

Ingredients for a High-Impact Software Demonstration

Wayne A. McClelland

waynemcc@wamware.com

demo-skills.com -and- facebook.com/DemoSkills -and- [Google+](https://www.google.com)

Researching the Account (i.e. Sales 101, but all-too-often not adhered to)

From phone, email, in-person contact, and general research we understand:

- the critical business issues facing the prospective customer's engineering/manufacturing process
- decision-making dynamics on the customer side (people, positions, roles, politics, history, leanings, potential 'champion', likely path to close-of-order)
- how our solution can address the customer's business issues, and for which of those issues we can have the most payback
- how we can best convey 'value' that will unlock funding mechanisms on the customer side

The Well-Qualified "Event" (i.e. let's reduce the number of demos needed to close the sale)

- all key decision makers and influencers are committed to be present
- clear meeting purpose agreed upon with primary customer contact (and ideally presented by that person at start of the event)
- contains a well-prepared SHORT sales intro (<3 minutes; ≤3 PowerPoint slides) that covers:
 - who are we?... product/solution, company, individuals
 - Objectives (see Command Central below)
 - Workflow of Demo (see Command Central below)
 - why not longer?... if you go to the Porsche dealer, do you want to be held outside the showroom looking at brochures?! The best products are best shown rather than talked about.
- Agenda for the Event (specifics on Part A and Part B below):
 - Introduction
 - Customer Lead-in on Purpose of Meeting (get them to talk) 1 minute
 - Company Update and Product Overview <3 minutes (OK, maybe 5 minutes max)
 - Review Objectives (and any open concerns) 1 minute
 - Part A: Overview Demo <30 minutes
Objective: a 'taste' that generates excitement -- targets the 'emotional buy'
 - Short Standup Pause (see Two-Part Demo below)
 - Part B: Detailed Demo (Industry Examples, Application Vignettes) 30-to-90+ minutes
Objective: inform on features and benefits -- help them 'rationalize' the buy

A Two-Part Demo

The following Two-Part Demo approach (see table below) is based on the theory, and 40 years of corroboration, that the 'buying process' (for which all salespeople should be interested) is comprised of two phases... first the 'emotional buy' ('wow, I want that stuff!')... followed by the 'rationalization' phase to justify the already-made purchase decision ('OK, it fits my needs, fulfills all the specs, has the right price, will get by the boss, etc.'). We align our demo event with these two phases.

- Part A: an overview of our solution... i.e. a 'taste'
 - ideally via a real-world application closely related to the prospect's industry and needs
 - a standard demo, with Spontaneous Tangents at-the-ready (see below)
 - fast paced, energetic, enthusiastic
 - benefit and value focused
 - targeted at the 'emotional buy' (the 'heart')
 - ends on a high point (a 'wow')... NOT with 'are there any more questions?'
 - taking <30 minutes (including narrative and interaction)
 - rehearsed 20+ times, including in front of colleagues and video capture
- brief pause (stand and shake hands; 'Thanks... just give us a minute to open some additional files, and we'll continue with lots of details about our solution')... demarcates Part A from Part B
- Part B: more details and discussion about our solution
 - less structured, more up-close-and-personal
 - more of a working session to examine links from our solution to the customer's needs
 - if some managers leave after Part A (with a good taste), that's OK
 - to resolve open issues and concerns
 - targeted at helping the prospect 'rationalize' their decision (the 'brain/head')
 - lasts 60-to-90 minutes, or 'as long as you'd like to stay'

Part A	Part B
stated purpose: provide an Overview of our solution and how it addresses the customer's critical business issues	stated purpose: get into the Details of our solution and address any Open Issues or Concerns
hidden purpose: target the Emotional Buy; give them a taste; get them excited about our solution	hidden purpose: feed the Rationalization phase; address issues too 'touchy' for Part A
primary audience: managers, decision makers, influencers	primary audience: influencers and end users

General Characteristics

- a pre-sales Demo (especially Part A) has zero, repeat zero, to do with Teaching or Training... no feature is highlighted without a clear, stated benefit that relates to the customer's business objectives
- the Demo Narrative:
 - tells a simulated real-world story
 - in the 'voice' of a Design Engineer... who is enthusiastic, in love with the software, and speaks to issues of interest to mid/upper management. An effective technique is to:
 - a. start in the 1st person... 'I simply select this edge...'
 - b. then 1st person plural... 'We can easily apply boundary conditions...'
 - c. to, near the end, 2nd person... 'Your designers can optimize their assemblies...'
 - does NOT narrate the Demo Mechanics
 - verbally creates anticipation and reinforces/heightens the 'wows' of the demo
 - highlights benefits, not features
 - connects benefits to the prospect's business objectives

