The 2025 Presales Landscape Report

Scaling Your Custom Demo Program —
And Delivering Demos that Win

Table of Contents

Presales and sales teams are under more intense pressure than ever before. They're expected to develop personal relationships with buyers despite high quotas. According to LinkedIn's Buyer First Report, 91% of buyers prefer working with sellers that are well-informed about their industry. Plus, 44% strongly agree that they're more likely to consider a brand when the rep shares content applicable to their role or decision-making process.

Scaling that content engine and delivering customized live demos remain challenges for presales and sales teams alike. Presales roles like solution engineers (SEs) deliver unique value in the form of customized, technical product knowledge to augment enterprise account executives' relationship-building skills. However, their time is frequently used inefficiently throughout the sales cycle. Many create demos from scratch for each prospect, or spend hours cleaning and maintaining a demo environment — where their time could be better spent interacting with well-qualified prospects themselves.

We surveyed 100 SEs at enterprise software companies for the 2025 Presales Landscape Report.

The goal was to learn more about their role in the sales process, and where they feel their time is inefficiently allocated. Let's dive into these findings to learn more about common sales inefficiencies. From there, we'll guide you through a playbook on how to navigate the modern sales cycle including:

How product tours on your website can help prospects self-qualify before reaching the sales team.

How presales can create a demo program to templatize and scale live demos.

How to build winning technical demos for later-stage deals, with less effort.

The 2025 State of Presales Demos Report

Today, demos remain the most popular way to evaluate software. Product tours on a company website are often **the top resource** that buyers use during the evaluation process. In addition, live sales demos and interactive demo leave- behinds can help buyers understand how your product works to solve their own use cases and pain points.

With demos holding such an important role in the software evaluation process, it's critical that prospects get the right information at the right time from the right resource. That's not necessarily happening at every organization.

According to the Reprise 2025 Presales Landscape Report:

Most organizations surveyed **(70%)** had an average deal size of **+$50K** and long sales cycles of **90+ days (65%)**. Within these sales cycles, demos are frequent and common. Every week, the average SE gives:

47%
1–3 DEMOS

18%
7–10 DEMOS

26%
4–6 DEMOS

5%
10+ DEMOS

70%
seek out product demos or free trials available on a company's website

While frequent demos are good for qualified prospects, many SEs say their time is misallocated. That dynamic happens in a few different ways:

Unqualified Prospects:
We asked SEs, "What percentage of your weekly demos are spent with unqualified prospects?

25%
Most SEs surveyed (40%) said a quarter of their weekly demos are unqualified

50-75%
Nearly a quarter of SEs (23%) say more than half of their weekly demos are unqualified

Prep Work: We asked SEs: What percentage of your weekly demos are spent with unqualified prospects?

Notably, several SEs filled in custom responses, including, “Non-scripted demos average 7-10 hours of prep. Scripted demos typically require 40+ hours of prep.” and “Varies, the prepared demos take 1-3 hours. Sometimes we tailor a demo for a specific qualified client - and this can take days.”

24%
<1 HOUR

50%
1–3 HOURS

18%
4–6 HOURS

3%
10+ HOURS

Maintenance: 79% spend more than an hour per week cleaning/maintaining their demo environment; 16% spend between 3-10 hours. On the high end, that’s a whopping 21 days per year wasted for these high-value employees! Instead of these inefficient and ineffective tasks, SEs would prefer that their time be allocated in the following ways:

45%
Acting as a technical advisor to customers

20%
Building customized PoCs for qualified prospects

18%
Creating resources for sales enablement

17%
Demoing to technical buyers later in the sales cycle

We asked SEs a few questions to learn more about their collaboration with sales, and common pain points.

SEs indicated that their top three biggest frustrations with sales reps were:

39%
Not sharing information from discovery soon enough

34%
Bringing me into a demo with unqualified prospects

14%
Not being given adequate notice to prepare for a call with a prospect

To improve their collaboration with sales, SEs indicated the following as the top three biggest changes they'd like to see:

40%
Collaborate on discovery questions before the first call

31%
Get adequate time and background information to prepare for a technical demo

17%
Managing scope to ensure strong outcomes in advance of kicking off a technical PoC

Finally, we asked SEs to choose the most important capability for a trusted demo environment. These top three features ranked the highest:

66%
Stability/reliability

55%
Reusability of demos

46%
Customization of demos

Key Takeaways

SEs are often in short supply and high demand. As a result, it's important to maximize their time on the most highly qualified opportunities requiring technical expertise and detail.

