

The Perfect Software Sales Pitch

The Many Advantages of Product-Centric Software Demos

"We need better marketing tools," comes the chorus from sales. Marketing works hard to craft compelling messages and resources. Unfortunately, many of these masterfully fashioned tools collect digital dust—underutilized or fully ignored by sales.

As the competition looms on the horizon, marketing managers face a growing pressure to deliver effective and dynamic sales tools. But, by the time messaging and branding are finally locked down, your sales team may already be using their own messaging to sell a product that vaguely resembles the one you're trying to market.

The marketing-sales disconnect is one major challenge faced by marketers

How can marketing ensure the right message is consistently delivered to prospects? Is there an easy way to satisfy sales and stand out in a noisy marketplace?

To overcome these challenges, many marketing managers are turning to product-centric software demos. Designed to eliminate the need for a live demonstration, these automated solutions provide a video tour of the software product while focusing on its key value propositions. More than a series of screen captures, these narrated mini-movies allow prospects to quickly see the product in action and understand its unique benefits. Better yet, product-centric software demos deliver consistent messaging to both internal and external audiences. Your prospects see your software in action, while the rest of your organization gains an in-depth understanding of your software's features and benefits. From sales to customer service and even accounting, everyone will know what you're selling.

This white paper will:

- Examine some of the challenges marketing professionals face when trying to create relevant sales tools.
- Clarify how product-centric software demos can address your most difficult marketing challenges.

Common Challenges for Software Marketers

Software marketers are under pressure to develop quality sales resources that are effective and easily leveraged. Common software marketing challenges include:

- Prospects viewing product demos late in the sales cycle.
- Severe messaging disconnect between marketing and sales.
- Creating sales tools that differentiate the product from the competition.

This is compounded by the need to keep existing clients while gaining market share.

The Demo Dilemma

People don't buy what they can't grasp. The live product demo is designed to help overcome this problem. However, prospects often do not see the demo until late in the sales cycle. Early discussions within the sales process tend to focus exclusively on the product's features and benefits without ever showing the product in action.

Live demos also introduce challenges. For example, they require a significant time commitment from sales and their prospects. Coordinating schedules, setting up the demo and presenting the product can easily consume multiple hours for the prospect and the sales rep. In a competitive industry, the time commitment may deter someone from viewing the demo and ultimately lead to a lost opportunity.

While a trial version of a fully functional product is a great way for prospects to test-drive an application, it has its drawbacks. For example, when prospects download software for a trial period early in the sales cycle, they may be quickly overwhelmed. Often times, prospects lack the time to learn how to take full advantage of the software, stopping the sales cycle cold. When prospects are left to navigate the product themselves, they lose interest. Software trial versions can quickly turn away a lead without offering any real valuable information about the product.

Ideally, prospects should experience a "sneak peek" at the product and its benefits early in the sales cycle.

Are Marketing and Sales Speaking Different Languages?

According to a SandHill report:

"Marketing and sales rarely speak with a single voice, and this causes a lot of wasted motion that often confuses prospects, customers and partners, not to mention the salespeople."¹

Often prospects must wait until late in the sales cycle to actually experience a software demo

Prospects become confused when sales is telling a different story than the marketing materials

¹ Schmonsees, B. (April 4, 2005). SandHill.com. Fixing the marketing-sales disconnect.

"Marketers seem to be saying, 'Sales, execute better with the materials we're giving you.' Meanwhile, the sentiment of sales appears to be, 'We'll do it if you give us the best tools,'" explained a *Sales & Marketing Management* article.²

Nearly every software company faces this marketing and sales disconnect. For example, salespeople often tout features that have not yet been released or have been updated. Alternatively, each salesperson may end up telling a different story to prospects. Such disconnects place doubt in the minds of prospects, creating a sales culture of over-promising and under-delivering—the quickest route to losing sales.

Unfortunately, the enormous amount of marketing collateral produced by many software companies makes it hard for sales to keep up. Many marketing materials have a short shelf life because the software is updated frequently.

What's needed is an easy way for salespeople to deliver consistent messaging to prospects while leveraging dynamic sales tools that generate results.

"The demo has received an overwhelmingly positive response. We're not just using it for prospects. We've also leveraged it as an internal education tool to help educate our own people, partners, investors and even the media."

***George McTaggart
Vice President of Marketing
Third Brigade Software***

Standing Out From Competition

The competitive landscape makes it hard for software businesses to stand out.

