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Positioning Strategies: Brand Development of the Tropicars Lubricator from the Jama Canton

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ABSTRACT

The overall objective of this study is to analyze the most effective positioning strategies for the Tropicars lubricator in order to consolidate its presence in the market and improve the customer experience. Through exhaustive research on the positioning strategies of the competition and the current perception of Tropicars, key opportunities to add value were identified. A mixed methodology was applied, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. Structured surveys were conducted with current and potential customers and complemented by observation and interviews to achieve a deep understanding complemented by observation and interviews to deeply understand consumer expectations and profiles. To ensure data reliability, SPSS version 25 software was used. The results highlight that Tropicars' main differentiator is service quality, perceived as a key factor for customer satisfaction and loyalty. However, the research also revealed that there is an opportunity to modernise the brand's visual identity, which would help consolidate its positioning in an increasingly competitive market. Furthermore, a stronger digital presence, especially on social media such as Facebook and WhatsApp, is considered essential to attract new customers and improve engagement with existing ones. The final findings suggest that Tropicars should reinforce its focus on service quality, adopt a modern visual image, and expand its digital presence to increase its visibility and market appeal.

INTRODUCTION

Positioning, as well as the different axes involved in the development of a brand, is so influential if it is required that it be significantly present within the market. These processes bring with them different strategic and digital tools that allow establishing a brand in the consumer's mind from a more attractive point of view, where they have the purpose of positioning a brand in a strategic context destined to maintain loyalty.

Criteria generated, Macias *et al.* (2023), They indicate that brand positioning is a strategy in which a company determines and consolidates the image, value and unique identity of its brand in the perception of consumers. It is about generating a unique and significant impression in the market to stand out from competitors and achieve an important place in the public's mind. This process requires a detailed analysis of the market, the study of the competition and a deep understanding of the needs and expectations of consumers.

Brand positioning is crucial because it allows businesses to create a distinctive image that makes it easy for consumers to identify and prefer. In a saturated market, where many services may seem similar, the ability to differentiate is essential to capture attention and build loyalty. Thorough research and study are necessary to design a strategy that not only stands out but also resonates with the wants and needs of the target audience. This differentiation not only helps the brand stay relevant, but also maximizes its value in the consumer's mind (Arroyo & Lemoine, 2023).

Customers who require preventive maintenance for their

vehicles, mainly in terms of lubrication and oil changes, seek personalized attention that meets their needs, a fluid adjustment check, as well as good communication about the products used.

According to Martinez (2020), to achieve effective positioning, it is essential to identify both the visual differences and the specific characteristics of what they offer. The positioning of a brand, by taking into account the preferences and expectations of the consumer, allows the advertiser to take advantage of these differences and improve its presence within the market where studying consumer behaviour is becoming increasingly important in order to achieve more effective positioning (Lemoine *et al.*, 2020).

However, other authors such as Silva (2024) They consider that effective positioning is key to achieving success in the market, as it allows customers to clearly identify their services compared to the competition, which are accompanied by products such as refrigerants, spare parts, among others. Identifying visual and concrete differences is essential, so that they can capture the customer's attention by presenting the product assortment and the business image from the first moment, while concrete characteristics, such as attention, quality, durability and efficiency of services, ensure customer satisfaction, generating security and loyalty in the purchasing decision process (Moreno *et al.*, 2022).

It is important to adapt the services that current businesses provide to the needs and expectations of customers; they can develop a brand that highlights these differences and

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thus generate reliability and loyalty. On the other hand, Cazorla-Milla (2024) argues that positioning a brand and maintaining its presence in a highly competitive market is not a matter of a day, where a well-executed positioning ensures a solid identity and a relationship of trust with customers, standing out from other available options as long as we use solid content strategies (Mera & Lemoine, 2024).

Based on the above, we adopt the approach of Martínez (2020) when he mentions that “to position or reposition a brand in the consumer’s mind, it is necessary to follow a process applicable to both goods and services as well as brands themselves”. He mentions that according to the type of positioning, a certain process must be applied, which is described in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Positioning Process

Note: Adapted from Martínez G. (2020).

