

Green Selling Tip

Think in Terms of Results

As to basic selling techniques, what's the difference between selling conventional cleaning products and selling Green cleaning products?

When you come right down to it, not much. The approach is often the same: meet and greet the prospect; try to understand the client's needs; suggest and demonstrate a product that best addresses those concerns with an emphasis on its features.

The problem that can arise is that distributors place too much emphasis on selling the features of Green cleaning products and not enough on selling the benefits. The features-versus-benefits dilemma is an age-old concern, and it is made worse because some salespeople do not fully understand the difference between the two.

Features are normally taken right from advertising and marketing material. But they do not necessarily help the customer answer the burning question: "What's in it for me?" This is where a discussion of the benefits of the product is necessary. These are the results that come from using the product.

For instance, some of the benefits or results a facility manager may look for and appreciate when transferring to a Green cleaning product are the following:

- It cleans just as well as the conventional products they have been using.
- No special training is required to use the new product.
- Its costs are about the same as conventional products, or may even prove to be a significant cost savings overall for the facility once items such as reduced absenteeism, improved product performance, etc. are factored.
- There is less concern about someone getting sick or injured at the workplace or when using the product.

- The customer's staff thinks it shows the company cares about their health and welfare.
- They don't have to worry about meeting any new compliance regulations.
- It impresses their customers and helps put them one step ahead of some of their competitors.
- The manager's boss likes it—which means he or she likes the manager—because the boss wants the office to go Green.

Should We Say “Results?”

Sometimes it is easier to understand the distinction between features and benefits and use the terms more effectively in selling by dropping the word *benefits* altogether and replacing it with the word *results*. Then think of all the features of the product that are normally used to discuss a product and replace them with the results the customer will derive from that feature.

In many ways, addressing the results clients will achieve by using the Green product also gets them emotionally involved with it and makes it easier for the salesperson to lead them to a purchasing decision. Discussing just the features is much more intellectual. But people tend to buy emotionally — based on the results they expect to see— and then defend their decision intellectually.