

RainCastle

BRANDING FOR SMART BUSINESSES:

The Top Five Things You Should Know



Imagine yourself in a competitive situation, in which a committee is responsible for choosing your firm or a competitor, what sentence is likely to come after the prospect says, “I had so many good choices of companies, I was hard pressed to decide who to go with.”

Probably one of the following:

- You all came out pretty equal according to our rating criteria, and company B was about 10% less.
- It was a tough decision but we just decided to go with company Y.
- So and So knows someone at Company C, so we’re going in that direction.
- We seemed to have the best “click” with the person from firm Z.

With each of these typical responses, it is clear you did not differentiate from your competitors, and left to a committee, your chances for success are slim to arbitrary.

In this e-book, we will show you how a well-articulated brand strategy and powerful visual execution bring together the rational and emotional aspects of your brand that will help differentiate your business.



How Positioning Sets Your Firm Apart

Branding terms like “Vision Statement, Mission Statement, Positioning” and “Messaging” have a lofty, academic sound and it’s hard to remember the definition and purpose of each. In our experience, in terms of influencing business development success, the Positioning Statement is your most powerful brand ally. Let’s take a look at how it works.

Because Positioning, unlike Vision or Mission, is a verb, it suggests action. Implied in the word is the idea of positioning in relation to something else, which in terms of branding is — your competition. Your Positioning statement then, describes how you differentiate from your competition. You get this right and the pieces begin to come together.

Trout and Ries, in their classic book, “The 22 Immutable Laws of Marketing,” broke down the Positioning Statement into a structure everyone could understand. Although not to be taken verbatim, one could use this structure as a rough template for expressing differentiation. In their model, the components of a Positioning statement are:

- **What:** The only [category]
- **How:** that [differentiation characteristic]
- **Who:** for [customer]
- **Where:** in [geographic location]

- **Why:** who [need state]
- **When:** during [underlying trend]

Harley Davidson used this to create their positioning statement, which is:

- The only motorcycle manufacturer
- That makes big, loud motorcycles
- For macho guys (and “macho wannabes”)
- Mostly in the United States
- Who want to join a gang of cowboys
- In an era of decreasing personal freedom.

A looser and more blended interpretation of a Brand Positioning statement is the one we created for Architecture, Planning and Preservation firm, Goody Clancy:

(WHAT) Goody Clancy creates places and plans that inspire transformation.

(HOW) We combine creative passion and a spirit of exploration with deep expertise and a rich appreciation of context.

(WHO) Our focus on each client’s defining purpose enables us to create spaces and communities that are deeply connected to who they are—and who they aspire to be.

(WHY) Our work is visually distinctive and socially innovative. It challenges convention and connects people in ways that incite creativity and collaboration, and builds social, economic, and environmental value.

In the following sections, we’ll see how the Positioning statement leads to tangible differentiation.



How Positioning has a Positive Cascading Effect for Your Entire Brand

In the previous section we examined the structure of the positioning statement, but just having all of the components will not lead to a differentiated brand. A good positioning statement blends the **rational**, **emotional** and **aspirational** characteristics of your organization. In the example of the architectural firm, the latter two are more significant for differentiating brand than say, a technology or law firm. Emotion and Aspiration are linked to the creative and social aspects of what that type of business delivers. You will need to dig deep to identify the right balance of these attributes, and will most likely need a dedicated outside branding partner to provide the objectivity that is hard to maintain when you are wrapped up in the details of your own organization.

Let's revisit the Positioning statement from the last section and see how these rational, emotional and aspirational qualities coalesce into a cohesive whole.

Goody Clancy creates places and plans that inspire transformation. We combine creative passion and a spirit of exploration with deep expertise and a rich appreciation of context. Our focus on each client's defining purpose enables us to create spaces and communities that are deeply connected to who they are—and who they aspire to be.

Our work is visually distinctive and socially innovative. It challenges convention and connects people in ways that incite creativity and collaboration, and builds social, economic, and environmental value.

Rational

Emotional

Aspirational

There is no formula for how these elements are combined. It's just important that they're combined in a way that feels authentic for the organization, focuses on value to the client, and provides enough depth to develop messages to key audiences and inspire a unique creative expression for marketing materials.

The following diagram of the Brand Cascade (another term you don't need to remember but is nicely descriptive) shows how the Positioning statement leads to tangible elements for differentiating your brand. Essentially, once you have a Positioning statement, which possesses the right balance of intellectual, aspirational and emotional content, the other necessary elements of your brand will cascade from it.



Now, let's discuss the other elements in the Brand Cascade.



3

How Brand Essence Influences Positioning and Brings “Personality into Your Brand

You probably noticed “Brand Essence” sits above the Positioning statement in the Brand Cascade. Brand Essence is the single, ubiquitous concept on which the brand is founded.

In his excellent book “New Brand World,” Scott Bedbury, former CMO of NIKE, describes how he used the core concept of “Authentic Athletic Performance” as a litmus test for every piece of marketing, from ads to TV to in-store promotion. If a campaign did not at its core deliver on “Authentic Athletic Performance,” it wasn’t NIKE.

Brand essence is the distillation of the brand into its most fundamental truth. It needs to be specific enough to be unique to your organization and flexible enough to allow for different forms of creative expression across media, as NIKE demonstrates.

Returning to the Goody Clancy example, our interviews of team members from multiple disciplines coupled with extensive competitive and client research, led us to “**Inspiring Transformation**” as their Brand Essence. Common to all of their disciplines and client experiences was the single idea that their work inspired transformative experiences for the people that inhabit the spaces they architected, planned or preserved.

