Journal your brand

Use this journal to take notes, complete tasks, get creative,
or just doodle in it (that's still being creative).

Session 2; Insight
How do you stand out from the competition?

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Journal your brand

Untangle Your Brand
Session 2; Insight

How do you stand out from the competition?

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What to expect

This session explores the importance of insight in branding and how businesses can stand out by understanding their audience, business, and competition (ABC). You will learn how to gather and analyse valuable information, identify opportunities for differentiation, and create a clear positioning strategy. Through practical exercises and real-world applications, you will gain the tools to make informed branding decisions that foster connection and loyalty.

By the end of this session, you'll clearly understand the importance of insight and how it can help make your brand more relevant.

- Explain the role of insight in branding and why continuous research into audience, business, and competition is essential for long-term success.
- Apply audience research techniques, including customer feedback, to uncover needs, preferences, and emotional responses to a brand.
- Use the positioning matrix to evaluate their brand's place in the market and identify opportunities for differentiation.
- Reflect on customer perceptions by assessing what people love and dislike about their brand, ensuring alignment with audience expectations.
- Develop a clear positioning statement summarising their brand's unique value and emotional connection, using structured exercises to refine their messaging.

Remember to complete the quiz and feedback form using the links provided. Your input is valuable for improving your experience, reviewing your progress against the original learning objectives, and enhancing the course overall.

Session 2 Quiz; test what you've learned
Session 2 Feedback; provide input to improve the session



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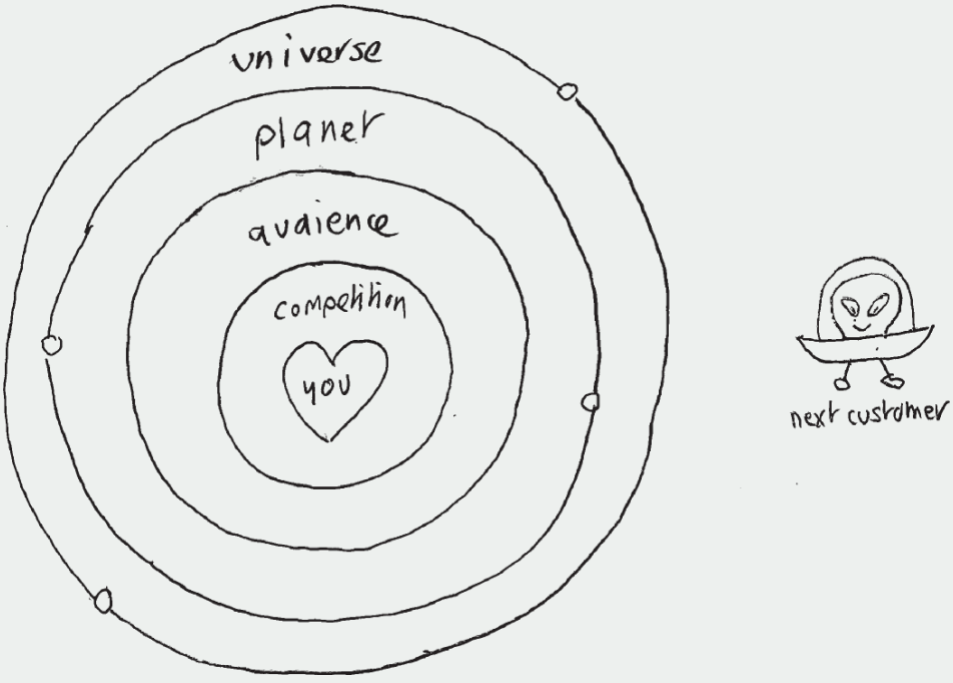
Why is insight important?

Gaining insight is a continuous process. While you can go through the exercises in this book, it's worth revisiting them regularly. There are three key areas to consider:

Your audience: Understanding everything about your audience, including their thoughts and feelings, is vital for building loyalty and trust. Go beyond basic demographics (e.g., age, gender, location) and psychographics (e.g., lifestyle, beliefs, social status). Instead, focus on their deeper feelings about your products and services. They'll love you for it.

