



**Tell Descriptive Stories That Engage Our Minds and Help Sell More?
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Perhaps you've heard or been taught that sharing Features, Advantages and Benefits is a more effective selling approach than just feature dumping on our prospective customers. But do we effectively do that in our sales conversations? This hands-on, show how it works and what it can do to help you in your business approach works well with software. People buy solutions, not software and they are looking for the classic WIIFM (What's in it for me). Use the power of engaging stories to help them visualize that positive result, find that illusive solution, or take their business profitably to the next level.

Let me share a simple experience where a young shoe salesman (let's call him Joseph) did this very well. We all need shoes, since as selling professionals we are on our feet a lot, hopefully we select some that are comfortable, yet stylish to wear when we are at work. At least that's my story, and I'm sticking to it!

I was in Puerto Vallarta doing some sailing last summer. One afternoon, I was enjoying a quiet break doing some window shopping. Along the way a very stylish, yet simple, pair of two-tone loafers caught my eye in a little shoe store off the quaint cobblestone street. Thinking I was only looking (1st mistake), I stepped into the store to check them out. I picked them up and quickly put them down, as my initial reaction was, "Wow...that is not cheap!"

My young and very wise shoe expert approached and engaged me in conversation about my visit to his store, to Puerto Vallarta, and what I did for a living. I made the mistake (2nd) of telling him I was a professional speaker, sales success trainer and author who traveled North America sharing ideas on how others could be more successful in their lives, careers, sales, etc. (Guess he figured I could really afford them...

Picking up the shoes and holding them with care, he said, "You know, when you wear these traditional loafers, your going to have a big smile on your face because 'one of the great things' about these shoes is they're soft calfskin leather with a full leather lining. And as you wear them, they will mold to the shape of your feet, giving you a custom-made feel."

He continued, "It would be fun to walk around in custom-made shoes, don't you think?"



He could have just said, "These shoes are all leather, which is flexible, making them very comfortable." And, on the surface that sounds good, doesn't it? However, what he said engaged me and was much more effective in getting me to seriously consider investing in a pair for myself, don't you think?



He talked about how the shoes were made. He mentioned, they were bench-crafted, which meant one person was completely responsible for making this specific pair of shoes.

Joseph then sent in for the kill, “Since they are bench-crafted, they have the artisan’s name on them. When they’re finished, these shoes have no nicks, no scratches, and all of the components fit perfectly. Unlike shoes made on an assembly line, these shoes are one of a kind.”

Then he asked me a simple closing question, “What size do you wear?” He then proceeded to have me try on a pair in my size.

Feature (which Means)	Advantage (which Means)	Benefit (to Customer)
Calfskin Leather	Molds to Your Foot	Custom-Made Feel
Full Leather Lining	Finished Feel	Instant Comfort
Traditional Loafer	Will Stay in Style	Wear for Years

Long Story, Made Short: He was right, they are delightful to wear. When I wore them out of his store, both of us had big smiles on our faces. I could hardly wait for the snow to leave this spring so I could take them out for a walk here in Northern Alberta.

Simple story of how one wise young salesman took his craft to the next level by engaging his customer and telling a story that allowed me to see myself in ‘his’ shoes.

- Do you do that with your customers when they come into your store?
- Or when you visit them in their place of business?
- Do you tell them stories that help them visualize how their lives and business will improve when they apply what you are offering?

For example, if you sell home furnishings, do you know enough about your products that you can craft engaging, picturesque stories to help your customers see themselves sitting in front of that big screen Plasma TV, on that leather sofa with matching love seat and chair, end tables, coordinated lamps and accents to enjoy that quiet, perhaps romantic, evening together? Are you willing to engage your customers to help them see it in their mind's eye before they see it in their house?

Do you know enough about your software products and services that you can create captivating stories that help your prospective customers see themselves enjoying the benefit of wisely selecting you to help enhance their lives, businesses and careers?

Do you think this might help you build and expand your business or enhance your selling career?

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Bob Hooey's "Ideas At Work!" have been successfully applied by thousands of sales leaders and selling professionals across North America. He is the prolific author of 10 books, including "Creating Time to Sell, Lead or Manage" and his articles appear in North American consumer, on-line and trade journals. Bob is also the creator of 'Secret Selling Tips' to help equip and motivate sales professionals to grow and succeed in the selling game. For article feedback, contact Bob at bob@secretsellingtips.com
