

The Journey to Becoming a

DEMOgod

Award™ Winner

FREE



By Nathan Gold

A two-time winner of the DEMOGod Award™

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Chapter 1 - The DEMO Conference

People frequently say to me, “You’re a DEMOgod? Come on. Who are you kidding?”

Little do they know that becoming a [DEMOgod](#) is one of the most difficult tasks that one can ever encounter in the high-tech world. Being invited to participate in the DEMO conference is an honor. Further, being asked to be an on-stage demonstrator is an even bigger accomplishment.

But why?

The Executive Producer, [Chris Shipley](#), is the sole person standing between being a member of the audience and having the most coveted opportunity to announce your new product to the world at DEMO. She is the one who will provide an audience of top-tier press and TV journalists, venture capital investors, influential bloggers, and top-level executives from the Global 2000 companies. She is very, very selective.

Chris is a true technology luminary, who continues to prove that she understands business and knows how to identify the big and influential players. She has a talent for uncovering emerging products and services that are poised to change the technology industry. If your company is selected to participate at these shows, Chris, in essence, is predicting that your product or service will make a significant impact in the year following the conference.

Her track record is impressive with companies that include Palm, Handspring, Mercado Technologies, IBM, 3Com, TiVo, OracleMobile, AvantGo, Salesforce.com, U3, BeVocal, Extensity, Neomar, Digital Ink, and Google. For a complete list, visit <http://www.demo.com>. Chris is personally responsible for sifting through hundreds of products from

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companies around the world to select the best of the best. She will make your time at the conference worth every penny.

Since 1990, the DEMO conferences, scheduled in February and September, have attracted the best and brightest minds in the industry. The attendee list is typically a “Who’s Who” in technology and features the industry’s leading journalists, venture backers, technologists, executives, and bloggers.

Chris and the DEMO Conferences have established a true reputation in the industry for finding and presenting the products that will most likely have a considerable impact on the marketplace and market trends in the coming years.

Here is a company that went the distance when preparing for its time on stage at DEMO 08. It is an example of the results of the work we do at The Demo Coach.



[Click here to watch Education.com on stage at DEMO 08](#)

Chapter 2 - Getting Your Foot in the Door

DEMO seems as though it is pre-selecting companies that have the best-of-the-best products. Knowing this and being aware of their past expectations, you have one caveat to consider before pursuing participation at this conference.

To be acknowledged as a possible candidate, you must announce a new product that has not been previously explored. If the press have already heard of or seen your product, being a part of DEMO is out of the question.

When our public relations agency came to us with this opportunity, we did not have to look far for the product to announce. We were already toying with several new ideas and had a few working prototypes to select from. They set up the appointment, and we met with Chris Shipley.

Chris sat us down at the table and said confidently, “OK. What do you have?” I then showed her Extensity’s new application for expense reports and timesheets that people could access on their mobile phones.

In the year 2000, the hope was that people would use their mobile phone for accessing the Internet. Any practical application was of interest to her. She was very intrigued by our application, but did not show the enthusiasm we had hoped for.

The key aspect of our application was that it focused on the enterprise space. We found out later that she was ready to make a decision on which companies would be included in the show that had mobile applications for the enterprise user.

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While Chris was talking to us, she mentioned with huge excitement several other technologies that were bubbling up. One technology was automated speech recognition (ASR). When she mentioned ASR, I told her we had a prototype of the expense report and travel planning software that used ASR. Chris came out of her chair and said she wanted to hear it right away.

The product demo I gave to Chris changed our chances of being invited to the show in less than 2 minutes. We could see that she was eager and overjoyed to find an enterprise application using voice recognition. ASR was a hot topic in her mind, and we had a product that was in a class of its own. Other companies using ASR were offering voice access to information such as weather, directions, stock quotes, traffic, airlines, and headline news, but no one had a business application similar to ours.

On the Friday we met with Chris, she told us that she had interviewed over 400 companies and would be making the final selection in the next week. During that selection process, only a handful of companies would be chosen to present on stage. We left the meeting with the hope that we would at least be invited as a participant.