Your business: Reflect on your business's overall performance. Assess your marketing activities—which have been successful and which have failed? Identify areas requiring more focus, such as improving your website. Stay informed about industry trends and broader developments. How can your website be improved? What areas need more focus? What's happening in the news? What are the bigger trends for your area of expertise?

Your competition: Be aware of your competitors without obsessing over them. This awareness can be a source of inspiration, but don't copy—find your unique edge. Look to businesses you admire for ideas that resonate with your audience. If you love something, your audience will likely be attracted to similar businesses and brands.



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2.1 Where are you positioned?

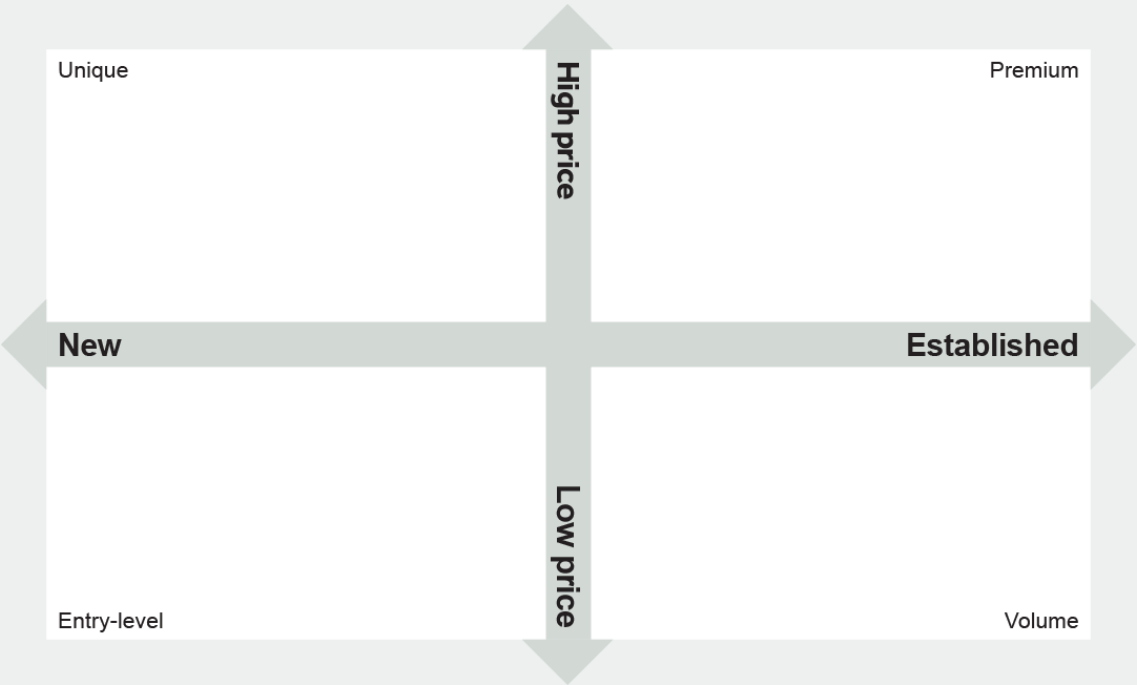
Positioning is how your **audience** sees your **business** relative to your **competition**.

Once you understand more about your market and your competition, you can identify where you fit compared to everyone else. This makes it easier to understand what you may need to change to **differentiate** yourself from direct competitors or **align** with businesses you want to be associated with.

Competition is generally healthy in business as it spurs companies to innovate and get ahead of each other. You can gain kudos by association with other loved brands but avoid trying to 'cash in' on their reputation. Customers see through this.

The matrix below is a generic approach to positioning, which is useful when you first consider positioning (but you can create your own axis). Decide where your key competitors are on the matrix, where you sit, and where you might want to be. Who are you in competition with, and how will you evolve over time?

