NATIONAL DIPLOMA: CUSTOMER MANAGEMENT

ID 20908 LEVEL 5 – CREDITS 243

LEARNER GUIDE

SAQA:10045

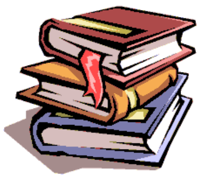
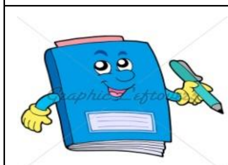
IDENTIFY PRODUCT FEATURES, ADVANTAGES AND BENEFITS TO THE CUSTOMER

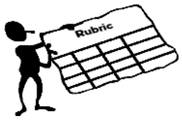
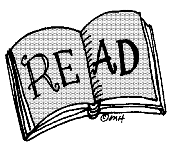
Learner Information:

Details	Please Complete this Section
Name & Surname:	
Organisation:	
Unit/Dept:	
Facilitator Name:	
Date Started:	
Date of Completion:	

Key to Icons

The following icons may be used in this Learner Guide to indicate specific functions:

 **Books**	**This icon means that other books are available for further information on a particular topic/subject.**
 **References**	**This icon refers to any examples, handouts, checklists, etc…**
 **Important**	**This icon represents important information related to a specific topic or section of the guide.**
 **Activities**	**This icon helps you to be prepared for the learning to follow or assist you to demonstrate understanding of module content. Shows transference of knowledge and skill.**
 **Exercises**	**This icon represents any exercise to be completed on a specific topic at home by you or in a group.**

 Tasks/Projects	An important aspect of the assessment process is proof of competence. This can be achieved by observation or a portfolio of evidence should be submitted in this regard.
 Workplace Activities	An important aspect of learning is through workplace experience. Activities with this icon can only be completed once a learner is in the workplace
 Tips	This icon indicates practical tips you can adopt in the future.
 Notes	This icon represents important notes you must remember as part of the learning process.

Learner Guide Introduction

About the Learner Guide…	This Learner Guide provides a comprehensive overview of the **Identify product features, advantages and benefits to the customer,**and forms part of a series of Learner Guides that have been developed for The series of Learner Guides are conceptualized in modular's format and developed They are designed to improve the skills and knowledge of learners, and thus enabling them to effectively and efficiently complete specific tasks. Learners are required to attend training workshops as a group or as specified by their organization. These workshops are presented in modules, and conducted by a qualified facilitator.
Purpose	The purpose of this Unit Standard is to **Identify product features, advantages and benefits to the customer**
Outcomes	**Identify product features, advantages and benefits to the customer**
Assessment Criteria	The only way to establish whether a learner is competent and has accomplished the specific outcomes is through an assessment process. Assessment involves collecting and interpreting evidence about the learner's ability to perform a task.This guide may include assessments in the form of activities, assignments, tasks or projects, as well as workplace practical tasks. Learners are required to perform tasks on the job to collect enough and appropriate evidence for their portfolio of evidence, proof signed by their supervisor that the tasks were performed successfully.

To qualify	To qualify and receive credits towards the learning programme, a registered assessor will conduct an evaluation and assessment of the learner's portfolio of evidence and competency
Range of Learning	This describes the situation and circumstance in which competence must be demonstrated and the parameters in which learners operate
Responsibility	The responsibility of learning rest with the learner, so: • Be proactive and ask questions, • Seek assistance and help from your facilitators, if required.

