

MS-DOS
Ongoing Public Relations Plan
December 1991

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SITUATION ANALYSIS

As MS-DOS begins its 11th year, we are faced with some tough -- but manageable -- competitive and marketing challenges. Our primary charter is to retain and improve MS-DOS 5 market share, which now stands near 100 percent. The key will be to reach primary audiences, such as the press, OEMs and users. Some of these groups are not directly affected by PR, so aggressive marketing programs, along with PR activities, will be required to effectively do the job. This plan complements MS-DOS marketing strategies and identifies key PR issues and activities for the next six months.

MS-DOS has experienced unparalleled success in the operating systems market -- no other product can lay claim to such widespread adoption and extensive visibility. However, the following issues are threats to continued achievement at current levels. None of these issues are mutually exclusive; rather, each challenge compounds the effects of another.

- **DR DOS**

The editorial community, to a great extent, does not see DR DOS as having a chance -- they think of MS-DOS as dominant and as "the DOS." However, editors are interested in DR DOS and will continue to investigate and write about their findings. They see the product as an interesting, legitimate competitor and a potential threat to Microsoft's long-standing hold on the DOS market. DRI is definitely the underdog and will continue to benefit from it -- including getting more coverage than they may deserve and getting the benefit of the doubt. The challenge is to derail them in a way so that they don't gain credibility. DRI is positioning DR DOS as the high-end DOS -- the general perception is that they have a good, more technically advanced product, and reviews have reflected this. Additionally, editors view the competition between MS-DOS and DR DOS as positive for the industry: users now have a choice when purchasing an operating system, and it is more likely that their needs will be met quickly as Microsoft and DRI jockey to gain competitive advantage. The Novell acquisition of DRI is interesting to editors -- many feel that DR DOS will now have more marketing muscle behind it.

- **DR DOS and IBM**

It is unclear whether IBM will license DR DOS. IBM recently confirmed off the record that they would sell a retail version of PC DOS to PC-compatible manufacturers. IBM's DOS strategy is therefore becoming less clear, so we have a challenge and an opportunity to leverage this against DR DOS.

- **MS-DOS Brand Awareness**

MS-DOS brand awareness is low, and many editors (as well as OEMs, ISVs and end users) use "MS-DOS" interchangeably with "DOS," which could cause some people to think that DR DOS is included in this category.

- **MS-DOS Upgrade**

User inertia is affecting sales of the MS-DOS 5 Upgrade, though the product continues to be at the top of the best seller charts. Many users feel there is little reason to update products they currently have -- added functionality and features are just not worth the trouble or cost. Most reviews have shown that users should upgrade, though there are caveats -- for example, if users already have certain utilities, they are told an upgrade is not worthwhile.

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- **Other Microsoft Systems Issues**

Editors are frequently confused by Microsoft's systems strategy. Furthermore, MS-DOS can get lost in the Windows-centric strategy. Editors will want to understand where MS-DOS is headed, how it will interact with other systems products and how this will affect users. Other systems announcements may introduce confusing messages vis a vis MS-DOS, particularly the introduction of Windows NT. There is no longer the impression that MS-DOS is dead, though now it should be clear that Windows is the future.

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SELECTED INDUSTRY QUOTES

In preparation for this plan, we conducted an audit of several key editors in the trade and general press. We asked: what are your thoughts about MS-DOS, are you thinking about DR DOS and what capabilities do users look for in an operating system? Below are several of their comments, which represent common perceptions that we believe users may also hold.

"MS-DOS 5 is the most bullet-proof piece of software that I've ever seen. If Brad and his folks can do for Windows 3.1 what they did for MS-DOS 5, the world will be a wonderful place."

"I've looked at DR DOS briefly, out of curiosity. I found that they've taken some good steps, but because of market acceptance and its broad base, I continue to use MS-DOS 5."

"On comparison of the two products, DR DOS is the fuller of the two products, having more features and accessories. MS-DOS is the more widely regarded of the two, considered safer to use and a must support by all software products."

"The most important thing in an operating system design is that it works, no questions asked. In an operating system like DOS, that includes complete compatibility with all the existing applications."

"Microsoft is in a uniquely powerful position. It can't lose. The question is how graciously it can win."