If you don't think you have competition, start by considering what your audience will spend their money on if they don't buy your product or service. You might be competing with Netflix subscriptions, Amazon or the local pub!!!!



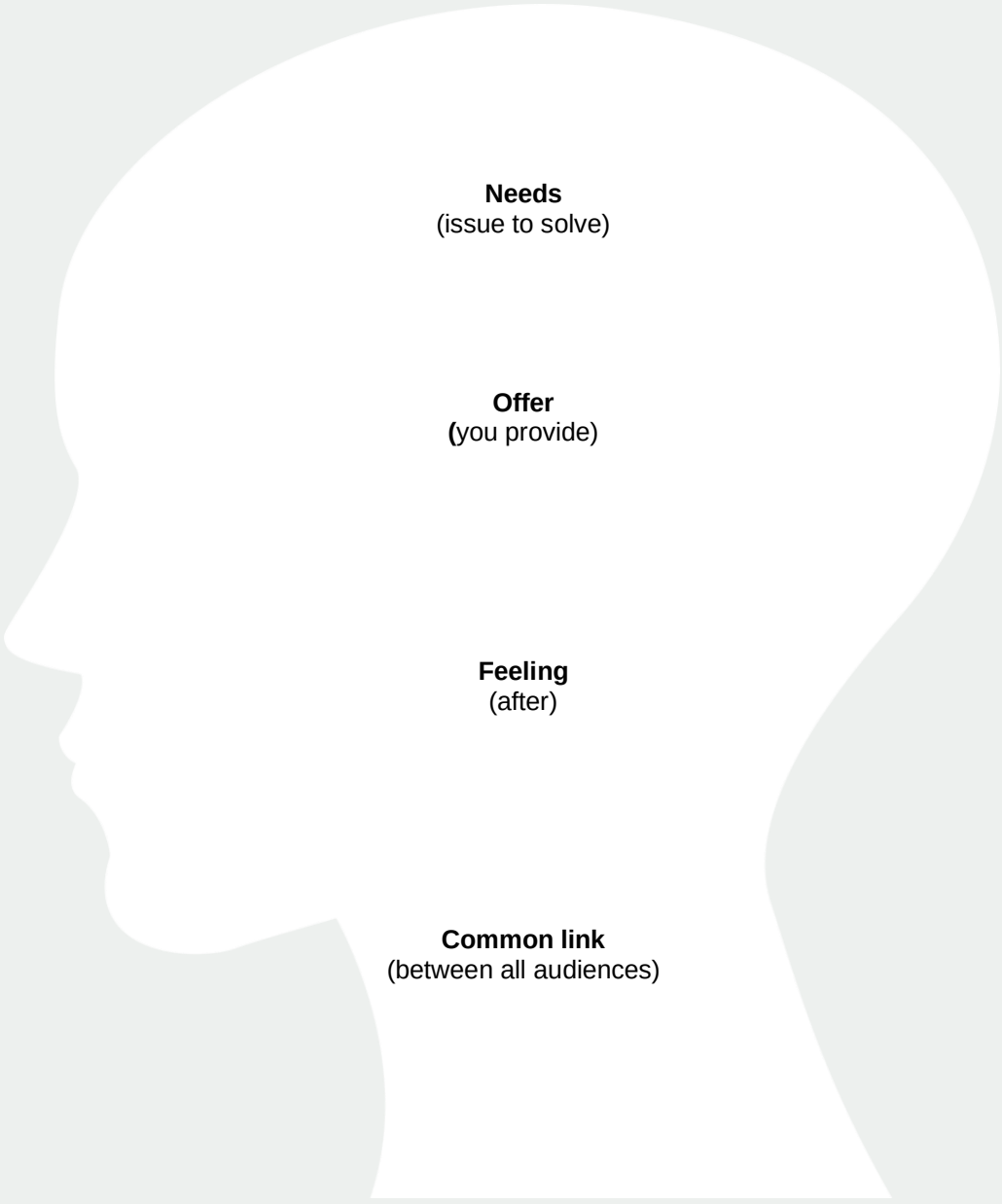
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2.2 Needs, offer, feeling

You could have several different audiences for your product and service. But try to work with just one or a couple to begin with to help you focus. Understanding who they are is important, but how you want them to feel when engaged with your brand is crucial to creating a brand.

