



**Mike Merrill:**

Hello, and welcome to the Mobile Workforce podcast. I am your host Mike Merrill, and today we are sitting down with Steve Antill, the CRO at Foundation Software. Steve invests most of his time in building relationships across the construction industry. One of the things he really focuses on is building those relationships and bridges with companies, sales, marketing, and product development teams. Currently, Steve has over 20 years of experience and has led to more than 1,000 software selections and implementations for contractors of every side and in all different trades.

So Steve, before we jump into the conversation today, I wanted to just give you a chance to give us a little bit about your background and maybe share with the listeners what you have learned through your experience in the industry and maybe some of the places you've been.

**Steve Antill:**

Thanks, Mike. So I've been with Foundation for 21 years. Had started in inside sales, basically talking to contractors to get them lined up to look at our software. I really worked my way up the food chain, it's one of the things we do real well here is we like to develop people over time. So I did inside sales for a while.

Then one of the really cool things I did is, I'm out of Cleveland, Ohio, but I moved to California back in 2003 and started a West Coast office for us. We were very regional at the time so it helped put us on the map on the West Coast, so I gained a ton of experience because I was working with contractors on the West Coast, and had some experience with people in the Midwest. So as our company grew from regional to national, I was very much engaged with that.

Then in 2011, I came back to Ohio to run sales, Director of Sales at the company. As our company's

grown and evolved, I also morphed into business development, maintaining a lot of relationships with industry professionals, accounting firms, CPAs, other vendors in the software space. We've continued to grow over the years and now my title is CRO and sales is underneath me, marketing's underneath me, business development's underneath me, but very much I'm still out there talking to contractors on a daily basis, working hand-in-hand with them on the sales side, and building relationships with various industry professionals.

**Mike Merrill:**

Wow, that's awesome. Great laundry list of experience and appreciate you sharing that.

**Steve Antill:**

Thanks Mike, good to catch up with you guys. We've got back many years, it's going to be a fun conversation here, so.

**Mike Merrill:**

Awesome, well thank you again for joining us. So I guess just to start out here, one thing I'm curious about and I know you have a lot of experience in this, but what is it that drives the relationship between construction companies and their suppliers, subcontractors? What are some of those key things that you see as important?

**Steve Antill:**

Yeah, so thanks for the question, that's a good one. From our lens, just for full disclosure, 70% of our 5,200 clients are subcontractors. They're very labor intensive, so I tend to approach the world and view things more from the subcontractor lens. However, we do have some general contractors but most of them have labor. So a lot of our clients here at Foundation tend to be labor intensive trades like electrical, mechanical,

and heavy machinery where payroll tends to be a real driving factor in their company. The labor cost, the burden cost.

So some of the things that we see on a daily basis that drives the relationships and their dealings with other folks would be, if they're doing a government job working with a general contractor, making sure they're getting their certified payrolls submitted on time, all the contractors on the job are getting the right paperwork in. As you know over the years, everything's become so litigious, paperwork has such a big trail. Being collaborative with the generals and the other contractors on the job are real driving factors. Making sure they're dotting their I's and crossing their T's, so to speak, as far as getting everything submitted. Then the general is aware of that and they're even communicating those items back up to the owners, the agencies, making sure everybody's working in unison on the project. So that's one thing.

Then obviously on the material side, a lot of these folks, especially the ones doing the install work, they're staying on top of their purchase orders. Making sure their requisitions are getting to the suppliers, making sure those materials are getting delivered to the job in a timely fashion so they're staying on schedule. Again, this is all collaborative. These guys are moving around job to job, and especially now in the last nine to 12 months, it's going to be coming up over time. Making sure they're getting these materials at the job site because a lot of the stuff tends to come from overseas often. Staying on schedule, communicating that up with the GC, making sure they're getting their piece done before the next contract, especially the next trade contractor comes in to do their piece. So this stuff is becoming more and more critical, especially due to COVID. I mean you're dealing with suppliers, issues there. You're communicating this back to the generals and dealing with all the other trade contractors in between.

### **Mike Merrill:**

Yeah, so there's yeah, lots of different areas and you mentioned the suppliers, materials, the sticks and bricks, if you will. That's one side, but there is another side too. I think I'd be interested in hearing what your thoughts are on how important those relationships are between vendor, partner, suppliers, workers,

subcontractors, essentially the rest of the people that actually have to put those materials in on a project, install those, deliver them, whatever their role is. I mean, how important do you think it is to have those communications properly set up with the people?

