Chapter 11

Marketing communications: objectives and positioning

The formal setting of marketing communication objectives is important because they provide guidance concerning what is to be achieved and when. These objectives form a pivotal role between the business/marketing plans and the marketing communications strategy. The way in which a product or service is perceived by buyers is the only positioning that really matters.

Aims and learning objectives

The aims of this chapter are to establish the nature and importance of the role that objectives play in the formulation of marketing communication strategies and to explore the concept of positioning.

The learning objectives of this chapter are to:

1. examine the need for organisational objectives;
2. specify the different types of organisational goals;
3. examine the relationship between corporate strategy and promotional objectives;
4. determine the components of SMART-determined promotional objectives;
5. examine the differences between sales- and communication-based objectives;
6. evaluate the concept of positioning;
7. understand the importance of perceptual mapping;
8. explain the main types of positioning strategies.

For an applied interpretation see Richard Godfrey's MiniCase entitled *Unlocking the secrets of the male shopper* at the end of this chapter.

Introduction

There are many different opinions about what it is that marketing communications seeks to achieve. The conflicting views have led some practitioners and academics to polarise their thoughts about what constitutes an appropriate set of objectives. First, much effort has been spent trying to determine what promotion and marketing communication activities are supposed to achieve; second, how should the success of a campaign be evaluated?; and finally, how is it best to determine the degree of investment that should be made in each of the areas of the promotional mix?

> The most common marketing communications objectives set by managers are sales-related.

The process of resolving these different demands that are placed on organisations has made the setting of promotional objectives very complex and difficult. It has been termed 'a job of creating order out of chaos' (Kriegel, 1986). This perceived complexity has led a large number of managers to fail to set promotional objectives or to set the wrong ones. Many of those who do set them, do so in such a way that they are inappropriate, inadequate or merely restate the marketing objectives. The most common marketing communications objectives set by managers are sales-related. These include increases in market share, return on investment, sales volume increases and improvements in the value of sales made after accounting for the rate of inflation.

Such a general perspective ignores the influence of the other elements of the marketing mix and implicitly places the entire responsibility for sales performance with the promotional mix. This is not an accurate reflection of the way in which businesses and organisations work. In addition, because sales tests are too general, they would be an insufficiently rigorous test of promotional activity and there would be no real evaluation of promotional activities. Sales volumes vary for a wide variety of reasons:

1. competitors change their prices;
2. buyers' needs change;
3. changes in legislation may favour the strategies of particular organisations;
4. favourable third-party communications become known to significant buyers;
5. general economic conditions change;
6. technological advances facilitate improved production processes;
7. economies of scale, experience effects and, for some organisations, the opportunity to reduce costs;
8. the entry and exit of different competitors.

These are a few of the many reasons why sales might increase and conversely why sales might decrease. Therefore, the notion that marketing communications is entirely responsible for the sales of an offering is clearly unacceptable, unrealistic and incorrect.

The role of objectives in corporate strategy

Objectives play an important role in the activities of individuals, social groups and organisations because:

1. They provide direction and an action focus for all those participating in the activity.
2. They provide a means by which the variety of decisions relating to an activity can be made in a consistent way.
3. They set out the time period in which the activity is to be completed.
4. They communicate the values and scope of the activity to all participants.
5. They provide a means by which the success of the activity can be evaluated.

It is generally accepted that the process of developing corporate strategy demands that a series of objectives be set at different levels within an organisation (Johnson and Scholes (2006), and Quinn *et al.* 2003). This hierarchy of objectives consists of mission, strategic business unit (SBU) or business objectives and functional objectives, such as production, finance or marketing goals.

> The process of developing corporate strategy demands that a series of objectives be set at different levels within an organisation.

The first level in the hierarchy (mission) requires that an overall direction be set for the organisation. If strategic decisions are made to achieve corporate objectives, both objectives and strategy are themselves constrained by an organisation's mission. Thompson and Strickland (1990) claim that mission statements are a vision that management have of what the organisation is trying to achieve in the long term. A mission statement outlines who the organisation is, what it does and where it is headed. A clearly developed, articulated and communicated mission statement enables an organisation to define whose needs are to be satisfied, what needs require satisfying and which products and technologies will be used to provide the desired levels of satisfaction.

Conventionally, setting the mission answers the question 'What business are we in?' (Levitt, 1960). Obvious answers such as 'engineering', 'food processing', 'import and export' or 'retailing' miss the point. These are merely activities. Missions must be linked, explicitly, first and foremost to the needs met, rather than to markets or industries (Rosen, 1995). According to IBM, its original success was tied to its founder's principle of 'offering the best customer service in the world', not to technological innovation. The mission then, should clearly identify the following:

- the customers'/buyers' to be served;
- the needs to be satisfied;
- the products and/or technologies by which these will be achieved.

In some organisations these points are explicitly documented in a mission statement. These statements often include references to the organisation's philosophy, culture, commitment to the community and employees, growth, profitability and so on, but these should not blur or distract attention from the organisation's basic mission. The words mission and vision are often used interchangeably, but they have separate meanings. Vision refers to the expected or desired outcome of carrying out the mission over the agreed period of time.

The mission provides a framework for the organisation's objectives, and the objectives that follow should promote and be consistent with the mission. While the word 'mission' implies a singularity of purpose, organisations have multiple objectives because of the many aspects of the organisation's performance and behaviour that con-

> The mission provides a framework for the organisation's objectives.

tribute to the mission, and should, therefore, be explicitly identified. However, as Rosen points out, many of these objectives will conflict with each other. In retailing, for example, if an organisation chooses to open larger stores, then total annual profit should rise, but average profit per square metre will probably fall. Short-term profitability can be improved by reducing investment, but this could adversely affect long-term profitability. Organisations therefore have long-term and short-term objectives.

At the SBU level, objectives represent the translation of the mission into a form that can be understood by relevant stakeholders. These objectives are the performance requirements for the organisation or unit, which in turn are broken down into objectives or targets that each functional area must achieve, as their contribution to the unit objectives. Marketing strategies are functional strategies, as are the strategies for the finance, human resource management and production departments. Combine or aggregate them and the SBUs overall target will, in reductionist theory, be achieved.

The various organisational objectives are of little use if they are not communicated to those who need to know what they are. Traditionally, such communication has focused on employees, but there is increasing recognition that the other members of the stakeholder network

need to understand an organisation's purpose and objectives. The marketing objectives developed for the marketing strategy provide important information for the communications strategy. Is the objective to increase market share or to defend or maintain the current situation? Is the product new or established? Is it being modified or slowly withdrawn? The corporate image is shaped partly by the organisation's objectives and the manner in which they are communicated. All these impact on the objectives of the communications plan.

Promotional objectives consist of three main components. The first component concerns issues relating to the buyers of the product or service offered by the organisation. The second

> Promotional objectives consist of three main components.

concerns issues relating to sales volume, market share, profitability and revenue. The third relates to the image, reputation and preferences that other stakeholders have towards the organisation. Each of these three streams is developed later in this chapter.

The role of promotional objectives and plans

Many organisations, including some advertising agencies, fail to set realistic (if any) promotional objectives. There are several explanations for this behaviour, but one of the common factors is that managers are unable to differentiate between the value of promotion as an expenditure and as an investment. This issue is addressed later (Chapter 16), but for now the value of promotional objectives can be seen in terms of the role they play in communications planning, evaluation and brand development.

> Performance is improved if there is common understanding about the tasks the promotional tools have to accomplish.

The setting of promotional objectives is important for three main reasons. The first is that they provide *a means of communication and coordination* between groups (e.g. client and agency) working on different parts of a campaign. Performance is improved if there is common understanding about the tasks the promotional tools have to accomplish. Second, objectives constrain the number of options available to an organisation. Promotional objectives act as *a guide for decision-making* and provide a focus for decisions that follow in the process of developing promotional plans. The third reason is that objectives provide *a benchmark* so that the relative success or failure of a programme can be evaluated.

There is no doubt that organisations need to be flexible to be able to anticipate and adjust to changes in their environments. This principle applies to the setting of promotional objectives. To set one all-encompassing objective and expect it to last the year (or whatever period is allocated) is both hopeful and naive; multiple objectives are necessary.

The content of promotional objectives has also been the subject of considerable debate. Two distinct schools of thought emerge: those that advocate sales-related measures as the main factors and those that advocate communication-related measures as the main orientation.

The sales school

As stated earlier, many managers see sales as the only meaningful objective for promotional plans. Their view is that the only reason an organisation spends money on promotion is to sell its product or service. Therefore, the only meaningful measure of the effectiveness of the promotional spend is in the sales results.

