QUALIFICATION AND SOFTWARE DEMON-STRATION AS PART OF SALES PROCESS

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Bachelor's Thesis
October 2013

Degree Programme in Automation Engineering
School of Technology

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Author(s) MUHONEN, Markus	Type of publication Bachelor's Thesis	Date 25.10.2013
	Pages 45	Language English
		Permission for web publication (X)

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Degree Programme School of Technology

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Assigned by YSP Oy

Abstract

YSP Oy does not have at the moment proper sales tools like software demonstrations and software demo videos at their disposal. The qualitative research about software demonstrations and software demo videos as sales tools was researched in the internet and in literature. The objective was to find out information based on which YSP Oy could afterwards start to design and develop software demonstrations and software demo videos.

At first general sales process is discussed, which gives understanding of how the rest of the parts fits into the sales process. Sales process includes following six phases: 1. Qualification, 2. Presentation and demonstration, 3. Product evaluation, 4. Selection and negotiation, 5. Closure

The next part is about qualification process which is one of the most important phases in the sales process. The purpose of the qualification process is to find out as much information as possible about prospects and customers. Is the prospect really going to by the type of product which is the company is selling? Does the prospect have budget to buy? What are prospect's critical business issues? What are the reasons to the critical business issues? Can the software company offer the specific capabilities which can solve the prospect's critical business issues?

The software demonstrations and software demo videos are built based on the information gathered during the qualification process. It is important that the demonstrations present functions which can help prospects and customers solve their critical business issues. It does not matter how cool functions are presented in a demonstration and the prospect might lose his or her interest if the functions which can help to solve their critical business issues are not presented.

The thesis gives good starting point to YSP Oy to start to develop software demonstrations and software demo videos.

Keywords Technical sales, sales process, qualification process, needs analysis, sales tools, marketing tools, solution sales, automation, demo software, demo software video, software demonstration, application software, SCADA, PLC, programming, ITS (Intelligent Transportation systems)

Miscellaneous

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Table 1 Glossary

application software (often just application)	An application software is a type of software which performs user task. Examples: MS word, Alarm clock in a mobile phone, Spotify
Critical Business Issues	A problem of a prospect or a customer which should be solved to improve the business.
demo	Informal for demonstration (see below)
demonstration	Presentation of qualities of a product
ICT (Information and Communication Technology)	Computers and technology relating to them
ITS (Intelligent Transportation System)	A system where with the help of technology the safety, fluency and effectiveness of different modes of transportation is improved. Systems can include e.g. roadside devices and in-car devices
live software demonstration	A presentation of a software where functions of a software are demonstrated. Given by a person who is familiar with the software

.NET	A software framework developed by Microsoft. It makes interoperability of various programming languages. Includes large programming library which in practice means that a programmer doesn't have to reinvent that much.
OPC (OLE for Process Control)	A standard which specifies software interface mainly used in industrial automation
PLC (Programmable Logic Controller)	A computer which is used in industry to control electronic and electromechanical devices
sales tools	Anything which helps to present the products and services which a company is selling to prospects and customers e.g. brochures, web sites, demo products, etc.
SCADA (Supervisory Control And Data Acquisition)	A computer software platform on which it is possible to program and configure application software which processe real time data from other computer systems, PLC, field devices e.g. temperature meter.
software	in computer environment generally used word for anything which is not hardware

	e.g. operating systems like Windows, Linux, application software like MS Excel, Spotify etc.
software demo video	A video where functions of a software are demonstrated
Software interface	An interface which makes data exchange possible between two or more software within a same hardware or in different hardware e.g. software application can read data from database
VMS (Variable Message Sign)	A sign post used to show textual, numerical, and pictorial information. Usually VMS signs are based on LED technology.

1   LACK OF SALES TOOLS

YSP Oy (afterwards YSP) has been part of European technological services provider Imtech N.V. (afterwareds Imtech) from year 2010. YSP specializes in planning and consulting services in the fields of ITS (Intelligent Transportation Systems), industrial automation and process control, electrical design, and ICT. Within ITS systems YSP's main focus is on system integration and the company is specialized in system design, development of SCADA application software, PLC application software, and .NET framework application software. (YSP Oy. 2013)

Especially in international sales YSP has often faced a situation that a representative of Imtech would like to introduce YSP's expertise to prospects, and only what YSP has been able to offer at these situations have been some screenshots from accomplished projects. That is a problem because YSP has strong expertise in the development of application software in the field of ITS, and Imtech has a European wide sales and project management organization, however, the sales representatives of Imtech do not have any means to convince prospects about YSP expertise.

Proper sales tools should be at disposal of YSP's and Imtech's representatives for each phase of the sales process. The term "sales tools" can be understood in many ways, and in this thesis, sales tools refer to communication tools which help sales representatives in communication with prospects and customers. Examples of Sales Tools can be e.g. slide show presentations, demo software, demo software video, web-sites, etc. As the list of sales tools can be exhaustingly long, the number of sales tools covered in this thesis is limited. The sales tools covered in this thesis are "live software demonstration", and "software demo video". The choice of these two sales tools is based on experience. Prospects and customers want to see something tangible. There have been many cases for example in Russia that YSP and Imtech have got a request and an opportunity to present the actual applications which YSP has developed. That has in most of the cases happened in very short notice, and the time to prepare the software demonstration has always been more or less too short com-

pared to the required tasks to accomplish to create a successful demonstration. In some cases YSP hasn't even been capable to deliver the demonstration due to the lack of time and resources at the time. In those cases YSP has only delivered some slide show presentations. In cases when YSP has been able to deliver a software demonstration, it has led to conversation with the prospects and customers in where the opinions and ideas of the application are exchanged. In those situations prospects and customers get the feeling that they can affect to the functions and qualities of the product.

Below are few quotations which quite clearly let understand the importance of the software demonstration as a part of sales process in technical sales.

"There may be nothing quite so ubiquitous in the normal sales cycle for the enterprise software market as the software demo. And there may be nothing that kills as many promising deals as the software demo done poorly." (Moran, F. 2013).

Moran, F (2013) states also that "Delivered at the right stage in the sales process and sharply tuned to the prospect's real needs, there are few tools in your sales kit more potent than a well-run demo"

As the modification of the demonstrations according prospects' and customers' needs is important, the qualification process is quite a big part of the thesis. The whole sales process is described shortly on general level to give the reader understanding how the qualification process and software demonstration fit into the sales process.

The purpose of this thesis is not to design or develop any software demonstration or any software demo video, but to find out information which will help YSP to start a development project of software demos and software demo videos. The topic is researched and studied from the business point of view and technical issues are not discussed.

2 YSP AND ITS MAIN PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

YSP in a Nutshell

YSP offers high-quality expertise, reliability and customer oriented services in the field of ITS, and is a leading Finnish provider for traffic controlling in the fields of motorways, tunnels, border crossing stations, movable bridges and parking guidance systems.

