

# How To Get Customers Knocking Your Door Down

| By Bernadette Schwerdt |

I saw an advertisement a while back that promoted the benefits of getting your doona dry cleaned. In fact, I liked the advertisement so much that I actually took my doona in to get dry cleaned, only to find out that the cost to dry clean it was almost double the price of what I paid for it. Needless to say, I did not proceed.

But here is what was interesting. The advertisement stopped me in my tracks and compelled me to say, "Gee, I need this service" when, three seconds before, I had never even heard of it. It also highlighted a previously unknown 'problem' that I had (an unclean doona) which compelled me to take action and to visit the store.

So, what was it about this advertisement that caught my eye? I mean, how interesting can a dry cleaning ad be?

Well, the headline was great - simple but effective: '7 Reasons To Dry Clean Your Doona'.

The advertisement worked for me because I had not ever thought about getting my doona dry cleaned and here was this informative advertisement telling me that there were lots of good reasons to get my doona dry cleaned - and not just one

reason, but seven! So, it fulfilled rule number one with headlines - it grabbed the reader's attention. The second thing it did was list the benefits of getting my doona cleaned. Now, this is where they really hit the jackpot and it is where most companies get it wrong. Here is a sample of what they said:

1. Your body drips approximately 75 milligrams of body fluid into your doona every night.
2. Bed bugs, dust mites and other nasty little creatures breed and nest in your doona and then burrow deep into your skin pores and bite you whilst you sleep.
3. Dust mites can cause asthma, so your doona could quite conceivably be the reason you or your children get asthma or unexplained coughs and colds.

They then went on to explain what they do to the doona when they dry clean it. They said:

- We puff it up with new feathers so it is like having a new doona without the price tag
- We steam clean it so that it looks and feels like new
- We deodorize it so that it smells as fresh and clean as the day you bought it



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- We inject it with slow-release chemicals that will kill stray bed bugs for up to three months so you (and your children) will not get bitten ever again
- We give you an extra bag of feathers so you can top it up at regular intervals
- We aerate it to rejuvenate the feathers so it feels lighter and softer than ever before.

It is sounding good, is it not?

Now, I am not saying that this advertisement was not slightly emotionally manipulative (it was) or that it was not sensationalist and slightly extreme in its claims (it was), but it did a fabulous job of highlighting the features and benefits of a very boring product.

## The Key To Marketing Success - Turning Features into Benefits:

Let us have a look at what they did and how they made this run-of-the-mill service sound so compelling and necessary.

The first thing they did was take a feature and then, by asking, ‘which means that’, they found their all-important benefit.

Feature:		Benefit:
We puff it up with new feathers...	Which means that...	It is like having a new doona without the price tag
We steam clean it...	Which means that...	It looks and feels like new
We deodorize it...	Which means that...	It smells fresh and clean
We inject it with chemicals...	Which means that...	You and your family are kept safe
We give you an extra bag of feathers...	Which means that...	You have a puffy, fluffy doona all the time without paying any extra to get it

...and so on.

This is good marketing and it is what you should be doing with any copy you write - state the feature, add the benefit. So, how do you extract the benefit from the feature? It is simple, but first you have to identify what is the feature and then work out why it is great. It is all about asking some key questions about your product and thinking laterally.

## Key Questions To Ask To Uncover Your Hidden Benefits

Firstly, make a list of features of your product or

service. The best way to extract the features is to ask some questions. By the way, this exercise does require you to have some passion for your product. If you do not, that is okay (for now), just fake it as best you can.

You also need to imagine that someone who is genuinely interested in your product is sitting opposite you and they have asked you to tell them more. (If that is impossible to imagine as well, then maybe you should be thinking about moving into a new line of work or scrapping your business altogether. Just joking. Sort of.)

So, as you imagine this mythical person sitting opposite you, waiting with baited breath to hear you wax lyrical about your product, here are the ‘launch questions’ you should use to get your creative juices flowing so you can work out what exactly your product offers:

1. I think this product/service is fantastic for you because... (and then fill in the blanks)
2. What is great about this product is...
3. The best part about it is...
4. What sets it apart from the others is that it...
5. If you do not buy this, you run the risk of...
6. If you buy this, this is what you are going to get...

Now, the reason these questions are so powerful is because they force you to consider even more questions:

- What is it I actually offer my customer?
- What will it do for them if they buy it?
- What will happen if they do not buy it?
- Why is my product better than the others?

These questions are even more powerful because they are the exact questions that consumers are thinking about (and need answered) before they can buy.

So, if you can figure out all the potential

objections as to why people would not buy your product, and then answer them in a nicely worded way, you will have a never-ending supply of customers.

## Tell The Customer What Is In It For Them

One last thing about that doona ad. The reason it works so well and has been so successful is because they took features that every single other dry cleaner operator offers, shone the spotlight on it, outlined an emotive and relevant benefit, and told the customer what was in it for them.

I did a bit of research after that (clearly, I have nothing better to do than to talk to dry cleaners all day) and discovered that most dry cleaners do what this company are doing - fluffing, steaming, injecting, aerating and so on - but they just do not mention it in their advertising. They just assume that people expect those things to be done to their doona when it is sent for dry cleaning.

## Never Assume What The Customer Knows About Your Service

And that is where all of those dry cleaners (and most other businesses) get it wrong - they assume too much and, as a result, fail to fully explain to the customer what their product is, what it will do, what is involved, why they do it, why it is more expensive than the others and what will happen if they do not use it.

So, here is your opportunity to find out what gems are lying undiscovered in your business - get out the spotlight, shine it on your business and see how many ways you can share the story of why your product is so brilliant. **ABS**

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