



# Authentic MARKETING

for Health, Wellness & Fitness Brands

## Universal marketing obstacles

The purpose of this **marketing strategy guide** is to share the most consistent, predictable, and successful marketing strategy I've employed over the past 20 years.

Unfortunately, most small business marketing attempts fail. Throughout my two decades of professional experience, I'd estimate that only 10-20% of campaigns exceed expectations.

Marketing campaigns flounder for countless reasons. The leading culprits I've encountered are:

- Abandoning campaigns and strategies prematurely
- Casting a wide net with multiple offers to several audience segments at the same time
- Too much detail and information in marketing communications
- Sporadic marketing and advertising attempts
- Scattershot tactical approaches without an underlying strategy
- Guesswork from inexperienced marketing team members

If any of these issues resonate, **this strategy guide is for you.**

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## Getting started ;)

Hello. I'm a marketing and advertising professional with over two decades of industry experience. I specialize in brand strategy, creative direction, and visual design.

I've worked with hundreds of small businesses and some exciting big brands on thousands of projects. I have over 40,000 hours of hands-on experience as a creative professional.

I'm sharing a little backstory for you to **feel confident** and know you're in good hands. I'm writing from extensive experience and sharing the best of what I've learned over many years.



**Rob Knapp**

*Creative Director & Marketing Strategist*

*Rob Knapp Design*

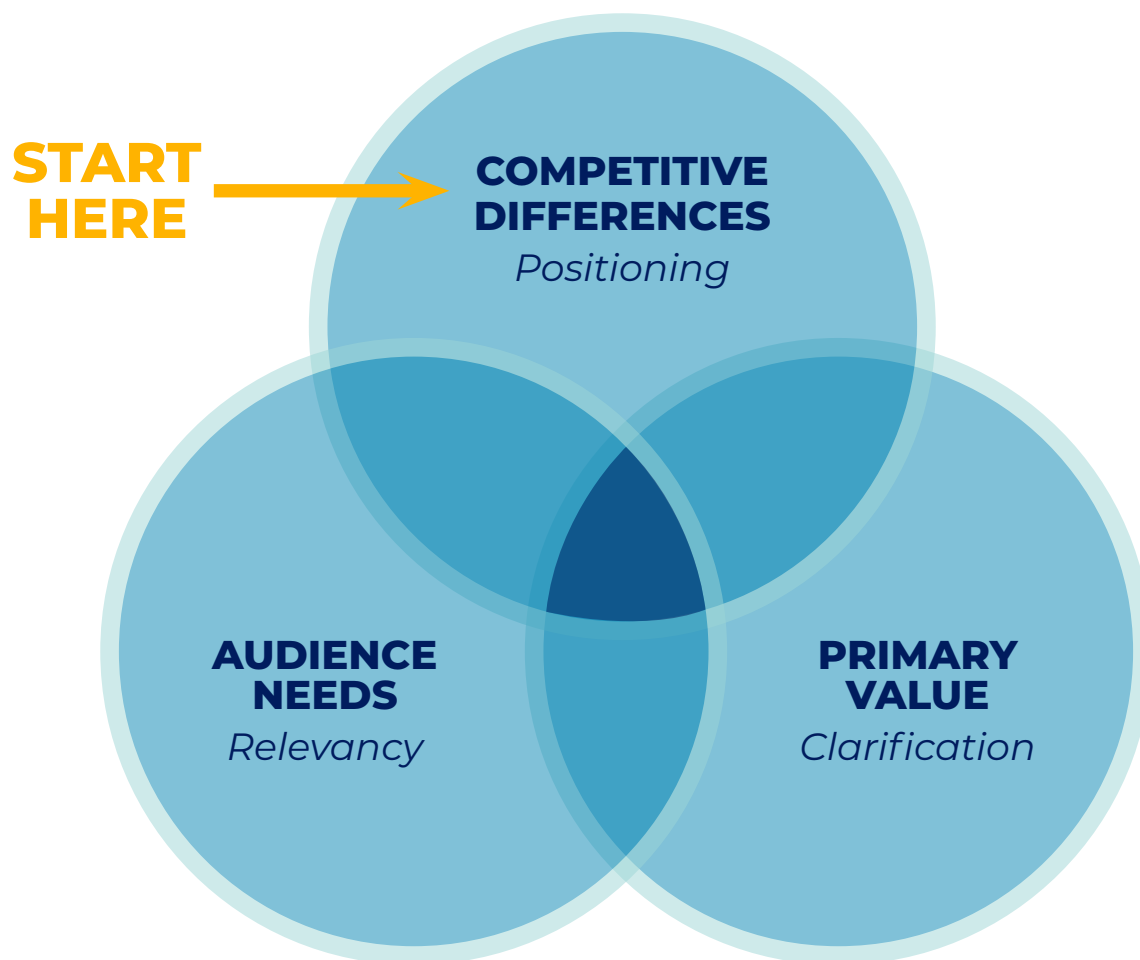
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I don't have psychic powers, but I have a hunch that you're a busy decision-maker. You probably don't have time for a lengthy ebook about marketing strategy. So I've made every attempt to keep this short but valuable. The following is a 10-15 minute read.

