

# What's Baked into Your Brand? Is it FAB?

Baking benefits into your brand mix makes it magic. It's actually almost alchemical. Put sticky spoonfuls of dough in the oven and you get warm, gooey cookies. Except ... it's not really magic, it's science. But yes, their intoxicating power does endow you with so much feel-goodness you can't help but go 'mmm'. And that's exactly what a great brand message should do for you. In this article **Neil Osborne** explains why baking benefits into everything you say makes your brand as irresistible as freshly-baked cookies.



you into a domestic goddess (although you will feel like one when you bake messages with them).

Benefits create interest and desire. Just like cookie-goodness.

## The ultimate cookie

For many years I'd never baked a cookie that was exactly how I liked them. I'm talking soft, chewy cookies with a honey brown base — that transition from a barely crisp edge into a chewy, moist rich caramel-like centre, rich with butter and big pockets of melt.

Some had come close, but none had quite hit that 'yum' mark. However, my bigger problem was that I was never quite sure what to change to get what I wanted.

Technique is the key to baking; likewise, great brand messages use tried and tested formulas. The next baking secret I want to share is a classic messaging formula — FAB. A simple acronym, FAB is in the same league as the 'Warm Rule' of cookies: that even a bad cookie straight from the oven is appealing.

So let's start baking!

## The FAB recipe

Cookies use few ingredients and likewise (unlike more complex messaging formulas), FAB has just three ingredients:

### F = Features

A factual attribute or characteristic of your product or service  
Features give confidence

### A = Advantage

A positive description of what the feature means  
Advantages are the link between features and benefits

### B = Benefits

Explain the "what's in it for me" factor  
Benefits motivate

Purchasing decisions are made on the benefits a product or service delivers. As a messaging recipe, FAB helps you clarify what each of your product features means to your customers — enabling you to address their concerns, desires, wants, and needs with benefit messages.

How do you figure out your ingredient mix for the recipe? Through simple questions.

## The method

In a table (with three columns headed features, advantages and benefits) list:

1. Your features (the facts)

**Y**ou like soft gooey centres. He likes a snap to the bite. Oh, if only there was a cookie recipe that pleased everyone all the time. Yes, it's tough in the kitchen. Brand messaging mirrors the pastry chef's cookie challenge — because it's what goes into making a message that makes all the difference. Now... pay close attention; I'm about to share my best message baking secret. I learnt it not at the floured bench of a great pastry chef — but from reading master copywriters.

It's just one word. Benefits.

Sitting at the very heart of great messaging, benefits make you feel. They make you want, without logic. But, to be honest, they won't turn

2. Marry each feature to the advantage it creates (what that means)
3. Turn that advantage into a practical benefit (what it does for their life)

If you get confused, the easiest way to differentiate between features and benefits is to keep asking the question, "So what?" When you get to the point where you can no longer answer the question, you have arrived at your benefit.

An alternative approach is to ask:

1. Because it has.....(FEATURE)
2. You will be able to.....(ADVANTAGE)
3. What that means to you is.....(BENEFIT)

Now put the features, advantages and benefits together in brand or product messages and practice using them. Try them in the FAB order and then reverse them (BAF) where the benefit comes first, then the advantage and finally the feature.

The finer points of baking make all the difference. And so it is with brand messaging.

## Features: the crispy edge

By themselves, features will not convince someone to buy.

They're what you see, and are the logical part of your recipe.

By answering the "Why should I believe you?" question, they provide the rational reasons that make the benefits believable.

Because they belong to the product/brand, features transfer from user to user without changing. Paraben-free or all-natural ingredients are features: it doesn't matter who uses the product, they remain the same. Dosages, sizes and pump dispensers are also features.

Here are some questions to help uncover your features: What are the attributes of your product or service? What is it made of? What are the specifications and special functions of the product? What do you do?

## Advantage: the home-baked smell

Advantages are the bridge between the logic of features and the emotion of benefits. They're part of the 'because' questioning that helps to make the feature 'logic' clearer and more compelling.

Questions to help uncover your advantages are: How is your product or service better than your competitors? What makes it the best product or service on the market?

## Benefit: the gooey centre

Benefits are why people buy. They are the emotional part of your recipe. By answering the "What do I get?" question, benefits can be exciting or they can relieve a nagging worry or fear.

Most cookie recipes have the same basic ingredients, with additives. Similarly, benefits vary by how deep you've dug when asking the "So what?" question. Fundamentally, there are three levels of benefits:

1. First-level benefits: the simplest, most obvious (almost generic) ones. They could apply to almost anyone interested in your product.
2. Second-level benefits: tell you what the benefit really means and how life will change by buying the product.
3. Third-level benefits: this is where the deepest, core benefits live and are often very personal and dramatic in effect.

Ironically these are frequently not directly mentioned, but rather layered in subtext in your messages, for greater impact.

As the most important ingredient in the recipe, your benefits must be as specific as possible. Some questions to help you find your benefits are: What is the core value your product or service provides to your customers? What problem/s does it solve? How will your customer's life improve as a result of paying you?

## Baker's secrets

When do you use the FAB recipe? All day, every day. It should underpin all your brand messaging, through every type of media, on and offline. Even your sales pitches should use it!

Any time you're trying to convince someone to take action, buy or do something, you can use the FAB recipe. Remember, people only respond to benefits — you know — the "What's in it for me?" factor, so don't make the simplest of mistakes by forgetting to use FAB.

Brands are baked every day, but even the best cookies crumble... if you don't use the right recipe. ■

Neil Osborne is an elite sales trainer and mentor who has devoted more than 30 years of his working life to the Salon Industry. He's been responsible for dramatically growing businesses and helping them launch, develop and change their sales results. Contact him at The SALES CATALYST, 1300 302 859 or go to [www.thesalescatalyst.com.au](http://www.thesalescatalyst.com.au) and get his FREE Micro-Step Closing E-Course for Busy People — and learn how to close sales, build rapport and win more customers.

## SofTap® Australia

### Permanent Cosmetic Training

Beginners • Advanced • Refresher Classes

Training partner RTO:21791

**Permanent Makeup Services at Beauty Access:**

Eyebrows – Hairstrokes or block  
Eyeliners • Lips • Scar camouflage  
Nipple & areola re-pigment  
Corrections • Removal

BEFORE	AFTER

Ph 08 8364 2126    M 0419 828 691

E [sales@beautyaccess.com.au](mailto:sales@beautyaccess.com.au)