

The Science of the Demo

We surveyed more than 300 sales and presales professionals on what makes demos win — and what's holding teams back.



BEST PRACTICE #1

Lead with Story, Not Features

When asked what matters most in a demo, respondents ranked storytelling and discovery far above technical factors. The best demos aren't product tours — they're conversations.

- 1 Storytelling**
Connecting features to customer value through narrative **29%**
- 2 Discovery**
Uncovering business pain while demoing **24%**
- 3 Speed**
Show the "Aha!" moment within the first 5 minutes **20%**
- 4 Realism**
Demo environment looks and feels 100% real **13%**
- 5 Personalization**
Using the prospect's industry, logo, and use case **9%**
- 6 Reliability**
Zero lag, no bugs — a flawless technical experience **5%**

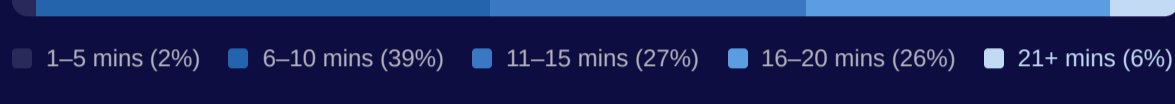
KEY INSIGHT

73% of what makes a demo great is soft skill — storytelling, discovery, and speed to value. Yet most demo training focuses on the product itself.

BEST PRACTICE #2

Demos Should Take No More Than 50% of the Call

In a 30-minute meeting, the vast majority say the demo should consume less than half the time — leaving room for discovery, questions, and next steps.



68%
say demos should run **15 minutes or less**

6%
believe in going **demo-heavy (21+ mins)**

Keep your demo less than 15 minutes. Use the rest of the call for discovery and next steps — not more features.

BEST PRACTICE #3

Embrace AI — Your Competitors Already Are

AI adoption in demo workflows has crossed the threshold from "early adopter" to standard practice. Teams using AI are moving faster, personalizing more, and scaling better.

89% of sales & presales teams use AI in their demo workflow

AI ADOPTION

The remaining 11% are falling behind — AI is no longer optional for competitive demo teams.



BEST PRACTICE #4

Personalize Every Demo to Increase Win Rate

69% of respondents say personalization has a moderate to significant impact on win rate — including 5% who say it doubles their win rate. Yet most teams still struggle to personalize at scale — making it the #1 automation target.

IMPACT ON WIN RATE

69% say personalization has a **moderate-to-significant** impact on win rate

WIN RATE IMPACT

AUTOMATION PRIORITY

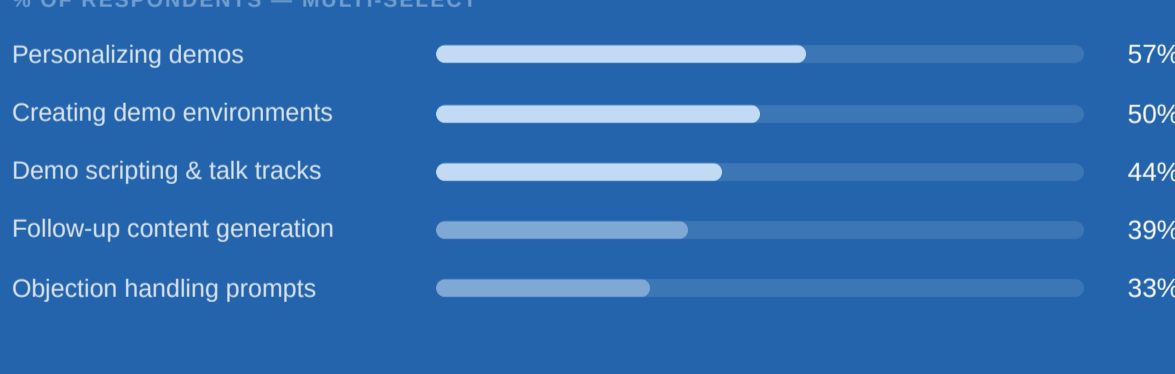
Automation Priority — **personalizing demos** is what teams most want to automate

- Moderate (11–25%) 36%
- Significant (26–50%) 28%
- Minimal (1–10%) 15%
- N/A — don't track 14%
- Doubles win rate (50%+) 5%
- No impact 2%

BEST PRACTICE #5

Automate the Repetitive, Focus on the Human

Teams are most excited about using AI to handle the heavy lifting — environment setup, personalization at scale, and content generation — so reps can focus on the conversation.



BEST PRACTICE #6

Measure What Matters: Next Steps & Win Rate

Teams are split between leading and lagging indicators. Next step conversion is the best signal for pipeline quality; win rate tracks long-term demo effectiveness.



BEST PRACTICE #7

Enable Async Selling with Leave-Behind Demos

The demo doesn't end when the meeting does. Nearly half of respondents already send leave-behind demos — but 52% still don't, leaving champions without a tool to sell internally.

48%
do provide leave-behind demos for prospects

52%
still don't send leave-behind demos after the call

THE OPPORTUNITY

Leave-behind demos let your champion **sell for you** in meetings you'll never attend. Every deal without one is a deal your competitor can still win.