

Discover Your Professional Services Firm's Unique Positioning with These 3 Exercises

Ready to uncover your firm's unique positioning? Start with these three exercises to get your team thinking about what genuinely sets you apart from the competition.

1. Brand Archetype Exercise

Brand marketers recognize 12 universally accepted brand archetypes. These archetypes represent distinct groupings of characters, aspirations, values and attitudes. The archetypes are typically presented in a wheel, which is broken into four quadrants: stability, fulfillment, risk and enjoyment.

Many of the world's most recognizable brands personify one of the archetypes. For example, Oprah is the Sage, Land Rover is the Explorer, Nike is the Hero and Disney is the Magician.

Gather your leadership team together and walk them through each of the 12 archetypes. Where does your firm fit in?

Don't be afraid to think outside the box. For example, many professional services firms want to be seen as the Sage. But there are other ways to conceive of your brand's identity. Perhaps you are the Magician because your work is transformative in the lives of your clients. Or perhaps you are the Explorer because of the way you innovate at the intersection of technology and service delivery.

See if you can reach consensus about which archetype best represents your firm—then spend some time brainstorming what that means in terms of how you communicate your brand.





2. Compare-and-Contrast Exercise

This exercise gives your team a way to productively compare yourself to your competitors (the firms you regularly compete with) and your aspirational competitors (the brands you want to be competing with).

Have your team work together to list out all the brands you relate to in some way. The more well-known they are, the better, since that gives everyone shared context. For each brand you identify with, complete the following Mad Libs-style sentences:

“Our brand is similar to _____ because _____. However, we are different because _____.”

For example, you might say, “Our brand is similar to CitiGroup because we have a lot of high-tech solutions. However, we are different because we take a human-centered approach with more human touchpoints.”

3. StoryBrand’s Hero’s Journey Exercise

Most marketers naturally think of their own business as the hero of the brand stories they tell. This exercise, which comes [courtesy of the StoryBrand agency](#), flips the script. Your task: tell the story of your brand by putting your customers in the central “hero” role.

StoryBrand founder Donald Miller points out that there are seven basic elements to any story:

1. A hero (your customers)
2. With a problem
3. Meets a guide (that’s your brand)
4. Who gives them a plan
5. And calls them to action
6. That results in
7. Success...or failure

As you map out your hero’s journey, put yourself in your ideal client’s shoes. What is the problem they are trying to solve? How do they meet you (their guide)? And what is that you do to ensure that the action they take results in success (not failure)?

This exercise won’t just clarify your positioning—it will help you tell “customer-first” brand stories that resonate with your audiences.