### **Steve Antill:**

Yeah, right. So essential, I mean as you're throwing the question my way I'm thinking, essential is how I'd answer the question. Getting into our world and probably your world, these technology pieces have come into the market now that allow everybody to be collaborative and communicate. I think about capturing payroll in the field, getting it submitted, just selfishly within the contractor themselves, but collaborating up with the GC's for some of these communication tools through project management systems that they're collaborating with their generals and other contractors on and even the suppliers, it's critical, it's essential. I mean, one delay, one person being off a few hours a day can throw a whole wrench into the process and to the job. Supplier getting stuff to a job site late can throw a monkey wrench into everything.

So I mean, think about this. I mean, we've been doing this for a while. So many of probably your clients and our clients, if we walked in their offices a few years ago, they were doing all their scheduling for labor and materials on whiteboards.

### **Mike Merrill:**

Yeah, yep.

### **Steve Antill:**

I mean, and now there's products out there that they use. For example, we get these great labor scheduling tools that their guys no longer have to manually call the office and find out where they're going tomorrow or what time they need to be there, what they're working on. They're actually getting a text notification telling them where to be, the supervisor to check in with. Same project managers are getting notifications of, make sure you're talking to the general contractor tomorrow, do your safety inspection, make sure all the teams are working in unison. We're moving this direction fast where there are unsophisticated contractors that were doing all these things manually

from a communication standpoint that even three years ago were essential. Now we're getting to the point where everybody's actually being collaborative and working together and taking advantage of these better technologies now. So all that stuff is essential and you just see a big movement of contractors taking advantage of tools to connect them up with everybody on the job.

**Mike Merrill:**

Yeah, your words are resonating with me and it's making me think of a guest we had recently on another episode, Damien Brothers. He was talking about how critical it is to have good documentation and how a lot of times he just learned that if he wasn't able to document things properly, that it wasn't even necessarily worth bringing up the argument or the contention point. So how important is having that documentation in place and where you can use it in this process?

**Steve Antill:**

I love what you just said. You don't have it, it's probably not worth fighting the battle. We hear from our customers, the generals a lot of them, their hearts are in the right place. The subs, their hearts are in the right place, but things go sideways. So often these jobs have issues with litigation, payments held. The traditional story you hear in construction, but there's so many great ways to document things.

Here's a story that I've heard that I really like. Something that didn't exist 10 years ago, there's a software called On Earth, it's designed for heavy contractors that can document what they're basically moving in and out of the jobs, as far as dirt loads and things like that. So completely unrelated to what we do or what you guys would do. I really like the story. So there was a water system that needed work and a city didn't have time to do a survey. They wanted to get them moving so their drawings and everything and survey went back to the 1980s. They said, "We got to get someone out there to fix it," so this contractor won the job. Of course as the job started, the amount of dirt they had to move to fix this dam and water system went up through the roof. Of course, halfway through the job they were talking to the city saying, "We got a whole bunch of change orders coming

your way because this is out of scope from what we signed up for." The city said, "That's fine, just we're documenting, we're being aware of it." Of course at the end of the job they started submitted these overages and basically the city said, "There's no way you guys moved that much dirt. We're not paying you for these change orders."

**Mike Merrill:**

Wow.

**Steve Antill:**

So typical story 10 years ago, these guys ended up in litigation or ended up settling and all that, however, this company subscribed to this product called On Earth, which takes satellite photos of a job site.

**Mike Merrill:**

Wow.

**Steve Antill:**

They actually went back, you're talking about documentation, they had photos every day of all their trucks coming and going from the jobs because the city's argument was the trucks are only half loaded. You're basically moving half the dirt you're billing us for and all that. They basically threw it in front of the city's face and said, "Here's proof, here's documentation. This is what we truly did." The city said, "You know what? You're right, we're going to pay you."

**Mike Merrill:**

Wow.

**Steve Antill:**

So that contractor, by subscribing to a system that was documenting things very specific to them and their needs, it probably paid for itself multiple times just in that one situation.

So I mean, we talk of 20 years ago when me and you got into this. You never heard contractors using tools like that. Now, there's tools like that available to all the different trades, very specific to them available to the

generals. A lot of these are collaborative tools that GCs and the owners and the subs all use together. It helps the process off keeping jobs moving and it helps avoid litigation between the subs and the GCs a lot of times.

