How to Get *Phenomenal* Product Reviews

Brian Lawley

President, 280 Group LLC

www.280group.com

SVPMA Meeting

September 8, 2004

©2004 280 Group LLC

Agenda

- A Little About The 280 Group…
- Why Reviews are SO critical
- Top 10 Ways To Get *Phenomenal* Reviews
- Q&A

©2004 280 Group LLC

Hand-picked Marketing and Product Management experts to help companies define, launch & market breakthrough new products.

©2004 280 Group LLC

About the 280 Group

- Core Team:
  - Brian Lawley
  - Sarah Lawley
  - Will Iverson
  - Aaron Hyde
  - Sharon Grimshaw
  - 10+ Subcontractors
- Work for Clients Includes:
  - Consulting & Contracting
    - Projects
    - Interim PMs/Directors/VPs
  - Training
  - Coaching

©2004 280 Group LLC

280 Group Services Offered

Product Management

- Market Analysis
- Developing Business Cases
- Profit & Loss Analysis
- Customer Research
- Market Research
- MRDs & PRDs
- Product Roadmaps
- Working With Engineering Teams
- Reviewing Functional Specs
- Finalizing Product Requirements
- Prioritizing Feature Sets
- Feature, Schedule & Cost Tradeoffs
- Competitive Analysis
- Running Beta Programs

Product Marketing

- Product Launches
- Sales Tools
- Positioning
- Pricing
- White Papers
- Reviewer's Guides
- Product Demos
- Competitive Comparisons
- Customer Testimonials
- Success Stories
- Features & Benefits/USPs
- Press Tours & Materials
- Presentations
- Training Materials

©2004 280 Group LLC

280 Group Client List...

©2004 280 Group LLC

Other 280 Group Services

GoogleRank!

Search Engine Optimization Program

-9 Step process to increase your ranking

-Top 10 results on Google, MSN, Yahoo

-Drive more traffic to your site

QuickSurveys™

Online surveys

-Uses Zoomerang survey service

-Fast results

-More educated decisions

©2004 280 Group LLC

Product Manager's Toolkit™

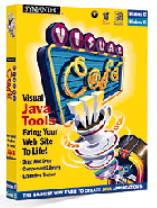
- 30 Best Practices PM Templates
  - MRDs
  - Marketing Plans
  - Positioning
  - Pricing
  - Roadmap
  - Business Case
  - Competitive Analysis
- 280 Group White Papers & Samples
- 30 Minute Consultation
- Unlimited updates & upgrades (www.blackblot.com)
- $99 - introductory price is $79
- Available at www.280group.com

©2004 280 Group LLC

Brian Lawley

- **280 Group LLC**
  President, Principal Consultant

- **Whistle Communications**
  Director of Product Management & Product Marketing



- **Symantec**
  Director of Java and C++ tools

- **Apple Computer**
  Senior Product Manager, MacOS

- **Claris Corporation (FileMaker, Inc.)**
  Marketing Specialist

- **Digidesign, Inc. (division of Avid)**
  Manager of US channel sales and marketing

©2004 280 Group LLC

Before We Start

- Primarily focused on software & hardware reviews
- Value of a first rate PR firm
  - Introductions
  - Credibility
  - “Value-Added” varies
- Without a good review program all else may be a waste of time

©2004 280 Group LLC

Why Reviews Are Critical

- Establish Credibility
- More believable than marketing
- Third-party opinion
- Early adopters live by them
- Key to creating a tipping point
- Product's brand
- Good reviews lead to awards

©2004 280 Group LLC

You've Worked Hard...

techtv

Review: Que!007 Portable Digital Theater

CD/DVD recorder/player does it all but still manages to suck.

★★☆☆☆

By Lawson Wong

You'd need extra fingers to count the functions of the QPS Que!007 Portable Digital Theater. This thing burns DVDs and CDs. It plays MP3 and audio CDs. It'll play DVDs on your television. If you got photos burned onto a CD, it'll display those, too.

So why does the QPS Que!007 leave us feeling as if we had just witnessed our team's game-winning touchdown pass get intercepted? Watch "Fresh Gear" to find out.

©2004 280 Group LLC

Revenues Are On The Line

techtv

YOU CAN'T BUY HAPPINESS BUT YOU CAN WIN IT!

Review: Meade CaptureView Binoculars 8x42 2.0D

Find out why we say 'pass' on this $200 digital camera/binoculars duo.