NOTIONAL HOURS BREAKDOWN

The candidate undertaking this unit standard is best advised to at least spend one hundred hours of study time on this learning programme. Below is a table which demonstrates how these one hundred hours could be spread:

TIMEFRAME

Total Notional Hours	Contact Time	Non contact- Self-Study/Assessment
Credits (10) x 10 = 100	30 HRS	70 HRS

<table>
<tr><td>1.</td><td>Learning Programme Name:</td><td colspan="10">REFER TO COVER PAGE</td></tr>
<tr><td>2.</td><td>SAQA Qualification/
Unit Standard Title:</td><td colspan="10">REFER TO COVER PAGE</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Qualification/
Unit Standard</td><td></td><td>4.</td><td>SAQA Number</td><td>10045</td><td>5.</td><td>NQF Level</td><td>5</td><td>6.</td><td>Credits</td><td>10</td></tr>
<tr><td>7.</td><td><u>PURPOSE</u> for offering programme to your learners</td><td colspan="10">REFER TO NEXT PAGE</td></tr>
<tr><td>8.</td><td><u>TARGET AUDIENCE</u> for this specific programme:</td><td colspan="10">REFER TO NEXT PAGE</td></tr>
<tr><td>9.</td><td>Entry/Admission Requirements:</td><td colspan="10">REFER TO NEXT PAGE</td></tr>
<tr><td>10.</td><td>Timeframe for Training:
(Total Hours/Days/Weeks)</td><td colspan="10">Theory content –Role play, Simulation, Group work, Pai = 30 hrs.
Non contact session- self-study, assignment, practise g by coach or mentor, formative assessment and summ assessment = 70 hrs.</td></tr>
</table>

Learning Unit 1 Identify product features, advantages and benefits to the customer

UNIT STANDARD NUMBER	:	10045
LEVEL ON THE NQF	:	5
CREDITS	:	10
FIELD	:	Business, Commerce and Management Studies
SUB FIELD	:	Marketing

PURPOSE:	This unit standard is a core standard and forms part of the qualification, National Diploma, and is registered at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). Learners working towards this standard will be learning towards the full qualification, or will be working within a Marketing Environment, specialising in either Marketing Communication, Marketing Management, Market Research or Customer Management, where the acquisition of competence against this standard will add value to one`s job. This standard will also add value to learners who are starting their own business and recognises that Marketing forms an integral component of any business. The qualifying learner is capable of: Identifying needs of the customer Presenting features, advantages and benefits to the customer Demonstrating features, advantages and benefits
LEARNING ASSUMED TO BE IN PLACE:	
Learners accessing this qualification will have demonstrated competence against the standards in the National Certificate in Marketing, Marketing Communication or Marketing Research or Marketing management or Customer Management or equivalent at NQF Level 4.	

SESSION 1. Identify needs of the customer
Learning Outcomes
• 1. Customer needs are identified through the use of questions. • 2. Significant factors in relation to developing customer relationship are established and developed. • 3. Customer buying motives are identified to link product features, advantages and benefits to them. • 4. Customer needs in terms of product quality; price and usage are identified and assessed.

Step 1: Identify your target customers

Begin by identifying your target customers. Who are they? What do they need from your agency? How, and at what times or places do they interact with your agency—what are the "points of service delivery"?

- Cluster or segment target customers based on their common behaviors.
- Determine the priorities of your customer "clusters".
- When possible, focus on customers with high current or future value—for example, someone who frequently accesses your services. A comparable example is a frequent flier program—airlines offer a higher level of service (such as early boarding privileges) to their frequent flyers, while still meeting the needs of their other passengers.
- To target the highest level of service to your "frequent flyers", you also need to identify the best ways to serve non-target customers, those to whom it is expensive to provide services, or those who might be better served by other means. This is a necessary part of a customer focus. One example: a fire department could discourage residents from contacting the department to remove cats from trees

by charging a $20 fee for performing the service, and by advertising their busy emergency call load.

Step 2: Determine what your customers want

- Determine what target customers want (not just what they need right now) by considering these techniques:
    - online customer satisfaction surveys
    - phone or email survey
    - in-person meetings or focus groups
    - user testing
    - channel analytics (web, phone, etc.)
- Determine how target customers prioritize their "wants". Generally, customers want timeliness, convenience, quality products and services, variety or selection, and protection or security. However, each agency must identify what is most important to**its** customers.
- Weigh how important the customer-identified "wants" are to your agency. Are the services something that the organization does, is capable of doing, or wants to pursue?
- Determine how well your agency can meet your customers' "wants" in comparison with competitors. You may think you don't have competitors, but more than likely you do, especially if you're producing consumer-related information for the public. Be mindful of who's doing similar work—if competing organizations meet or exceed customer expectations, it changes the customer's frame of reference and increases their expectations.
- Determine which "wants" would most positively impact your agency's bottom line (for example, increased compliance with a regulation, more loyalty and trust, or a desired customer behavioral change), and whether those "wants" should be targeted for improvement.