**Mike Merrill:**

Yeah, and the market right now is so busy, everybody's behind. There's a lot going with some of the other challenges, the social distancing, the spacing, you can't throw as much labor at things as maybe you used to. So the last thing you need now is litigation or delays that are external to actually getting something done.

**Steve Antill:**

Yeah, I mean there's so much uncertainty right now. These guys are worried about their backlog. We have clients that from March through May, June, July, a lot of their jobs stopped, started, stopped, started. Trying to coordinate all of that and getting all the parties back on the job site at the same time. Then like you said, appeasing all of these safety requirements that have come into play now. Their world's changed and it's going to be different moving forward in '21. So all these technologies that capture data in the field, documenting the safety conditions at the job site incidents and all that, in my mind they easily pay for themselves because so many of them are so fairly priced and reasonable and easy and accessible for even contractors that always thought that stuff was out of their range a few years ago.

**Mike Merrill:**

Yeah, that's very interesting. I think like yourself and me too, we have exposure to so many different contractors and so many different industries and different sizes, from little guys to huge guys, publicly traded companies. With that background that you have and that perspective, what do you think some of the biggest challenges are that contractors are facing or trying to solve today?

**Steve Antill:**

Yeah, I come back to the word uncertainty right now. I mean, we're living in a moment right now. We talk to our customers daily over here and say people aren't nervous would be lying. It's November 17th when we're

recording this, I mean yesterday Michigan started shutting things down. Our company, we have over 150 customers that are active there and I guarantee in the next couple days we'll be talking to some and they'll say certain jobs they are doing are just shutting down. So there's a lot of uncertainty on these jobs. A lot of uncertainty about backlog beyond the first half of next year for both small and large contractors. That's going to be changing week in and week out.

I mean one of the things we were just talking about today over here is, if there's another stimulus package, we're very hopeful there'll be an infrastructure piece in that because that can feed a large amount of labor and labor and equipment subcontractors for a long time, which would be good for our country and be good for our industry as a whole. But again, until some of the stuff gets done, there's a lot of uncertainty in these contractor's minds. They're very worried for the first time in probably seven, eight years, because the economy's booming and just because they're going fast still and haven't had shut downs in certain areas, a lot of them are worried what's going to happen late next year and into 2022. So that's a recurring theme we've been hearing from our clients for a few months is, it's almost like they just want a clear answer of what's next year going to look like and the year after going to look like? Unfortunately, I don't think with everything going on right now, people have any clue what the next couple months are going to bring.

**Mike Merrill:**

Yeah, who knows, right?

**Steve Antill:**

Who know, right, so.

**Mike Merrill:**

So the jobs you've got in place and that you're on, all the more reason to make sure that those run well and are as profitable as possible so that you can control those variables that you do have some control over.

**Steve Antill:**

Yeah, yeah, yeah. So it's just it's a different time right now than anything we've experienced in probably the

last decade in our industry where things have just been booming nonstop, and even though things look good right now there's a lot of questions about what's going to happen into the future here.

So I think from both our GC clients and sub clients and just folks I talk to, if they know they've got a strong backlog, they're comfortable, they'll be more aggressive in what they do. They'll focus on building their business and taking advantage of tools that'll help their company get to that next level but when they get uncertain, it just makes them decide often not to do anything. They might be missing the boat on things that can help their company because they're fearful of spending money on what they might deem as extras, but there are a lot of tools that could help them on the back end of all this.

**Mike Merrill:**

Yeah, and we both know of course that in construction, we're known as laggards of adoption of technology.

**Steve Antill:**

Yeah, completely agree, but the one thing I tell people is, I've been doing this 21 years, and I don't have any hard facts on this but I think our industry, the technology's evolved more in the last probably 36 months than the prior 17 years.

I mean it feels like for the first time I've been doing this, that these contractors are embracing technology more so than they ever have and they're more aware of it. I don't want to stereotype things but we deal with a lot of small to mid-sized contractors that I think there's been a little bit of a change in the generations of companies. So mom and dad started the company and ran it to the last few years and now a lot of times now this newer generation, whether it's the kids or younger leadership, the management team, a generation like Gen X and the millennials are starting to move into these leadership roles. We've grown up with technology and computer. So when we come into these spots and we're looking at the business and saying, "Why are we not taking advantage of it?" Where before, it was such a hard sell to get that generation to, why do we need this, why do we need computers, why do we need technology, why do we need a mobile solution, we can do it by hand. Now this new generation tends

to be hungrier for it where they're like, why aren't we taking advantage of these tools?