These results can be measured in a number of different ways. Sales turnover is the first and most obvious factor, particularly in business-to-business markets. In consumer markets and the fast-moving consumer goods sector, market share movement is measured regularly and is used as a more sensitive barometer of performance. Over the longer term, return on investment measures are used to calculate success and failure. In some sectors the number of products sold, or volume of product shifted, relative to other periods of activity, is a common measure. There are a number of difficulties with this view. One of these has been considered earlier, that *sales result from a variety of influences*, such as the other marketing mix elements,

competitor actions and wider environmental effects, such as the strength of the currency, changing social preferences or the level of interest rates.

A second difficulty rests with the concept of *adstock or carryover*. The impact of promotional expenditure may not be immediately apparent, as the receiver may not enter the market until some later date, but the effects of the promotional programme may influence the eventual purchase decision. This means that, when measuring the effectiveness of a campaign, sales results will not always reflect its full impact.

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Sales objectives *do little to assist the media planner, copywriters and creative team* associated with the development of the communications programme, despite their inclusion in campaign documents such as media briefs.

Sales-oriented objectives are, however, applicable in particular situations. For example, where direct action is required by the receiver in response to exposure to a message, measurement of sales is justifiable. Such an action, a behavioural response, can be solicited in direct-response advertising. This occurs where the sole communication is through a particular medium, such as television or print.

The retail sector can also use sales measures, and it has been suggested that packaged goods organisations, operating in mature markets with established pricing and distribution structures, can build a databank from which it is possible to isolate the advertising effect through sales. For example, Sainsbury's was able to monitor the stock movements of particular ingredients used in its 'celebrity recipe' commercials. This enables it to evaluate the success of particular campaigns and particular celebrities. Its use of celebrity chef Jamie Oliver is so successful that it can stock ingredients in anticipation of particular advertisements being screened. However, despite this cause-and-effect relationship, it can be argued that this may ignore the impact of changes in competitor actions and changes in the overall environment. Furthermore, the effects of the organisation's own corporate advertising, adstock effects and other family brand promotions need to be accounted for if a meaningful sales effect is to be generated.

ViewPoint 11.1   Privileged sales objectives

RBS, previously the Royal Bank of Scotland, has three main brands in the car insurance market, Direct Line, Churchill and Privilege. The first two have been enormously successful while Privilege has had varying levels of success being targeted at, Londoners, the over 50s and performance car drivers. However, the market was relatively static in terms of the number of people taking out new car policies. New entrants are able to use the Internet at low cost and people are able to switch providers at little cost. Indeed, the car insurance market was becoming characterised by a salience factor (the one that stands out wins). RBS' business strategy was to create a portfolio of brands so when people were thinking about car insurance they had a better chance of picking up the business.

Two business/sales objectives were set:

● Grow sales of the Privilege brand by 100 per cent in two years.
● *Invest heavily in advertising to build the brand and sacrifice short-term profits to hit five-year income and profitability targets.*

(See Viewpoint 11.2.)

Source: Adapted from IPA, Anon. (2006).

Question

What other objectives could have been set?

Task

Make a short list of the key activities necessary to achieve these goals.

The sales school advocates the measure on the grounds of simplicity. Any manager can utilise the tool, and senior management does not wish to be concerned with information which is complex or unfamiliar, especially when working to short lead times and accounting periods. It is a self-consistent theory, but one that may misrepresent consumer behaviour and the purchase process (perhaps unintentionally), and to that extent may result in less than optimal expenditure on marketing communications.

The communications school

Promotional efforts are seen as communication tasks, such as the creation of awareness or positive attitudes towards the organisation or product.

There are many situations, however, where the aim of a communications campaign is to enhance the image or reputation of an organisation or product. Sales are not regarded as the only goal. Consequently, promotional efforts are seen as communication tasks, such as the creation of awareness or positive attitudes towards the organisation or product. To facilitate this process, receivers have to be given relevant information before the appropriate decision processes can develop and purchase activities established as a long-run behaviour.

Various models have been developed to assist our understanding about how these promotional tasks are segregated and organised effectively. AIDA and other hierarchy of effects models are considered in Chapter 8 at some length and need not be repeated here. However, one particular model was developed deliberately to introduce clear objectives into the advertising development process: Dagmar.

Dagmar

Russell Colley (1961) developed a model for setting advertising objectives and measuring the results. This model was entitled 'Defining Advertising Goals for Measured Advertising Results – Dagmar'. Colley's rationale for what is effectively a means of setting communications-oriented objectives was that advertising's job, purely and simply, is to communicate to a defined audience information and a frame of mind that stimulates action. Advertising succeeds or fails depending on how well it communicates the desired information and attitudes to the right people at the right time and at the right cost.

Colley proposed that the communications task be based on a hierarchical model of the communications process: awareness – comprehension – conviction – action.

Table 11.1 Hierarchy of communications

Stage	Explanation
Awareness	Awareness of the existence of a product or brand is necessary before any purchase will be made.
Comprehension	Audiences need information and knowledge about the product and its specific attributes. Often the audience needs to be educated and shown either how to use the product or how changes (in attributes) might affect their use of the product.
Conviction	By developing beliefs that a product is superior to others in a category or can confer particular rewards through use, audiences can be convinced to trial the product at the next purchase opportunity.
Action	Potential buyers need help and encouragement to transfer thoughts into behaviour. Providing call-free numbers, Web site addresses, reply cards, coupons and sales people helps people act upon their convictions.

Source: Based on Colley (1961).

	Involvement	
	High	Low
High	Sustain current levels of awareness (deploy other elements of the promotional mix)	Refine awareness (inputs through the introduction of knowledge components)
Low	Build awareness quickly	Create association of awareness of product with product class need

Awareness (vertical axis label)

Figure 11.1   An awareness grid

Awareness

Awareness of the existence of a product or an organisation is necessary before purchase behaviour can be expected. Once awareness has been created in the target audience, it should not be neglected. If there is neglect, an audience may become distracted by competing messages and the level of awareness of the focus product or organisation may decline. Awareness, therefore, needs to be created, developed, refined or sustained, according to the characteristics of the market and the particular situation facing an organisation at any one point in time (see Figure 11.1).

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In situations where the buyer experiences high involvement and is fully aware of a product's existence, attention and awareness levels need only be sustained, and efforts need to be applied to other communication tasks, which may be best left to the other elements of the communications mix. For example, sales promotion and personal selling are more effective at informing, persuading and provoking purchase of a new car once advertising has created the necessary levels of awareness.

Where low levels of awareness are found, getting attention needs to be a prime objective so that awareness can be developed in the target audience. Where low involvement exists, the decision-making process is relatively straightforward. With levels of risk minimised, buyers with sufficient levels of awareness may be prompted into purchase with little assistance of the other elements of the mix. Recognition and recall of brand names and corporate images are felt by some (Rossiter and Percy, 1987) to be sufficient triggers to stimulate a behavioural response. The requirement in this situation would be to refine and strengthen the level of awareness in order that it provokes interest and stimulates a higher level of involvement during recall or recognition.

Where low levels of awareness are matched by low involvement, the prime objective has to be to create awareness of the focus product in association with the product class. It is not surprising that organisations use awareness campaigns and invest a large amount of their resources in establishing their brand or corporate name. Many brands seek to establish 'top of mind awareness' as one of their primary objectives for their advertising spend.

> Many brands seek to establish 'top of mind awareness' as one of their primary objectives.

Comprehension

Awareness on its own is, invariably, not enough to stimulate purchase activity. Knowledge about the product (or what the organisation does) is necessary, and this can be achieved by providing specific information about key brand attributes. These attributes and their associated benefits may be key to the buyers in the target audience or may be key because the product has been adapted or modified in some way. This means that the audience needs to be educated about the change and shown how their use of the product may be affected. For example, in attempting to persuade people to try a different brand of mineral water, it may be necessary to compare the product with other mineral water products and provide an additional usage benefit, such as environmental claims.

Conviction

Having established that a product has particular attributes that lead to benefits perceived by the target audience as important, it is then necessary to establish a sense of conviction. By creating interest and preference, buyers are moved to a position where they are convinced that one particular product in the class should be tried at the next opportunity. To do this, the audience's beliefs about the product need to be moulded, and this can be accomplished by using messages that demonstrate a product's superiority over its main rival or by emphasising the rewards conferred as a result of using the product, for example, the reward of social acceptance associated with many fragrance, fashion clothing and accessory advertisements, and the reward of self-gratification associated with many confectionery messages (Cadbury's Flake).