★★☆☆☆

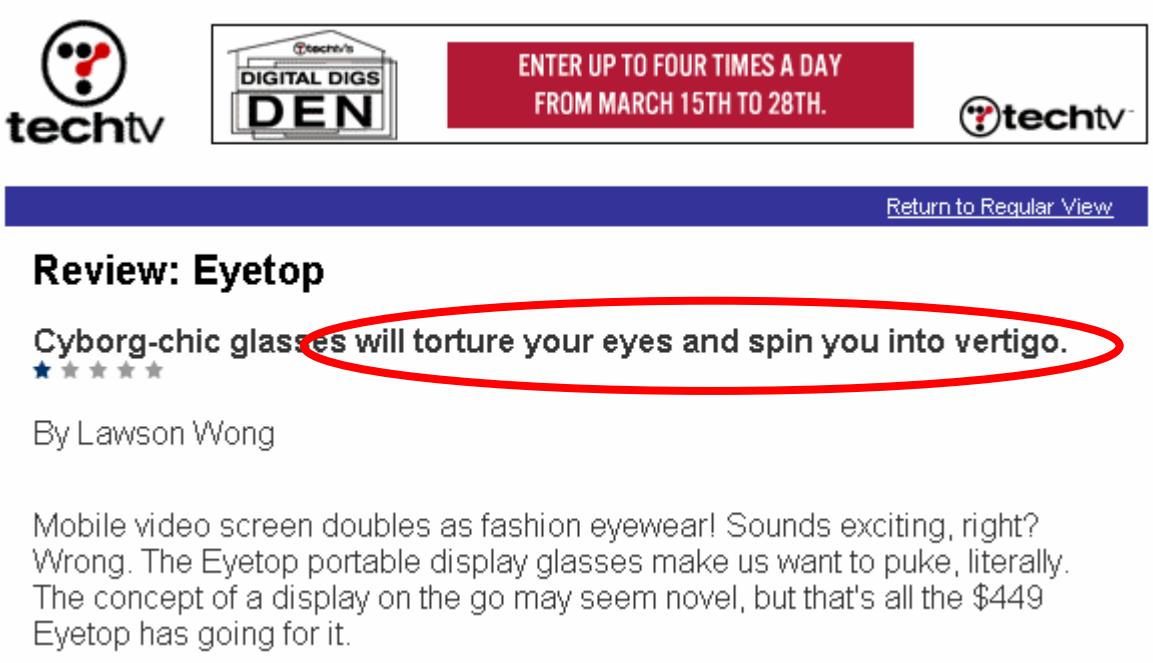
By James Kim

Bird watchers, sports fanatics, and Peeping Toms would wither and die without a pair of good binoculars. Add a digital camera to the mix and you've got a four-eyes' dream.

Meade's CaptureView binoculars pack a digital camera, letting users capture images of far-away subjects such as macaws, outfielders, or, well... you know. While the latest CaptureView employs a better 2-megapixel CMOS (complimentary metal-oxide semiconductor) sensor, most photo enthusiasts will be turned off by poor image quality.

©2004 280 Group LLC

Not To Mention Your Career



©2004 280 Group LLC

Case in Point

PC MAGAZINE
SUBSCRIBE NOW

THE INDEPENDENT GUIDE TO TECHNOLOGY

HOME | REVIEWS | DOWNLOADS | SOLUTIONS

My Account | Sign In Not a member? Join now

New Treo Gets It Right

By Bruce and Marge Brown

October 7, 2003

Total posts: 3

ENLARGE

- Product: Handspring Treo 600
- Street price: $700 ($500 with service activation)
- Requires: Microsoft Windows 98 SE or later, or Mac OS 10.1 or later
- Company info: Handspring Inc., 888-565-9393, www.handspring.com

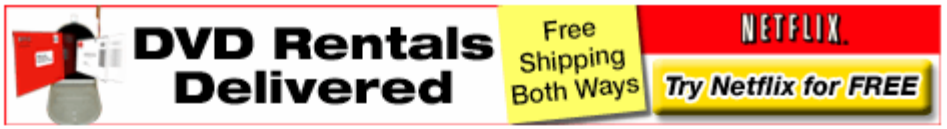
CHECK PRICES

Editor Rating: ●●●●○
Member Rating: ●●●●◐

©2004 280 Group LLC

Case in Point

techtv



Review: Handspring Treo 600

Handspring's new Treo 600 is *the* cellphone/PDA hybrid to buy.
★★★★★

By Hahn Choi

Call me a PDA/cellphone slut -- I've used 'em all. Some make amazing data and messaging devices, while others make great cellphones but terrible messaging devices. Handspring's third incarnation of its Treo PDA/phone hybrid, the Treo 600, achieves the delicate balance that eluded so many before it. Plus, you get the benefit of a mainstream Palm operating system.

I dated the GSM version of the Treo 600 for a bit. Watch "Fresh Gear" this Tuesday to see why it could be "the one."