Chapter 3 - Waiting...

Everyone at the company was on pins and needles during the wait because we all knew that this was the opportunity of a lifetime for a high-tech company. This was not a trade show that allowed us simply to sign up for an exhibitor booth. If we were not invited, there was no way we could get in.

All participants in the trade show are given a booth to display their products. If chosen to be a demonstrator, you would be given the opportunity to go on stage and demo your product to the entire audience. Our thoughts were now focused on being selected to be a demonstrator. The only problem was that the demonstrators would not be selected for another week.

It turns out that, in order to be selected as a demonstrator, we had to demo our product to Chris again. Afterwards, she would make the final selections. It is easy to understand that she wanted on stage only people with products that outshine all others.

Finally, our PR firm called to congratulate us for being selected as a participant. We were elated and popped a bottle of champagne to begin our journey to DEMOfall 2000 in Pasadena, California. This was the ultimate opportunity.

Chapter 4 - The Way the Process Works...

Demonstrators are given exactly 6 minutes in which to demo their product to the general audience. This means that each company has only a few short minutes to make a lasting impression and demo the product to an audience of 1,000 people.

Chris is dead serious about the logistics. We were told by the A/V crew that after those 6 minutes passed, we had a grace period of maybe 15 seconds. If we ran over 30 seconds, the music and lights would come up. Following that, our microphone would go silent, and Chris would walk us off the stage. Knowing this creates great stress during preparation.

Another strict guideline for the demonstrators was that PowerPoint slides or anything that masqueraded as PowerPoint replacements were not permitted.

This show was meant to be focused on the products, so the producers did not allow the use of any visuals. The time on stage was to be used to show your product, not to tell the audience who you are. People could always drop by your booth or read about you in the program for more information about your company.

Chapter 5 - Preparation

We spent nearly three weeks scripting the demo and continually fine tuning it to be sure that we could make the strongest impact in those brief 6 minutes. I was determined to finish in less than 6 minutes, but it would be a stretch.

Because many demonstrators spend too much time talking about their products, my goal was to have the screen change within the first 10 seconds. I felt that this would capture the audience's attention much more quickly than most demonstrators. However, it would require tightly scripted choreography and some creative thinking.

I typically rehearse a demo three or four times for normal business demos. For this occasion, I rehearsed the script 10 times more than the normal number. I stopped counting after reaching 50.

Finally, we had it down to a 5 minute and 30 second demo, consistently. We knew we were ready and could hardly wait for our chance to present on stage. We were scheduled to be the first speaker on Friday, the third day of the conference, which was devoted to enterprise applications. The pressure was on us to start the day on a positive note.

Chapter 6 - The Anticipation Builds...

Understandably, I did not get much sleep on Thursday night. During the wee hours of the morning, I think I practiced the demo at least 10 more times. I finally reached REM sleep at about 4:00 in the morning. The adrenaline was flowing when I awoke, so I knew I was ready.

It was almost show time. I was getting a microphone attached to my lapel when it finally hit me. There were 1,000 people in the audience, and they were all poised and ready for the demonstrators to begin. I can remember almost passing out from the excitement, but I held it together because I understood the opportunity and the impact I could potentially have on my company's future.

There were now seconds before we were to go on stage. Chris was at the podium announcing the beginning of the third day. The stage crew came to me quickly and told me it was time for me to get on the stairs. The Rocky theme song was playing loudly in my mind as my heart began to race with nervous excitement. I could feel my heart pounding in my chest. I wondered if anyone else could hear it or if the microphone could pick up the sound. Thankfully, it didn't.

Chapter 7 - The Most Exciting Moment

I walked out on stage, and to my amazement, I could not see one face in the audience. The lights were so bright that I could barely see the edge of the stage. And because I was not one to stand behind a podium, I had to be careful not to fall off the stage. I quickly navigated around the stage to be sure that I was safe and could present the product effectively.

This was the most exciting moment in my career. It was a peak experience that I will remember forever. The demo and presentation went smoothly and with no real problems. The only little problem was with the voice recognition, but the audience was very understanding.

