



The Product Marketing & Product Management Experts™

Putting Your Automated Demo to Work

Different ways to leverage your demo so that it delivers maximum ROI.

By Amy Gesenhues

In the world of software marketing there are two types of demos: live demos and automated demos. Both can serve your marketing objectives and help you achieve specific goals; but, for each demo to achieve maximum ROI, you have to be strategic with how you leverage your live demo versus your automated demo.

Because a live demo takes up more of your sales force's time and effort than an automated demo, it is best to use a live demo further into the sales cycle with prospects that have been pre-qualified. A professionally-produced automated demo delivers the highest ROI when leveraged at the beginning of a sales cycle with prospects that have just begun to evaluate your software. If done correctly, the automated demo can quickly initiate the sales cycle and become one of your strongest lead-gen tools.

To get the most out of your automated demo, develop it with technology that has a high user-adoption rate, i.e. Adobe's Flash. Make your automated demo easily accessible so that prospects can find it and view it within seconds of visiting your website. Keep the demo succinct; no matter how robust your software solution, an automated demo should run no longer than six minutes. Define your three key selling factors and use them to build out the content for your automated demo.

Here are a few strategic ways to leverage your automated demo besides simply putting it on your website or product page:

- Email signatures – Placing a link to your demo in employee email signatures is an efficient way to increase product exposure. Within seconds of receiving an email, your prospects can see how your software works, and come to the sales discussion armed with informed questions about your product.
- Trade Shows – An automated demo can be used multiple ways at a trade show. First, you can continuously loop the demo on an oversized monitor for floor traffic to view. Second, if you create the demo with audio that can be turned off and controls so that you can pause the demo, your booth personnel can use the automated demo to give quick live demos. The message stays consistent and on track no matter which employee may be selling your software at the show. Third, if you do trade shows, then you probably do giveaways. Put your automated demo on USB drives that are handed out to show attendees. Everyone can leave your booth with a four-minute demo in their pocket.
- Sales Reps' Laptops – If your sales force includes outside sales reps, then it is a good idea to save your automated demo on their hard-drive so that the demo is always accessible, regardless of their online access. An automated demo has a hidden benefit over many live demos—consistent messaging. Because the demo content is created and automated, every sales person using the automated demo is giving the same sales pitch, eliminating any inconsistent messaging about the software.

- Reseller Distribution Channels – All resellers should have your automated demo posted on their website and used within their marketing tools. Since it is already available, it is an easy and inexpensive resource that your resellers can use to sell more of your software.
- Webinar Invites – Many live demos are given via an online conference meeting venue and promoted as Webinars. Including a link to your automated demo on your webinar’s registration page can help win over prospects by offering them a quick peek at your product before asking them to commit to a 45-minute online sales presentation. Your automated demo can increase your webinar registrations by offering invitees a dynamic and succinct overview of what you will cover in your webinar or online sales demo.
- Adwords – Include a demo campaign in your Adwords program and track its conversion ratings. Use copy for your ads that promote your demo (“Watch a five-minute demo of our software now”) and post your demo on your Adwords landing page.
- Post-Sale Follow-up – If you have a SAAS or sell your product via downloads from your site, an automated demo not only works during the sales process, but as a great follow up tool. Customers who do not receive one-on-one instruction will benefit from having a dynamic demonstration on the key features of your product. It is also an easy way for customers to share information about your software with colleagues who were not involved in the evaluation process, but use the software.

The best thing about an effective, results-oriented automated demo is that it can serve a variety of your sales and marketing objectives. You can use an automated demo across multiple

platforms and within all of your marketing campaigns. The more you use your automated demo, the bigger your ROI will be.

About the Author

Amy Gesenhues is the Director of Marketing for Autodemo LLC, the leading developer of software demos. Her company has focused solely on product-centric, automated demos since its start over ten years ago. Autodemo works with hundreds of software companies, from startups to Fortune 500 organizations. You can view samples of their work at www.Autodemo.com.

About the 280 Group

The 280 Group is the world's leading Product Management and Product Marketing consulting and training firm, and has been featured on CNBC's World Business Review and the Silicon Valley Business Report. Formed in 1996, the company has helped thousands of companies to learn and implement best practices, resulting in better products and increased revenues. Major consulting clients of the 280 Group include SAP, Nokia, Intel, Adobe and Palm as well as dozens of small and medium-sized high-tech companies. A partial list of clients, letters of reference and samples of work are available on the 280 Group website in the clients section.

Brian Lawley is the CEO and Founder of the 280 Group (www.280group.com) and former President of the Silicon Valley Product Management Association (www.svpma.org). During his twenty five year career in Product Management he has defined, launched and marketed over fifty successful products. He is the author of the Books "Expert Product Management: Advanced Techniques, Tips & Strategies for Product Management & Product Marketing" and "The Phenomenal Product Manager". In 2008 he won the Product Management Excellence Award for Thought Leadership by the Association of International Product Marketing & Management. Mr. Lawley is a Certified Product Manager (CPM) and Certified Product Marketing Manager (CPMM). He earned an MBA with honors from San Jose State University and Bachelors Degree in Management Science from the University of California at San Diego.

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