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DATE: December 11, 1992

SUBJECT: Interoperability Press Tour PR Plan

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This brief strategy memo outlines PR plans for the Microsoft Interoperability Press Tour in January 1993.
The tour will cover a number of issues related to using multiple applications, including interoperability,
programmability, data access and using applications in workgroups. Interoperability will be the primary
focus because we have the most to say about that topic. The information we convey on the tour will be
conceptual in nature, and there will be little or no hard news. Our goal is to get editors thinking about the
importance of cross-application issues, show that Microsoft is dedicated to these issues and position
Microsoft as the leader on issues relating to using multiple applications. Later this spring, as we begin
rolling out the next generation of applications, we will build on the themes established during this tour.

Interoperability is ultimately an area in which Microsoft can win. We want to start setting the stage for
this by affecting the way applications and applications suites are reviewed and evaluated. In addition, we
need to set the stage for programmability, which will also play an important differentiating role in our
communications.

SITUATION ANALYSIS

Microsoft must jump on the interoperability bandwagon now before our competitors, the most significant
of which is Lotus, stake their claim. Lotus has put a lot of muscle behind its Working Together strategy
and editors and analysts are starting to listen and cover the issues. It appears, however, that Lotus has not
literally said, "These are the key components, and this is what we are doing." They are, however, starting
to include a paragraph in their news releases on applications working together. We may want to consider
this type of boilerplate for future Microsoft releases. Most recently, this paragraph was in the Lotus'
Freelance Graphics 2.0 announcement news release:

> *Freelance Graphics for Windows is tightly integrated with Lotus' suite of Windows applications
> including 1-2-3 for Windows, Ami Pro, cc:Mail and Lotus Notes. It shares the look and feel of
> the Lotus suite offering users smooth transitions among applications and a reduced learning
> curve. Products in the suite feature SmartIcons for single-click access to frequently used
> commands, a common menu structure and screen appearance, and the ability to share work
> seamlessly across applications. Mail-enabling with cc:Mail for Windows Release 1.1 and
> Lotus Notes Release 2.1 gives presenters the option of sending a presentation to a colleague
> without leaving Freelance Graphics for Windows.*

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Lotus recently announced LotusScript, which at first sounds similar to Object Basic, but sources say it is really only a macro language and not as extensive as Object Basic. It is unfortunate that LotusScript beat us out of the announcement gate, and we will need to keep an eye on this product.

Lotus is increasingly defining relevant data to be data residing in the Notes database and shared by the group. To access outside data, they have Datalens, which they say will support ODBC, but their data access "front end tool" or query tool plans are unclear. In other words, they do not have a straightforward method of bringing data into an application. Since Lotus is saying that "communication" not "data" is important, we could position them as weak in data access.

Lotus has done a good job of positioning itself as a "workgroup" company with Notes. It is likely that Lotus will deliver workgroup integration in all of its major applications.

Borland does not have a good interoperability story, in a large part due to not having the key components of a business suite (including a word processor), and not offering a significant number of cross-platform applications. They have not yet expressed a cross-applications programmability strategy. By talking about cross applications issues, we can indirectly position Borland as a non-player. Borland will, however, be able to talk about data access. They recently announced IDAPI, which is similar to ODBC but is way behind ODBC – it is not even in the spec. stage. Microsoft is positioning this product as an extension to ODBC. Borland does have a comprehensive, but complex and vaporous, database strategy and will make data access a key part of their messages.

There are a lot of inherent PR risks in Microsoft's Object Basic strategy, which will be covered thoroughly in the Object Basic PR Plan. The key concern is that Microsoft will be perceived as giving its applications an unfair advantage, by not offering Object Basic to ISVs until 18 months after it first appears in a Microsoft application, Excel. Even thought this tour is just setting the stage for future communications with the editors and analysts, we need to be prepared for questions that may surface about this issue.

