

Public Speaking



Giving a Demonstration

Demonstrations



A demonstration, often called a “demo” is a special type of informative speech, designed to show the audience how to perform a task by **actually performing the task on stage**, and often having the audience perform the task themselves.

In this speaking style, speakers use the actual items they want to talk about to assist in instructing the audience.

Many product trainings, teaching the audience how to use or repair the products, use the demo format.

Another area where demonstrations are often called for is in a sales situation.

Demonstrations

Preparation

Consider the following aspects before developing a demonstration:

- Is a demonstration the **most effective way** to present the information?
- What **aspects of the task** you are demonstrating are you trying to bring across?
- Who is your **audience** (audience analysis)?
- Does the demo address the **needs of the customer**? Don't demonstrate the product from the developer's point of view, but from the customer's!

Demonstrations

Preparation

Things for which a demonstration is a useful way to present your information:

- A **well-defined** skill or activity that can be demonstrated in a **short time** period.
- A topic that can be easily **broken down** into illustrated steps that the audience can be successful at **doing themselves**.
- An action that has an immediate **result**, so the audience can feel good about being able to do it.

Demonstrations

Preparation

Audience considerations specifically important for demos:

- The **size of the group**. Will you have a small group that can cluster around you, or will you need large visual aids and a microphone to be seen and heard?
- If the audience need to do the activity themselves, your demo must be challenging but not impossible for any member of the audience.
 - Is the **skill level** of the audience high enough to accomplish the task?
 - Can any members of the audience have **impairments or difficulties** when trying to perform the activity?
 - Is performing the activities **culturally acceptable** for all members of the audience?

Demonstrations

Preparation

If you plan to use electronic equipment:

- Make sure you'll have **outlets** available nearby.
- If you need the **network**, make sure you can on it, and you can access the assets you need especially when they are outside the firewall of the venue where you are giving the demo.
- If needed, bring some **replacement bulbs for the projector or batteries for a remote control or other battery-powered device** if those are crucial for the demo.
- If possible, have a **back-up plan** in case your equipment fails, or if it can't be used for some reason (for example if there is a power cut or any other such problem). An example of a back-up plan for a software demo would be print-outs of the screens you used to develop the demo, which you can use to talk your audience through without the need for a projector (or even electricity).

Demonstrations

Development

To develop a demo:

1. Design the **structure** (introduction, demo, conclusion).
2. Organise the **realia** (“real” items you are going to need to do the demo), making sure you have enough of them and they are available at the time of the demo.
3. Make sure the plan for your demo is **realistic** and **easy to follow**. Notably:
 - If you have to demonstrate something small to a large audience, organise a camera and a projector, like a video wall in a pop concert.
 - If you want the audience to perform the activity but the audience is large, use a volunteer to do the demo, like a magician does.
4. Write a **demo script**. A script is a listing of exactly **the things you are going to do and in which order** (Note: It is not what you are going to say!! A demo is not a speech competition!). Not having a script or, even worse, deviating from your script is a sure way to invite Murphy along. An “impromptu” demo is rarely successful.

Demonstrations

Delivery

When delivering a demo:

1. All the usual stuff, but pay extra attention to the following:
 - **Dress:** The audience will be looking at you more than at the screen, so make sure you look good.
 - **Energy:** Try to be extra energetic. Make lots of jokes. People expect demos to be fun as well as informative.
2. Use your **demo script**. An “impromptu” demo is rarely successful.
3. **Practice, practice, practice.** For demos it is especially important you are absolutely certain that the script works, and you will successfully go through all the steps from beginning to end.
4. Don't forget to check your **timing**.
5. Prepare for **answering questions**.

Demo Pitfalls

The demo-effect

Murphy's Law:
Whatever can go wrong will go wrong.

When giving a demo, be aware of Murphy's Law. If you demonstrate a product to a potential customer, and the product fails during the demonstration, the deal may be ruined.

The probability of a demo not working as intended is so high it has a special name: the "**demo-effect**".



Demo Pitfalls

The demo-effect

The "**demo-effect**" is especially dangerous when demonstrating complex products such as software products: lots of thing can (and, according to Murphy, will) go wrong if many parts must work together to be successful.

There are many reasons why demo are prone to suffer from Murphy's law:

- The products are usually new and have not been tested well enough.
- The speaker is unfamiliar with the product.
- Often you are showing the product outside the lab in a new environment or different country
- And so on and so forth...



Demo Pitfalls

Defusing the demo-effect

The best way to defuse the demo-effect:

Do not give a live demonstration of your product!!

Because of the demo-effect, sales demonstrations should be avoided where possible, especially for complex products and products where all you can show is a prototype (試用品).

