



White paper

Let's light this candle!

How to release your product to the world

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Scoutwest, Inc.

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You're nearing the end of development for the all-new, world's greatest, "Whiz-Maker Pro 9000" software product, but what's the end-game plan? Do you have a release plan to make it available to waiting fans around the world? Who gets it? Where do they get it from? How do they find out about it? Consider taking some time to think this through. Here are a few suggestions to light this candle! You'll notice that the items below blur the lines between development and marketing. That's okay; this is a natural product transition. It doesn't hurt the development and marketing wonks to party, but proceed with caution on that subject.

1) Define releases

Make sure everyone is on the same page with terminology for releases, such as beta, release candidate, and final gold release. Define the level of quality that each release must surpass before moving to the next level. "Gee, it looks good enough to release" probably isn't a good enough definition. Consider clearly defining the levels.

2) Identify customers

Determine who your customers are, and who is eligible to obtain pre-release versions of the product. Setting up a beta list takes a considerable amount of time, since customers usually take their time in signing up to extra beta testing work. You'll need to contact 100 customers just to get 2 willing to do some valuable testing, unless they owe you a favor. Furthermore, you should spend some time defining the persona of the typical customer. That helps to plan for releasing the product to them.

3) Release strategy

Define who sits on the board that makes the final decision for product release. How will they make the final decision? Do they have sufficient empirical

quality data to make the decision? Can they make the hard decisions to hold the product back when quality issues demand?

4) Posting the final release

If your final product will be posted for download on your web site, you should define exactly how this will be done. Consider the following: What file format will be used for download? Who will perform the final product build and post the file on the web? What build steps guarantee that nothing goes wrong in this process?

5) Customer download

If customers will be downloading your product from the web, you'll need to consider the procedures for customer downloading and installation. Can customers perform the steps reliably without calling support for help? Will you offer an evaluation CD for customers who can't download files from the web? Will you be capturing customer information for each download? What information is necessary? What information systems will be used to store the customer names? And, how will you follow up on those downloads? You may consider making a list of all distribution sites that will be linking to yours. You'll need to post your listing on those sites when it becomes available.

6) Keyword marketing

Customers need to find your product on the Internet. They do this primarily with keywords they type into search engines like Yahoo, MSN or Google. Do you have a list of your search terms? How does your product rank in pay-per-click and organic listings?

7) International marketing

If your product is suitable for locales outside your own country, you may consider an international marketing strategy to attract more customers. Web site registration, and web and keyword translation are good places to start.

About Us

Scoutwest, Inc. develops and publishes project management and time tracking products for consulting, manufacturing, government, and general business applications.

Thousands of small to large businesses, in dozens of countries worldwide, trust their mission critical business processes to Scoutwest products. Standard Time® and Standard Issue® work together to offer well-rounded project management solutions.

We specialize in packaged software for timesheets, project management, time tracking, defect tracking, and issue tracking. Standard Time is a web-based timesheet that also runs on Windows, Palm OS, and Pocket PC. It can be used for client billing and task management. Standard Issue is used for bug tracking and general issue tracking.

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