Step 3: Create a culture of customer service

- In the best performing private companies, CEOs ensure that employees at all levels understand their customers and are given the tools to serve them well.
- Agency leadership must communicate the importance of customer service and ensure that all employees, even those without direct customer-facing jobs, understand how their work serves customers.
- Management must regularly interact with customers so they understand evolving customer needs.
- Most importantly, front-line customer service workers must be empowered to actually solve problems on the spot.

Step 4: Clearly communicate service standards and expectations

- Set service standards, such as call wait times, claims processing times, and satisfaction ratings.
- Clearly define the standards and make them publicly available.
- Clearly defined goals helps motivate employees and helps manage customer expectations.
- When service standards cannot be met, customers must be informed—a non-negotiable best practice in the private sector.

Step 5: Provide consistent service across channels

- Agencies should continuously collect comprehensive customer feedback across the whole customer experience—not just via each channel.
- As communication preferences change, we need to adapt our services to interact with our customers, when and how they prefer.
- Consistency of service across channels is critical—a customer who gets an answer on the phone should receive the same answer in-person at a local office, via the website, over email, or via mobile device.

Step 6: Establish a vision for customer service excellence

- Establish your agency's customer-focused vision using all the information in these steps. The vision statement should be simple and may also identify what the company does**not** want to be. Sample vision statements include:
    - "Absolutely, Positively Overnight" by Federal Express
    - L.L. Bean's promise of "Guaranteed. Period."; and
    - Google's "Do no evil"
- Continually reflect on the vision and goals and the way services you're delivering service. Be creative about the ways you create and deliver new services. Be willing to change existing practices to integrate improvements.
- Live up to what you promise by applying both an external and internal strategy that reflect the vision. If your agency doesn't implement both internally and externally oriented strategies consistent with the vision, you'll have good intentions but poor customer service.

Step 7: Implement an external strategy

The external strategy should focus on how your agency's service is designed, marketed, and delivered to target customers.

- Take into account the costs of providing services and ways to minimize those costs while implementing quality control. Develop the service concept with the frontline worker at its center. Determine the necessary financial, human, and technological resources, as well as how your agency structure and flow can enable frontline workers to deliver excellent customer service.
- Use advertising/educational strategies to set appropriate customer expectations.
- Provide a feedback loop to incorporate customer comments and complaints into the planning process. Customer complaints are an invaluable resource. Without them, organizations can't be successful. Complaints that people bring to your agency are one of the most efficient and least expensive ways to get information about people's expectations of your agency and its products and services. Studies have shown that customer comments and complaints are a more direct means of getting information than conducting research studies of customer

expectations, conducting transaction studies, or reviewing customer expectations in similar industries.

- Ensure that the complaint resolution strategy supports the customer-focused vision. Most research shows if customers believe their complaints are welcomed and responded to, they will more likely come back to your organization for a future interaction.

Step 8: Focus on recruiting and retaining good employees

While Step 7 outlined an external strategy, the next three steps cover, in detail, the internal strategy—how your agency's internal processes will support the customer-focused vision.

- The premise is that "capable workers who are well trained and fairly compensated provide better service, need less supervision, and are much more likely to stay on the job. As a result, their customers are likely to be more satisfied…" (Harvard Business Review, 1994).
- Research also shows that employee turnover and customer satisfaction are directly correlated—typically, the higher the turnover rate, the lower the agency scores in delivering good service.
- In addition, it's commonly noted that employee turnover is an expensive problem, with significant costs needed to hire and train new people.
- Leaders must foster the creation and testing of new ideas and be openly willing to change existing practices to integrate improvements.
- Learn how targeted employees perceive the proposed customer services. An organization cannot change without the participation of its employees.
- Focus on recruiting employees who support the customer service vision. The costs of employing people who do not support the customer service vision are considerable. In addition, develop career paths that allow successful customer-oriented employees to remain on the frontline.

