



Peter E. Cohan
The Second Derivative
1532 Scenic Drive
Trinidad, CA 95570
T: +1 650 631 3694
E: PCohan@SecondDerivative.com
W: <https://GreatDemo.com>

Stunningly Successful Great Demo! Implementation – A Practitioner’s Perspective

Congratulations, you’ve survived a Great Demo! Workshop. Now what?

Some folks start making changes right away. Others watch to see how it goes with their peers. And (sadly) a few ignore the investment completely...

If you want to go to “club” – if you are looking to collect more bonus and commission – if you would like to move from individual contributor to become a mentor, team-lead, principal or manager – if you hope to include any these on your resume – or if you simply have the desire to continue to improve – then you need to get to work!

This article presumes nothing about your organization. In the best case, your manager is ready and eager to coach you, supported by a full set of resources from your enablement team. In many cases, however, you may be largely on your own. Accordingly, you must take responsibility for your own success...!

Let’s explore how to get the most from the training you experienced.

Change Has (Substantial) Rewards

To whet your appetite, here are a few examples of results of change from Great Demo! Workshop participants:

“A Real Differentiator...”

“This has become a real differentiator for us in conversations. It has become a great standard process used between sales and presales to ensure we are on the same page walking into a call.

A recent interaction with XXX Corp, where we were given feedback that we were the only company out of 5 invited in that actually listened to their needs and delivered a demo focused on their specific use case.”
- Sales Director

“...Send Him the DocuSign.”

“We had a great discovery conversation with XXX in Indianapolis. The owner was open and willing to share the true pain they are experiencing. We set our presentation for 48 hours later and showed them how we’d fix their issue straight out of the gate. That took a total of 11 minutes. After another 29.5 minutes we completed our presentation (demo) at which point the client asked us to send him the DocuSign.”
- Regional Sales Manager, Transportation Software

“Subject: Great Demos Are Working!”

“I took your Great Demo! class in late 2016. We were slow to completely implement the principles of the Great Demo! into all parts of our demo, but I am glad we revisited at the beginning of this year and implemented into all our demos and scoping calls. We have also started doing a lot more scoping calls to make sure that the demos only focus on what people need.

Well this year it has paid off! We had 7 app sales in 2017 and with the use of the Great Demo! principles and scoping calls we completed to 19 in 2018 and have over 23 sales in 2019 and a few more about to sign up!”
- Val - Marketing & Support Specialist, Non-Profit Organization Software

“DRASTIC”

“So obviously it is slightly early to put insight into performance over a long period of time but I have noticed a DRASTIC decrease in ALL of my sales cycles after the Great Demo!

This past month I had 2-3 demonstrations that closed within about a month of the opportunity being created and only a week or two after the demo.

I will continue to collect data and insights but my sales cycles have compressed greatly since this class. I want to mention the only way to see progress is to have some way to quantify or measure it.

I have numerous dashboards that track where I spend my time, the demos I conducted along with their opportunity status, and metrics around sales cycles. Since the Great Demo! class I have closed 5 deals (1 renewal, 3 new logos, and 1 upsell). That puts me at 36 new logos this year.”
- Solution Consultant, ITSM Software

These success stories have a few embedded messages that we can learn from:

1. In the first organization, Great Demo! has become standard practice.
2. In two organizations, improved Discovery skills yielded fabulous results.
3. The third organization revisited Great Demo! well after the training was completed – with terrific outcomes.
4. All tracked their progress, using one or more metrics.

Did they implement *everything* they learned in the Workshop? Nope – each chose a few high value elements to focus on first, and then expanded their practice over time.

Setting Goals

It is challenging for any individual to move from traditional demos to a full Great Demo! implementation in a single leap. Accordingly, we recommend ongoing, consistent progress towards small, achievable goals.

With that in mind, here are five key Great Demo! elements that represent large implementation objectives:

1. Generate and use Situation Slides
2. Develop and present Illustrations
3. Break up your content into short, discrete chunks

4. Use the fewest number of clicks
5. Remember to summarize

Let's take Situation Slides and create a set of smaller, along-the-route goals:

- Generate a Situation Slide for one upcoming demo – regardless of the level of completeness.
- Assess:
 - o Which elements are missing or incomplete?
 - o What tuning could be done to improve?
 - o Are there additional Discovery questions that I should be asking my prospects?

Choose one small improvement as a goal for your next Discovery conversation and corresponding Situation Slide. Practice it – note the results and repeat until it becomes comfortable, natural and embedded as habit. Then set the next goal – excelsior!

