

## 10. Translating Features to Benefits

**JUST THE FACTS:** Marketing executives translate features to benefits when they are preparing to sell products and services. For example, your cell phone plan offers call forwarding (a feature). This means you will never miss another important call (a benefit). In another example, the new car you want to buy has a built-in GPS system (feature). The salesperson probably tells you that with built-in GPS you will never get lost or need to print out Internet directions again (benefit). The purpose of this activity is to help participants list and explain the positive personality traits (or personal features) they possess and how to communicate those traits to an employer. Remember: Features tell...benefits sell.



### Time

30 minutes



### Materials

- Chart paper, white board (or anything on which to write so a large group can see), and markers
- Three to five notecards per participant



### Directions

Write the following statistics on a flip chart or white board:

- 40% - Attitude
- 25% - Image and appearance
- 25% - Communication skills (verbal and non-verbal)
- 10% - Job skills

According to a variety of sources, your attitude is the #1 factor in getting or losing a job. On the chart is how it is often broken down. Take a few minutes to discuss what each of these "looks like." For example:

- Attitude: Do you demonstrate confidence and enthusiasm, are you on time or early?
- Image and appearance: Do you wear too much perfume or cologne, are your clothes wrinkled or inappropriate for the work environment?
- Communication skills: Do you look the interviewer in the eye, is your handshake firm, do you speak clearly?

Ask participants (and discuss) why they think attitude is rated highest? How does an employer get a sense of your "attitude" during an interview?

Explain that part of a job interview is actually a sales job. You are "selling" yourself and your skills to an employer. This is not an easy task for many of us because we may not be sure about our skills, lack a bit of self-confidence, or are just plain nervous. This is one skill that will definitely get better the more it is practiced.

In order to begin thinking about how we might “sell” ourselves in a job interview, participants will learn how to turn their personal FEATURES into BENEFITS for the employer. This is where they will be able to tell an employer what they have to offer while also giving the employer a reason why this feature is good for his or her business.

Take a few minutes to brainstorm some positive personality traits. Ask participants to “yell” them out while you write them where all can see. Examples of positive personality traits include, but are certainly not limited to: friendly, creative, honest, dependable, trustworthy, enthusiastic, upbeat, patient, polite, helpful, etc.

Now, ask participants to think about what these features might mean to an employer. For example:

- Honesty (feature) means you can be counted on to do the right thing (benefit).
- Friendliness (feature) means you will help customers feel welcomed (benefit)

Review a few of these examples until participants feel comfortable with the activity.

Give each participant a set of notecards. On one side of the card participants should draw a picture of or write a FEATURE they possess. On the other side of the card, they should draw a picture of or write the BENEFIT (or why this feature would be important) to the employer. Depending on the group, this activity can be done individually or in groups of two or more.

Once complete, ask for volunteers to read their personal traits and how they might benefit a future employer. Alternatively, you can ask participants to act out their FEATURES and see if the group can guess both the FEATURE and the BENEFIT to an employer.



## Conclusion

Discuss with participants the ease or difficulty they experienced with this activity. In addition, discuss some examples of different features that may be perceived as “challenging” and how they may be described positively as benefits. For example:

- “Over the years, I’ve learned what it means to multi-task.” (someone who has ADD)
- “I am a great problem solver. You should see some of the places I’ve needed to get into!” (someone who uses a wheelchair)



## Journaling Activity

Describe how it makes you feel talking about yourself in a positive way. Is it easy, difficult, awkward, etc.? Since this is important when it comes time getting a job, what might you do to improve your ability to do this? If this is already easy for you, how can you be sure you don’t come across as “full of yourself” or conceited?



### Extension Activity

Have participants use their individual Features to Benefits cards to create a “30-Second Commercial.” Explain that their goal is to hook an employer on hiring them, just as they might get hooked on buying something from TV after seeing a commercial for the product. A few suggestions for this activity include: record participants, allow for multiple takes and retakes, encourage feedback and suggestions from peers, etc. Encourage participants to view each of their successive videotapes to look for improvement.

You may also wish to invite one or more employers in to critique each commercial and provide feedback and suggestions. Only bring employers into the mix once participants have had the opportunity to practice and feel a bit more confident “selling” themselves.