Although, Altimira (2023) mentions that positioning strategies consist of a set of actions and tactics carefully designed by a company so that its brand, product or service is perceived in a particular way compared to the competition. The objective is to shape the public’s perception, associating the brand with specific attributes, benefits or values that distinguish it and make it more attractive to consumers.

Such strategies are essential for any company that wants to stand out in a competitive market. Through a well-planned set of actions and tactics, a company can shape its audience’s perception, presenting its brand, product or service differently than the competition. The goal of these strategies is not only to stand out, but also to generate an emotional connection with consumers, associating the brand with attributes and values that resonate with their needs and desires. In this way, effective positioning can transform a simple offer into a preferred choice, boosting customer loyalty through relationship management and ensuring a sustainable competitive advantage (Lemoine & Pérez, 2022).

Said in the words of Robinson (2024) argues that “market positioning strategy is a key piece when it comes to brand development”. In the automotive market, positioning strategies play a crucial role in brand development. By specializing in services, including the sale of oils and/or spare parts, many businesses can differentiate themselves by positioning themselves as a company that not only offers these high-quality services, but also provides fully personalized attention to each client according to their needs. For example, by focusing on oil changes, which are a free service with in-store purchases, Tropicars lubrication can

stand out from competitors who charge for this service. In addition, by providing exceptional customer service and expert technical advice, Tropicars reinforces its image of trust and professionalism. This approach not only attracts new customers, but also fosters the loyalty of existing customers, who value personalized attention and superior quality.

According to Morán *et al.* (2021) in their research carried out at the Toñito Washing and Lubricating Plant in the Quevedo canton, they mention that the development of a strategic marketing plan was key for the Toñito Washing and Lubricating Plant to achieve successful positioning at a local level. Through the identification of strategic and effective points in key markets, the company was able to better adapt to the demands of the environment. This plan became an essential tool to avoid errors derived from a lack of understanding of the market, allowing the formulation of solid strategies. As a result, the company achieved greater economic profitability, business relevance and a more complete service, which contributed to its success and sustainability in the industry.

In Lischer’s (2024) opinion, “A brand is the sum total of how a business is perceived by those who experience it”. This is the result of all the experiences, both direct and indirect, that a customer has with the commercial offer, covering tangible aspects, such as product quality, and intangible elements, such as corporate values, reputation and visual communication.

In other words, a brand is built not only through what it offers, but also through the subjective perceptions that each individual generates based on their relationship with the service. This includes factors such as the coherence

between the value promise and the actual delivery, customer service experiences, and even third-party opinions. All of this is integrated to form an image of what that brand represents in the market.

Considerations by Maza *et al.* (2020) argue that brands have become so deeply integrated into people's daily lives that they are now an essential part of culture. Today, companies seek to get consumers to identify with their brands, making them generate an emotional connection and reflect their personal values and aspirations. The integration of brands into everyday life responds to how companies have evolved to emotionally connect with consumers. Today, brands not only offer a good, but also represent symbols with which people express their identity and values. This change is due to the fact that consumers are looking for a deeper relationship with brands, which transcends functionality and reflects their personal aspirations. The constant presence of brands, driven by technology and the media, has allowed them to become a cultural and emotional extension of people's lives, strengthening loyalty and a sense of belonging.

From the position of the position of Hayes (2024) mentions that Branding is a strategic approach aimed at creating and differentiating a company's visual identity and service portfolio. This process involves aligning the brand's identity with business objectives, effectively communicating its value proposition to the target audience, and making adjustments or reinforcing the brand when necessary to maintain its relevance and competitiveness in the marketplace.

Brand development, as a strategic process, aims to establish a unique and differentiated identity that positions the company in the market. Creating a coherent visual identity is essential to stand out from the competition. This approach requires a deep understanding of business objectives, as the brand must reflect not only the essence of the company, but also its long-term goals.

According to Guthrie (2023) highlights that brand development is a long and continuous path which must be consistently monitored as market dynamics and global culture evolve, a company must adjust its values to stay aligned with emerging and future trends.