Step 9: Empower employees to resolve customer service problems

- Empower frontline employees to do what it takes to satisfy the customer. Management must support employee empowerment by clearly defining the boundaries of the empowerment, while remaining flexible within those boundaries. This will encourage creativity. In general, rules should be simple and few—Continental Airlines actually had an employee handbook burning party to signify the change from a procedural environment to one of empowered customer service
- In addition to skills and empowerment, equip frontline personnel with the technology, information, and internal resources to do what it takes to satisfy your customers.

Step 10: Develop good communications and rewards system

- Ensure that divisions and individuals within your agency communicate. Frontline employees who take customer questions, and other employees who have answers to those question, need a support network. A customer should never have to tell one employee what another employee already knows.
- Develop cross-functional teams for operations and improving service. Ask the people who are doing the work for suggestions to improve productivity.
- Link employees' compensation to (and offer rewards for) good customer service performance. Rewards can be money, status, praise, acknowledgement, or perks such as trips, time off, or special events.
- Finally, measure employee satisfaction regularly.

SESSION 2. Present features, advantages and benefits to the customer
Learning Outcomes
• 1. Presentation of the features, advantages and benefits are in accordance with customer need established. • 2. Credibility is established of the seller and organisation through the quality of the presentation. • 3. Major features of the products are established and presented that emphasise advantages and benefits in relation to identified needs. • 4. Customer's responsiveness to the features, advantages and benefits is assessed to evaluate their acceptance.

Product Features, Advantages and Benefits

The sales mantra goes that we must sell benefits, not features. To explain what I mean read the following extract of an on-line advertisement for Miele ovens."The Miele fan forced cooking system, for example, enables you to cook on up to three levels. Rather than just circulating hot air with a fan we use a mini-turbine together with a ring heater element to force hot air evenly throughout the oven interior. This reduces cooking time and thus energy consumption – above all providing perfectly even cooking results."

In this advertisement, the feature, advantages and benefits are:

Features: Fan forced cooking system, mini turbine, and ring heater element.

Advantages: Cooking on up to three levels, hot air forced evenly through the interior.

Benefits: Reduced cooking time, reduced energy consumption, perfectly even cooking results.

In sales speak; features describe the sales item in technical terms. Advantages describe the sales item in terms of what the feature does. Benefits describe the sales item in terms of the benefit to me, the customer.

PRODUCT.

SALES TRAINING - HOW TO SELL FEATURES & BENEFITS THE POWER OF TARGETED COMMUNICATION!

This past week a client of ours asked, how do I tell a feature from a benefit, and how can I promote it so it will have sales presentation impact? Good question. To answer, let's begin with a reasonable definition. A **feature** is any part of your product or ***service*** that can be physically seen or touched. By this I mean it is what the product or service IS. Nothing more. It contains each physical feature in regards to a hard goods-type product, and is the information contained on a brochure or any describing information regarding a service-type product.

A benefit on the other hand, is what a product or service DOES SPECIFICALLY for that particular prospect or customer. Now, this is where my definition varies a bit from others in the training field. I have purposely added the phrase specifically for that particular prospect or customer because the impact of how you extend and present your product benefits, can and will be different for each new presentation. Here is an example.

For instance, let's say your company produced unique marble countertops. As you point out all the intricate carving and craftsmanship on how your countertops were created you are covering only features he prospect can see these features without explanation and the presentation impact is only so-so.

However, if this couple happens to live in the executive corporate world and finds they entertain top brass from other companies, now as you extend the benefits of your product and speak specifically to the needs of your prospect, your presentation is really gaining in its strength and acceptablility.

