



a **DELUXE™** company

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## WHITE PAPER

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# The Positioning Funnel

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Simple Steps To Help Bring Out Your Company Positioning Story

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## What Is A Business Position?

From our experience as Canada's leading supplier of branded products for businesses, it is clear that the majority of businesses in Canada have not spent enough (or any) time in developing a positioning story for their business.

We also know that having a clear, concise position statement, which then is developed into your brand, is one of the major factors that will determine long-term success and allow your business to be one of the survivors. Statistics Canada reports that only 1 out of 5 businesses will survive 10 years.

So, what is a position? A position is the simple, credible plot of your story of why customers should do business with you. This story must be unique to you, something that you are passionate about and something that can be summarized in one or two key words. Every expert and every success story of positioning speaks to the need to pick one important characteristic that will help you differentiate your company from the competition. Never imitate, never duplicate but differentiate your company.

*"If you can't write your movie idea on the back of a business card, you ain't got a movie."  
- Samuel Goldwyn*

## Positioning Is About Finding The Plot Of Your Story

We all know the following successful companies. They are long-time leaders in their extremely competitive market (they all have dozens, if not hundreds of competitors) by owning a single, credible, position.

NIKE is PERFORMANCE

MERCEDES is ENGINEERING

JAGUAR is STYLE

COKE is REFRESHMENT

PORSCHE is DESIGN

VOLVO is SAFETY

*"Success means never letting the competition define you. Instead you have to define yourself based upon a point of view you care deeply about."  
- Tom Chappell, Tom's of Maine*

## Translate This Plot Into The Story That Your Customer Will See

Once you understand the position that you want to own (the plot to your story) then it is time to begin to write the novel.

Volvo is a good success story. They have built this success based upon absolutely, unequivocally, living their position of Safety. They own this in the automotive market. They are able to charge appropriately, they do not require the massive discounts of other car manufacturers. And they have life-long, raving fanatic customers.

When Volvo tells their story to the customer, they translate their internal position of "safety" into the slogan of "Volvo for life." The Volvo slogan translates the positioning into an emotional tie with their customers.

An example of how far they go with this is their "Volvo Saved My Life Club." If a company saves your life – you are a customer for life!

## The Positioning Funnel – Develop Your Position

The first step is to look inside yourself and ask these five simple questions:

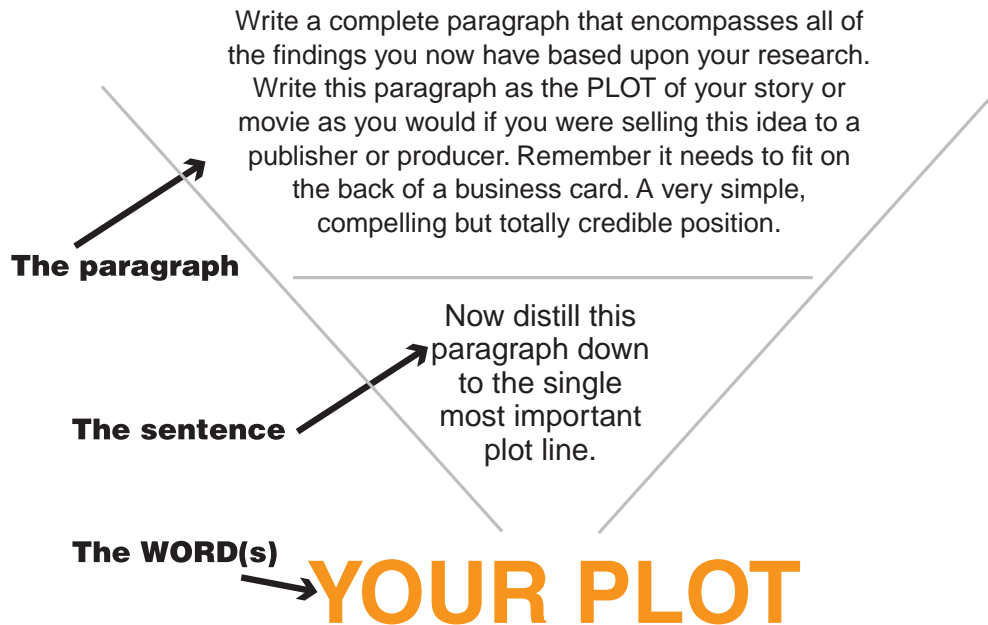
1. What do I stand for?
2. What is my character?
3. What is my promise and how do I back it up?
4. Why would customers want to buy from me?
5. Why does what I do matter?