To get straight to the point, here's the formula below. This **deceptively simple** graphic is the blueprint for sharpening your marketing strategy:





## An authentic and brand-centric marketing strategy

I wholeheartedly believe that the strategy I'm sharing is **rarely wrong**. It might not always be the perfect approach, but it will consistently lead you down good paths.

Maybe you're struggling with your marketing performance. You're just not seeing results from your efforts and investments. If that's the case, there's a good chance that you're not strategic enough. Your process might be more tactical or reactionary than you realize.

That's why I recommend a focused and authentic strategic framework.

What makes this strategy authentic? Well, I'm going to suggest you **don't guess** when marketing. The predominant strategies (that don't work well) are often contrived or aspirational. They require guesswork.

Contrived strategies typically revolve around fictitious audience personas. Personas almost always involve unnecessary guesswork. There are more accurate methods of developing effective messaging.

Aspirational strategies are more dangerous. When your entire system is built to catch mice, you don't have the tools to catch a whale. Dream clients are great, but you seldom win them through marketing.

## What to expect from this brief strategic overview

First off, I'm going to give you a quick definition of brand-centric marketing. The fact that this strategy is brand-centric is a huge contributor to authenticity.

Then I'm going to quickly go over branding and why it's essential. I know branding can be fuzzy and confusing, so I'm not going to muddy the waters with explanations. I will **highlight** the most critical elements of branding relative to authentic marketing communications.

While describing branding, I'll give you some fundamental terms and definitions. You'll want to understand them before attempting this strategy for yourself. There are thousands of things you could focus on, but I'll emphasize the important few that make all the difference.

Next, I'll briefly describe the two major marketing problems that most small businesses create for themselves.

The last thing I'll go over is the precise starting point for transforming your marketing strategy. I'll tell you exactly how to get started and provide a few examples and templates to jumpstart your process.

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## Why are all the cool kids saying “brand-centric?”

First off, brand-centric does not mean self-centered. Brand-centric is a strategic approach to authentic marketing communications. Brand-centric marketing intentionally conveys **specific** brand attributes, but they’re always relative to your audience.

That doesn’t mean brand-centric ads or marketing pieces aren’t promotional or purely informative. They’re just focused on brand messaging and **connected** to your audience’s needs.

### Brand-Centric Communication

- Connects your brand to your target audience
- Affects advertising and marketing
- Aligns messaging across different media channels



## What is branding?

Your brand is the **perception** of your business in the minds of your audience. Branding is an attempt to **influence** this perception.

The most powerful and effective brand strategies emphasize how your company is **unlike** the nearest competitive alternatives. These strategies attempt to capture a space in the mind that's currently unoccupied by something else.

Good brand strategies highlight **differentiating benefits** and create alignment between audience needs and the value of your company's unique solutions. A differentiating benefit is how you're unlike the nearest competitive alternative.

Great brand strategies **focus** on only a few impactful things while saying no to 1,000 other alternatives.

The problem with branding is that it quickly becomes overcomplicated, overwhelming, and challenging to grasp.

To protect yourself from unneeded complexity, prioritize these three branding fundamentals: positioning, clarification, and relevancy. That's all you need to know to leverage branding to guide your marketing.

