

CORPORATED MANAGEMENT / HUMAN RESOURCES

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What's in it for me?

This is a question that all customers ask, so make sure you can answer it

PEOPLE are driven by their emotions not just in their personal buying decisions – business buyers are also emotional.

A business IT buyer might tell you that he wants to buy a product or service that saves his organisation money.

However, he might be buying it to make him look good in front of his boss – another emotional decision.

Warren Buffett, the chairman of Berkshire Hathaway and one of the world's richest men, once remarked: "I've walked away from some very good deals because I didn't like the people involved." That is another emotional decision.

It doesn't matter if your product or service is predominantly technical or something much simpler – the person who buys it will always be driven by his emotions, so ignore that at your peril.

It's difficult to be logical

It's often extremely difficult for a customer to make a logical decision about a product or service.

Most people aren't qualified to tell a good accountant from a bad one, a good lawyer from a not so good one, one washing machine from another, or one builder or plumber from another. Customers will often make a decision based on how they feel about the person they are dealing with.

A friend who was opening a new coffee shop business was telling me about her lawyer. "Is he any good?" I asked. She replied: "He's great.

He's really nice and he doesn't talk like a lawyer!"

If my friend feels that way about her lawyer, then it will be so much easier for both of them to do business and she will be less concerned about how much he bills her for.

What people really buy

I am sure you are familiar with features and benefits when it comes to making a sales presentation to a customer.

However, for the moment, I just want you to be really clear about what your customers want from your product or service.

Features are the characteristics of your product or service; what it has or does. Benefits are what those characteristics do for the customer. People don't buy what things do – they buy results.

The features of a bed that you might be selling could include "unique interlinked springs with a triangular structure and up to seven times as many as other beds". (I took this statement from a bed manufacturer's website)

However, the benefit that the customer really wants is "a good night's sleep, free from back pain!"

This is what is sometimes known as the DBM or Dominant Buying Motive. I don't promote sales training seminars to my clients; I promote "more sales and an increase in profits".



Features are the characteristics of your product or service – what it has or does. – APpic



People don't buy what things do – they buy results. – Filepic

When people consider your product or service, they are only thinking one thing – "What's in it for me?" Any communication with your customers has to answer that question.

Have a look at some product brochures and business websites, including your own. As you read, identify the number of times you see the words "we" or "our" starting a sentence.

For example: "Our company has been established for 50 years. We have a quality of service second to none. Our product contains the best of ingredients which meet all safety standards."

If you change the word "we" to "you" and "our" to "your" at the start of each sentence, you get something like: "You will benefit from our 50 years of experience. Your tummy will love our superb ingredients!"

If you are to become a successful businessperson, and draw customers to you, then you must remember: Customers – even business buyers – do not buy products; they only buy benefits and solutions to their problems. They buy good feelings – and make emotional decisions. – Singapore Straits Times / Asia News Network

■ Article by Alan Fairweather, "The Motivation Doctor". He is an international speaker, best-selling author and sales growth expert.