The Second Derivative
1538 Winding Way
Belmont, CA 94002
Phone: +1 650 631 3694
PCohan@SecondDerivative.com
www.SecondDerivative.com
http://greatdemo.blogspot.com/
Peter E. Cohan, Principal

Remote Demos – the Role of the "Active Conduit"

The (very) best practice for Remote Demos is to split your forces – to have a representative from your organization at the customer site to serve as the eyes for the person presenting the demo remotely. The person at the customer site needs to be an *Active Conduit* of information to the demonstrator – he/she needs to be the demonstrator's "eyes" on-site.

The lack of this Active Conduit feedback results in poor communication, confused presenters and audiences, and inconclusive results. Executing the role of the Active Conduit is critical to the success of Remote Demos – a passive representative from your company at the customer site is insufficient and a waste of resource!

For many vendors it is the sales person who typically sits with the customer at the customer site. Next best, if you cannot have one of your representatives present, is to ask your champion or coach to be your "eyes" for the meeting.

Here's a brief list of the items that need to be communicated by the person at the customer site to the remote individual:

Before the demo:

1. Arrive at the customer's conference room 15 minutes *before* the formal meeting is scheduled to begin to get things set up and operating correctly:
    a) Start the collaboration tool (e.g., GoToMeeting, WebEx, Live Meeting, etc.) session on the customer side.
    b) Help test and confirm screen resolution issues – "Yes, I can see your mouse across the full diagonal and we've maximized the screen here on the receiving end".
    c) Help test and confirm audio – "Yes, I can hear you fine… Here, let me move the conference phone microphones to better positions so that you can hear us better."
    d) Help test "latency" – "Looks like we have about a 2 second delay right now…"
2. Plan for managing questions – "Can you please plan to capture questions in a Word document from your laptop during the session?"
3. Review any other pre-meeting plans or issues.

During the demo:

1. Alert regarding "latency" – "Looks like you are about 3 seconds ahead of what we are seeing here… You may need to slow down."
2. Somebody new arrives at the meeting – "Before you go on, we have a new participant in the room…" [And to ask the three questions:
    a) What is your name?
    b) What is your job title?
    c) What would you like to accomplish during our session today?]
3. Somebody leaves – "Just to let you know, Bob had to leave the meeting…."
4. Unspoken questions – "Hang on, it looks like Jennifer has a question [furrowed brow, raised hand, look of confusion, etc.]."
5. Inability to hear – "John, let me repeat that question for you…"
6. Manage and alert during side conversations – "Hold on, we have a side conversation going on about the capability you just presented…"
7. Provide "color" commentary, as appropriate, e.g., "I want to let you know that they are all smiling and nodding their heads…!"

After the demo:

1. Debrief with the customer – face-to-face feedback provides nuances often missed via the phone.
2. Listen for "casual" conversations – what else are the audience members saying about the demo, the product, the company…
3. Afterwards, communicate this information back to the balance of the selling team.

You can train your own representatives to execute these items – or your champion/coach – by reviewing this list with them ahead of your demos. Following these practices will improve the outcome of your Remote Demos markedly!

For more articles on demonstration effectiveness skills and methods, visit our website at www.SecondDerivative.com. For demo tips, best practices, tools and techniques, join the DemoGurus Community Website at www.DemoGurus.com or explore our blog at http://greatdemo.blogspot.com/.