In fact, the blunder with the voice recognition became the brunt of a joke that made the entire audience laugh for nearly 15 seconds. It was unplanned and perfect timing. Audience members love to laugh. As a result, it eased my tension and allowed me to gain a special rapport with the audience. In general, people love to see how you recover during a demo. It makes you more real and believable.

When I finished the demo and looked down at the huge clock in front of the stage, it read 5:57. We finished with 3 seconds to spare. Because the venue did not allow for questions, I remained for the thunderous applause, then walked off the stage. It was over. I was elated and relieved that it went so well.

My support team congratulated me and told me how well it went from their point of view. They were in the audience and were able to see the reactions of people. They said it was a winner and I should be happy with the performance. I was.

Chapter 8 - The Recognition

It was now time to wait for the DEMOGod Awards to be issued. It took the producers almost two weeks (an unusually long wait) to make the announcement, but we were ultimately selected as one of the three pre-IPO companies to receive the award out of all demonstrators.

We found out by getting a call from the PR firm representing us at DEMO. They were all celebrating their success along with ours.

We were all very excited about the results of all our hard work. Being a DEMOGod was really the icing on the cake. The actual opportunity to demo our products on stage was the best experience of my career, and I will never forget how much work and fun it was.

The DEMOGod™ Award



“We confer upon Nathan Gold the honor of DEMOGod™ status because he displayed true grace under pressure and more than adequately explained his company's mission and technology. He's a one-man walking communications store with the ability to deliver an incredibly well-timed demonstration.”

Chris Shipley
Executive Producer, DEMO

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Chapter 9 - The Second Time Around

I had a second opportunity to be on stage at DEMO while at U3, LLC at DEMOfall 2005. We had a product that allowed people to carry their many Windows applications on a USB Flash drive.

The device can simply be plugged into any PC and run without installing any software on the PC. When the drive is removed, all traces of being on that PC are removed and all data go on the USB drive. It was and still is an innovative way to carry your computing world with you and use it on any PC.

The main reason I want to mention this experience at DEMO is that everything I experienced in the first DEMO Conference was applied to this opportunity with a great outcome.



[Click here to watch U3 on stage at DEMOfall 2005](#)

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Fast forward to the day before the conference: Kate Purmal, the CEO of U3, and I were sitting near the registration area when Chris Shipley walked up to us and gave us some interesting news. She informed us that we would be the first demo on the first day.

What a surprise and what an honor, not to mention the self-imposed stress we put on ourselves.

Presenting on the first day in the first position was certainly additional pressure, but we both felt that our preparation and content would help us sail through this prestigious position in the lineup.

As it turns out, everything we had hoped for came true. We were selected as one of the DEMOgod Award winners. This honor felt even better than receiving my first award because it solidified my confidence in myself, my demo skills, and the companies that I have represented on stage.

Chapter 10 - It's Your Turn Now

There are many considerations and several steps you should take, if you strive to become a DEMOGod Award winner. Here are a few key steps that should be taken to have the confidence needed to win:

1. Have a new and unannounced product that you feel will make a significant impact on business and/or personal lives. It can be a new extension of an existing product as long as it is being announced as a new product.
2. Contact DEMO at <http://www.demo.com>, submit your product for the show, and wait to be contacted.
3. Be prepared to give a riveting 6-minute demo to Chris or one of her staff. This is the make-or-break point in the process. Unless you can meet with her in person, be ready to do your demo online. Also, I suggest you get a coach from the outside to review and help formulate a compelling demo. If you get someone from outside your company to help, he or she will not be afraid to tell you what will work and won't work. This honesty is key because the opinion of Chris and the audience will be more important after the demo than the opinion of your co-workers. Of course, I suggest you use [The Demo Coach](#).
4. Once you have been selected to be a demonstrator, it is time to gather the great minds in your company to brainstorm the best approach to demonstrating your product. Select the top three benefits of your product and plan to demo the powerful and exciting features that fit into those benefits. Use stories and real-world

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examples while you demo your product. Connecting to the audience will help make a longer lasting impression.

