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Stunningly Awful Sales Prevention Demos

Does your organization have a “Sales Prevention Team” – people or processes that lengthen sales cycles and lose deals? Sadly, those who present Stunningly Awful Demos are often awarded membership on this infamous team.

Here are a few true examples of Stunningly Awful Sales Prevention Demos for your shock, horror, and amusement:

The Terrible Tabs Death March

I sat in on a demo recently where the presenter navigated to a page with 10 tabs showing and the proceeded to march through each of them, one by one, in detail.

It was *very* interesting to watch the body language of the audience. The response to the initial page was positive – it was a well-constructed dashboard and it looked good. The next tab was received with moderate interest, but at the third tab many of the audience members visibly sagged in their seats...!

By the fourth and fifth tabs nearly everyone had checked out (perhaps even the presenter, who had clearly presented these tabs many, many times...). There was an audible sigh of relief as the final tab was described.

This was a classic case of the presenter following the old, established, traditional demo pathway – a slow, painful march towards no sale!

Buying It Back

A true story from a few years ago: Discovery had been done well, the Champion was excited, the 50 target end-users were lined-up and interested. The Solution Consultant presenting the demo had an hour for the meeting...

In the first 10 minutes, he went through the key capabilities the customer was interested in. He then said, “Hmm – looks like we’ve got another 50 minutes left in our meeting today. Why don’t I go ahead and show you some of the other capabilities, other workflows, how to configure for different users and some other custom stuff?”

And he did. He spent the next 50 minutes showing a range of functions, workflows and capabilities – many of which were demonstrated in considerable detail.

At the end of the demo meeting the Champion chatted with the target end-users, then met with the selling team.

He told the vendor, “We’ve decided to purchase a *single* license of your software. We’ll put it on an expert’s machine and have all of the other users come to the expert to work the problems.”

“Why?” asked the sales person. “What about the other users?”

The Champion said, “The users said your software looked too *complicated* – they couldn’t visualize using it themselves.”

A classic, very sad case of snatching defeat from the jaws of victory – and of a reduction of the order size by \$245,000 (annual fees!). Sales prevention at its worst!

The Moral? *Stop selling when the customer is ready to buy...!*

“Here are all the different ways to...”

Imagine you ask the presenter how to print a document during a demo. The presenter’s face lights up and she says, “Printing is one of our real competitive advantages!”

She chooses File Print from the menu, while also noting that you can use keyboard shortcuts as well, or voice commands, if your system is configured accordingly. She then shows how to set-up the voice recognition software, does a test, and then cancels out of it.

She next selects Print Options and walks through how you can choose different printers, or add a printer, or print to file. Next she shows the paper choices, the margin options, the print quality possibilities, tray management on the printer, the print queue, print preview, and print to PDF. Another 13 minutes of your life senselessly squandered by the Sales Prevention Team...

And, fascinatingly, she never actually chose “OK” to print the document – which was the *only* click she needed to show!

Moral Number 1: *Just Do It.*

Moral Number 2: *Peel Back the Layers (in accord with the customer’s level of interest).*

Peeling Back the Onion

A colleague once commented that “Peeling Back the Layers” is just like peeling an onion: If you peel it back too far, what happens? You cry!

Help, Mr. Wizard...!

Wizards are designed to make a complex workflow simple to use – but only if a reasonable path is followed! Here’s another true story:

The presenter started a wizard to execute an analysis of business data – and was still walking me through the options and settings 60 minutes later!

Once he’d finally completed that portion of the demo, I asked him to show me how to complete that same workflow using the wizard in the *fewest* number of steps – the way someone would typically use the wizard on a day-to-day basis.

How long do you think it took? About 2.5 minutes start to finish.

Moral: [Create your own pithy saying here...]

Desperation Demos

“Wait – don’t go away, we haven’t gotten to the best stuff yet!”

Or:

“OK, so that wasn’t interesting to you? Well, how about this? Or this? Wait, we’ve got much more, and more, and more, and more...”

The Overrun Overview

“So I said we’d only take 30 minutes – but, wow, it looks like I’ve been talking for 2 hours! Um, hello, are you still there...?”

The Sales Prevention Team is, unfortunately, only too alive and well. To avoid joining this team, even briefly, we recommend a Great Demo! Workshop, Seminar or reading a copy of the *Great Demo!* book.

What Sales Prevention Demos have you seen? Send your horror stories to us at PCohan@SecondDerivative.com and we’ll publish (anonymously) the most frightening.

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