



# The Leadership Institute

*Lighting the Way*

## **MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS THROUGH FEATURES & BENEFITS**

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**Written by  
Bill Osborne  
The Leadership Institute**



### **Participant Module**



**The Leadership Institute**

*Lighting the Way*

*“Inspiring Dreams, Realizing Potential”*

# MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS THRU FEATURES & BENEFITS

"FIND A NEED AND FILL IT"- RUTH STAFFORD PEALE, AMERICAN PUBLISHER

WELCOME

OVERVIEW

## 1. WELCOME

## 2. OVERVIEW

At this point in the sales process, you have:

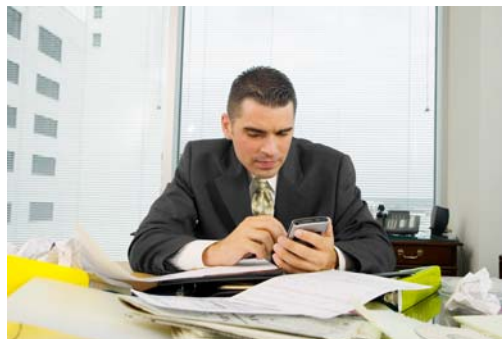
- ✓ Prospected & Qualified Leads
- ✓ Opened with an agenda
- ✓ Identified Needs through Questioning

You are now ready to "Make a Recommendation through Features & Benefits!"

Recommendations that sell include *Features, Benefits and Value*. To build an effective recommendation, you need to:

- Identify the client's most essential (key) needs
- Match those needs to your products and services
- Articulate your Features & Benefits
- Create Value
- Unbundle your Value
- Plan to persuade with Value that satisfies their needs
- Make your recommendation(s)

**Now let's work through the process of building a great recommendation!**



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## BUILDING A SOLUTION FOR J&G AUTO

### 3. ASSESS THE SITUATION

#### J&G AUTO SALES

Remember, before you can make a recommendation to J&G, you need to assemble the information you've gathered from your needs assessment, including:

- Customer Profile
- Sales Patterns
- Marketing Strategy
- Merchandising
- Advertising Philosophy
- Advertising Budgeting



From your previous conversations with Joe Green, the manager of J&G Auto Sales, you learned that he has a medium-sized lot and a wide variety of used cars. Joe likes to say he has a vehicle for everyone. *"It doesn't matter whether you have good credit or bad credit, if you have a paycheck, you can buy a car."*

Additionally, your questions revealed the following details about his business:

- ✓ *He prices his cars from \$2-4,000 to the mid-teens.*
- ✓ *Joe's customers come from a radius of 5 to 10 miles from his store.*
- ✓ *His best times of year are Spring and Fall. His worst times are December, January and July.*
- ✓ *He is currently advertising in the Auto Trader and on Autotrader.com and uses the daily newspaper's classified section.*
- ✓ *His competition come franchise dealers and independent lots nearby. He's getting about 8% of the business in his market.*



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## JOE'S PROBLEMS

Perhaps most importantly, you learned that Joe's problems are:

- ✓ *He wants to increase sales and take customers away from the franchise dealerships.*
- ✓ *He wants to grow his share of the used car market to about 10%.*
- ✓ *Joe inherited the business from his father-in-law and he feels that he has to overcome his "image problem."*
- ✓ *He also wants to increase traffic during midweek.*

## OBJECTIVES

Determine the objectives of the advertiser/ prospect.

*What can we do to help the customer reach objectives?*

*How can we clarify customer expectations?*

## AGREE ON HIS NEEDS

Divide the information you've learned into 3 categories:

1. Action required by your publication
2. Action required by the account
3. Background information

By reviewing your findings thoroughly, you can identify the customer/ prospect's level and type of advertising needs. In Joe's case he needs an advertising campaign that focuses on:

- ✓ Customer awareness (make sales)
- ✓ Customer acquisition (increase store traffic)
- ✓ Customer retention (keep them coming back)

Before moving into the recommendation process of matching your product's features, benefits and value to the needs, you need to make certain you and the prospect/ customer agree on those needs.



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**USING  
FEATURES,  
BENEFITS &  
VALUE TO  
SOLVE  
PROBLEMS**

**ANSWER  
WIIFM**



*"Joe, based on what you've told me, it sounds like you want to accomplish several goals. First, you want to increase sales by taking business from the franchise dealers. Second, you'd like to reach the customers within a 5 to 10 mile radius. You'd also like to overcome your image problem and finally, you need to increase traffic mid-week. Am I correct in my understanding of your needs?"*

Once you and the prospect agree on his/ her advertising needs, you can move forward in the recommendation process.

Remember that your focus needs to be on matching your products to their needs.

