

GT Business Plan

Executive Summary

Create the software that Tony Robbins' OPA/RPM software was meant to be. Develop the first release with \$50,000 in 6 to 9 months and market it via the net. Exploit the lack of a clear front runner in the personal information manager category. Brand it as a PIM that is so intuitive that *soccer moms will use it*, and at the same time is extremely effective at getting people to use the emotional edge that is critical to personal fulfillment.

The Origin

The idea for this software product (codenamed “GT”) was born out of the respect I have for Tony Robbins' OPA/RPM planning methods. The opportunity exists because Tony's product is substandard in quality, and there is no worthy competition. Some users have the Franklin Covey software which overlays Microsoft's Outlook. Others use ACT! or simply MS Outlook itself. However, I've found that the most successful planners are rolling their own solutions and are often still using paper-based products – myself included.

The Need

I've talked to dozens of OPA software users who are dissatisfied with the product and are waiting for something better. Mitch Kapor, creator of the original Lotus 1-2-3 spreadsheet recently put \$5 million into creating an “Outlook killer” because no viable software exists that is easy enough to use and still does the job of organizing one's personal plans. Frustrated with Tony's software and with the lack of philosophy in Outlook and other programs, I've begun crafting my own software tools to do things the right way. There are many more who want and need this caliber of software.

The Opportunity

With no clear front runner there is a tremendous opportunity to create the ultimate personal information manager and sell it directly via the web. It has the possibility of becoming to PIMs what Quicken has become to accounting – a solution that is elegant and just the right size for one person and small teams – and recognized as the standard.

The Competition

Tony's RPM software is selling at \$149 (and it has been priced higher) and while it has been plagued with problems, it has sold about 5,000 copies for \$750,000 in sales. My estimate is that it was developed with less than \$100,000 hard dollars and could have been done for less.

Focusing only on contact management, the makers of ACT! now have 4 million customers. ACT! 6.0 is now \$199. From its website: “It links your entire relationship history – meetings, commitments, calls, to-do items, proposals, e-mails, and more. Plus, with its new mobile features, you can manage your relationships from your PC or Palm Powered™ handheld.” ACT! has healthy competitors such as Goldmine. Still, ACT! and Goldmine are branded for and targeted to salespeople, and they are hardly considered as PIMs.

Outlook is Microsoft's product for personal scheduling, and yet most home users never use it beyond its email capability even though Outlook Express comes free with Windows. It is regarded as too clunky. The server software that coordinates Outlook users is \$1,495 and a single copy of Outlook 2002 is \$99 retail.

Microsoft also has created Schedule+ described by one reviewer: “It seems most of the effort went into the 7 Habits wizard. (Schedule+) really isn't an information manager, just a good calendar and mediocre address book. If this is the only choice, stick with paper.”

Clearly Microsoft hasn't gotten it right yet either.

Ecco Pro by Netmanage won PC Magazine's Editor's choice award two years in a row as the best PIM, but ended the product when Microsoft began including a free copy of Outlook Express with Windows. Reviewers blame poor management at Netmanage as much as the heightened competition.

Other remarkable and highly praised programs like Improv and Ascend have been orphaned by their owners even while they generated cash. Critics say these moves were made to preserve the market share of “larger” programs such as Lotus.

On the very high end, many large corporations are run on Lotus Notes, the crown prince of collaboration software. Lotus Notes is incredibly expensive and totally out of the reach of individual users. I checked the IBM website hoping for even a guess as to the cost but it ultimately asked me to leave my information so a representative could contact me.

GT Marketing Plan

As this product will be sold on the web, it will be marketed on the web.

Viral marketing will be the crux of the strategy. Picture this: you download GT, and you find that this great new software makes it a pleasure to keep in touch with family, friends, coworkers, everyone on your team. Now you're faced with the daunting task of keying in all that information! *What if each of your team members could do that for you?*

It would be a lot of effort to call and email everyone asking for their updated cell phones, work numbers, birthdays, and then key it all in yourself. What if instead you could point your team members to a website where they could securely give you their personal information, and then it automatically updated your own software?