©2004 280 Group LLC

Case in Point

PERSONAL TECHNOLOGY
WALT MOSSBERG

PERSONAL TECHNOLOGY
MOSSBERG'S MAILBOX
THE MOSSBERG REPORT
THE MOSSBERG SOLUTION
COLUMN ARCHIVE
ABOUT WALT MOSSBERG
BUYER'S GUIDES DESKTOP PCs LAPTOPS
Walt on TV
SUBSCRIBE TO THE PRINT JOURNAL
WSJ.com THE WALL STREET JOURNAL
SUBSCRIBE
TAKE A TOUR
DOWJONES

Win some personal time at Pebble Beach.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

September 18, 2003

COLUMN ARCHIVE

New Treo 600 Rules, With Bright Screen And Long Battery Life

By WALTER S. MOSSBERG

Handspring has done it again. In 2001, the little company introduced the best combination phone, PDA and e-mail device on the market, the Treo. Now, Handspring has topped itself with its all-new version, the Treo 600.

Sprint will start selling the Treo 600 in the U.S. by mid-October for $500 to $550. In Europe, the wireless-phone carrier Orange is also about to start selling it as well. Handspring expects to offer Treo 600s that can be used on

©2004 280 Group LLC

Your Mission, Should You Choose To Accept It…

A Marketing professional, like a lawyer, is an advocate for the client. Just as the lawyer uses all the arguments at his disposal to win the case, so does the marketer use all the facts at his disposal to win the customer (or reviewer) over to the product.

Bob Bly
Copywriter

©2004 280 Group LLC

So What's the difference?

- Some products will never win
- Many products are equal
- Occasionally you get a product that will win no matter what
- Perception is everything
- You can and must manage perception
- Reviewers are overworked, underpaid (and some are lazy)

©2004 280 Group LLC

A Day in the Life of a Reviewer

- Deadline
- Try out new product
- Doesn't work – make calls
- Deadline
- Try second product
- Interruption
- Second product works but don't understand it
- Deadline
- First company never calls back
- Finish second product review
- Attempt to set up lab for third product
- Don't have the right equipment
- Deadline
- Interruption
- Next day:
  - Go back to first bullet
  - See "Groundhog Day" movie

©2004 280 Group LLC

On To The Top 10….

©2004 280 Group LLC

Top 10 Ways to Get A Great Review…

10. Put a Dedicated Senior Product Manager on the Job

©2004 280 Group LLC

Put a Dedicated Senior Product Manager on the Job

- This will be *as important* as the product itself
- Ideal candidate
  - Responsible & good planner
  - Done review programs before
  - Has charisma
  - Ultimately will convey to the reviewer what the company is all about (flaky, responsive, uncaring, customer-focused)
- Get a commitment from management that this will be her/his number one priority for 6 months
- Take them on the press tour
- Build the relationship!!!

©2004 280 Group LLC

Top 10 Ways to Get A Great Review…

9. Work From a Timeline and Hold Bi-weekly Meetings
10. Put a Dedicated Senior Product Manager on the Job

©2004 280 Group LLC

Work From a Timeline and Hold Bi-weekly Meetings

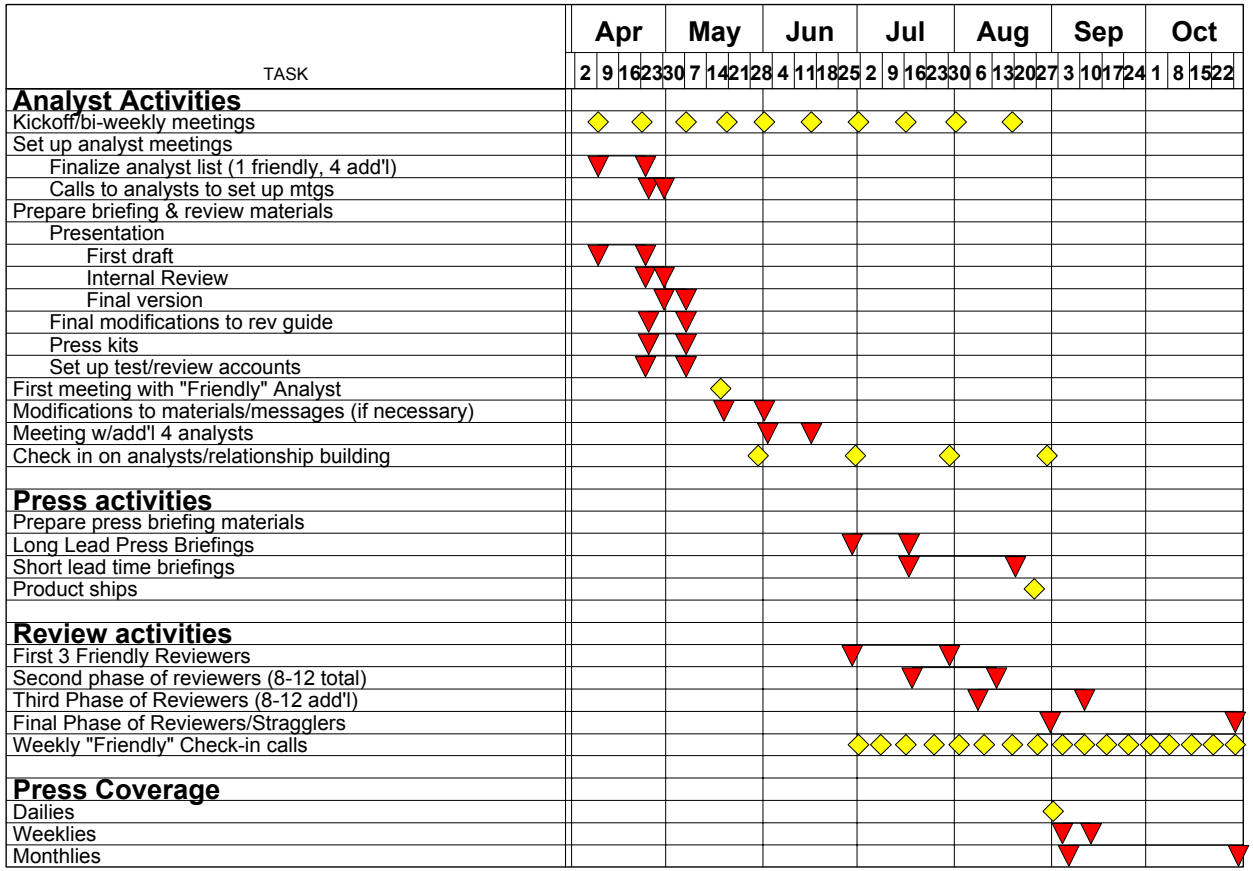
- Use a timeline to communicate/control
- Factor in slippage
- Insist on meeting every 1-2 weeks
- Ask the PM to send a weekly status email