## **4. USING FEATURES, BENEFITS AND VALUE TO SOLVE PROBLEMS**

The process of utilizing Features, Benefits and Value follows 7 Steps:

1. *Identify their problems & most essential advertising needs*
2. *Match their needs to your products and services*
3. *Describe your Features & Benefits*
4. *Establish Value*
5. *Unbundle your added Value*
6. *Create a persuasive presentation*
7. *Make your recommendations*

**Value Sells-- It's a Call to Action!**



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THE VALUE  
WILL "GEL"  
YOUR  
SOLUTION IN  
YOUR  
CUSTOMER'S  
MIND

## What are Features, Benefits & Value?

### Features → Tell!

Describe your products & services

Brag about your company

Features are the "what"

*i.e., The Green County Tribune has a circulation of 40,000 households.*

### Benefits → Sell!

Answers the questions, WIIFM, "What's in it for me?" in the customer's mind.

A benefit is a "how"—how it will help the customer

*i.e., The Green County Tribune has a circulation of 40,000 papers throughout your core market, Mr. Customer. This will enable you to reach your customers directly through our product.*

### Value → Gel!

In your customer's mind, the value of your products and services "gel" your solution with their needs.

By illustrating the value of your products to your customers, you increase their level of loyalty and trust in your company's ability to satisfy their needs both now AND in the future.



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**WHAT ARE  
THE  
FEATURES OF  
YOUR  
PRODUCT?**



## Features and Benefits Exercise

Think of a customer to whom you'd like to sell an advertising campaign.

In the space below, make a list of your product(s)' top 8 features that are important to this advertiser.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.



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**WHAT ARE  
THE BENEFITS  
OF YOUR  
PRODUCT?**



Next, in the spaces below, describe the corresponding benefits to your advertiser.

*(Remember to answer the question, "What's in it for me?")*

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.



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SO WHAT?

## Let's play the "So What?" Game

It is very difficult for both new and seasoned sales reps to tie a feature and benefit together. It's easy to assume that the customer understands the importance of reaching 40,000 households. Unless you can vocalize both the feature and benefit to your advertiser, you run the risk of the customer thinking, "So what, how does this apply to my needs?"

We're going to read a few of our benefit statements aloud and the group will play the role of the advertiser. If any of the statements don't answer WIIFM, we're all going to shout, "So What?!"



*Remember...*

**FEATURES** + **BENEFITS** = **VALUE**  
(What + How = WIIFM)



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## CREATING VALUE IN ADVERTISING

### 5. CREATING VALUE IN ADVERTISING

The business of your publication's advertising is more than just selling space—it is the application of:

- ✓ *Marketing Knowledge*
- ✓ *Analysis*
- ✓ *Advertising Program Design*
- ✓ *Multimedia Planning*

All of these concepts work together to solve advertisers' problems.

The only thing that matters on today's business world is your customer's perception of the value of your product in relation to his or her needs.

Creating value starts with a detailed understanding of the advertiser's products, services, lines of merchandise, his/her market, customer base, budgets and competitors' activities. While the customer's perception of his or her business needs may differ from reality or may not be incredibly sound business-wise, that perception is what drives his or her decision-making process.

Value **DOES NOT** necessarily mean offering a lower price or lower cost product or service. It **DOES** mean delivering solutions that produce results.

*Never forget: In any sales relationship, it is important to establish the value of your products or services in the mind of the potential advertiser BEFORE you discuss the price!*



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BUILDING  
VALUE  
BEGINS WITH  
KNOWLEDGE  
OF YOUR  
CUSTOMER

YOUR  
CUSTOMER IS  
CONCERNED  
WITH TOTAL  
COMPETITIVE  
VALUE



Value begins with knowing:

- *What the advertiser wants to accomplish*
- *What the advertiser expects the consumer to do after seeing the ad*
- *Who the target consumers are in terms of demographics, lifestyle and purchase behavior*
- *What the advertiser's competitors are doing*
- *What strategies have worked or not worked for the advertiser in the past*
- *What the key benefits are that the advertiser can deliver to the consumer*

Your advertiser is not just thinking about your publication. They are thinking about all of their options. This is something we call **Total Competitive Value**.

Total Competitive Value= Value of total advertising plan as perceived by the advertiser.

Total Competitive Value is comprised of:

Essential Needs	Are determined by learning about the customer's problems
Competitor's Values	Combinations of products, services, creative ideas and pricing being offered by your media competitors
Current Value	Value of your ad products and as presently perceived by the advertiser
Added Value	Value that you make by add ideas to your current products and services

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JOE  
CURRENTLY  
HAS  
COMPETITIVE  
VALUE...

HOW CAN  
YOUR  
SOLUTION  
SURPASS HIS  
CURRENT  
VALUE?



Think back to Joe at J&G Auto Sales and think of his problem in terms of **Total** Competitive Value.

His needs are:

- *To increase sales by taking business from franchise dealers*
- *To reach potential buyers within 5 to 10 miles of his store*
- *To overcome his image problem*
- *To increase traffic midweek*

Joe is currently receiving Competitive Value from:

- Auto Trader
- Auto Trader.com
- Daily Newspaper Classifieds

To sell advertising to Joe, you must recommend products and services that contain current value AND added value to exceed what he is receiving from your competitors to solve his problem.

Suppose your company offers cull color inserts. It's been your experience that automobile ads in color are extremely effective. Additionally, inserts are very portable and allow customers to bring the flyer with them to the showroom. Finally, you have testimonials from customers that attest to the effectiveness of your insert program.



