Presenting and Selling (Scientific) Software

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Based on book and slides by Peter E. Cohan
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This meeting

- Discussion of Selected Software
- Reports on Papers?
- Intro to Demoing
Understanding the Customer

• What objectives (= Critical Business Issues) does your customer have?

• Which capabilities help achieve that objective?

• Chain of Pain (relationships in the audience)
Specific Capabilities

Features do not solve problems!

Specific Capabilities can provide a solution, in context with the customer’s situation.
Homework

- Select your software
- Practice usage
- Determine capabilities and differentiating factors
- Invent customer
  - CBI, Reason, Specific Capabilities
- Create illustration
- Look at marketing material, note good and bad
Why demo?

Demo =

"Presentation of the set of **Specific Capabilities** needed to solve a customer’s **Critical Business Issue**"

• Technical Proof of Capabilities
• Vision Generation
Do the last things first!
A Great Demo

- Introduce illustration / example
- Do it
- Do it again (more slowly)
- Questions and answers
- Summarise

Possibly reiterate with other illustrations
Presenting Solutions

1. Rapid description of what the solution is
2. More thorough exploration of how the solution works

Do the “What” first, then the “How”.

Do not distract!

Showing more adds risks:
• Running into bugs
• Boring
• Confusing
• Looking complicated
• Looking expensive
• Running out of time
Starting the Demo

Ask:

• What does the customer want to accomplish in the meeting?
• What are the time constraints?
Preparation
Meeting Agenda

• Location
• Date
• Start and End time
• Objective
• Roles and timing
• Customer contact
Sales preparation

• Identify audience members
• Identify CBIs, Reasons, Specific Capabilities needed
• Identify “Chain of Pain”
• Determine objective for meeting
• Define agenda
• Inform selling team
• Agree on demo content
Technical preparation

- Research context (examples)
- Coordinate infrastructure
- Create outline
- Create summary and introduction
- Create illustration
- Develop “Do it”
- Develop “Do it again”
- Practice!
- Confirm infrastructure
Direct research

- Customer’s workflow
- Example reports
- Example data
  (agree on confidentiality)
Indirect research

• Customer’s website
• Papers, reports, patents, …
• Customer’s competition (other customers)
• Your competition
Infrastructure checklist

- Hardware
- Network
- Projection (resolution?)
- Power (adapters?)
- Lightning
- Screens
- Whiteboard, …
- Handouts
- Software
Reminder: Demo script

- Introduce illustration / example
- Do it
- Do it again (more slowly)
- Questions and answers
- Summarise
Example

• Scenario:
  – Specific Capabilities needed:
    • Search for information
    • Produce a concise report
  – Deliverable: report

• Outline
  – Introduction
  – Illustration (the report)
  – Query -> report
  – Query explaining steps -> report
  – Questions and Answers
Summary and Introduction

- “Tell them what you’re gonna tell them, tell them, tell them what you told them”
- Phrases:
  - Thanks for inviting us.
  - Our objective today is/was to …
  - We will share / have shared a number of solutions with you.
  - I will briefly present an overview … / Let me review these
Illustration

- Visual representation of Solution
- E.g. report generated from computation
- Probably present on customer’s
  - desk
  - white board
  - “recently opened” lists

- Remember CBI, Reason, Specific Capability, Delta
- Use form familiar to customer
- Explain Delta (may be bold)
“Do it”

- Use straightest path / fewest clicks
- Message:
  - Software provides Solution
  - Solution is quick and easy
- Duration: ca. 1-2 min
- End: figure that show illustration
- Take time to summarise
“Do it again”

• Same pathway as “Do it”!
• But:
  – Explain options
  – Explain background
  – Duration ca. 10 to 15 min
• Possibly show different representation of Illustration
• Explain flexibility if relevant to Solution

“Scenic route”
Practice

• Review objectives and agenda
• If demo looks too short:
  – More powerful illustration possible?
  – All specific capabilities covered?
  – If still “too short”, do not change!
• Try out with sales team
• Think of traps and create backups!
Typical problems

- Software bugs
- Unfamiliar software
- Unknown audience needs
- Unknown Critical Business Issues
- No / confusing / unclear / pointless story
- Too long / boring
- Too many features
Increasing Complexity
Multiple Solutions

- Introduction
- Illustrations for all Solutions
- For each solution
  - Represent illustration
  - Do it
  - Do it again
  - Summarise
- Summarise for all sets of Specific Capabilities
- Questions and Answers
- Final Summary
Generic Demonstrations

- Trade shows, Conferences
- On-the-fly events
- “Vision Generation” meetings
- Marketing roll-out
- Canned demos (web-site etc.)

If possible, do “on-the-fly qualification”
Give “menu” of illustrations
Remote Demonstrations

• Have sales representative on site
• Make bi-directional
• Prepare technical side beforehand
• Send Illustrations ahead of time
• Move mouse slowly
Questions

• Answer easy / helpful questions immediately
• Defer longer answers to Q&A session
• Make list of open issues: “Not Now List”
• Get agreement for deferral
• When answering:
  – Restate question
  – Answer
  – Get feedback
• “Can you show me?”
  – Be honest
  – Offer to sponsor development
Style

- Humour
- Appearance
- Language
- Pace
- Confidence
- Mouse movements
- Recovering from bugs, mistakes, crashes
Avoid Buzzwords! – Be specific

- Robust
- Powerful
- Flexible
- Integrated
- Seamless
- Extensible
- Scalable

- Interoperable
- Easy-to-use
- Intuitive
- User Friendly
- Comprehensive
- Best-of-Breed
- World-Class
Presentation Skills

• Be “on the spot”
• Make contact
• Make motions deliberate
Bugs

- Ignore cosmetic bugs
- Don’t try to repeat!
  - Acknowledge bug
  - Describe what should have happened
  - Resume after bug (backups…)
  - Test again in private, then possibly show
Summary

• Qualify your customer
• Centre demo around relevant solution
• Find impressive illustration
Homework

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- Invent customer
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