

Revealing Deeper Benefits

By John Forde

Every good copywriter knows the difference between features and benefits. (You DO know the difference, don't you? If not, I strongly urge you to go back and review Section 19 of your [copywriting course](#).)

But do you know the difference between "benefits" and "deeper benefits?" And, just as importantly, do you know how to pack them into your promo copy?

I realize I'm hitting you with a barrage of questions here. My apologies.

Let's slow this down and start from the beginning ...

A feature is what a product is or does. A benefit is what it will do for whoever chooses to use it. Quantitative vs. qualitative.

Prospective customers need to know features because they want to know what's included for the price. You want to translate those features into benefits just to make sure the customer sees what's in your offer for him or her.

So, what's a "deeper" benefit?

A deeper benefit is the unseen part of the product iceberg. It's the great goodness implied between the lines of your pitch. The larger-than-life stuff. Often, it's an intangible, emotional thing. It's the feeling beyond the feeling.

Let me give you an example ...

When a local gym that is selling memberships talks about the equipment they have upstairs, that's a list of features.

When they tell you how that equipment can get you slimmer and stronger than equipment that's available at other gyms, that's a translation from feature to benefit.

But when they start flashing you photos of lithe-looking members in gym gear ... chatting confidently ... flashing big smiles and toned flesh. Well ... that's approaching the deeper benefits.

I could spell it out further, but I think you see what I mean.

Trouble is, deeper benefits are more abstract. Intangible. So, conveying them can be difficult. For instance, stating them outright doesn't work. Deep benefits sink in much better when they're absorbed or realized, rather than stated or explained.

So ... how are you supposed to get these intangible benefits across?

Recently, I heard Michael Masterson give a good speech. In it, he ran through his personal techniques for communicating these kinds of richer, deeper benefits to customers ...

1.

Tell a Simple Story.

Everyone loves a story, said E.M. Forster. Every prospect loves a story that shows a product benefit hitting its mark. Testimonial stories are perfect for this. But, in the happy endings that result, you can also share other details of how the testimonial-givers' lives improved.

2.

Keep Idea Clutter to a Minimum.

Most good promos center not just around a big promise, but around a "big idea." That is, a core idea that's rich and original and engaging. That ties directly to the product and the problems it solves. But big ideas can be hard to handle. Sometimes, they multiply. They can bog your package down and wear out your prospect.

Think of a blockbuster movie.

The easier it is to sum up the plot in a single sentence, the better it seems to wash with a mass-market audience. Keep your core-package idea equally as simple, and packing "deeper benefits" between the lines will be easier.

3.

Lay on the Details, Nice and Thick.

Just because you're keeping your core promo idea simple, don't think that means you should skimp on detail. Rich details can be the strongest mules in your stable, pulling your reader relentlessly to the sale. It's details that make your pitch feel real, original, and engaging. Which brings us to this final point ...

4.

Keep It Real.

There's a reason testimonials with poor grammar and real customer snapshots out-pull polished quotes and airbrushed photos. It's because authenticity builds trust. And trust leads to more checks in the mail.

To get to a trustworthy level, unfortunately, takes work. You actually have to BE sincere. Study the product until you see it in your sleep. Strike out every single cliché, every fake sentiment, every vague promise or contrived piece of logic.

There are two big sins of the copywriter, says Mike: laziness and insincerity. If you can't be sincere about what you're saying, write for another product. Or find another career.

Published: November 17, 2003

Related Content:

- [Quick Tip: The 3 Components of a Good USP](#)
- [Show Your Warts: An Honest Way to Make a Buck](#)
- [Creating an Enemy](#)
- [Targeted Learning Tip: The "So What?" Technique for Squeezing Core Benefits Out of Your Product's Features](#)
- More by [John Forde](#)
- More from [The Golden Thread](#)

4 Responses to "Revealing Deeper Benefits"

Thank you for this informaion and deep understanding benefits or promises. I will save this for futur references.

Timothy – over a year ago

Practical, doable, learnable tips.

Thanks, John!

Roger A Ford – over a year ago

Wonderful article, and a great quote at the end about the 2 big sins of the copywriter.

Amen!

Suresh Nair – over a year ago

Hi,

So it means that the Copywriter needs to 'show' a benefit, but, must appeal to the 'deeper benefit' with an emotional card...the intangible?

Thanks.

teejay – over a year ago

American Writers & Artists Institute

220 George Bush Blvd, Suite D

Delray Beach, FL 33444

(561) 278-5557 or (866) 879-2924