

## With Help from Visible's Tool, OPT Converts Manufacturing App

"**We faced a daunting task,**" explains Mike Lowery, president of Order Processing Technologies (OPT), Reston, Va., whose RollCIM applications were written in CorVision, a 4GL tool for the VAX/VMS ISAM environment. "We had 306 data tables, 766 screen panels, and 450,000 lines of code to move to a Microsoft VB and NT/SQL Server environment in one year," Lowery says. OPT's RollCIM provides an enterprise-wide application for metals manufacturers that automates manufacturing operations, materials ordering, shipping, customer service, purchasing, plant maintenance, inventory, accounts receivable, and general ledger. For 10 years, OPT's RollCIM software has been successfully running at companies such as Timken Co., Republic Technologies International, Chase Brass & Copper Co. Inc., and British Steel's U.S. subsidiary Corus Tuscaloosa.

With the decline of VAX hardware support and the advent of compiled Visual Basic, OPT decided to move RollCIM to an all-Microsoft platform, which CorVision didn't support. And OPT couldn't afford to rewrite its entire application. "CorVision is a great tool and allowed our small team of six developers to build and maintain a vast application," Lowery says. "Now we needed a tool for the Microsoft environment that was equally effective in making programmers productive."

OPT searched for a Visual Basic repository/generator tool that could build large business applications and yet be flexible enough to call OPT's customizations at exactly the right times. OPT considered data modeling products, such as Rational Software Corp.'s and application generators such as Alstra's (from Mirus Data) but found that the products couldn't be customized or produce a running application. Instead, OPT selected Visible Developer from Visible Systems Corp., Waltham, Mass.

"Visible Developer's template-like code patterns allowed OPT to save its huge investment in code customizations," Lowery says. "Visible Systems really listened to us. They added extra customization points and behaviors we needed to their code patterns. By enabling us to reuse our existing logic, Visual Developer saved us a rewrite."

OPT became excited when it learned that Visible Developer's code patterns were customizable Visual Basic: They were more than just a template. OPT can even maintain its own customized code pattern. It can also use Visual Developer to store and convert RollCIM's extensive online help files. Visible Developer's ability to customize code generation made the difference—and sealed the decision. "We're so excited by our ability to move our CorVision applications, we've decided to offer conversion tools, packaged with Visible Developer, to other CorVision clients under the name CV2VB," Lowery says.

For information on Visible Systems' Visible Developer and other model-based application development products, contact Visible at 781-890-2273 or [sales@visible.com](mailto:sales@visible.com) or visit [www.visible.com](http://www.visible.com).

*Reprinted with Permission from the Feb. 2001 issue of Software Magazine*