Innovation in brand development involves the ability to continually adapt and transform a brand's identity and strategy to stay relevant and competitive. This is achieved by incorporating new ideas, technologies and trends that allow the brand to differentiate itself and connect more effectively with its audience in an ever-changing environment.

Citing Falcó (2023), he refers to the fact that within brand innovation, the first objective is to improve the company's competitiveness, which is achieved by implementing significant changes in internal processes, allowing the organization to become more competitive. The second objective focuses on increasing the value that customers perceive from the services offered by the brand, which is achieved by transforming the business model, where research and development play a crucial role in identifying new opportunities.

Innovation in brand development involves a company's ability to adapt and evolve, creating value propositions that respond to changing market needs. Within the automotive market, this innovation translates into the use of advanced technology and value practices, as well as the implementation of communication strategies that connect emotionally with consumers. This not only strengthens the brand's identity, but also positions it as a benchmark in the sector, capable of anticipating trends and effectively meeting customer expectations.

The "Tropicars" lubrication company opened its doors in August 2003, being a small warehouse that provided automotive services accompanied by products, where only oils, lubricants and basic spare parts in the automotive field were distributed. Over time, it has had approximately 3 changes of physical points in the same area and due to internal problems it stopped providing car wash services, this being a key to transformation. Today it is a large business maintaining its main service, providing everything from oils to tires. It has a meager presence of tactics that allow it to develop its brand in a strategic amount so that its presence in the automotive market is differentiating and valuable, which does not open up opportunities for growth either locally or nationally.

In today's highly competitive and diversified automotive market, the brand plays a key role in consumer perception and purchasing choice. According to Lemoine *et al.* (2021), states that positioning is related to programming the consumer's mind so that a brand appears and how it works with other competing brands. Likewise, it states that the war of brands is in the consumer's mind and that the main objective of brand identity is to find a place in it. Based on this argument, it is desired to study the appropriate positioning strategies to achieve complete brand development regarding the Tropicars Lubricator. This, therefore, allows for the implementation of more important strategic points to reach the desired objective. This research seeks to explore in depth the effective positioning strategies for brand development in the specific context of the Tropicars lubricator. Various strategies that can be used to effectively position itself in the market will be examined. Firstly, it is crucial to understand the environment in which lubricators operate. This market is characterized by the presence of numerous competitors, both locally and internationally, offering a wide range of services. In the face of this competition, lubricators must stand out not only for the quality of what they offer, but also for the strength of their brand and the perception, they generate in consumers.

Based on the details, the question arises: How does the choice and execution of positioning strategies impact brand development and consumer preference in a highly competitive market?

The overall objective of this study is to analyze appropriate positioning strategies for Tropicars Lubricator. Specific objectives include investigating competitors' positioning strategies, assessing current brand perception, and providing suitable strategies that deliver increased value.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research used a mixed-model methodology, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to gain a more complete understanding. The quantitative approach was based on the application of structured surveys, in order to collect measurable data that allow statistical analysis. In parallel, qualitative techniques such as direct observation and interviews were used, which offered a deeper insight into the participants' experiences and contexts.

The combination of both approaches allowed for data triangulation, broadening the scope of the findings and facilitating the achievement of objectives in a more robust manner. On the other hand, the population of the methodology focused on current and potential customers of the Tropicars lubrication company in the Jama canton, with the selection of a representative

sample of 50 inhabitants using random or convenience sampling techniques. To ensure the reliability of the data, the data analysis was carried out using SPSS version 25 software, using descriptive methods such as frequencies and percentages to interpret the results and evaluate the relationships between the variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Below are the results obtained from the survey, which reflect the preferences and expectations of Tropicars lubrication company customers. This data provides a detailed insight into what consumer's value, their purchasing behaviours, and the areas in which they seek improvement. This information is essential to better understand the needs of the public and guide future decisions that drive both customer satisfaction and brand growth.

Table 1: Reliability statistics

Alpha of Cronbach	N of elements
0.957	12

Table 1 shows the reliability of the instrument applied. The 12 elements of the survey obtained a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.957, which indicates excellent internal consistency in the questions asked. A Cronbach's Alpha value greater than 0.9 is generally considered highly reliable and suggests that the questionnaire elements consistently measure the main construct of Tropicars brand positioning.