On the other hand, let's say that the next folks into your display area are of a mundane nature, not out to impress anyone, but desire your marble countertops for the intrinsic ***value*** they will bring into their new home. So you, being the consummate salesperson, found that the extension of benefits to the executive couple worked so wonderfully, that you decided to follow the same course of communication with the down-home folks. Result - NO SALE!

Why? Because your presentation of product features and their extension into product benefits was not a targeted communication channel to the needs of this specific audience the down-home folks. Therefore, your presentation impact was zero. It was not what they wanted to hear, nor did it make an emotional connection.

Do you now understand why your extension of benefits must be specifically engineered to each new customer? Remember, a product feature is what the product IS, nothing more. A benefit is what the product can do to solve a problem, add value, and what it DOES SPECIFICALLY for that particular prospect or customer.

Now that you understand the definition of features and benefits and how these definitions are applied, lets create even more sales communication impact by moving to the next level of presentation.

When we create communication impact, we do it through separation of information. In other words, instead of grouping a number of features together and offering their benefits in total, it is better to stair-step the process. By taking each product feature and making sure to extend only that features benefits to the ***customer*** before moving to the next feature-benefit combination, you are creating higher value for your product or service. The higher the value created in the consumers mind, the less the ***price*** objections.

Product Features and Functional Benefits

Customers derive functional benefits from features that are part the consumable product. For instance, a plasma television includes such features and benefits as:

Feature	**Functional Benefit**
screen size	offers greater detail and allows for more distant viewing
screen resolution	viewing provides clear, more realistic picture

surround sound	immerses all senses in the viewing experience
remote control	allows for greater comfort while viewing

These features are called functional because they result in a benefit the user directly associates with the consumable product. For marketers functional benefits are often the result of materials, design and production decisions. How the product is built can lead to benefits such as effectiveness, durability, speed, ease-of-use, and cost savings to name just few.

Sell Features, Advantages, And Benefits

Most people could care less about your association's products or services. They want to know what it can do for them; how it will solve some problem or help them achieve some business or career objective. Too often, we concentrate on the great features our association offers, like newsletters or trade shows, but neglect to translate them into the real motives for buying.A feature is an objective and observable characteristic of your product or service. Features remain unchanged whether the prospect buys or not. For example, features of your upcoming trade show might include room for 150 booths, five break-out seminars, and 2,000 visitors over two days. Features of your newsletter might include 32 pages, a color cover, and a bingo reply card.An advantage is what the feature does, the service that it performs. An advantage of having break-out sessions at your trade show is that they attract qualified attendees to your exhibits. The advantage of a bingo reply card is that it makes it easier for customers to respond. But that's not the whole story.A benefit is the payoff of the advantage, or the value it provides to this individual prospect. Qualified attendees mean you'll spend less time qualifying and spend more time closing sales. Easy response means you'll see immediate results from your newsletter ad.

Think of benefits as the value of the advantage to the individual prospect. These are therefore defined by the prospects' goals. The same product or service may offer different benefits to prospects with different priorities. For the trade show go-getters, a busy floor with lots of traffic may be just the opportunity they've been waiting for to introduce a new machine.Another member might want to participate in order to network with the show's other exhibitors. Another may view it as an opportunity to orient their new employees to the industry. The guerrilla always links features and advantages to their prospects' objectives, so they can clearly see the benefits.Remember too that a benefit may not be intuitively obvious. Guerrillas target their selling message by always translating features into advantages into benefits. For example, you might say, "One feature of our show is that attendees will have paid 5.00 each to enter the exhibit hall. The advantage is that these are people who really want to see what you have to offer, and you benefit because that makes it easier for you to sell to them."Because the same features will offer different benefits to different prospects, the guerrilla targets the presentation to cover only selected features that offer a clear advantage. "Attendees will have paid 5.00 to enter the exhibit hall. The advantage is that by keeping the traffic down to a manageable level, your people benefit by having time to qualify each visitor, rather than just passing out literature to a mob."Before attempting to sell anything new, do this simple exercise. Fold a sheet of paper as you would a letter into three sections. In the first column, list the half-dozen major features of your offering. In the second column, list several advantages for each feature. And in the third column, list the possible benefits of each advantage for the different types of prospects you plan to call on. No matter what you're offering, your presentations will flow naturally and logically across the page, making it easier for prospects to justify buying. Now you're armed and dangerous.