©2004 280 Group LLC

Sample Timeline for Analyst & Press Program

Analyst & Press Program

Page 1 of 1



©2004 280 Group LLC

Top 10 Ways to Get A Great Review…

8. Get Your Materials & References Together
9. Work From a Timeline and Hold Bi-weekly Meetings
10. Put a Dedicated Senior Product Manager on the Job

©2004 280 Group LLC

Get Your Materials & References Together

- Provide a complete press kit
  - Printed materials
  - CD with soft copies
  - Materials to include
    - Press release
    - Brochure/data sheet
    - Reviewer's guide
    - Photos & screen shots
    - Customer quotes, success stories, references and contact info
    - Personalized one page summary sheet
      - When you send product for review
      - Materials included
      - Step-by-step instructions to get started
      - PM & PR contacts
- Don't *make them* have to call you
- Put all materials on the web (for when they lose the CD)

©2004 280 Group LLC

Top 10 Ways to Get A Great Review…

7. Do the Killer Demo: Practice Practice Practice
8. Get Your Materials & References Together
9. Work From a Timeline and Hold Bi-weekly Meetings
10. Put a Dedicated Senior Product Manager on the Job

©2004 280 Group LLC

Do the Killer Demo: Practice Practice Practice

- May be the only time they see the product
- A great demo:
  - Shows top 5 features & benefits
  - Appeals to logic & emotion
  - Uses a real-world scenario
  - Flows and tells a story
  - Build tension & climax
  - Make sure that is an unexpected “Aha” twist
- Practice:
  - Internally
  - Pre-flight
- Refuse to change the demo at the last minute

©2004 280 Group LLC

Top 10 Ways to Get A Great Review…

6. Make It “Dummy Proof” With Custom Preset Accounts
7. Do the Killer Demo: Practice Practice Practice
8. Get Your Materials & References Together
9. Work From a Timeline and Hold Bi-weekly Meetings
10. Put a Dedicated Senior Product Manager on the Job

©2004 280 Group LLC

Make It “Dummy Proof” With Custom Preset Accounts

- Set up demo accounts beforehand & test
- Send reviewer customized letter with materials packet and username & login
- Check to see if the accounts are being used

©2004 280 Group LLC

Top 10 Ways to Get A Great Review…

5. Set the Competitive Argument
6. Make It "Dummy Proof" With Custom Preset Accounts
7. Do the Killer Demo: Practice Practice Practice
8. Get Your Materials & References Together
9. Work From a Timeline and Hold Bi-weekly Meetings
10. Put a Dedicated Senior Product Manager on the Job

©2004 280 Group LLC

Set the Competitive Argument

- Tell them what category you are in
  - Gets you into roundups (even if not necessarily a fit)
  - Makes the logical part of their work much easier
- If you don't set the argument, they will
- "But We Don't Have Any Competition"