> Low-involvement decisions rely on the strength of advertising messages, packaging and sales promotion to secure conviction.

High-involvement decisions are best supported with personal selling and sales promotion activities, in an attempt to gain conviction. Low-involvement decisions rely on the strength of advertising messages, packaging and sales promotion to secure conviction.

Action

A communications programme is used to encourage buyers to engage in purchase activity. Advertising can be directive and guide buyers into certain behavioural outcomes, for example, to the use of free phone numbers (0800 in the United Kingdom), direct mail activities and reply cards and coupons. However, for high-involvement decisions the most effective tool in the communications mix at this stage in the hierarchy is personal selling. Through the use of interpersonal skills, buyers are more likely to want to buy a product than if the personal prompting is absent. The use of direct marketing activities by Avon Cosmetics, Tupperware, Betterware and suppliers of life assurance and double-glazing services has been instrumental in the sales growth experienced by organisations in these markets.

Colley's dissatisfaction with the way in which advertising agencies operated led him to specify the components of a good advertising objective: 'A specific communications task to be accomplished among a defined audience to a given degree in a given period of time' (Dutka, 1995). An analysis of this statement shows that it is made up of four distinct elements:

- a need to specify the communications task;
- a need to define the audience;
- a need to state the required degree of change;
- a need to establish the time period in which the activity is to occur.

Colley's statement is very clear – it is measurable and of assistance to copywriters. Indeed, Dagmar revolutionised the approach taken by advertisers to the setting of objectives. It helped to move attention from the sales effect to the communication effect school and has led to improved planning processes, as a result partly of a better understanding of advertising and promotional goals.

Many of the difficulties associated with sequential models, as presented in Chapter 8, are also applicable to Dagmar. In addition to problems of hierarchical progression, measurement

ViewPoint 11.2   Privileged communication objectives

The ambitious sales objectives set out previously in Viewpoint 11.1 for the relaunch of Privilege, could only be achieved through effective communications. The product itself was not subject to any radical change although the web site and the sales team were retrained. The success of the relaunch depended on communications and this required setting appropriate communication objectives and achieving a strong positioning in the market (the strategic element).

The first main goal was to make people aware of the brand and the second was to invoke a behavioural response and drive people to the web site to be converted into a sale. The awareness goal would not be cheap as at least nine brands in the market had already invested in excess of £10m per annum. RBS invested £22m over 18 months and although they were not the biggest investors, their sales increased 226 per cent and they doubled their market share inside two years.

(See Viewpoint 11.1.)

Source: Anon. (2006).

Question

To what extent do you think the awareness goal was more important than the behavioural goal?

Task

Find out the messages used by Privilege to achieve this result.

and costs are issues concerning the sales orientation, restrictions upon creativity and short-term accountability.

Sales orientation

This criticism is levelled by those who see sales as the only valid measure of effectiveness. The sole purpose of communication activities, and advertising in particular, is to generate sales. So, as the completion of communications tasks may not result in purchases, the only measure that need be undertaken is that of sales. This point has been discussed earlier and need not be reproduced here.

Restrictions upon creativity

Dagmar is criticised on the grounds that creative flair can be lost as attention passes from looking for the big idea to concentration on the numbers game, of focusing on measures of recall, attitude change and awareness. It is agreed that the creative personnel are held to be more accountable under Dagmar and this may well inhibit some of their work. Perhaps the benefits of providing direction and purpose offset the negative aspects of a slight loss in creativity.

Short-term accountability

To the above should be added the time period during which management and associated agencies are required to account for their performance. With accounting periods being reduced to as little as 12 weeks, the communications approach is impractical for two reasons. The first is that the period is not long enough for all of the communication tasks to be progressed or completed. Sales measures present a much more readily digestible benchmark of performance.

The second concerns the unit of performance itself. With the drive to be efficient and to be able to account for every communication pound spent, managers themselves need to use measures that they can understand and that they can interpret from published data. Sales data and communications spend data are consistent measures and make no further demands on managers. Managers do not have enough time to spend analysing levels of comprehension or preference and to convert them into formats that are going to be of direct benefit to them and

their organisations. Having said that, those organisations that are prepared to invest in a more advanced management information system will enable a more sophisticated view to be taken.

The approach adopted by the communication school is not universally accepted. Those who disagree, argue that it is too difficult and impractical to translate a sales objective into a series of specific communications objectives. Furthermore, what actually constitutes adequate levels of awareness and comprehension and how can it be determined which stage the majority of the target audience has reached at any one point in time? Details of measurement, therefore, throw a veil over the simplicity and precision of the approach taken by the communication orientation school.

> The approach adopted by the communication school is not universally accepted.

From a practical perspective, it should be appreciated that most successful marketing organisations do not see the sales and communications schools as mutually exclusive. They incorporate both views and weight them according to the needs of the current task, their overall experience, the culture and style of the organisation and the agencies with whom they operate.

Derivation of promotional objectives

It has been established that specific promotional objectives need to be set up if a suitable foundation is to be laid for the many communication decisions that follow. Promotional objectives are derived from understanding the overall context in which the communications will operate. Comprehending the contexts of the buyer and the organisation allows the objectives of the planned communications to be identified: the *what* that is to be achieved. For example, objectives concerning the perception that different target customers have of a brand, the perception that members of a performance network have of the organisation's offerings, the reactions of key stakeholders to previous communications and the requirements of the current marketing plan all impact upon the objectives of the communication plan. Therefore, promotional objectives evolve principally from a systematic audit and analysis of the key communication contexts, and specifically from the marketing plan and stakeholder analysis.

> Promotional objectives evolve principally from a systematic audit and analysis of the key communication contexts.

It was established earlier that there are three main streams of objectives. These are set out in Figure 11.2. The first concerns issues relating to the buyers of the product or service offered by the organisation. The second concerns issues relating to market share/sales volume,

Figure 11.2   The three elements of promotional goal setting

profitability and revenue. The third stream relates to the image, reputation and preferences that other stakeholders have towards the organisation.

All these objectives are derived from an analysis of the current situation. The marketing communication brief that flows from this analysis should specify the sales-related objectives to be achieved, as these can be determined from the marketing plan. Sales-related objectives might concern issues such as market share and sales volume.

Customer-related objectives concern issues such as awareness, perception, attitude, feelings and intentions towards a brand or product. The exact issue to be addressed in the plan is calculated by analysing the contextual information driven by the audit.

Issues related to the perception of the organisation are often left unattended or, worse, ignored. Research may indicate that the perception of particular stakeholders, in either the performance or the support network, does not complement the current level of corporate performance or may be misplaced or confused. Objectives will need to be established to correct or reinforce the perception held of the organisation. The degree of urgency may be directly related to the level of confusion or misunderstanding or be related to competitive or strategic actions initiated by competitors and other members of the network. Corporate strategy may have changed and, as identified earlier, any new strategy will need to be communicated to all stakeholders.

> Objectives will need to be established to correct or reinforce the perception held of the organisation.

The need for realism when setting promotional objectives

Hierarchy of effects models which specify stages of development were first proposed as far back as 1898 by E. St Elmo Lewis (Barry and Howard, 1990) and similar views were expressed by Colley (Dagmar) in 1961. Yet despite the passage of time since their publication, a large number of organisations still either fail to set any promotional objectives or confuse objectives with strategy. Organisations seeking to coordinate their communications need to recognise the necessity of setting multiple objectives at different times in the campaign period and of being prepared to adjust them in the light of environmental changes. These changes may be due to ever-decreasing product lifecycles or technological developments that may give a competitor comparative advantage, and perhaps legislative developments (or the timing of management's interpretation and implementation of certain legislation) may bring about a need to reconfigure the promotional mix.

Management's failure to set objectives is often the result of a lack of awareness of the current position, or a lack of understanding of how and why appropriate objectives need to be established. With increasingly competitive and turbulent environments, a greater number of organisations are turning their attention to ways in which they can communicate more effectively with their stakeholders. Furthermore, as more executives undertake management education programmes, so a higher level of skill is being transferred to organisations, and this in turn will bring a higher incidence of better practice.

The overall objective of any promotional programme is to increase the level of sales. While it seems unreasonable to expect the communication mix to bear total responsibility for this, it is also unreasonable and impractical to expect the communications approach to bear total responsibility. It is imperative that organisations are willing and prepared to set promotional objectives that utilise basic communications tasks, such as awareness and intentions, and that they utilise sales benchmarks as means of determining what has been achieved and how. Promotional objectives are a derivative of both marketing and corporate strategies. Just as revenue and income targets are part of marketing strategy, so they should form part of the

> Promotional objectives are a derivative of both marketing and corporate strategies.

promotional objectives. They cannot be separated and they cannot be neglected. Figure 11.2 shows the different types of objectives that can be set for a promotional strategy.

