



CHAPTER 10

Positioning

Here in the qualification stage, you are focused on making credible, strategic business decisions about pursuing specific opportunities. Everything you do here drives action items and next steps—the forward movement of SES.

Four Qualification Tools

There are four proprietary Sandler tools you will be using in this stage to move specific opportunities forward: the **Positioning Tool**, the **Pre-Call Planner Tool**, the **Call Debrief Tool**, and the **Opportunity Tool**. All are based on fundamental Sandler principles, as applied to the enterprise world.

What has happened up to this point? You have done territory and account planning to increase the likelihood that the business you pursue is the business you're most likely to win. You've followed structured prospecting activities, engaging and communicating

with prospects and setting the right mutual expectations. Now, at the level of the actual opportunity, you drill down further. Let's begin with the process called "positioning."

SANDLER ENTERPRISE SELLING RULE

Know your competitors so well that they bring out the best in you.

The Big Question

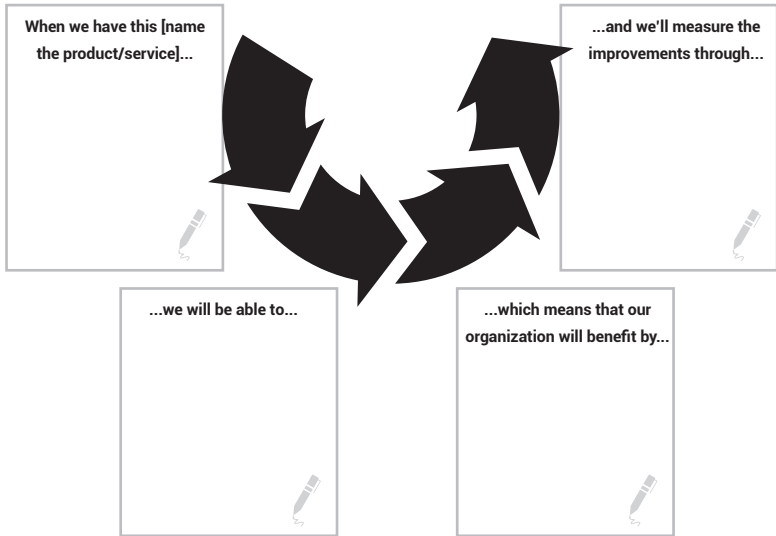
What would you say is the single most important thing for you to understand about your competition?

You'd be surprised at the wide range of answers participants give in SES training sessions. People say the most important thing to understand about a competitor on an enterprise pursuit is anything from their strategy, their product/service, and the markets they serve to their pricing.

Actually, Sandler says the most important thing to understand about the competition in the enterprise world is their value proposition for a specific buyer in a specific opportunity.

If you know how the competition is positioning themselves for the business you want, then you can position your own offer more effectively. That's the answer to the big question. If you could wave a magic wand and learn one thing about what your competitors are up to, that's probably what you'd want to know. Why? Because your own value proposition should outflank the competition's. If it doesn't, you'd want to know about that in short order.

At this point, it's a good idea to review the four-part SES definition of a value proposition. Look at the value arrows once again:



There is nothing wrong with studying the competition's history and offerings, but success in the enterprise world requires that you develop an understanding of the value propositions your competition will likely bring to the opportunity you are pursuing.

At this point, it's not uncommon for salespeople to tell us, "I have no idea what the competition's value propositions are." Sandler's proprietary Positioning Tool helps you get a little closer to figuring that out. Let's look at it now.

The Positioning Tool

The Positioning Tool provides a clear, simple template for identifying the customized value of your product or service, in comparison with the competitive options available to the enterprise account being pursued.

“Know your enemies and know yourself.”
—Sun Tzu

Positioning your product or service properly often requires in-depth analysis and research. The Positioning Tool begins that research process, gives you a clear picture of the likely cast of characters and helps you to create a competitively aware action plan.



Positioning Tool

Opportunity Details				
Account:	Kennedy & Mariani Financial			
KARE Type:	Expand			
Opportunity Name:	E-Branding			
Sales Lead:	Julia Angelos			
Value:	\$160K			
Probability:	60%			
Close Date:	Oct. 20			
Client Cast of Characters				
Who	Role	Impact on This Deal (High, Medium, Low)	DISC Style D, I, S or C	Relationship (Friend, Neutral, Enemy) F, N or E
Shannon Truro	CFO		D	N
Revo Kallistro	AVP - Finance		C	F
Evan Williams	Financial Analyst		I	N
Our Solution/Value Proposition				
Product/service	Printing services for roll-out of e-branding campaign.			
What it will do for the client	On-demand printing of survey results on the day of product introduction.			
What the benefit is to the client's business	K&M clients will see survey results on the day of product introduction.			
How the benefit will be measured	40% client adoption rate within 30 days; 60% within 90 days.			
Competition				
Competitor	Product/Service	Strength	Areas to Exploit	Coaches

Above, you see a portion of the Positioning Tool. To prepare for a positioning session, you should:

- Consider a significant opportunity you are currently pursuing, then identify each key buyer within that opportunity and rate your relationship with each of them. Is this person a friend, neutral or an enemy? Also make your own best identification of each person's impact on this deal (high, medium or low) and DISC style.
- State the solution you plan to present in terms of the four elements of the value proposition.
- Identify the key competitors. What are their strengths? What are their weaknesses? Who are their coaches? What presence do they currently have within the account? What value have they delivered in the past? What next steps will you take to identify the competition's likely current value proposition? (For instance, what internal allies could you ask about this? When will you do this?)

To find out more about the Positioning Tool and how it can help your business, visit www.sandler.com/enterpriseselling.com or contact your local Sandler office.

