
How to write benefit-driven copy.

You've identified the benefits you offer your customers, but how do you turn a list of benefits into engaging copy? As a marketing manager, many of the projects we've undertake are for completely new products. The product managers have some general ideas about what they'd like to convey, but they need someone who can fine-tune their message, and create copy which engages their readers. As a result, over the years we've developed a process for doing this effectively. Here are four steps to help you on your next project.

STEP 1 – Identify your benefits

Branding aside, most new product introductions are about selling. Customers don't want to know what you can do; they want to know what you can do for THEM. That means the first question you should ask is, "What benefits do I offer my customers?" This is usually the first step toward identifying the key message to be conveyed.

STEP 2 – Identify how you deliver these benefits

Of course, you can't just claim to deliver benefits and stop at that. You need to support that claim. You're going to need to convince your audience that you actually do deliver these benefits. Anyone can say they deliver benefits, but few can say it persuasively.

From step 1 you'll have a list of benefits. Now you need to think about how you deliver each benefit in that list. This is where you start talking about features – price, product highlights, distribution channel, competitor weaknesses, external factors, etc. It's helpful if you draw up a table with one column for benefits and one for the features which deliver those benefits.

STEP 3 – Prioritize your benefits

Now that you've identified all the things you COULD say, it's time to figure out what you SHOULD say and where you should say it. This is where your benefits-features table comes into play. Read

through your list of benefits and prioritize them according to how compelling they will be to your reader.

The reason for this? Priority determines prominence. The most compelling benefits will need to be prominent.

STEP 4 – Write your content

So now you know what you'd like to say, it's time to decide how to say it. This is about three things:

- Subject – What is the nature of your piece; features or benefits?
- Structure – How do you structure your copy such that your customers will read your most compelling benefits?
- Words – What words should you use to best engage your audience?

Subject

What is the subject of your marketing piece; features or benefits? The answer to this question lies in audience identification. If your audience knows a bit about the type of product or service you're selling, lead with features. But make sure you talk about their benefits, and make sure the features offering the most important benefits are the most prominent.

Structure

How do you structure your piece such that your customers will be sure to read your

most compelling benefits? The answer is, keep it short 'n sweet. And make it scannable. This doesn't mean you have to cut features or benefits. You just have to structure your piece to accommodate your message.

While every piece is different, as a rule of thumb it's a good idea to introduce your main features and benefits early on. Summarize them – preferably using bullet points, but at the very least, clearly highlight them so that your audience can scan-read (e.g. bold, underline, color, link).

Conclusion

Effective marketing communication is about far more than just clever words. It's essential that you identify the benefits you offer your customer, and that you can convince your customer you actually deliver those benefits.

Creative Marketing Services provides marketing, creative and sales promotion services on an "outsourced" basis without the high-cost or overhead of a traditional advertising agency. To discover how you can make your marketing more effective, visit www.mysalespromotion.com
