

## Case Study

## COMPANY BRAND POSITIONING

CLIENT OVERVIEW	<p><b>Oregon Mutual Insurance</b></p> <p>Oregon Mutual is a 100+ year old property casualty insurer operating in five western states. The company sells personal policies (homeowner and auto insurance) and business policies through independent insurance brokers.</p>
ISSUES & CHALLENGES	<p>There were several key issues of immediate concern to Oregon Mutual. First, they are a relatively small insurance company with major national and international competitors, so they needed to identify a market niche where they could successfully compete. And, second, competitors who sell directly to consumers via the Internet (bypassing brokers) had a built-in cost distinct advantage over Oregon Mutual who had not yet pursued that sales path.</p>
PROJECT GOALS	<p>Blackstone was selected by Oregon Mutual's senior management to (1) help develop their strategic brand positioning, and to (2) provide management with recommendations to align their internal operations with the external marketplace.</p>
BLACKSTONE'S ROLE & PROCESS	<p>Blackstone conducted the six-month project in four phases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Foundation Research</u>: this phase involved an industry review, interviews with key stakeholders, and a competitive analysis.</li> <li>• <u>Pre-Messaging Research</u>: focus groups were held in multiple regions with consumers &amp; business managers, and independent insurance agents.</li> <li>• <u>Message Exploratory</u>: based upon previous learning, Blackstone developed a series of possible positioning and messaging concepts.</li> <li>• <u>Post Messaging Research</u>: the messages were tested and refined until they were proven effective.</li> </ul>
RESULTS	<p>Based upon the findings and recommendations of Blackstone's consulting engagement, Oregon Mutual's management team conducted planning sessions where they reprioritized corporate strategies and tactics, amended budgets, and revised criteria for hiring new staff.</p> <p>Blackstone succeeded in identifying a new strategic brand position for Oregon Mutual by helping them...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better understand the attitudes, opinions, and unmet needs of customers and potential customers</li> <li>• Identify key competitors, their strengths and weaknesses</li> <li>• Define and assess market opportunities</li> <li>• Evaluate brand perceptions</li> <li>• Explore various brand messages</li> <li>• Test positioning effectiveness</li> </ul> <p>Blackstone engaged the management team throughout the process to ensure an enthusiastic acceptance of the findings and direction at every level: from the CEO, to the Board of Directors, and staff.</p>