YSP was established in 1985 and at the moment turnover over is about 3,5 M€. At the moment YSP employs about 35 engineers, who are specialized in ITS control systems. Office is located in Jyväskylä, Finland. YSP was acquired by Dutch listed company, Imtech N.V. (~29 000 employees) in 2010, and belongs to Imtech Traffic & Infra Finland which consists 4 companies. Those 4 companies including YSP employ about 100 employees.

Deep Expertise and Long Experience

YSP has over 20 years of experience from combining industrial automation and electrical design expertise to modern ICT solutions in ITS field.

YSP's growing reference list includes approximately 100 references from motorway, tunnel, bridge and border crossing station traffic controlling solutions.

The following list names YSP's main services.

- Motorway solutions
- Tunnels
- Movable bridges
- Border crossing stations
- Parking guidance
- Consulting
- Maintenance services

Rough weather conditions in Finland set demanding requirements to the systems. Field devices and control systems must work reliably in all weather conditions. Temperature can vary from -35 to +35. As traffic management systems' function is always related to the safety on the roads, YSP's traffic management systems are always implemented with "safety first" principle in mind from design through implementation to maintenance.

Finnish domestic and international ITS strategies are challenging ITS players. YSP has a long experience of introducing new technologies to the ITS field.

- First automatically weather controlled motorway in 1994 - 1997.
- First wireless highway systems already from 90's (SMS and radio modem solutions)
- Programmable logical controllers with distributed I/O's
- Even country level distributed systems by using mobile operators' networks

YSP always pursues to use highest quality and field-proven commercial off the shelf products and open standards to guarantee long term maintainability, spare part availability, extendability, and integrability of the systems. With this principle Customers get good value for money, and it gives independency and freedom to Customers to response to futures challenges with ease. Nevertheless, it is not always possible to use standard software interfaces as some subsystems e.g. Incident Detection Systems and some field devices e.g. VMS signs may not offer standard software interfaces. In these cases YSP's software expertise offers solution. YSP has already implemented successfully various "communication protocol converters". In practice this means that Customers can choose field devices and subsystems from any manufacturer. If the new field device or a subsystem e.g. Incident Detection System does not offer a standard software interface, YSP can make a "communication protocol converter", which converts a nonstandard software interface to a standard software interface e.g. OPC.

The end customers are mostly from the public sector, e.g. Cities, governments, municipalities, etc. In construction projects, like for example if a new tunnel is built, YSP is usually a sub-contractor for the main-contractor, which is usually some construction company. Because the end customers are usually from the public sector the bidding goes usually through the public procurement.

Project sizes which YSP usually deliver can vary from under one thousand men hours to several thousand men hours

Motorway solutions to challenging conditions

YSP has a long experience of designing and implementing ITS solutions to very challenging Nordic weather conditions. In YSP's motorway control systems there are usually three (3) different control modes: manual, recommending, and automatic. In recommending and automatic control modes YSP's traffic management system receives data from traffic counting systems e.g. inductive loops and radar detectors, and, from weather stations. Based on pre-

set thresholds for example speed limits can be set automatically lower and variable warning signs can be set to show appropriate warning e.g. slippery road pictogram. In YSP's solutions there are no limits for automatic controls.
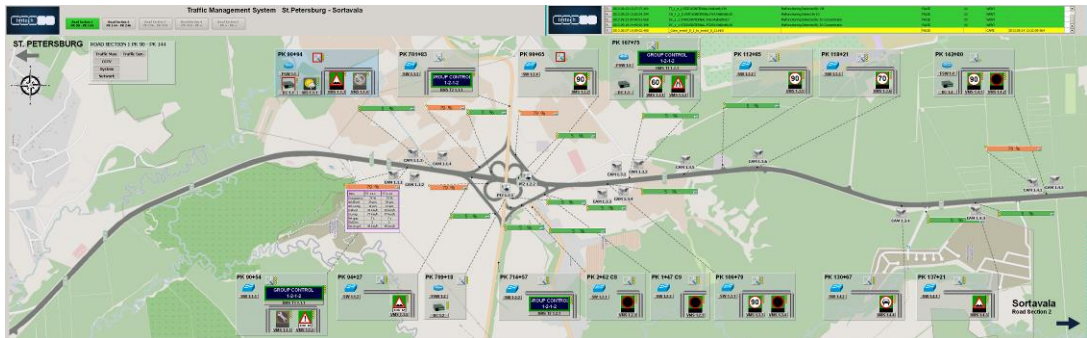
Figure 1 An example of YSP's GUI (Graphical User Interface) of a Motorway Management System

Tunnel Management Systems

In normal cases, system architecture of Tunnel Management systems and Motorway Management Systems are very similar. The biggest difference normally is that in Tunnel Management Systems there are more subsystems which sets more demanding requirements to the system. YSP has successfully implemented various Tunnel Management systems to diverse weather conditions from Vietnam to Finland
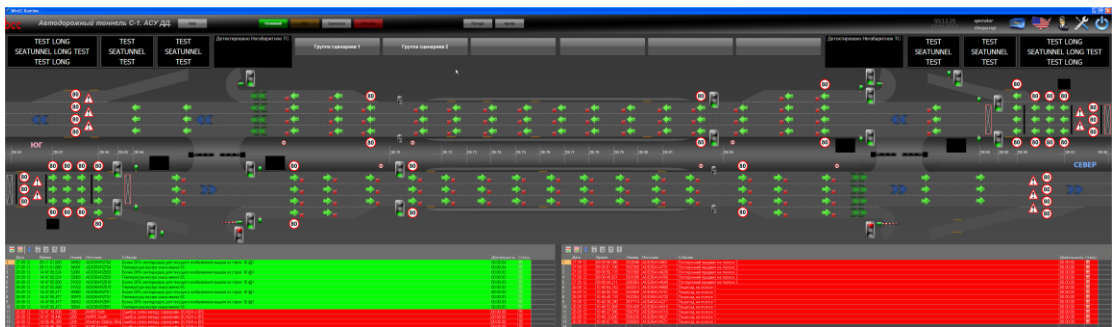
Figure 2 An example of YSP's GUI (Graphical User Interface) of a Tunnel Management System

Movable bridges in the country of the thousands lakes

The use of modern panel PC solutions and mobile networks. YSP has tens of different references regarding

movable bridges already from mid-90's. In movable bridge solutions there are combined control functions of movable bridges and traffic management systems including e.g. barriers,

traffic lights, speed limit signs, lane signs, warning signs etc. When a bridge is opened, with traffic lights and warning signs systems informs road users that the bridge will be opened. After a pre-set time, barriers are closed to prevent vehicles enter to the bridge. After the barriers are closed and all the safety checks have been done, the bridge can be opened.

Traffic controlling in border crossing stations

Finland has an important role between East and West (Russian border). YSP has implemented many traffic controlling systems to border crossing stations between Finnish and Russian border. In traffic control systems in order crossing stations, there are various traffic measurement and control systems in use e.g. Variable Speed Limit Signs, Variable Lane Control Signs, Variable Warning Signs, Variable Text Signs, Traffic Lights, Inductive loops etc.