5. Do not make the same mistake that many other demonstrators have made in the past. Do not stand on stage and waste precious minutes before your product demo actually starts. Some people make a severe error by replacing their PowerPoint slides with several minutes of needless talking. The 6 minutes should be focused on the benefits of your product. Demo your product; do not give a speech. Keep it moving and keep it exciting, especially if you want people to remember you with good feelings in mind. Remember, at \$18,500, another way to look at your time on stage is that you are spending approximately \$3,100 per minute. Don't waste the money and time telling the audience something that Chris already mentioned or that they can read in the booklet.
6. Practice. Practice. Practice. And practice again and again and again. Practice until you have dreams about the 6 minutes that you have on stage. Practice until the demo becomes second nature and flows without thinking. Then, once you think you have it down cold, practice a few more times. It wasn't until the 30th practice session that we were able to complete the demo in less than 6 minutes consistently.
7. Make sure that you keep all of the dates that you need to adhere to, such as when your first draft script is due and when you have to meet with the A/V people. The A/V crew is really a wonderful group of people. The best way you can ensure a successful demo is to make sure they know everything you need on stage. Do not surprise

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them at the 11th hour with extra A/V requirements, because you may not get what you need. If anything changes about what you need on stage, be sure to let them know as early in the process as possible. Asking them for something like an additional laptop on stage at the last minute might mean that they have to readjust everyone else's demo, which is not fair, and ultimately they may not even be able to accommodate such a request.

8. When you write your script, it is vital that you call out all of the A/V requirements at every step of the demo. Once selected for DEMO, you will get a sample script design, and you should be sure to use that so the A/V crew and all of the cameras can be sure to capture your every move as you want them to. The A/V people can make or break you on stage, so treat them with kindness and the respect they deserve. Remember, there are nearly 75 companies presenting on stage these days, and the A/V crew needs to make sure that the requirements of all companies are met.
9. Prepare for the worst. What if your demo breaks as soon as you walk onto the stage? What will you do? You must think about alternatives. So, beforehand, check the connections. Check the speeds. Check the coverage. Check everything. Write yourself a checklist so that you can concentrate on doing a great demo. This is your only chance. There are no retakes or second chances. If you have a problem in your demo, you still only have 6 minutes. Therefore, be sure to think of at least one backup plan if the original demo does not work. And, practice that backup plan BEFORE getting on stage so you can confidently change on a dime, if needed. Two

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backup plans would even be better. And remember: PowerPoint is not an option. Use your enthusiasm and pride in your product to finish the demo if a problem occurs. If you love your product, the audience will be able to tell through your words.

10. Record one or two pieces of music that get you motivated to do your best. Personally, I use the Rocky theme song anytime I need to get motivated. When the movie came out in the summer of 1976, I saw it 12 times. Use your inspirational music as often as possible to get you motivated to do your best. Play the music just before you walk out on stage, in your head, of course. This will instantly tell your brain that it is time to go.
11. Go out on stage and have fun. Smile, take a few deep breaths as you walk out on stage, and look out over the bright lights at the audience who is anxiously awaiting your demo. Demo your product and get the audience excited and inspired to visit your booth. Give it your best shot. Remember, these people want to hear what you have to say. Make their time worthwhile.
12. Finish in just under 6 minutes. Don't even think of going over. If you have to be escorted off the stage, you have probably lost any chance for an award. Also, a positive feeling in the audience can turn negative in a heartbeat.
13. Celebrate with your team. It has taken a huge effort to get to this point, and you deserve to take a moment and lock this in as one of your peak experiences in life. Cherish the experience and anchor the feelings. You'll be calling on this one many times in your future.

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14. Get a copy of your demo from the video crew. The recording is usually broken up into morning and afternoon sessions on each day of the conference. Your recording can be duplicated on the spot so that you have a souvenir to take with you to show your company, friends, and relatives. Add it to your portfolio of accomplishments. Congratulations!
15. If everything went well or better than expected, you are now in line for your DEMOgod Award. Now, it's up to the producers to decide whether your demo deserves that award.

For information on how The Demo Coach can help you, contact us at 510.400.7917.