**Mike Merrill:**

Right, yeah I remember not so long ago, I mean even a decade ago, companies were saying, "I've got all the technology I need in this spreadsheet."

**Steve Antill:**

Yeah, yeah, yeah. That spreadsheet might've been a Lotus spreadsheet, right?

**Mike Merrill:**

Yeah, true. Good point. Green screen software.

**Steve Antill:**

Yeah, yeah, yeah, it's moving quick, yeah. I mean how many folks, the first thing they call into us and say is, "What cloud solutions do you have?" 36 months ago, even though many other industries, are already using the cloud, other industries, five, six, seven years ago. Construction had just got on their radar. So when you talk about construction being known as laggards, it's taken a lot to get there but it just seems like things are moving much quicker right now.

**Mike Merrill:**

Yeah, it's funny you mention that. I was going to ask you how the cloud has impacted what you guys do every day and how often is it now coming up?

**Steve Antill:**

Yeah, all the time, all the time. One of the thing we even talk about is, we have multiple products over here. We have a mobile system, we have payroll for construction, we have Foundation software, the big accounting package. We have thousands of on-premise clients that over time will move over to our hosted environment, whatnot, but I think a lot of times too, a lot of times when people call in just they assume now that what you offer is cloud based. They just assume what you offer is that option and they won't even consider anything else but a SaaS or a cloud option even if you were still selling on-premise. So it's just interesting

where once you start talking to them they do start talking about cloud and all that.

The one thing that I always talk about with our customers and things and you guys may see it too is, I think we're going to through this transition right now too, where I'll flat out ask if I'm the CEO of a company, "Does your company have an IT strategy?" A lot of times they're like, "What are you talking about?" I think we're in that phase now, especially with these small to mid sized contractors that may be a little bit behind the big \$500 million contractor. They may use a program like yours like WorkMax cloud based, but then they use Foundation on-premise version, and then they had an estimating system in for 20 years that is also on-premise. You say, "Well do you guys have a goal? Are you trying to all your key programs you need to operate your business to a hosted environment?" A lot of times they're like, "No, we haven't had the conversation." I'll say, "Well maybe it's time you guys put a roadmap in place where maybe three years from now you want your WorkMax, you want Foundation, you want your estimating system all to be hosted in a cloud environment so you're no longer maintaining that infrastructure in your office."

So I think we're seeing a little bit of a mismatch now with a lot of these contractors where one or two of their key three or four programs are on-premise, and then the other couple are cloud and all that. They're a little bit back and forth. So it's just trying to educate these guys to sit down and say, "Do you have a true IT strategy of what you're looking to do with your key systems you use to run your business on a day-to-day basis over time?"

### **Mike Merrill:**

Well, so and you mentioned various systems, various products. How important is integration of those different systems if they've chosen some best of breed options?

### **Steve Antill:**

Yeah, yeah, so we've gone from import export, to API. So a lot of times our customers and our prospects we talk to, tell me about your APIs. Right out of the gate, that's the first thing. We say, "Well, what are you

looking for?" "I don't know, I was just told to ask about your APIs." So-

### **Mike Merrill:**

I was going to say, they didn't used to even know what the word is or what the acronym was referring to, but sounds like some still don't but they know they need it.

### **Steve Antill:**

Yeah, right. So we're getting a lot of push from customers because they no longer want to export from one system and then manually import it in, which to tell you the truth, I mean that works fine for a lot of folks with certain systems. It works fine, but as time goes by that'll become less and less as more API tools get written. So we do have much more of a demand for APIs now than we did probably 18 months ago, 24 months ago.

I'll give you an example. We have a really good relationship with Procore, and obviously they're the big, big player in the industry right now. So we've developed API tools with them. They have a great system but our average customer's always looking to add it from our lens, the accounting world. Their user's doing it from their side, from Procore or the operational standpoint, which they do things different than us.

We get the call all the time is, "Hey, we want to use these API tools. Make Procore and Foundation talk." We're like, "Okay, we have these available." So I tell our average customer, I'm like, "Understand the technology part of that is the easy part. It's still unifying your team and creating the collaboration between office and operations so you guys are on the same page of what you want to bring back and forth between the two systems."