Below are listed some of important references between Finnish and Russian border. To get better understanding of YSP's level of expertise and long experience of ITS solutions, please, see attached reference documents.

Modern parking guidance solutions

Figure 3 VMS's (Variable Message Signs) installed by the street. The sign displays available parking lots in two separate parking halls

YSP provides solutions from city-wide parking guidance to internal parking guidance in parking facilities. YSP has successfully implemented a number of dynamic real-time parking guidance systems in various cities. YSP's real-time parking guidance solution improves traffic flow in city centers and decreases emissions as drivers can easily find a root to a parking facility without unnecessary searching.

Figure 4 GUI (Graphical User Interface) of the real time parking guidance system in the city of Jyväskylä

3 SALES PROCESS

The purpose of this chapter is to give a general description of sales process. The qualification process, live software demonstration, and software demo videos will be discussed in the next chapters. This chapter helps the reader to understand how those fit into the overall sales process.

Care, J. & Bohlig, A. (2008, 8-13) divides sales process into the following six steps:

1. ***Lead qualification***

    a. Is the prospect really going to buy a product?

    b. Does the prospect have money and budget?

    c. What is the timeframe for purchase? Any deadlines?

2. ***Request for proposal (RFP) (optional)***

    a. The prospect requires a proposal for a solution.

3. ***Needs analysis, discovery, and customer engagement***

    a. What are the prospects Critical Business Issues to which they are looking for a solutions?

    b. What technical functions and capabilities does the prospect expect from the product?

    c. How does the product meet the customer's requirements, and can it help in solving the prospects Critical business Issues?

4. ***Presentation, demonstration, and proposal***

    a. Presentation, demonstration, and proposal are built based on the information gathered during the earlier phases of the sales process

5. *Evaluation (optional)*

    a. Customer evaluates the product and the proposal

6. ***Negotiation and closing***

    a. The primary target of this phase is to get a mutual agreement with the prospect about the price, schedule, and features of the product.

And Greenwald, R. & Milbery, J. (2001, 28-32) divides the sales process into the following 5 steps:

1. Qualification

a. Is the prospect really going to buy a product?

b. Does the prospect have money and budget?

c. What is the timeframe for purchase? Any deadlines?

d. What are the prospect's Critical Business Issues to which they are looking for solutions?

e. What technical functions and capabilities does the prospect expect from the product?

f. How does the product meet the prospect's requirements and can it help in solving the prospect's Critical business Issues?

2. Presentation and demonstration

a. Presentation, demonstration, and proposal are built based on the information gathered during the qualification phase

3. Product evaluation

a. Prospect evaluates the product and the proposal

4. Selection and negotiation

    a. The prospect selects the vendor from whom it is going to buy the product.

    b. The primary target of this phase is to get a mutual agreement with the prospect about the price, schedule, and features of the product.

5. *Closure*

    a. There should be time reserved to enjoy, celebrate and analyze the win of each deal, and there should be equally time reserved to analyze each lost sale.

Even Care, J. & Bohlig, A. (2008, 8-13) and Greenwald, R. & Milbery, J. (2001, 28-32) have different number of steps in the sales process. A closer look reveals that in practice in both cases the same steps are handled, and the steps are listed more or less in the same order.

In the Greenwald, R. & Milbery, J. (2001, 28-32) case the qualification process is described as a one phase of the sales process which includes several sub-tasks. The same sub-tasks can be found in the sales process described by Even Care, J. & Bohlig, A. (2008, 8-13); however, the tasks are spread under separate phases of the sales process instead of one. In other words, the both describe the same thing, but just in a slightly different way.

The main focus of this thesis is on software demonstrations; however, like with many other matters, preparation is crucially important. The next chapter discusses that, the "qualification process".

4 QUALIFICATION PROCESS

The purpose of the qualification process is to find out as much as possible information about the prospect, the prospect's needs, and the prospect's problems. The

software demonstration can then be built based on the information gathered during the qualification process.

Millions of dollars are lost by software companies because of bad, poor, boring, misguided and misinformed software demonstrations. If a demonstration of software is poor and does not cause the expected reaction, all the efforts might be a waste of time. It is not just the time spent on the giving the actual demonstration but also the time spent on the designing and developing the demo software, travelling costs, and the lost opportunities because the time wasn't used to look new opportunities but to a failed demo software. On top of that, how does a failed demo affect the reputation and future business of the company? (Cohen, P, E. 2003, 13 - 21.)

Technology Sales Help (Accessed 2013) writes that "The goal of a demo should always be to move the sale forward in the sales process." and that all prospects are looking for answers for either one or both of the following issues:

- *A solution to a problem*

- *A path to achieving their vision*

An effective software demonstration needs to be designed for a target audience. As Technology Sales Help (Accessed 2013) mentions about "A solution to a problem" and "A path to achieving their vision"; Cohen, P, E. (2003, 23) discusses about "CBI" (Critical Business Issue), Reason(s) of CBI, and "Specific Capabilities needed". In other words, a customer has always **a problem (CBI), reasons** which cause the problem, and the customer is always looking for a **solution** to the problem.

Might be that a customer knows only the problem but not the reasons to the problem, and here is where a representative of the software company can help the customer. Customers are interested in finding a solution to their problems and if they don't see the solution at the software demonstration, the business might be lost. The ultimate objective of a software demonstration should be to prove the customer that the software has specific capabilities which can solve the customer's Critical Business

Issues. That is why it is important to invest the time and effort to do research and communicate with the customer to find out what their Critical Business Issues (problems) are, and what the reasons causing the problems are. After that the software company can find out if it has the specific capabilities needed to solve the problem, if the software already includes the functions for solving the problem, or if new functions should be developed to solve the problem. It does not matter how good and cool functions the software has if the software demonstration does not show the specific capabilities for solving the customer's problems. (Cohen, P, E. 2003, 23 - 25.)

An example of a traffic management company and its Critical Business Issue is presented as follows below.

Problem (CBI): As weather conditions change into worse, lowering of speed limits is very time consuming and does not happen consistently every time.

Reason: The speed limit signs are controlled manually by traffic management operators, which causes delay to the controls and the operators often control the speed limit signs in a different way in similar situations.

Solution: Implementation of an application software which automatically controls speed limit signs based on weather data.

Care, J. & Bohlig, A. (2008, 92) writes about a survey conducted in 2006 and 2007. There were over 300 attendees to the survey. The results revealed that the win rate of standard software demonstrations, demonstrations which were not customized according the customers problems, the Critical Business Issues, was 10%; however, the win rate of customized demonstrations was 45%. The results of this survey support and emphasize the importance of the work before the actual demonstration, the importance of finding out the customers' problems and showing the solutions in the demonstration.