Here's a second, high-value example – “Develop and Present Illustrations”:

- Choose *one* specific capability that is typically requested by customers, then develop and present an Illustration for it.
 - o Is the Illustration representative of the desired deliverable?
 - o Did I present it compellingly?
 - o What was the customer's reaction?

Choose one small improvement as a goal for your next demo. Practice it – assess and repeat.

Let's do one more example – “Fewest Number of Clicks”:

- Select one typical demo pathway that you commonly show and execute it.
 - o How many clicks was it?
 - o Could it have been shorter?
 - o Did I remember to summarize at the end?

Again, choose one small improvement as a goal for your next demo. Practice it – evaluate and repeat.

[Note: We have guidelines available for developing and presenting Situation Slides, Illustrations, Do It and Peel Back the Layers pathways, Managing Questions and Summaries – [contact us](#) if you would like a set!]

Track and Celebrate Your Progress

A terrific mechanism to support your efforts to change is to track your progress. Many folks use a Word document or Excel spreadsheet to set and track progress towards their goals (large or small).

Intriguingly, the act of writing down specific goals often drives individuals to achieve them – it becomes a personal commitment. Similarly, as each goal is achieved, putting a ✓ upon completion gives many of us a feeling of progress – celebrating small but significant accomplishments!

Some people set small daily goals while others go for weekly accomplishments – choose what you are comfortable with. Whatever cadence you select should be short enough that you can see real progress in a reasonable timeframe – monthly or quarterly is too long...!

How Small Is Small?

Remember the expression, “How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time...” (apologies to the elephant). Adopting a methodology like Great Demo! means making substantial changes to one’s practices, but in alignment with your personal “appetite”.

Some folks are willing to make big changes and try some of the more challenging aspects of the new practices; others will want to start with smaller, easier-to-implement changes.

One way to look at this is to use a four-quadrant grid, with the Y axis identifying the level of gain or pay-back and the X axis showing the implementation or adoption effort:

High Pay-off	High Pay-off High Effort	High Pay-off Low Effort
Low Pay-off	Low Pay-off High Effort	Low Pay-off Low Effort
	High Effort	Low Effort

When you populate this graph with the key skills and practices of the methodology, you have a tool you can use to select your goals, in accord with your personality. Folks who want the “biggest bang” for their efforts will be directed to the top-right quadrant first; next they may work on items in the top-left quadrant. (And any sane person will avoid, as possible, the bottom-left quadrant...!)

For Great Demo!, here are a few examples of effort vs. pay-off:

Low Effort, High Pay-off:

1. Fewest Number of Clicks
2. “You” Mode
3. Preparing Situation Slides, based on existing “Discovery” information (likely incomplete)
4. Precise pointing
5. Full screen mode (in browsers)

Moderate Effort, High Pay-off:

1. Completing Situation Slides (which may require executing more Discovery)
2. Identifying and presenting compelling Illustrations

3. Peeling Back the Layers
4. Transition Vision and V.R.E. discussions
5. Communicating and connecting to the Business Value (the Delta) throughout the demo
6. The Menu Approach
7. Vision Generation Demos

High Effort, High Pay-off:

1. Preparing and delivering Complex Situation Demos (e.g., for multiple stakeholders, multiple solutions)
2. Reaching agreement with the customer on success criteria, the timeline and the players for a POC
3. Deeper Discovery skills (e.g., from a Great Demo! Master Class)

Low Effort, Moderate Pay-off:

1. Remote Demos practices
2. Color, xy graph and related Illustration presentation tactics
3. Managing Questions
4. Smooth and deliberate mousing
5. Summarizing
6. Making Demos Remarkable elements (e.g., visual aids, whiteboard work, storytelling...)
7. Letting the customer drive (requires more courage than effort!)

Let's Talk About Coaching

Coaching is a hot topic today – but it is a bit like weather: “Everyone talks about it – but no-one does anything about it...” So let's not just *talk* about coaching, let's put it into *practice*.

Why is coaching important? Very simply, coaching helps us get better, faster.

[Brief sidebar: What is the difference between training and coaching? You can train someone to follow a process; coaching explores how well that process is being executed and makes improvements in performance.

For example, you can train someone on how to run a 5-kilometer race: he/she should start, pace him/herself over the first 4.5 kilometers, and then “kick” the last half a kilometer to finish. The runner listens to the instructions, then runs the course as best he/she understands or interprets the plan. That's training.

Coaching is what happens next. A coach, who has watched and timed our athlete during the run, reviews what happened – and offers positive feedback along with corrections and changes. “Your time was good, overall – nice job. Start a bit faster; remember to focus on smooth, steady breathing, and when you see the final half kilometer sign you can start your ‘kick’ – increase steadily over that half km so that you are at top speed in the last 100m before the finish line.” That's coaching – working to improve the performance of the process.

