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Let Your Champion Drive

“Stand away from the mouse and nobody will get hurt!”

Most demonstrations are executed by an expert from the vendor – the “technical person,” “guru,” “techie” or “expert”. It is interesting to note that the audience is often comprised of end-users, who are decidedly not experts.

This creates a natural misalignment between the vendor’s desire to generate a vision of “ease of use” and the customer’s perception. The “Do It” pathway in a Great Demo! is designed to help build and support this vision of ease of use. Reducing the number of mouse clicks and moving the mouse deliberately can go a long way towards creating that vision, but you are still at risk.

Here’s a terrific way to prove “ease of use”: have a customer representative do the demo.

When a customer drives the demo, or at least part of it, two key advantages are gained:

- First, the rest of the audience sees first-hand that a non-expert can actually run the software and get to the desired endpoint or output (without crashing, running into dead-ends, or other problems). This provides the audience with a stronger sense of proof of the Specific Capabilities than when the vendor drives. The sense of reality is deeper; there is less perceived risk of “smoke and mirrors”.
- Second, the audience begins to feel that they can run the software, themselves. “If Bob can do it, then certainly I can as well...” This also reduces the risk of the demo appearing to be too complex or complicated.

An additional advantage may be realized as well: the demo event becomes remarkable. When a customer representative “drives”, it is generally considered unusual. This can cause folks afterwards to talk about the demo with others, “You should have seen the demo today. Bob drove and it was really cool!” The result can be a very positive word-of-mouth effect that ripples through the customer’s organization.

A few pragmatic guidelines:

Work with your champion or “volunteer” ahead of time. We recommend that you coordinate with your customer champion, if you have one, or other lead user before the demo. You want to make sure the champion is comfortable, knows what to do and how

to do it reasonably well. You may want to set up a remote session to practice.

As a further note, if your champion is really a champion, he or she will typically be very willing to invest in the effort to “get it right”. Why? Because your champion has a significant emotional and/or business reason for the demo to go well. Additionally, involving your champion in driving the demo increases his or her ownership in the overall process – and this effect becomes a positive feedback loop (the more involved, the more ownership; the more ownership, the more involved).

Another recommendation: You may want to limit your customer involvement to the “Do It” pathway. The longer the segment, the greater is the risk of the customer representative making a mistake.

Finally, in the case where you do not have a champion available, you can still contemplate using an audience volunteer. You will have to give greater guidance on the individual steps, but the effect will still be very positive. Another, more controlling way to accomplish this is to ask the audience, while you drive, “What would be my next step?” or “Where should I click to...?” This provides you the ability to manage the process and reduce the risk of things going wrong, but it also reduces the positive impact of a volunteer stepping up to the mouse.

The moral: It is good when you prove your capabilities; it is great when your customer does it!

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