Greenwald, R. & Milbery, J. (2001, 141) divides the qualification process into seven steps:

1. *Bulldozer/ BMW assessment*

At first it is important to find out whether the customer really is in the need of the type of product the company is selling. Greenwald, R. & Milbery, J. (2001) describes this with the "Bulldozer/ BMW" example. Both, the bulldozer and BMW have same functions e.g. steering wheel, gears, both can be used for transportation, but, does the customer want to move tons of soil or drive fast on motorways? The main goal of this is to find out whether the functions of the product meet the basic needs of the prospet. Based on this assessment a sales representative can make a decision whether to continue with the customer further in the qualification process and in the sales process. (Greenwald, R. & Milbery, J. 2001, 141-142.)

2. *Competition*

Here the key issue is to find out who the competitors are. By continuing with the example in the previous phase, if the customer is considering "John Deere, Komatsu, International Harvester, and Porsche, then you know that there is a problem-especially if you are selling the Porsche." The customer is considering totally different types of products. Why? (Greenwald, R. & Milbery, J. 2001, 142.)

3. *Budget/ Timefrate*

In any business transaction, money is required, and without money there will be no business. Sales representatives need to try to find out if the prospect has a budget to buy the product, when the prospect needs to use the money, and when the prospect is able to use the money. The prospect might have the budget but there might be some restrictions in the use of money. The prospect might need to invest the money by the end of a fiscal year, or, the money cannot be used before the beginning of the next fiscal year. All this helps in planning the sales process and in estimation of what resources are available in the company at the time when the software project is estimated to be implemented. (Greenwald, R. & Milbery, J. 2001, 142-143.)

4. *Problem definition*

This is probably the most important part of the qualification process. It is important to be able to state the prospect's problem, the Critical Business Issue, clearly and shortly. If the problem is unknown it is impossible to give a solution. This is similar as with medical doctors. The first task for a doctor is to diagnose the problem before he or she can prescribe any solutions to the problem. This might be challenging task to a sales representative and should not be ignored, instead sufficient time and resources should be invested in this. A sales representative should ask questions directly from the prospects and try to define the Critical Business Issue together with the customer. This action also creates credibility and trust towards the sales representative as the customer gets a feeling that the sales representative really cares about the prospect's problems. (Greenwald, R. & Milbery, J. 2001, 143-144.)

5. Solution set

As earlier stated, the qualification process is not about giving information and presenting solutions to the prospects, but the opposite. The goal is to listen, ask questions and gather as much information as possible. The same idea with the solution set, the goal is to ask questions and to find out what the prospect considers as solution set for her or his problems. The solution set can be composed from several solutions which can include competitors' and other vendors' products e.g. "relational databases, application development tools, and pre-packaged software solutions". The description of the solution set helps to find out how the own product fits to the rest of the solution set, what competitive advantages and weaknesses the product have etc. (Greenwald, R. & Milbery, J. 2001, 144.)

6. Technical requirements

Technical requirements can involve low-level functions such as the database must be able to store 10 gigabytes of data in a single table. Technical requirements can also be business functions that are part of the solution—for example, "the order entry system must be able to automatically calculate reorder points daily." In the first case, we are talking about bit and bytes, but in the second, we mean higher-level business functions that

could be implemented in many different ways. Both are examples of technical requirements. (Greenwald, R. & Milbery, J. 2001, 145.)

Customers might not always know their technical requirements, or the technical requirements can change and develop during the sales proses. If a prospect does not have technical requirements document, it is important to ask questions as much as possible to be able to define the technical requirements and make sure that you understand what the prospect actually mean with each requirement. After understanding each technical requirement, each requirement needs to be prioritized. Prioritization helps to evaluate how well your product's functions match the technical requirements and how well the product's functions can solve the prospect's problems, the Critical Business Issues. (Greenwald, R. & Milbery, J. 2001, 148.)

7. Decision process

The "decision process" is a phase in the qualification process. In this step the sales team makes a decision whether to continue the sales process or not. This decision is made based on all the information gathered during the qualification process. (Greenwald, R. & Milbery, J. 2001, 149-151.)

After the qualification process the results can be summarized into three items:

- Technical match-up

    o A customer has a Critical Business Issue, and technical requirements. Those two form the basis of the technical match-up. Now it is possible to compare the technical capabilities of the product to the technical requirements and how the product can help in solving the Critical Business Issue. (Greenwald, R. & Milbery, J. 2001, 152.)

- Highlights

    o Highlights are qualities which are not necessarily the deal makers but can improve the situation and give a competitive advantage. (Greenwald, R. & Milbery, J. 2001, 152.)

- Deal breakers

  o Deal breakers are qualities or lack of qualities which are crucially im-
  portant to the prospects. A prospect might have for example a re-
  quirement that all the operator actions needs to be logged into a da-
  tabase. If the software does not support database logging, it can be
  the deal breaker and the prospect will not want to continue the sales
  process any further. (Greenwald, R. & Milbery, J. 2001, 152.)

5 SOFTWARE DEMONSTRATION

5.1 Live software demonstration

According to WiseGEEK (2003 – 2013) "Demo software is a trial version of a software
program which allows people to use it for free while they decide whether or not to
buy it." A demo software can be full version of the software with all the functions of
the software, and it comes with an expiry date after which the demo software does
not work anymore, or a demo software can come with limited functions and if a cus-
tomer buys the software license he/she gets the full functionality of the software.
Demo software can often be downloaded directly from a software manufacturer's
web-site and if the customer is willing to buy the software, an activation key can be
purchased from the manufacturer of from a reseller. (WiseGEEK, 2003 – 2013.)

WiseGeek (2003 – 2013) discusses a software demo which is used by the end users
themselves. Nevertheless, for example Moran, F (2013), Popper, B. (2011), and
Technology Sales Help (Accessed 2013) talk about demos which are presented to
prospective customers by sales representatives and technical staff of a software
manufacturer, people who are familiar with the software.

Greenwald, R. & Milbery, J. (2001, 182-185) emphasizes that a demonstration has to be a "live" show and interactive. That means that prospects want to see the real product in real action. A video or screen shots of the product does not make the same effect.

> *Although it may seem like we're stating the obvious here, the first element of a product demonstration is that it has to be a "live" show. Your prospect needs to see the product as it actually live and breathes. He or she has to be able to see and touch the product. Most prospects are highly skeptical of being shown a mock-up, and the solution is to have your product live in all its glory.* (Greenwald, R. & Milbery, J. 2001, 182.)

> *It's like the difference between watching a television show about tigers or seeing tigers in a zoo.* (Greenwald, R. & Milbery, J. 2001, 182.)

> *You either have to bring the product to the prospects or bring the prospects to the product in order to give a real demonstration. Showing your prospects a videotape or a screed-cam does not count as a demonstration.* (Greenwald, R. & Milbery, J. 2001, 185.)

How to succeed in a software demonstration? One way to approach this is to take a look on common mistakes which often cause a failure in software demonstrations. Cohen, P, E. (2003, 10) gives the following list of the common reasons for failures in software demonstrations.

