

Make Your Product's Benefits SPARKLE

By Clayton Makepeace

A serious crisis has arisen that must be addressed immediately.

Over the years, I've had the dubious pleasure of reviewing copy submitted by new groups of my beloved Copy Cubs — each of whom has read The Masters and even completed courses on copywriting ... and each of whom I believe has the innate talent to (eventually) become one of the greats.

Each Cub was told to write benefit-oriented headlines for a series of natural supplement products.

The first headline jumped up and shouted ...

Get Off the Hormone Roller Coaster!

"Well," I said to myself, "THAT certainly sucks!" And so I turned to the next one ...

Balance Blood Sugar Levels Naturally!

... And the next ...

Flush Deadly Toxins Out of Your Colon!

"Whoo boy," I said out loud, "I should be getting combat pay for this!"

See, not a single one of those "benefit-based" headlines contains a single real benefit! Instead, each contains a "Faux Benefit" — a product feature masquerading as a benefit!

Apply my patented "forehead slap" test to each of those headlines and you'll see what I mean.



Clayton Makepeace

- Have you ever been awakened in the middle of the night ... sat bolt upright in bed ... slapped yourself on the forehead and exclaimed, "Holy Moley — I gotta get off of the hormone roller coaster?"
- When was the last time you were jarred out of a deep sleep exclaiming "Jeez Louise — I need to balance my blood sugar levels naturally!"
- And have you EVER jumped out of a warm bed to holler, "I gotta flush some deadly toxins out of my colon!"

No? Me neither!

Have you ever found yourself feeling eager to PAY for a product that would do any of those things for you?

Nope? Join the club!

I mean — getting off the hormone roller coaster sounds like it might be a good thing. On the other hand, roller coasters are fun. Heck. People pay money to get ONTO them!

I suppose balancing blood sugar levels is good, too. And if you're making a list of folks who are "all for" flushing deadly toxins out of my colon — or any other part of my body for that matter — put me at the top of it.

But are these really benefits our prospects crave — and are willing to pay for?

Of course not. Our "hormone balancing" prospects want to stop having hot flashes and mood swings and stop losing their libidos.

Why? Well, for one thing, because hot flashes and mood swings are irritating — even miserable. And for another — drilling down even deeper — because all of these things threaten the intimacy and security of their primary relationships. Nobody wants to be a hormone hermit!

Nobody really wants to balance their blood sugar levels, either. But anyone in his or her right mind DOES want to avoid the misery of blindness ... cold, numb, painful limbs ... amputation ... and premature death that go along with diabetes.

And frankly, while "flushing toxins out of my colon" is nowhere near the top of my personal "to-do" list, I WOULD prefer not to be constipated, or plagued with uncontrollable diarrhea, or have to poop in a bag for the rest of my life, or die from colon cancer.

The Faux Benefits heralded in these headlines are mechanisms ... processes ... product features that deliver benefits. They are not, in themselves, real benefits that anybody craves or wants to pay for.

My beloved Copy Cubs failed to drill down to the real, bottom-line, rubber-meets-the-road benefit each product provides — the tangible, measurable, real value they bring to prospects' lives: The value that prospects are willing to — once again — pay for.

This is a cardinal and common sin even among more seasoned copywriters — and that business owners and marketing execs too often let us get away with.

Here's another: Failing to fully explore the benefits that each benefit provides. In short, squeezing every feature until you've explored every benefit ... and then squeezing every benefit for the secondary benefits IT provides.

Confused? Me too — sometimes, anyway. Let's work through this together ...

Benefits 101

Let's start with four basic facts ...

1. **Every product has features:** Features are merely objective facts about a product (or the company behind it). In three-dimensional products, features include size, shape, weight, construction, color options, and more. In information products, features include number of pages, size, frequency of publication (for periodicals), and the types of information that are presented.?
2. **Fortunately, most features are there for a darned good reason:** Prospects don't want features. They want you to change their lives for the better. Product features are merely the means to that end. That means features can have a place in ad copy — like telling prospects how many issues they'll get per year ... how many pages are in your book ... or that your widget is made from carbon steel for strength or carbon fiber for lightness. Beyond that, features are a yawn because they're about the product; not about the prospect. Or, as in the examples above, they can help demonstrate how your product delivers a benefit. The good news is, just about every product fact — every feature — is there to provide a benefit that your prospect IS willing to pay for.?
3. **There are more benefits associated with each product feature than are dreamt of by most copywriters:** Benefits are like bunny rabbits: Give them a little time and they'll begin multiplying — each benefit or combination of benefits producing one, two, three, or more new benefits you never thought about before. The secret to kick-butt sales copy is to identify each and every benefit a product provides — and then to look at each benefit and ask, "What does THAT do for me? What additional benefits does that benefit provide?"?
4. **Your prospect has strong feelings about every dimensionalized benefit you present:** Connecting each fully-dimensionalized product benefit with a strong emotion that your prospect already has about the benefit (or the lack of it in his/her life) makes sales copy irresistible.

Come by tomorrow and I'll tell you what I tell my beloved Cubs on how to turn Faux Benefits into gold.

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3 Responses to "Make Your Product's Benefits SPARKLE"

I have been riding that roller coaster for most of my life, but it seems the more I get the motion the more I get tired and start forgetting how it feels to be on it! Thank you Clayton for a very informative and wake up article, just what I needed to see about getting off the coaster for a while and focus. I've been wrestling with the will to write and it's been so challenging to just start.

Guest (Ben Castaneda) – over a year ago

The insights presented is very inspiring and it give you the confidence that you can do it. I enjoyed every moment of it because I know full well that I am coached by the best in the industry.

Guest (uduak udo) – over a year ago

You had me at SPARKLE. I've been trying to use more powerful verbs in my writing so I'm noticing them more when I read. Making product benefits "sparkle" sure painted a vivid mental picture for me. I also loved the humor!

Rick Jones – over a year ago

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