I joined the Observability company New Relic when they were a year old and only supported Ruby applications. Internally we were developing a java agent. I did most of the testing on that agent including performance testing the first release. But after release the new agent wasn’t getting the traction hoped for and someone suggested a demo.

So using a simple idea for a demo the sales team suggested I created a script to provision AMIs on AWS. Then the script deployed a mysql database (with a mysql dump of sample data), a simple Spring MVC framework application and a jmeter load script to drive traffic to this fake application all running continuously on the cloud.

I instrumented this application with New Relic and made this available to everyone to try out the product and the data generated from our website. I was later told that the rate of sign-up for the service and thus paid subscriptions increased very noticeably immediately after that demo went live. Since APM had previously been a very expensive and exclusive tool most developers had never seen what kind of insights the tool provided with a running application and so couldn't understand the value proposition.

I went on to build some other pretty cool things at New Relic including a framework for fully automated distributed performance and stability testing for each of the agents (ruby, java, python, c#, php) but the project above quite early in my time directly contributed to the success of the company.