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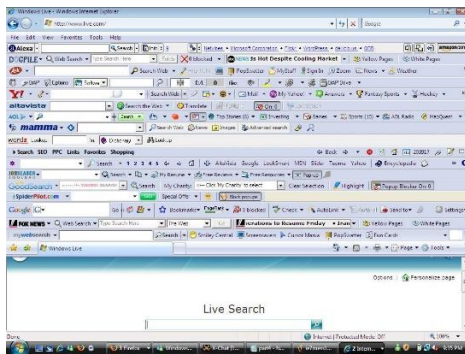
## 11 Signs Your Demo Sucks!

### 11 Visual and Verbal Indicators That Need To Make Some Changes

This month's title sounds like it comes straight from Buzzfeed as it is time to stamp out bad habits. The intent is to make you sit up and take notice if you or any of your colleagues are seeing any of these indicators in your customer demos. I am focusing on visual and verbal signs – things customers may see or hear, rather than anything particularly thought provoking and strategic. The good news is that these 11VVI (Visual + Verbal Indicators) are easily fixed.

Your pre-work is to take a recording of your next demo and to use that as input to this document. It can be a live video recording or a webex-style recording of a virtual pitch.

#### The 11VVI List



1. **Kill The Browser Bars.** The customer doesn't really want to see all your browser bars, search engine aids and bookmarks. Not only are they distracting, but they also take up valuable real estate on the screen. Either use F11 to go full-screen browser, or use a browser skin if your company has developed one. You'll also get about an extra 10% of usable screen area which may make a difference between scrolling or not.

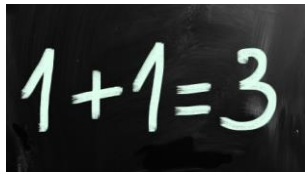
2. **You Get Navigational.** Note when and where you use any navigational terms such as “click”, “pull-down”, “selection-list”, “menu options”, “drill-down” etc. Whenever you use these terms it is highly likely that you are talking about a feature instead of a meaningful advantage or benefit. Remove these phrases from your customer pitch unless you really are teaching someone how to use your product. Your goal as an SE isn't to teach the customer how to use your stuff, it's to help them imagine themselves using it and being happy.



3. **“And Then”**. Listen for connective phrases such as “and then”, “also” and “next”. They usually signal that you are chaining together a collection of features without much focus on competitive advantages and benefits. Those phrases are also a sign that you may want to work a story into your demo instead of showing speeds and feeds.



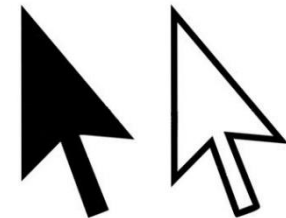
4. **You Have Bad Data**. Your demo data needs to support the premise of your demo. You can't show enterprise software and only have four users, seven laptops and a single network. You need scale. You also need up-to-date information. Four-year-old data



will get noticed, especially by detail oriented IT or financial folks. So will showing an empty screen and saying “Now, if you actually had any alerts you can imagine that this is where you would see..”

5. **Pause And Take A Deep Breath**. When the customer asks “Can you do/can you show me..” DO NOT say “Yes, Let Me Show You How..” unless you know WHY they want that particular capability. Many SE's forget to ask the “Why?” and try to please the customer by showing them the HOW first. Resolve to pause and think it through first. (That's really a verbal sign from the customer, but ...)

6. **The Invisible Mouse**. Change your mouse settings from the default small white mouse outline to a double sized black solid mouse. Why? Because that way your customers can see the mouse and pay attention to what you are doing instead of trying to figure out where the mouse is! There are various “Mouse Enhancement” programs like Mousepose and PointerFocus you can try.



7. **Filler Words**. Everyone uses filler words in an ad-hoc, free-form situation. The key is minimize their use otherwise your audience starts subconsciously counting them. This is where the recording really helps you. As well as listening for “ums, errs and ahhs” you should also note “so”, “you guys”, “right”, “basically” and all such words that serve no purpose. The key to eliminating a filler word is understanding when you use it. Once you figure that out life becomes much easier.

8. **Clicks And Flicks.** Count the number of screens that you show the customer. That's both unique screens and screens in total. Pop-ups count! Also count the number of mouse-clicks and the number of times you have to scroll up/down or left/right. You now have your base case. Divide the total number by the length of your demo in minutes. Congratulations – you have calculated your DEMOS – Demo Efficiency and Memory Observation Score. Now what can you do to drop your DEMOS? There is no perfect objective score – but the lower the better.
9. **Throw Away The Product Names And Releases.** As a customer I don't really care what you call your product and what release level you are talking about until I know it can help fix a problem I may have. Stop talking about “new in version 5.2” or the “integration manager”. Instead, focus on what the product does and the benefits.
10. **Test It With A Projector.** What you see isn't always what you get. When using a projector, test your pitch on the projector from at least 40 feet away. Colours (yellow/red) don't always show up exactly as you would expect. Don't make the visuals too difficult for the customer.
11. **Fiddle With The Font Size.** Similarly, make sure your screens are legible and easy to read. That may mean you increase the font size or the browser magnification. Use CTRL-plus to increase browser size and CTRL-0 to restore it. If your customer cannot read the screen they certainly will not remember it.

## Summary

Small changes can make a big difference. Read through the list and pick two or three changes/habits to implement and start from there. Make them standard, get used to them. Then add the next two or three. Repeat as needed.

“The price of doing the same old thing is far higher than the price of change.”

- *Bill Clinton*

Talking Points is a monthly column authored by John Care, Managing Director of Mastering Technical Sales. For more information on this and other Sales Engineering topics visit the website at [www.masteringtechnicalsales.com](http://www.masteringtechnicalsales.com).

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>>> **Score Sheet On Next Page**

Note: If you video-record yourself, watch the video 3 times.

1. Watch the video with no sound. You will pick up body language cues.
2. Only listen to the video recording. To pick up fillers, pauses, poor cadence.
3. Watch and listen simultaneously.

#	VVI Descriptor	Your Notes
1	Kill The Browser Bars	√ X :
2	You Get Navigational	√ X :
3	“And Then” Feature List	√ X :
4	You Show Bad Data	√ X :
5	Pause, Breathe and Then Listen	√ X :
6	Put Your Mouse On Viagra	√ X :
7	Eliminate Filler Words	√ X :
8	Clicks And Flicks – DEMOS Rating Unique Screens Total Screens Clicks + Scrolls Demo Length	DEMOS = ((5 * US + 3 * TS) + C + S / Minutes)
9	No More Product Names	√ X :
10	Test It With a Projector	√ X :
11	Fiddle With The Font	√ X :