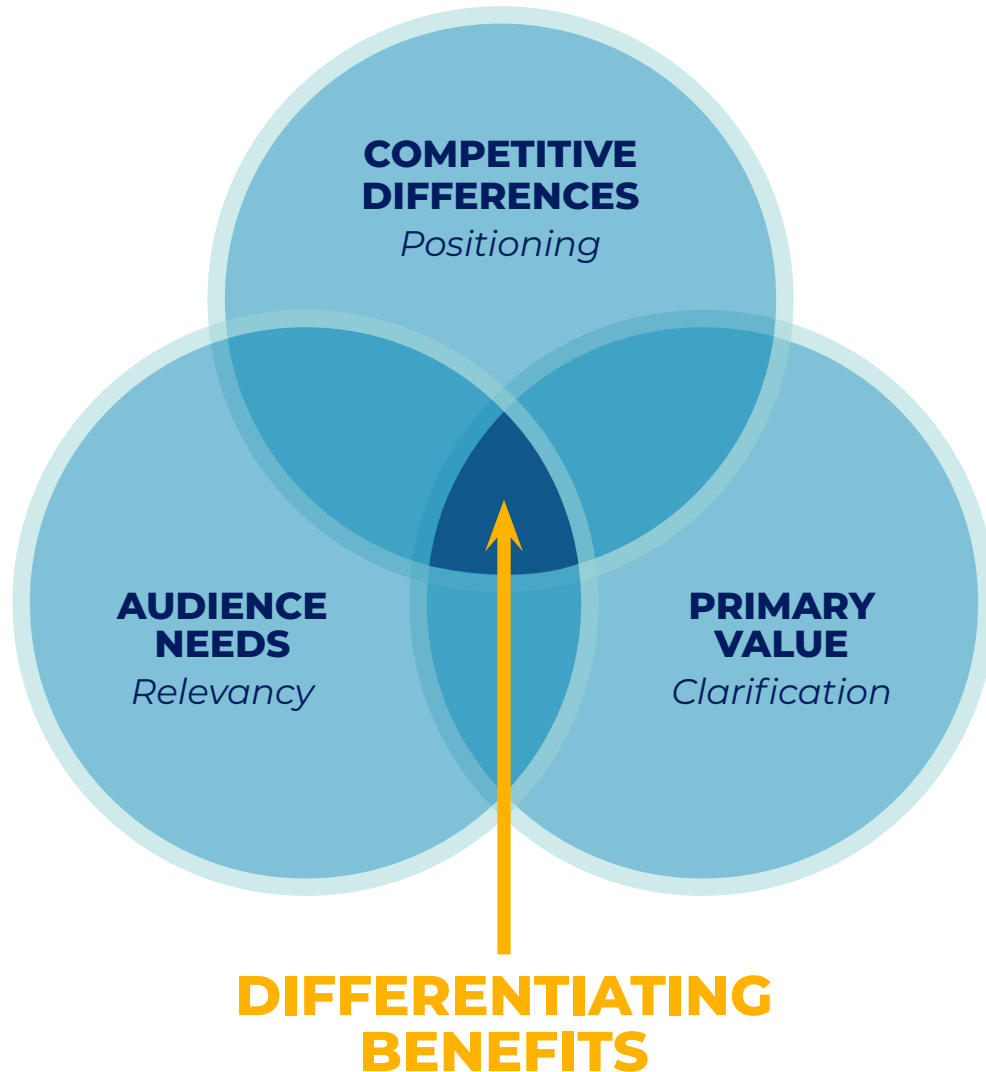


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- **Positioning** is how your brand is different from the nearest competitive alternatives.
- **Clarification** is the act of stating and repeating the primary value of your unique solutions.
- **Relevancy** is how the value of your unique solutions align with your target audience's needs.



## Why is branding important?

Branding is essential because it creates focus, consistency, and **potency** in your business communications. It helps you stand out because it gives your audience something **easy to remember**. Branding allows you to properly utilize repetition to influence the perception of your company in the minds of your audience.

If you're a small business owner, branding gives you a **competitive advantage**. Most small businesses overlook branding as a nice-to-have or don't understand how to take advantage of its benefits.

