

Erik Stevenson

From: Jim Allchin
To: billg; bobmu; bradsj; davidcol; jonl; jonro; mikemap; paulma; richt; steveb; w-clair
Subject: Customers and Novell
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Reading the PCWeek article about the mud-slinging between Novell and Microsoft on the "black screen of death" again points out the fact that we don't have everyone trained with the same approach to Novell. A lot of people talk to the press and (and customers) and we still aren't giving the "we just want to help customers" message consistently.

Instead, we're hitting back at Novell - in a losing way. That does nothing other than set us up as the bad guys. Novell is playing us and we continue to fall for it. And every time some product manager or exec falls for it, we look like we're fighting with Novell in front of customers. This is very, very bad.

I want to ask you to get everyone to begin and end every discussion/quote with the press dealing with Novell with the same basic message: (take your pick - they're all basically examples of the same general message)

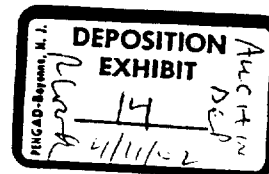
- + "we don't care where or what the problem is, we will work to solve the customer issue"
- + "it doesn't help customers throwing stones between vendors, we're just going to fix the customer problem"
- + "our mission is to work with every company especially Novell with their large marketshare to solve customer problems. We'd be crazy not to work super hard with them."
- + "Pointing fingers is stupid. We will work to Novell and work internally to solve the problems"
- + "Yes, we have a group that competes with Novell on the server, but isn't competition good for customers? Novell support is critical to us because it's critical to customers. We'd be pretty silly not working as hard as we can with Novell on compatibility and interoperability. That's what customers want. Again, we're thinking of customers here. We welcome Novell's competition provided they work with us to help customers."

Novell uses every opportunity that we "lose it" to say something bad against us. "See they really hate us and won't work with us." "We work with everyone. Microsoft works with no one." (Then we get defensive and hit back - exactly the wrong thing to do in my view.)

We MUST get control of this - especially as we move to ship our own NetWare support. We must be able to explain clearly "we just want to solve customer problems". "Of course, we're going to continue working with Novell. We absolutely want their software to run great."

"We also must think of customers and customers are begging us for this support to come directly from us." [we need to put together a strong list of names that we can use here.] "Why else would we invest so much effort in this client (and server) work? We sure won't make any more money! We had to do this for our customers." [we really need to hammer home this last point about it costing us money to do this and we're not getting anything back from it. It is a strong supporting argument about us just trying to help customers.]

Sentiment is against us. We can and MUST turn this around. As we become more aggressive against Novell product and marketing-wise, we must get our mouth in order. The press, etc. is very skeptical of us



so one slip up and we get set back quite a ways.

This really isn't that hard. If you're going to kill someone there isn't much reason to get all worked up about it and angry – you just pull the trigger. Angry discussions beforehand are a waste of time. We need to smile at Novell while we pull the trigger.

jim