How to Create Automated Demos that Shorten Your Sales Cycle and Fill Your Pipeline

By Amy Gesenhues

If you are in charge of marketing and selling a robust software application that includes a comprehensive set of features and functions, then you probably have an extended sales cycle. Most likely, your sales process includes meeting (and selling to) multiple decision makers within one company. There's a slight chance that you may not even get to meet with all the people who are evaluating—and ultimately deciding—if your software is the right solution for their business objectives.

So how do you keep prospects engaged throughout the duration of a long sales process and everybody on the same page when it comes to your sales messaging?

A professionally-produced, automated demo that drills down into your software's key benefits can dramatically impact and shorten your sales cycle. It can initiate the sale and help you control the message when you're not able to get in front of all the decision makers evaluating your software.

Prospects want to see how your software works, what it looks like, and how it will help them. An automated demo can show prospects exactly what they want to see within the first five minutes of the sales process. You don't have to offer up a trial version, handing over your software to untrained users who won't know what to do with it. You also get to keep competitive information under-wraps as you control the content in the demo.

A five to six-minute automated demo with actual screen shots of your software synched to a professional voiceover is an effective and cost-efficient tool for initiating the sales conversation with

new prospects and keeping your pipeline filled with qualified leads. Here are three quick tips for producing a demo that can impact your sales process and dramatically shorten your sales cycle.

Keep It Short

If you want a product demo that can shorten your sales cycle, you must keep it succinct and make the content resonate immediately with the viewer. Leave out the marketing jargon and flashy bullet points about your company. Focus on your software's three leading selling points. No matter how robust your product, your automated demo should not run longer than six minutes. The point is to demo your software's unique features to pique your prospect's interest.

All that is needed is a quick intro about your product. Your demo should quickly zero in on the actual product by the third or fourth screen. The sooner you get to the goods, the more likely prospects will stick around to see what you have to show them.

Do not put anything out there that is less than professional.

Once you have identified the three benefits you are going to showcase in the demo, write a script that flows well with the screen shots you are demonstrating. Keep the script personable and relatable for your intended audience. The overall tone and voice of your demo script should reflect your company's image. Always use professional talent for the demo's voiceover. Nothing screams "unprofessional" louder than a demo without professional audio.

The screenshots of your software must be clean and crisp. Fuzzy images or tiny thumbnails of an application can make your demo look amateur and can quickly turn off prospects. Your demo is the first view of your software that prospects get to see; it has to make a good first impression. If your demo looks unprofessional, so will your software and, by extension, your company.

<u>Let your demo do the heavy (and initial) lifting for you.</u>

Make your demo accessible to everyone who comes to your site. The easier you make it to view, the more exposure your software receives. If produced correctly, the demo will immediately qualify leads by allowing them to see what your software can do. Include a registration screen or a "contact us" link within the demo so that prospects who want to know more can correspond with you within seconds of watching the demo.

If you are selling to a team of decision makers, make sure each of your contacts has a link to the demo. Often times, the first person you talk to is never the person making the final decision. Your demo can act as your clever sales rep that makes it past the gate keeper. With a professionally-produced, automated demo, your sales message stays consistent no matter who is evaluating your software. This keeps everyone on the same page and interested.

Comprehensive software solutions can be a difficult to market. You want your prospects to know every detail; but, waiting to show them the product can work against you. People don't buy what they can't see and the longer it takes for a prospect to see your software, the more time they have to lose interest. Leveraging an automated demo to initiate the sales process and continue the conversation within a group of decision makers will help your sales force be more efficient and lay the groundwork for keeping your marketing message consistent throughout the sales cycle.

About the Author

Amy Gesenhues is the Director of Marketing for Autodemo LLC, the leading developer of software demos. Her company has focused solely on product-centric, automated demos since its start over ten years ago. Autodemo works with hundreds of software companies, from startups to Fortune 500 organizations. You can view samples of their work at www.Autodemo.com.