©2004 280 Group LLC

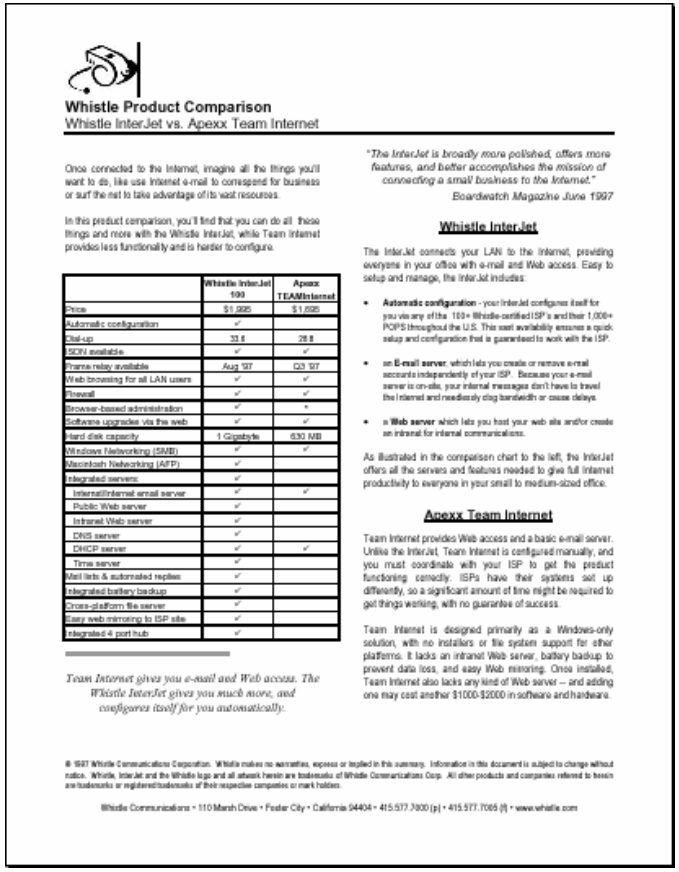
Set the competitive argument

Comparing Hosted Intranet Solutions

	Planet Intra	HotOffice	Intranets.com
Publish and edit web pages without needing to know html?	Yes – using the IntraEditor	No – documents must go through "conversion process" to be viewed by others with a browser	No
Calendaring, contacts, document posting, and discussion groups?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Structure Intranet to match the way you work?	Yes – by workgroups, teams, departments, or projects	No	No
Hosted & licensed versions available?	Yes	No	No
Administrator can set up and manage all accounts?	Yes	Yes	No – Users must create their own account after being "invited" by admin
"What's New" summary?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Designed to scale up to hundreds of users?	Yes	No – designed for very small teams of 10 or less	No – designed for very small teams of 10 or less
Set security and viewing privileges (read, post, modify) per user or per group?	Yes	No - all users have the ability to view all documents. To keep things confidential you must set up a separate new Intranet.	Yes
Pricing	10 or less users free 11+ users - $6/month/user - volume discounts available	With continuous advertising: Free Without ads: $12.95/month/user for up to 20 users	With continuous advertising: Free
Multi-lingual support?	Yes – available in 10 languages	No	No
Multi-platform support?	Yes – Windows, MacOS & Unix. Supports both Windows & MacOS file formats for uploading of files.	No – Windows only	Limited – Windows & MacOS. Unix not tested.

©2004 280 Group LLC

Set the competitive argument



Whistle Product Comparison
Whistle InterJet vs. Apexx Team Internet

Once connected to the Internet, imagine all the things you'll want to do, like use Internet e-mail to correspond for business or surf the net to take advantage of its vast resources.

In this product comparison, you'll find that you can do all these things and more with the Whistle InterJet, while Team Internet provides less functionality and is harder to configure.

	Whistle InterJet 100	Apexx TEAMInternet
Price	$1,995	$1,695
Automatic configuration	✓	
Dial-up	33.6	28.8
ISDN available	✓	✓
Frame relay available	Aug '97	Q3 '97
Web browsing for all LAN users	✓	✓
Firewall	✓	✓
Browser-based administration	✓	*
Software upgrades via the web	✓	✓
Hard disk capacity	1 Gigabyte	630 MB
Windows Networking (SMB)	✓	✓
Macintosh Networking (AFP)	✓	
Integrated servers:	✓	
Internet/Internet email server	✓	✓
Public Web server	✓	
Intranet Web server	✓	
DNS server	✓	
DHCP server	✓	✓
Time server	✓	
Mail lists & automated replies	✓	
Integrated battery backup	✓	
Cross-platform file server	✓	
Easy web mirroring to ISP site	✓	
Integrated 4 port hub	✓	

Team Internet gives you e-mail and Web access. The Whistle InterJet gives you much more, and configures itself for you automatically.

"The InterJet is broadly more polished, offers more features, and better accomplishes the mission of connecting a small business to the Internet."
Boardwatch Magazine June 1997

Whistle InterJet

The InterJet connects your LAN to the Internet, providing everyone in your office with e-mail and Web access. Easy to setup and manage, the InterJet includes:

- **Automatic configuration** - your InterJet configures itself for you via any of the 100+ Whistle-certified ISP's and their 1,000+ POPS throughout the U.S. This vast availability ensures a quick setup and configuration that is guaranteed to work with the ISP.
- an **E-mail server**, which lets you create or remove e-mail accounts independently of your ISP. Because your e-mail server is on-site, your internal messages don't have to travel the Internet and needlessly clog bandwidth or cause delays.
- a **Web server** which lets you host your web site and/or create an intranet for internal communications.

