

Thoughts?
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PLAINTIFF'S
EXHIBIT

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tabbies
Comes v. Microsoft

Microsoft Excel 3.0 Positioning

Key Goals and Issues

Excel 3.0 will be an significant improvement over Excel 2.0 in many visible ways. While Excel 2.0 has been successful in terms of critical acclaim and adoption by the leading edge, it has not been a mainstream success in the Windows market. This is due to it's more expensive swiching process, need for high-end hardware, and prior limitations of the Windows 2.x environment.

Both because Windows 3.0 is growing the market by adding more new GUI users, and because our current archetectural sell has gamed only a small percentage of the DOS market, we need to broaden our message to appeal to a wider segment.

Because Excel 3.0 faces many more competitors, and because those competitors map both above and below Excel in terms of power and hardware requirements, Excel 3.0 must stake out a sizable share of the broad market and be able to defend it again multiple competitors.

I recommend option 3.

1 The 2nd/New/Next Generation Spreadsheet

Pros

This is high tech leadership. We continue to forge ahead of our competitors to bring the newest, most innovative, most advanced spreadsheet to market. We can point to our L&E as a sustainable advantage that delivers the first step in our eventual modular application architecture. This supports the environment and our integratiuon with it well, at the expense of Quattro and quick ports like Wingz.

Cons

We've been seen as somewhat of an eccentric genius already — undeniable innovative, but hard to like. This positioning pushes us further out of the mainstream. Given that some of our features are catch up (buttons, solver) this will be difficult to sustain.

Repositioning our Competitors

We can point to Lotus and it's hybrid interface as an artifact of the past and evidence that their product is a CUI app in GUI clothes.

Supporting Product Attributes

Outlining, Styles, Linking and Embedding (and environment integration), draggable chart points, consolidation, fast recalc, powerful macros.

Exposures

Finally, it will be easy to reposition us as esoteric and unwieldy vs Quattro and 123 2.2.

2 The Most Powerful Spreadsheet

Pros

This has been our positioning and remains compelling. Powerful still means best to many consumers and we have invested in this positioning for some time. This is a "no compromises" positioning which appeals to power users.

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Cons

However, we are no longer the most powerful spreadsheet. 123/G, Wingz, and even Quattro have features that Excel 3.0 will not. As well, if we intend to broaden our market for Excel vs our competitors, moving higher will not help us - we'll only appear more unreachable and non-mainstream to the average spreadsheet user.

Supporting Product Attributes

Consolidation, fast recalc, powerful macros, outlining, styles, arrays.

Exposures

In lots of ways, this is not sustainable or defensible: 123/G and Wingz out feature us already. Finally, it will be easy to reposition us as esoteric and unwieldy vs Quattro and 123 2.2.

Repositioning our Competitors

We can say that 1-2-3/G (and 123/W) is a catch up product which still lacks the auditing tools, smart consolidation, outlining, and macros that Excel has. Quattro will lack many of the same features (and will pose less of a threat in terms of pure power).

3 The Smarter Spreadsheet - recommended

Pros

This is a power positioning but directed more at solving customer problems instead of setting new bars for features. This says: we've thought through the hard problems and incorporated the solutions into Excel so that you don't have to work as hard. It also plays off of our "older and wiser" GUI spreadsheet positioning. It also touches on the "smart choice" idea: buy Excel and have compatibility across platforms, a strategic software partner, and a vendor committed to leading the category.

Cons

Can be vague or arrogant if not explained carefully.

Supporting Product Attributes

Smart charting, smart consolidation, auto outlining and styles, Linking and Embedding, auditing, auto-sum, best fit column width, and draggable chart points. Sensible system requirements and family compatibility. Billg and Microsoft reputation for smarts.

Exposures

None seen.

Repositioning our Competitors

123/G, 123/W, and Wingz are lumbering and awkward and ill suited for daily use. They are adding features for the sake of features instead of directing development toward solving customer problems. They haven't begun to redefine the category. If we successfully redefine power in this way, much of the 123/G, 3.0 and Wingz thunder will be silenced. We can point to Quattro as a feature release which does not extend the category in any innovative ways.

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