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4/95

Borland founder resigns

Kahn to devote more time to on-line services venture

By JOHN MARKOFF
The New York Times

SAN FRANCISCO — Philippe Kahn, the flamboyant founder of Borland International Inc. in Scotts Valley, said Wednesday he was resigning as chairman to concentrate on his latest start-up company, Starfish Software.

Kahn, who led Borland for 12 years, was forced out as president and chief executive in January, before Borland posted a quarterly loss of \$22.9 million, or 80 cents a share.

In a telephone interview Wednesday, Kahn said he wanted to devote more time to Starfish, a company that is designing products for on-line services, including the Internet's World Wide Web.

"I only have so many hours in the day and Starfish has taken off much more quickly than I had expected," he said.

Starfish has recently announced that it will develop a group-scheduling product based on Sun Microsystems' Java computer language, which has been designed to help secure applications on the Internet computer network.

"It's beautiful because you're suddenly not stuck in a proprietary computer platform," Kahn said. "Now via the Web, a Mac user, a Windows user and a Unix user can do group scheduling just by using their Web browser software."

He said he will remain a director of Borland after he leaves his position as chairman Jan. 1.

Starfish, which was founded without venture-capital backing, posted \$8.5 million in sales in its first nine months and now has 60 employees, said Kahn.

He said he had assembled a team of programmers who were working on a variety of Internet and on-line projects. The company also has an agreement with America Online to create a group-scheduling version of its Sidekick program, which will use the on-line service.

In August, Kahn sold 957,500 Borland shares, or more than half of his holdings, for more than \$13.4 million. He said that he remained one of Borland's largest sharehold-



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Borland did not say who would replace Kahn as chairman. Gary Wetsel, executive vice president and chief financial officer, replaced Kahn as president in January.

On Wednesday, Borland's shares fell 25 cents to close at \$16 in Nasdaq trading. The stock has risen 161 percent from an all-time closing low of \$6.125 at the end of last December.

Kahn is a French-born mathematician and self-taught computer programmer. He founded Borland in 1982, selling an expensive version of the Pascal computer language through the mail.

In the late 1980s, Kahn expanded the company's product line to include spreadsheets and data bases, with acquisitions and internal development.

In March 1994, Borland sold its Quattro Pro spreadsheet program to Novell for \$145 million to raise cash. Novell has since put Quattro Pro up for sale. Borland management also has said it is willing to sell other programs.