The choice depends on the situation facing each manager and, in particular, whether the product or organisation is new. Establishing and maintaining levels of awareness is, however, paramount to any communications programme, and must be considered one of the primary communication objectives.

ViewPoint 11.3   Norwich Union flood maps

Early in 2004, Norwich Union launched its flood maps, a digital method of gauging the flood danger to individual properties. This new system sought to replace the previous postcode approach to risk evaluation that failed to discriminate potential flood risk properties from high rise flats.

The launch of the new product aimed to achieve two different objectives. The first was communication-related and geared to raising awareness of the maps to property owners, especially in high-risk parts of the country. The second was sales-related as Norwich Union wanted to sell more property insurance policies.

Source: Various, including **www.environment.agency.gov.uk.**

Question

Was awareness raising alone a sufficient goal?

Task

Find a flood map for area. If your home is in a flood risk area, what other information would you like to know?

0.1% chance of flooding in any one year (1 in 1000yr)	Land at: Tewkesbury 15.07.08
1% chance of flooding in any one year (1 in 100yr)	
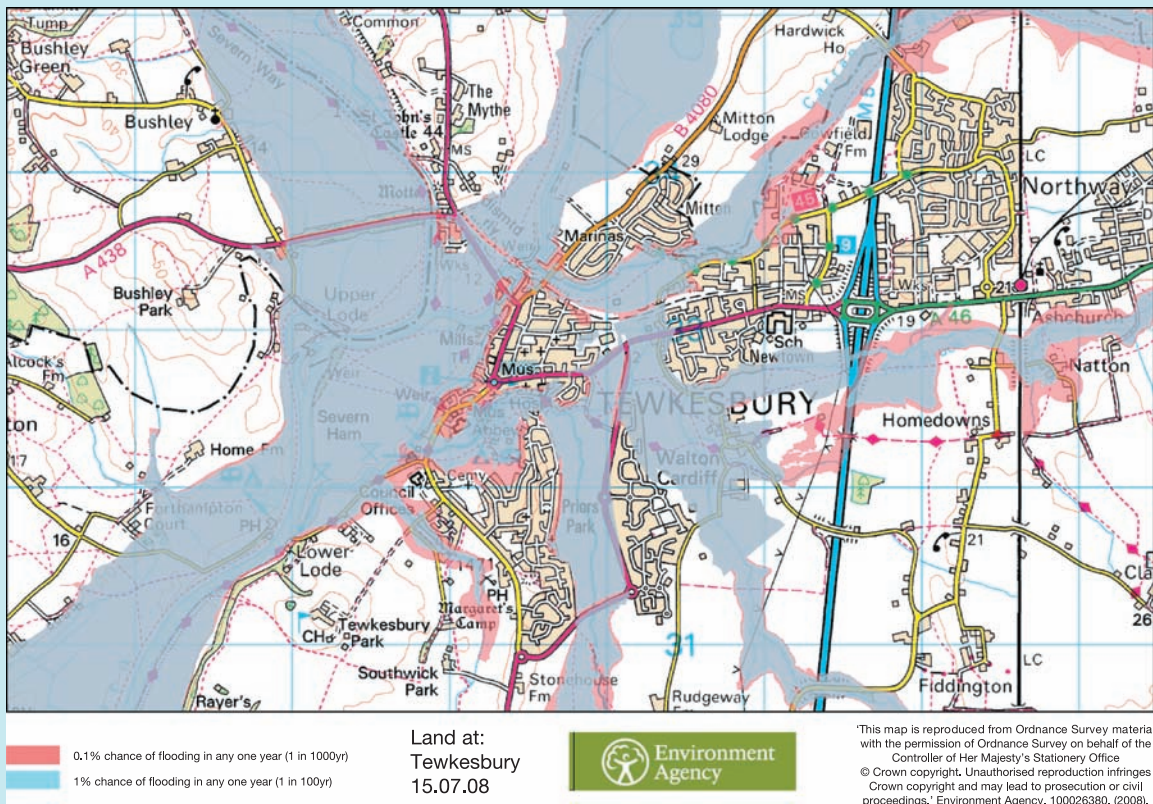
Exhibit 11.1   Flood map for the Tewkesbury area. Used functionally to inform people about potential flooding problems and to assist the selling of property insurance.

Promotional objectives need to be set that reflect the communication and sales tasks that the product or organisation needs to accomplish. It should be appreciated that promotional objectives are vitally important, as they provide the basis for a string of decisions that are to be taken at subsequent stages in the development of the communication plan.

Management's next task is to make decisions regarding which of these different promotional objectives will receive attention first. In order that decisions can be made regarding promotional strategy, the communications mix and the level of resources allocated to each promotional tool, it is necessary to rank and weight the objectives at this stage in the management process. The criteria used to weight the different objectives will inevitably be subjective, because they reflect each manager's perception, experience and interpretation of their environment. However, it is also their skill and judgement that are the important elements, and as long as the criteria are used and applied in a consistent manner the outcome of the communication plan is more likely to be successful.

SMART objectives

To assist managers in their need to develop suitable objectives, a set of guidelines has been developed, commonly referred to as SMART objectives. This acronym stands for specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, targeted and timed.

The process of making objectives SMART requires management to consider exactly what is to be achieved, when, where and with which audience. This clarifies thinking, sorts out the logic of the proposed activities and provides a clear measure for evaluation at the end of the campaign:

> The process of making objectives SMART requires management to consider exactly what is to be achieved, when, where and with which audience.

- *Specific*
  What is the actual variable that is to be influenced in the campaign? Is it awareness, perception, attitudes or some other element that is to be influenced? Whatever the variable, it must be clearly defined and must enable precise outcomes to be determined.
- *Measurable*
  Set a measure of activity against which performance can be assessed. For example, this may be a percentage level of desired prompted awareness in the target audience.
- *Achievable*
  Objectives need to be attainable, otherwise those responsible for their achievement will lack motivation and a desire to succeed.
- *Realistic*
  The actions must be founded in reality and be relevant to the brand and the context in which they are set.
- *Targeted and timed*
  Which target audience is the campaign targeted at, how precisely is the audience defined and over what period are the results to be generated?

Having determined what levels of awareness, comprehension or preference are necessary or how attitudes need to be developed, the establishment or positioning of these objectives as a task for the organisation to accomplish should be seen as a primary communication objective. The attitude held or what individuals in the target market perceive, comprehend or prefer is a focus for campaign activity and subsequent evaluation.

An introduction to positioning

The final act in the target marketing process of segmentation and targeting is positioning. Following on from the identification of potential markets, determining the size and potential of market segments and selecting specific target markets, positioning is the process whereby information about the organisation or product is communicated in such a way that the object is perceived by the consumer/stakeholder to be differentiated from the competition, to occupy a particular space in the market. According to Kotler (2003), 'Positioning is the act of designing the company's offering and image so that they occupy a meaningful and distinct competitive position in the target customers' minds.'

> Positioning is not about the product but what the buyer thinks about the product or organisation.

This is an important aspect of the positioning concept. Positioning is not about the product but what the buyer thinks about the product or organisation. It is not the physical nature of the product that is important for positioning, but how the product is perceived that matters. This is why part of the context analysis (Chapter 10), requires a consideration of perception and attitudes and the way stakeholders see and regard brands and organisations. Of course, this may not be the same as the way brand managers intend their brands to be seen or how they believe the brand is perceived.

ViewPoint 11.4   Now, please adjust your clothing

Asda has used the George brand of clothing for several years but after a period of relatively slow growth decided that the market it was currently serving did not offer the long-term growth it was seeking. At the time it competed against Primark and TK Maxx in what is referred to as the discount market. A new strategy was developed to enable it to compete against M&S and Next among others in the mid market sector. This required that the George brand be repositioned. This was necessary in order that the target market perceived and understood what the George brand presents and what the brand promise is.

In order to reposition the brand successfully, changes are necessary in order that the range of clothes offered match the needs of the target market, in terms of style, quality and price. So, as a first step Asda had to adjust the brand architecture (see Chapter 12). The George brand itself, positioned for the 25- to 45-year-old market, and G21, positioned for consumers aged 25 and under, remained. However, Asda replaced the Collections, Fast Fashion and the Must Haves sub-brands, aimed at fashion-conscious young shoppers. In their place they introduced two new sub-brands: Boston Crew for men, which was already in the Asda portfolio, and Moda aimed at women. Both of these labels are positioned to attract the over-45s.