- Objections are:
 - interruptions of any sort (questions, concerns, skepticism, disbelief, sabotage)
 - anticipated in advance (e.g. get colleagues to play devil's advocate/saboteur)
 - addressed with:
 - a. a credible yes or no
 - b. -or- illustrated with a prepared, rehearsed Spontaneous Tangent (a <30 second 'demo-lette')... for a 30-minute demo, prepare 10+ tangents
 - c. -or- visibly written as an Action Item on Command Central (see below) for follow-up (in Part B, and then if necessary with commitment on follow-up date)
 - if illustrated, with a spirit of 'sure, let's give that a try...'
 - confirmed to address the prospect's concern, with prompt return to the demo flow
- the Demo is delivered:
 - in a relaxed, yet fast-paced way
 - in a confident, yet understated manner ('the software is doing all the work, I'm just having fun!') -- unlike Training/Teaching, there is negative benefit to the "know all" demonstrator
- the successful use of Spontaneous Tangents allows a Standard Demo to come across to the audience (and demonstrator) as alive, exciting, non-canned, and real-world
- Secrets to a successful performance:
 - "Passion... and Attention to Details", David Copperfield, illusionist

Timing

If the Part A Demo is 30 minutes, that means that:

1. the Demo Mechanics (without narrative) must be doable in less than 10 minutes
2. ... allowing ~10 minutes for interspersed Demo Narrative
3. ... and another ~10 minutes for interspersed Interaction with audience (incl. Spontaneous Tangents)

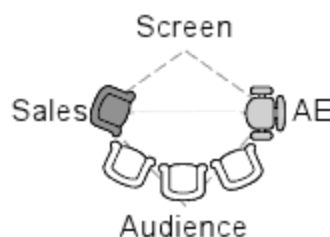
... and yet, with all this jawboning, still includes at least 15-to-20 'wows' for the 30-minute demo.

The Scene

Demo Diamond... cozy... an upfront and personal view of our product

Small Audiences (<6): all seated

Large Audiences (7 to 1000s): sales and AE standing



Suggested Template for Demo Script

Message

A one-sentence statement: e.g. 'In the next 30 minutes, we'll be experiencing together, firsthand how our solution for 'abc submarket' will bring significant value in helping to address, what you've shared with us to be, your most pressing business objectives, namely...'.

Command Central (viewable and readable-by-all -- on notepad, flipchart, iPad, etc.)

Product Name << Salesperson
Company Name Applic Eng>>

Objectives:
* _____
* _____
* _____
* _____
* _____

Actions:
* _____
* _____
* _____

t = 30

Workflow

[Download Command Central on Prezi](#) | [Prezi for iPad](#)

Names (on Command Central)

- Ever have someone (probably someone important!) join the meeting late... and they don't know who we are or what we're selling? (or they forget because there was nothing 'visual' to help the names stick)
- Product and Company names
- First names (only) of Salesperson and Application Engineer (with arrows to indicate which side of the screen they're sitting) -- questions from the audience then get asked to us by first name (breaks down the 'distance' between 'we, the vendor' and 'they, the customer')

Objectives (on Command Central)

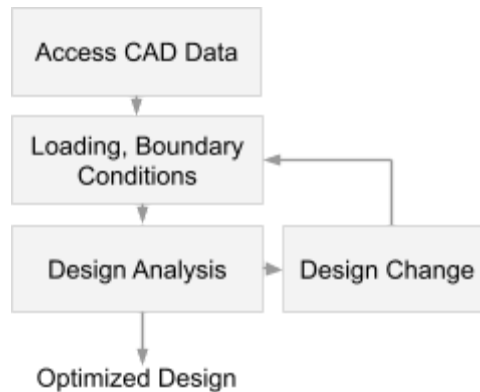
These are 3-to-4 business-oriented objectives of the customer... NOT the features of our software, NOT the steps in our demo, and NOT our objectives for the meeting... instead, their critical business issues, e.g.:

- Interferences (nominal or toleranced) detected before prototype stage
⇒ Reduced number of physical prototypes
- Integration with CAD allows analysis within minutes not days

⇒ Better designs with reduced time-to-market

Workflow (on Command Central)

A simple flow diagram of 4-to-7 steps that will keep the audience oriented as the demo (Part A) progresses... e.g.:



Keeping the audience 'oriented' is important... can you imagine going on an excursion with your spouse, e.g. a shopping trip, and not knowing where you're going, how many shops you'll visit, and how long it will take?

Actions (on Command Central)

When a question/objection/concern cannot be fully answered/illustrated in the flow of the demo, these issues are captured, so-all-can-see, on the Command Central.