According to the results, demographic data revealed information about the gender and age of Tropicars customers. 82% of respondents (41 people) are male, while 18% (9 people) are female, showing a significant majority of male customers, a common characteristic in the automotive sector. In terms of age, the predominant group is 28-37 years old, representing 42% of respondents (21 people), followed by the 38-47 age group, with 32% (16 people). Customers aged 18-27 make up 16% (8 people), while those aged 48 and above make up 10% (5 people).

This profile suggests that Tropicars has attracted mainly men in active life stages, for whom vehicle maintenance is a priority, whether for personal or work needs. In general, this is a clientele that stands out for its frequency in the use and care of its vehicles.

The research also wanted to find out through which medium customers found out about Tropicars Lubricator. In the results, 76% (38 people) indicated that they found out about it through recommendations from friends and family, on the other hand, 20% (10 people) did so through traditional media such as newspapers and radio. Finally, 4% (2 people) found out about it through recommendations and advertising content. The strong dependence on recommendations shows that Tropicars has developed a good reputation among its clientele, which results in current customers recommending the brand. This is an indicator of trust and satisfaction with the services, which strengthens Tropicars' positioning in the market.

Table 2: What is the element that differentiates the Tropicars Lubricator from the competition?

		F	%	%V	%TO
Valid	Quality of service	34	68.0	68.0	68.0
	Quality of products	16	32.0	32.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

According to the results shown in Table 2, it is evident that 68% of respondents (34 people) consider that service quality is the main differentiating element of Tropicars compared to the competition, while 32% (16 people) highlight the quality of the products. This perception suggests that customer service and the

treatment received are valued as outstanding aspects. Service quality is established as the main factor for which customers choose Tropicars, indicating that this aspect is a fundamental part of its value proposition. This shows a positive relationship with customers, who associate Tropicars with a high quality service.

Table 3: Do you think that Tropicars Lubricator is positioned in the Jama Canton?

		F	%	%V	%TO
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Valid	Totally agree	38	76.0	76.0	76.0
	Ok	12	24.0	24.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

From Table 3, it was found that 76% of respondents (38 people) fully agree that Tropicars is positioned in the Jama canton, while the remaining 24% (12 people) also agree, although to a lesser extent. This consensus reflects a general positive perception of Tropicars' positioning in the community. The high rating of Tropicars as

a brand positioned in the Jama canton suggests that the company has managed to establish a recognizable presence and good acceptance in the local market. This consolidates its position among the competition and reinforces its relevance in the lubrication and spare parts sector in Jama.

Table 4: Do you think that Tropicars lubrication company should develop and innovate its visual identity more comprehensively?

		F	%	%V	%TO
Valid	Totally agree	36	72.0	72.0	72.0
	OK	10	20.0	20.0	92.0
	Neutral	4	8.0	8.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

According to the results in Table 4, 72% of respondents (36 people) indicated that they strongly agreed that Tropicars should innovate its visual identity, followed by 20% (10 people) who agreed and 8% (4 people) who were neutral. This reveals a considerable interest in seeing an improvement or update in the brand image. The perception of the need to innovate the visual identity suggests that customers would be receptive to changes in the appearance and presentation of Tropicars. A modern visual identity could attract more attention and improve the perception of the brand in terms of professionalism and updating. In addition, the illustrative element that identifies the Tropicars lubrication company was investigated. The results show that 52% of respondents (26 people) identify it with illustrations of cars, while 36% (18 people) prefer engine elements. Mechanical symbols and the oil silhouette have 6% each (3 people). The results reflect a

tendency of customers towards direct representations of cars and engines, which indicates the affinity of customers towards symbols related to vehicles. This result can guide Tropicars in the use of visual elements that connect better with its consumers.

