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There are 6 categories that the features of a car are broken down in to.

They are:

- **S** Safety
- **P** Performance
- **A** Appearance
- **C** Comfort
- **E** Economy
- **D** Dependability

How do I know which one of these my customer is most interested in? That is easy. There are two ways:

**1-Ask them** – "Mr. Smith of safety, performance and appearance which is most important to you?" or "Mrs. Jones when looking for your next vehicle are you most interested in comfort, economy or dependability?"

**2-Listen to them** – When talking to your customer in the early stages, what features are they talking about? Are they telling you they love the seats in their car? Did they say they loved the stereo? Are they going to be hauling a busload of kids around? All of these would point me to a specific category.

**Safety** is defined as the state of not being dangerous or harmful. Many of today's customers are concerned about safety. Think about it, other than our house or our work, we spend more time in our vehicles than anywhere else on earth and our houses and jobs don't move around at 70 miles per hour. Crazy people on the roads, people that text and drive, impaired drivers, bad weather, and having our loved ones in our vehicles are all reasons today's buyers are concerned with safety.

A few of the safety features on today's cars could be: Brighter L.E.D headlights Airbags Anti-lock brakes Blind spot indicators Crumple Zones! Open the hood and look underneath. Even something we may consider small, like roadside assistance!

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**Performance** is the way a mechanism performs. In other words, how well does a product work? When most of us think about an automobile's performance we think of the engine. Is that the only feature on an automobile that performs? Most customers are most concerned with how all of the features on their new car will help them perform better. Aren't they? Let's go over a few features and how they will perform.

Navigation system – will save time and stress when traveling Tires – allow the vehicle to handle better

Headlights – allow the driver to see better when cornering at night Gasoline injection – reduces lag when accelerating Styling – reduce the drag coefficient allowing better acceleration

**Appearance** is defined as the way someone, or something looks. Americans are obsessed with appearances, aren't they? We must have the best-looking house. Our kids must have the best clothes. We don't ever ask the ugliest girl to the prom first do we? It isn't just the overall look of the car that makes up the appearance. Let's point out the smaller parts too. Like these:

Aluminum wheels – You don't have to explain this one, just show them one with hubcaps. They will get the picture.

Interior design – Everything is at your fingertips! We spend 95% of our time in the car, not looking at the outside. Make sure you point out how great the dash, seats, and color combination look.

Aftermarket items – It amazes me how different a car can look with window tint, or a small spoiler added.

Front and rear end – Today's manufacturers spend countless hours and dollars designing the grills, taillights and bumpers. Point out these to your customers. Show them how classy the grill is, etc.

Bodylines – ok, I know, you have to show them the sleek styling too. That is what drew them to the car to begin with. Don't just breeze through this one. Spend some time and show them the entre care. After all, it is sexy, isn't it?

**Comfort** is a difficult one. I am a big guy. I am 6'4" tall and weigh over 200 pounds. I don't fit in too many cars. My opinion of comfort is totally different than that of my 14 year old. Make sure when presenting the comfort feature you show them to everyone that is involved in the purchase. Here are a few ideas:

Seats – Duh, this is the easy one. How well do the seats fit the customer?

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Rear seat heating/cooling – Have you ever been in the back seat on a test drive when the customer has the heat on high? You are all bundled up for winter and now it's 100 degrees in the back seat. That is when you realize how important it is to have your own heating controls.

Legroom – It isn't only important for the front seat occupants. If you have kids you know what I mean. "If you kick my chair one more time..."

Suspension – I once took a 200 mile trip with a friend of mine in his new Corvette. That tight suspension is awesome when you're taking a curve at warp speed but it isn't worth a hill of beans zipping down the freeway.

Heated seats – Oh boyy, how did it take so long for someone to figure this one out? Living in the Midwest where it gets below zero in the winter, there is nothing better than heated seats. If your customer has had them in the past, heated seats will be a must have on the new one.

**Economy** can be defined a few different ways. The one that best suits this situation is the careful use of money and resources. This is another one that confuses most salespeople. Immediately when someone says that they are interested in economy salesmen talk about two specific topics; gas mileage and sale price. Instead of just pointing out these features, let's explain the features that give the customer the benefit of low price and great gas mileage. Also, don't forget some of these:

Warranty – This topic is skipped many times when a customer brings up economy. If your product offers a long warranty, won't that save your customer money during their ownership should an issue arise?

Alternative fuels – E85, hybrid, and electric cars are all alternative fuel vehicles that will save your customers money in the long run.

Maintenance – Many of today's cars have maintenance items that will save customers money. Some have lifetime rated transmission fluids or 100,000-mile spark plugs. Be sure to point these out. If your competition didn't point these out your customers will assume they do not have them and you are saving them money.

**Dependability** can be explained as the quality of being dependable or reliable. The easiest way to think of the dependability features is to think of you. Think about some of the reasons why your product is dependable.

Warranty – I like to explain to customers that a long warranty doesn't only assure the customer that if they have an issue they will be taken care of. It also means that the car is reliable.

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Computers – Todays cars are driving computers. There are thousands of sensors reviewing the performance of the car the entire time it is running. Warning lights are displayed to help prevent major issues. If your customer sees a warning light when the light first comes on, many times they can avoid an expensive repair.

Wow, that is a lot of information to talk about with your customer, isn't it? Relax! Today's customers only care about 10% of cars features. Remember, we aren't breaking the car down piece by piece. We are taking the information that we learned from the customer during the investigation stage and showing off those features to the customer. Spend the time on this step and you will reap the rewards when you get your voucher!

