

## Uncovering Your Hidden Gems: How To Tell The Difference Between A Feature and A Benefit and Why It Matters!

I saw an advertisement a while back that promoted the benefits of getting your doona dry cleaned. In fact, I liked the advertisement so much that I actually *took* my doona in to get dry cleaned, only to find out that the cost to dry clean it was almost double the price of what I paid for it. Needless to say, I didn't proceed.

But here's what was interesting. The advertisement stopped me in my tracks and compelled me to say "Gee, I need this service" when, three seconds before, I had never even heard of it. It also highlighted a previously unknown 'problem' that I had (an unclean doona) which compelled me to take action and to visit the store.

So, what was it about this advertisement that caught my eye? I mean, how interesting can a dry cleaning ad be?

Well, the headline was great – simple but effective:

### **"7 Reasons To Dry Clean Your Doona"**

The advertisement worked for me because I hadn't ever thought about getting my doona dry cleaned and here was this informative advertisement telling me that there were lots of good reasons to get my doona dry cleaned - and not just one reason, but seven! So, it fulfilled Rule # 1 with Headlines – it grabbed the reader's attention.

The second thing it did was list the benefits of getting my doona cleaned. Now, this is where they really hit the jackpot and it's where most companies get it wrong.

Here's a sample of what they said:

1. Your body drips approximately 75 milligrams of body fluid into your doona every night.
2. Bed bugs, dust mites and other nasty little creatures breed and nest in your doona and then burrow deep into your skin pores and bite you whilst you sleep.
3. Dust mites can cause asthma so your doona could quite conceivably be the reason you or your children get asthma or unexplained coughs and colds.

They then went on to explain what they do to the doona when they dry clean it. They said:

- We puff it up with new feathers so it's like having a new doona without the price tag
- We steam clean it so that it looks and feels like new
- We deodorize it so that it smells as fresh and clean as the day you bought it
- We inject it with slow-release chemicals that'll kill stray bed bugs for up to 3 months so you (and your children) won't get bitten ever again
- We give you an extra bag of feathers so you can top it up at regular intervals
- We aerate it to rejuvenate the feathers so it feels lighter and softer than ever before

It's sounding good isn't it?

Now, I'm not saying that this advertisement isn't slightly emotionally manipulative (it is) or that it wasn't sensationalist and slightly extreme in its claims (it is), but it did a fabulous job of highlighting the features and benefits of a very boring product.

### **The Key To Marketing Success - Turning Features into Benefits:**

Let's have a look at what they did and how they made this run-of-the-mill service sound so compelling and necessary.

The first thing they did was take a feature and then, by asking "which means that" they found their all-important benefit.

<b>Feature:</b>	<b>Which means that...</b>	<b>Benefit:</b>
We puff it up with new feathers...;		It's like having a new doona without the price tag
We steam clean it...		It looks and feels like new
We deodorize it...		It smells fresh and clean
We inject it with chemicals...		You and your family are kept safe
We give you an extra bag of feathers...		You have a puffy, fluffy doona all the time without paying any extra to get it

...and so on.

This is good marketing and it's what you should be doing with any copy you write - state the feature, add the benefit.

So, how do you extract the benefit from the feature? It's simple. But first you have to identify what *is* the feature and then work out *why* it's great.

It's all about asking some key questions about your product and thinking laterally.

### **Key Questions To Ask To Uncover Your Hidden Benefits:**

Here's how you do it.

Firstly, make a list of features of your product or service. The best way to extract the features is to ask some questions. By the way, this exercise does require you to have some passion for your product. If you don't, that's okay (for now), just fake it as best you can.

You also need to imagine that someone who is genuinely interested in your product is sitting opposite you and they have asked you to tell them more. (If that's impossible to imagine as well, then maybe you should be thinking about moving into a new line of work or scrapping your business altogether. Just joking. Sort of.)

So, as you imagine this mythical person sitting opposite you, waiting with baited breath to hear you wax lyrical about your product, here are the 'launch questions' you should use to get your creative juices flowing so you can work out what exactly your product offers:

1. “I think this product/service is fantastic for you because...”(and then fill in the blanks)
2. “What’s great about this product is...”
3. “The best part about it is...”
4. “What sets it apart from the others is that it ....”
5. “If you don’t buy this, you run the risk of ...”
6. “If you buy this, this is what you’re going to get...”

Now, the reason these questions are so powerful is because they force you to consider even more questions:

- What is it I actually offer my customer?
- What will it do for them if they buy it?
- What will happen if they don’t buy it?
- Why is my product better than the others?

These questions are even *more* powerful because they are the exact questions the consumer is thinking about, (and need answered), before they can buy.

So if you can figure out all the potential objections as to why people wouldn’t buy your product, and then answer them in a nicely-worded way, you’ll have a never-ending supply of customers.

### **Tell The Customer What’s In It For Them:**

One last thing about that doona ad. The reason it works so well and has been so successful is because they took features that every single other dry cleaner operator offers, shone the spotlight on it, outlined an emotive and relevant benefit, and told the customer what was in it for them.

I did a bit of research after that (clearly, I have nothing better to do than to talk to dry cleaners all day) and discovered that most dry cleaners do what this company are doing – fluffing, steaming, injecting, aerating etc – but they just don’t mention it in their advertising. They just *assume* that people expect those things to be done to their doona when it’s sent for dry cleaning.

### **Never Assume What The Customer Knows About Your Service:**

And that’s where all of those dry cleaners, (and most other businesses) get it wrong – they assume too much and as a result, fail to fully explain to the customer what their product is, what it will do, what’s involved, why they do it, why it’s more expensive than the others and what will happen if they don’t use it.

So here’s your opportunity to find out what gems are lying undiscovered in your business - get out the spotlight, shine it on your business and see how many ways you can share the story of why your product is so brilliant.

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