Industry-leading software company swells sales with HCL Demo Factory

The challenges—and HCL Technologies solutions

Even the most successful companies seek to step up sales, and this world-class software manufacturer is no exception. The client was experiencing challenges with its product demos, a key tool in closing sales. The challenges interfered with the demos' ability to accelerate the sales cycle.

The challenges

The demos designed by the client's product engineers focused on features and technologies that drive the products, not specific end-user industry or business needs. Even demos for business applications such as ERP and CRM and cloud business services applications were presented as products rather than solutions to a customer problem.

HCL and the company, a long-term HCL client, noticed a trend: The most persuasive product demos show an end-to-end solution for a particular customer problem. For instance, let's say a prospect wants to launch an e-commerce site, integrate the site with ERP and CRM software, and build technology that lets customers use the site on their smart phones with their own specific data. A demo that showed how the prospect could accomplish these goals would be invaluable, and the client's sales team was clamoring for them.

The solution

The client understood that a new approach to product demos would help convince prospects to purchase its products. Although HCL had not created complex demos at this scale in brisk timelines, the company has implemented countless end-to-end solutions for customers and has the deep technical knowledge and business acumen essential to creating a winning solution.

With trust in HCL, the client asked the team to create a demo. HCL created the first demo in early 2018, and within six months, the client asked the team to take ownership of its demo program, build tools, automate the process and run it in a factory model.

> "HCL is a unique company…the only company that could offer skillsets across the technologies and deliver demos at a very quick pace…I'm looking for integrated, holistic and end-to-end demos….HCL is the only company that can deliver."
>
> — Client Marketing Director

The HCL Demo Factory, from bolts to nuts

The HCL team constructed a factory to create demos for the client's ERP and CRM apps; its AI, machine learning, business intelligence, microservices, app development, app connectivity software apps, and some of its third-party tools; and its industry-specific clouds such as retail, healthcare, manufacturing, financial services, and non-profit, with more in the works.

The team advises the client's technical sales team on marketplace trends and key challenges facing prospects and customers. HCL triangulates what the client is doing from a product perspective with customer purchases and business challenges. These insights help the client derive a clear ROI and faster adoption and helps HCL deliver demos that make sense to the demo's audience.

The Demo Factory, a paradigm shift in product demos, is one of the most impactful programs the client has seen, and the factory has received enterprise-wide appreciation.

The factory serves three client groups. The team works on a day-to-day basis with the product engineers and marketing and technical sales teams for five product lines. Senior business leaders use demos in executive briefings and keynote presentations all over the world. The analyst relations team presents them to industry analysts. In 2020, demos received 1,000,000 views on various platforms.

Before HCL begins constructing a meaningful demo, the team gathers info from the client to:

- Understand requirements by reading documents and discussing goals, strategies, objectives, functions and processes with the client and its sales team
- Collaborate with the client's sales team to define the strategy for a winning demo
- Design the solution, estimate the hours and negotiate the hours and timeline with the sales team

HCL then focuses on the demo infrastructure and the quality of the product demo's data, making sure the numbers align with the prospect's business goals. It's essential that the data is consistent, up to date, live and relevant to the prospect, which were sometimes issues before HCL took charge.

The HCL team builds the environment and client industry-specific data and images, adhering to privacy and legal considerations. It's also essential that the data is interconnected among features and tasks, so the demo performs like the actual solution the audience needs, and users—technical salespeople and prospects—can perform tasks while viewing the demo. Interconnection also allows users to surf through pages, start on a different page, and still track the solution's logic. The team providing that interconnection was probably the single most important factor in the client asking HCL to take full ownership of demos.

HCL also set up business rules that mimic a live instance so that viewers understand the prescribed flow. The team progressively added capabilities for discovering, manipulating, automating and analyzing data as well as AI and UI.

In short, the demos are as close to real as demos can get.

Because demos this sophisticated require many skill sets in several areas, HCL assigns a team of 10 to 15 people to each demo. While client engineers work on new features or products, HCL works with the engineers to create a product demo that will be ready when the client announces the features or products to the world. As HCL's demo factory leader says, "The HCL team boards the plane while the plane is being constructed."

Leveraging application life-cycle management, the team creates a "Golden Sandbox" instance visible only to the intended demo audience—a specific API endpoint. The sandbox allows HCL to introduce new features into demos and replicate copies very quickly, enabling rapid time to market.

HCL provides a dedicated link for individual users to log into the demos with a unique username and password that's valid for 120 minutes. If the user closes the demo and launches it later, he or she receives a new unique username and password. That ensures security control and protects the integrity of the individual user's demo experience.

In 2020, HCL built 20 non-customized "master" demos. Using the master demos as a baseline, the team created 350 demos customized to specific prospect scenarios.

Turn-around time for demos reduced from **4 months** to **4 weeks** [1]

Moving from 6 vendors to 1 vendor **increased efficiency** [2]

100% satisfaction from client technical sales team [3]

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Key metrics include:

- The client's technical sales team and channel partners use the demos widely, and the technical sales team's win rate increased.
- Turn-around time for master demos used to be four months. Now it's three or four weeks[1]. Custom demos are most often delivered in two weeks.
- Time to market for a product launch used to be three to four months. Now it's four to five weeks.
- Cost per demo decreased.
- Vendor consolidation from six to one has made the process more efficient[2].
- In a 2020 survey, HCL received 100% satisfaction from the client's technical sales team[3].
- The client has asked HCL to create demos for more products. The client's marketing director said, "HCL is a unique company...the only company that could offer skillsets across the technologies and deliver demos at a very quick pace...I'm looking for integrated, holistic and end-to-end demos....HCL is the only company that can deliver."

The client and HCL are in complete agreement: The Demo Factory helped advance the client's mission of enabling people and organizations to succeed.
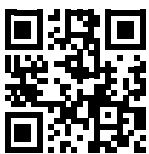
Now that the mission has been accomplished, the HCL team can't wait to use its robust model to create demos for future clients in any industry.

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