Benefits of Product Knowledge

Knowledge is power and for retailers, product knowledge can mean more sales. It is difficult to effectively sell to a consumer if we cannot show how a particular product will address a shopper's needs. Read on to learn some of the benefits of knowing the products you sell.

Strengthens Communication Skills

Having a thorough understanding of the products on the shelves can allow a retailer to use different techniques and methods of presenting the product to customers. Stronger communication skills will allow a salesperson to recognize and adapt a sales presentation for the various types of customers.

Boosts Enthusiasm

Seeing someone completely enthusiastic about a product is one of the best selling tools. As you generate excitement for the product, you remove any uncertainty the product may not be the best solution for that customer. The easiest way to become enthusiastic is to truly believe in the product.

Grows Confidence

If a customer isn't fully committed to completing a sale, the difference may simply be the presence (or lack) of confidence a salesperson has towards the product. Becoming educated in the product and its uses will help cement that confidence.

Assists in Overcoming Objections

Objections made by customers may be struck down with factual information regarding the product. That information usually comes in the form of product knowledge. Being well versed in not only your products, but similar products sold by competitors, allows you to easily counter objections.

How to Gain Product Knowledge

- Marketing Literature
- Sales Reps
- Training Sessions
- Testimonials
- Role Playing
- Practical Use

It is important to understand how the product is made, the value of the product, how the product should and can be used, and what products work well together.

What to Know About Your Products

- Pricing structure
- Styles, colors or models available

- History of the product
- Any special manufacturing process
- How to use the product
- Product distribution and delivery
- Servicing, warranty and repair information

It may take a while to easily articulate your product knowledge, especially with new products, but over time you'll become comfortable and confident in providing the correct information to shoppers. That confidence will pay off in improved sales results.

SESSION 3. Demonstrate features, advantages and benefits
Learning Outcomes
• 1. Demonstration of features, advantages and benefits match clients needs. • 2. Demonstration is carried out in accordance with operating instructions and highlights product features, advantages and benefits. • 3. Demonstration is consistent with the sales client's needs for and uses of the product.

In marketing, a **product demonstration** (or "demo" for short) is a promotion where a product is demonstrated to potential customers.[1] The goal of such a demonstration is to introduce customers to the product in hopes of getting them to purchase that item. Products often sampled during demonstrations include new products or new versions of already existing products that have recently been introduced to the commercial marketplace, which the manufacturers are attempting to advertise.

The Purpose & Benefits of a Product Demonstration

A product demonstration is one of your best sales tools if you have a high-quality product. A product demonstration helps you get a prospect interested and excited about your solution. It is also an effective way to address the prospect's specific product-related concerns.

Simulates Interest

Product demonstrations provide visual support to enhance the quality of your sales presentation. Prospects who are more visual or hands-on learners often need to see your product in action to fully grasp its value and potential. This is especially true if unique design features are key selling points, such as with fashion or furnishings. The ability to see, feel and sometimes smell your product is generally more appealing to prospects than simply listening to your sales pitch.

Conveys Ownership

An effective demonstration also serves the purpose of instilling a sense of ownership of the product to the prospect. For example, car salespeople typically try to get a buyer behind the wheel to feel what it would be like to own and drive the car. Free trials have a similar intent of letting buyers' experience temporary ownership of a product without the risk of paying for it. Helping prospects' connect with this feeling of ownership is an important step to persuasive selling.

Provides Proof

The product, sample, video, brochures, pictures and other tools used in a demo are often called proof devices because they offer tangible evidence that supports what you say. Buyers assume you will say good things about a product you sell. Buyers sometimes have a built-in distrust for salespeople. Showing what your product can do, and even letting the customer experience it, provide necessary proof. For example, food samples help grocery shoppers experience taste quality for themselves.