Why this emphasis on "Command Central"?

- Command Central (on a flipchart, iPad, or for audiences <4 simply a pad of paper) is visible and readable throughout the event (it's not a window popped to the back during the demo).
- If people come late (usually someone important) they know immediately (without asking)... who we are (product, company, personal names)... why we're here (objectives)... what we're doing (workflow)... and how long it'll take (time). Our "hello" is reinforced by Command Central:
 - for a very important latecomer, we recap via Command Central, plus perhaps rewind the demo itself and show key visuals, and then continue.
 - for a non-vital latecomer, we indicate where we are on the workflow, and continue.
- With our personal names in plain view (even for latecomers), an audience member is more likely to preface their question/comment with "Wayne, can you explain...?". The faster we can get on a first name basis with our prospects, the better. Nicely breaks down the "psychological distance" between "we, the vendor" and "they, the customer".
- If questions are asked that are too involved to answer on-the-fly in Part A, we write them down as "Actions" and defer them to Part B... all audience members "feel better" because they see the item written down (we're not ignoring the issue or sweeping it under the rug).
- Also, if/when the AE runs into tough going (difficult question, tech glitch, slow compute), the salesperson can use Command Central to provide "cover" that draws attention (physically) away from the AE as he/she recovers.

Demo Script (Mechanics, Narrative, Spontaneous Tangents)

Demo Mechanics (pick and clicks)	Demo Narrative (the story; the benefits)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nunc fermentum mi id nulla varius egestas. • Donec laoreet molestie eros, eu tempus massa interdum id • Pellentesque euismod nisl eget felis blandit fringilla vestibulum eros pellentesque. • Sed malesuada sapien vitae metus malesuada posuere • Ut tempus vestibulum libero, sit amet pulvinar odio dapibus auctor • Aenean vitae risus mi, non eleifend nisl. • Quisque congue sapien malesuada dui eleifend sit amet semper nisi volutpat <p><also include: by-the-way and be-careful-of messages to the demonstrator></p>	<p><insert story... bullets for a start></p> <p>Benefit: <insert benefit></p> <p><insert story... bullets for a start></p> <p>Benefit: <insert benefit></p> <p><insert story... bullets for a start></p>
<p><i>Spontaneous Tangent</i> <initial Demo Script will likely not include Anticipated Objections... these will be added as experience with the demo increases></p> <p>Anticipated Objection: <as stated by customer/devil's advocate></p> <p>Mechanics to address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nunc fermentum mi id nulla varius egestas. • Donec laoreet molestie eros, eu tempus massa interdum id • Pellentesque euismod nisl eget felis blandit fringilla vestibulum eros pellentesque. • Sed malesuada sapien vitae metus malesuada posuere 	<p><insert Narrative for Spontaneous Tangent></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nunc fermentum mi id nulla varius egestas. • Donec laoreet molestie eros, eu tempus massa interdum id • Pellentesque euismod nisl eget felis blandit fringilla vestibulum eros pellentesque. • Sed malesuada sapien vitae metus malesuada posuere 	<p><insert story... bullets for a start></p> <p>Benefit: <insert benefit></p> <p><insert story... bullets for a start></p> <p>Benefit: <insert benefit></p>

<p><i>Spontaneous Tangent</i></p> <p>Anticipated Objection: <as stated by customer/devil's advocate></p> <p>Mechanics to address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nunc fermentum mi id nulla varius egestas. • Donec laoreet molestie eros, eu tempus massa interdum id • Pellentesque euismod nisl eget felis blandit fringilla vestibulum eros pellentesque. • Sed malesuada sapien vitae metus malesuada posuere 	<p><insert Narrative for Spontaneous Tangent></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nunc fermentum mi id nulla varius egestas. • Donec laoreet molestie eros, eu tempus massa interdum id • Pellentesque euismod nisl eget felis blandit fringilla vestibulum eros pellentesque. • Sed malesuada sapien vitae metus malesuada posuere • Ut tempus vestibulum libero, sit amet pulvinar odio dapibus auctor • Aenean vitae risus mi, non eleifend nisl. • Quisque congue sapien malesuada dui eleifend sit amet semper nisi volutpat 	<p><insert story... bullets for a start></p> <p>Benefit: <insert benefit></p> <p><insert story... bullets for a start></p> <p>Benefit: <insert benefit></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <(n-1)-th 'wow'> • Any additional questions? 	<p><insert story... bullets for a start></p> <p>Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • of Workflow • of Benefits • of Business Objectives met
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Oh, one more cool thing...' <nth 'wow'> 	<p><stand up and shake hands... "Thanks, after a brief pause we'll get to Part B of our session and look forward to addressing any detailed questions."></p>