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## How To Give A Killer Product Demo

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Steven Jobs, chairman of the board of Apple Computer, leans on the new "Macintosh"... [+]

Even if you allow potential customers to have a trial of your product – such as a SaaS application – this is usually not enough to get a sale. Keep in mind that it is likely that the person will not even try it out! Let's face it, after signing up for a new product, it can be tough to know what to do, even if there are clear instructions.

This is why a product demo is often essential to the sales process. But then again, there are many factors that can trip you up. Hey, how many times have you pulled off a seemingly great demo, but there was no response to your follow-up emails or calls?

Yes, it's discouraging. So what to do? Well, here's a look at some steps you can take to improve your odds of success:

### #1 – Discovery Call or Email

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Before the call, you need to get a good understanding of the pain points, challenges and requirements of the customer. One way to do this is to add some fields in the sign-up form for the product trial. But you should also reach out to the customer and ask some initial questions.

“Answering questions in advance and leveraging the insight to inform the approach to the meeting is critical to creating a compelling demo,” said Michael Baker, who is the vice president of sales at SmartDrive Systems.

### #2 – Start of the Demo

Before jumping into the product details, it is a good idea to spend a few minutes talking about what topics you will cover and how long the presentation will be. It's also a good idea to give a quick description of your company and how your products solve tough problems. Something else: provide information that shows that your company is stand-out, such as mentioning large customers. This will help to build trust and credibility.

### #3 – The Demo

A demo is not a training session. Rather, it's about addressing the needs of the customer. So do not go straight into a tedious description of your product. The customer will probably just zone out.

“When we do a demo,” Carla Fitzgerald, who is the chief marketing officer at [Spireon](#), “we demonstrate the actual product in the context of how specific roles at a company would use and benefit from the software. For example, in a franchise car dealership, the features of our Kahu product used by sales associates would be different than those used by the lot manager or those in the finance department. A sales person would use the

mobile app to quickly locate a specific vehicle that a customer is interested in, whereas the lot manager would use the web portal of Kahu to identify the vehicles with low battery life so he can send a lot porter out to start those vehicles. Thus, it's important that each demo is designed around the correct role and their specific needs.”

Next, the demo needs to relate the product to the daily problems or scenarios the customer faces. “Our job is to show how our product addresses those specific scenarios using real-world examples – including real-world data, not 'test' data that is clearly fake,” said Carla. “There is no reason to make your buyer imagine how a screen, menu or report would behave in their world when we can, and should, take the extra time to make it look as realistic and personalized as possible. When a buyer sees his or her life getting easier with your solution, they can't wait to take the next step.”

#### **#4 – The Takeaway**

At the end of the demo, recap the main points and how your product can help solve the customer's problems. Then, you need to talk about the next steps. Is the customer ready for a purchase? And if not, who should be the next person to talk to?

“The primary goal of the initial demonstration should be to secure a follow-on meeting where a ‘deep dive’ can take place with target users,” said Sandeep Pandya, who is the president of [NetraDyne](#). “Often the initial demo is for a ‘gate keeper’ who must be convinced of the core value proposition before advocating to his or her peers.”

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