



Corporate Positioning Decision Worksheet

Ten questions to answer before your organization says anything — or decides to say nothing.

When a controversial issue reaches your organization, the worst time to decide what you believe is after the pressure has arrived. Work through these questions in order, in writing, before any statement is drafted. The goal is not to reach a “yes” or a “no.” The goal is a decision you can defend six months from now. **If a line is blank, you are not done.**

ORGANIZATION

PREPARED BY

DATE

1

What issue are you being asked to address?

State it in one sentence. If you cannot describe the issue in one sentence, it is not yet defined well enough to decide.

2

Why is your organization being asked to respond?

Who is asking: customers, employees, investors, activists, reporters? Is the pressure coming from people you serve, or from online volume that may not represent them?

3

Which stakeholders are affected?

Name your core customers, your employees, and at least one other group that matters (investors, franchisees, regulators, the local community), and note where each is likely to land.

4

What happens if you speak?

Put a concrete consequence beside each stakeholder group. Then name the action, not just the words, that would back the statement.

5

What happens if you don't?

Silence is read as a statement. How will the people who matter most read yours, and can you accept that reading?

6

Is this issue directly connected to your business?

Write one sentence linking the issue to your products, workforce, supply chain, or stated mission. "Our customers care about it" or "it is in the news" is a marketing impulse, not a connection.

7

Have you previously established a position?

What have you already said or done on this exact issue? Would a new statement contradict it? Identify proof of action you could show a skeptical reporter.

8

Who has authority to make the decision?

Name the decision owner, who must be consulted (legal, HR, the board), and who must hear it first. Employees should not learn the position from a customer or a reporter.

9

Would you make the same decision six months from now?

Assume the pressure reverses. A position that ends in a reversal is usually more damaging than either speaking or staying silent.

10

Can you defend the decision without relying on partisan politics?

Explain the decision in terms of your business, your people, and your prior commitments, without reference to a party, a candidate, or a side.

Your decision

- ☐ Speak — deliberately, backed by action
- ☐ Stay neutral — on purpose, and say so internally
- ☐ Not ready — do the work first

DECISION OWNER

REVISIT ON (DATE)

Reversing a position is usually costlier than either speaking or staying silent. If you would fold the first time the pressure flips, do not start.

WANT THE COMPLETE FRAMEWORK?

The Unofficial Ballot

Trust, Risk, and Taking Sides in a Divided Era

This worksheet condenses the decision process at the heart of the book. The full six-step framework, worked examples, statement and apology templates, and playbooks for corporations, small businesses, creators, and individuals are in the book by Bill Hartzler, available in paperback, hardcover, and Kindle.

[THEUNOFFICIALBALLOT.COM](https://theunofficialballot.com)

Educators: course resources at theunofficialballot.com/educators/

