What's the difference between **features** and **benefits**?

Here's the quick answer:

Features are aspects of your product, which could be technical or descriptive.

Benefits are why that feature matters to your customers. In other words, how that feature makes their life better.

Features tell customers **what**, and **benefits** tell customers **why**.

Business communication | Explaining features and benefits

1 A company wants to use a new type of software. Read about its key features and discuss questions 1–2 with a partner.

1 What concerns do you think some employees might have about this software?
2 How could the company explain the benefits of the software to the employees?

Key features

- The software tracks when an employee starts and ends work from when they log on and off or when they switch their computer on and off.
- It monitors the number of hours worked and sends this information to payroll.
- The mobile app enables employees to log on from home or when travelling.

2 ▶4.4 Listen to an IT trainer explaining the features of the new software to a group of employees. Make notes about:

1 the main benefits of the software
2 the employees' questions and concerns

3 ▶4.4 Match 1–10 to a–j to make sentences and questions from the discussion. Then listen again and check.

1 The main benefit is ___	a log on from a hotel?
2 It's a lot more accurate because ___	b it automatically knows how many hours you've worked each month.
3 One of the problems is that ___	c the payroll feature.
4 What happens if I ___	d have to adjust the settings on our computers?
5 That's a good ___	e it's possible to do that every time you're abroad.
6 But wouldn't that require us to ___	f your manager has to fill in a form for each of you.
7 It might seem that you'd need to adjust your settings, ___	g but in fact the software can do this automatically.
8 Will it let me ___	h question.
9 I'm not convinced that ___	i forget to log on in the morning when I start work?
10 I'm sure you'll find it much ___	j easier to use than the current system.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Key expressions

Explaining the features and benefits

The main benefit is ...

It'll let you / It'll make it easier to / It'll help you to / It'll enable you to ...

Another useful feature is ...

Comparing services and systems

It's a lot more accurate / It's a lot less time-consuming because ...

The new system will be much ...

One of the problems is that ...

Asking questions and expressing concerns

Will it let me / allow me to ...?

What happens if ...?

But wouldn't that ...?

I'm not convinced that ...

I have a question, too.

Handling questions and concerns

That's a good question.

That's true, but ...

It might seem ..., but in fact ...

I'm sure you'll find it much ...

LIVEWORKSHEETS

4 Work with a partner. Read about a new company system below and make two lists:

1 A list of the benefits of this system. How can it make things better?
2 The problems of this system. What objections might employees have?

Afterwards, present your list to the class and share your ideas.

A company wants to introduce a new system to improve employee performance. The key features of the system are:

- Managers measure the performance of employees in their departments.
- Each employee has a meeting with their manager at the end of every month to discuss their performance.
- Managers can give bonuses for an excellent performance.
- The company will introduce an 'employee of the month' award.

5. Role-play

You're going to discuss the features and benefits of the new system.

Student A

You think the new system is a good idea but your partner has some concerns. Talk about the benefits of the new system to Student B and handle any questions and concerns. Try to convince Student B that it's a good system.

Student B

You have some concerns about the new system. Talk to Student A and listen to the benefits. Ask questions and express your concerns.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Presenting | Explaining how something works | Comparing new with old

1 **Why do companies need databases? What sort of information do they keep? Do you use a database? If you do, is the system easy to use?**

2 18▷ **A hotel chain has a new customer database for all its hotels. It is being presented to the hotel manager and her staff for the first time. Listen and answer questions 1–4.**

1 What was one of the disadvantages with the old database?
2 When can they use the new database?
3 How is it similar to the old database?
4 What is new about it?
5 What does the hotel manager suggest is a problem with the new system?

3 18▷ **Match 1–8 below to a–h to make pairs of phrases. Then listen again and check your answers.**

1 The good news is …, _____
2 It might seem a bit difficult to use at first …, _____
3 It looks very similar to …, _____
4 As soon as you …, _____
5 In other words, as well as (*-ing*) …, _____
6 The more …, _____
7 On the one hand …, _____
8 One downside is …, _____

a but what's different is …
b it also …
c but the bad news is …
d but on the other hand …
e but in fact it's very simple.
f the (better) …
g but on the plus side …
h it starts to …

4 **Put the phrases in 3 into these categories.**

a Comparing and contrasting: _____
b Describing what something does or how it works: _____

LIVEWORKSHEETS

5 **Work with a partner. Imagine your company has some new software for storing customer information. Make sentences using some of the phrases from 3 and these prompts.**

Example: The good news is we have new software, but the bad news is we need six months' training.

1 new software + need six months' training
2 press this button + look for the customer's name
3 the old system + the quantity of information it can store
4 storing basic information + finds more information
5 information you get + easier it is to target customers
6 the system is more complicated + it is faster

6 **Work with a partner. Compare the functionality of the objects, systems, or services in 1–3. Make a list of the benefits and drawbacks of each of the more recent objects / systems.**

Example: Compared to CD players, MP3 players store more songs, are smaller, and more expensive.

1 CD players MP3 players
2 filing cabinets folder storage systems on PCs
3 going into a bank using an online bank

7 **Now work with a different partner. Take turns to talk about the functionality of 1–3.**

Example: On the one hand, the MP3 player is expensive, but on the other hand, it can store thousands of songs.

8 **Think of something that has recently changed at work. Tell your partner about the benefits and drawbacks of the change. It might be a change to**

- working hours / breaks
- how supplies are ordered
- measuring customer satisfaction.

ⓘ » Interactive Workbook » Email

Practically speaking | How to introduce information

1 19▷ **Listen to 1–5. Notice the stressed words in bold and the pauses (/) after the introductory phrases.**

1 As you **know**, / we have a new customer database.
2 So the **purpose** of today / is for you to start to become familiar with it.
3 As I **say**, / the good news is …
4 **Now**, / up on the screen you can see …
5 In **other** words, / as well as giving the customer more of what they want …

2 **Match the sentences in 1 to functions a–e.**

a Repeating something you have already said: ___
b Explaining a feature in a different way: ___
c Giving information that is already common knowledge: ___
d Explaining what is going to happen: ___
e Introducing a new item: ___

3 **Give a one-minute presentation to your partner about how an object in your classroom or office works. For example, the CD player or the answering machine. Try to use all five of the introductory phrases from 1 in your presentation.**

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Key expressions

Explaining how something works

Let me explain how it works.
One / the main thing to note is ...
What happens is ...
Basically, ...
It's a bit like ...
You can see what happens when you ...
As soon as you ..., it starts to ...

Explaining additional features and benefits

One other useful feature is that ...
As well as (+ noun / *-ing*) ..., it also ...
The more ..., the better (the) ...

Asking questions about functionality

Will it let me ... (+ verb)?
Will it allow me ... (+ infinitive)?
How does it know what to do?
What happens when ...?

Comparing

On the one hand ..., but on the other hand ...
The good news is ..., but the bad news is ...
Whereas before ..., we now ...
It looks very similar to ..., but what's different is ...
It might seem ..., but in fact it's ...
One downside is ..., but on the plus side ...
One benefit is that ..., though a drawback might be ...

LIVEWORKSHEETS