As illustrated in the comparison chart to the left, the InterJet offers all the servers and features needed to give full Internet productivity to everyone in your small to medium-sized office.

Apexx Team Internet

Team Internet provides Web access and a basic e-mail server. Unlike the InterJet, Team Internet is configured manually, and you must coordinate with your ISP to get the product functioning correctly. ISPs have their systems set up differently, so a significant amount of time might be required to get things working, with no guarantee of success.

Team Internet is designed primarily as a Windows-only solution, with no installers or file system support for other platforms. It lacks an intranet Web server, battery backup to prevent data loss, and easy Web mirroring. Once installed, Team Internet also lacks any kind of Web server -- and adding one may cost another $1000-$2000 in software and hardware.

© 1997 Whistle Communications Corporation. Whistle makes no warranties, express or implied in this summary. Information in this document is subject to change without notice. Whistle, InterJet and the Whistle logo and all artwork herein are trademarks of Whistle Communications Corp. All other products and companies referred to herein are trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective companies or mark holders.

Whistle Communications • 110 Marsh Drive • Foster City • California 94404 • 415.577.7900 (p) • 415.577.7065 (f) • www.whistle.com

©2004 280 Group LLC

Top 10 Ways to Get A Great Review…

4. Phase Rollout, Track Equipment, Check in Routinely
5. Set the Competitive Argument
6. Make It "Dummy Proof" With Custom Preset Accounts
7. Do the Killer Demo: Practice Practice Practice
8. Get Your Materials & References Together
9. Work From a Timeline and Hold Bi-weekly Meetings
10. Put a Dedicated Senior Product Manager on the Job

©2004 280 Group LLC

Phase Rollout, Track Equipment, Check in Routinely

- Phase Rollout
  - Do 2-3 reviews *early* to iron out the kinks
  - Deliver the rest in waves
  - Ensures you can be responsive
- Track equipment
  - Spreadsheet with date out, date in, etc.
  - Add'l reason to contact reviewer
- Check in routinely
  - Call 2 days after product sent
  - Friendly call every week to make sure things going smoothly/answer questions

©2004 280 Group LLC

Top 10 Ways to Get A Great Review…

3. Provide *Immediate* Responses
4. Phase Rollout, Track Equipment, Check in Routinely
5. Set the Competitive Argument
6. Make It "Dummy Proof" With Custom Preset Accounts
7. Do the Killer Demo: Practice Practice Practice
8. Get Your Materials & References Together
9. Work From a Timeline and Hold Bi-weekly Meetings
10. Put a Dedicated Senior Product Manager on the Job

©2004 280 Group LLC

Provide *Immediate* Responses

- Respond same day within 2 hours (preferably 30 mins)
- Get commitment from PM (and engineering)
- Use a pager/cell phone
- This will be the parachute if the reviewer accidentally trips and falls out of the plane

©2004 280 Group LLC

Top 10 Ways to Get A Great Review…

2. Include Screen Shots & Photos *With Captions*
3. Provide *Immediate* Responses
4. Phase Rollout, Track Equipment, Check in Routinely
5. Set the Competitive Argument
6. Make It "Dummy Proof" With Custom Preset Accounts
7. Do the Killer Demo: Practice Practice Practice
8. Get Your Materials & References Together
9. Work From a Timeline and Hold Bi-weekly Meetings
10. Put a Dedicated Senior Product Manager on the Job

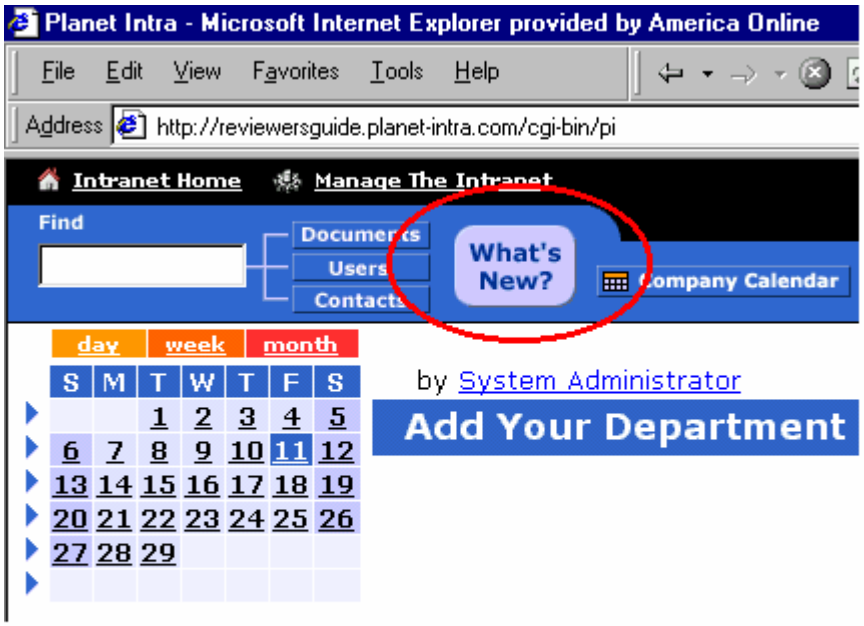
©2004 280 Group LLC

Include Screen Shots & Photos *With Captions*

- Include at least 3 screen shots & photos
- Highlight the top 3 features of the product
- Include captions at bottom of the screen shot
  - Visible when they open the graphic
  - May use it as a direct quote
- Give them the chance to take the lazy way out…

