

Multiply Your Advertising
Effectiveness with
THE “WHY? FACTOR”
The Ultimate Game-Changer

Part 4 of 4 Parts Of the “Sell Lots More” Series

By Larry Mullins

This article will be published in Furniture World magazine in mid January and distributed at the Las Vegas Market. I want my clients to have an advanced copy. This four-part series is very important and could be a game-changer for you in 2011.

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THE FINAL ARTICLE OF THIS series will divulge the game-changing link that ties everything together, the *Why? Factor*. If you read carefully, you will perceive a grand strategy emerge that is guaranteed to make you more sales and profit.

Why? ... The Sixth Factor that Makes the Other Five Work

There are six factors that I have presented in this series. Each plays an important role in making your advertising media more effective. Yet, none of the other five do much without the

Why? Factor. When you talk exclusively about Who? What? When? Where? and How?—they are almost meaningless. Because each can be brushed off by your prospect with “So what?”

The prospect wants to know what’s in it for her. Why should she care who you are or what you are selling? This seems obvious once it is pointed out. Yet, you may be surprised to know that, with a few notable exceptions, most furniture marketers leave the Why? Factor almost entirely out of their advertising messages! Especially the big boxes. The Why? Factor is the forgotten factor. And herein lies your big opportunity to lift your messages to higher and higher levels of effectiveness.

Think about it. Furniture dealers gripe about the cost of flyers, newspaper space, air media, direct mail and so on. Yet they appeal for more business in expensive advertising media with messages that leave out the reason a prospect should be interested in what they are communicating. They fill costly white space with label headlines and weak copy that is bereft of benefits. They fail to greet guests with their USP (*Unique Selling Proposition*). They abdicate the responsibility of producing very expensive advertising flyers to technicians who never read a book on advertising. And the truth is, if they introduced the Why? Factor into their advertising it would instantly double or triple its effectiveness! Because the Why? Factor addresses the “What’s in it for me?” element that is ever-present in the prospect’s mind.

The Why? Factor informs the prospect of the benefits your product will provide. And, on another level, there is even more to the Why? Factor. This embraces your STORY. Why are you having a sale? Why reduce prices? Why are you overstocked? Slow sales? New merchandise on the way? An honest reason will resonate much better with your sales staff than either a concocted one or none at all. Be sure to provide your staff with a short script so that they all tell the same story. Make the mantra of your sales consultants: “Always mention style, beauty, quality and fashion whenever you mention price or value.” And finally, provide them with a simple handout to break the ice when they greet their guests.

This article will provide information to help you stand out from a fragmented

universe of look- and sound-alike messages and quickly increase your market share. While competitors are yelling price and trying to hawk sofas, chairs, and room packages, your messages will be dramatically different. You will be offering a precious relationship to prospects, one based upon your Unique Selling Proposition. You will be dazzling prospects with your expertise. While competitors are selling price, price, price you will be selling new comfort and beauty for their homes, relationship, and a pleasant, risk-free shopping experience. You will be telling prospects your story and also WHY it is important for them to pay attention to your message. In short, you will inspire trust.

Keep in mind Clyde Bedell’s ultimate premise for good advertising:

“There is only one language of advertising. It is the universal language of the prospect. “Why should I listen to you? Why should I believe you? What’s in it for me? What will I get out of it?”

The Why? Factor is Your Promise

Make no mistake, this is dynamite. Under-promise and over-deliver. Most of all, Don’t promise what you can’t deliver. My first job in furniture was with Curtis Bros. Furniture in Washington, D.C. Back when this great store dominated retail furniture in America. Charles Curtis hammered a single theme into the minds of each associate: ***A promise is a promise.*** This single unit store was located in Southeast Washington, D.C. Thirty-five salespeople worked full time and out-produced every other store in America. Each salesperson had his or her own small desk and personal phone. There

Incredible!

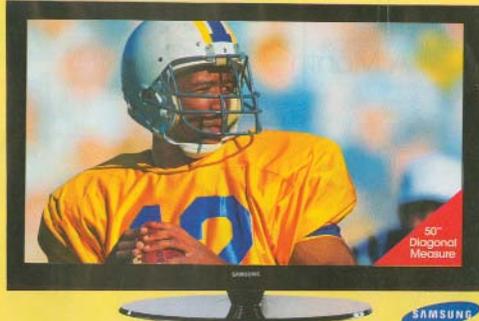
Beautiful Ultimate Room Packages with a Top Quality

50"

Samsung Slim-Design HDTV

You'll be amazed at what you get and how little you pay!

