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More Auto-Demo Hell – A “Customized” Recorded Demo?

Should a recorded or canned demo be “customized”? Interesting and tough challenge...!

[Update: The answer is, in fact, a resounding “Yes” – check out the fine folks at www.GoConsensus.com who have put together a terrific tool that enables recorded demos to be delightfully customized!]

By definition, recorded demos are not customized for any specific customer. However, an attempt to create a single recorded demo that embraces the needs and situations of a range of prospects with different job titles in differing markets is likely doomed to fail.

Example: Consider CRM demos that try to cover the needs of salespeople, sales management, and marketing. Sales management is most interested, typically, in forecast accuracy and transparency – which relies upon data entry by salespeople. A demo that shows a rep entering a pile of pipeline information (deal size, key players, likely close date, probability, deal stage, etc.etc.) will likely please the VP of sales but annoy the sales reps.

Similarly, the above scenario does little to help a marketing manager charged with executing lead generation campaigns – her demo needs to speak to the results and processes of campaign execution and management.

In summary, recorded demos need to be “customized” at least to address relevant market- and job-title specific situations. Recorded demos that show no apparent effort to customize are likely to:

1. Be perceived as insulting by the customer (“we are not all alike”)
2. Will result in *more* work for the vendor to get the same business (“I didn’t see what I needed in your demo – and it appeared to be inflexible”)
3. Violates nearly every customer-centric principle (and certainly the core principles of the Great Demo! method)

When I'm working with customers to help with their recorded demos (e.g., hosted on their websites), I recommend a Menu Approach to lead each individual prospect to the specific, generically-customized demo that matches that customer's industry and job-title. That means, potentially, *multiple* recorded demos as opposed to a single demo that hopes to somehow embrace everyone.

Does this mean that you need to generate recorded demos for every target job title and market? Yes and no...

Yes; in that the prospects should *perceive* that they have been led to a demo that is specifically relevant for them. No; you should expect that the situations for many job titles will be reasonably homogeneous across markets – providing the ability to leverage one recorded demo across those markets. (You'll need to be careful/clever about what data is used). Often, you can apply different *voice-overs* to one core demo to lend the *appearance* of a recorded demo that has been customized for a specific target audience.

The *perception* that a recorded demo has been created specifically for an audience can truly accelerate the sales cycle!

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