Because for example, our accounting folks are so embedded in setting up vendors and accounts payable because that's a traditional accounting function. Where a typical Procore user maintains their vendor listen in Pro Core because they're writing POs and subs out of their and all that. So sitting these teams down and say, "Okay, you can send vendors from Procore into Foundation. How do you feel about that?" The operations team says, "That's what we want to do."

Then the accounting folk says, “No, no, no, no, no, no, no. We want to maintain complete control. We want to set the vendors up in Foundation and send it to Procure.” So our API with them works both ways. Their preference and the technology part’s the easy part. Getting their teams to agree on how they want these workflows to go between the two systems, tends to be the struggle because they just don’t see the world from the same lens.

But as we get more clients using those API tools and we continue to have conversations and dialog with Procure as we share more customers for example, we’re putting better processes and to say, “Hey, these are best practices other companies have done, and this is how these things have worked for you,” so.

**Mike Merrill:**

Yeah, yeah, that’s interesting how again I like how you said they’re looking at it from their perspective. Again, a power user in Procure may not be the power user in Foundation Software

**Steve Antill:**

Yeah, right. The power user in Procure may not fundamentally understand the flow of accounts payable posting in the general ledger and in the job costing. It’s completely foreign to them and all that. A typical accounting manager may not know the complete workflow of how the PM’s going through and developing change orders in Procure. They just, we want the change order in Procure to talk to Foundation. Well, what type of change orders do you want to come back to Foundation to update your job costing in Foundation? A lot of times they’re like, “I don’t know.” Well, we have to sit these two teams down together and explain what we can do in that. So the technology again is the easier part, it’s getting those two teams to agree and understand how those systems work and can talk, that tends to be more the challenge.

I think just as a whole in our industry, as more API tools get developed out, we’re going to continue to deal with that system by system, cross each bridge one at a time, especially we have an API tool with ProEst estimating software. We just had a client last week, really good longtime client that started asking for more things than the API offers. ProEst is like, “It’d be nice if you

guys did this,” but we started looking at it and we’re like, “I don’t even know if this logically makes sense.” What the estimator wanted to do doesn’t really make sense in our system. So we got them together on the phone, all three of us and talked through it and they were like, “Oh, you’re right. There would be no point in doing that.” Even though he thought that could be something that would benefit their client, it’s just not something that happens in the accounting side. So again, another example where different departments see the world from different lenses.

**Mike Merrill:**

Yeah, and I think you’re... I mean I’m having flashbacks of so many conversations that I’ve had. In fact, even just a couple of weeks ago we had a new client and they’re in the mining and energy space. In a big room with eight or 10 people, and depending on what feature or function we were talking about, different people around that table said, “Oh no, no, no, no, no, I don’t even care about that. What I need is...” then yet somebody else would say, “Well no, no, no, that’s critical, we have to have that.” So to your point, we’ve got different focuses for different people depending on what their role is. I think APIs and having a workflow process that lets these systems work together to maximize the options of possible touchpoints is something we can do as technology vendors but at the end of the day, software is only good if it’s used by its user. So that’s a gap that I think we have to do a better job leading people to try and fill.

**Steve Antill:**

Yeah, I like what you said there in that example. You said, “I do not need that or I do not want that.” So again, a lot of times one of the things that I’ve seen exist in our industry for so many years, at least since I’ve been in it is, these teams work in silos. Accounting, field, estimating, they work in silos. As good companies like you’re doing, developing APIs and we’re doing developing APIs, like the one we have with Procure, at the end of the day we’re still a people business.

I always reflect back at to Fred Ode, our founder. I remember probably in the year 2000 he said, “If you can connect the field and office and get them talking together, you’ll be a millionaire overnight.” Looking back on this, the truth is you would’ve been a

multimillionaire overnight because they work different from each other and there's been a traditional disconnect between those business units for so many years. These API tools are great that we can bring them together but at the end of the day we're still a people business. Getting people to sit around that table and agree on certain things and making sure organizationally as a whole, they're all in alignment of what they're trying to achieve.

I think once you cross that bridge, which I think for the first time in our industry we're doing more of now than we ever have, that means companies are effectively utilizing all these tools together the correct way. But at the end of the day we're in a people business, if you can't get the different departments to change their behaviors, as great as these tools are, chances are they're not going to work for them, so.