An effective brand strategy revolutionizes your business communications while increasing the perceived value of your company.

## How do I know?

I've never worked within client-supplied brand guidelines. 100% of my small business clients had **undocumented** brands before I started.

That's how I know that you need to look more closely at your brand. Big successful companies see branding as a **growth factor**. Small, struggling companies hardly recognize branding at all.

## Two major marketing problems that smaller brands create for themselves:

Without going into unnecessary detail, there are two major marketing problems I consistently see with small businesses. You want to be aware of them and how branding minimizes their presence.

- 1. Information overload:** The fastest way to identify small business marketing is by how “busy” it looks. Most small businesses try to offer and explain too much in their marketing and advertising. That’s a big no-no. Your advertising is not meant to explain; it’s intended to persuade. If you need a lengthy explanation to persuade an audience, they don’t need you.
- 2. Mixed messaging:** All too often, small businesses attempt to speak to more than one audience segment with more than one benefit (at the same time). Unfortunately, mixed-up and jumbled messaging doesn’t resonate with anyone. In an attempt to cast a wide net, you create a message that speaks to no one in particular.

Branding creates guideposts. These pointers show you how to align your special sauce with the exact needs of your target audience.

Branding prevents overkill in your marketing and advertising: it **simplifies** things.

## How to get started with authentic brand-centric marketing

Here's the fundamental idea: you need to start with the **fewest number of assumptions**. Don't guess.

Our Venn diagram has only three circles but four variables: you, your competition, audience needs, and value. It's no accident that I listed the variables here from the fewest assumptions to the most.

You don't need to make any assumptions about your business. You should know what you can deliver.

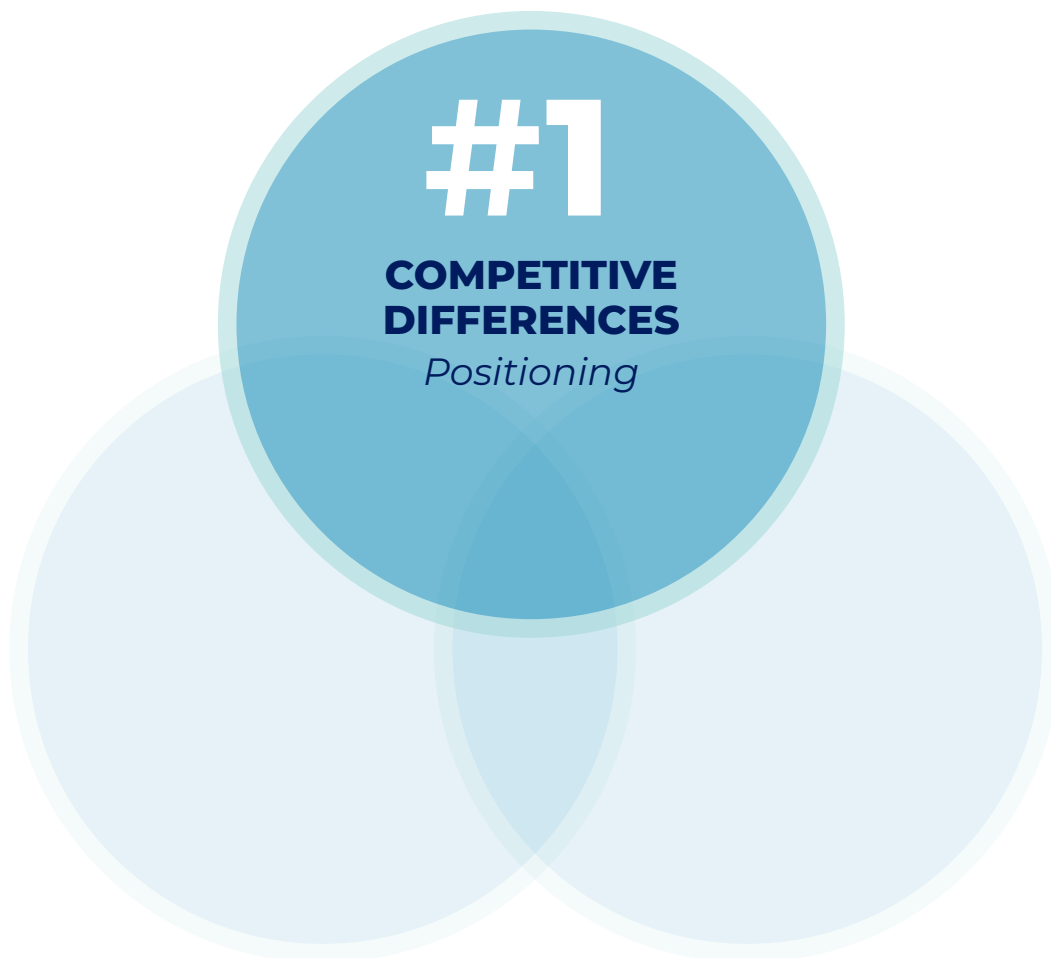
You also don't need to make assumptions about your competition because you can easily research the competitive landscape. All of your legitimate competitors have websites or social profiles that give away the farm when it comes to strategy.

