Mike Maples

From: Pete Higgins
To: Bill Gates; Mike Maples
Subject: FW: Comments on Lotus Usability Testing Versus Freelance
Date: Friday, July 23, 1993 4:58PM

Some good tactical response work and also some interesting reading as to how PPT 4.0 will respond to Freelance. With luck we will at minimum "de-humiliate" PPT. This plus the revelations of Steve Sinofsky as to how much Lotus is lying about their consistency message is encouraging.

From: Vijay Vashee
To: Pete Higgins
Subject: FW: Comments on Lotus Usability Testing Versus Freelance
Date: Tuesday, July 20, 1993 7:41AM

From: Darrell Boyle
To: Mark Kroese; Robbie Bach
Subject: FW: Comments on Lotus Usability Testing Versus Freelance
Date: Thursday, July 15, 1993 5:05PM

From: Cathy Harris
To: Vijay Vashee
Cc: Darrell Boyle; Elliott Ng; Susan Grabau
Subject: Comments on Lotus Usability Testing Versus Freelance
Date: Friday, July 09, 1993 5:50PM

Vijay,

You asked me what we were doing about the Usability Test information from Lotus (Freelance versus PowerPoint). This mail is to address that request.

1. Damage Control with the Field
We sent out a strong competitive comparison document to the field on selling against Lotus Freelance. It's message: Freelance wins on ease of use for first time users, but that their usability has come at the cost of one of PowerPoint's strengths: flexibility. PowerPoint still beats Freelance in outlining and text handling, overall- power, fine detail control, drawing, dual platform support, and speed. It also outsells FL 2:1.
We also sent out a message yesterday about the recent press reviews reinforcing these points.

2. FUD plan for Lotus
We are currently evaluating our best options for creating uncertainty around Lotus, Freelance, and SmartSuite. These will be defined, and executed through PR as a sustaining effort until PowerPoint 4.0 ships.

3. Revenge: PowerPoint 4
We have communicated to everyone at the gbu that we need to beat Freelance, and have asked everyone to take this on as a personal goal. The work on PowerPoint 4.0 can be broken up into the following percentages: 70% consistency and integration; 30% ease of use & category leadership.

We evaluted these usability tests and the editorial reviews and found that Freelance's success hinges on a few key features:
* on-line tutorial
* "click here" instructions
* multiple slide layout options
* tables
* orgcharts
* right mouse button support

All of these are being addressed in PowerPoint 4.0:
* We will have an on-line "quick preview" that will introduce users to the concepts and basics of using powerpoint 4.0. Will be shorter and more useful than Freelance's.
* "Click Here" instructions: we'll have them.
* We have added a feature called "QuickSlides" which provides 21 different slide layouts (as opposed to Freelance's 12), which users select visually instead of through a text list (tested far better than the FL approach).
* Tables: we've added Word Tables here. Strength is that you have all the features of Word tables; weakness is that you have to have Word to have tables. There is a risk of not getting credit for tables because of the Word requirement; we will work to minimize that risk.
* OrgCharts: we will be shipping a smaller version of OrgPlus, the leading org chart software. This has far more functionality than Freelance. There is risk however in providing this through an embedded app instead of the more integrated approach that FL has taken. We will be working hard in our PR efforts to sell the benefits of using a shared application strategy.
* Right Mouse Button Support: done.
These improvements alone will do LOTS to improve PowerPoint's usability. Add to them the improvments we're making with Wizards,

Tooltips, and CueCards, and we will be able to beat them at the usability game.

Ellen Nold (our usability gal) is going to work up some usability research for us to use in conquering FL2 with PP4. I expect these results to prove pp4 to be easier than fl2, but they will not be as "damning" as what Lotus has been able to create. They will be effective in taking away Lotus' key strength, however.

4. Exploitation
Beating FL at usability is not enough for us to regain back leadership. In order to do that, we must be successful in changing the criteria by which presentation graphics software is measured. Today, this is 80% ease of use, 20% wizzy features. We need to switch the criteria to include:
* ease of use for beginning, intermediate, and advanced users
* maximum leveraged learning from other applications
* interoperability with other business applications

We will build on the work the Office team is doing to accomplish this. We are also tuning our positioning to take PowerPoint one step beyond ease of use, towards "custom fitting". Our approach is simple: All the ease of use and consistency bells and whistles we've added make PowerPoint the easiest product for new users to get up and running. As users become more advanced, they can take advantage of interoperability features like Report it, Present it, an Doc Review, and turn off some of the "training wheels" to work in a faster, more streamlined manner. As they become even more experienced, they can turn on the power toolbar options, customize their UI, install some of the power applets, and have a monster power tool, custom fit for their precise needs. This is a story that helps us:
* address ease of use, but go beyond it.
* exploit our consistency and integration efforts
* get maximum benefit out of the embedded applications we ship ¯
* speak to usage patterns that we can substantiate with research, breaking lotus' "new user myth" (everyone's a new user every time.)

Key to our success in category leadership will be:
* the ability to leverage consistency into ease of use
* the ability to get reviewer's to include consistency and integration with other applications as part of the category review criteria.
These are big challenges, but our friends in Office will be helping us along as well. PowerPoint 4.0 will be an excellent office component, and a very good presentation graphics package. We face an excellent competitor, but the team is PUMPED and ready for battle.