Interoperability, defined as the consistency and integration of products, has the potential of being an industry buzzword much like usability is right now. Ideally, interoperability will be a key criteria in future reviews as a subset of usability. Research shows there are more than seven applications on the average Windows and Macintosh user's desktop computer, and corporations continue to offer several platforms to their employees.

As suite sales continue to rise, it will be increasingly important to present Microsoft as the leader in areas that affect users of suites, such as consistency and integration via OLE. Similarly, a good cross-platform story is important to show Microsoft's commitment to these corporations. As applications become more modular and there is a greater use of OLE, the lines between applications start to blur, creating an increasing need for applications that look and behave consistently. As Microsoft begins to talk about the significance of OLE 2.0 and a common macro language, it indicates further that the lines between applications are blurring, increasingly working together as a desktop "system" of applications.

Interoperability, as a term and a concept, is not fully understood in the editorial community. In our research, we came across several articles that touch on aspects of interoperability such as cross-platform capabilities and consistency. But this is a relatively new topic. Many of the articles were gripes about how poorly files transfer from one platform to another. Some articles complimented Microsoft on the cross-platform consistency of Microsoft Excel. Microsoft has been criticized for the consistency of its applications, most notably by Dale Lewallen of *PC/Computing*, so it is important that Microsoft says that it is working "toward" complete interoperability rather than saying Microsoft is there already. We also found that the Macintosh publications covered the interoperability issue as much as the PC press.

Because of the newness of discussions on the usability of applications working together, Microsoft can indirectly position itself as the leader by being one of the first to go out and talk about the importance of it. Microsoft may not have the ideal story, but it can show how the company has smart people dedicated to

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making the products work better together. Microsoft can also take the leading role in educating the press on the definition of interoperability and position the company as the expert in this area. It is important to give editors a taste of what Microsoft is doing without giving them the details, thus risking that Microsoft competitors will hear about them and implement them. We will also need to evaluate when Microsoft applications interoperability will be where it should be and set reasonable expectations. All the while, we need to be clear that "doing" interoperability and all the other aspects of applications working together is very complex and difficult, but Microsoft has the talent to take on the challenge. The product groups have committed to filling out a matrix for how well the next generation of products support each of the following areas: interoperability, usability, programmability, data access and workgroup enabling functions.

We will need to set the agenda for what constitutes true interoperability. It is likely that Lotus will counterattack by saying Microsoft lacks in these areas, so it will be crucial to position Microsoft's thinking as long term. If Microsoft does not win in this area, it risks losing tremendous ground in the battle to win the desktop. Microsoft needs to set a high bar for interoperability. One crucial area that needs to be addressed is how the products interact with products from other companies. This issue was raised by Michael Miller, and we suspect others will raise this issue as well. It could turn into a PR nightmare if it is perceived that this is "yet another" way Microsoft is trying to shut out competitors.

OBJECTIVES

- Establish the importance of interoperability and the other key cross-application issues.

- Position Microsoft interoperability and other key cross-application efforts as the standard to which other companies should be compared.

STRATEGIES

- Clearly articulate what makes "good" interoperability, programmability, etc.

- Clearly articulate why interoperability and other cross-application efforts are increasingly necessary and in demand.

- Introduce Chris Graham's group to convey that Microsoft is dedicated to good interoperability and other cross-application issues.

- Show research to convey Microsoft's understanding and awareness of these issues.

- Be the first on the "interoperability" bandwagon.

KEY MESSAGES

- There is a need and customer demand for good interoperability and solutions for other cross application issues.

- Microsoft is a dedicated to good interoperability and solving these other issues.

- Microsoft knows what users want because the company has done extensive research.

- Microsoft has smart people working on interoperability and other cross applications issues.

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- Good interoperability is very complex; it is a long term process, and Microsoft is beginning to make progress.

- Results of Microsoft's interoperability and other cross-application efforts will be visible in upcoming versions of key Microsoft products.

