# SCS Partnership Accelerates GUI Migration

*By Greg Grisham*

In June of 1999, BASIS announced a partnership with SCS Consulting Inc., a software consulting firm specializing in custom BBx® application development. This raised some eyebrows inasmuch as a portion of our channel is made up of consultants and independent developers. This article addresses what SCS is and how it differs from our channel.

First, let's address a couple of the more common business models in which you find Business Basic. There is a large network of customized, vertical applications that have business rules that have evolved over the last 20 years. The developers that own these applications have anywhere from five to hundreds of loyal customers using their software. Another common model is a growing multimillion-dollar corporation that still uses the application it started with in the 1970s.

Most of these companies have well-trained, professional internal departments for Management Information Systems (MIS). But these departments have a complete daily task list just maintaining the software and responding to their corporate customers. They don't have the time to modify the application to GUI. In most cases, they don't have the development time or training for a rapid GUI conversion.

BASIS is fortunate enough to have some large corporations in our customer base, some of whom fit the latter model profile. BASIS formed the SCS partnership specifically to address these customers' needs. They have a product and programming staff that could use some help going GUI. They don't need their application redesigned, they don't need additional staff, and they don't have time to freeze their application for a year or more to convert.

SCS is a large group of Business Basic programmers that focus on enhancing character applications with a graphical interface, leaving the business rules intact. When SCS programmers do not have the application expertise in a particular industry, they consult with experts in that industry to be sure the new GUI implementation will meet customer requirements.

There is an incredible amount of new market share available to the Business Basic community with the introduction of BBj™. BBj will deliver the infrastructure necessary for developers applications to compete in the enterprise marketplace, but these applications must appear competitive. GUI is the state of the art in the computer industry.

SCS has the experience and staffing bandwidth to accomplish GUI migrations of character-based applications in a reduced amount of time. This allows corporate staff the ability to continue to maintain the application while it is getting a graphical facelift. More importantly, SCS can allocate a large number of programmers specifically to this task. This means more programmers with specific focus... it takes significantly less time.

SCS is :

- **A resource, not a competitor**
  One of the other benefits of the SCS structure is the ability to contract for as much, or as little, work as a company needs. If the immediate need is a GUI conversion, that can be done in a timely manner. If the need is greater, possibly some application customization and/or support, this too can be arranged.

- **Worldwide**
  In today's world of telecommuting, location is not as important as it once was. Nevertheless, SCS maintains offices in several countries around the world. Should a company need on-site consulting for a GUI project, or possibly post-implementation training, it is not a problem. SCS employees speak English, Spanish, Portuguese and French fluently. This gives them intercontinental communication skills to aid in support, deployment and training.

- **A tool developer**
  Most recently, BASIS has contracted with SCS to develop some language-conversion and data management tools. The days of having to MERGE conversion code only to find you needed to then build a file list will soon be gone. The Grid Management Library, available now in Visual PRO/5® 2.22, is evidence of just one of the data management tools developed by SCS. The GML facilitates data viewing, editing and control with less work and better functionality than can be found in other development languages. The result is a better, finished application.