Likewise, in order to identify the message or slogan that identifies Tropicars Lubricator, the results reflect that the phrase "The quality of service that your vehicle deserves" was selected by the majority of respondents (33 people), while "Service that extends the life of your engine" was chosen by 18% (9 people) and "Quality maintenance, guaranteed performance" by 16% (8 people). The majority choice of this message underlines that customer's value a focus on service and vehicle care. This message reflects the connection that customers feel towards Tropicars and supports its positioning as a brand focused on quality of service.

Table 5: Please indicate the platform through which Tropicars Lubricator should provide content?

		F	%	%V	%TO
Valid	Facebook	21	42.0	42.0	42.0
	WhatsApp	15	30.0	30.0	72.0
	Tik Tok	14	28.0	28.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

In Table 5, the results reflect that Facebook is the preferred platform for 42% of respondents (21 people), followed by WhatsApp with 30% (15 people) and TikTok with 28% (14 people). This shows the variety of channels that customers use and would prefer to obtain content from Tropicars. However, the preference for platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp highlights the channels through which customers expect to communicate with Tropicars. The popularity of these platforms offers Tropicars an effective avenue to connect and keep its customers informed.

Finally, through the control question Do you consider that brand development is essential for the positioning of Tropicars Lubricator in Jama Canton. It was learned that 92% of respondents (46 people) consider that brand development is essential for the positioning of Tropicars, while 8% (4 people) do not consider it necessary. This shows a majority perception that the evolution of the brand is important to ensure its place in the market. The high valuation of brand development underlines that customers perceive the importance of Tropicars maintaining and strengthening its identity to preserve its relevance and recognition in the market.

Discussion

Once several works similar to the research carried out were analysed, it was found that Moreira *et al.* (2021) in their research entitled “Design of marketing strategies for the brand positioning of the Tacita Caliente Foundation” states that:

Advertising strategies help not only in the marketing of products and services, but also help those Foundations such as the Tacita Caliente Foundation, to be recognized by a greater number of people, to know their purposes and to contribute to their strengthening, which will impact their prestige at a national level and recognition by government entities, in order to gain their attention and help in the present and future.

These authors mentioned how advertising strategies can help establishments position themselves, which is applicable to Tropicars, since a high proportion of its customers learned about the brand through recommendations. On the other hand, this dynamic suggests that, although the establishment has achieved notable recognition at a local level, it can benefit from broader advertising strategies that complement the effect of the recommendation and potentially attract a more diverse clientele or even from neighbouring cantons.

As indicated by Sepúlveda and Correa (2019) in their research entitled “Development of marketing strategies for brand positioning in the retail channel, case study of the company Vilaseca SAS” they state that it has been shown that there are different motives, interests and perceptions of the consumer that influence them at the time of making the decision to purchase a product, it is at that moment where the positioning of a brand plays a key factor in the mind of a consumer. What the authors mention coincides with the results obtained in the research in which “service quality” was identified as the main differentiating factor of Tropicars compared to its competitors, suggesting that the company has managed to capture and satisfy specific expectations of its clientele. This finding corroborates the importance of a focus on the service experience to strengthen customer loyalty and generate clear and effective positioning.

Duarte *et al.* (2019) in their research “Brand positioning for the company Campos de Café por Siempre with digital marketing in Colombia” indicates that great opportunities for positioning the company’s brand are identified, through digital tools that today are essential to improve the marketing of products and due to the current demands of the consumer in terms of technology. Campos de Café por Siempre, by not having a presence on the Internet, opens the option of starting everything with the brand using Digital Marketing. Which reaffirms the importance of digital marketing as an essential tool for brand positioning, especially in a context where the technological demands of the modern consumer drive the visibility and accessibility of online companies. Likewise, they conclude that the absence of a digital presence limits the positioning opportunities of a brand, while its incorporation through digital strategies can significantly

improve the marketing of products and interaction with customers.

This approach is directly reflected in the results obtained for Tropicars, where the majority of respondents expressed the need for the brand to be available on digital platforms, in this way the company can also strengthen its brand. The digital presence will facilitate interaction and accessibility of information through channels such as Facebook and WhatsApp, helping Tropicars to remain competitive in today’s market.

