

PowerBuilder® and .NET

SUE DUNNELL
SENIOR PRODUCT MANAGER

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1 It's not PowerBuilder vs. .NET
- 1 What is .NET and what does .NET do for me?
- 1 Ask not what .NET does for me; ask how PowerBuilder makes .NET easier
- 2 Why is PowerBuilder's support for .NET such a big secret?
- 2 PowerBuilder – It's still the one

Lately, a variety of PowerBuilder® customers have asked whether or not they should stay with PowerBuilder or go to .NET. Sometimes they ask folks at Sybase directly, other times their inquiries are filtered to us through analysts. The purpose of this paper is to show that this really isn't a valid question because PowerBuilder and .NET are not mutually exclusive. Ultimately, this paper should provide you with the information you need to feel confident and comfortable about your future with PowerBuilder.

IT'S NOT POWERBUILDER VS. NET

PowerBuilder is an IDE, .NET is a platform. Invariably, when someone asks if they should stay with PowerBuilder or go to .NET, they are really asking if they need to think about doing new development with Visual Studio .NET instead of PowerBuilder. Many people equate Visual Studio .NET with .NET. That is understandable as Microsoft owns both the Visual Studio tool and the .NET platform. And, Visual Studio is the most popular tool for .NET development, with 80% of development for .NET done with this product. Why, then, shouldn't you put this paper down and run out right now and get a copy for yourself?

Because you're a PowerBuilder developer, and PowerBuilder is the easiest, most cost-effective path for .NET development for PowerBuilder developers. It's a smart business decision. It takes you and your applications into the future with the least amount of investment of time or money. It empowers you to directly contribute to a healthy bottom line.

You probably remember the first time you used PowerBuilder. Maybe it was version 1.0a, or maybe it was when we added PFC in v5.0. Or, maybe you started using PowerBuilder as recently as v9.0 or 10.5. Whenever it was, you'll always remember your first app. It was fast. Powerful. It made you look really good! And, for those of you who are skilled 3GL developers, and could make yourself look good on your own, you chose to use PowerBuilder because it was easier. You could build a window in PowerBuilder in 3 minutes instead of building one in C/C++ in 3 months. It saved you time, and time is money.

PowerBuilder is the same as it ever was. It still delivers the unbeatable productivity that lured you in so long ago. It still builds the types of applications you need to build. And now, it's taking you along with the evolution of the Windows platform on which it runs.

WHAT IS .NET AND WHAT DOES .NET DO FOR ME?

.NET is more than just an operating system. The .NET Framework is a rich set of services and classes that simplify your development. It enables developers to be productive by working in their language of choice, and produce language independent assemblies that can be extended or inherited by any other .NET developer using any other .NET language. Why is that important? It allows developers to focus on solving the business tasks at hand and not on learning a new language.

ASK NOT WHAT .NET DOES FOR ME; ASK HOW POWERBUILDER MAKES .NET EASIER

So where does PowerBuilder fit in? PowerBuilder simplifies .NET. Developers have always chosen PowerBuilder because it makes development easier. Whether it's heavy lifting data access for a manufacturing environment, building complex distributed applications, or running a back office, the abstraction in PowerBuilder enables you to use the built-in technologies to satisfy your management and IT department and, at the same time, get the job done quickly. The same is true for PowerBuilder's support for .NET.

PowerBuilder has been delivering support for .NET in phases. In 2002, we announced a 4 phase plan for our .NET support, and the current 11.0 release delivers phase 3 of this plan. This release enables you to deploy your existing applications as ASP .NET2 Webforms, Smart Clients, and Winforms as well as traditional Win32 client/server

applications. It also enables you to invoke methods on .NET assemblies directly from your PowerBuilder code. And, you can deploy your non-visual objects (NVOs) as .NET Web Services and as .NET assemblies, and these assemblies can be used by other .NET developers in your organization. Have a code-off and see who can build reusable business logic the fastest! PowerBuilder applications can also consume the assemblies that your coworkers have built in Visual Studio .NET, enabling you to reduce your workload and prove the .NET value of PowerBuilder.

PowerBuilder developers can now leverage their existing applications, and extend them into the future by quickly deploying them to .NET. And, even more powerfully, developers can leverage .NET's rich components in the Windows Presentation Foundation (WPF), Windows Workflow Foundation (WF), Windows Card Space (WCS), and Windows Communication Foundation (WCF). This lets application developers focus on building robust applications, and add-in system level functionality, such as security and digital signature capability, simply by leveraging the functionality from the .NET Framework.

Future versions of PowerBuilder will make this process even easier. We will focus on simplifying development with .NET, in addition to deployment. The applications you build will be deployed, if you choose, as managed code. We'll simplify the way you interoperate with the .NET Framework even more, much like we do with PocketBuilder, our tool for Windows Mobile development, by abstracting the services and classes PowerBuilder developers use most. And, we'll leverage the rich, quickly changing User Interface (UI) functionality from WPF/E, which has been newly renamed Silverlight, so you can easily build visually exciting and easy to navigate applications. As we progress with support for .NET 3.0 and beyond in PowerBuilder, developers will be able to demonstrate the RAD power of PowerBuilder by delivering new applications and enhancements to existing applications faster and easier than co-workers using other tools. We'll make sure that you will be able to use the technology your management and IT departments require, without having to change your tool or reinvent your skill-set. Just like always.

WHY IS POWERBUILDER'S SUPPORT FOR .NET SUCH A BIG SECRET?

We have been telling customers about our .NET roadmap for 5 years, and we've been delivering on every phase of our plan. We are focusing our efforts on supporting the PowerBuilder community, and while we get new PowerBuilder customers all the time, our focus is not on the .NET market at large. That's a good thing. Microsoft owns the majority of the .NET market, but we own the biggest chunk of all the rest. And that enables us to focus on delivering what we do best – ensuring we simplify .NET development for the PowerBuilder developer. We leverage all the legwork that Microsoft has done, and simply make their own .NET technology easier for you to use. We also continue to enhance and expand our own patented technology, the DataWindow. Nothing beats its ease of use for complex data access, data validation, and applying your own complex business logic rules to your data presentation. And, we continue to implement your enhancement requests, update the IDE, and update our support for other technologies and databases.

We need to do more, because we do more than just .NET. PowerBuilder earned its reputation as the market leading 4GL RAD tool because it was open. It didn't restrict or confine you. Today, openness goes beyond the database. PowerBuilder NVOs can be deployed today to 3rd party JEE application servers and function just like EJBs. DataWindows can be reused in mobile applications with PocketBuilder, or in Eclipse with Sybase WorkSpace. And, we've leveraged PowerBuilder technology to build a plug-in for the Visual Studio .NET environment; DataWindow .NET.

POWERBUILDER—IT'S STILL THE ONE

PowerBuilder will continue to evolve by supporting new and emerging technologies and abstracting them so they're easier for you to support. At the same time, it must also stay true to its roots. With tens of thousands of mission critical PowerBuilder applications running in businesses and industries around the world, including banks, universities, insurance companies, all branches of government, commercial aviation companies, oil companies, the NY stock exchange, retail and manufacturing, there are as many different customer demands to meet as there are uses for PowerBuilder. Our plan is to keep PowerBuilder current and ensure it's relevant to you.