

# Introduction to **Brand Positioning Fundamentals**

- Positioning is a strategic choice, not a tagline or slogan collection
- It defines who you serve, your category, core promise, and credible proof
- Weak positioning confuses slogans with differentiation and appeals to everyone
- You will learn to organize these four elements into one clear, structured position



# What Positioning Is—and What It Is Not

## POSITIONING IS



VS.

## POSITIONING IS NOT



- Positioning is a **strategic decision**, not a tagline, mission, or campaign.



- The correct sequence: **Positioning** → **Branding** → **Marketing**.



- Avoid empty claims: "innovative," "best-in-class" differentiate nothing.



- **Logo Swap Test** If a competitor can claim it, it's a category description.

# The Audience Anchor – Who You Are Really Talking To

- Define a specific segment—BDRs should disqualify leads in under 60 seconds
- Use JTBD: understand the functional, emotional, and social jobs customers hire for
- Example: narrowed from 'compliance teams' to 'General Counsels at \$25M-\$75M financial services firms'
- Specificity signals expertise, attracts right buyers, and filters poor-fit prospects



# Defining the Audience with JTBD and ICP Criteria

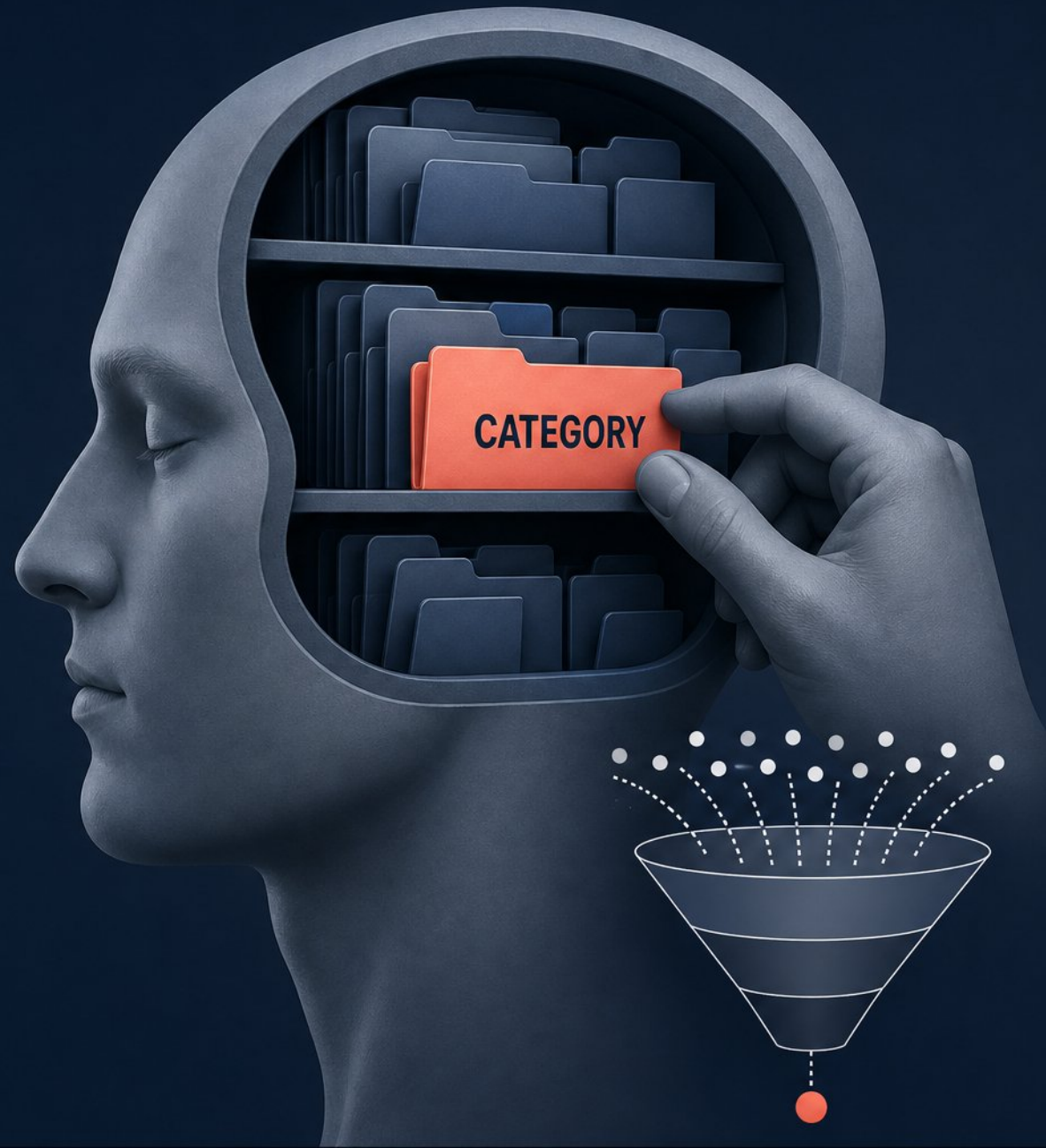
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- JTBD-infused personas capture the job, circumstance, and outcome—not just title or industry.
- The "Three Questions": Who has the problem? What outcome is urgent? What alternatives did they try?
- Different jobs create different positioning opportunities; choose the highest-pain segment first.
- Audience definition sharpens the problem, frames competitors, and determines which claim is credible.