As Flores (2024) indicates in his research called “Diffusion and Positioning Strategies of the Guaranda Brand – in Ecuador” that brand design and usage standards have a deep and lasting impact on the positioning and recognition of the city of Guaranda. A coherent and well-implemented visual identity is essential to establish a strong and distinctive image that can differentiate Guaranda from other cities. This strategic effort not only improves the perception of the city at a local level, but can also extend to a regional and even international audience. This author mentions that a coherent and attractive visual identity contributes significantly to brand recognition. The research indicates that the majority of respondents fully agree on the need to innovate in Tropicars’ visual identity, suggesting an opportunity for improvement in this aspect to broaden its appeal and adapt to a visually oriented audience. This highlights the relevance of a robust branding strategy, as Flores suggests, to maintain competitiveness and visibility in the local market.

Mojica *et al.* (2019) indicate in their research entitled “Evaluation of brand positioning strategies implemented by an Educational Institution to contribute to its economic profitability” that the importance of proposing a marketing strategy for brand positioning based on two basic elements: customer perception of the brand as a starting point, and the identification of the target market. Through the first element, both the needs of the market and their common points with the institution’s value proposition can be identified, leaving a clear message that must be communicated to be a reference in the customer’s mind; for its part, the identification of the target market allows us to know to whom and how the message must be communicated, so that the educational proposal reaches the people who will receive it in the expected way and the success of the process is guaranteed.

These authors emphasize that a brand positioning strategy must be based on customer perception and on the precise identification of the target market, considering that these elements allow the value proposition to be aligned with the specific needs of the public. In the context of Tropicars, this theory is clearly reflected in the results obtained, where service quality emerges as the most valued and differentiating attribute of the brand. This suggests that the company has managed to correctly identify a key aspect for its target audience, which is personalized attention and reliability in services, elements that guarantee customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Therefore, according to the results obtained and in

relation to the research of different authors, the following strategies are proposed within the Tropicars lubricator:

Digital marketing: Presence and content on the Internet according to your market research.

Brand reconstruction: strengthening the brand identity and reinforcing its rebranding.

Point of sale optimization with a focus on merchandising.

To strengthen Tropicars' online presence, it is proposed to prioritize the use of Facebook and WhatsApp, the most popular social networks according to the survey. On Facebook, it would be ideal to publish attractive content that shows the benefits of the products and services, taking advantage of tools such as segmented ads and interest groups. This would help to capture the attention of potential customers and build loyalty among current ones. On WhatsApp, a direct communication channel could be implemented to answer questions, offer technical support and share exclusive promotions, thus strengthening the close relationship with customers and facilitating a quick response.

In terms of rebuilding the brand, it is suggested to carry out a rebranding focused on projecting trust and quality, highlighting the values that customers appreciate in Tropicars. This would include consistent visual and verbal communication across all media, conveying a clear message about the durability and effectiveness of the products. The intention is to project a modern and professional image that is present at all points of contact with customers.

To improve the experience at the point of sale and make it more attractive, it is proposed to reorganize the space to facilitate access to the most popular products. In addition, these products could be highlighted through displays and signage that allow for quick identification and understanding of their benefits. Including a demonstration area in the store would give customers the opportunity to experience the quality and value of the products before purchasing them, thus offering an enriching and differentiated shopping experience.

CONCLUSION

The research concludes that service quality is the key factor in Tropicars' positioning, perceived as the main differentiator in the local automotive market. This approach, based on reliable customer service, allows the brand to stand out in a highly competitive environment, consolidating its recognition and loyalty in Jama canton.

Additionally, digital presence is identified as a strategic necessity for positioning. Current and potential customers prefer online channels to interact with the brand. The lack of digital strategies limits its visibility and reach compared to competitors active on platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp. Implementing a digital strategy would meet consumer expectations, expand its reach, and strengthen its positioning.

Finally, the research highlights the importance of innovating Tropicars' visual identity to maintain its relevance. Customers value a modern image that conveys

professionalism and trust. The renewal of its visual identity, combined with a strategy focused on quality attributes and personalized attention, would establish Tropicars as a benchmark in the sector, enhancing its competitive advantage and achieving a stronger connection with its target audience.

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