

Architect as Visionary: Positioning as Thought Leader

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Jean Leathers helps architectural, engineering and construction management firms to increase revenue and awareness through strategic planning, client development and marketing.

She began her career at URS Cleveland, then transferred to San Francisco where she sold seismic engineering services, directed marketing, and eventually handled corporate communications and investor relations for URS Corporation.

After five years with URS, Jean founded a consultancy in San Francisco providing marketing, business development and training for clients including Architectural Resources Group; KPMG Airport Consulting Practice; Bank of America; and World Bank in Washington, DC.

In 2003, Jean re-established her practice in Cleveland and continues to provide strategic planning, market research, sales strategies, presentation coaching, branding, website and e-communications, advertising, and public relations.

Jean is widely published. Her portfolio includes *The Plain Dealer*, *LD + A*, *Builders Exchange Magazine*, *Parks & Rec Business*, *Smart Business*, *Coaching Review*, *The Digest of Financial Planning Ideas*, and *The Stanger Register*.

She is a former Guest Lecturer on Marketing in the MBA program at Case Western Reserve University's Weatherhead School of Management. Jean graduated from the University of California, Berkeley with a Bachelor of Arts in English.

Architect as Visionary: Positioning as Thought Leader

Historically, the Architect as Master Builder was the visionary of the built environment combining the roles of architect, builder, engineer and scientist. With the changes in the AEC environment today, how do architects continue to establish themselves as visionaries?

By positioning themselves as thought leaders.

After attending this interactive program, participants will be able to:

- > Identify and skillfully describe 1 or 2 individual or company areas of expertise.
- > Describe at least 2 Client Relations programs or tactics that can be implemented to build trust and establish the architect's role as a trusted advisor and thought leader with clients.
- > Explain how Media Relations can be leveraged to establish an architect or firm as an expert in the field and list 2 media entities you plan to contact after the convention.

Definitions as Food for Thought

- Architect* A deviser, maker, or creator within the profession of architecture.
- Visionary* A person of unusually keen foresight.
- Thought* The product of mental activity; thinking, reasoning, imagining, considering, reflecting, meditating, contemplating, recollecting; intention, design, or purpose.
- Leader* A person who goes before or with to show the way; one who guides in direction, course, action, opinion; one who influences.
- Facilitate* To make easier or less difficult; help forward.
- Trust* Reliance on the integrity, strength, ability, surety, etc., of a person or organization; confident expectation of something.
- Positioning* Creating or possessing a specific image or message to make a firm attractive to a part of the market.
- Expert* A person who has a special skill or knowledge in a particular field; specialist; authority.
- Niche* A distinct segment of a market.

Identify Your Target Markets

List the market segments that you or your firm serve/s.

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Circle the market segment where you feel you or your firm is the strongest.

Drill Down Deeper Into the Market

Example

Healthcare

- > Long Term Care
 - > Skilled Nursing
 - > Extended Care
 - > Other
 - > Other
- > Acute Care Hospitals
 - > Other
 - > Other
- > Clinics, MOBs
 - > Other
 - > Other

Answer the question: How does the work we do benefit our clients?

- > Provide better patient care
- > Accommodate the latest in medical technology
- > Other

Further Market Segmentation

Divide the market segment you circled even further.

List the benefits clients will experience by working with you or your firm.

Positioning Statement

Example

TWG Architects provides design of sports arenas for professional teams that result in increased ticket sales, and improved athletic recruitment and performance.

Complete this sentence: I / my firm specialize/s in design of...

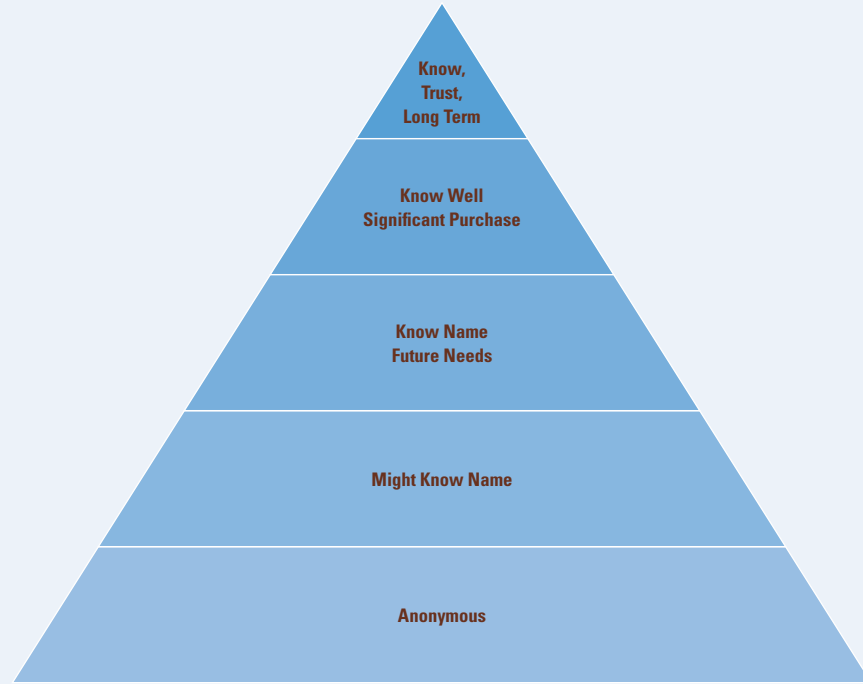
List the benefits your client receives from working with you or your firm that helps them meet their needs.

(Hint: This almost always involves people and money.)

Create a Positioning Statement

Positioning Creating or possessing a specific image or message to make a firm attractive to a part of the market.

Write a positioning statement for your area of expertise.



How Do You Establish Trust?