- *A feature failed – software bugs or crashes*

- *Failure to identify the Critical Business Issues*

- *Demonstrator did not know the product*

- *Unknown of unqualified audience needs*

- *Cannot drive the message*

- *No story*

- *Confusing story*

- *Too long*

- *Too boring*

- *Too many features*

- *Did not stop in time (demoed additional features that were not needed)*

- *Got lost in the story*

- *Unclear story*

- *No point to the story*

- *No conclusion or poor conclusion*

- *Broad range of audience needs*

- *Lack of demo skills*

- *Lack of clear objectives for the demo*

- *Too little time*

- *Too much time*

- *Equipment failure*

- *Equipment unavailable*

- *Questions interrupted the flow*

- *People (coming/going) interrupted the flow*

Obviously, the list is quite long. Some of the reasons might be more important, some of the reasons might occur more often. This list helps to avoid common pitfalls in software demonstration.

Cohen, P, E. (2003, 36) emphasizes the importance of focusing on the specific capabilities the customer needs to solve their problems. Presenting additional functions which does not solve the customer's Critical Business Issues might add some interest, however, there is a risk the audience get bored, alienated, and the demo might become too complicated. Cohen, P, E. (2003, 36) lists the following risks which might occur if the software demonstration is not focused on the special capabilities which can solve the customer's Critical Business Issues.

- *Risk of running into bugs or crashing*

- *Risk of boring the audience*

- *Risk of presenting capabilities that are not desired.*

- *Risk of running out of time <u>before</u> the audience has a chance to see what they need.*

- *Risk of confusing them with too many features and functions.*

- *Risk of making your product look too complicated.*

- *Risk of making your product look too expensive ("Why I am paying for all of these features I will not use?")*

Even there is only one customer, a one company, it does not mean that it is one. Problems, Critical Business Issues, are always personal, and each employee of the customer sees the situation from the point of view of their position in the company. There might be employees from senior management, high-level technical leaders, technical staff, or operators hired to use the software full time, eight hours per day, five days a week. Senior management might not be interested in some technical issues, and technical staff's biggest concern might not be financial issues. (Cohen, P, E. 2003, 23 - 25.)

A solution to handle diverse audience in a demonstration is to suggest to the prospect that the demonstration could be given in two sessions, a session for the technically oriented staff, and a session for business oriented staff. As the technical staff and business staff have different perspective to the situation and different problems, it is easier to customize one demo to address the solutions for the problems of the business staff, and one demo to address the problems of the technical staff. (Care, J. & Bohlig, A. 2008, 99).

If there is not possibility to give the demonstration separately for the technical staff and the business staff, then it is important to find out beforehand which group is more important to convince that the demonstrated product will solve their problem. It is often the case that the business staff and especially executive level are busy and less patient, and the technical staff have more time to get familiar with the product. From that point of view, if no better information is available, the demonstration should focus on the problems of the business staff. Although, whether the demonstration is planned to address either of the group's problems, the software company should be prepared to both, just in case. The demonstrator can mention in the be-

ginning of a demo for example that the demo is dealing with the problems and the solutions of the technical staff. If the business staff, and especially the executive level have expected to see the solutions to their problem, they will most probably tell about that. (Care, J. & Bohlig, A. 2008, 99-100).

According Cohen, P, E. (2003, 5) a demonstration of software should always start with a "Do the last thing first" method. Cohen, P, E. (2003) divides a demonstration of software into three separate phases.

1. Start with the last things, show the screens to which you are going to end up in the end of the demo. It is important that those screens impress the audience and makes them eager to see more. These screens should prove that the software being sold is capable to solve the Critical Business Issues of the prospect. This phase should not last more than 60 seconds. (op. cit. 2003, 5.)

2. After the first phase where it was proved that the demoe software can solve the prospect's Critical Business Issues you move to the second phase follows where it is demonstrated step-by-step how to get to the end screens showed to the prospect in the first phase. This is not the moment when a software company's representative learns how to use the software. The demonstration of the software is a moment when the software company's representative should be able to run the software easily, smoothly and without too much thinking of what should be done in each step. Here it is important that the software company's representative do not talk too much, however, instead of that the software talks on its own behalf. This phase should not take more than three minutes. (op. cit. 2003, 6.)

3. When the first two phases of a demonstration have been completed the audience will most probably have a more detailed question how the end screens were reached or about other functions of the software. Here the audience will guide the demonstrator by questions to which the demonstrator gives the answers or demonstrates with the software. This phase can take a longer

time; however, normally 20 to 30 minutes should be enough. (op. cit. 2003, 6.)

5.2 Software Demo Video

"Focus on features that your audience wants to know about, not the ones that you think are cool." (Thomas, W. 2012). The same issue as with the other marketing and sales tools, software demo video should prove that the software has the specific capabilities and functions which can solve the customer's Critical Business Issues.

Below is a quotation from Scott, M., Bettina, H. & Goeldi, A. (2012). They use word "pain" which in this context has the same meaning as with "Critical Business Issue".

> *The first thing to remember when creating a successful marketing video concept is that the video is not about you. Many marketing videos fail to do their job because they fail to consider the mindset of the prospects who will watch it. These videos become vanity pieces instead. Believe us: No one wants to hear your drone on and on about yourself unless you're providing a direct solution to their pain.*
>
> *Done well, video marketing is an effective tool for creating an emotional connection with viewers who are truly willing and able to buy. If you connect with their pain, they respond positively.*

When creating a demo video, it needs to be decided why the video will be created, and what the purpose of the video is. A software demonstration video can be made to introduce new features of software, to sell the software, or to differentiate from competitors. **(**Thomas, W. 2012.**)**

According to Thomas, W. (2012) a software demonstration video should not be longer than 3 – 5 minutes and if it goes beyond five minutes, probably there is material in the video which does not support the key functions which would solve the customers

Critical Business Issues. In that case there is a risk that the audience get frustrated and do not have patience to watch the video.

Johnson, C. & Moore, J. (Accessed 2013) also ephasises the "keep it simple" and "less is more" principles: "The famous Ivengar Jam Study informs us that less is more—the fewer choices people had to process the more likely they were to make a purchase."

If too many features of software are packed into a one video there will be two problems. 1: The script is too dense, which makes it difficult to get the most important point, and 2: People will get bored and stop watching the video. (op. cit. Accessed 2013.)

The length of the demo video and the amount of features presented on a demo video can vary according to the purpose of the video. If a software demo is done for educational purpose to teach people how to use a software, then the video can be longer and can include more features of the software. If a customer watches a training video, he/she has probably already purchased the software. (op. cit. Accessed 2013.)

Johnson, C. & Moore, J. (Accessed 2013) state that they include around three features in a software demonstration video. Functions which are very basic and which can be found from each competitors' software should not be given too much time in the video. Those basic functions do not bring any competitive advantage, therefore, why waste valuable time of the demo video which could be used to show the key functions, the specific capabilities which can solve the customers Critical Business Issues. (op. cit. Accessed 2013.)