Then look outside for help in things you might not be able to see yourself:

1. Ask everyone who works for you for a story about what they think you care deeply about, what you are doing well and what they think your brand story is.
2. Ask three close friends the same question.
3. Ask your top two or three suppliers the same question.

## Take Your Findings and Run Them Through The Positioning Funnel

Now that you have assembled all of this important information try the following exercise and then share your findings with those who have helped you get to this point.



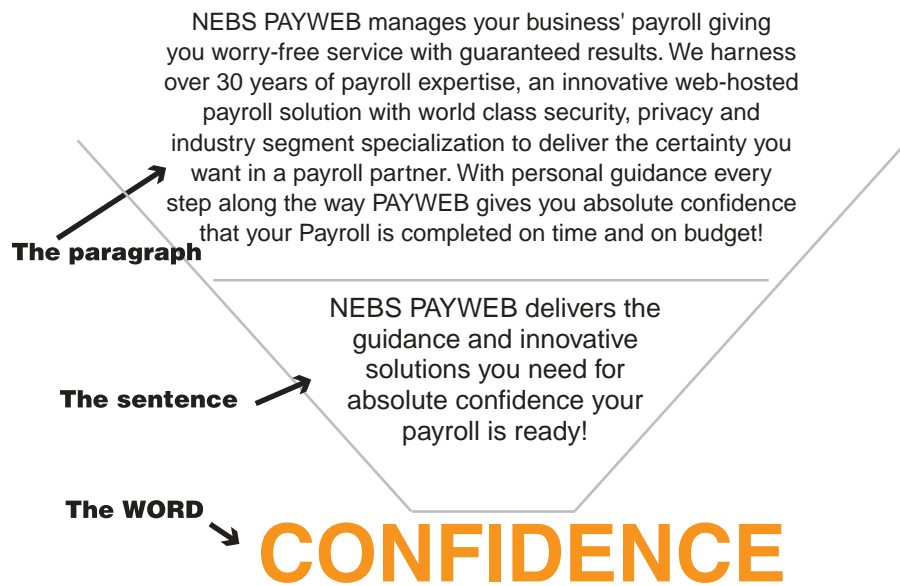
## Case Study – NEBS Payroll – Developing our New Position

NEBS acquired a small payroll processing company in 2004 and has been expanding and rolling out this service to 200,000 plus customers. In late 2005 we took our early learnings, completed the research and exercises that were recommended earlier and then developed a new position.

From our research the following key messages and themes emerged that were used to run through the Positioning Funnel exercise.

- On-line hosted web service, with the highest level of security and privacy was critical
- Aimed and designed for the unique needs of smaller businesses with 1 to 99 employees – where they need someone to do this work for them – they cannot afford a payroll expert on staff
- Focused on solving payroll issues all businesses have and with unique features targeted at specific lines of business (like contractors, retailers or restaurants) to match NEBS historical strength
- With leading functionality that these segments can use – like statutory pay calculator, direct deposits and emailing of pay stubs
- With total security and peace of mind so our customers will never have to worry if their employees are paid
- That offers a total value that is a low cost solution
- Which offers "hand-holding" best in class service because our target market shouldn't have to worry if their payroll is ready or right – that is our job.

### This is how we took these key messages and filled in our Positioning Funnel:





After going back and speaking to everyone who had input into what our story should look like, we have begun the process of writing the story of NEBS Payroll. The first step was to develop the story the customer would see:



***Absolute confidence...***  
**your payroll is ready!**

**Live Your Story...Live Your Position...You Can Never Stop Writing It**

You can do this and we know from our work with over 200,000 Canadian businesses that if you spend time and do this you will have a significantly higher chance of succeeding.

Once you have your position, it is not over. Picture it like a soap-opera, the story never ends and it is important that you maintain absolute consistency so your customers never fail to recognize your brand or understand your story.

Good luck with your story!