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UNBUNDLE  
YOUR VALUE



## Unbundling Value

The term unbundle simply means to break down ALL of the things a customer will receive by running an ad in your publication. By unbundling, the customer will fully understand what they are receiving and how it will help them.

Let's unbundle our offer for Joe:

**Current value:** 4 Color Insert at a rate comparable to Auto Trader.

### Added Value:

- Upscale art along w/ color will improve his "image."
- A midweek madness promotional idea will increase traffic.
- Your market research will allow him to target his prospective customers.
- You can insert his ads into zones that best represent his customers' demographics.
- For a small additional investment, you can put his ad on your website with a hyperlink to his website.

Unbundle your own products' added value. Think back to our previous features and benefits exercises. What recommendation will you make to your customer? Unbundle the added value of your recommendation in the space below:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

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**TELL THEM  
WHAT YOU  
ARE GOING TO  
TELL THEM!**



## 6. MAKE A RECOMMENDATION THAT GETS RESULTS!

Deciding what recommendation to make is only half the battle. You also need to deliver your message in such a way that the customer understands how it benefits his/ her needs and is compelled to act on your message without remorse.

### ***Tell Them what you are going to Tell Them***

Don't wing it—design your presentation from your advertiser's point of you. (WIIFM)

*Think...*

*Why... Am I making this presentation?  
What... Is my primary goal?  
Who... Will hear this presentation (What  
are the hot buttons?)*

*Back to Joe...*

*Hi Joe,*

*I've given a lot of thought to what you told me about your store and what you want from an effective advertising campaign.*

*What I am going to tell you will not only help you sell cars, it will save you a lot of money.*

*Our advertising campaign is going to put an upscale image of J&G Auto Sales in the hands of thousands of people—people who are read, willing and able to buy!*



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**CREATE  
EXCITEMENT  
WITH YOUR  
SOLUTION—  
MOTIVATE  
YOUR  
CUSTOMER!**



## **Tell Them what you are going to Tell Them**

A skilled persuader:

Manages relationships well (other-person oriented)

*Balance the feeling of give and take so the advertiser understands they are receiving value for their investment*

Manages advertiser's expectations

Encourages involvement (ownership and commitment-oriented)

*Without involvement, there is no persuasion*

*Makes it relevant to their needs*

*Uses fun and emotion*

*Solves problems*

**Remember, a good communicator creates excitement that moves the advertiser to action! Be excited about your proposal—share your enthusiasm and be passionate!**

*Joe, you mentioned that you wanted to improve your image. Is that correct? Well, here's a spec ad that my company's award-winning art department created just for you. Notice it's full color and features a "Mid-Week Madness" promotion. I think it's a real knockout—what do you think?*

*Didn't you also say that you wanted to target specific types of customers by age and income? We've done a market analysis for you that will help you fully understand the spending and buying patterns of these types of customers. Typically, this type of analysis would cost about \$400 through an advertising agency; I've included it for you at no additional cost.*

*Advertising with us will also give you a key advantage over your competition. Our paper is direct-mailed and thus, we arrive in every home through the mailbox. Your ad will not be sitting on a shelf or counter in a convenience store, nor will only go to people who subscribe to the publication.*



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**DON'T  
FORGET TO  
SUMMARIZE  
KEY POINTS  
AND  
REINFORCE  
THE GREAT  
DECISION  
THEY'RE  
MAKING**



*As you can see from the market analysis, your best success will come from these zip codes. Unlike the daily newspaper you're currently running in, I can directly insert your ad into the books ONLY going to those zip codes. You'll only need to buy advertising in areas that target YOUR customers; you don't need to waste your ads on customers who will never buy from you like you do in the daily publication.*

*Joe, you also said you use the Internet more and more. We can take this really hot ad and put it on our website with a hyperlink directly to YOUR website; we can drive customers right back to you! This ad will go to thousands of potential buyers who will see a new upscale look for J&G!*

*Now, here's the best part of the whole deal—we can do all of this for you for less than you are spending with Auto Trader and the local daily newspaper.*

## **Tell Them what you are going to Tell Them**

Remember to...

*Summarize your key points*

*Schedule a follow-up program*

*Reinforce the fact that they are making a great decision*

*Joe, this is a fantastic opportunity for you to reach the people who are most likely to buy your cars. Additionally, we can give your image a complete makeover at no additional cost, and finally, you can enjoy the advantages of a direct link from our website to yours. I think this complete solution is a real winner. Here is what we need to do next..."*



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## SUMMARY

### 7. SUMMARY

Remember these key points when making a recommendation:

- Identify the client's most essential (key) needs
- Match those needs to your products and services
- Articulate your Features & Benefits
- Create Value
- Unbundle your Value
- Plan to persuade with Value that satisfies their needs
- Make your recommendation(s)

## QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION

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On behalf of The Leadership Institute, thank you for attending this class. We believe that the continued growth of the free paper industry begins with a well-trained, energized sales force.

For more information on TLI's course offerings, check out the [afcpconference.org](http://afcpconference.org) website.

*"I know the price of success: dedication, hard work and an unremitting devotion to the things you want to see happen."  
—Frank Lloyd Wright*

