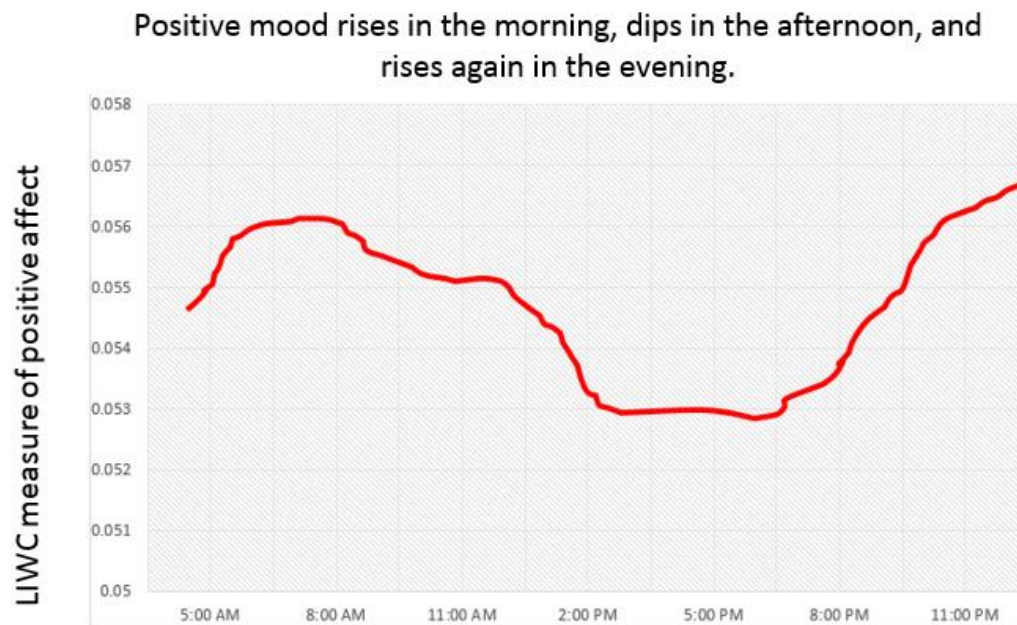


## When is the Best Time to Do a Demo?

Have you ever wondered what the best time of day is to perform a demo...better yet...a Great Demo! Having now been in sales a few years I have experienced that energy levels, attentiveness, and mental acuity are stronger at different times of the day, yet never had the research to validate my own experience and belief. Here it is.

I had a chance to meet New York Times Best Selling Author Daniel Pink, Author of *When: The Scientific Secrets of Perfect Timing* and asked the question I had pondered for years. When is the best time of day to do a demonstration or make a sales call with clients? His response was "Great Question, the Answer is Complex because it depends on many variables!" However, he shared some interesting insights from his research and book that we can use in the wonderful world of sales.

The first is that as humans we perform differently on unique tasks at different times of the day. In general, people move through the day in three stages: A peak, a trough, and a recovery. Most of us move through it in that order. He shared that about 1 in 5 moves in the reverse order, but for the rest of us the timing is quite predictable. During the peak, which for most of us is in the morning, we are better at analytic tasks, maintaining attention and diverting interruptions. That's when people are most vigilant when they are able to bat away distractions and concentrate deeply. The illustration below highlights mood across a daily time scale.



Source: <https://executive-coaching.co.uk/newsletters/managing-energy-not-time/>

During the trough, which for most of us is the early-to-mid-afternoon, clients may possess a lesser ability to fight off distractions and focus on the well-crafted solutions we have beautifully prepared. The recovery period, which for most of us is in the late afternoon and early evening, are good times for creativity and forming insights to problems, yet those times don't lend well to software demos and

selling themes given our typical work hours. I wonder, however, if that is why so many brilliant business ideas are created on the backs of napkins over a pint and the local pub.

Here is what Daniel suggested. Bring the most important part of your solution to the front of your demo and do it in the morning when the client has the most energy and focus available. Gong.io reported that software demonstrations should prioritize the topic that the client spoke about most in discovery and present it right up front. The combination presents a clear recommendation to prioritize your demo (Doing the Last Thing First) and perform as early as possible when your client is at their peak.

Here is another interesting idea that Daniel suggested. If the client is seeing numerous vendors try to demo first unless the client is uneducated. With less educated clients, there is a learning curve and an education the first vendor provides. If you are the incumbent go last. Here was the most unique suggestion though. Don't follow two of your strongest competitors! Go First! If you follow other stronger presenters and companies, the client may form an unwarranted bias against your solution. He used the example of tossing a coin three times. If the first two flips generated a head, what might a person bet on the third toss? Typically...Tails. While statistically irrelevant as each flip is mutually independent, the prospect may not believe they can see three great solutions and demos in a row and subconsciously dismiss the third believing that it just cannot be possible to see another good one. They may have already mentally prepared for a different outcome.

Daniel's research also highlighted the importance of Starting's and Endings with analogies of how people make major changes in their life on the 9th year of a decade (29, 39, 49, etc.) The concepts seem to align and correlate with the teachings of the Great Demo! methodology almost perfectly (although on a grander scale). In the Great Demo!, Peter Cohan teaches to chunk up demonstrations illustrating the most important requirement first. He often suggests and illustrates through the use of a newspaper, that we chunk up our demos, start with an introduction and then conclude each section with the benefit (Delta). Beginning and Endings are when attention is highest in our demos and when clients have the highest probability of retaining the benefits of our solution.

***"I used to believe that timing was everything. Now I believe that everything is timing."*** -Daniel Pink

Daniel Pink's book is another form of validation that timing and order is one of the most important components in life and in Demos!

Happy selling,

Paul H. Pearce