

Does My Company Need a Corporate Repositioning Specialist?

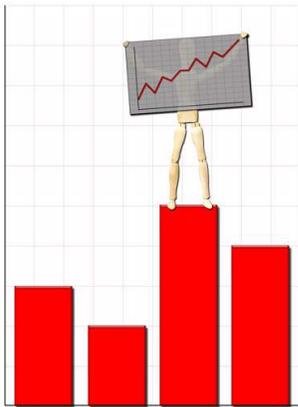
By Ed King - Corporate Rejuvenation Specialist, Turning Point Strategies

What is a Corporate Repositioning Specialist?

The best way to explain it is with an analogy. A captain of a ship, like the leader of a company, inspires and leads his crew to navigate the waters of business. She also has to take into account many variables in order to take the lead in the race. Things like wind, weather, currents, other ships, obstacles in the water, crew morale, and the condition of the ship itself.

Like a ship's captain, leaders in today's corporations are often overwhelmed with these duties, and without realizing it, many times the ship goes off course. This results in a decline in sales, employee apathy and turnover, missed sales opportunities, the commoditization of the company's products and services, and the erosion of customer loyalty.

A Corporate Repositioning Specialist serves as the captain's *navigator*. Someone who understands the waters from previous experience, analyzes the variables, sees the ship from a customer's point of view, and helps the captain chart a better course for success.



So, what does it take to be a Corporate Repositioning Specialist?

It takes a unique combination of skills and personality traits. First, one must have a keen sense of the big picture...being able to see where things belong, where there's an over abundance of things, and where there are gaps. Being able to not only understand business, but also being able to understand society, spot trends and understand people. When it comes down to it, everything revolves around people – customers, vendors, distributors, leaders, stockholders and employees.

A Corporate Repositioning Specialist must also be “whole-brained” – meaning one must be able to look at research findings and spreadsheets with an analytic eye while also being able to create outside-the-box solutions to create real, substantive change in the client's business.

What types of companies benefit most from a Corporate Repositioning Specialist?

Companies that benefit most are typically in industries where pricing pressures are increasing often due to increased competition (manufacturing, B2B services) or in industries that have confusing or muddled service offerings (B2B software, technology). A Corporate Repositioning Specialist can help companies that are becoming commoditized rise above a price war by adding value to the customer relationship. With companies offering a confusing product, a CRS can help by simplifying and clarifying the messages, products, processes and procedures of the business to make it easier for the customer to understand the offering and buy quicker.

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Many companies qualify using these criteria and truly need the help of a Corporate Repositioning Specialist, but have other issues that prevent them from being helped. This usually has to do with politics or a leader that is unwilling to change. What we're talking about here is possibly a fundamental change in the way the business is run. They say that change only happens in business where change is the least risky option. In other words, a business that is thriving isn't going to want to change much. A business that is underachieving or struggling should be more open to change, because without change, the business may fail. The companies that achieve the best results are those that are willing to change.

How does a Corporate Repositioning Specialist work?

Typically it's an outsourced relationship in which a struggling or underachieving company hires a specialist (or team of specialists) to help "right the ship." The specialist will spend time learning the company and industry and talk with employees, customers, and sometimes, past customers to get a benchmark of where the company is currently positioned.

They will then meet with the executive committee and other influencers in the corporation to understand the problems and the goals of the organization. Then, they would work with company leaders to determine the core meaning of the company to its customers and form new messaging statements to support this meaning.

Once the new corporate messages (i.e. positioning statement, Focal Point statement, and Brand Promise Statement) are developed, the Corporate Repositioning Specialist would dive into the internal workings of the company from a customer's perspective to uncover inconsistencies about the products, processes and procedures of the company. They would then give recommendations on how these products, processes and procedures could be improved or altered to better live up to the new Brand Promise.

Next, the Corporate Repositioning Specialist would help the company leaders roll out the new corporate position inside the company. This usually includes training and an internal launch event to inspire the company's employees to embrace the change.

Once the brand position is rolled out internally, the CRP would help roll the brand out to its customers, prospects, analysts, stockholders and investors. This may include a PR campaign, an ad campaign, a new company name and/or logo/tagline or new corporate sales and marketing collateral.

Finally, the Corporate Repositioning Specialist would continuously analyze the new market position and suggest tweaks and changes to improve the company's bottom line results. They really become a trusted long-term partner that the company relies on.

How long does a Corporate Reposition take and what kind of results could a client expect?

The processes I just discussed could take as little as three months, but typically the entire process takes about nine months. It could be longer for companies with more severe problems.

Although a client typically does see quick benefits from the reposition like a faster sales cycle, more qualified prospects and lower employee turnover, the goal of a corporate reposition is to establish a sustainable corporate brand that delivers results for years to come. Ultimately, the goal is to sell more products and services to a specified (and very loyal) target market for a premium price.

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