Our athlete (after a bit of a rest), runs the course again, focusing on the guidance from the coach – and sees some significant improvement. Importantly, coaching creates a positive feedback loop that enables ongoing positive change.]

OK, so who is available to coach you on your journey towards Great Demo! perfection?

- Best? Your manager. [This presumes that your manager is *already* a skilled Great Demo! coach or practitioner.]

Your manager can help set goals, review your pre-demo materials (e.g., Situation Slides and Illustrations), and provide feedback and tuning both pre- and post-demo.

For face-to-face demos, invite your manager to join you on a regular basis – this enables timely and precise coaching to take place.

For web-delivered demos (using Zoom, GoToMeeting, WebEx, etc.) record your demos so that you and your manager can review. Consider using [Refract.ai](#) to enable asynchronous feedback (I love these guys – check them out...!)

- Next Best? A mentor or a peer. [This again presumes that your mentor/peer is *already* a skilled Great Demo! coach or practitioner.]

Same/similar opportunities for coaching guidance, but it is less likely that a mentor or peer will be able to join you in face-to-face demo meetings.

- Who's next? Yourself.

Yes, you can coach yourself. You'll miss the insights that another person can provide, but most of us have been self-coaching for years. The main challenge here is to be consistent in the process: goal-setting, self-review, improvement tuning, etc. should be executed on a regular cadence.

One of the best ways to coach yourself is to watch recordings of your demos. (First step? Get over the sound of your voice...!) It can be very humbling, but very effective. You'll see your mouse movements; you'll hear your "crutch" words ("um", "actually", etc.); you'll hear how you responded to customer questions; your pace; your tone...

Time how long you talk before you have a question or comment from your customer (and set a goal to target enable a "speaker switch" an average of every 76 seconds...!).

Make notes as you review your recording – what did I do well? What could I have done better? What could I have done differently? These notes will yield your next small goals – and enable you to celebrate the victories you have achieved so far!

- Also available – your Great Demo! Workshop Facilitator.

Clearly, your Workshop Facilitator can help you improve your Great Demo! practices – a terrific option! Of course, they may need to charge for coaching as a service (the ROI on these services has proven to be truly remarkable!).

Anything Else?

Why, yes! Here is a terrific list to help you help yourself:

- ✓ Watch demos from *other* vendors. No, not your competition (although you should do this anyway), but vendors of software that you are actually interested in. Sign up for a demo on the vendor's website – and let the fun begin... You get the opportunity to *be a customer* – what a great perspective to have!

- ✓ Watch demos from your peers. This is a great opportunity to see how they address customer needs, present demo pathways – and if they are also Great Demo! graduates you'll be able to see how they present and prepare Situation Slides, Illustrations, Do It pathways, etc.
- ✓ Participate in QBR and related Opportunity Review Sessions. See how you can apply situation Slides to assess the likelihood of the opportunity moving forward (or ending as a “No Decision”).
- ✓ Generate a Peel Back the Layers list of questions. Each week (for example), write down five questions you heard from customers in demos – and practice the answers (is it a “Yes or No” question – or do I need to show the answer in the software...?). These will become plug-and-play demo chunks for you.
- ✓ Ensure that you schedule pre-demo prep calls with your sales colleagues and team members. Use Situation Slides to review what you know and don't know about the customer. Discuss what Illustrations you plan to use, who will manage questions, who will provide the final summary, etc.
- ✓ Similarly, schedule post-demo reviews. What did we do well? What could we have done better?
- ✓ Regarding scheduling, please give yourself some time to “sharpen the saw”. It is very hard to get better when you are booked into back-to-back-to-back-to-back meetings all day...!
- ✓ Review the materials from your Great Demo! Workshop – paging through the workbook will refresh your memory of the ideas we discussed and remind you of concepts you may have forgotten.
- ✓ Join the Great Demo! Group on [LinkedIn](#). The Group on serves as an ongoing, evergreen mechanism to share new ideas, surface best practices, and provide tips on new technologies. It is, in essence, a Great Demo! Users' Group. You are welcome and encouraged to join!
- ✓ Explore the Great Demo! [Website](#). Look on the Resources pages for a large selection of articles (like this one!) on a broad range of demo topics – and the Blog is where you can find the latest ideas.

Get Better, Get Great!

Improving one's practice is change – and change takes work. Choose and set one small goal for yourself, right now – let's get the process started.

Invest in yourself and reap the rewards – that additional bonus or commission; those accolades from your sales colleagues; that “club” trip to the Bahamas; those happy and successful customers; that promotion; and the knowledge that you are, indeed, moving from good to better to truly Great!

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