

# Message Files and Variables as Sources of Attribute Values

Most dialog elements have a `STRING` attribute. As an alternative to specifying the attribute value by typing in the text in the "String" entry of the attributes window, you can select a variable or a message file number from which the text is taken at runtime. In this case, the attribute value is determined by the variable's current value or the selected message file at the dialog element's creation time. You can also specify attribute sources for the `BITMAP-FILE-NAME`, `DIL-TEXT` and `ACCELERATOR` attributes.

## To select a message file number or specify a variable

1. Invoke the dialog element's attribute window.
2. Push the "Source" button to the right of the "String" entry.

The "Attribute Source" dialog box appears. The default attribute source is "Constant"; you can also enter the number of the message file, or enter the variable name.

**Note:** If you are using an integer variable as the source of an attribute value, note that at runtime, the message with the corresponding number from your message file will be displayed. To avoid this, you can `MOVE` the contents of this integer variable to a variable of format `N`, for example.

[Back to Event-Driven Programming Techniques.](#)