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** UPGRADE

BRIEFINGS PUBLIC RELATIONS

COMDEX: Making It Happen for MTA Now

by Bob Mappes

MTechnology is going to COMDEX. As an implementor, I would like to share my perspective as to why this is vital now and to ask for your financial support.

MTA's public relations efforts in recent years have been focused correctly on activities to expand the M market. The 1992 Gartner Group report said that M is a \$1 billion market that would double by 1995. Unless you read the fine print, this report could lull you into a false sense of security: It said the market would double if we successfully address certain technical enhancements (such as developing windowing capabilities and networked personal computer options). The Gartner report also said that to improve our market position, we would need to overcome the view that M is old technology and that M is only for the medical/hospital community, and to expand the acceptance of M by computer manufacturers. To do this, we need to strengthen our educational and training efforts and participate in industry conferences, exhibits, seminars. That's a tall order.

In my ten years' experience with M, there has been a significant change in the market. The 1985 Implementations issue of the *MUG Quarterly* identified more than forty different M implementations but the 1993 *M Sources* lists twenty-three. I submit that there are really four if you check those who consistently advertise in *M Computing* today. Ten years ago, my market research revealed relatively few M application developers, primarily focused in the health marketplace and demonstrating extremely robust annual growth rates of 20 percent to 30 percent. The July 1993 *Healthcare Informatics* indicates that these growth rates generally have fallen to less than 5 percent per year. There's no groundswell of new M-based application developers—we are not expanding the base.

We believe our presence at COMDEX will help push M Technology into the mainstream: It will raise the awareness of M as part of our plan to expand the M market; increase M's visibility and credibility; build its image by touting its well-established user base; educate developers/programmers, resellers, corporate information systems staff and consultants; and gain qualified leads with strong reasons to try M. We're convinced that we'll open a lot of eyes and doors of consultants and resellers.

COMDEX should be the rising tide that raises all the M ships; we'll all benefit from the success we anticipate from this show. And, it seems only fair that the entire M community share in the effort to take us there. Some leading vendors whose business is M-based give scant recognition to M. M has been good to you. This time, please stand up and be counted. Consider contributing to the COMDEX effort. Not only will COMDEX bring us closer to realizing the Gartner marketplace forecast for M Technology, it may be necessary for our long-term survival. ■

Bob Mappes is director of marketing for Micronetics, and previously was the M program manager for IBM. His first involvement with M was in 1972 as an IBM systems engineer at Massachusetts General Hospital, where M all began.