"DR DOS has been a favorite of techies who need to dive into a computer's insides to produce a program for the outside. It is reported to have a 10 to 15 percent market share of the worldwide personal computer operating systems market. Over the last three years, more than 3 million copies of DR DOS have been sold as users speak of its superiority over Microsoft MS-DOS."

"DR DOS suffers primarily from a perception problem as a mere clone of MS-DOS. This alone will keep many buyers from ever considering it."

Our conclusions:

- MS-DOS continues to hold the majority of mindshare among the press.
- Although people are curious about DR DOS, many view MS-DOS as the clearly established leader.
- People are doubtful that DR DOS can compete against Microsoft.

This, however, does not mean that we can rest on our laurels. We will continue to aggressively reinforce these perceptions.

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KEY MESSAGES

- MS-DOS is the standard -- only MS-DOS is DOS. When hardware and software vendors say they support "DOS," they mean MS-DOS.
- Microsoft is totally committed to MS-DOS compatibility and users say that is of importance.
- MS-DOS 5 is technically superior to DR DOS, because MS-DOS is compatible with "DOS" hardware and software, has a better memory management implementation, has sophisticated APIs and has "fit and finish."
- Microsoft is driving the MS-DOS standard forward through the portable computing initiative, and later, MS-DOS 6.
- DR DOS is buggy and incompatible with lots of existing software.

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TARGETS

- Daily columnists and trade press to reach OEMs, ISVs and technical users who may be aware of and are considering DR DOS. This includes trade labs.
- Local press that cover computer-related topics to reach the common user and to promote brand awareness.
- Analysts and other industry influentials to share an impartial point of view and to reach decision makers.

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OBJECTIVES

- Ensure the press understand MS-DOS superiority and why DR DOS is inferior.
- Communicate MS-DOS and MS-DOS 5 momentum.
- Communicate technical leadership and demonstrate that Microsoft is moving the standard forward aggressively.

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STRATEGIES/TACTICS

Use third parties to speak credibly.

Tactics:

- Identify credible non-press who believe in MS-DOS and/or have negative opinions of DR DOS. This would include:
 - Contacting CompuServe users who are negative about DR DOS.
 - Contacting users who are negative and referenced by the press, or who write a letter to the editor.
 - Contacting third parties (such as utilities vendors) who are impacted by poor DR DOS compatibility.
- Develop comprehensive user profiles of our supporters to use as press references and include in press releases and other communications materials. We have several, but not as many big names as we think we could and should have.
- A Letters to the Editor campaign. Solicit third parties to submit opinion pieces that are pro-Microsoft and/or anti-DRI. These will come from our credible third parties, as identified above (CompuServe users, people quoted by the press and utility vendors).
- Create MS-DOS PR packet for OEMs. This would include general information for their PR efforts, including standard MS-DOS boilerplate (to be developed), proper usage of the term "MS-DOS" and procedure for getting an MS quote for use in a press release. A contact name will be included.

Actively influence coverage for MS-DOS and DR DOS, including reviews. Show editors what to probe for and what is important to users. Use competitive information against DR DOS.

Tactics:

- Target a broad press audience. This would include daily columnists, second tier and regional publications, along with the traditional trade press. We will contact the dozen newspaper columnists we've recently added to our lists, as well as all local computer newspaper editors.
- DR DOS comparison document. Correct the misleading side-by-side comparison of MS-DOS to DR DOS prepared by Digital Research. Send corrected information to labs and editors.
- Aggressively follow reviews -- know what they will cover and when they will complete. Continue to proactively provide any information we think might be useful -- they might never share with us details of the review/article.

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- Develop user reference lists from profiles and feed to editors doing articles and reviews. These will include users who are favorable toward MS-DOS and negative toward DR DOS.
- Prepare a backgrounder describing what users look for and what criteria reviewers should consider when evaluating an operating system; though the DR DOS 6.0 wave is over, we must think ahead to the MS-DOS 6 and DR DOS 7 waves. Distribute broadly. The purpose of this backgrounder is to identify positive questions that reviewers should consider when evaluating MS-DOS or MS-DOS clones. This should include sample hardware/software configurations that we believe are key. This lays groundwork, further positioning Microsoft as the operating system leader. *w/Software Testing*
- Distribute MS-DOS Resource Kit for users. The Windows Resource Kit has been a great success. PR will target and provide copies to 50 editors. We will call these editors to determine perceptions about the kit and encourage write-ups. The kit would show commitment to users and share correct information about DR DOS.
- Target publications for stories on various subjects and sell editors on the concepts. Examples and possible targets include:

