

Realizing The *Volcano*TM Vision

Maile Foster, BASIS' director of marketing, finished the TechCon97 General Session with a discussion of BASIS' new software development and delivery processes. The following is a summary of her speech.

Today, users tell us that they do not care as much about technology as much as they care about **solutions**. With over 70% of the Business Basic market, BASIS has a responsibility to provide solutions. Scott McNeely, CEO of Sun Microsystems, Inc., has said frequently, referring to Java, "There are two answers: freedom of choice or freedom from choice." While McNeely and Sun discovered values like portability and openness recently, BASIS has been committed from its very inception to the vision of software that you can "write once, run on everything."



In order to achieve this vision, BASIS has organized the entire company, and especially its product development, to produce products recognized for their quality, open architecture, and portability, while being easy to learn and easy to use. The ultimate goal of this process is to provide a reliable and predictable development cycle that can be measured and continuously improved. At the same time, we must provide **value** to customers by delivering customer-driven products in a timely manner. For us, that has transformed the way BASIS creates and distributes software. The products released this year as part of the *Volcano* strategy are the first tangible results of these new processes.

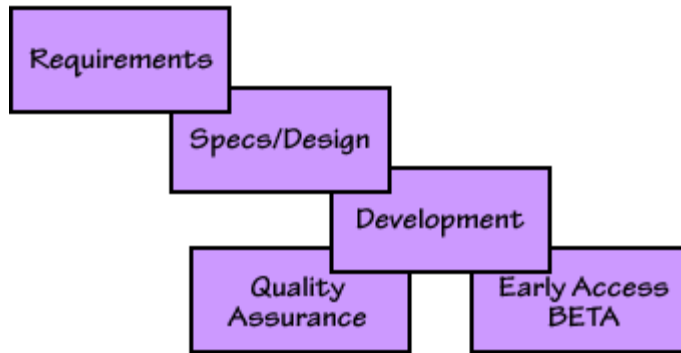
Step-By-Step Software Development

BASIS software development is now produced according to a product life cycle that follows established standard practices. The major components are carefully observed product development phases.

1. Proposal
2. Requirements
3. Specification & Design
4. Development
5. Quality Assurance - Early Access Releases and Beta Testing
6. Product Rollout / General Availability

Developing customer-driven software begins even before technical requirements. Projects are defined and developed by cross-functional teams that include staff from Engineering, Quality Assurance, Product Marketing, Technical Documentation, and Technical Support. The product proposal defines both the business opportunity and the customer needs that a product must fulfill to be successful.

BASIS Software Development



Once the product direction is adopted, the customer-driven approach continues, incorporating methods such as focus groups and usability studies to include as much objective information about customer needs as possible. Interface prototypes and other techniques allow implementation decisions to be made before coding, in the Specification and Design phase. This reduces the actual development time and increases quality and predictability. Complete functional and design specifications allow quality assurance groups to prepare to test the products, and documentation writers time to write manuals and help systems during, not after, development. The Development phase includes unit testing and system testing.

Faster Product Delivery

With the new *Volcano* products, BASIS is committed to getting working software into the hands of our developers as soon as possible. These releases also serve to test and validate the design. With *Volcano* we will follow a new product delivery schedule that begins today with the first Early Access release of *Kilauea*, the code name for PRO/5® 2.0 and Visual PRO/5™ 2.0.

With Early Access code, developers will be able to start analyzing their applications, planning for improved functionality, and begin implementing new capabilities prior to the general availability of *Kilauea*. Early Access releases will also include documentation, and wherever possible, the way features are implemented won't change, as it sometimes has in the past. The goal is that application code written using the Early Access and beta software won't have to be reworked before application developers release their products.

This is an extremely exciting time for BASIS and the Business Basic industry. Rumbblings and rearrangements beneath the surface of BASIS have resulted in new processes that will generate quality, customer-driven products in a timely manner and bring BASIS' vision for business applications development into new markets and a new millennium. ☑