A software demo should show the customer the steps which are needed to do to get the wanted results. In other words, to show the process how to execute the specific capabilities which will solve the prospect's Critical Business Issues. (op. cit. Accessed 2013.)

Rossiter, V. (2012) lists Dos and Dont's for software demo Videos:

Dos:

1. *Do make sure it is simple and concise*

   A software might be complicated but the demo video should not be. Customers want to have easy to use software. It is important to make the software look easy to use in a demo video. (Rossiter, V. 2012)

2. *Do make sure it is informative*

   A software demo video need to include the essential information about the specific capabilities which can solve the prospect's Critical Business Issues. (Rossiter, V. 2012)

3. *Do make sure it is interesting and slick*

   The software might be boring, but the video does not have to and should not to. Otherwise people will not watch it. (Rossiter, V. 2012)

4. *Do make sure it plays on all platforms*

   The software company cannot know which platforms prospects are going to use. That is why it is important that the video runs on iPad, iPhone, Windows, Anroid, etc. (Rossiter, V. 2012)

5. *Do make sure it is made to a high standard*

   "This means making sure the visuals and audio are top notch – which also means getting a professional video production company to make it." (Rossiter, V. 2012)

6. *Do embrace the many benefits the video will provide*

   "The video will not only replace a physical manual or pdf in showing how your product works, but it will also act as an advert for your software." (Rossiter, V. 2012)

   "Use this to your advantage by putting it out there – use social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter etc." (Rossiter, V. 2012)

Dont's

1. *Don't be dull*

   This is obvious, but still worth of mention – "it will turn your audience off" (Rossiter, V. 2012)

2. *Don't use a single static shot of a computer screen and call it a video*

   Pictures are not a video. (Rossiter, V. 2012)

3. *Don't make it yourself*

    "Unless you are a professional video producer with the relative and required experience. If you are not, it will show." (Rossiter, V. 2012)

4. *Don't provide unnecessary information*

    If there is too much information the software will look too complicated (Rossiter, V. 2012).

5. *Don't make it too long*

    "The 2012 consumer is not interested in a lecture. They want to digest your content as instantaneously as possible." (Rossiter, V. 2012)

6. *Don't limit its audience*

    "Make sure your video is – and your software – is promoted via online media sites such as YouTube and social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter. Also remember to make it HTML5 compatible." (Rossiter, V. 2012)

Autodemo (Accessed 2013) gives the following list of five common mistakes made during production of software demo videos:

1. No professional scriptwriter

Everything starts with the script of the software demo video. If it is not done professionally, the quality of the demo will suffer from the very beginning of its development. (Autodemo, Accessed 2013)

2. No audio or, worse, poorly produced audio

The voiceover of the demo video needs to sound professional and friendly, and it has to be in sync with the visuals of the video (Autodemo, Accessed 2013).

3. Clumsy technology

A software demo has to run easily on all the common platforms, web browsers, and operating systems. It needs to be fast to download. If there is problems with any of these or any similar things, it can make the software company look unprofessional, and it might cause a situation that a prospective customer cannot see the demo, or, loses his/her patience and does not want to watch the demo at all. (Autodemo, Accessed 2013).

4. No tracking features

As a marketer, one of your primary responsibilities is measuring your efforts, from lead-gen initiatives to social media engagement and conversion rates. Attaching tracking features to your software demo not only helps you discern your demo's success, but can also deliver valuable prospect information to give you deeper insight into your target market. (Amy, 2012B)

5. No sharing capabilities

Prospective customers should be able to watch the demo software video wherever they spend time, YouTube, Facebook, etc. Demo software videos need to be easy to share in the media which the prospective customers are used to share things. (Autodemo, Accessed 2013).

Amy (2012A) gives a list of 10 places where software demos can be used:

1. *Your email signature*

If all employees' email signature included a link to the software demo video, the video would spread by itself without any extra effort. (op. cit. 2012.)

2. *Your trade show booth*

The representatives of a software company are not all the time available as they might be for example engaged to interaction with other customer, and that time a software demo video can work independently and show the key features and benefits of a software to prospects. (op. cit. 2012.)

3. *Your sales team's mobile devices*

A software does not have to run on an iPad or on an Anroid phone; however, the software demo video should. If a software company's employees had a demo video always with them installed on their mobile devices they would always be ready to impress if they happened to meet prospective customers. (op. cit. 2012.)

4. *Your company profile paragraph*

This is "About Our Company" part. A company's web site, press releases, news items, marketing material etc. usually include "About Our Company"

part. Whenever a prospective customer wants to learn about a company she/he goes to "About Our Company" part, and, the software demo video should be found there. (op. cit. 2012.)

5. *Your online newsletter*

This is a bit same as the item 4 above, but the video can be added directly to the online newsletter, for example on the side bar of the newsletter. (op. cit. 2012.)

6. *Your blog*

If the company is publishing a blog the software demo video should be there. The more active and more famous the blog is the more it brings views to the video. (op. cit. 2012.)

7. *Your company Linkedin page*

Amy (2012A) states that

HubSpot discovered that Linkedin generated a higher visitor-to-lead conversion rate than Twitter or Facebook. It's simple math: putting your number one lead-gen tool in the place most likely to deliver the highest visitor-to-lead conversion rates equals maximized ROI.

8. *Your company Facebook page*

People are familiar with Facebook and it makes it easy for them to upload and share videos. (op. cit. 2012.)

9. *Your company profile on Twitter and in direct messages*

In Twitter there are 160 characters to use per message and a URL of a software demo video is easy place there. (op. cit. 2012.)

10. *Your website*

It is not enough just to put a software demo video on a company's website. The video should be placed somewhere where it draws visitors' attention e.g. the front page of the web site. Also the text on the launch button should be in contextual language. That could be for example "Watch a 5-minute demo

now!". The text on the launch button should encourage people to watch the video. (op. cit. 2012.)

Software demo video can also be used as an aid when talking with customers at phone. The software company's employee only needs to tell the web address where the video can be found, or, he/she can send the video by email for example. If the software demo video includes The Specific Capabilities which can solve the customer's Critical Business Issues, the video can be a huge help to get the sales process forward. (Johnson, C. Accessed 2013.)