Plus...
PAY NO INTEREST 'TIL 2015!



Available for pickup at Best Buy® with your purchase of one of Rooms to Go's selected room packages. Best Buy is only responsible for providing the HDTV and all parts. Installation is not included. Best Buy, the Best Buy logo and the tag design are trademarks of Best Buy Solutions, Inc.

\$400

Sofa + Loveseat + Matching Chair + Cocktail Table + 1-End Table + 1-Lamp + Flat Screen Console + 50" SAMSUNG PLASMA HDTV!

A Month INTEREST FREE

THE SALINGER BLENDED LEATHER LIVINGROOM **ULTIMATE 50" TV ROOM PACKAGE**

Supple coffee color blended leather. Tufted backs, padded seats and pillowtop arms. Innerspring sleeper sofa and rocker recliner also available.

PLUS! THE CRAIG FLAT SCREEN CONSOLE
48 x 17 x 27. Merlot finish with chrome hardware.

PLUS! 50" SAMSUNG PLASMA HDTV!

ALL 7-PCS, PLUS...TV!

ONLY 1999⁹⁹



Sofa + Loveseat + Matching Chair + Cocktail Table + 1-End Table + 1-Lamp + Flat Screen Console + 50" SAMSUNG PLASMA HDTV!

FOR ONLY \$400 A Month INTEREST FREE



THE SALINGER BLENDED LEATHER LIVINGROOM **ULTIMATE 50" TV ROOM PACKAGE**
Supple coffee color blended leather. Tufted backs, padded seats and pillowtop arms. Innerspring sleeper sofa and rocker recliner also available.

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NO INTEREST UNTIL JANUARY 2015*

On the left is the first of a six page, full newspaper size, full color advertising piece. This is very expensive advertising space. The flyer is masterfully merchandised and beautifully illustrated. It is loaded with label headlines and product-feature copy, yet totally lacking in benefits. This article explains why "so what?" copy such as this has about 1/10th the value of benefit-rich copy, especially when the copy is linked to "dreams."

was a level of professionalism in that store I have never seen surpassed in the last thirty-plus years of serving furniture entrepreneurs. Every associate at Curtis was trained and retrained and each knew the key USP: ***A promise is a promise.***

To repeat a maxim of Jay Abraham:

“The clearer and more powerful you are at expressing, articulating, demonstrating and comparing how you will render your USP (unique selling proposition) better than anyone else ... the more business you will get.”

Not all Big Box Locations are Equal

In fact, let's face it, some Big Boxes franchises grossly underperform. In some cases, Big Boxes do about half the business they should. Yet they manage to pay their franchise fees and eke out a small profit, so they are tolerated. On the other hand, there are a few Big Box stores that have a remarkable entrepreneur in charge and dramatically out-perform the pack. One store I know is located in a small Midwest rural market of about 20,000 people and regularly does over \$400,000 of very profitable business a month. What is his secret? For one thing the owner does something I have never seen any other store owner do. ***He personally calls every customer who makes a purchase in his store.***

I discovered this by accident. I had an appointment to meet him one evening after closing. He was on the phone, and gestured me to come into his office. He was just ending his conversation. Then he said, “Larry, I only have two more brief calls to make. Do you mind if I finish up?” His next

telephone conversation went something like this: “Hello Mr. Jones, my name is (withheld) and I am the owner of (store name) furniture. I am calling about the recent purchase you made in our store. How did we do? In your opinion, is there anything we can do better?” He listened for a bit and then said: “That's great, I'm glad you were pleased. Just one more question. On a scale of one to ten, how likely would you be to recommend (store name) to a friend?” After he finished his calls I questioned him about what I had just observed and heard. He informed me that he calls every customer. “Every customer?” I asked. “Yes,” he responded, and he added that if he runs into a problem he solves it pronto. How likely do you think these customers are to return to his store?

Total Selling Marketing is the Only Way to Excel

This gentleman's store reflects his unique retail philosophy depicted in the story above. It is a model of neatness and efficiency. His store manager works with equal passion. He freely gives out his business card to customers with his home phone number and email address on it. He tells each customer he closes: “Please call me at anytime if you encounter a problem with delivery or service.” The entire sales staff models this professional Total Selling attitude.