How much do you know about your audience and what motivates them to buy your products and services? Go beyond the usual demographics and psychographics and think about how they feel once they've experienced a specific product or service. Do this for several audience types (current customer, lapsed customer, cheerleader). What links them all?



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2.3 Ask your audience

If you've been in business a while, don't forget about your existing customers; they will have lots of valuable insight. Ask them questions (either directly or via online surveys). Keep the questions short and simple. (A one-to-one interview should last about 30 minutes, and online surveys should have between 5 and 8 questions.) Even ask people who didn't buy your product or service; you can sometimes learn even more. Cheerleaders (people who have supported you on your journey) will often have already identified what makes your business unique. Ask them!

Open questions: for one-to-one conversations (ie "What do you think of cheese?".
Closed questions: for larger surveys to groups (ie "Do you like cheese?").
Tip: if doing multiple client interviews, then structure the questionnaire the same for each interview so you can easily compare answers.



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2.4 Love it or hate it?

What customers love about your business is probably front of mind. But what do they hate about it, and does that matter? Sometimes, having a brand that can immediately put people off as much as it can draw people in can be an advantage to you. Make it clear what you stand for, and what you don't stand for will ensure you build a loyal following and don't waste time on nurturing an audience that is not right for you or your offer.



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2.5 Look at yourself

Take a look at everything you do and say about your business. Look at everything. Really get close-up and consider what's working and where you can improve things. Do this regularly, but don't be too hard on yourself. Identify what's working and think of ways to strengthen these elements.

Looking good

Doesn't look so good

Room for improvement

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2.6 Look at others

Looking at your competition will help you understand what makes you different. Learn about what they say and how they look. Looking at direct competitors and being influenced by them is useful (not copying them). You may learn more from the big, famous brands in your market or other brands you love.

Brands you admire will trigger responses in you; these responses will likely be relevant to your audience. How can you create that same connection? You may never be as big as the famous brands (but you might be!). But they can influence you as you develop your brand.

Direct competitor

Better at

Not as good at

Unique thing

Admired brand

Really love this brand because

Always buy this brand because

Will never buy this brand because

Really big and famous business

Wish I did

I'll never do

When I'm this famous

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2.7 Competitor audit

Keep looking at the competition and create an audit of what they're saying and how they look. You only need to worry about the top-level details, such as the homepage and the key messages, to understand what they are all about. Look for any headline message the business is using to draw you in. If you go to the About page, just focus on the first 100 words (no one goes much further anyway).

Audit board
Use the layout in this document or follow this link to drop everything into a Canva template.

https://link.pincreative.com/competitor_audit



What they do well	What they do less well	What is unique

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2.8 Positioning statement

After gaining insight into your business, it's time to create a simple statement that describes your business, your difference to the competition, your key audience, and their emotional response. Don't worry if it sounds a bit 'clunky'; you'll never actually carve it into a plaque on your office door, but it will form an important part of your overall brand story. Try a few versions before settling on the final one.

Example
The online cheese company **that** provides wholesale products **for** busy families **so** they can just get on with their day.

The (describe **your** category/activity)

That (describe what differentiates you form the **competition**)

For (describe your key **audience**)

So (describe their **emotional** response)

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Stop, keep, start

After completing this session, what are the key things you should change immediately, what's working well, and what needs to start happening?

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I will **stop** doing

I will **keep** doing

I will **start** doing

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Notes, ideas, sketches, doodles

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