Thus, once the right brand structure is in place the brands can be communicated. At the time of writing Asda used Coleen McLoughlin as the face of the brand but this celebrity may not fit the mid-market position Asda are aiming for, and to compete with Twiggy, who fronts the M&S brand, someone who appeals to the new segment may be required. In order to compete against its new competitors Asda will need (with their agencies) to detemine a message strategy that will add value to the George brand and thereby motivate shoppers to try the brand because they percieve that it offers them something better than its immediate competitors.

Source: Bokaie (2008).

Question

Why is it necessary to organise the brand architecture when positioning a brand?

Task

Who would you chose to front the new Asda brand and help its repositioning?

This audience orientation is emphasised by Blankstson and Kalafatis (2007). They considered the positioning strategies of several leading credit card providers from three perspectives. These were the banks' executives, the positioning strategies that were implemented, and finally but most importantly, the perception of the target audiences of the positioning strategies. In the words of the researchers; presumed practice, actual practice and perceived practice. One of the outcomes of their work was the need to manage the potential gulf that may occur when the presumed and actual positioning strategies drift away from the way audiences actually perceive the brand.

In the consumer market, established brands from washing powders (Ariel, Daz, Persil) and hair shampoos (such as Wash & Go, Timotei), to cars (for example, Peugeot, Saab, Nissan) and grocery multiples (Sainsbury's, Tesco) each carrys communications that enable receivers to position them in their respective markets.

The positioning concept is not the sole preserve of branded or consumer-oriented offerings or indeed those of the business-to-business market. Organisations are also positioned relative to one another, mainly as a consequence of their corporate identities, whether they are deliberately managed or not. The position an organisation takes in the mind of consumers may be the only means of differentiating one product from another. King (1991) argues that, given the advancement in technology and the high level of physical and functional similarity of products in the same class, consumers' choices will be more focused on their assessment of the company they are dealing with. Therefore, it is important to position organisations as brands in the minds of actual and potential customers.

> The position an organisation takes in the mind of consumers may be the only means of differentiating one product from another.

One of the crucial differences between the product and the corporate brand is that the corporate brand needs to be communicated to a large array of stakeholders, whereas the product-based brand requires a focus on a smaller range of stakeholders, in particular, the consumers and buyers in the performance network.

Whatever the position chosen, either deliberately or accidentally, it is the means by which customers understand the brand's market position, and it often provides signals to determine a brand's main competitors, or (as is often the case) customers fail to understand the brand or are confused about what the brand stands for.

The development of the positioning concept

This perspective was originally proposed by Ries and Trout (1972). They claimed that it is not what you do to a product that matters; it is what you do to the mind of the prospect that is important. They set out three stages of development: the product era, the image era and the positioning era.

The product era occurred in the late 1950s and early 1960s and existed when each product was promoted in an environment where there was little competition. Each product was accepted as an innovation and was readily accepted and adopted as a natural development. In the pharmaceutical market, drugs such as Navidex, Valium and Lasix became established partly because of the lack of competition and partly because of the ability of the product to fulfil its claims. This was a period when the features and benefits of products were used in communications – the unique selling proposition was of paramount importance.

The image era that followed was spawned by companies with established images, which introduced new me-too products against the original brands. It was the strength of the perceived company image that underpinned the communications surrounding these new brands that was so important to their success. Products such as Amoxil, Tagamet and Tenormin were launched on an image platform.

The positioning era has developed mainly because of the increasingly competitive market conditions, where there is now little compositional, material or even structural difference

between products within each class. Consequently, most products are now perceived relative to each other. In most markets the level and intensity of 'noise' drives organisations to establish themselves and their offerings in particular parts of the overall market. It is now the ability of an offering to command the attention of buyers and to communicate information about how an offering is differentiated from the other competitive offerings that helps to signal the relative position the offering occupies in the market.

The positioning concept

From the research data and the marketing strategy, it is necessary to formulate a positioning statement that is in tune with the promotional objectives.

> Clear, consistent positioning is an important aspect of integrated marketing communication.

One of the roles of marketing communications is to convey information so that the target audience can understand what a brand stands for and differentiate it from other competing brands. Clear, consistent positioning is an important aspect of integrated marketing communication. So the way in which a brand is presented to its audience influences the way it is going to be perceived. Therefore, accepting that there are extraneous reasons why the perception of a brand might not be the same as that intended, it seems important that managers approach the positioning task in an attentive and considered manner. Coke Zero was originally positioned as a male-oriented brand, whereas Diet Coke targeted women. 'Girls Aloud' singer Cheryl Tweedy was used to front the launch of Coke Zero while footballer Wayne Rooney acted as brand ambassador. Unsurprisingly Coke Zero quickly became dubbed Bloke Coke. However, this was changed in 2008 and the brand was repositioned on its benefits (Bokaie, 2007).

Generally there are two main ways in which a brand can be positioned, these are functional and expressive (or symbolic) positioning. Functionally positioned brands stress the features and benefits, and expressive brands emphasise the ego, social and hedonic satisfactions that a

> Functionally positioned brands stress the features and benefits, expressive brands emphasise the ego, social and hedonic satisfactions.

brand can bring. Both approaches make a promise, a promise to deliver a whiter, cleaner and brighter soap powder (functional) or clothes that we are confident to hang on the washing line (for all to see), dress our children in and send to school and not feel guilty, or dress ourselves in and complete a major business deal (symbolic).

ViewPoint 11.5   Functional positioning: stuck, not nailed

Marketing communications in the consumer and trade adhesives market places heavy reliance on demonstrating the performance of the individual brands. Solvite, for example, presents a man glued to a board and suspended in dangerous situations (above sharks, towed into the sky and at a theme park on a 'vertical drop ride'). Another brand, 'No More Nails', uses a similar functional approach. One execution shows a man sitting on a chair that has been glued half-way up a wall inside a house (see Exhibit 11.2).

Adhesives provoke low-involvement decision-making and there is generally little consumer interest in the properties of each brand. The essential information that consumers require is that the brand has strong performance characteristics. This sets up umbrella brand credibility so that sub-brands for different types of glue are perceived to have the same properties as the umbrella brand and that will do the 'job'.

Advertising should use drama in order to attract attention and to build up a store of images that enable people to recall a brand of adhesives that actually do stick.

Exhibit 11.2   A still from a TV ad promoting the strength of the adhesive 'No More Nails'

Question

Is it important to stress one key attribute or should several be presented in a brand's communications?

Task

Find a competitor brand to 'Solvite' and 'No More Nails'. How do they position themselves?

ViewPoint 11.6   **Expressive positioning: croaked**

Anheuser-Busch is one of the three top brewers in the United States and all of them were experiencing declining sales. One of the reasons for this decline was that consumers in the 21–27-year age rage preferred more specialist beers produced by smaller breweries.

Anheuser-Busch was a traditional brewer and sought to reverse the decline using its flagship brand, Budweiser. Its agency, with whom it had worked for 79 years, D'Arcy, Masius, Benton, & Bowles, had used campaigns featuring scantily dressed women and blue-collar workers. While the formula had limited

success and was used by all three competitors, the approach had drawn complaints from different stakeholders. Anheuser-Busch wanted a big change and started by firing the agency.

In order to re-establish itself with core consumers the new agency, DDB Needham develop an idea based on hawking frogs. The Budweiser 'Frogs' campaign was introduced at the 1995 Super Bowl with the amphibians on lily pads. They croaked to each other, at first it was indistinguishable but then three words emerged . . . Bud . . . Weis . . . Er. A neon Budweiser sign reinforced the brand name but this constituted the entire message. Subsequent campaigns based on the amphibian theme were introduced including a lady frog and eventually lizards.

The campaign was an instant success as the ads provided entertainment especially as they were laced with irony. The sexist labels attached to its previous campaigns stopped and the buzz and publicity surrounding the Frogs was enormous. Far from functional this campaign demonstrated how beer could be communicated expressively, and in doing so reverse the sales decline. The Frogs campaign was eventually withdrawn. Some believe this was partly because school children began to believe there was an association between frogs and beer.

Sources: Lane (2007), www.galegroup.com.

Question

Is expressive positioning always going to offend or threaten a group?

Task

Find an expressive positioning campaign of your choice. What do you like about it and does it work?