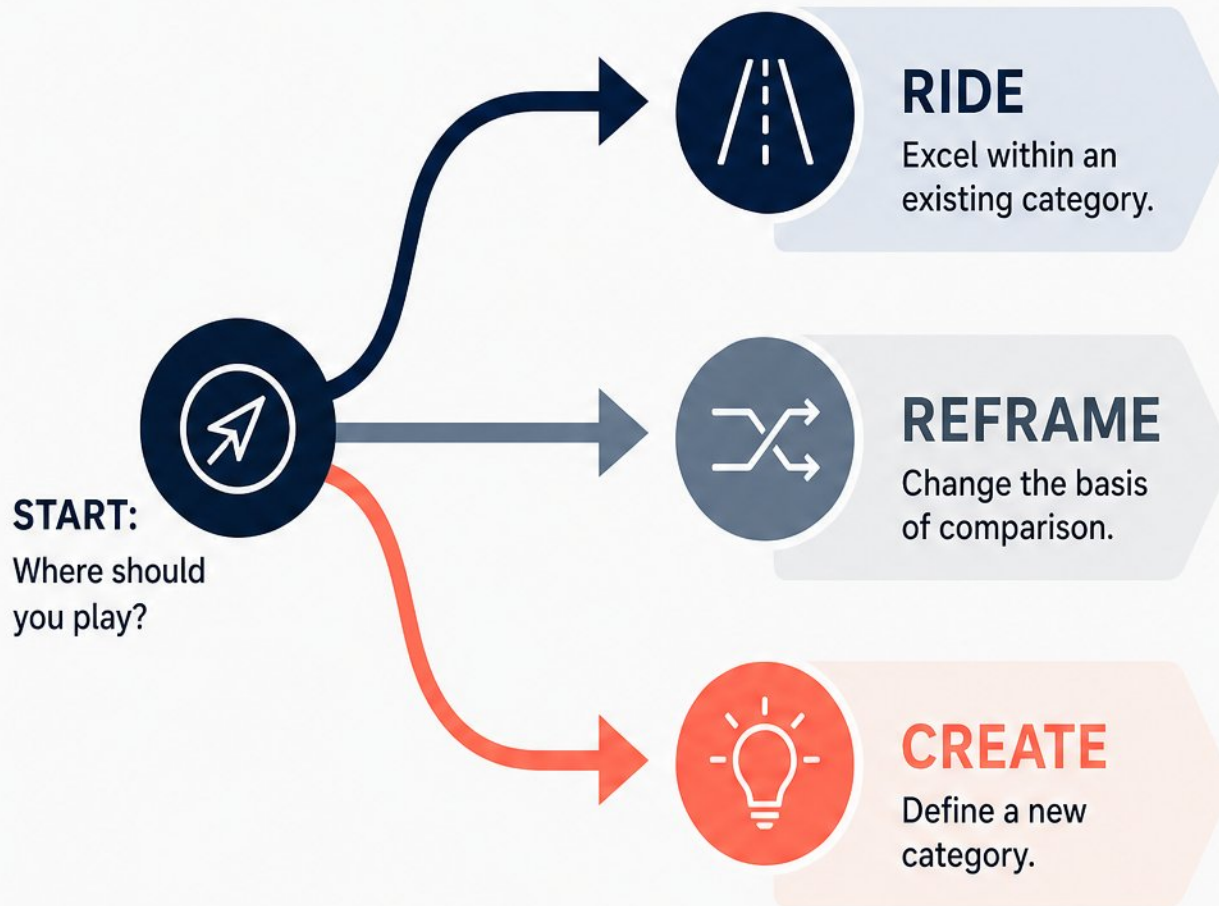


# Category Context – The Frame That Gives Meaning

- Category = the label buyers use to remember you three weeks after the first call
- Wrong category: too novel (only you say it), too broad ('marketing software'), or market already uses another name
- Two paths: compete inside existing category vs. carve a new one
- RemotePass: counter-positioned in global payroll; Stears: created 'data intelligence' for African markets



# Choosing the Right Category: Ride, Reframe, or Create



- Ask 4 questions: existing category? provable edge? naming a rival—help or hurt? market already educated?
- Category design fits when buyers lack a frame and labels confuse, not clarify.
- Reframing changes comparison basis: 'real-time decisions' over 'faster reports.'
- Most \$5M–\$75M firms need positioning clarity first; 9 in 10 requests are positioning problems.