That means:

- Creating interactive demos and product tours for your website to help prospects self-qualify before reaching a presales/sales representative.
- Enabling AEs and other stakeholders with foolproof live demos via a demo program. Adopting an easy-to-use demo creation platform to avoid the unnecessary time spent preparing demos and/or cleaning and maintaining a demo environment.

Let's dive in on how to execute on each of these goals.

A Presales Guide to Improving Sales Efficiency

Creating an Interactive Demo or Product Tour

Given what we know about prospects' need to self-serve, an **interactive demo or product tour** on your website can help accelerate the sales cycle. Interactive demos help prospects decide for themselves whether your product or service meets their needs.

Think of this step as the overview that gives prospects initial exposure to the product, so they can ask more targeted questions to the sales team down the road. Having an interactive demo will help the sales team have more directed conversations with prospects, focused on specific pain points.

Best Practices for Creating and Using Interactive Demos

Test different product messaging.

You may have different buyer personas evaluating your product, or different pain points your product addresses. Experiment with multiple demos approaching the product from several angles. A/B test messaging or create an interactive product tour for each pain point, embed them on the website, or share them in other channels like email marketing or social. That will help you see which demos get the most leads and engagement.

After reviewing analytics on your demos, optimize your product tours accordingly. With an interactive demo platform, you can see what's working, where prospects are exiting the tour, and where they're spending the most time. With the right demo software, editing your demos only takes a few clicks.

Speak directly to target customers.

Create interactive demos tailored to all of the different stakeholders involved in your purchase decision. These people could be end users, influencers or champions who are driving the process, or final decision makers like an executive approver and budget controller.

Understanding their roles, objectives, pain points, and any gatekeepers who might be blocking the purchase along the way is critical. Think through the best way to convince each of these people in the sales cycle when creating your GTM strategy, and then determine how to reach them. From there you can create bite-sized product demos customized for each persona, and organize them into a **demo library** on the website.

Incorporate interactive demos throughout the buyer journey.

In addition to having a demo on your homepage or product page, you can incorporate interactive demos throughout the buyer journey. Earlier in the journey, demos can make email marketing campaigns more exciting and effective. Micro-demos of specific features can also make blog posts, thought leadership pieces and other content more engaging.

Later on in the buyer journey, interactive demos can be used as freemium or free-trial onboarding assets. Including bite-sized, self-guided demos in your onboarding process is a great way to guide new users to realizing immediate product value. In short, they'll know what they're doing (this is even more critical if your product is complex). Seeing more value upfront means they're less likely to drop off and more likely to convert to paid customers.

Enabling AEs with Foolproof Live Demos

Another major way to accelerate your sales cycle is to empower AEs to present their own customized demos without the involvement of an SE. Most SEs support a variety of teams, not just sales. That means their time is in high demand, so they can't necessarily be on every sales call (particularly the early ones).

Ideally, AEs can be equipped with the tools and training to run early demos solo, cutting down on the number of unqualified demos SEs give every week.

According to Gartner, "Replacing or augmenting demos of production applications with more easily customizable self-service or live, interactive demos can reduce the time and resources needed to create, schedule and present demonstrations, decreasing costs and shortening sales cycles."

Best Practices for Empowering Sales Teams with Live Demos

Use data injection to develop custom datasets for live Demos.

Picture this: You've secured the meeting with a six-figure prospect and they're interested in seeing a live product demo. When it comes time for the meeting, you open your live app and find that the data is loading too slowly to keep up with the pace of your conversation. Or, you find yourself showing data that's for a completely different industry. Worse still, you get to the one dashboard they really want to see and it's completely empty — with no data at all.

The prospect walks away without understanding how your product might be valuable to them. They might not even understand your product at all. You'd be lucky to get another meeting, even though they were the perfect ICP!