Combats Concerns

Your demonstration also helps you combat product-related concerns presented by a buyer. Prospects often come with preconceived notions or misinformation based on things they have heard in the marketplace. If a prospect questions key claims or doubts your product and its performance capabilities, a demo can ease those concerns. The key is to view buyer concerns as a request for more information and not a condemnation of your solution.

Procedure begins with preparation

Our procedure begins with preparation. Thinking about the client you will present to next, break down your product demonstration into segments highlighting each individual feature of your product or service that you know will benefit this client.

The second step is to present each of those features in the following manner, and only in the following manner.

First, you state the FACT. Then, you show the BENEFIT. Once the benefit is given, you must create URGENCY. And ask for FEEDBACK.Facts and benefits create the sale. Urgency and feedback make it happen now. The first two, fact and benefit, are pretty easy if you are a professional who truly knows their product.Urgency for each feature is something that the salesperson must create. It's not there until you make it so. It's not being pushy or trying to force your customer into a quick decision. Creating urgency requires some effort and creativity to assure that your potential client feels a genuine need to make a purchase now.In my seminars, we create urgency by offering special investments on products that are only valid the day of the seminar. It's the today-and-today-only method of developing urgency. Retail outlets use sales or offers where they indicate quantities are limited to create a sense of urgency in their shoppers. Investment counselors show charts and graphs of growth potential that is based on today's market figures. If the clients want to earn those kinds of returns, they should start their program today. Think about what would be appropriate for your product.The fourth step of asking for Feedback serves two purposes: 1) it provides a way to monitor your progress, and 2) helps you see if your potential client is ready for the next logical step.To give you a better idea of how the process works, here are a couple of examples. Read them, study them and customize the system to work for your product and your customers.

Here's an example for health products:

FACT: "This powerful juice contains 85 necessary nutrients for the human body."

This fact can be proven. You probably have a detailed list of the contents from your company.

BENEFIT: "These nutrients will help your body recover from the daily stress it endures from pollutants, emotional anxiety, or from eating processed foods."

To discover the appropriate benefit, just put yourself in your potential client's situation and ask "what's in it for me?" In this case, the potential clients are concerned about their health. After achieving trust and need, facts and benefits may do the selling, but urgency and feedback will do it now.

URGENCY: "Our research has proven that when taken daily, these nutrients will keep the body in a sound health state. However, it takes most people at least a week of taking it before they begin to feel and see the benefits. That being the case, it's wise to get started on your program immediately—especially if you have a particular goal in mind for feeling better." Without using any high pressure or being pushy, the salesperson has merely pointed out the significant advantage to making a purchase right now over procrastinating until later. Buying now is clearly in the customer's best interest according to the customer's own definition of need.

FEEDBACK: "Because we're offering a special introductory program this month, how soon do you think you'll want to begin?"The answer is rather obvious, isn't it? With these four steps, the potential client should realize that, too, and be prepared to move to the next step in the system, which would be to discuss the money aspects of the sale.Use the preceding example to spur some thought as to how the process will work with your product or service. Creating urgency requires a little thought on your part, but it can be done. Asking for feedback is critical. If you don't generate feedback, you may never discover any concerns your potential client has until it is too late to effectively address them.When you get positive feedback throughout your presentation or demonstration, your close becomes much easier because your client would be contradicting himself by refusing to go ahead. Your potential client is not an opponent to be overcome, but a partner to be helped. Even negative feedback is valuable because it lets you know where they stand on a particular issue or feature.Product demonstration is basic. It's simple, but it's not easy. It requires thought and planning. You have to do your homework, study, and practice the techniques. You also need to research your client's real needs, wants, and concerns. Beyond that, you have to apply your own creative resources to put the entire system together in terms that provide the unique solution to your client's unique situation.When you use the system properly, it will astound you.

