

Features and benefits

Introduction

This article is part of our [sales guide for contractors](#).

You will often hear sales or marketing people discussing 'features and benefits'. In this article, we will cover exactly what they are and go into further detail as to how and why they are used.

As a contractor selling a product (your knowledge) you'll need to be aware of your own features and benefits and ensure you explain these to both the agent and client. You should also be able to recognise when sales or marketing people are introducing features and benefits in attempt to sell you something.

Background

Sales training allows people to use a process and a formula that provides the most effective way of communicating a message with a positive outcome. Part of this process will always include mentioning the features of a product or service and describing the benefits of each feature.

This may sound straightforward, but in fact a common mistake made by sales people is to mention the feature and to forget to mention the benefit or the other way around.

Remember that features and benefits help us to clearly describe a product and service in such a way that it allows the customer to easily and quickly agree to buy. If we miss out parts of the process, the customer is likely to be confused and will probably not buy the product!

Firstly, what is a feature and what is a benefit?

“ a common mistake made is to mention the feature and to forget to mention the benefit or vice versa ”

Features

Let's use a product as an example, say – a car! Features of this product would include:

- o Power steering
- o Electric windows
- o CD player
- o Diesel engine

We must mention these features to our customer, as they may not be aware that the product they are thinking of buying has them. When they discover these new features, the customer might be tempted enough to buy. However, mentioning just the features is not enough and will almost certainly not make the sale. This is where we come on to benefits.

Benefits

For every feature, we must include the benefit. We may feel that these benefits are obvious, but what is obvious to you is not necessarily so to others. So, let's take a look at what the benefits might be to the features listed above:

- o Power steering – the benefit to you being 'it's so much easier to drive'
- o Electric windows – the benefit to you being 'you never have to wind down the windows manually'
- o CD player – the benefit to you being 'you can listen to your own music in high quality stereo'
- o Diesel engine – the benefit to you being 'fuel will take you a lot further and so travel costs come down'

Common Mistakes

Much of the above should seem quite straight forward and largely common sense. All the same, many sales people neglect this area of their pitches to their peril. When you are being sold to and features are mentioned without the benefits – ask the sales person what the benefit is. If you don't have the facts, you cannot make an informed decision and the sales person is not doing their job!

Often when people are trained on this area of a pitch, they make a massive list of features and benefits and then do little more than list them to their potential clients. This is not the way to sell. One of the most fundamental parts of the [sales process](#) is the fact finding.

Tailor Your Features and Benefits

Before presenting any features or benefits, a good sales person will have already asked many questions of the prospective customer. The answers to these questions will suggest to the sales person which particular features and benefits are likely to influence their decision, or not.

So, if buying a car, the sales person will try and find out what is most important to their customer. If the customer indicates that they are conscious of high travel costs, then a car that runs economically on diesel is worth pointing out. If the customer mentions luxury, then power steering and electric windows are good features to introduce.

In the contracting world recruitment agents will try to sell the contract to you by first establishing which of your buttons to press, and then by explaining features and benefits of the contract that align with your magic buttons! Conversely, you should do exactly the same with both the agent and client. This is why you need to ask lots of questions to find out what those buttons are!

Summary

In summary, features and benefits are a straightforward, but essential part of the [sales process](#). Features on their own do not sell, but features with a clearly defined benefit have the maximum impact.

A sales pitch should always be tailored to each customer, as far as possible. Find out what the customers needs or desires, and then match them clearly with the relevant features and benefits.

Published: Friday, March 23, 2007

[Tweet](#)

© 2011 All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without permission is prohibited. Please see our [copyright notice](#). If you want to use any content you have seen on this site then please [request our media pack](#) and ask for details of our Content Licencing Service.

“ One of the most fundamental parts of the sales process is the fact finding ”

Readers Comments...



Be the first to comment on this article

Also of interest...

Related Guides:

- [Sales for contractors](#)
- [What is sales?](#)
- [Understanding recruitment agencies and consultants](#)
- [Negotiation for contractors](#)
- [Sales strategies](#)
- [The sales process](#)
- [Sales closing: the theory and practices](#)
- [Objections and objection handling](#)
- [Open ended questions](#)
- [What sales people don't want you to know](#)
- [How To Find a Contract](#)
- [Steps to Become a Contractor](#)

Related Calculators:

- [Permanent To Contracting Calculator](#)
- [Contractor Financial Profile Calculator](#)
- [Contract Comparison Calculator](#)



ABCe verified website - last audit confirmed **130,682 monthly unique visitors**

© Copyright 2011 Byte-Vision Limited UK. All rights reserved [Copyright notice](#)