



Funosophy Marketing Tip #1 Toy Book February 2006

More Than An Elevator Pitch

As the industry readies itself for February Toy Fair, it is more important than ever to have a crystal clear vision for your brand, line, or product – one that your entire team is passionate about and can recite forward, backwards, and inside out.

Who is your consumer? How are you different from and better than your competition? What will your brand look like in 12 months? How will you get there? Ask around the office and odds are you'll get a different answer from everyone on your team! And yet agreeing to the answers to these questions should be the very first step you take in building, growing, refreshing, and marketing your line.

After all, if you can't clearly articulate who you are, why you're different, and where you're going, how is a buyer going to understand? And within the tremendous clutter of the marketplace, how is the consumer going to understand?

Defining your brand is not easy and takes the full cooperation and creative energy of your team. But the results are worth it – a clear-cut positioning that you can use as a guideline for all future decisions about your brand!

Drawing from Funosophy's highly structured brand strategic planning process - the Clarity Session - we offer several questions that you and your team can answer to get you started down the path to brand clarity.

To begin, schedule a half day away from the office with your entire team – choose a location where you will not be distracted or tempted to work on other projects. This exercise requires complete concentration! Be sure to bring your products, prototypes, and any relevant competitive products for reference, along with a large pad of paper and pens. Then ask yourselves:

- ✍ What business are you in? Be precise – you're not just in the toy business! You may be in the preschool entertainment business or the girls' arts and crafts business. If you answer this question broadly, you may also want to identify which segment you compete in.
- ✍ Who is your target consumer? Be sure to consider both the gender and age range to which you appeal as well as the single target age and gender of your strongest consumer. For example, your target consumer may be 5-7 year old boys, with a sweet spot of 6 year old boys. Placing a priority rating on each segment will help you when allocating resources against multiple segments.
- ✍ What are the most important consumer needs in your business? Be sure these needs cover all the target consumer segments you've just identified!
- ✍ Who is your competition? Keep the list down to just the two or three competitors that are most relevant.
- ✍ What is your competitive positioning? This should be the single most important reason why a consumer would choose your product over that of a competitor's. It must be a highly meaningful benefit that is also believable and ownable. In addition, list two or three reasons for the consumer to believe you are the best in delivering on this benefit.
- ✍ What is your brand character? How would you define your brand if it were a person? For example, your brand may be whimsical, creative, and fun or educational, challenging, and empowering. Keep your final list of adjectives to three.

Let each team member be heard and be open to discussing any new or divulging viewpoints – you never know where you'll net out! Once you've reached agreement or majority rule on each of these questions, take a look at your answers. You should have defined your market, target consumer, competition, competitive positioning, and brand character in a way that gives you a clear picture about who you are and how you're different. Use this picture as a litmus test for all future decisions about your brand.

And now that you know who you are, get out there and spread the word!

Nancy Zwiers is chief Funosopher at Funosophy, the pre-eminent brand building and consulting firm for toys and entertainment products. Funosophy's Clarity Sessions have helped dozens of toy manufacturers large and small achieve clarity, consensus, and commitment regarding their brand positioning and strategic plans. For more information on Funosophy's Clarity Sessions or to book your session today, call 562.436.5251 or email info@funosophy.com.