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'Twas the Night Before the Big Demo
(with apologies to Clement Clarke Moore)

'Twas the night 'fore the demo and all through the house
Not a creature was stirring, 'cept my SC and his mouse;
I'd proposed a big licensing deal with great care
In hopes a big order soon would be there;

Management was restless and not in their beds
As visions of bonuses danced in their heads;
And my VP with his forecast and me with my own,
Had just started a long EOQ roam,

When out from my mobile there came a great ring-tone,
I sprang from my chair to answer my phone,
What could it be? Was it good news or no?
A last-minute order? A contract? PO?

Greetings, said my assistant, who spoke on the line,
It was someone to see me, offering help at this time!
Who could it be at this late eleventh-hour,
To make the deal sweet and avoid something sour?

Away to the door I flew in a flash,
And swept it open in my quest for fast cash,
When who to my wondering eyes should appear,
The DemoGuru! And standing so near!

He came in my office and, while dusting off snow,
Said, "I have some news that you'll want to know."
He drew up a chair and asked for some tea,
And said to my VP, SC and to me:

“Your deal is in trouble and I’ll tell you now,
Your demo’s confusing, complex and lacks ‘Wow!’
It’s riddled with features and functions and more,
And too many cool things, mouse clicks galore,

Don’t flog them with features and other neat stuff,
Stick with the substance, stay away from the fluff,
The more that you show is not always nice,
Customers may say, ‘Please lower the price!’

The Buzzword-Compliant Vocabulary list,
Are words, I’m afraid, that are better-off missed,
Not Flexible, nor Powerful, nor Easy-to-Use,
Not Robust, nor Seamlessly Integrated abuse,

And no corporate overview, please don’t do that,
After ten minutes they’re grabbing their hats,
Use real data, stay focused, on target, be brief,
Build vision, while you suspend disbelief!

Your customer’s queued and ready to go,
They love the vision you’ve built with them so.
They want Technical Proof in the demo you’ve planned,
Just the key capabilities, everything else banned.”

“But how can we do this?” I heard myself cry,
“We’re victims of momentum, we’re nervous to try,
Another approach, a new way to go,
We have to admit we’re just a bit slow!”

“Do the Last Thing First!” he said with a smile,
“Then Peel Back the Layers, and Do It with style,
Peel it back in accord with their interest,
Stay focused and execute, and you’ll find it best,

Your customer’s Situation is a great way to intro,
Their Problems and Reasons, from CBI flow,
Review these and check – is this still the case?
Are we aligned or are we off-base?

Start with the end, that big pay-off piece,
Illustrate and describe, those are the keys!
Capture their interest, compel their attention,
Make sure it aligns with their mode of consumption,

When it clicks and they're hooked, they'll then ask for more,
There's absolutely no way that they'll head for the door.
They'll say, "Please show us, prove that it's so,
Show us the rest, please do demo."

Then Do It, just Do It, with no extra clicks,
To return to that Illustrative image that sticks,
Make it simple, make it fast, make it easy and clear,
Then they will realize they've nothing to fear,

Encourage their questions, most are not new,
Good ones and Great ones (and Stupid ones too),
Treat Hostiles with courtesy, use your Parking Lot so
Those mean, crusty folks can't damage your flow,

Peel back the layers, (like an onion),
Show only what's needed, put nothing else in,
Let them drive the demo, let them think they're in charge,
While their Vision Solution you work to enlarge!

Summarize, summarize, tell them again,
'Cause adults do learn by repetition,
And when you show a key take-away screen,
Leave it up, let it linger, so they'll know what they've seen!

"I get it – I'll do it!" exclaimed my SC,
"This is all so obvious, it's way clear to me!"
And he sprang into action, his mouse flew like lightening,
(Frankly, his speed was a little bit frightening!)

And with that the DemoGuru smiled and he said,
"Your way is now clear, put that baby to bed,
Your deal's now on track, your order secure,
You'll make your numbers at the end of the year,

Then he strode from my office in the flash of a pun,
Turned 'round and he said, "My job here is done,"
Ere he drove out of sight, I did hear him say,
"Great Demo! to all and to all a Great Day!"

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