# Core Promise – The One Thing Customers Should Remember

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- Core promise is a single outcome, not a feature list or generic benefit
- Human memory stores simplified associations, not feature catalogs
- "7-Word Verbal Identity" test: compress transformation into 7 words, no buzzwords
- Strongest brands are shorthand for one outcome:  
Volvo = safety, FedEx = overnight
- Goal dilution: promising too many things reduces believability and recall



More healing,  
less typing

# Crafting a Credible and Specific Core Promise



- **Formula:**  
"[Outcome] for [Audience]  
without [Main Friction]"



- **APP structure:**  
Agree with the struggle,  
Promise an outcome,  
Preview the product



- **Warning:**  
Goal dilution makes promises  
harder to remember and believe



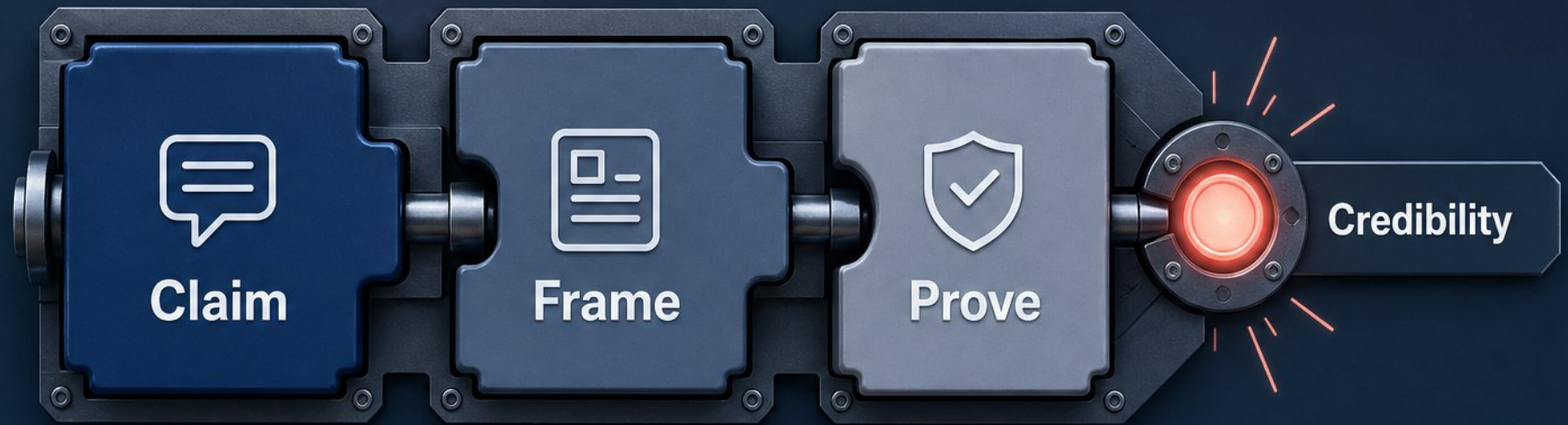
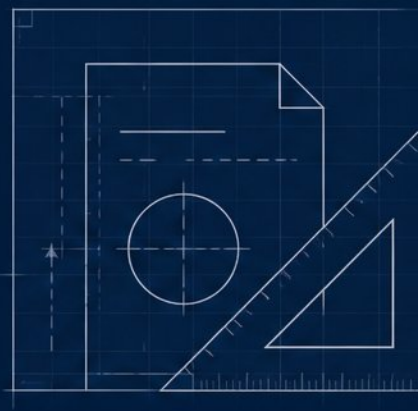
- **Pressure-test:**  
Can a competitor claim  
the same? Does the buyer care?