The good news is, you can spare yourself lost deals and embarrassing demo failures like these. Presales teams are starting to use a new process known as "data injection" to populate their demo environments with rich, contextual data. Data injection simplifies and automates the task of building and maintaining demo data, so SEs or sales reps can add relevant datasets to their live demos in just a few clicks. This allows teams to create highly customized demos quickly and at scale, accelerating the sales cycle while maximizing presales and engineering efficiency.

With specialized demo software, this process can happen in a both live production environment and a self-contained demo environment.

When to use a live production environment with data injection: If you need to demo your product live with up-to-the-minute accuracy and personalized datasets.

When to use a self-contained demo environment: If you need a live demo with the stability of a self-contained demo environment, plus the interactivity of your live product and one-click personalization.

Consider this: A live production environment comes with certain risks. While some companies' apps are stable and rarely change, for most SaaS companies, demoing out of a live production environment is unpredictable. That's because many live apps constantly change. If you're shipping a new feature the same day as a live demo, the product may load slowly, look and feel different, or have a slew of new bugs. Or, demo data that looked one way a few hours ago may change completely.

If you share a live production environment, you may also find that every change a sales team member makes impacts everyone else. If the environment isn't reset for the next demo, other reps may find tables missing or dashboards deleted. There are plenty of other reasons why a live production environment may be inconsistent — ranging from too many concurrent users to a lack of internet connectivity and more.

That's why it's best to have the option to inject data into either a live production environment or a self-contained demo environment. A self-contained demo environment allows you to create a full-featured, interactive copy of your application that's completely separate from your production environment. The application looks and feels exactly like your live app, but without the instability risks of a production environment.

Scale Your Demo Operations with a Demo Program

Here's a fact: Creating a scalable, repeatable demo program results in a 20% decrease in demos that require an SE. With a demo creation platform, you can build, organize, measure, and improve all of the demos you use in your go-to-market motion.

A demo program can grow from where you are today, but it typically starts with a set of templated demos or datasets that can be used to customize your live and interactive demos for specific prospects. Having these assets ready can accelerate the sales cycle and spare SEs from having to build custom demos from scratch every time.

Here are a few tips on where to start:

Step 1:

Define your personas or audiences for demos. For example, do you want to create custom demos for specific industries, prospect pain points, use cases, or sales plays?

Step 2:

Create a few versions of your live product demo that serve typical stakeholders in your buying cycle (e.g. primary vs. technical decision-makers). You can always make more as your needs evolve.

Step 3:

Create custom, synthetic demo datasets to load into your live sales demos. Include a variety of options sales reps can inject into the demo before the meeting, so they can plug and play the right data for the right prospect.

Step 4:

Create variations of your interactive demos and product tours that can be used for a variety of scenarios, including sales leave-behinds for the different prospect personas you've already defined.

Step 5:

Build a complete demo library that includes all of your custom datasets and demo variations. Categorize the library by prospect persona so sales and marketing team members can use the assets they need on demand.

Step 6:

Measure the success of your demos and continuously improve them. Look at which demos convert the most and improve or phase out lower performing demos.

Leverage demos as sales enablement tools.

Pair your standardized demo program templates with a script to enable sales to confidently deliver the demo solo. Include objection- handling scripts and sales training to ensure that newer AEs are confident in talking about the solution and how it compares with competitors.

Another option is to build a guided demo to serve as a training and enablement tool. Using the same clicks, AEs can walk through the guided demo independently, learning how to deliver it at their own pace.

Here's where SEs can help in this process:

Map: SE maps out the vertical markets their AEs are targeting and identifies product use cases within them.

Build: SE uses a demo creation platform to pre-make custom demos in sandbox environments for each vertical market use case.

Deliver: SEs meet new buyer needs by giving their AEs relevant, persuasive pre-made demos they can run without them during discovery demo calls.

Create an interactive demo library.

A product "demo library" or "demo center" is a collection of interactive, self-guided demos, as well as live demo replays that can be sent or used as leave behinds (more on that in the next point). You can use this library to showcase the various features, functions, and use cases of your product. Each demo in the library should serve a specific purpose.

AEs can use this demo library as a sales enablement tool, so they can choose the most relevant demo for their prospect's use case. As a few examples, you can create different demos centered around:

- New or complex features
- One or more buyer personas
- A specific use case
- FAQs
- Apps and integrations
- Analytics

Use a guided demo as a leave-behind.