Most stores spend almost all of their marketing time and resources striving to bring in new business. They go from promotion to promotion in a frenzy to keep sales figures up. But bringing in new customers is only one of three ways to maximize and leverage business. And, promoting for new customers is the *least* cost-effective and efficient way to increase sales and profits (even though most stores use it almost exclusively).

VETERANS DAY
SALE

BONUS DISCOUNTS!
SAVE \$100-\$1000



NO DOWN PAYMENT
NO INTEREST
FOR 24 MONTHS*

On purchases of \$2,500 or more.
Minimum payments required.
Offer valid through 11/15/2010.
See page 4 for details.

\$699⁹⁹ Pacific Heights sofa

Furniture built for life®

SAVE \$100-\$1000

\$999⁹⁹

STETSON BUCHHEIM SOFA
MS. \$2999.99. Includes everything the
body touches in the back of your chair.
Leather. Wood. Metal. \$299.99. \$1000 OFF.

SAVE \$100



BONUS DISCOUNTS!

save	spend
\$100	\$1000-\$2499
\$250	\$2500-\$3999
\$500	\$4000-\$5999
\$1000	\$7500 & above

Prices shown are per lot for illustration.

See all your options at
havertys.com

■ CUSTOMER SERVICE
800-848-8888 or 800-848-8888

■ HAVERTYS IS A
FURNITURE STORE
WITH OVER 100 STORES
ACROSS THE US

■ WE ARE A
FURNITURE STORE
WITH OVER 100 STORES
ACROSS THE US

■ WE ARE A
FURNITURE STORE
WITH OVER 100 STORES
ACROSS THE US



\$1299⁹⁹

MSRP \$1399.99. Includes everything the
body touches in the back of your chair.
Leather. Wood. Metal. \$1399.99. \$100 OFF.

SAVE \$100

Another Massive Waste of Advertising Dollars

Above are illustrations of pages from a full color advertising piece. The entire piece was 4 pages. This is also extremely expensive advertising space. The motto of this great store is “Furniture Built for Life,” yet there is nothing to explain or justify this statement. The entire flyer features only six items. Other than a brief reference to the website, there is nothing to inform a prospect that there are any other items for sale. There are brief references to other services in the store, but it is in 6 point type, in spite of an ample amount of space to make it larger. It is all label headlines, no benefits, and no support for a woman’s dream of a more beautiful, comfortable home.

There are Only Three Ways to Increase Sales & Profits:

1. Promote, bring in, and sell new customers.
2. Sell more stuff to each customer who visits your store.
3. Promote to, allure, and sell existing customers more often.

Almost all marketing ideas you will read about address getting more customers. Second, we all know the importance of building tickets to increase profits. There are many good techniques leveraging (building) tickets, such as incentives and spiffs. I will save those for another article. More important for this article is the third method of increasing sales, ***leveraging existing customers.***

Obviously, if you can establish a good relationship with a customer she will be inspired to visit you more often. You do this by exceeding her expectations. Most people are moderately pleased by a post card from a salesperson thanking them for their business. They are more pleased when the salesperson calls them personally to see if the delivery and set up went successfully. ***Customers are delighted and inspired when the owner of the store calls to check on their sales experience.*** This is, potentially, the beginning of a precious relationship. These relationships are People Media, and they are nourished and cultivated by continuous additional contacts through direct mail and email. People media are virtually free, and, statistically, an old customer is eight times as likely to respond and buy to an appeal as a customer who does not know you. The take home message here is to spend more time leveraging existing customers than trying to

promote new customers. Most stores do the opposite. When you understand the value of a customer for life and act on that understanding, you will reach new levels of success. Guaranteed.

There is yet another immensely important benefit in acquiring a customer for life and activating new streams of People Media contacts. People talk. On the average, each person knows 200 or so other people. Absolutely nothing equals People Media for generating more and more sales and profits. Yet they are a third person influence, the least understood and appreciated of any advertising media.

The Why? Factor ... Emphasize Benefits, Spin Dreams

There is a magic formula for persuading customers. At least, it works like magic. I have said that customers are not interested in sofas, chairs, mattress sets, washers, or new carpet. These things are means to an end. A woman dreams of a more beautiful, comfortable, efficient home, better health, more luxurious floors, etc. It is part of her nurturing instinct. The formula I find most effective embraces this idea.