An exception is product training. Here, using the real thing is much better, and failure has a lower impact. Failure may even have a training effect!

Never consider a demo as the first option for showcasing a product. Try to find alternative ways to present your product:

- Video
- Pictures
- Mock-up

Only make a demo after you decide that it is the **only way** to properly show your product. Of course, customers often ask for a demo, and in that case you have no choice. If that happens and your product is complex or software, try to make the customer to your lab if you can, rather than taking the product to the customer's office.

Demo Pitfalls

Defusing the demo-effect

Okay, so have decided you have no choice but to stick put your neck and give a demo... In situations where a potential customer demands that you demonstrate the real product, you can **minimise the probability of failure** by using the following tricks:

1. Try to use a **mock-up** where possible. A mock-up is something that looks like the real product, but doesn't actually really work. It is only a "front". For software products, for example, it is customary to use a PowerPoint slide show showing the screens of the product as they would evolve if you would actually use the product. The risk of failure is eliminated completely.



你的电脑遇到问题，需要重新启动。
我们只收集某些错误信息，然后你可以重新启动。

0% 完成



有关此问题的详细信息和可能的解决方法，请访问 <https://www.windows.com/stopcode>

如果致电支持人员，请向他们提供以下信息：

终止代码：CRITICAL_PROCESS_DIED

Demo Pitfalls

Defusing the demo-effect

Okay, so have decided you have no choice but to stick put your neck and give a demo... In situations where a potential customer demands that you demonstrate the real product, you can **minimise the probability of failure** by using the following tricks:

2. For real product demos, use a **demo script**. Before giving the demo, write down exactly what values you are going to enter, what buttons you will press, and so on, and try it out before the demo. That way you will know for sure that what you are showing will work.

Demo Pitfalls

Defusing the demo-effect

Okay, so have decided you have no choice but to stick put your neck and give a demo... In situations where a potential customer demands that you demonstrate the real product, you can **minimise the probability of failure** by using the following tricks:

3. If something does go wrong:
 - A. If possible, **carry on** with the next item to demonstrate pretending that hat happened is normal. The customer might not notice. **Don't try to explain what went wrong unless absolutely necessary:** you will only be digging your own grave, and your explanation will not rectify the fact that the product failed.
 - B. If it is obvious something went wrong that shouldn't have, **apologise** by saying you are not familiar with the product and, after the demo, ask the engineers about the details of what happened, then **report back to the customer**. Most customers will have no problem with this.

Demo Pitfalls

Defusing the demo-effect

Minimise the probability of failure by using the following tricks:

1. Try to use a **mock-up**
2. Use a **demo script**.
3. If something does go wrong:
 - A. If possible, **carry on**.
 - B. If it is obvious something went wrong that shouldn't have, **apologise** and **report back later**.

Demo Pitfalls

Getting Stuck

In any type of public speaking, getting stuck is the worst thing that can happen. You can use the following tricks to minimise the chances of getting stuck.



1. **Don't memorise your speech.** When practicing, write down only some keywords and speak freely from that. If you memorise your speech like you would do for a speech contest, the chance is high that you fail to remember a word and get stuck. If you practice your speech a few times, you will automatically use the right phrases and words, even without memorising them.
2. **If you do get stuck** because you **forgot** something, **carry on with the next part** you do remember. Chances are that you remember what you forgot before finishing that, and then you say:
 "Oh, sorry, as I should have mentioned before, ..." or
 "Before we carry on, I should mention that ..." or
 "Oh, that's right, I forgot to mention that ..."
or something like that. If you don't remember, just skip it and go on with the next slide. The audience probably won't notice anyway.

Whatever you do when getting stuck, **don't come to a halt**. If you are clearly embarrassed about it, the audience will feel bad on your behalf. If you **just carry on**, they will be happy. In many cases, chances are nobody will even notice you got stuck if you carry on with confidence.



Exercise 1

Consider you have to give a demo on the following topics.

As an exercise, answer the following questions for the topics A-C below.

DON'T MAKE A DEMO, ONLY ANSWER THE QUESTIONS!!

Questions:

1. Is the topic **suitable** for a demo? Why (not)?
2. Suppose you must do a demo, even if the topic is not suitable. What **special measures** would you take to make sure the demo has the highest chance of being successful?

Topics:

- A. Show how easy it is to enter 30,000 records into a database.
- B. Train an audience of 500 people on how to replace a spark plug (火花塞) in a car engine.
- C. Explain to a cooking class of 5 how to make Beggar's Chicken (叫花鸡).



spark plug

Exercise 1

Possible solutions:

A. Show how easy it is to enter 30,000 records into a database.

- **Not suitable:** complex, things can easily go wrong, which would give the opposite message (it is hard, not easy). High probability the data is not the same as customer's, so you will get a request to customize the demo, which is very dangerous.
- **Suitable:** Easy to organize, you can easily project the screen without any special measures.
- **Measures:** Use a mock-up using screen shots if you can, or else a prepared data set and a good script.

