
The Anatomy of *Persuasion*

MAKE YOUR IDEAS HAPPEN!®

Learn to communicate more persuasively by understanding the power of benefits!

Many have realized that, when evaluating your ideas, proposals or plans, other people are primarily concerned with one simple concept: how will your suggestions affect them – in other words, what’s in it for them (WIIFT) if they accept or agree with you.

Unfortunately, most of us tend to think and communicate in terms of facts and features. Since facts and features do not always clearly identify the corresponding benefits, our audience often misses the critical point of WIIFT. Consequently, we will fail to persuade because our ideas or proposals focus on details or features rather than on the results that will benefit our audience. If you are not able to identify the way(s) in which your audience will benefit from your idea or proposal, it is best to postpone your persuasion effort until such time you are able to do so – otherwise you will likely fail!

Consider the following example: A common and popular “feature” associated with a television set is a remote control. Why do you like to use a remote control when watching television? We have asked many people this question, and have discovered that different people like to use a remote control (feature) for different reasons (benefits).

- Because of the remote control, I am able to manipulate the television without getting-up. This means I can enjoy more convenience and comfort when watching television
- Because of the remote control, I can change channels without getting-up. This means I can “surf channels” while watching television
- Because of the remote control, I can select the program of my choice. This means I can watch my preferred program when watching television with other family members

So we have 3 different perspectives, each illustrating a different way in which someone might benefit from using the remote control (feature) – CONVENIENCE, CHANNEL SURFING, or CONTROL. If we were trying to persuade someone to use a remote control, it would be best for us to first learn about the person’s viewing habits and living situation before suggesting which benefit might be the most appropriate. For example, if we were to learn that the person (our audience) is living alone, there would be little reason to promote the CONTROL benefit.

Features Tell, Benefits Sell

The first step towards mastering the technique of identifying relevant benefits is to accept the fact that features alone do not persuade. As the saying goes, “Features tell, but benefits sell!” You might also imagine that each time you present a “feature” your audience is secretly asking, “So what?” The solution is simple – analyze each situation, identify relevant benefits for your audience (WIIFT), and then present BOTH features and benefits. To more easily learn the thinking process and methodology of analyzing situations in terms of benefits, you can use the following phrase as a guide: **Because of [INSERT FEATURE], you get [INSERT ADVANTAGE], which means [INSERT BENEFIT].**

The worksheet on page two will help you analyze the features associated with your organization, products and services, and then identify the corresponding benefits.

