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through Accurate Positioning

Positioning means making clear claims about your firm's expertise and stating whom you intend to serve. Whether it's online, in marketing materials or in person, it should be so assertive and transparent that it sets your firm apart.

Jason Blumer • Aug. 15, 2017



Your phone rings. It's a challenging client. You pick up the phone to hear the latest request that will undoubtedly gobble up a couple of hours. Clients like this can hijack a firm – it can feel as if the client is running your practice and not the other way around.

I offer this example for two reasons:

1. Any time spent with clients like this takes valuable time away from prospecting for new clients.
2. Firms should ask if they are correctly representing themselves to attract clients that share their values. This process can pave the way for accelerating growth

through the right client acquisition.

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For example, if your firm is tech-driven, clients that prefer paper-based accounting and bookkeeping stall efficiency and require administrative support for printing, mailing and data entry. In short, they're not a good fit, and the firm should refer them to a practitioner that better suits their preferences.

Questions you should ask to identify your firm's positioning

Honing your firm's positioning starts with a few simple questions:

- What is my firm's purpose? What do we exist to do?
- What is the definition of my ideal client?
- In what unique ways does our firm serve that sets us apart?
- What particular expertise do we have that not all firms have?

The result of these questions and others like them allows you to assert your focus and offer concise descriptions such as:

- We are a financial services firm that helps startups save time and money through sound advice and the latest technology.
- We are a virtual firm that specializes in freeing retail clients from labor-intensive bookkeeping with cloud-based technology.

How to convert positioning into client acquisition and growth

Positioning is the foot you lead with and the first impression. Selling amplifies client acquisition by helping you identify the companies who respond to your positioning. Here are a few ways to use positioning to gain new clients:

- Revisit your firm's website and marketing materials to ensure your positioning is accurately reflected. If your firm focuses on franchises, do these materials reflect

language and challenges that appeal to them? Does your website feature keywords

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with cloud-based technologies, 44 percent prefer monthly flat rates, and 54 percent opt for bookkeeping services.

Don't underestimate the power to technology for positioning and selling

Technology plays an important role in supporting both positioning and selling. Tech-savvy firms can market the convenience, mobility and accuracy that cloud-based technologies provide clients. For firms, technology offers a way to amplify efficiency, reduce costs and create collaborative relationships with clients.

Oftentimes, demonstrating the technology can be impressive by itself. For example, I've shown potential clients the Bill.com mobile app to demonstrate how streamlined and efficient AP and AR can be. The clients react quite positively when they realize they can review documents and pay a bill in a few simple taps.

Revisit positioning

You should review your firm's positioning regularly to ensure it reflects the firm and your market. Ask questions such as "Has my target market changed in any way that would require me to change how I sell?" and "Should I be selling differently at different times during the year?"

Ultimately, the best way to spur growth and acquire the right clients is to target them up front. Positioning paves the way for successful selling and – in the end – a growing and profitable practice.

Jason Blumer, CPA, has more than two decades of accounting experience. In addition

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consulting with firms and agencies, while their team meets the technical and compliance needs of the client.

Jason is the co-host of two podcasts, the Thrivecast and The Businessology Show, and speaks and writes frequently for CPAs. He has been honored as one of the Top 100 Most Influential People in Accounting (Accounting Today) for five years running.

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