



MARKETING / OFFICE / STAFF

The Power of Positioning

Drew Stevens, PhD

During the evening, I like to relax while either reading a book or watching television. One of my shows, NCIS, has the main character always drinking coffee. Everyone knows it is a Venti from Starbucks because of its distinctive color and style. As I was watching a recent episode and thinking about this, I was also reminded of a time many years ago when I was working in Manhattan and I would regularly see new computer boxes in offices with the distinctive look of a cow. Can you name the company? Yep, it was Gateway.

When marketers package products, they are doing so very a very clear reason - branding. Brand is that logo, symbol, look and feel that provides consumers and those that aren't brand recognition and value. Packaging is a vital component of the marketing process simply because consumers acquire for brand's sake.



I am reminded of the time while selling to many Japanese banks in the early 1980's and how they loved to visit Tiffany. It was not the gift they desired as much as getting the blue box. With that in mind, what are you doing to create a package that creates allure and attraction? To create visibility, you must engage with others and ensure they are aware of your value.

This is where many of the issues stem, in that many chiropractors are unsure of their value. So much so, that many chiropractors when they introduce their services, wind up providing stereotype. By this I mean that many doctors of chiropractic introduce themselves by title, thereby offering nothing in terms of differentiation but simply a comparison to others. Patients are then left to consider why they should choose one doctor over another.

It is the doctor's responsibility to illustrate who they are and what they do. Perhaps the best method in today's market is to create a message that illustrates to the patient not only a competitive advantage but also a clear understanding of the patient's issue before they tell the doctor. Becoming more consultative, perhaps even psychic, will draw more people to the chiropractor than using titles or stereotypes.

You might be thinking at this point what is meant by a stereotype. The best example I can provide is when I was just about to speak at a very large event. Just prior to being introduced, the organization was announcing its newest members. Incredibly there were 35. Each proceeded to the front of the room and stated their name, their company and what the company did. There were nine doctors, seven financial advisors, four florists and the list continued. There was never an indication of what one did better than another, it was simply name and title.

Patients today are seeking experts that they can confide in and trust to create long-term relationships. Stereotypes do not allow for this. In fact, they lend themselves more to your commoditization than anything else. The answer here then is to create a tool so that you can attract people to you like nails to a magnet.

The Answer to Your Issues

The best method of attracting new patients to you and your practice is to create a voice of value. This is not meant to be an elevator speech or some other tiresome tool. The voice of value is meant to be a resource that helps to frame your competitive advantage with your specific target market. It will help to explain why you do what you do better than anyone else in your market.

The voice of value creates a positioning statement so you can create the value and differentiation necessary for patients to say, "I want to work with you." As you can imagine, this will immediately assist you with manifesting your brand. To assist you, my purpose with this article is to show you how to build one.

Step One

The very first step with creating the voice of value is with your target market. As with any product or service, or even brand, you must create a market niche. Many chiropractors fail to do this because they do not think of themselves as needing a target market. However, every successful brand utilizes target market segmentation so they can pinpoint the best patients. Therefore, it is vital that you consider by age, income, education, profession, region, marital status etc., who is the proper demographic for your services.

Some of the best resources available to you to help find this important content are from the Bureau of Labor and statistics, your local real estate association or even web resources which can be found on either Google or a very specific service known as the zipskinny.com. These content warehouses provide you with the proper demographic and psychographic information necessary so that you can zero in on your proper demographic.

Step Two

Once you have created your market niche, it is then necessary to identify in lay terms the patient's condition. This is yet another area where chiropractors tend to miss the boat. Too many use medical terminology such as subluxation or other terms. Patients do not use, nor would they ever even question, their subluxation. Patients will talk about neck pain, lower back pain, fatigue, joint stiffness or even lethargy and obesity. To that end, it is vital that you talk in the patient's language.

Step two then requires the chiropractor to identify the issue the patient is going through. A good example might be, "working with individuals that have constant fatigue, joint pain and migraine headaches." Speaking this way, patients will say, "hey he really understands me!"

Step Three

Finally, now that you have your niche and patient issue, it then requires you to establish your competitive frame. In this particular scenario you'll want to briefly state your proprietary process, procedure or even methodology to aiding the patient. For example, you might use proprietary enzymes, you might have a special analytical technique or you might even use standards that check for mineral, thyroid or even vitamin deficiencies.

It is important that you spend some time here considering what you do that's different from other chiropractors in the local area. I would suggest not simply talking about adjustment techniques or even acupuncture or massage, as these are tactical methods. You want to position your strategic competitive advantage versus others in the area.

Putting It All Together

Once you have completed all three steps, you can then begin placing this into a conversational message. Your final positioning statement might actually sound similar to the following. "Hello my name is David, and I work with professional women who are mostly administrative professionals and executives ages 35 to 40, who suffer from chronic fatigue joint stiffness and migraine headaches. I use a proprietary formula known as McKinley's Medicine Box, that quickly rejuvenates their soul and energizes them so they can immediately feel like they're 22 again!" The next statement you will hear from potential patients is, "I want to work with you because I need that!"

You will find that creating a voice of value helps position your brand, your services and your value. This particular positioning tool will help you stand above the crowd especially if there is tremendous competition in your area. However, this is an exercise that does take time and patience. Do not rush this, but then again, do not wait to use it. And finally, test it repeatedly to ensure your prospective patients understand what it is you do and how you do it.