

# Selling With Tailored Benefits

## Why Tailored Product Benefits?

We all know that a specially tailored suit is made just for you and fits you perfectly. The only problem is that it is more expensive. In selling, particularly rapport selling, where we always put our customer first, tailoring your product benefits to them just has to happen. And we don't charge more for this...it's all part of the service.



Anyone who has been involved in selling, or has read a book on selling will know about benefit selling. It is as old as Rock 'n Roll, first being taught in the late 1950's and early 1960's. We need to move with the times and into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Here we must still benefit sell but now we must really concentrate on making those benefits fit the customer just like a tailored suit.

## When do we do this?

This is the important bit actually...not the selling of benefits as most salespeople can do that side.

Three things must happen first and by the way, these three things can happen over a 2 minute conversation or a 2 hour interview. We can only benefit sell:

1. Once we've relaxed the customer
2. Once we know exactly what our customer's needs and wants are.
3. Once we know what kind of person they are

The other day I had to call into my bank to pay in a cheque. I very rarely call in to the branch these days as I usually use their internet site and the cash machines. There I was at the counter expecting a very quick transaction and I would be out of there.



The cashier took my paying in book and cheque and got on with the transaction. As she got on with it, she looked up at me and smiled. *"Do you know this lovely weather is getting all my customers talking about their holiday? Have you got yours booked?"*

*"Yes we have – we're going to France again this year...and looking forward to it to."*

*"May I ask Mr Archer...(looking for my non verbal agreement)...how do you take your spending money with you?"*

*"We use the French cash machines...they're very convenient."*

*"They are, aren't they, and especially as we have such an enormous network of machines to use. I'm glad you use them. Have you experienced any problems or downsides?"*

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*“Not really – sometimes the machine is a drive away and you do have to plan to pick up the cash. Oh and also you tend to carry around large amounts of cash.”*

*“Oh I see. Can I ask...what else worries you about taking money abroad?”*

*“Uhm...Being cut short I suppose, if you lose your wallet – that really would be a nightmare.”*

*“Have you considered our Travellers Cheques?” she asked, “Ours can be used in shops, supermarkets, restaurants without the need to cash them in. For you, Mr Archer, that would mean you wouldn’t have to make a special journey into town to use a cash machine.”* She added, looking at my facial reaction. Clever girl as she was looking for some form of interest in my face.

*“And, as might know, our traveller’s cheques have a refund feature so that you could have them replaced really quickly if you lost them...or they were stolen.”* She said with a low pitched voice.

She looked at me...I looked at her. She looked at her computer and added...

*“And I see Mr Archer, you rarely call into the branch. Our traveller’s cheques can be ordered on line, so you can buy them alongside your normal on-line banking. That would be easy for you wouldn’t it?”*

She was good this cashier, even a testing close at the end. And what she said made sense and it appealed to me. *“Yes I will; thank you for bringing it to my attention.”*

The cashier did the three things and the last one, knowing the kind of person I was, she observed from the computer records, so the last benefit was tailored to suit the kind of person I was. All very clever, so let’s find out a little more of what she did



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## How to Sell Product Benefits

The trick here is to keep it simple and short, especially where the customer can't give you much time. So you can order the cheques using the website

Many people use the acronym FAB, which always reminds me of that 1970's ice lolly.

- **F**eature
- **A**dvantage
- **B**enefit

First find a feature of your product which is something that it does. Think of anything right now around you. The computer lets you play songs, for example. The light above you shines out a 100 watt beam. The mobile phone takes calls from all over the world.

These are just features, things your product does. If it had packaging, then it would "tell you what it does on the tin".

Remember our cashier – she spoke about travellers cheques being used in shops, having a refund policy and being able to be bought on line.

Next we need to think of an advantage of this feature and some features have several advantages. The computer's ability to store songs means you can save space by not storing CDs, you can listen to all your music at anytime whilst working, you can buy more songs on the internet...and so on.

Now this is where some salespeople go adrift with benefit selling. They get carried away and excited about the good things around their products. And they know them off by heart and they rattle them out with gusto, given the opportunity.

Now I store all my CDs on my computer, like many others of you. But I still keep my CD collection stored in my house and I never buy music downloads, preferring to buy my own CDs and rip them onto the computer. So only 1 out of those 3 advantages appealed to me. It's this shotgun gun approach that is so dangerous. Blasting out a mass of pellets so one or two might hit the pheasant is very time consuming.

Rather find one advantage that you know would appeal.

Which brings us onto benefits. The oldest US West Coast radio station...WIIFM...broadcasting just to you. It's rather a cliché now but still relevant. WIIFM – what's in it for me.



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Think of what the customer really wants and how this advantage will work for them. Remember our cashier friend. She said.

*“For you, Mr Archer, that would mean you wouldn’t have to make a special journey into town to use a cash machine.”*

*“And, as might know, our traveller’s cheques have a refund feature so that you could have them replaced really quickly if you lost them...or they were stolen.”*

These two advantages were given to me because earlier, I had expressed this as a concern or an issue or a need or a want. So you can see why the chat earlier was needed. Notice also she used a bridge which linked the feature to the benefit. She used *“that would mean you”* and *“so that you”*

Other bridges:

- *“Which means to you”*
- *“To allow you to”*
- *“Therefore you”*

But the cleverest part of the cashier’s selling was the last benefit. This one was really tailored to me. This one was tailored because it took into account the type of person I am and how I like to operate as an individual.

There are various ways to do this...but when you start doing it, it makes a really big difference. Our cashier found out about my individual banking practises by checking the computer and she linked this to the on-line feature of the traveller’s cheques.

*“And I see Mr Archer, you rarely call into the branch. Our traveller’s cheques can be ordered on line, so you can buy them alongside your normal on-line banking. That would be easy for you wouldn’t it?”*

Finding out a little more about the type of person the customer is can be a little tricky in a bank counter...but then again bank customers often call in regularly so you can get to know them over time. You can get to know their habits, likes as a person, rituals and these things can help you really tailor your benefit selling.

Longer interviews with customers make this bit easier. Look at their eyes to establish visual, kino or auditory (the subject of another article), test their influencing keys (big/small chunk, towards or away from), assess their colour from the SDI instrument (blue, green, red, hub). All these methods can be used to find out the kind of person your customer is and will accelerate your benefit selling to a new level.

Remember do those three things first – relax them, find out their needs/wants and find out about them as a person. Then pick a feature, take an advantage that might appeal and bridge it to a benefit for them. And seriously this year, I will be taking a supply of traveller’s cheques too.