Managing positions

The development and establishment of a position is a core strategic marketing communications activity. Positioning is one of two dynamics considered within communications strategy, considered previously in Chapter 10. The first dynamic is concerned with who, in broad terms, is the target audience? End-user customers need to derive particular benefits based on perceived value, from the exchange process. These benefits are very different from those that intermediaries expect to derive, or indeed any other stakeholder who does not consume the product or service. The second dynamic concerns the way in which an audience understands the offering they are experiencing either through use or through communications. The way in which people interpret messages and frame objects in their mind is concerned with positioning. Therefore, positioning is an integral part of marketing communications strategy.

In order that suitable positions be set, managers wishing to develop a position can be guided by the following process:

1. Determine the positions held by competitors? This will almost certainly require research to determine attitudes and perceptions and possibly the key attributes that consumers perceive as important. Use perceptual mapping.
2. From the above, will it be possible to determine which position, if any, is already held by the focus brand.
3. From the information gathered so far, will it be possible to determine a positioning strategy, that is, what is the desired position for the brand?
4. Is the strategy feasible in view of the competitors and any budgetary constraints? A long-term perspective is required, as the selected position has to be sustained.
5. Implement a programme to establish the desired position.
6. Monitor the perception held by consumers of the brand, and of their changing tastes and requirements, on a regular basis.
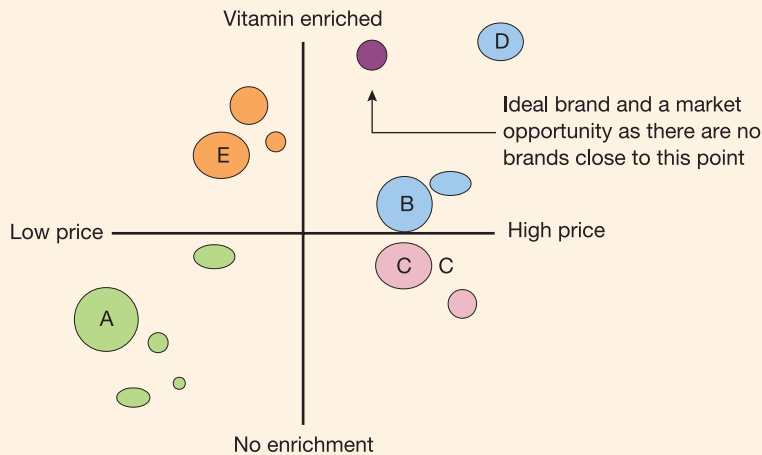
Figure 11.3 A perceptual map for a shampoo market

Perceptual mapping

In order to determine how the various offerings are perceived in a market, the key attributes that stakeholders use to perceive products in the market need to be established. A great deal of this work will have been completed as part of the research and review process prior to developing a communications plan. The next task is to determine perceptions and preferences in respect of the key attributes as perceived by buyers.

The objective of the exercise is to produce a perceptual map (brand and multidimensional maps) where the dimensions used on the two axes are the key attributes, as seen by buyers. This map represents a geometric comparison of how competing products are perceived (Sinclair and Stalling, 1990). Figure 11.3 shows that the key dimensions for consumers in the shampoo market could be price and enrichment. Each product is positioned on the map according to the perception that buyers have of the strength of each attribute of each product. By plotting the perceived positions of each brand on the map, an overall perspective of the market can be developed.

> Each product is positioned on the map according to the perception that buyers have of the strength of each attribute.

The closer products are clustered together, the greater the competition. The further apart the positions, the greater the opportunity to enter the market, as competition is less intense. From the map, it can be seen that brand A dominates the bottom left-hand sector where a low price and little enrichment have attracted a number of buyers and competitive brands. Brands B and C are in direct competition, positioned closely together on a fairly high price yet medium level of enrichment. Brand D is isolated and may need to be repositioned as it may start losing share to a competitor, especially if the ideal position is occupied by B or any of the brands clustered around brand E.

Substitute products are often uncovered by their closeness to each other (Day *et al.*, 1979). It is also possible to ask buyers and other stakeholders what an ideal brand would consist of. This perfect brand can then be positioned on the map, and the closer an offering is to the ideal point, the greater its market share should be, as it is preferred over its rivals. These maps are known as preference maps.

By superimposing the position of an ideal brand on the map, it is possible to extend the usefulness of the tool. Perceptions of what constitutes the right amount of each key attribute can assist management in the positioning exercise. Marketing communications can, therefore, be designed to convey the required information about each attribute and so adjust buyers'

perceptions so that they are closer to the ideal position, or to the position on the map that management wants the brand to occupy. For example, brand C may wish to reposition by changing the perception that users have of the quality of the shampoo. Following any necessary adjustments to the product, marketing communications would emphasise the enrichment attribute and hope to move it away from any association with brand B.

Neal (1980) offered the following reasons why perceptual mapping is such a powerful tool for examining the position of products:

1. It develops understanding of how the relative strengths and weaknesses of different products are perceived by buyers.
2. It builds knowledge about the similarities and dissimilarities between competing products.
3. It assists the process of repositioning existing products and the positioning of new products.
4. The technique helps to track the perception that buyers have of a particular product, and assists the measurement of the effectiveness of communication programmes and marketing actions intended to change buyers' perceptions.

> Promotional strategy enables brand managers to identify gaps and opportunities in the market and allows organisations to monitor the effects of past marketing communications.

Perceptual mapping is an important tool in the development and tracking of promotional strategy. It enables brand managers to identify gaps and opportunities in the market and allows organisations to monitor the effects of past marketing communications. For example, in the early 1980s, none of the available brands in the newly emerging lager market was seen as refreshing. All brands were perceived as virtually the same. Heineken saw the opportunity and seized the position for refreshment, and has been able to occupy and sustain the position ever since.

Positioning strategies

The development of positions that buyers can relate to and understand is an important and vital part of the marketing communications plan. In essence, the position adopted is a statement about what the brand is, what it stands for and the values and beliefs that customers (hopefully) will come to associate with the particular brand. The visual images or the position statement represented in the strapline may be a significant trigger that buyers use to recall images and associations of the brand.

There are a number of overall approaches to developing a position. These can be based on factors such as the market, the customer or redefining the appeal of the brand itself (see Table 11.2).

To implement these three broad approaches, various strategies have been developed. The list that follows is not intended to be comprehensive or to convey the opinion that these strategies are discrete. They are presented here as means of conveying the strategic style, but in reality a number of hybrid strategies are often used.

Product features

This is one of the easier concepts and one that is more commonly adopted. The brand is set apart from the competition on the basis of the attributes, features or benefits that the brand has relative to the competition. For example, Volvos are safe; Weetabix contains all the vitamins needed each day; and the Royal Bank of Scotland promotes its credit card by extolling the benefits of its interest rate compared with those of its competitors.

Price/quality

This strategy is more effectively managed than others because price itself can be a strong communicator of quality. A high price denotes high quality, just as a low price can deceive buyers

Table 11.2   Positioning approaches

Approach	Type of application

Market-related	*First into a market*
	    Heineken was first to take the refreshment position
	Redefine the market
	    Carlsberg claims to be 'Probably the best beer in the world'
	    British Airways as 'The way to fly'
	    Miller Lite said the *lite* meant not heavy; not low alcohol
	Importance/leadership claim
	    H. Samuel claims to be 'The nation's favourite jeweller'

Customer-related	*A unique buying reason*
	    Ronseal, because 'It does exactly what it says on the tin'
	Particular type of buyer
	    Glenfiddich: 'Independently minded. Independently made'

Appeal-related	*Distinct personality*
	    Pepperami became a crazy/mad 'bit of an animal'
	Decision criteria
	    Virgin Upper Class was presented as a sensible, rational business decision,
	    not a whim or a risk
	Imaginative or interesting
	    Castrol made oil into liquid engineering
	    Dyson, because it uses cyclone technology

into thinking a product to be of low quality and poor value. Retail outlets such as Harrods and Aspreys use high prices to signal high quality and exclusivity. At the other end of the retail spectrum, Matalan, BHS and Woolworth's position themselves to attract those with less disposable income and to whom convenience is of greater importance. The price/quality appeal used to be best observed in Sainsbury's, 'where good food costs less' before it was changed and with the alcoholic lager Stella Artois, which was positioned as 'refreshingly expensive'.

Exhibit 11.3 shows a series of print ads which depict the various stages involved in pouring the perfect glass of Stella Artois. The art of pouring, presenting and serving Stella Artois in the right way, enables the colour, aroma and flavour of each beer to be fully appreciated, in much the same way as the French appreciate their wine. These ads are intended to enhance the perception of the overall drinking experience and to help position the brand as a premium quality beer. One of the outcomes of this positioning has been the development of various 'pouring competitions', not only in Belgium where the brand is brewed, but also as far away as New Zealand.