**Mike Merrill:**

Yeah, yeah, great point. So you're with Foundation Soft, which is essentially a construction job cost accounting solution. Is that defined properly?

**Steve Antill:**

Yeah, that's a great way to define it. You nailed it.

**Mike Merrill:**

So tell me, with that definition, what is that? What does that even mean? Say I'm on QuickBooks or something more simple, not as specialized. What does that mean? True job cost accounting, what are the different-

**Steve Antill:**

So I'll give you the salesman answer and then we can drill down a little bit. So an easy way to approach this is, we've made our living as a company at Foundation Software, we love QuickBooks. Without QuickBooks, we probably wouldn't exist because QuickBooks is such a great starter software for general businesses. Right, just like anyone else, a construction company starting off finds their way to it more often than not. So in the companies we market to, we believe there's probably over 100,000 construction companies that could use our product that use QuickBooks around the

United States. So there's just a tremendous amount of businesses that use QuickBooks.

**Mike Merrill:**

Millions, yeah.

**Steve Antill:**

Yeah, millions, and probably 100,000 between three million to 25 million commercial construction companies that we're chasing.

So what happens a lot is they often run their business like a check register that's all cash based, paying their bills, all that type of stuff. Then they grow up a little bit and get a job that's bigger than anything they've had, and they tend to start with tracking things by labor, material, subs, equipment cost, other. Then they start growing and doing well and then they may say, "Hey, we want to put a coding structure in place," and if you're an electrical contractor it might be conduit fixtures, lighting within that, then you look at labor material sub cost, but what happens is you're building these layers of job cost. It's just organically happening as your company's growing and maybe you're taking on bigger commercial jobs or bigger government jobs.

Then couple things start happening. You start becoming inefficient where you're doing your reporting in Excel. We were talking about spreadsheets a few minutes ago. You're doing all what you deem as job cost reports in Excel, but there's no real source of truth of that, it's just numbers that are gathered and plugged into a spreadsheet where maybe you're saying, "Hey, we think the estimated cost is 100,000 and our reports in QuickBooks says actual cost right now is 80,000." So you're manually plugging the stuff so things do not reconcile back to accounting.

So a couple things that happen on the tipping point. We start seeing these contractors maybe hit \$3 million, \$4 million, \$5 million, where the burden of doing that manually, the behavior of it, it's a tipping point where they're like, wow, we're not being efficient. Maybe we should start looking at something industry specific, a construction accounting package. One of the other indicators are the CPA comes in there, they have a good CPA and says, "Guys, you're spending way more in labor doing this stuff manually versus if you were to



get a construction specific job cost accounting system that would automatically build these reports for you." So that's another one.

Then the one that's really interesting is the bonding company. The company hits \$3 million, \$5 million, they go to bid on a larger job and they want to increase their bonding capacity and the bonding agent says, "This data you're sending me is in spreadsheets, it reconciles back to nothing. We're having a hard time accepting this data as a source of truth from you." So there's a lot of moving pieces that can happen.

But the natural evolution is at some point probably between \$3 million on up is these companies find their way into starting to think about getting into what you're calling a job cost accounting system. I call it a fully integrated job cost system where if conceptually they're using us or other products we compete with correctly, they're entering data into accounts payable, they're entering into another payroll module or they're using your system and capturing payroll in the field and it pushes into our payroll module. They're doing their billing functions automatically, and the beauty of the seamless, fully integrated job cost accounting system is is they're putting those transactions into the daily modules. They're capturing the job and the job cost structure that they're wanting to. Then when they post those transactions, it's fully integrated. It updates the root accounting module, just like it would in QuickBooks. It also hits your ledger, but it also automatically takes that and pushed it into the job cost system.

So again, they are no longer manually plugging numbers into a spreadsheet. They're in a fully integrated job cost construction accounting package. In two reports right out of the gate, they should be getting with us or any of the other systems out there would be estimated versus actual cost, to see within a job, estimated versus actual cost. So if they're doing that and getting that automated, that's a huge step up from manually doing it in spreadsheets.

Then the other big one is the one that relates to the bonding company. They're started to formulate an over under billing report where they can see a percentage of completion on the job or even broken down by the cost code within the job. Then these companies hopefully will do more with that. They'll start forecasting off of

it and using it to their advantage to start growing their business, so.

