



Director of Communications
and Public Relations

How Should You Position Your Product?

I just finished the task of assembling many of these Merchandising columns into a new, more comprehensive book. Still titled, "How To Sell Angus Cattle" the 90-page second edition is divided into three sections on advertising, public relations and sales.

Single copies are available free to American Angus Association members. For others, the book will sell for \$5, postage paid, in the U.S. and Canada; \$10 (shipped airmail) elsewhere.

Promoting this new book is not the purpose of this column. I discovered while putting it together that I had failed to write what should have been among the very first — a column on positioning.

Positioning is a simple concept. It says that in your business and your advertising and promotion, don't try to be all things to all people. Rather, stake out a narrow marketing position designed to supply a specialized product to a carefully selected market. From that position, aim your advertising and promotion directly at your market segment in your market area. You don't waste time, money and energy advertising and marketing to someone who isn't a potential customer.

An extremely successful advertising agency executive is said to have taught his employees that if you stand for everything, you stand for nothing. Positioning, he taught, is sacrifice — deciding what's important and what can be left behind.

That philosophy is obvious when we look at other industries and other advertisers. Mercedes and Ford Escort advertising have nothing in common. Their position in the market has no overlap.

While Mercedes courts the wealthy and near-wealthy with appeals to exclusivity and snob appeal, Escort advertising uses none of these approaches. Instead, it goes after the people who need the dependability of a new car but can pay for little more than basic transportation. Between these two extremes are auto makers whose position commits them to market to people with completely different wants, needs and incomes.

No matter where you live in this country, you, too, need to position your product

and then develop an appropriate market strategy.

If you are in northwest Missouri you probably need to decide whether you will concentrate on selling \$1,500 bulls to local commercial producers within a 15-county area (who will probably have to be convinced that even this price is not too high). Or will you go after a more upscale market segment that offers higher average prices, but that is more spread out, with more competition, and thus more difficult and expensive to reach. Your positioning decision also hinges upon the type and quality of breeding cattle produced.

It will help to put your positioning statement in writing. It can be something as simple as the fact that you plan to

market top quality, performance-tested bulls, in the \$1,500 to \$2,000 price range, to commercial cow-calf producers within a 15-county surrounding area.

Whatever position you take, your advertising and marketing program becomes more focused. You know the exact market area you have to cover and the kind of beef producers you want to reach and sell to. You have a very specific target to aim at. Your efforts thus become more efficient and effective.

There is never enough time or money to do the kind of advertising and merchandising you want, or think that you should do. That's why positioning is so important.