The guesswork begins with your audience. I don't care who you are; you don't fully understand the motivations of your audience. You can make educated guesses, but I highly recommend that you don't start here. There's a more accurate way.

The last variable is value. Without an understanding of audience needs, you can't honestly know your worth. So this is where **Authentic Marketing for Health, Wellness & Fitness Brands** truly begins.

## Positioning is always the first step

When you look at the diagram, the top circle is labeled **COMPETITIVE DIFFERENCES Positioning**. You start here because you don't have to make any assumptions. You know what you can deliver, and you know how you're different from most of the competition. Don't even worry about your audience yet. It's all about how you're different.



## Why differences are important

What sets you apart from your competition is paramount. You have to remember; you're branding now. Branding is an attempt to influence the perception of your company. The most significant and affordable shortcut is **being memorable**: occupying a unique space in your audience's minds.

The biggest mistake with positioning is trying to be "better than," "more affordable," "easier," "faster," or other generic labels. Those things are great, but they aren't memorable.

I'll jump into an example from my own business. I focus on three differentiators when marketing my services: more **strategic**, more **experienced**, and more **versatile**. My category is Marketing Professionals, and my nearest competitive alternatives are Marketing Consultants and Creative Freelancers.

I'm not better, more affordable, more accessible, friendlier, more thoughtful, or faster. That's just the truth. My category is competitive, and the other options are excellent.

What makes me different and memorable is that I have branding expertise with 20 years of experience in both print and digital. I have a clear-cut **framework** for small business success. That makes me different from the next guy, who might not be so distinguishable.



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Here's an example: a comparison chart that shows you how to extract benefits from your **competitive differences** and match them to actual audience pain points. No audience persona guesswork is required!

## STRATEGIC

Competitive Alternatives: <b>Less strategic</b> (aimless)	Differentiation: <b>More strategic</b> (purposeful)
<i>Scattershot marketing, random tactical efforts, and experimentation</i>	<i>Brand-centric marketing framework for small business success</i>
<b>AUDIENCE PAIN POINTS</b>	<b>BENEFITS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guesswork</li> <li>• Trial and error</li> <li>• Erratic</li> <li>• Disorganized</li> <li>• Difficult sales process</li> <li>• Confusing</li> <li>• Reinventing the wheel</li> <li>• Irrelevant information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direction</li> <li>• Focus</li> <li>• Consistency</li> <li>• Simplified marketing efforts</li> <li>• Smooth sales pipeline</li> <li>• Easy to remember</li> <li>• Leverages repetition</li> <li>• Targeted communications</li> </ul>

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There are two main takeaways from the comparison chart. First, you only need competitive differences to uncover benefits and audience pain points. From there, the **authentic audience needs reveal themselves**. You don't have to struggle with make-believe motivations, desires, wants, fears, hopes, and dreams.

The second upshot is that the benefits and audience pain points are great primers for killer marketing materials. Each one makes an excellent topic for a blog post, social media content, or email blast.

For example, I could focus on “erratic marketing results” and write an empathetic blog post about how difficult it is to get reliable digital marketing and social media feedback.