"There's an avalanche of information, and the noise level has gone up dramatically. The new fight is just to have the opportunity to sell," states Robert Kear, chief marketing officer at Sales Performance International.³

A significant 70 percent of businesses find it difficult to differentiate their product from the competition, according to a comprehensive study from *Sales & Marketing Management* and the American Marketing Association.⁴ The same study found that sales collateral and the corporate website were the most helpful tools to assist the sales team, yet were often the most lacking.

Ideally, businesses need powerful tools that help them stand apart from the competition.

² Hosford, C. (June 2006). *Sales & Marketing Management*. Curing the sales-marketing disconnect.

³ Hosford, C. (June 2006). *Sales & Marketing Management*. Curing the sales-marketing disconnect.

⁴ Ibid.

- Creating the final product

With product-centric software demos, software companies are significantly improving sales.

Benefits of Product-Centric Software Demos

Product-centric software demos provide many important benefit benefits.

A product-centric software demo:

- Allows prospects to quickly experience the product
- Accelerates the sales cycle and generates more leads
- Conveys the value of the software without requiring prospects to read marketing materials
- Offers an immediate and highly professional experience to prospects
- Ensures marketing and sales are presenting the same message
- Differentiates from competitors who lack similar demos
- Moves the prospect deeper into the sales funnel by showcasing functionality and associated benefits
- Provides anytime, anywhere access to software demos
- Guarantees products are consistently sold and only relevant features are discussed
- Improves stickiness of websites by engaging prospects with an easily accessible product demo
- Enables a single marketing tool to be leveraged across various marketing campaigns and multiple platforms

With product-centric software demos, prospects can experience a demo early in the buying cycle, making the sale easier

The ideal product-centric software demo provider has on-staff instructional designers who specialize in software application presentation

What to Look for in a Product-Centric Software Demo Provider

When seeking a company to produce product-centric software demos, consider the following important requirements:

Demo specialization: Look for a company that designs and develops product-centric software demos as their sole focus to ensure the highest quality outcome.

Instructional design experts: The ideal firm has on-staff instructional designers who understand how to best present short-form software demos to ensure the final product is easy for prospects to understand.

Proven track record: Seek a business with at least 10 years experience managing, directing and producing product-centric software demos. The demo development firm should be scalable to address a variety of client needs. How many demo projects does the firm manage at any given time? Companies with extensive experience developing demos average 60 to 75 completed demo projects per month.

Language localization: For businesses with international clients, look for a company that has extensive experience localizing demos in a variety of languages from Spanish, French, and German to more complex languages such as Thai, Malay, Punjabi, Chinese and Hindi.

In-house scriptwriters: Only work with firms that have experienced scriptwriters who understand how to create conversational scripts for voice talent.

Flat rate pricing: Beware of hidden fees and costs, or hourly billing arrangements that can quickly result in out-of-control costs.

Detailed development process: Ask the company about their process. The ideal process should include multiple checkpoints that are set in advance, including storyboarding, script approvals and beta reviews.

Deliver final project in less than a month: Seek a provider that offers a rapid turnaround time on all projects. Thirty days or less is only achievable by highly efficient firms.

Software industry expertise: Only work with a company that has extensive experience working with software products and a reputable client list to ensure the highest quality outcome.

Consultative process: Look for a firm that will act as an advocate, aiding in project management and using a minimal amount of your time.

Many Fortune 500 companies turn to Autodemo for their product-centric software demos

The Autodemo® Solution

As the name suggests, Autodemo specializes in creating automated product-centric software demos that deliver consistent marketing messaging and help software firms stand apart from the competition. Many *Fortune 500* companies, such as Microsoft, Infor, Ingenix, and Fair Isaac, rely on Autodemo.

With a decade of experience assisting software companies, Autodemo is a leading provider of product-centric software demos. Producing hundreds of demos annually, Autodemo is able to complete a project in less than a month. On-staff instructional designers and scriptwriters ensure the highest quality results.

Leveraging a proven process, Autodemo works closely with its clients to produce results-oriented demos that can be localized to fit any language need.

"The Autodemo team was extremely focused and added value every step of the way. This was our first professionally produced demo and it was a daunting prospect—especially how to tell our story in only a few minutes. You all have it down to a science! Thanks for making our demo a success."

FM Systems

"Autodemo's results are always right on: they are convenient, professional and the perfect supplement to our sales pitches. We use them throughout our sales process from on our website to our tradeshow booth. I highly recommend Autodemo."

Sage Software

To learn how other businesses have benefited from product-centric software demos, visit www.autodemo.com or for more information about Autodemo services call 502-581-1300 or email success@autodemo.com.