©2004 280 Group LLC

Sample Screen Shot



Planet Intra gives everyone at your company the ability to see What's New with a single click of a button

©2004 280 Group LLC

Top 10 Ways to Get A Great Review…

1. *Write the Review for Them*
2. Include at Least 3 Screen Shots *With Captions*
3. Provide *Immediate* Responses
4. Phase Rollout, Track Equipment, Check in Routinely
5. Set the Competitive Argument
6. Make It "Dummy Proof" With Custom Preset Accounts
7. Do the Killer Demo: Practice Practice Practice
8. Get Your Materials & References Together
9. Work From a Timeline and Hold Bi-weekly Meetings
10. Put a Dedicated Senior Product Manager on the Job

©2004 280 Group LLC

Write The Review For Them

- Provide A Reviewer's Guide
  - Make it "Brain Dead Easy"
  - Include a TOC
  - Use a professional graphic designer
  - Get it printed
    - Professional/together image
    - Forces schedule
    - More likely to be used
  - This will be expensive and worth every penny
- Give Them PDF/Word Versions
  - Plagiarism is the highest form of praise
  - Give them the lazy way out
  - Allow them to copy & paste

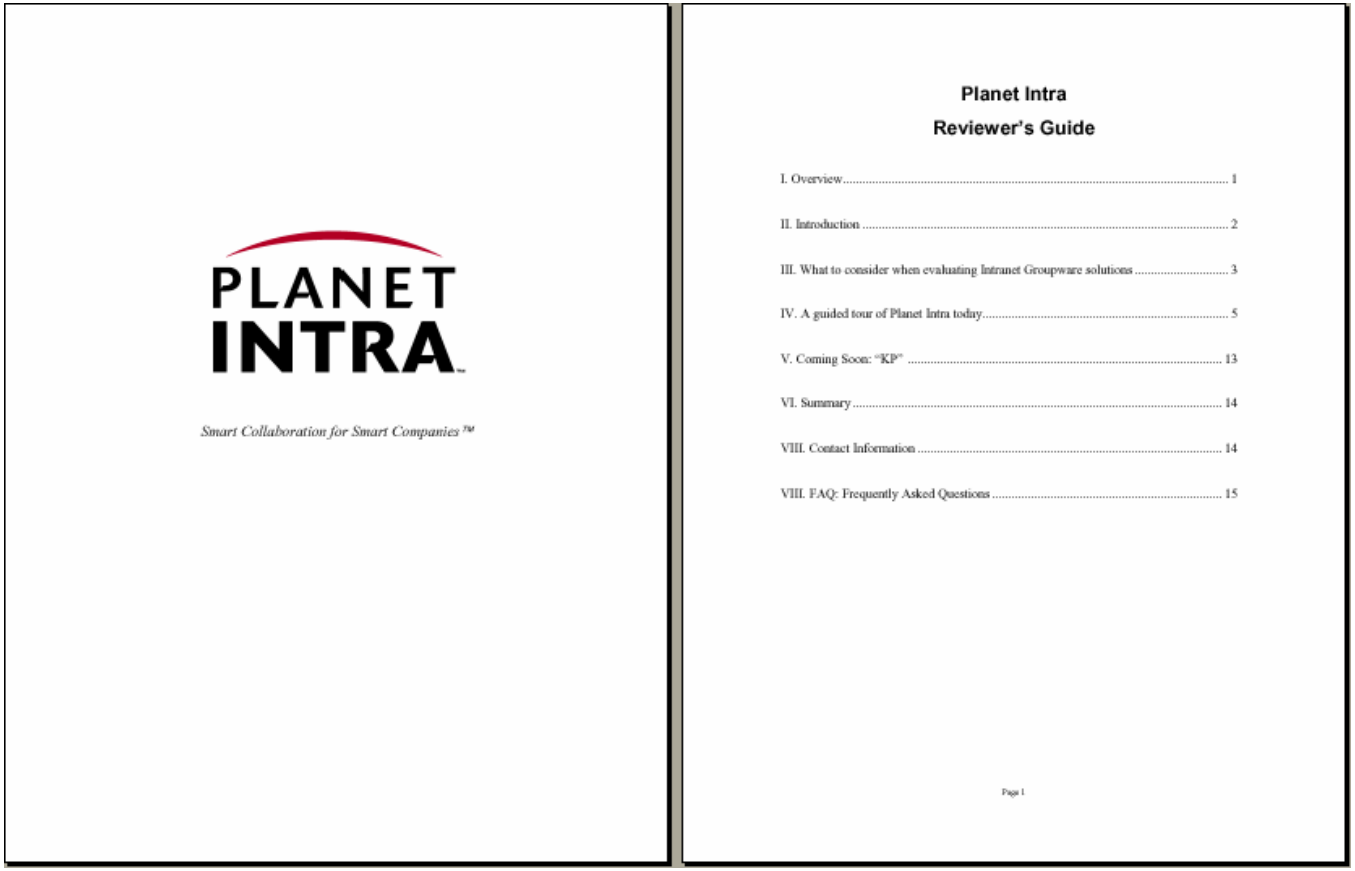
©2004 280 Group LLC

Sample Outline For Reviewer's Guide

I. Overview
II. Introduction
III. What to consider when evaluating XXX solutions
IV. A guided tour of XXX
V. Coming Soon…
VI. Summary
VII. Contact Information
VIII. Competitive Comparison
IX. FAQ: Frequently Asked Questions

©2004 280 Group LLC

Sample Reviewer's Guide



PLANET INTRA

Smart Collaboration for Smart Companies ™

Planet Intra

Reviewer's Guide

I. Overview 1

II. Introduction 2

III. What to consider when evaluating Intranet Groupware solutions 3

IV. A guided tour of Planet Intra today 5

V. Coming Soon: "KP" 13

VI. Summary 14

VIII. Contact Information 14

VIII. FAQ: Frequently Asked Questions 15

Page 1

©2004 280 Group LLC

Sample Guided Tour

IV. A Guided Tour of Planet Intra

This section will give you a hands on tour or Planet Intra to give you the full experience of its powerful features and the simplicity of getting an Intranet up and running with it.

The scenario for this guided tour is that you are the president of a small graphic design agency. You have currently have 15 employees – enough so that communication in the office has become a challenge. You are looking for a solution that will provide a centralized place where employees can go to find information and that will allow you all to collaborate and better work together to utilize the technology at your company.

Planet Intra is a full-featured, powerful Intranet groupware solution. To get started creating an Intranet all you do is specify a name for your site, provide some basic information such as your name and email address, and then let Planet Intra set up the rest for you.