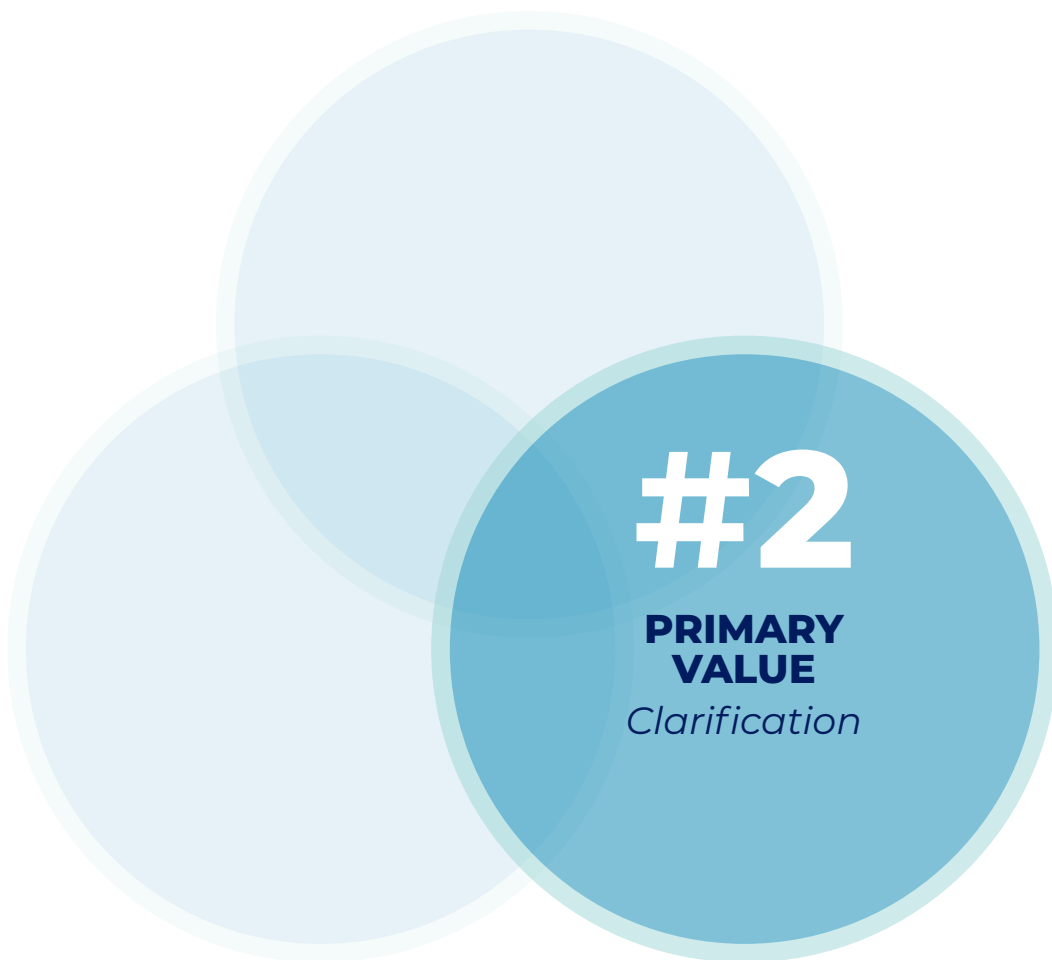
As long as I dovetail back to branding, I can **connect** with an audience that's suffering. These people are bouncing around erratically in a desperate attempt to find something that works. Well, I've got something that works: an authentic brand-centric strategy.

That's a real audience with legitimate pain points. I might not have even thought of their struggles without this approach.

Including this example, I quickly created 16 ideas for content, half positive and half negative, with one differentiator. Considering that I have three competitive differences, it's no stretch to think that I could create 50 brand-centric content ideas with this strategy alone.

## Always communicate value

It's tempting to overemphasize your competitive differences. However, they don't matter unless they're **valuable** and relevant to the needs of your audience. To protect yourself from running off in the wrong direction, make sure always to root your communications in value.



## How to emphasize value

Let's use the **strategic** competitive difference again. One of the benefits was “leverages repetition,” and the corresponding pain point was “reinventing the wheel.”

It would be OK to communicate either of these ideas directly. They're both fine on their own. However, neither one of them directly references value.