Instead of the typical one-pager no one reads, share a guided, custom tour with potential customers to enable them to effectively internally sell your product to the rest of the buying committee. **Some options could include:**

Create a gated version of the live sales demo with a sandbox environment that buyers can explore after the call. By requiring them to input data like their name and email for access, SEs will be able to see which users are engaging with their demos, and in what ways.

Create guided demos as leave-behinds for buyers.
Guided demos have elements like pulsating buttons and pop-up instructions that act as a virtual AE & SE team, filling in the knowledge gaps for your champion while enabling them to share it with other evaluators on their team.

Bringing SEs into the Sales Cycle after Prospects are Already Qualified

One of the best moments for SE involvement in the sales cycle is after the prospect has been qualified. That's usually when the discovery process has unveiled new questions about how the prospect might use your product in their specific environment. An SE can go beyond the technical scope of a first call or introductory demo.

Even when they are involved more strategically (and later) in the sales cycle, SEs don't have to reinvent the wheel with each demo. Nor do they have to rely on complex, hard-to-scale, unreliable sandbox environments that might crash or interfere with data in production. Here are a few ways in which a demo creation platform can help SEs build tailored, technical demos in less time.

Best Practices for Winning Technical Demos

Don't reinvent the wheel.

The same demo creation platform used to build interactive product tours and standardized sales demo libraries can be used to tailor SE demos. You can think of a demo library as a big box of reusable assets that can be shared as-is, or duplicated and customized for deeper, late-funnel discussions.

Now that you know more about the prospect and their specific needs or questions, it's time to think about the story you want to tell. A good demo creation platform will allow you to tailor and customize a demo quickly.

Some questions to ask to tailor your demo might include:

- What parts of the product do you want to explore in this stage of the cycle?
- What types of data do you want to show in the demo, and is it relevant to the prospect?
- How can you proactively address challenges, questions or objections as you dive a layer deeper into your demo?

Remain hyper-focused on what the prospect is trying to understand.

It can be tempting to feature-dump in a technical demo, showing off every possible capability your product has to offer. In many cases, this approach can confuse or overwhelm a prospect that has a specific pain point. Instead, cherry-pick the ideas that seemed most interesting to the prospect on previous calls, and explore those in further depth.

Prospects at different stages in the funnel have different attention spans. Top-of-funnel prospects have the least time and attention, so it's important to keep an interactive product tour short and sweet. Think 5-10 clicks. Once a prospect hits a first call with an AE, they may have slightly more attention to give. If you're using an interactive demo platform for the product tour, you'll have more intel on where to focus your first AE demo.

From there, the demo should get customized further based on what the prospect wants to see. Rather than talking through every possible feature, using a guided demo as a leave-behind can address what isn't covered on the SE call.

Use guardrails to keep a live demo on track.

To keep the conversation highly tailored to prospect needs, a good demo creation platform will allow you to set guardrails on exactly what parts of the product environment you'll show at any given time. This keeps the demo under control for both the SE and prospect alike, and avoids needless distractions that can extend the sales cycle even further.

Improving Sales Efficiency with the Right Interactive Demo Creation Platform

Fortunately, the playbook above is easy to execute with the right demo creation environment. Choosing the right solution can help you save time at every stage in the sales cycle: From prospect self-discovery to close.

Tips for Choosing the Best Demo Creation Platform

Choose a platform that allows you to:

- Create both live demos and guided demos/product tours for prospects.
- Inject custom datasets into either a live production environment or a self-contained demo environment.
- Build a demo program and standardize a demo library.
- Enable sales reps or marketers to edit and customize demos without coding skills.
- Prioritize safety, stability, and reliability — particularly in enterprise environments where data security, anonymization and compliance regulations are critical.
- Easily connect to and clone your application environment.
- Offer flexibility to customize your demo as you need, so you can start with a baseline/standardized demo and inject custom datasets for a specific industry, persona or use case.
- Integrate with your sales and marketing stack, or provide data API connectivity that you can leverage within your data lake or data warehouse.
- Leverage demo analytics to improve your demo over time, or prioritize use cases that get the most traffic on your website. You can even use this data to trigger specific sales and/or marketing actions.