Now, if you revisit the Positioning statement and bare this in mind as we discuss Messaging and visual expression, you will see the clarifying power of Brand Essence.



How Messaging Bridges the Aspirational to the Practical

With the Positioning statement feeling solid, you've done a good deal of the heavy lifting and are now ready to apply this to your various audiences in the form of distinct messaging, which embodies the positioning but makes it more specific and actionable. A purpose of Messaging is to pave the way for copywriting for your proposals, website, presentations, collateral and other marketing materials.

Now that we've broken down the components of a successful Positioning statement, let's take a look at where it leads. Following are a couple of messages derived from the Goody Clancy Positioning Statement.

Goody Clancy Architecture creates **transformative** spaces that promote human connection and ignite creative collaboration and exploration.

We explore the client's deepest aspirations, leading the way to buildings that inspire achievement and elicit joy—in every design detail. Our work is aesthetically stunning,

contextually aware, and socially and environmentally responsible.

Goody Clancy Planning helps communities **transform** themselves to better meet rapidly accelerating social, economic, and environmental changes. Working collaboratively with our clients and their constituents, we create plans that are both inspiring and achievable.

Our work is animated by a passion for creating communities that foster social equity, economic opportunity, and environmental responsibility.

Not only are these statements configured to the needs of their specific audiences, you can see they carry forward the **brand essence** as well as the rational, emotional and aspirational language of the Positioning statement.

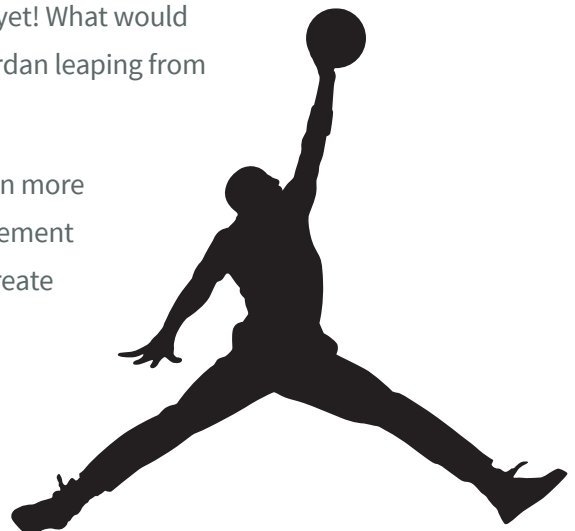


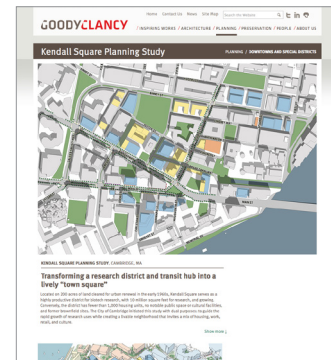
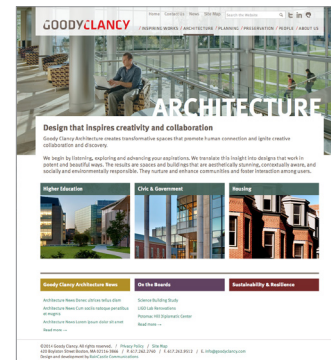
5

How Copywriting and Visual Design Transform Rational Language into Emotional Content

It took a lot of work to get here, but we're not done yet! What would "Authentic Athletic Performance" be without Air Jordan leaping from the foul line to the basket for a slam dunk?!

Words are critical, but in marketing, images are often more powerful. The right Brand Essence, Positioning statement and messaging are the raw materials you need to create your authentic brand, but the visual expression is what gives it life and reaches your audience in the emotional way that achieves differentiation, inspires action and ultimately leads to loyalty.

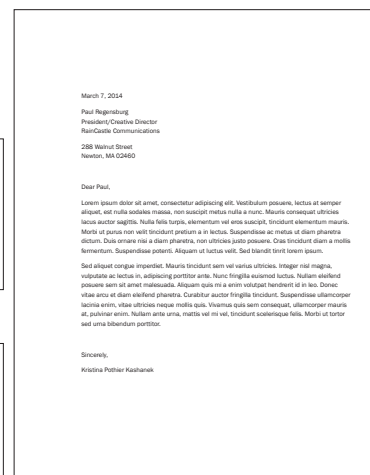
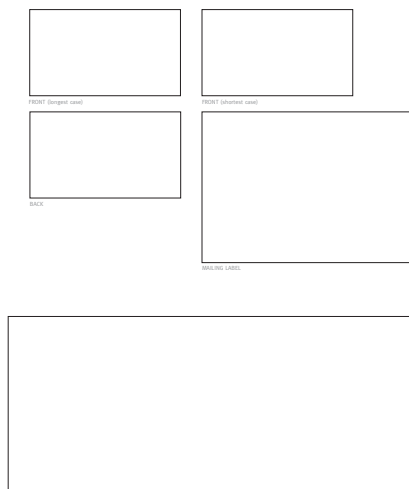




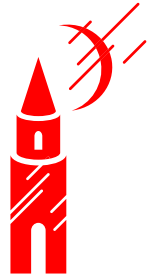
GOODYCLANCY

ARCHITECTURE / PLANNING / PRESERVATION

Goody Clancy visual brand based on the brand positioning and essence reviewed here.



Competitive differentiation is hard to achieve and is that much more meaningful for the few that achieve it. Crafting an authentic Brand Positioning and executing the elements of the Brand Cascade will provide your firm with the competitive edge that will register with decision-makers.



RainCastle

www.raincastle.com

contact@raincastle.com

617-553-5170

288 Walnut Street

Newton, MA 02460