Leveraging repetition is valuable because it makes your life easier, saves time, reduces production work, and helps people remember you. Not having to reinvent the wheel is beneficial because it reduces stress, mental effort, and unnecessary work.

So being strategic makes life easier, saves time, and makes you memorable. Those things are explicitly valuable.

The danger here is **only** communicating value without differentiation. Don't do that. You want to blend your competitive difference into the equation, or you won't stand out.

Bad example: “Hire me because I'll make your life easier.” That's lousy because it's generic and forgettable. A better example: “My strategic approach leverages repetition to make your marketing easier and more memorable.” Now that's a differentiating benefit.

## It's time to get cracking!

Since it all starts with positioning, let's look at three different templates for your **Brand Positioning Statement**. None of them are right, wrong, the best, or the worst. They're all unique.

I recommend that you complete each template and reach a point where every statement has roughly the same meaning but with different wording. Eventually, you'll pick a favorite.

Your positioning statement will create the backbone of your authentic marketing strategy. Your statement will be an internal document that guides and directs your future marketing communications.

It's not unusual to take a few days to complete these exercises. Give yourself time for reflection, creative marination, and some emotional ups and downs. It can be a roller coaster ride when you draw a line in the sand and define your brand position.

There's an overlap between brand positioning and your **Unique Value Proposition**. Once you feel good about your positioning, the UVP falls into your lap.

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## Positioning template #1 - Exercise

At

---

Your business

a

---

Your business description

we help

---

Your target audience

---

Your audience needs

As

---

Your key difference

we

---

Your headline benefit

Clients hire us because

---

Differentiating benefit

---

Differentiating benefit

---

Differentiating benefit

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Differentiating benefit



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## Positioning template #1 - Example

At *Rob Knapp Design*

Your business

a *boutique marketing and design service*

Your business description

we help *Health, Wellness & Fitness brands*

Your target audience

*stand out and grow their business*

Your audience needs

As *brand-centric marketing experts*

Your key difference

we *create unforgettable brand impressions*

Your headline benefit

Clients hire us because • *we have a clear-cut framework for success*

Differentiating benefit

• *we have 20 years of industry experience*

Differentiating benefit

• *we offer an array of print and digital services*

Differentiating benefit

• *we have a clean, modern design style*

Differentiating benefit

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## Positioning template #2 - Exercise

For

---

Target customer

who

---

Statement of need or opportunity

---

Your business name

is a

---

Product or service category

that

---

Statement of key benefit

---

How you deliver

Unlike

---

Primary competitive alternative

we

---

Statement of primary differentiation

---

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# Authentic Marketing

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## Positioning template #2 - Example

For *Health, Wellness & Fitness brands*

Target customer

who *want to stand out and grow their business*

Statement of need or opportunity

*Rob Knapp Design*

Your business name

is a *boutique marketing and design service*

Product or service category

that *creates unforgettable brand impressions*

Statement of key benefit

*with killer print and digital assets*

How you deliver

Unlike *marketing consultants & creative freelancers*

Primary competitive alternative

we *leverage a proven brand-centric framework*

Statement of primary differentiation

*that simplifies marketing, creates laser-focus,*

*and helps your audience remember you*

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## Positioning template #3 - Exercise

To

---

Customer group

---

Your brand

is

---

Differentiating benefit for customers

---

by

---

How you make it possible

---

## Positioning template #3 - Example

To *Health, Wellness & Fitness brands*

---

Customer group

*Rob Knapp Design*

---

Your brand

is *a strategy-driven marketing and design*

---

Differentiating benefit for customers

*service that helps clients stand out*

---

by *leveraging the power of branding to create*

---

How you make it possible

*unforgettable print and digital assets.*

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## Final thoughts

I hope you're having some "aha!" moments with these templates and authentic brand-centric strategy. If you have any questions at all, please feel free to reach out. The reason I created this guide is to help you succeed. If I can be of any further assistance, I'm here to help.

If you want feedback on your positioning statements, shoot me a quick email. Sometimes it's best to have a sounding board before rolling out new ideas and strategies.

You can reach me at [rob@robknappdesign.com](mailto:rob@robknappdesign.com). I'm looking forward to seeing what you whip up!

