

# DIFFER ENTIATE OR DIE

5 Keys to Disruptive Positioning

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Secrets of Silicon Valley

“Think customer-in, not company-out.  
Until you do, you’ll just talk the talk  
not walk the walk – something that 95%  
of tech companies today  
are still very guilty of.”

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Philip Lay  
Chasm Group

A pair of iridescent wings, possibly from a butterfly or moth, are spread out against a light gray background. The wings are dark with vibrant, iridescent colors (blue, green, yellow, and orange) that shimmer across the surface. The text "IMAGINE MORE" is overlaid in the center of the wings in a bold, white, sans-serif font.

**IMAGINE  
MORE**



Positioning clients



GitLab

greenhouse



Hootsuite

**Microsoft**



Quip



talend

vmware

workday

An aerial, high-angle photograph of a dense urban landscape, likely New York City, featuring numerous skyscrapers and buildings. The image is taken from a high vantage point, looking down on the city. The buildings are tightly packed, with various architectural styles, including modern glass-fronted towers and older brick structures. The lighting suggests late afternoon or early morning, with long shadows and warm tones. Overlaid in the center of the image is the text "PROVEN RESULTS" in a large, white, sans-serif font. The text is split into two lines: "PROVEN" on the top line and "RESULTS" on the bottom line. The letters are bold and have a slight drop shadow, making them stand out against the complex background of the city.

PROVEN  
RESULTS

# Do you have a positioning problem?

## The tell-tale signs



Your presentation  
is 38 slides



Long sales cycles,  
feature wars,  
pricing discounts,  
unacceptable  
win/loss ratio



Ask 3 people  
about your company.  
Get 3 different  
answers



You place your logo  
on your competitor's  
web site. You both  
look the same



Blah, Blah, Blah.  
Your parents don't  
know what you do  
for a living



Your product  
is considered a  
"nice to have"



UNLOCK  
POTENTIAL

# The inconvenient truth of B2B technology: Driving the need for strategic positioning

The best product rarely wins

No executive buyer wants  
another technology vendor

All companies are organized  
for yesterday's buyers

The competition is setting  
the buying criteria and market agenda

Tech companies love to talk features;  
executive buyers don't care "how it works"

A person is paragliding over a vast, hazy landscape. The sky is a warm, golden-orange color, suggesting a sunrise or sunset. The ground below is a mix of dark, silty terrain and patches of green vegetation, all shrouded in a thick mist or haze. The overall mood is serene and adventurous.

**RISE  
ABOVE**

## What do all B2B tech category leaders have in common?

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- All have a **strong, differentiated positioning strategy** as a central foundation for their company success
- All understand that positioning is a strategic **CEO-led initiative** for accelerating revenue and commanding a higher valuation
- All recognize that breakaway differentiation requires a shift from a **product-centric to a buyer-centric** positioning strategy



# NEW PERSPECTIVE

# The keys to disruptive positioning

This is not a marketing game.  
It's a game-changing CEO initiative.

An abstract sculpture composed of several large, overlapping, metallic-looking planes that create a complex, three-dimensional geometric form. The planes are arranged in a way that suggests movement and depth, with some edges sharp and others more rounded. The background is a blurred, light-colored surface, possibly a wall or a floor, which makes the dark, metallic sculpture stand out. The text "STAND OUT" is superimposed in the center of the image in a bold, white, sans-serif font.

**STAND  
OUT**



## Define your “Mary”

Successful positioning strategies are exquisitely clear about their “Mary” or target buyer. The more clearly you understand the motivations, needs, challenges and attitudes of your buyer, the stronger your positioning. Most tech companies do a poor job of truly understanding their “Mary.” Or they miss the mark by positioning to yesterday’s buyer. If you want to break away from the pack, you must have a point of view and value proposition that engages your next set of buyers.