Systems of Famous People - *USA Today*
 What Users Look for in an Operating System - *PC Week*
 Software Testing Issues - *BYTE*
 Supporting a Large Installed Base - *PC Computing*

- Create an MS-DOS Editor Buddy program. Pair key influentials who are not yet in the MS-DOS camp and who are positive about DR DOS with members of the MS-DOS marketing team to influence and establish relationships with editors -- the Silverberg/Sherer pairing has proven quite successful. This will allow for consistency as well as continued opportunity to audit editorial opinion. The managers will call their buddies monthly to update them on recent news and offer to answer any questions. The goal is to create a dialog and relationship that encourages the buddy to call the manager whenever he/she is looking for Microsoft's side of the DOS story.
- Continually share anti-DR DOS competitive information, such as the XXCal Testing results and other documents. This includes referencing information on the phone as well as offering it with all MS-DOS product and information requests. In addition, we will mail these with personal notes to individuals not visited on the MS-DOS press tour.
- Leverage upcoming MS-DOS news. This would include our current work on the portable computing initiative.
- Tips and Tricks. Continue to place helpful hints in trade publications, such as *BYTE* and *PC Magazine*, which have not previously shown an interest. This requires further input from PSS and developers on new tips.

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Reinforce MS-DOS tenure and industry support through articles, panels and direct communications.

Tactics:

- Prepare presentation and conduct press tour to discuss software testing issues. Presentation to embrace Microsoft's overall approach -- including, but not limited to, MS-DOS.
- Develop MS-DOS terminology reminder to be sent out to writers who misuse the term "DOS" in articles. Send along a trinket, such as an MS-DOS coffee mug, as a constant positive reminder.
- Jeopardy! technology category. Contact the producers of Jeopardy! to suggest a technology category. Supply them with answers, including a reference to Microsoft and MS-DOS. This may be a wild card but would certainly reach a large audience.
- Distribute a letter to copy editors, OEMs and ISVs encouraging usage of the term "MS-DOS." Write proper usage into OEM contracts.
- Use Gordon Letwin's great visibility. Raise his visibility on CompuServe to show that Microsoft is thinking about MS-DOS futures and has smart people thinking about it. Approach Stuart Johnston to suggest he interview Gordon for an *InfoWorld* "one on one" column.
- Panel Placement. There is ample opportunity to piggyback MS-DOS on Windows panel opportunities based on Microsoft's current operating system focus. Windows speaking opportunities occur on a regular basis. PR to brief speakers, encouraging MS-DOS messages. It is unlikely that we would be able to place an MS-DOS-only speaker on a panel that did not also include either DRI or GeoWorks. We will actively target the Windows & OS/2 Show, Windows World and Spring Comdex.
- Press Audit. Conduct an audit of key influentials to determine individual perceptions of MS-DOS and DR DOS, and to identify candidates for our buddy program. Formal follow-up will take place in June to gauge any change in perceptions and to further identify where we need to concentrate our efforts.

Leverage MS-DOS marketing and advertising programs.

Tactics:

- MS-DOS Advertising Campaign. Press tour to visit daily and regional columnists to coincide with campaign. Goal would be to reinforce MS-DOS momentum and provide a general update and Q&A.
- Additionally, mail postcards to the press citing the reasons "No PC Should Be Without MS-DOS 5," as referenced in the ads.

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TIMELINE:**Ongoing**

- Identify credible parties for development of user profiles and reference lists.
- Aggressively influence reviews and coverage through use of editorial calendars and regular contact.
- Proactively share anti-DR DOS competitive information.
- Letters to the Editor campaign.
- Place MS-DOS Tips and Tricks in *BYTE* and *PC Magazine*.

December 1991

- Determine announcement date for APM and MS-DOS 5 ROM Version announcement. Revise materials and develop joint letterhead. Target key editors and approach for meetings.
- Obtain buy-off and distribute "MS-DOS" usage letter to copy editors, OEMs and ISVs.
- Conduct press audit.
- Contact Windows & OS/2 Show speakers to determine opportunities for MS-DOS.
- Begin publishing weekly PR status reports to gauge progress.