Trust Reliance on the integrity, strength, ability, surety, etc., of a person or organization; confident expectation of something.

Write the name of the client you trust the most, then list reasons why.

I trust _____ because:

To Build Trust, Build the Relationship

- > Frequent contact
- > Honest communication
- > Multiple relationships within an organization that are high and wide

List 3 individuals from different client organizations who are critical to generating revenue.

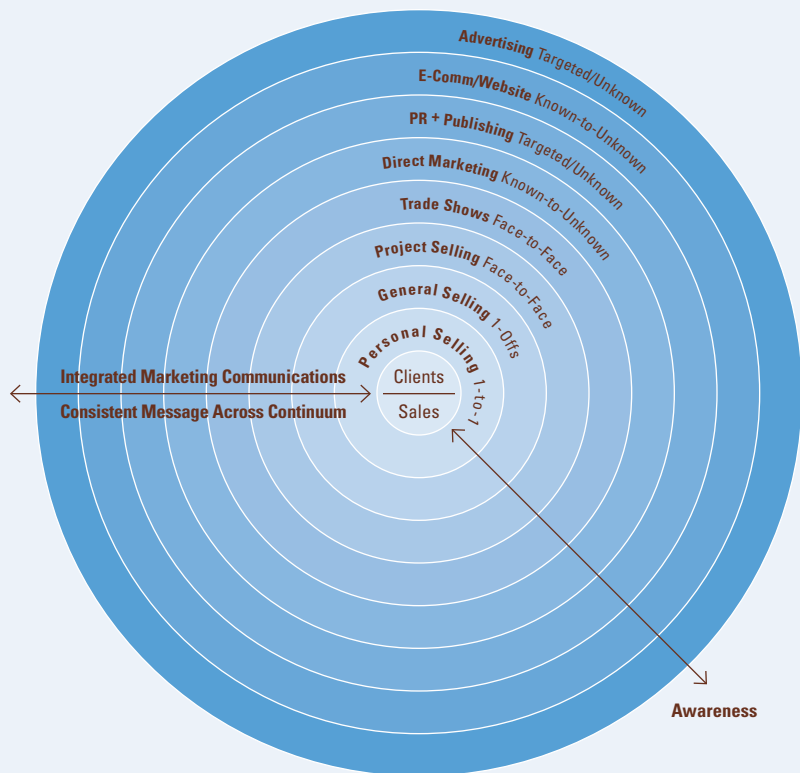
- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

In your opinion, do these individuals trust you? Why or why not?

Ways to Establish a Trusted Advisor Role

How do you systematically stay in touch with your key clients?

How do you continue to establish your expertise in their eyes?



Inside > Outside

Client Relations > Knowing Needs, "Insider Leads"
 Knowing Needs > Sole Source, Proposal Invites
 Insider Leads > Successful Campaigns
 Successful Campaigns > Revenue

Outside > Inside

Awareness > Top of Mind
 Top of Mind > Leads/Invitations/Referrals
 Leads/Invitations/Referrals > Proposals
 Proposals > Revenue

Marketing Mix Continuum

Effective Marketing Communications work along a continuum between Sales and Awareness.

The center is the target. It's where the transactions that lead to revenue take place. Here is one-to-one selling, contract negotiations, the highest degree of trust, the place where a hand shake and a look in the eye communicates, "We won't let you down." Trust is the key deciding factor in the procurement of professional services.

The innermost circle is relationship-based. It is the most time-intensive, and yields the highest likelihood of revenue generation. The time spent here needs to be exceptionally well qualified. This is the most personal, most active and least far-reaching of the MarComm tactics.

Innermost Goal: RELATIONSHIPS + SALES

The outermost circles create more anonymous contact. The tactics help you to get a message out to a broad, unspecified, yet selective audience. By raising awareness in the marketplace, these tactics feed the chute for project potential by letting the widest audience possible know that your firm exists, and for what purpose. The outermost circle is the least personal, the most passive, and has the broadest reach.

Outermost Goal: AWARENESS

Integrated Marketing Communications

Creating and carrying out a consistent, meaningful and memorable message across all communications mediums and tactics.

MEDIA RELATIONS: HOW TO BECOME RECOGNIZED AS AN EXPERT IN YOUR FIELD

Establish Your Expertise

List ways in which you can establish yourself as an expert in the field.

Self Check

In the past year, which of the following tactics have you used to establish your expertise and to build client relations?

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Presentation at Client-centric conference | <input type="checkbox"/> Holiday Greeting | <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trade show booth | <input type="checkbox"/> Attendance at Client-sponsored event | <input type="checkbox"/> Client referral acknowledgement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Press Release | <input type="checkbox"/> Advertising | <input type="checkbox"/> Client reference acknowledgement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Article Publishing | <input type="checkbox"/> White Paper | <input type="checkbox"/> Handwritten notes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Award Submittal and Recognition | <input type="checkbox"/> Website updates showing current work | <input type="checkbox"/> Client gift |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Announcement | <input type="checkbox"/> E-Blasts | <input type="checkbox"/> Golf, Sporting Event or other outing with Client |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Direct Mail | | |

Building Media Relations

How can you build relationships with the media to help you get published?

What else can you do to enhance your chances of getting published?

Identify Target Media

Identify 2 media entities that provide information that your clients need and read.
(Hint: If you don't know, ask them.)

Have you been published there before? Do you have relationships there? Can you name the editors?

What's the Hook?

Newsworthy current; unusual; best, first or most; milestone; breakthrough; a change in the market; a new solution, etc.

Identify a news item that an editor would find worthy of publishing.

Complete the following sentence:

I plan to pitch the above story idea to _____.

Leathers Consulting

**Helping to increase revenue
through strategic planning,
client development + marketing.**

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