Use

By informing markets of when or how a product can be used, a position can be created in the minds of the buyers. For example, Kellogg's, the breakfast cereal manufacturer, has repositioned itself as a snack food provider. Its marketing strategy of moving into new markets was founded on its over dependence on breakfast consumption. By becoming associated with snacks, not only is usage increased, but the opportunity to develop new products becomes feasible. The launch of Pop Tarts is a testimony to this strategy. Milky Way, 'the sweet you can eat between meals', informs just when it is permissible to eat chocolate and After Eight chocolate mints clearly indicate when they should be eaten. The hair shampoo Wash & Go positions the brand as a quick and easy to use (convenience) product, for those whose lifestyles are full and demanding.

Product class dissociation

Some markets are essentially uninteresting, and most other positions have been adopted by competitors. A strategy used by margarine manufacturers is to disassociate themselves from other margarines and associate themselves with what was commonly regarded as a superior product, butter. The moisturising bar Dove is positioned as 'not a soap'. The UK-based bank, NatWest, position themselves with the strapline, 'Another way', which suggests that their

Exhibit 11.4 Nat West – Another Way
Reproduced with permission of National Westminster Bank Plc © 2006.

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> The position sets out to promise customers that they are different from other banks.

approach is different from their competitors. The foundation for their claim is based on their prominent use of local branches and use of UK-based call centres. This is to counteract the threat of Internet banking and the perception of poor quality that many international call-centres receive. The position therefore sets out to promise customers that they are different from other banks and offer better services and customer care.

User

A sensible extension of the target marketing process is to position openly so that target users can be clearly identified. Flora margarine was for men, and then it became 'for all the family'. American Express uses several leading celebrities, including Sir Terence Conran, Beyonce, and Jose Mouriniho, to suggest that users can have a lifestyle profile that complements those who use and endorse the Amex card. Some hotels position themselves as places for weekend breaks, as leisure centres or as conference centres. The cookware brand Le Creuset repositioned itself to appeal to a younger customer segment.

Exhibit 11.5 Jose Mourinho endorsing American Express
Image courtesy of The Advertising Archives.

Competitor

For a long time, positioning oneself against a main competitor was regarded as dangerous and was avoided. Avis, however, performed very successfully 'trying even harder' against Hertz, the industry number one. Saab contested the 'safest car' position with Volvo and Qualcast took on its new rival, the hover mower, by informing everyone that 'it is a lot less bovver than a hover', because its product collected the grass cuttings and produced the manicured lawn finish that roller-less mowers cannot reproduce.

Benefit

Positions can also be established by proclaiming the benefits that usage confers on those who consume. Sensodyne toothpaste appeals to all those who suffer from sensitive teeth, and a vast number of pain relief formulations claim to smooth away headaches or relieve aching limbs, sore throats or some offending part of the anatomy. Daewoo entered the UK market offering car buyers convenience by removing dealerships and the inherent difficulties associated with buying and maintaining cars.

Heritage or cultural symbol

An appeal to cultural heritage and tradition, symbolised by age, particular heraldic devices or visual cues, has been used by many organisations to convey quality, experience and knowledge. Kronenbourg 1664, 'Established since 1803', and the use of coats of arms by many universities to represent depth of experience and a sense of permanence are just some of the historical themes used to position organisations.

Whatever the position adopted by a brand or organisation, both the marketing and communication mixes must endorse and support the position so that there is consistency throughout all communications. For example, if a high-quality position is taken, such as that of the Ritz Carlton Hotel Group, then the product quality must be relatively high compared with competitors, the price must be correspondingly excessive and distribution synonymous with quality and exclusivity. Sales promotion activity will be minimal in order not to convey a touch of inexpensiveness, and advertising messages should be visually affluent and rich in tone and copy, with public relations and personal selling approaches transmitting high-quality, complementary cues.

> Both the marketing and communication mixes must endorse and support the position.

The dimensions used to position brands must be relevant and important to the target audience and in the image cues used must be believable and consistently credible. Positioning strategies should be developed over the long term if they are to prove effective, although minor adaptions to the position can be carried out in order to reflect changing environmental conditions.

> The dimensions used to position brands must be relevant and important to the target audience.

Repositioning

Technology is developing quickly, consumer tastes evolve and new offerings and substitute products enter the market. This dynamic perspective of markets means that the relative positions occupied by offerings in the minds of consumers will be challenged and shifted on a frequent basis. If the position adopted by an offering is strong, if it was the first to claim the position and the position is being continually reinforced with clear simple messages, then there may be little need to alter the position originally adopted.

However, there are occasions when offerings need to be repositioned in the minds of consumers/stakeholders. This may be due to market opportunities and development, mergers and acquisitions or changing buyer preferences, which may be manifested in declining sales. Research may reveal that the current position is either inappropriate or superseded by a competitor, or that attitudes have changed or preferences surpassed; whatever the reason, repositioning is required if past success is to be maintained. However, repositioning is difficult to accomplish, often because of the entrenched perceptions and attitudes held by buyers towards brands and the vast (media) resources required to make the changes.

ViewPoint 11.7   It's not golf, it's a community

The World Golf Village is a residential and retail resort development in Florida. As the name suggests it is built on and around a golf course complex. Indeed, it was created by the 'PGA Tour' to be a base for the World Golf Hall of Fame.

Unfortunately, the project failed to get going and soon investors and prospects began to reduce their commitment, negative comments emerged in the press and soon a perception of the village as a ghost town were heard among stakeholders.

▶

The real problem was that the original scheme had been overly ambitious with regard to purchase rates and village attendance. The complex was positioned as a golf only male-oriented domain. The quality of the homes themselves were not in doubt but negative perceptions and images of the community did not entice people to want to buy into the village ambiance. Even the brokers and press perpetuated this negative perception.

To rescue the project a repositioning strategy for the village was developed. However, instead of targeting male golfers the campaign was targeted at women, known to be the decision-makers when selecting communities. The focus was on promoting a premium, yet well-rounded community of people of all ages, including families, not just empty nesters. The village was presented as fashionable, stylish and aspirational. Rather than push the functionality of golf, an emotional personality position was adopted.

Since the repositioning strategy was implemented sales grew for the next two years. The number of people enquiring (traffic) about the community grew by 11 per cent, while all other indices became positive and attitudes to the community and its facilities improved enormously.

Source: New York American Marketing Association Effie Awards 2005. www.nyama.org.

Question

Should repositioning only be undertaken when things go wrong?

Task

Find an example of another brand that has been successfully repositioned.

Jewell (2007) draws attention to the need to consider repositioning from a customer's perspective, something neglected in the literature. He also shows that two key tasks need to be accomplished during a repositioning exercise. First, the old positioning needs to be suppressed so that customers no longer relate to it and second, consumers need to learn the new position. These twin tasks are complementary, as interference or rather the deliberate weakening of the old position will help strengthen acceptance of the new position.

Green & Black's, the UK's fastest-growing confectionery brand, launched a £1.2m national advertising campaign – 'Green & Black's . . . it deserves a little respect' as part of its programme to consolidate its repositioning from an organic to luxury chocolate brand and as a result almost trebled its value in two years.

The Defence Establishment and Research Agency (DERA) was required to change its name when it ceased being a government-owned organisation and was privatised. The name QinetiQ represented a radical change of name but it needed to reflect its new position in a new commercial market.

Summary

In order to help consolidate your understanding about the role of objectives and positioning within marketing communications, here are the key points summarised against each of the learning objectives:

1. Examine the need for organisational objectives.

Objectives play an important role in the activities of individuals, social groups and organisations for a variety of reasons. These include providing direction and an action focus for all those participating in the activity, a means by which the variety of decisions relating to an

activity can be made in a consistent way, and they set out the time period in which the activity is to be completed. In addition, they communicate the values and scope of the activity to all participants and finally, they provide a means by which the success of the activity can be evaluated.

2. Specify the different types of organisational goals.

The use of objectives in the management process is clearly vital if the organisation's desired outcomes are to be achieved. Each of the objectives, at corporate, unit and functional levels, contributes to the formulation of the promotional objectives. They are all interlinked, inter-dependent, multiple and often conflicting.

3. Examine the relationship between corporate strategy and promotional objectives.

The various organisational objectives are of little use if they are not communicated to those who need to know what they are. Traditionally, such communication has focused on employees, but there is increasing recognition that the other members of the stakeholder network need to understand an organisation's purpose and objectives.

The major task for communication objectives is twofold: first, to contribute to the overall direction of the organisation by fulfilling the communication requirements of the marketing mix; second, to communicate the corporate thrust and values to various stakeholders so that they understand the organisation, can respond to its intentions and help develop appropriate relationships.

