

module one: customer service

Greetings and First Impressions

article:

Do Not Disappoint

by Laurie Guest

Interested in positive positioning for your business?

Set the bar of expectation. Once you have set an expectation of a good experience, do not disappoint. Before making a presentation for nurses, I asked a critical care nurse what she wanted her staff to hear during my talk. She responded, “I want you to say, ‘One of your patients will be spending his last day on earth with you. Do not disappoint him.’” What an impactful statement. Even though it is unlikely that your customers are spending their last day on earth with you, the mentality of the statement is the basis of my focus in this article.

What is positive positioning?

Positive positioning is using words to set up an expectation of a good experience. Although it sounds simple, a receptionist scheduling a new exam may need more advanced training to succeed at this because it does not come automatically to most. One of my favorite examples of this is a doctor who asked me to do a secret shop phone call to his office. He wanted me to pretend to be a new patient. His hope was that the staff person answering the phone would give me an explanation of his great attributes including where he'd graduated from school and his excellent chairside manner with patients. These are things that he thought were important to a new patient.

I asked him, “How confident are you that when I call, your receptionist is going to do the spiel just the way you scripted it?” He said, “I am extremely confident. We've gone over it. She knows how to do it. She's practiced it. All is good.” With great confidence I called the next day. During the entire phone conversation, the receptionist did a fantastic job of taking care of my needs. As we neared the end of the phone call she hadn't fulfilled the positive positioning that the doctor expected. Because I wanted her to score well on this test, I asked a leading question in hopes it would cause her to



recite the words from her training. I said, “You know, before I let you go, I'm kind of new to the area. Is there something you could tell me about your doctor?” Now, what more could I have done for her? I teed it up perfectly.

After a long pause, she said, and I quote, “Well, he's six foot, blonde and gorgeous. What more do you need to know?” I've always loved this story because, although you could call that positive positioning, it's not what the doctor was looking for in setting the image of his practice.

How do you communicate positive positioning?

“Don't disappoint.” The words of a critical care nurse have stuck with me. Think about it. What can I do to make sure that I don't disappoint you? The concept of “don't disappoint” is something that I use at the end of my emails.

When a client considers me, my last line says, “I look forward to delivering this program to your audience. You won't be disappointed.” You'd be amazed how many times after I'm done with my work, the client will say some version of: “You were right. I wasn't disappointed.” Setting the bar of expectation and delivering as promised is what positive positioning is all about.

In addition, figure out how to build up the atmosphere of being noteworthy. Not long ago, I made a reservation to go to a spa. At the end of the phone conversation, the receptionist said, “Just wait until you see our infinity pool and our power shower.” She spoke with such enthusiasm that I couldn’t wait to get to the spa. When I got there, it did not disappoint. The infinity pool and the power shower were fantastic. That would be a place I would recommend again. She set that bar of expectation.

How do you handle hurdles to positive positioning?

Another way to use positive positioning is to listen for hesitation points in the buyers’ communication and balance it with accurate praise. For example, an assistant during an initial call is trained to listen for hurdles in order to address them. If the client pauses when it’s time to schedule a financial planning consultation, the administrative assistant might say something like, “What I like about working with Sally is that she’s really honest with her recommendations. She will show you all the options and not be pushy in her advice. Clients really appreciate that about her.” If you are a solo entrepreneur and you answer your own phone, it may be hard to say how great you are without sounding a little conceited, right? When I talk to a buyer, I use phrases such as, “I’m proud of…” or “Many of my clients comment on…”

What does positive positioning look like for you?

To set an expectation of a good experience and thus create the image you desire, I’d like your team to first generate a list of specific things to compliment about your organization, your people, your product and service. If you can’t come up with a list, then you’ve uncovered a bigger issue. I’d like you to work as a team to develop sentences that work for your current situation. For example, “He’s a great doctor” could be “Our patients often tell us Dr. Jones is so easy to talk to.”

The phrase needs to be truthful and accurate. Once you fine-tune the language, even simple words can make a difference. Words like definitely, absolutely, certainly, and fantastic are great examples of starter words. A book I’d recommend is *Words That Sell* by Richard Bayan. A new, updated version is available and is packed with words and phrases that help people connect and allow you to position your business in the best way possible.

Next, pull all of your printed materials and look at them as though seeing them for the first time. This includes promotional materials, statements, letters, thank you cards, every single piece of paper that a guest sees. How do you look in print? Is it clear? Is it easy to understand? Perhaps you made the mistake of taking an original document and made copy after copy without returning to the original. Now when you look at your printed materials, they’re faded or maybe even catawampus on the paper. Positioning includes your words and messages in print.

Upgrade your words, message, and image. See what a difference positive positioning makes to your guest encounter that will not disappoint.