TACTICS

Press Tour

A combination of Philipe, Hank, Robbie and Mark will begin to go out on the road in late January for one-and-a-half-weeks' worth of a press tours. Monica and Gaby will split the PR support responsibilities. On the trip, we will see influential analysts and editors from monthly trade publications including the Macintosh press. On a second trip in March, we will visit the weeklies and some second-tier publications that have expressed an interest in this topic. Because our story is not as good as we would like it to be, we don't want to open ourselves up for scrutiny by the weeklies at this time; rather we should wait until we get a better understanding of how Microsoft is perceived in this area. We are also considering phone calls to people that are important but not worth the time, effort and cost of a face-to-face visit.

The tour visits will have the following flow in an informal discussion:

- Stroke the editors/analysts by saying we are here to talk to them because their opinion is super valuable and important to us.
- Introduce Chris Graham's group and explain its mission.
- Show Microsoft research and discuss the implications.
- Ask the editors/analysts what they think. Is this accurate? Is this what they are hearing from their readers?

The trip will follow on the heels of the Microsoft Office momentum news release, so we will likely field questions about it. We will develop a Q&A document to make sure we handle questions appropriately and consistently. We will also provide a diagram that defines interoperability and other cross-applications areas and illustrates key components.

The following are the editors/analysts that PR recommends for the tour and a suggested timeline for the visits:

Sunday, January 24, travel to Boston

Monday, January 25, in Boston:

IDC - Mary Conti-Loffredo, Ann Palermo, Gigi Wang, John Gantz

Patricia Seybold's Group - John Rymer, David Marshak, Ronni Marshak

Forrester Research - John McCarthy, Stuart Woodring, William Bluestein

Summit Strategies - Tom Kucharvy, Joyce Gavenda

*Soft*letter* - Jeff Tarter

The Yankee Group, Paul Zagaeski

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(Fly to New York that evening)

Tuesday, January 26, in New York

PC Magazine - Mary Kathleen Flynn, Michael Miller, Joel Dreyfuss, Robin Raskin, Bill Howard, Sheryl Canter, Ted Stevenson, Don Willmott, Trudy Neuhaus, Ed Mendelson

BYTE - Rich Malloy, Ed Perratore

Windows Sources - Gus Venditto, Jackie Gavron, Karen Offerman

Release 1.0 - Esther Dyson

Computerletter - Dick Shaffer

Wednesday, January 27, in New Hampshire

BYTE - Dennis Allen, Rich Friedman, Jerry Pournelle, David Andrews, Dennis Barker

Workgroup Technologies - John Dunkle

Thursday, January 28, in Connecticut

META Group - Aaron Zornes, David Curley (Westport, CT)

Gartner Group - Bill Caffery, Bill Redman, Jon Yarmis, Leslie Fiering, Jeff Schulman (Stamford, CT)

(Fly home)

Monday, February 8, in Bay Area

PC World - Eric Knorr, Steve Fox, Philip Lemmons, Russ Glitman

Macworld - Deborah Branscum, Cheryl England, Carol Person, Jim Heid

BYTE - Andy Reinhardt, Patrick Waurzyniak

Corporate Computing - Rafe Needleman, Alan Kay, Bill Roberts, Rochelle Garner, Michael Laskey, Kevin Bachas

Tuesday, February 9, in Bay Area

MacUser - Jim Bradbury, Rik Myslewski, Russ Ito, Vicky Von Biel, Henry Bortman

PC/Computing - Ed Bott, Sandra Reed, Ron White, Jean Atelsek, Gina Smith, Sebastian Rupley, Matt Lake, Dale Lewallen, George Beinhorn

Creative Strategies Research International - Tim Bajarin, Michael Heylin

Dataquest - Ken Landoline, Kristyna Filistowicz, David Kesselring

Wednesday, February 10 in By Area and Malibu

PC Letter - David Coursey

Seybold Seminars - Jonathon Seybold, Craig Cline

(Fly home)

Redmond

Windows Magazine - Jim Powell