# Provable Difference – Turning Claims into Credibility

- Proof turns a promise into a credible, verifiable argument
- Data, customer outcomes, certifications, demos all qualify as proof
- CFO wants a dollar figure; evaluator wants an uptime number
- In trust-heavy fields, lead with unmatched proof like Deloitte's 175-year precedent



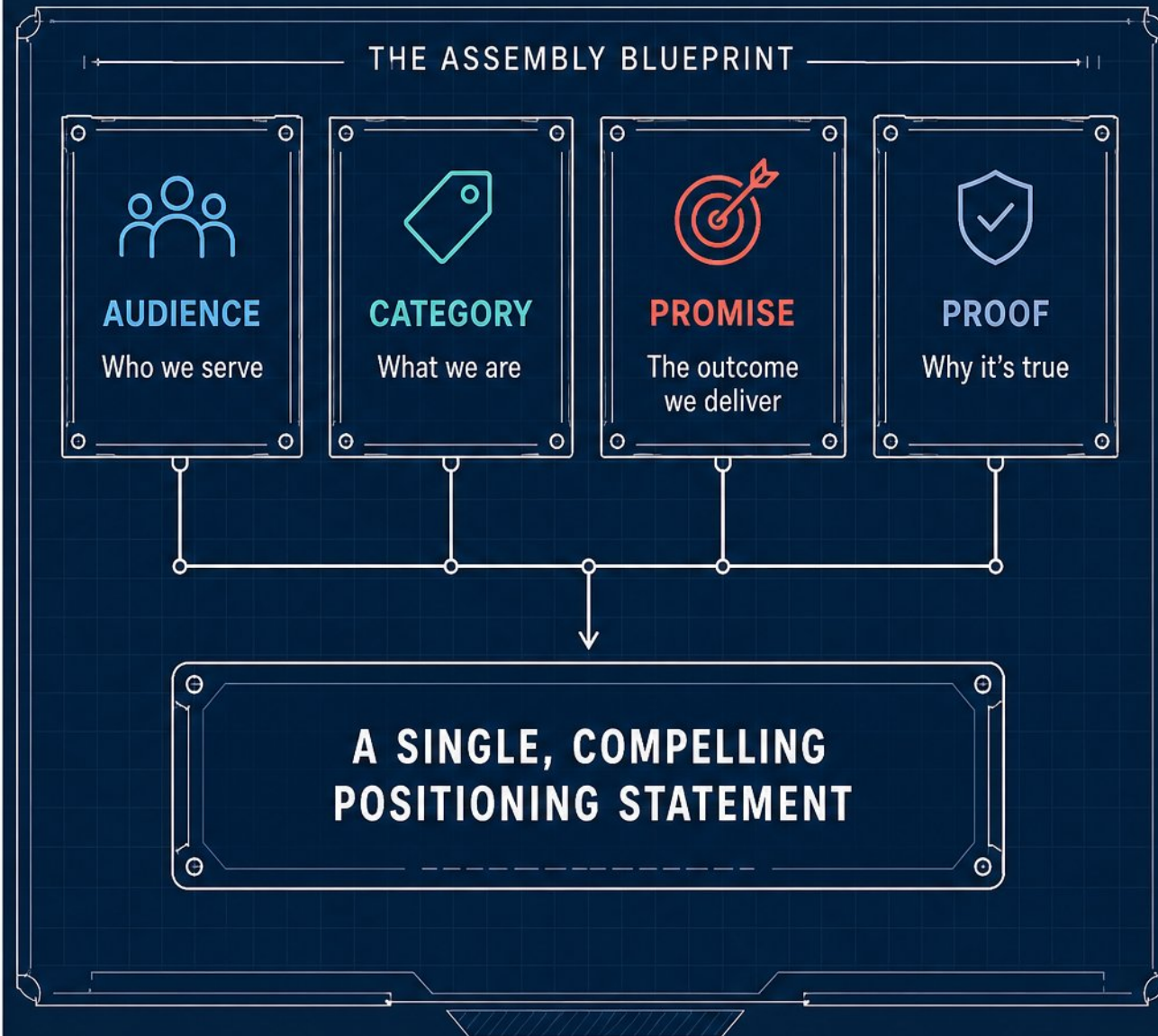
# Building and Stress-Testing Your Proof Library