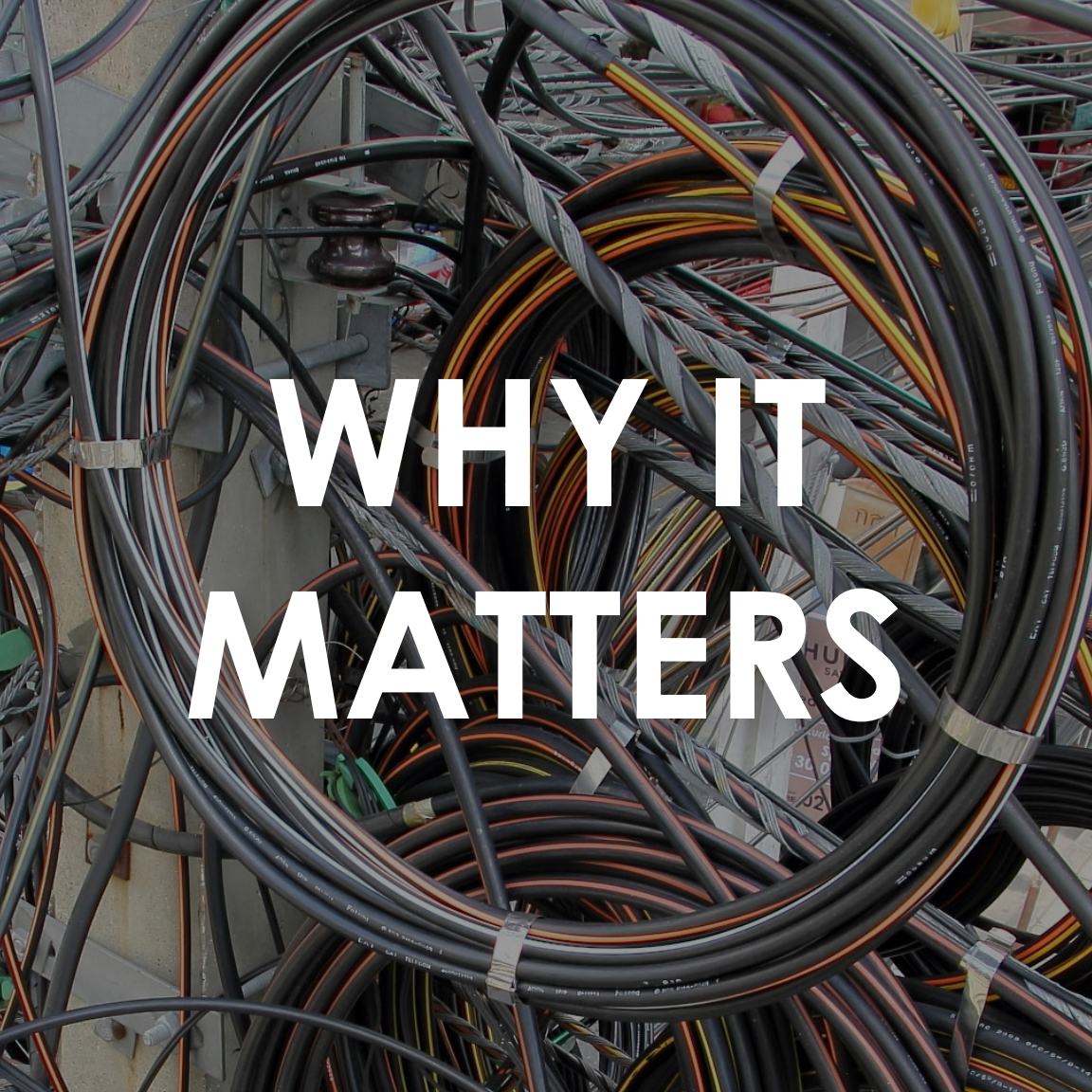
A high-contrast, low-key photograph of a person's head and shoulders in silhouette against a solid red background. The person's face is obscured by the text. The text is in a bold, white, sans-serif font, centered horizontally and split into two lines.

**INSPIRE  
THE YES**



## “Own” a problem

Every B2B tech category leader has built a positioning strategy around a big hairy problem their buyers deeply care about. They “own” this problem in the market, develop a strong viewpoint that resonates with their buyer, and articulate what they do in the context of the problem their customer is trying to solve. Successful positioning calls for a fundamental shift in the conversation from “how the product works” to “why it matters” to your buyer.



**WHY IT  
MATTERS**



## Take a corner of the room

Each significant tech company has carved out their “corner of the room” with a distinct, highly differentiated positioning that separates them from the pack. They know their true genius – whether it’s unique IP, an original approach, a specialized focus – and how it positions them to solve their buyer’s problem better than anyone else. In contrast, most tech companies are stuck in “geek speak” and feature wars or end up sounding exactly like their competitors. And if buyers can’t tell the difference between competitors, they will always go with the bigger brand name.

A low-angle, upward-looking perspective of a modern glass skyscraper. The building's facade is composed of numerous rectangular glass panels held together by a dark metal frame. The sky is a clear, vibrant blue. The text 'UNIQUE GENIUS' is superimposed in the center of the image in a large, white, sans-serif font. The lighting suggests a bright, sunny day, with a slight lens flare or glow effect emanating from the bottom right corner.

UNIQUE  
GENIUS



## Have a viewpoint. Tell a story

Stop explaining. Start inspiring. Today's market leaders stand for something with a provocative viewpoint and a positioning story that cuts through the noise, wakes up the market and brings their products alive. Positioning that elevates the whole conversation, captures the imagination of buyers and proactively influences the formation of the category. Stories that make the difference between average and transcendent, boring and inspiring. The difference between yes and no.



# FRESH NARRATIVE



## Answer 3 questions for your buyer

True game changers are unambiguously clear about why they matter and why buyers should care.



The answer to these questions is everything. So your buyer can finally understand who you are and how you will rock their world. It's never about "how the product works." This comes later.



**CREATE A  
MOVEMENT**

## The success criteria:

What does winning positioning look like?



Your company has a strong viewpoint that wakes up the market



Everyone is on the same page in your company



Sales engages at the executive level



Your win/loss ratio is at least 5:1



Your solution commands a premium price



There is buyer urgency: your solution is a “got-to-have”



Analysts and customers are adopting your language

About  
**firebrick**  
CONSULTING

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Firebrick is a San Francisco-based consulting firm that helps B2B tech companies accelerate revenue growth and command a higher valuation through breakaway positioning strategies. Through a proven process, refined by our experience positioning over 400 B2B tech companies, we give your company the powerful positioning it deserves.

**[www.firebrickconsulting.com](http://www.firebrickconsulting.com)**