Within a matter of minutes you can quickly and easily deploy an Intranet site and get started working immediately.

Setting up your first Intranet

	To make things easier for you as a reviewer we've already set up an account for you at _____. Simply point your browser to this site and you'll see a screen that looks like the one to the left. Log on with the username Admin and the password _____.

Page 5

	You'll first see a screen called Getting Started – that explains that you are about to use the Getting Started Wizard to create your Intranet. Click on "Continue Setup"
	In the Set Up Users screen create a new user with the following information: First Name: Jimmy Last Name: Smith Username: jsmith Email address: jsmith@planet-intra.com Password: smith Click on the "Add User" button. That's it – you've already created your first user!
	Now that you have created his account, Jimmy Smith will be able to securely log in and access the Intranet with his username and password. In addition to security via usernames and passwords users can also choose an SSL secure version of Planet Intra for an additional fee to provide the highest level of security possible when connecting to the Intranet. You can add as many users as you would like at this time, or you can easily add additional users later. For now we'll move on to the next step in the setup process. Click on the "Next" button in the upper right corner of the screen.

Page 6

©2004 280 Group LLC

Top 10 Ways to Get Great Reviews…

1. *Write the Review for Them*
2. Include at Least 3 Screen Shots *With Captions*
3. Provide *Immediate* Responses
4. Phase Rollout, Track Equipment, Check in Routinely
5. Set the Competitive Argument
6. Make It "Dummy Proof" With Custom Preset Accounts
7. Do the Killer Demo: Practice Practice Practice
8. Get Your Materials & References Together
9. Work From a Timeline and Hold Bi-weekly Meetings
10. Put a Dedicated Senior Product Manager on the Job

©2004 280 Group LLC

A Few More Tips

- Start early (3-4 months prior to launch)
- Reviewer's guides will save you
  - Leverage them everywhere
  - Use for customers & sales force
  - Training tool
  - Basis for demos & other collateral
- Use good tools
  - SnagIt for capturing screen shots
  - Milestones Simplicity for creating simple timelines
- Consider hiring a professional
  - Manage the launch
  - Write the reviewer's guide & other supporting documents
- Email brian@280group.com for samples
  - Reviewer's guide
  - Competitive comparison
- Check Silicon Valley Marketing Resources Directory for PR firms
  - www.280group.com/directory.htm

©2004 280 Group LLC

Q&A...

Brian Lawley
President, 280 Group LLC
brian @ 280group.com
www.280group.com
408-832-1119

©2004 280 Group LLC