Crane, D. (2009) adds few ways to use software demo videos:

- *Add it to your giveaway promotional stuff on CD or USB flash*

- *Put it on view in the reception area of your office*

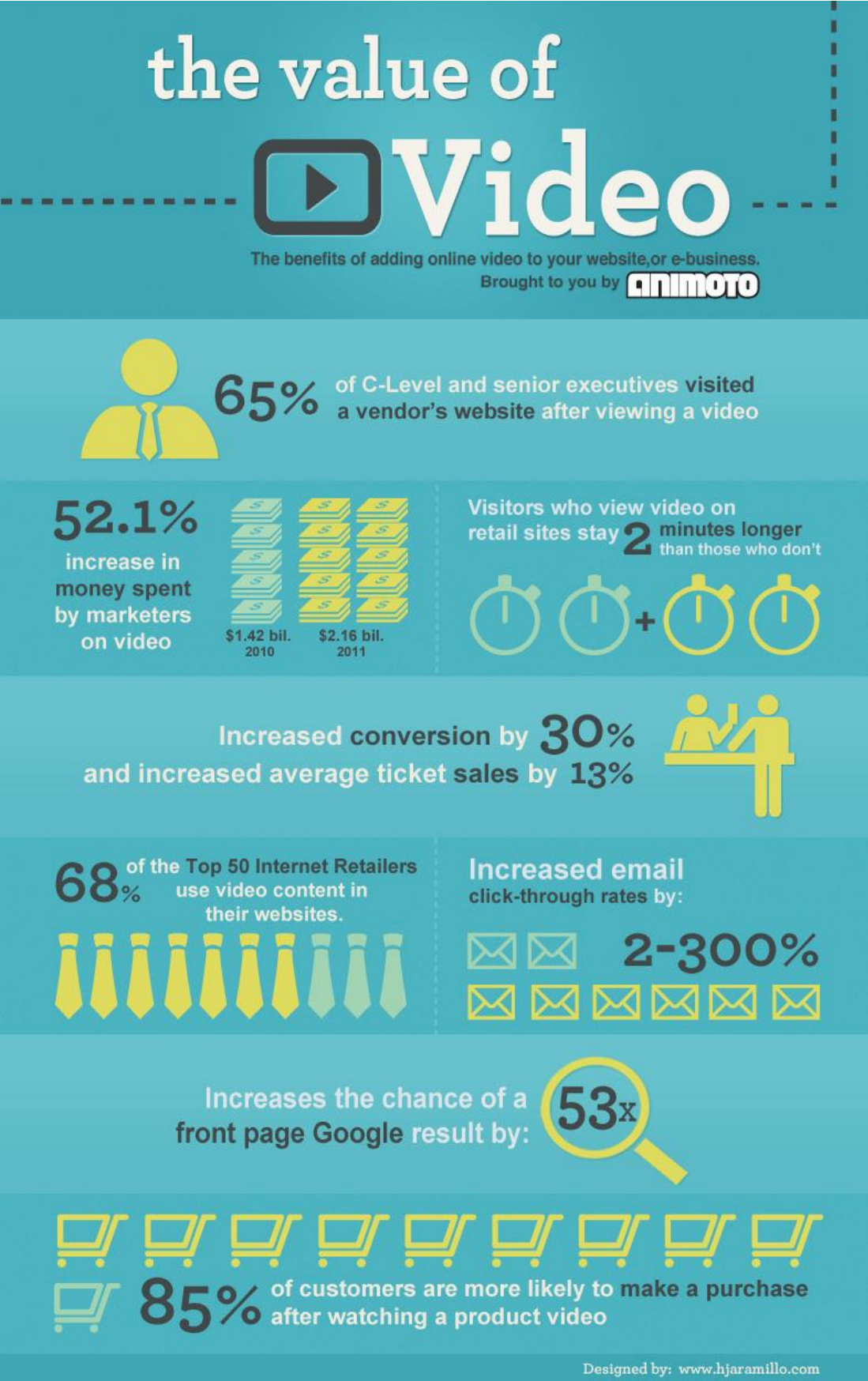Erin (2013) presents an infographic from about the value of video:

Figure 5 Value of Video (Erin, 2013)

6 RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

Qualification process

Qualification process is the most important phase in preparation of a software demonstration whether it is a *software demo video* or a live software *demonstration.* Success of a software demonstration without proper qualification process is pure luck. The importance of this phase cannot be emphasized enough. It is like Greenwald, R. & Milbery, J. (2001, 143-144) discuss medical doctors: a doctor canot prescribe any solution or treatment to the problem if he/she does not know what the problem is. YSP and Imtech should put a great effort on finding out

- prospects' **Critical Business Issues**

- **Reasons** which cause the Critical Business Issues. Only after that YSP should start to think whether or not YSP is capable to provide the needed

- **Specific Capabilities**, a solution in other words.

After it has been found out whether YSP is able to provide all or some of the needed specific capabilities the actual design and preparation of the software demonstration can start.

The following check-list can help to complete the qualification process successfully. The list is based on what Greenwald, R. & Milbery, J. (2001, 141) offers. The order of the task in the qualification process can and will change case by case and there is not always need to go through the whole qualification process; if for example it is found out that the prospect does not have a sufficient budget to the project, or if the prospect is looking for something what YSP and Imtech cannot offer.

1. *Bulldozer/ BMW assessment.*

Is the prospect really in the need of the type of products and services offered by YSP and Imtech? This is on very general level, e.g. is a prospect looking for a CRM software for a traffic management company, or, is the prospect actually looking for a traffic management system, in which YSP and Imtech are specialised.

2. Competition

Who are the competitors?

What are the qualities which the prospect value in the competitors' service, products, and in possible business proposal?

What are the qualities which the prospect does not appreciate in the competitors' service, products, and in there possible business proposals?

Do YSP and Imtech have competitive advantages to the competitors' weak points and strong points?

3. Budget/ Timefrate

What is the prospect's budget?

When is the budget available?

What are the values of the competitors' proposals?

What is the prospect's expectation/requirement of the project schedule?

What project schedules have the competitors offered?

What project schedule can YSP and Imtech offer?

4. Problem definition(Probably the most important phase of the qualification process)

Find out (in cooperation with the customer) **what the prospect's Critical Business Issues** (the problem) are and state them clearly and shortly.

Find out (in cooperation with the customer) **what the reasons** to the Critical Business Issues are.

This action creates credibility and trust towards the sales representative as the customer gets a feeling that the sales representative really cares about the prospect's problems.

6. *Solution set*

- What subsystems (e.g. Automatic Incident Detection system) will be connected to the traffic management system?

- What will be the brands used in each subsystem?

- How should each subsystem interact with the rest of the system?

- Which contractor will deliver each subsystem?

- What will be the scope and role of each contractor in the project?

Information gathered about the solution set might reveal new sales opportunities e.g. the customer does not know the possibility of integration of CCTV system's camera control to the traffic management SCADA. If YSP's or Imtech's representative finds out any similar opportunity to improve the system which the customer is going to build, that opportunity should be presented to the customer.

7. *Technical requirements*

Does the prospect know the technical requirements?

Can YSP and Imtech help the prospect in the development of the technical requirements?

After understanding each technical requirement, each requirement needs to be prioritized. Prioritization helps to evaluate how well YSP's and Imtech's solution match the technical requirements and how well the solution can solve the prospect's Critical Business Issues.

8. Decision process

The decision concerns whether or not to continue the sales process based information gathered during the qualification process.

After the qualification process is completed the following three items can be concluded.

Technical match-up

How does YSP's and Imtech's solution mach up with the prospect's Critical Business Issue, and technical requirements?

Highlights

Are there qualities in YSP's and Imtech's solution which can improve the situation and give a competitive advantage?

- Price and payment terms?

- Project schedule?

- Technical qualities?