B. Train an audience of 500 people on how to replace a spark plug (火花塞) in a car engine.

- **Suitable:** It is a training scenario so hands-on is a very good way.
- **Not suitable:** The audience is large, so need special measures to make it successful.
- **Measures:** with so many people having to see a small object, use a video camera and a screen to project what you are doing, Use a volunteer from the audience. Invite the audience to come down the break and try themselves.

C. Explain to a cooking class of 5 how to make Beggar's Chicken (叫花鸡).

- **Suitable:** Small group. Cooking needs hands-on, and tasting and feeling what you do to learn.
- **Not suitable:** Very complex and difficult. Some steps take long and involve waiting.
- **Measures:** Prepare some of the results of each stage in advance, so that you can proceed with the next stage even if it goes wrong. This also saves waiting time. Try to arrange for a backup in the form of pictures, or a video.

Exercise 2

Develop your own demo — Example of a demo script

A demo script for the towel demo would look something like this:

1. **Take the towel in both hands and hold it in front of the head.**
2. **Sling the middle part of the towel behind the neck and move it from left to right, demonstrating drying the back of the neck.**
3. **Move the left hand down while keeping the right hand high, letting the towel slide down over the left shoulder blade.**
4. **Move the towel from left to right, demonstrating drying the right part of the back.**
5. **Move the left hand back up and move the right down, positioning the towel over the left part of the back.**
6. **Move the towel from left to right, demonstrating drying the left part of the back.**
7. **Move the left hand down again while keeping the right down, positioning the towel over the lower part of the back.**
8. **Move the towel from left to right, demonstrating drying the lower part of the back.**

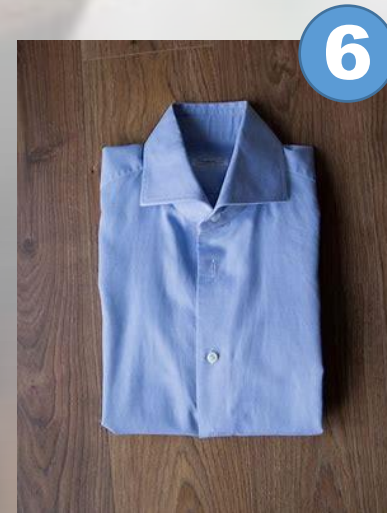
Exercise 2

Use the method presented in this lesson to prepare a demo. Work in pairs:

- One group member does the talking.
- One group member demonstrates the actions.

The demonstrations:

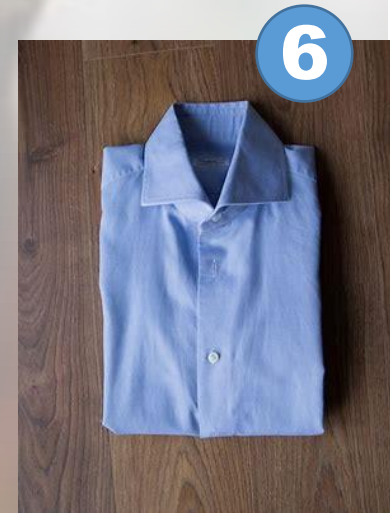
1. Demonstrate to foreigners how to use chopsticks.
2. Demonstrate to Chinese how to use knife and fork.
3. Demonstrate how to tie a double Windsor knot in a neck tie.
4. Demonstrate how to properly taste wine.
5. Demonstrate how to fold a napkin for an official dinner.
6. Demonstrate how to fold a shirt.



Exercise 2

Tips for developing your demo:

1. **Write a demo script.** Write down step by step exactly what you are going to show to complete the objective. This is the main reason for doing the exercise; you need to practice this.
2. Prepare the realia (“real” items you are going to need to do the demo).
3. Practice the demo with your partner. Some of you can show he class.
4. Don’t forget to say “Good morning, ladies and gentlemen” and “Thanks for your attention”!



Summary

A demonstration (or “demo”) shows the steps the audience needs to take to complete a **task** in real life:

- **Useful for training.**
- **Avoid** in a **sales** situation.

Consider the following points when doing a demo:

- Is the task **well-defined, short**, and can it be **broken down** in easy steps?
- Are all **conditions** for executing the demo met?
- Have a **plan** for **when things go wrong**.

Make sure to write a **demo script**.