FACT + BENEFITS + URGENCY + FEEDBACK = SOLD TODAY, SOLD NOW

Repeat this mantra over and over, "I will never give a product demonstration again without presenting the features in this manner: State the facts, Show the benefits, Create urgency and ask for feedback." It will make a world of difference in increasing the number of people you serve, improving your closing ratio, and allowing you to do it in less time. It's a sales professional's dream come true.

Product demonstrators, heed the following advice…please?

1. Say what the product is. Early on, in a straightforward manner stripped of hype and buzzwords–both to make what follows clearer and to disabuse the audience of any misperceptions. (Example of why this is a good idea: was the first product unveiled this morning at DEMO, and I labored under the misunderstanding that this software product was some sort of hardware until about halfway through the announcement.)

2. Don't tell the audience that your product is going to change the world. Or even that it's amazing. It probably won't, and most likely isn't. And by making inflated claims you ensure the product will fail to live up to them. Besides, truly amazing, world-changing products speak for themselves. (Yes, I know that Steve Jobs hypes products to the heavens, and it works–and the moment you magically turn into Steve Jobs, you can start doing it, too.)

3. Demo fewer features, not more . In a venue such as DEMO that gives you little time to do your stuff, you should probably focus on a couple of features at most. Certainly no more than three. Make sure they're both memorable and representative.

4. Don't claim you have no direct competitors. You do. (They don't have to be exactly the same as your product–in fact, if they were exactly the same it would be pretty darn confusing.) Claiming you have no competitors makes you look clueless, or full of misplaced hubris, or both.

5. Have a backup plan in case something goes wrong. Have several of them, actually. At both TechCrunch50 and DEMO, a meaningful percentage of the demos have failed–momentarily or completely. I'd try to eliminate potential points of failure. I'd introduce redundancy if possible. (At the Windows XP launch in 2001, Bill Gates did a remote demo via Webcam using a notebook in Times Square; it choked, and he pulled out an identical notebook that worked.) And I'd figure out what I'd do and say if the demo was an utter failure.

6. Be very, very careful about trying to be funny. I've seen demos that have made me laugh (intentionally so!), but I've seen ten times more that I thought were lame. And some of the ones that made me chuckle didn't help me remember the product in question. (I recall a guy in a cowboy hat from a DEMO past, but couldn't tell you a thing about the product he was pitching.)]

7. Mention how you plan to make money. Briefly, and at the end, but everybody is wondering, so you might as well get it out of the way.

8. Remember that fewer presenters are usually better. At DEMO, many of the demos involve multiple people, but the most memorable ones usually involve one person on stage. It probably reduces the chances of embarrassing screwups, too. (There's a reason why Steve Jobs has historically gotten Phil Schiller involved in his demos only when he absolutely, positively needed a second person.) The person who does the demo should probably be the most talented presenter in the company, whoever that person may be.

9. The most credible presentations are done by people who you can envision using the product. For some reason, amazingly few of the scads of presentations I've witnessed involving professional graphics software have been done by artists. More often, they're done by people who would have trouble sketching out a stick figure. Similarly, music-related demos are best done by people who seem to love music, and game PCs should be demoed by people you can imagine playing games.

10. Make sure your audience can *see* the demo. Especially in a venue such as TechCrunch or DEMO, where it may be hard to read small onscreen type, and projection may be on the fuzzy side. (Most impossible-to-see demo I've ever sort of witnessed: Microsoft's unveiling of the first Windows CE PDAs, which involved murky projection of even murkier non-backlit monochrome displays.) It's probably a good idea to avoid demos in which not being able to read the screen renders the demo unintelligible.

11. Practice. Practice.Practice. Take a break. And then practice some more. Lastly, practice. Other than having a truly great product, it's the best way to ensure that your demo goes well.

12. Go to shows like TechCrunch and DEMO and take notes about the clichés you hear. Then avoid them when you do demos. (There's a generic *sameness* to many of the demos at these conferences that makes it hard to tell one company from another.)