4. Determine the components of SMART-determined promotional objectives.

Promotional objectives are derived from an initial review of the current situation and the marketing plan requirements. They are not a replication of the marketing objectives but a distillation of the research activities that have been undertaken subsequently.

There are three main streams of objectives. The first concerns issues relating to the buyers of the product or service offered by the organisation. The second concerns issues relating to market share/sales volume, profitability and revenue. The third stream relates to the image, reputation and preferences that other stakeholders have towards the organisation.

To assist managers in their need to develop suitable objectives, a set of guidelines has been developed, commonly referred to as SMART objectives. This acronym stands for specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, targeted and timed.

5. Examine the differences between sales- and communication-based objectives.

Promotional objectives consist of two main elements: sales-oriented and communication-oriented. A balance between the two will be determined by the situation facing the organisation, but can be a mixture of both product and corporate tasks. These objectives, once quantified, need to be ranked and weighted in order that other components of the plan can be developed.

6. Evaluate the concept of positioning.

The position adopted is a statement about what the brand is, what it stands for and the values and beliefs that customers (hopefully) will come to associate with the particular brand. Visual and text/copy images or the position statement represented in a strapline may be a significant trigger that buyers use to recall images and associations of the brand.

There are two main ways in which a brand can be positioned, these are functional and expressive (or symbolic) positioning. Functionally positioned brands stress the features and benefits, and expressive brands emphasise the ego, social and hedonic satisfactions that a brand can bring.

7. Understand the importance of perceptual mapping.

A perceptual map represents a geometric comparison of how competing products are perceived by customers, based on important attributes. Each product is positioned on the map according to the perception that buyers have of the strength of each attribute of each product. By plotting the perceived positions of each brand on the map, an overall perspective of the market can be developed and strategies formed to develop clearer, more rewarding positions.

8. Explain the main types of positioning strategies.

There are a number of overall approaches that can be used to develop a position. These can be based on factors such as the market, the customer or redefining the appeal of the brand itself. To implement these three broad approaches, various strategies have been developed. These include product features, price/quality, use, product class dissociation, user, competitor, benefit and heritage or use of cultural symbols.

Review questions

1. Why do organisations use objectives as part of their planning processes?
2. What should a mission statement clearly identify?
3. Suggest three reasons why the setting of promotional objectives is important.
4. Write a brief report arguing the case both for and against the use of an increase in sales as the major objective of all promotional activities.
5. Repeat the exercise as for the previous question but this time focus on communication-based objectives.
6. How and from where are promotional objectives derived?
7. Why is positioning an important part of marketing communications?
8. What is perceptual mapping?
9. Select four print advertisements for the same product category and comment on the positions they have adopted.
10. What are the main positioning strategies?

MiniCase Unlocking the secrets of the male shopper

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Men have been a marketing afterthought for more than a century. Starting in the late 1800s, when *Good Housekeeping* and *Cosmopolitan* began teaching generations of women how to be Type A wives and mothers, brand managers painted a giant bull's-eye on the female consumer. They have taken relentless aim ever since. 'He makes. She buys.' That's the calculation that turned women into shoppers and men into providers. (Byrne, 2006).

All this began to change following the Second World War, and has quickened apace in the last 30 years. Men are now actively forced/encouraged into a way of being in which they too have become increasingly objectified, measured through their own practices of consumption: by what they wear; their body image; their material possessions etc. This can be seen through the emergence and spread of men's magazines, High Street stores and forms of popular entertainment that encourage men to take greater

interest in their appearance, to adopt consumption-led lifestyles.

The importance of men as (a market of) consumers has been marked by numerous attempts at classification and careful targeting by marketers. A recent issue of *Business Week* (4 September 2006) ran with the cover story 'Secrets of the Male Shopper' in which Nanette Byrne attempted to categorise male shopping habits into five distinct groups, based on a range of shared traits, attitudes and consuming behaviours. The first, the 'Metrosexual', who might be conceived of as the successor to the 1980s yuppie, is the quintessential 'feminised' male consumer. For him, consumption is all about style and the completion of self through designer brands and services. Against this she situates the 'Retrosexual', rejecting all things feminine, and reasserting a notion of masculinity through consumption of alcohol, sports (viewing) and junk food. There is also 'Modern Man', called by others 'New Man', who sits at something of a halfway point between the metro- and retrosexual. He has a vested interest in his appearance but does not subscribe to some of the vanity practices of the metrosexual: 'Moisturizer and hair gel are perfectly ordinary to him; a manicure is a tougher call' (Byrne, 2006). Then there is the 'Maturiteen' – the current cohort of teenagers – far more sophisticated in their consumption habits than previous teen generations and, thanks to their literacy with the Internet and other forms of telecommunications, far more influential over family decision-making than their predecessors. Finally, there is the 'Dad', for the most part something of a marketing undesirable but with new-found interest in fatherhood, increasingly the target of marketing communications. Byrne cites the example of the Bugaboo baby stroller, with its black and chrome frame, front and rear suspension and off-road wheels, as indicative of the targeted offerings now made towards such men.

Despite differences among these trait-based typologies, these men share a number of consuming habits. Perhaps one of the most significant of these is the increased attention paid to physical appearance. Most notably this occurs in relation to increased care and attention paid to one's body in terms of grooming, body modification and in the selection of clothing and accessories (of course, through these processes and practices, such body routines become 'masculinised'; that is to say, they become legitimate forms of masculine behaviour).

This changing attitude towards and among men has resulted in the rapid growth of a range of 'self-presentation' industries including fashion, cosmetic surgery and, markedly, in the market for men's grooming products, which was estimated to be worth more than £780 million in 2006. This market is now saturated with offerings all vying for a slice of this lucrative pie. Reflecting prevailing trends in the female grooming markets, many of the competitors in this industry position and communicate their brands using common (masculine) themes, such as use of sex appeal (especially at the higher end of the market), aspirational celebratory endorsers (such as Gillette's use, since 2004, of David Beckham), and, in the packaging of their goods, through the use of masculine colours and materials such as strong blues, black, red and brushed steel or silver. This makes for a cramped and, at times, undifferentiated drugstore shelf.

However, against this trend a number of competitors, recognising that not all men are alike, have started to move away from such standardised positioning in order to reflect the increasingly fragmented male audience. Lynx, for example, has focused on the social benefits of its brand. By combining sex with humour, campaigns over the last few years, such as the highly successful 'Pulse' campaign have sought to almost parody the communications activities of more exclusive brands. The Pulse ad demonstrated that even a 'nerdy' guy, with little going for him, can ooze sex appeal and get the girls, thanks to the 'Lynx effect'! The tongue-in-cheek ad, which sought to break down some of the established norms of communicating in this industry, not only proved a commercial success but also spawned a new dance craze and saw the track 'Make Luv', which was used in the ad, re-enter the singles chart at number one. The spread of the ad into popular culture was invaluable in helping to reposition a brand that had come to be associated, primarily, with the declining 'lad' culture of the 1990s.

Elsewhere, 'King of Shaves' has attempted to sidestep many of the brands that adopt a more aspirational appeal by focusing on the functional (or technical) value of the brand. Playing on male traits that turn around the control and mastery of technology it deploys overt masculine language in its branding such as in the use of the slogan: 'The World's Best shaving and skincare "software"'. It offers brands such as the XCD Defender, where XCD stands for 'Enhance', 'Camouflage', 'Defend' and also offers a web site offering 'expert' shaving tips and techniques.

A new entrant, Bulldog, launched in 2007, perhaps going after the 'Modern Man' or 'Dad's offers a range of grooming products using all natural ingredients but

at supermarket prices. As noted in a recent edition of *Marketing Week*:

> They decided that they would not pitch their brand at an exclusive, niche market but instead aim Bulldog at mainstream consumers, giving them, they claim, a natural choice at a reasonable price for the first time. They gave the brand a strong masculine identity, taking a risk with the potentially polarising name Bulldog. Clean, white packaging with a bold typeface was chosen to make the range look markedly different from the market leaders such as Lynx, Nivea, Gillette and L'Oréal.
> (Jack, 2008)

With the spread of the tweenager phenomenon and boys as young as 10 or 12 now using grooming products, these consuming behaviours look set to continue well into the future.

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MiniCase questions

1. Identify the social and cultural changes that have led to the rise of the male shopper.
2. How might an understanding of 'perception theory' be used in the targeting of male consumers?
3. Identify the different male consumer typologies outlined in the case. What are their key personality traits? How could a marketing communicator use this information in order to position a brand?

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