January 1992

- Finalize press materials and press tour for APM/MS-DOS 5 ROM Version announcement. Complete press tour and follow-up.
- Prepare correction to DRI's MS-DOS/DR DOS comparison document and distribute to reviews editors, as well as those writing comparative pieces.
- Approach Stuart Johnston regarding possible *InfoWorld* "one on one" column on Gordon Letwin.
- Develop editorial targets and partners for MS-DOS Editor Buddy program and initiate first contact by managers.
- Develop ideas for "Why No PC Should Be Without MS-DOS 5" postcard mailing to coincide with advertising campaign. Send postcards each week to select group of the press, including daily columnists.
- Contact Windows World and Spring Comdex speakers to determine opportunities for MS-DOS.

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February 1992

- Prepare "What Do Users Look for in an Operating System?" background. Revise and distribute broadly to the press. Target one publication to write a related story.
- Identify press targets and distribute MS-DOS Resource Kit.
- Determine approach for Windows 3.1 announcement and decide how to leverage. Announcement is currently targeted for April 6.
- Determine speakers for Windows & OS/2 Show and suggest MS-DOS messages where appropriate.
- Develop ideas for "MS-DOS" terminology reminder.
- Prepare for press tour on software testing issues.

March 1992

- Conduct press tour on software testing issues.
- Contact Jeopardy! regarding inclusion of a technology category.
- Develop list of 50 target editors for the MS-DOS Resource Kit and review with product marketing.
- Create MS-DOS PR Packet for OEMs and distribute.
- Perform call-down to determine perceptions of MS-DOS Resource Kit and possible coverage. Publish results.
- Create and mail MS-DOS terminology reminder.

April 1992

- Target and set up appointments with daily columnists to reinforce "Why No PC Should Be Without MS-DOS 5," talk about momentum, provide general update and answer questions.
- Determine speakers for Windows World and Spring Comdex and suggest MS-DOS messages where appropriate.
- Do preparation/research work for placed stories.

May 1992

- Finalize press tour to daily columnists and hit the road. Includes follow-up.
- Target three publications for specific placement stories.

June 1992

- Conduct press audit

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BUDGET

Develop user profiles and reference lists	\$ 5.0K
Panel placement and counsel	2.0K
Letter regarding MS-DOS usage	2.0K
MS-DOS Editor Buddy program	2.0K
MS-DOS Resource Kit	6.0K
MS-DOS PR packet for OEMs	4.0K
MS-DOS terminology reminder	3.0K
Jeopardy! technology category	1.0K
"Why No PC ... " postcard mailing	15.0 - 30.0K
Software testing press tour	20.0K
Daily columnist press tour	12.0K
Press Materials	
OEM support press release and distribution	3.0K
MS-DOS/DR DOS comparison document and distribution	2.0K
"What Do Users Look For ... " backgrounder and distribution	10.0K
Proactive Editorial Contact	
Coordinate story placement	2.0K
Letters to the Editor campaign	2.0K
MS-DOS Tips and Tricks	1.0K
Press audit (December and June)	6.0K
Responsive editorial contact (six months)	18.0K
Planning and client meetings (six months)	3.0K
<u>TOTAL</u>	\$119K - 134K

Note: The MS-DOS 5 ROM and APM announcement is not included in this budget.

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WILD IDEAS IF YOU HAD THE TIME AND MONEY

- **MS-DOS 5, One Year Later.** Revisit case studies from the MS-DOS 5 announcement one year later to see what companies are doing now. Show the momentum of MS-DOS 5 and explain where MS-DOS is headed.
- **Spearhead MS-DOS demos** in nationwide department stores, e.g., Sears. The same idea might apply to college bookstores.
- **MS-DOS Quiz.** Publish MS-DOS 5 quizzes in college newspapers, eligible for prize drawings. Terms such as MS-DOS, RAM, ROM would be featured.
- **Compatibility Central.** Users can report incompatibilities with MS-DOS or DR DOS and Microsoft will help smooth them out. Show who is having problems and where they are occurring.
- **MS-DOS radio promotion.** Stage a contest in major cities where key radio stations can pose user-oriented questions about MS-DOS. Listeners who can call in with the answer win a prize.
- **Organize sales force blitz** to OEMs to make sure they're happy.
- **Myths Paper.** Clean this up for widespread distribution to the press.

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