"Can you find the Save button?"
BASIS Conducts Product Research At TechCon97

BASIS Product Marketing conducted several basic research sessions-focus groups and usability studies-with customers at TechCon97. "It's all part of being a customer-driven company and using a development model that makes sure that the software meets customer needs," said Dan Rask, BASIS product manager.

BASIS Product Marketing hosted two focus groups, one covering project management and the other object technology. Focus group participants came from diverse companies including Explorer Software, Login Brothers Books, DISC, and PM Systems.

The project management focus group discussed how the participants organize their software projects from the code level, to development, and all the way to deployment. BASIS is vitally interested in how customers' Business Basic software projects work, so that it can maintain superior backward compatibility.

The object technology focus group looked into the major industry move from UNIX or DOS character-based interfaces to a graphical Windows environment. Some BASIS software developers had experience with third-party code to add controls and features to their applications, but the larger percentage of customers involved had not worked with objects.

In addition to focus groups, BASIS held software usability testing. During usability testing, software users were monitored as they performed assigned tasks. Observers from BASIS used notes and video recordings to analyze ease-of-use factors like predictability, compatibility, standardization and completeness. Testing at TechCon97 targeted early user experience with real software for the new BASIS integrated development environment (IDE).

According to Rask, who organized and ran the focus groups and usability testing, this kind of customer feedback is very important. "Our goal is to insure that Business Basic users who've spent years programming from the console will have the easiest, most productive path when they move to this innovative new tool. Focus groups and usability testing keeps us on track."