Imagine the experience of getting that email:

“Hi, it's me, Mike! I want to be sure I have your latest information in my personal planning software, so please click on www.gtlinkware.com/mikeleahy/00231 and see if I have all of your numbers correct. I really appreciate it! It'll help make my life easier, and I want to make sure I never lose track of you, especially around your birthday and holidays. By the way, this new personal software rocks!”

You click and possibly find that I have your old address or your obsolete cel phone number that needs updated. Maybe your area code has changed. You submit the changes.

The site goes on to explain that your changes are instantly being placed into my planner. Then it invites you to download a trial copy of GT because you are my friend – and because you deserve to have all of your family, friends and clients updating your contact list for you too!

In this way, satisfied customers will use their contacts to market the software. It's in their best interest because they get the latest addresses and phone numbers keyed in by everyone else. If their friends install the trial software, they get automatic updates of any changed contact information from it without having to email a request.

Many coaches and other professionals have websites and email newsletters that endorse products like GT. These people will become affiliates and are paid a commission for each sale from their leads.

GT Product

GT will be released in three phases. Phase One is a viable product for Windows that simplifies keeping in touch with people. It is a proof-of-concept program that will charm anyone who keeps contact with many people. Phase Two adds the power to share contact information, projects and schedules with team mates. Phase Three adds internet servers dedicated to moving and securing shared schedules and contacts with teams of any size.

The GT software is for Windows. The development tools allow easy porting to Linux in the future. It will be made to look like the latest Microsoft products. The power of the program is best showcased on the new tablet PCs.

Development tools include:

\$999	Borland Delphi 7 – the compiler and language
\$229	Abbrevia – adds backup capability
\$349	LockBox – adds encryption and security
\$399	OfficePartner – adds ability to look like and work with Microsoft products
\$199	OnGuard – allows the program to be released as a try-before-you-buy
\$499	FlashFiler – the database used by GT
\$279	VisualPlanIt – adds PIM components
\$349	Orpheus 4 – adds smarter interface, outlining
\$599	Sleuth QA Suite 3 – debugger, tester, and quality control
\$69	Essentials – adds interface enhancements
\$1,199	InstallShield Developer – program can be installed directly from the web
\$549	Microsoft Office XP – develop website and test MS compatibility
\$1,500	Compaq tablet PC – test and showcase the program
\$1,100	Windows 2000 Professional computer – develop the program

Development costs:

\$24,000	six months of programming* in phase one
\$24,000	three months of programming (2 programmers) in phase two
\$24,000	three months of programming (2 programmers) in phase three
\$900	competitive programs (ACT!, Outlook 2002, RPM, others) for research
\$690	ecommerce hosting for first year (1AutomationWiz)
\$240	web hosting for first year

Other costs:

\$120	Banking
\$600	Incorporation

*programming includes office supplies, phone expenses, incidentals, benefits, accounting

GT Product Timeline

Phase One will take four to six months to create a program that will be sold directly from the web for \$29. \$35,000 in startup expenses.

Phase Two will take three months to create a \$149 program that will be sold directly from the web. During phase two, 700 copies of the \$29 program will be sold to early adopters yielding \$20,000 in gross sales. \$24,000 in ongoing development costs.

Phase Three will take three months to enhance the \$149 program and create a web server that allows secure data sharing. During phase three, 200 copies of the \$149 program and 1,000 copies of the \$29 program will be sold yielding \$60,000 in sales. \$24,000 in ongoing development costs. Seminars and training business will be added in this phase.

The break-even point is reached in phase three, about 11 months into the project.

Second year target is 4,000 copies of the \$149 program and 4,000 copies of the \$29 program yielding \$720,000 in gross sales. Roughly \$12,000 in support and maintenance expenses, possibly another \$100,000 in further development.

Third year target is 50,000 copies of the \$149 product and the entry level product made free for promotional purposes for \$7.5M and \$150,000 in further development.

Fourth year target is 100,000 new copies and 50,000 upgrades for \$20M in sales.

Fifth year target is to exceed ACT's current four million customers (2002) as the provider of the best of breed personal information manager. Position the company for takeover or IPO.

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