Industry Leader Benefits from
GUI Sales Automation

The world's leading designer and manufacturer of office furniture needed a tool that automated the company's proven methodology of analyzing and fulfilling customer needs. PowerVision, in association with 3rd Wave Computing, developed ***Workplace Mapping***™, a GUI (graphical user interface) database system capable of gathering and analyzing client-specific data. Using ***Workplace Mapping***™, the company's 800 independent dealers and sales consultants can now methodically collect and assess client data, enabling them to provide superior service and appear technologically upscale.

800 Entities…

The office furniture designer/manufacturer's reputation and receipts rely heavily on the success of its network of 800 independent sales consultants worldwide. More than simply selling stock office furniture, these consultants employ design and consultation services to help create a work environment tailored to each client. This individualized, service-oriented approach contributes significantly to the privately-held company's success: sales in excess of $2.5 billion for fiscal 1996 and a transglobal operation involving more than 21 million square feet in 15 countries.

However, the designer/manufacturer knew that as the company and its sales force continued to grow, a consistent system for gathering and analyzing client data was pertinent. ***Workplace Mapping***™, a software tool was developed to ensure detailed data management and to target three specific problems:

- The dealers needed a tool to assist in and structure the gathering of client data.

- The client wanted a central repository in which to store detail-related project-related customer data, which could be used to provide innovative and design-centric custom solutions.

- The client needed to appear more high-tech — increasing portions of the client's customers are in the rapidly growing technology sector.

…One Solution

Initially, 3rd Wave Computing worked with the client to develop the conceptual image-conscious graphic design of ***Workplace Mapping***™. This highly visual interface was created to assist in the information gathering efforts by leading the client and its end users (lead sales consultants) through a structured environment, which would then analyze the data and generate reports. Once this concept was

Business Area:
- Sales Force Automation

Key Technologies:
- Visual Basic®
- ERwin ERX®
- Microsoft Access®

PowerVision's Role:
- Data Modeling
- Database Design
- GUI and Report Implementation

approved, PowerVision joined forces with 3rd Wave to refine the design, architect, and implement **Workplace Mapping**™.

Following conceptual design, PowerVision applied a team of data modeling experts. Through comprehensive study of the design and numerous working sessions with the client, the team developed a

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detailed data model (ERD) using the ERwin ERX tool. By shifting the emphasis from visual design to the data model, the PowerVision team addressed and resolved issues before they could develop into glitches.

In parallel with the data modeling effort, other PowerVision engineers quickly developed the screen navigation elements. PowerVision developed custom Visual Basic® code to facilitate the user interface which utilized highly stylized bitmaps provided by 3rd Wave's graphic team.
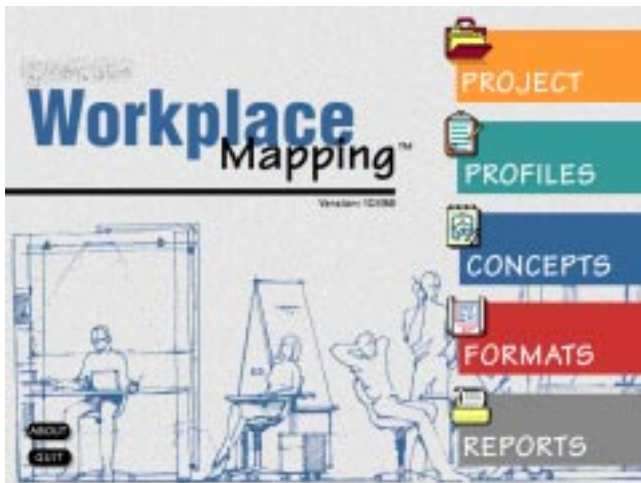
Once the team refined the data model and screen navigation was operational, the client was presented with a working prototype. After quick review, the clients verified that the project was on-track and PowerVision began work on the reporting tool.

Ultimately, it was determined that the sophisticated reporting requirements could not easily be met by Crystal Reports, the companion tool to Visual Basic. Rather than develop a custom reporting-engine, PowerVision turned to the powerful reporting capabilities of Microsoft Access®.

The first phase of **Workplace Mapping** complete, the client deployed the sophisticated sales and consulting tool to their dealers in October 1996. This tool also lays the groundwork for the second phase of the project: consolidation of all client and project information in a central repository.

At the design level, PowerVision's data-centric focus forced resolution to many issues early in the project. The resulting data model enabled engineers and clients to crisply understand, refine, and document many aspects of the project.

During the construction phase, the PowerVision and 3rd Wave teams quickly implemented the project. Despite the large number of client-initiated changes, progress proceeded at a rapid pace.