Nearly every salesperson knows (or should know) that you should never point out a product feature without relating it to a benefit. (“This mattress has 870 tempered springs in it.” “So what?” “So it will cradle your body in perfect comfort.” “This mattress is also lavished with layers of foam and padding.” “So what?” “So there are fewer pressure points to interfere with maximum comfort and you will sleep better.”) The trick is to link product features with benefits before the prospect says (or thinks) “So what?”

HOW TO SELL BY LINKING PRODUCT FEATURES, BENEFITS & DREAMS



1. SALESPERSON POINTS OUT A PRODUCT FEATURE:
“This mattress has nearly 900 individually pocketed coils.”
PROSPECT TACIT RESPONSE:
“SO WHAT?”



2. SALESPERSON LINKS PRODUCT FEATURE TO A BENEFIT: “So you will sleep more soundly with fewer pressure points and motion.”
PROSPECT TACIT RESPONSE:
“SO WHAT?”



3. SALESPERSON LINKS BENEFIT TO A DREAM (BETTER HEALTH):
“So you will greet the dawn energized, refreshed, and ready for anything.”
PROSPECT TACIT RESPONSE:
“Hmmm.”

So far, so good. Supporting benefits with product features make them credible. But we need to take the Why? Factor to another level: *the dream*. As product features support benefits, benefits support dreams. (“Experts tell us that when you sleep better you feel better, you have fewer aches and pains, you have more energy, you greet the dawn energized, refreshed, and ready for anything.”) The power of the Why? Factor cannot be over-emphasized. Only one salesperson in ten has mastered this higher level of psychological appeal. Teach it and you will increase your close ratio.

Putting It All Together

Let’s take a final look at my formula for creating powerful, cost-effective advertising. To recap, the formula is designed for the information age. People want information, they ignore hype. And they want information fast. The “WHO? WHAT? WHEN? WHERE? HOW? and WHY?” method is very much like journalism 101.

1. WHO? More than just a sig or logo, your identity includes your years in business, your expertise, your USP, your website, your photo, your story, anything you can think of to help your customer appreciate why they should give you a chance for their business.

2. WHAT? More than an announcement that you sell home furnishings, or that you have a special event going on. What is the story behind the event? How big are the discounts you are offering? Any samples of the values? What brands do you carry? What does your store look like? What does your showroom look like? What can you show

me that your competitors cannot?

3. WHEN? Time durations for the event are important, of course, days, dates and hours.

4. WHERE? Address, of course. A map is important. A locator phrase is always good.

5. HOW? Credit information is always important.

6. WHY? The important ingredient that makes all the others work. Check the exhibits in this article, and note how Big Boxes fail to link product points with benefits. They also fail to address the dreams of the female consumers who buy home furnishings. A corporate flyer or direct mail piece cannot (or at least they rarely make an effort to) make as effective a personal connection with the reader as you can.

Customers for Life ...

People Media that will make You Rich

Promise reasonably but with passion, and over-deliver. Follow-up relentlessly. When you follow up you will be creating relationships, customers for life. The Why? Factor is nothing more nor less than establishing high expectations, Total Selling is exceeding them. As the CEO of a retail furniture company, the quality of the messages you communicate to your prospects through media and personal encounters are critical. Likewise, so are the messages you communicate to your associates, executives, managers, and vendors. And also the messages that your staff communicate to each other-and the messages that your company, as a whole, communicates to your guests. These messages reflect not simply your promises, but how well you kept them. Some intellectual giant once came up with a saying: *The medium IS the message*. In the case of PEOPLE, this is a

truth. People communicating with other people ... telling others how good you fulfilled your promises, and WHY they should buy from you.

Larry Mullins is a contributing editor for Furniture World and has 30+ years experience on the front lines of furniture marketing. Larry's mainstream executive experience, his creative work with promotion specialists, and mastery of advertising principles have established him as one of the foremost experts in furniture marketing. His turnkey High-Impact programs produce legendary results for everything from



cash raising events to profitable exit strategies.

His newest books, *THE METAVALUES BREAKTHROUGH* and *IMMATURE PEOPLE WITH POWER ... How to Handle Them* have recently been released by Morgan James Publishing. Joe Girard, "The World's Greatest

Salesman" said of Immature People with Power: "If I had read Larry Mullins' book when I started out, I would have reached the top much sooner than I did." Larry is founder and CEO of UltraSales, Inc. See more articles by Larry at

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Hope you enjoyed this article.

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