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Being Remarkable – What Makes a *Truly* Great Demo?

What makes customers say, “Remember the time that vendor did that *really* amazing demo?” What is the difference between a good demo and a *Truly* Great Demo!?

They’re remarkable. They’re memorable. They stand out from all of the other demos and presentations – because they were really different...

“...Remember the time that the SC brought in that *huge* stack of papers and books to search through one-by-one – it reached from his chin all the way down to his knees!”

“...It was so great when they had our VP of sales drive a portion of the demo – our VP could barely type. He used to do everything in all CAPS because he didn’t want to have to shift...!”

“... Remember when that salesperson showed receiving an article via the web – on a *ship at sea* on his Blackberry – that was truly amazing!”

“...I loved it when they let *me* search their database – I found answers that I didn’t know were possible, emailed them to myself and had my project done on-time and much better than I’d expected!”

These demos were so remarkable that they got the business *and* stayed in customers’ minds long afterward. Let’s explore what makes certain demos *truly* great – and how to increase the proportion in your own organization.

Good vs. Better

Presentation skills classes help presenters improve their level of practice. Sales methodology courses provide processes to help sales people progress and secure business faster. Demonstration skills training enable sales teams to achieve improved demos.

All of these help people get better at what they do. For some of us, the starting point is low (e.g., “Our demos suck...”) – for others, they want to go from good to better (“Our team of seasoned veterans is good, but we can all improve...”).

Most training enables a step-change – a new way of doing things that goes beyond the *status-quo*. In the world of software demos, helping people to eliminate unneeded features and functions from their demos is good – but it is not going to result in a demo that is perceived as particularly remarkable.

[Warning – shameless self-promotion paragraph alert!] Great Demo! methodology, on the other hand, is an example of doing things really differently – a major change. The “Do the Last Thing First” concepts help sales, presales and marketing people change from good to great; from linear, boring, traditional demos to crisp, compelling and effective deliveries.

Stand-up Comedy – and Demos?

Stand-up comedians constantly test their material. They introduce new ideas, explore audience reaction, and add or delete accordingly. Their expectation is that each subsequent performance will be better than the previous – evolution at its best: survival of the fittest jokes...!

Comedians need to have material that is *consistently* remarkable. Should demos be any different?

- ✓ When you use a prop in a demo that really engages the audience and makes them light up, repeat it for the next group (that has the same or similar Situation).
- ✓ When you present a terrific pay-off screen or key report (an Illustration) that really resonates with the key player, do it again the next time you demo to someone with the same job title.
- ✓ When you tell a story that has the audience on the edge of their seats, keep it in the act.
- ✓ When you see the key member of your audience making notes about the Informal Success Story you just related, plan to do it again.

Demo elements that were memorable – that were particularly remarkable – are the elements to harvest, refine, and reuse. Demos should evolve to incorporate the *best* material for each customer’s Situation.

Share, Plagiarize, Leverage...

You have your personal stock of remarkable demo ideas; consider tapping into ideas from your colleagues, competitors and third parties as well.

- ✓ In your own team, organize a “Demo Day” where team members present demo components and ideas that worked extraordinarily well.
- ✓ Watch demos from other companies – on the web, at conferences, or as a *customer* when vendors present at your company – and collect ideas to incorporate into your own demos.

- ✓ Watch presentations (www.TED.com, for example) to harvest novel and remarkable ideas for your own use.

Quid Pro Quo

Here's an offer: send me a remarkable demo story (sanitized, as necessary); I'll collect them and send back the aggregated set to everyone that contributes, so that you can take "pre-competitive" advantage of the ideas. The remarkable demo stories you share don't necessarily have to come from your own organization...

To sweeten the deal, I'll ship a highly coveted Great Demo! Telescoping-Laser-Pen Pointer – an "Encrispenator" (the ultimate demo presentation tool...) to those who provide the best, most remarkable ideas.

Good to Great to *Truly Remarkable*

A good demo is typically what you were taught when you first came aboard – "Here's the demo for product X..."

A Great Demo! results from aligning to customer needs and turning a traditional demo upside down – "Do the Last Thing First".

Truly Remarkable Demos harvest the best, most memorable elements of a Great Demo! – and replay them on a consistently-improving, ongoing basis.

Truly Remarkable Demos have the highest success rates of all in securing the business!

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