

Sales Process: How to Deliver Effective Product Demonstrations - Part 2

by Alan Rigg

In Part 1 of this article we examined **two primary reasons** why so many product demonstrations fail to produce orders. Then we discussed **two activities** that must be completed **before** product demonstrations are scheduled.

In Part 2 we will explore **how to structure** product demonstrations to **maximize** the number of demonstrations that **convert into closed sales**.

Step #1: Review business problems and quantified impacts

Why should you review the prospect's business problems and quantified impacts before beginning a demonstration? There are two primary reasons:

1. To re-engage the prospect's EMOTIONS. It may have been some time since you last spoke with some of the people that are attending the product demonstration. You need to **make sure every demonstration participants' emotions are engaged** during the product demonstration, as **emotions are a key driver in buying decisions being made**.

2. To find out if any NEW business problems and quantified impacts should be added to the list. How often have you walked into a room to deliver a product demonstration and found **people in the room you had never met before**? The larger a prospect company is, the more likely this is to happen.

These new participants **may have different concerns** than the other demonstration participants. If they do, you need to make sure the new concerns are **identified** (and the related business problems **quantified**, if possible) **before** proceeding with the demonstration.

Step #2: Focus the demonstration on the SPECIFIC product features that solve the prospect's SPECIFIC business problems

Remember, the goal of a demonstration is to **prove** your company's product can **solve** the prospect's **specific** business problems while **avoiding** information overload.

It doesn't matter if the features that will solve the prospect's business problems constitute **just a small percentage of the product's capabilities**. You should focus the demonstration on the **specific** product features that deliver the return on investment described in the proposal. The prospect can learn about your product's many other wonderful capabilities **after** they buy!

Step #3: Carefully manage expert resources

Unless you are a real product expert, I always recommend having a product expert be involved in delivering a product demonstration. This **increases the chances that all of the prospect's questions will be answered accurately** during the demonstration.

With that said, there must be no doubt as to who is running the show. **You** must be willing to take on this responsibility!

You must ensure the demonstration **follows** (as closely as possible) **the predetermined script**. You should ask questions to **clarify the intent** of demonstration participants' questions **prior to answering** the questions (or prior to asking the product expert to answer the questions). You should also be prepared to **"reign in" the product expert** if the expert **gets into excessive detail** or begins to address **product capabilities that are not critical** to the prospect's buying decision.

Step #4: Gain agreement regarding "next steps"

Hopefully the next step following completion of a demonstration will be **processing the prospect's order**! But, if you are not successful closing a sale at the end of the demonstration, make sure there is **clear agreement regarding the next steps** in the prospect's decision process.

Summary

If a prospect **doesn't have the kinds of business problems** your company's products and services can solve, or **if the impact** of the prospect's business problems **is not severe enough** to motivate them to invest in your company's products and services, it doesn't matter how wonderful the demonstration is. The prospect **will not buy!**

You will **maximize your time and resource investments** if you delay scheduling a demonstration until **after** a prospect agrees there is **a compelling business case** for buying your product.

Remember, product demonstrations should play **a specific role** in the sales process. This role is **proving** a product or service will indeed solve the prospect's **specific** business problems!