- Any qualities or services which competitors cannot offer?

- etc.

Deal breakers

Are there qualities or lack of qualities in YSP's and Imtech's solution which can kill the deal?

- Price and payment terms?

- Project schedule?

- Technical qualities?

- Any qualities or services which are required but cannot be offered?

- etc.

After the technical mach-up, highlights, and deal breakers are evaluated, it should be found out how the situation could be improved? Could YSP and Imtech affect the Technical Requirements, for example, or could YSP and Imtech develop some new functions to match up with the requirements?

Software Demo Video

The application software done by YSP are usually that complicated that a user training is required before the customers are able to use the application smoothly and efficiently. Due to that a trained person is always required to give a live software demonstration. It is clear that it is not possible to give the training to the all sales representatives of Imtech and those are the cases where software demonstration videos could be used. As the prospects' Critical Business Issues and Reasons to them vary, it is impossible to make a one size fits all software demo video which would work perfectly in each case, although there are places and times for videos which would present application software in general level e.g. trade shows, presentations to mixed audience, in email signature, web-sites, social media etc. It is clear that a one video is not enough and it is also impossible to foresee which combinations of Specific Capabilities will be needed, and it is also impossible to predict the number of

those combinations. Solution to that could be to create a "library of videos", which would include a number of short videos, each of those videos presenting one functionality of an application e.g. a video about reporting functions, a video about alarm handling, a video about variable message sign control based on weather data etc. With this kind of library YSP's and Imtech's sales representatives could together compile software video demonstrations to tackle with the prospects' Critical Business Issues and with the Reasons to them.

To make YSP and YSP's expertise more known within Imtech group the general level software demo video would be a good tool for that. YSP could spread the general level video together with a short introduction about YSP via email within Imtech group. The email there should explain shortly, how the general level videos should be used and the possibility about composing tailor made videos from the short videos to tackle with each prospect's Critical Business Issues.

Live Software Demonstration

There are two options how a live software demonstration can be arranged. The first and in many cases the most effective way to earn prospects' trust to YSP's and Imtech's capabilities would be to arrange an excursion with the prospect to a traffic management center, where the prospects could see real live systems in full operation. Unfortunately, that is not always possible.

If the excursion cannot be arranged, the second option would be a live demonstration of an application running on simulation mode at for example a prospect's premises. This option requires that there would have to be a trained person available who knows the application.

The demonstration of YSP's and Imtech's capabilities could also be a mix of different types of demonstrations, e.g. an excursion to traffic management center, and a software demonstration with an application running on simulation mode.

The same thing here as it is with the video, the demonstration should focus on the Specific Capabilities which can solve the prospects Critical Business Issues. Unfortu-

nately that is not always possible due to the fact that the functions which would solve the Critical Business Issues have not been developed yet. In that case it is important to convince the prospect that YSP and Imtech are capable of developing those functions.

As YSP's software applications usually control hardware installed by the motorways and tunnels it is not possible to demonstrate the real applications if the demonstration is carried out at a prospect's premises. For that purpose it requires effort from the technical staff of YSP to develop demo versions of the chosen applications simulating real situations to show the prospects how the applications indicate changes in field equipment.

There is also one major technical challenge in live software demonstrations – multiple displays. A traffic management application might be designed to be used with e.g. four wide screen displays. If for example a four screen application is squeezed into a one laptop screen it will not give the same feeling to the prospect as with four screens. This is complicated since the live software demonstrations are usually arranged at the prospect's premises somewhere abroad and carrying e.g. four displays to the location might not always be possible due to the border crossings and customs rules. The problem becomes even more complicated as the screen resolution between implemented applications varies, so each case is different. To solve that problem cooperation between technical staff, management staff, and Imtech's representatives in the locations of the software demonstration is required.

Another challenge is the required processing power and hard drive space of the applications. It is for example not possible to share the applications via email. Conclusion is that it is easy to show the prospects the specific functions of the applications tackling with the prospect's Critical Business Issues if all the technical issues can be solved.

Demonstration Meeting

In most cases a software demonstration is just a part of a meeting. The whole meeting is only sometimes reserved just for a software demonstration which presents all

the technical capabilities of the software which can help the prospects to solve their Critical Business Issues. The Critical Business Issues are not always that type of problems which can be solved by any technical means. A prospect's Critical Business Issues can be related for example to the funding model of the project, to the service model of the maintenance of the system, or a prospect might be concerned about the continuity of the service over longer period of time. Even if it was agreed or assumed that the purpose of the meeting was just to demonstrate a software application, it is important to be ready to discuss about other issues as well.

Same principles apply to other issues than to a software demonstration – focus should be on the prospect's Critical Business Issues and the subjects which interest the prospect, not on subjects which interest the demonstrator. Additional functions and services can be presented to the prospect only if the demonstrator is confident that the solution brings some benefits to the customer. Therefore it is important to look at issues from the prospect's point of view as sometimes some functions which seem great from a developer's point of view do not necessarily look that great from a prospect's point of view. Goal of the qualification process it to find out all the Critical Business Issues to prepare the demonstrator to discuss about them. The whole meeting should be designed with the same principles as the software demonstration, focus on the Critical Business Issues. A meeting where a software application is demonstrated is a combination of discussion and presentation of the technical and non-technical solutions to a prospect's Critical Business Issues.

Continuity

In the business, there need to be continuity, and the same with demo software and software demo videos. It is not enough that they are done just once. There need to be a plan how the continuity of the software demonstrations and the software demo videos is secured. It is always cooperation between different parties within YSP. A need for a new demo might arise if a programmer has developed a new functionality to an application, or a request for a demo might come from YSP's sales representatives as they communicate with the prospects. It should always be considered to-

gether with programmers and sales representatives whether a new demo should be produced.

7 DISCUSSION

In the beginning the purpose was to find out a comprehensive list of sales tools, to describe what kind of content each sales tool should include, and how and in which situation each of them should be used. After researching and reading through reference material only about brochures and software demo videos I realized that the amount of work would be too large and I would not have time and resources to study and write about so many sales tools. Upon that I decided to limit the number of the sales tools and focus only on few of them. That was a good decision as without narrowing down I would not been able to use enough time to study and research each subject. The original goal set for this thesis project was to produce something which brings real value and if the research had been too broad and had only scratched the surface of each subject, anyone who is able to use internet would have obtained the same info with only minor effort. What would be the value of the research in that case?

The decision was that the research is going to focus only on live software demonstrations and software demo videos. After focusing for a while on those topics I found out that from business point of view the customization of the software demonstration to deal with the prospects' business problems is the focal point in software demonstrations. There I understood that the qualification process is probably the most important phase in the sales process and it did not make sense to talk just about software demonstration if the reader does not understand how that connects to the qualification process. Very quickly I found out that the qualification process was actually to be one of the major subjects of the thesis. Originally I did not plan to describe the general sales process; however, it became obvious that it would be important to shortly describe it so that the reader can understand how qualification process and software demonstration fit into the sales process.

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