



BUSINESS PARTNERS SPEAK OUT

Delay of R5 may spark new quality trend

By [Ron Herardian](#)

At Lotusphere 99, Lotus announced a further delay in the release of Notes and Domino 5.0. As a Lotus Business Partner, this delay has affected certain projects my company is working on, especially because we are doing so many cc:Mail to Domino email migrations before the end of 1999. In talking with other business partners, I've discovered that many others are feeling the same impact.

Nonetheless, we are glad to see R5 delayed. The alternative scenario, to be saddled with an unstable product that could harm the trust between Lotus, its partners, and our mutual customers, is something we all want to avoid. As a Qualified Lotus Business Partner involved with Domino messaging for the past four years, my firm, Global System Services (GSS), has been through the crucible with some of the past releases, particularly of the MTAs.

I commend Lotus and the leadership of Jeff Papows wholeheartedly for going against the insane trend we've all seen that pushes half-finished products out the door for the sake of press or for short-term gains in investor (rather than customer) confidence.

Besides sharing the opinion of other business partners, I feel I can confidently speak for my clients as well. They're tired of down time, data loss and living in a state of emergency due to poor product quality--all because someone cut testing or just didn't want to miss a release date. It is a far, far better thing to have a late product than to have one that's unreliable.

Unstable products cost productivity and damage vendor credibility, which reflects poorly on integrators like many of us business partners. If one reads the cost of downtime studies, just a few days of quality problems can obliterate anticipated ROI (return on investment) from the use of a product for quite some time.

Despite the inconveniences that the delay of R5 presents, I feel strongly that Lotus is doing the right thing. I hope that other vendors will take a page out of Lotus' playbook and focus first on what really counts. In a time when short-term quarterly profits make or break companies it's refreshing to see someone taking a long term view and making the kinds of tough choices that separate leaders from the followers.

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