- Use CFP Protocol: Claim → Frame → Prove in fixed order
- Place proof near primary claims, not isolated on a separate page
- Corroboration threshold: ~3 independent sources to establish a claim
- Audit claims: if unsupported, either find the evidence or drop it

# Assembling the Positioning – From Fragments to a Single Statement

- Classic format: “For [audience] who [need], [brand] is the [category] that [benefit] because [proof].”
- Audience must be narrow enough to self-identify or bounce
- Category must match buyer language; benefit must be an outcome, not a feature
- Add an “unlike [alternative]” clause to sharpen why you are specifically better
- Five decisions (category, audience, problem, alternative, claim) compress into 6-8 sentences—one page that is the whole brief



# Evaluating Positioning Completeness and Coherence



- **Logo Swap Test:** Could a competitor use your statement verbatim?



- **Messaging Filter:** Specific audience, difference, reason to believe, character



- **Common failures:** Irrelevant promise, mismatched proof, category confusion



- **Living asset:** Review quarterly; revisit assumptions annually

# Avoiding the Slogan Trap – Real Positioning vs. Empty Copy



- Taglines  $\neq$  positioning: catchy phrases rely on vague adjectives ('innovative,' 'seamless')



- The Logo Swap Test: if a competitor can claim it, it's a description, not a distinction



- Consensus kills clarity: committees edit out exclusion, producing safe, generic statements



- Before: "Empowering dreams through innovation." After: "For SaaS teams scaling to 200, we cut go-live from six months to six weeks with pre-built SOC 2, ISO 27001, and GDPR frameworks."



## EMPTY SLOGAN

*"Empowering dreams through innovation."*



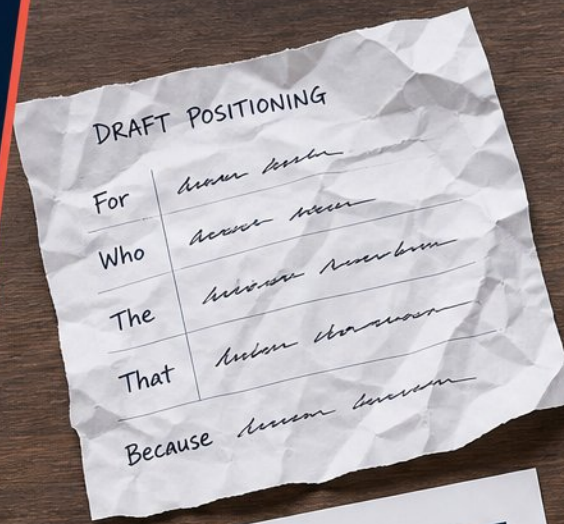
## PROVABLE POSITION

"For SaaS teams scaling to 200, we cut go-live from six months to six weeks with pre-built SOC 2, ISO 27001, and GDPR frameworks."



# Practical Application – Building and Critiquing Positioning

- Facilitate a workshop to draft positioning with the four-element template
- Peer-critique using your anti-slogan checklist (Logo Swap & 3 Questions tests)
- Pressure-test with a skeptic buyer, journalist summary, and competitor comparison
- Integrate final positioning into messaging briefs and sales enablement docs



| POSITIONING TEMPLATE |  |
|----------------------|--|
| For                  |  |
| Who                  |  |
| The                  |  |
| That                 |  |
| Because              |  |

| FINAL POSITIONING |                                                                      |
|-------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| For               | For leaders responsible for complex, high-stakes decisions           |
| Who               | Who need clarity, alignment, and confident action                    |
| The               | The Precision Lens                                                   |
| That              | That cuts through complexity to reveal what matters most             |
| Because           | Because better clarity leads to better decisions and better outcomes |



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