

**Speaking Practice Set 3:**

Transcript for Track 10:



**Narrator** Listen to part of a lecture in a business class.

**Professor** If a consumer has to choose between two products, what determines the choice? Assume that someone, a purchaser, is choosing between two products that cost the same. OK? If people have a choice between two identically priced products, which one will they choose? They choose the one they think is of higher quality, of course. But what does it mean for a product to be a high-quality product? Well, business analysts usually speak of two major factors of quality—one factor is reliability, and the other is what we call features.

So, reliability. What's reliability? Well, a product is reliable if it works the way we expect it to work, if it can go a reasonable amount of time without needing repairs. If a product, a car for example, doesn't work the way it should and needs repairs too soon, we say it's unreliable. So product reliability means, basically, the absence of defects or problems that you weren't expecting. It used to be that when people thought about product quality, they thought mainly about reliability. Today it's different. People do still care about reliability, don't get me wrong. It's just that manufacturing standards are now so high that ... take cars for example; today, today's cars all very reliable. So reliability is important, but it's not gonna be the deciding factor.

So if reliability isn't the deciding factor any more, what is? Features—all those extras, the things a product has that aren't really necessary but that make it easier to use or that make it cool: for example, new cars today are loaded with features like electric windows, sun roofs, air conditioning, stereos, and so forth. When people are comparing products today, they look at features—because reliability's pretty much equal across the board. And that's why manufacturers include so many features in their products.

**Narrator** Using points and examples from the lecture, explain the two major factors of product quality and how their role in consumer decision making has changed.