**Mike Merrill:**

Yeah, it sounds like you've got a lot to offer smaller to mid sized organizations that are really trying to get a handle on those true costs on a regular daily basis and head into growth.

**Steve Antill:**

Yeah, I mean we want to help these folks and if they go through training and they set the system up to be used at a basic to mid level, it's a huge improvement from QuickBooks. It should give them information to help them make better business decisions. Adjust during the light cycle of a job. You were talking about those spreadsheets, so often these numbers are not getting up in the spreadsheet until the job's done and it's over, you can't react. Where if you're on a daily, weekly basis looking at real time job costing, you can make adjustments on the job on the fly and increase the profitability.

**Mike Merrill:**

Yeah, that's great, great advice. So winding up here a little bit. Just curious, what would you advise companies, whether they're large or small, that they should be doing here as we wrap up 2020 to give themselves an advantage and be a better position for 2021?

**Steve Antill:**

Yeah, so we were talking about the emergence of technology a little bit and maybe how it also trickles down from larger contractors to smaller. I think these guys are going to have to be nimble, willing to adjust, be flexible more probably in 2021 than they've had to be in the last decade, just because of everything going on in the world.

The one thing that's really starting to emerge quickly, that I think it's a great topic is these business analytical tools, like using the power of the eyes of the world. Four years ago, a typical \$30 million Foundation client or About Time or WorkMax client wasn't even... these weren't on the radar. Now we're starting to see clients

use these tools and I think this could be a separator with the small to mid sized contractors. The big guys are using these now, but on top of getting good reporting out of them, they're allowing contractors to do predictive analysis on jobs, which I think moving into 2021 can be big and it can be important. Helping to predict things like cashflow, cashflow is going to be an issue that comes up more probably, more in 2021 than it has the last few years because a lot of these guys have been doing very well and all that. Now the margins might be down, the schedules might be off. Starting to look at some past history to help make predictive analysis and decisions on jobs and being able to adjust on the fly. So it's one of the things that it's just real interesting.

A year or two ago, very few of our clients were using these tools, even asking us about them. Now we're on a daily basis, you got companies that are just, "Hey, we use Power BI, we want to pull data from your system into Power BI and build some reports off of it that's going to help predict paper jobs we should be bidding on, cashflow cycles within different types of jobs we do." Cashflow might be tight, there might be certain types of jobs it takes a long time to get paid on. They can do some predictive analysis on that and then even though the job could be profitable, it might hurt them next year or during the lifecycle of the job because those types of jobs may take longer to get paid on. So those are all things I think contractors should be thinking about.

Again, these tools are readily available and they're very affordable. I mean, you can use Google Data Studio, I mean you got clients, big companies that use Tableau, that's become very popular as well, but again it's just fascinating to me because contractors, we didn't have this on the radar in any way, shape or form, a year or two ago. It's cool to call and say, "Hey, Steve, we're starting to use Power BI. We want to talk to you guys about doing some consulting to give Foundation married into it." Then they're bringing data in from other systems as well, bringing multiple systems' data together, so.

### **Mike Merrill:**

Yeah, it's nice to see the advance in our technology in our industry and people embracing it as opposed to running away from it like they've done in the past.

### **Steve Antill:**

Yeah, it's a different game, isn't it? It's cool, it's really cool.

### **Mike Merrill:**

Awesome, well so just to wrap up. One question I like to ask all of the guests of the podcast. What's one hack or process or a secret sauce that Steve Antill has learned over your illustrious multi-decade career?

### **Steve Antill:**

All right, so I may be living in the moment right now, but I mean I run a team of about 15 sales people and we have a marketing department over here. I think sometimes I need to step back and a good thing with secret sauce is it's a marathon, it's not a sprint as you go through things. I think this year is a good example of it where it's probably not a wise decision to make business decisions on what's happening this week or on the election until we know what the fallout is to overanalyze sales. Even this month versus over a longer period of a time. So sometime when we were looking at the business as a whole and we've been talking about our customers and how they do things. It's a marathon, if you're committed to your business and you want to be in this for the long haul, it's a marathon, it's not a sprint. Take your time, be patient.

I was telling my 11-year old son the other day, sometimes the best decision you can make in life is no decision. If you're unsure of what you're going to do, maybe doing nothing is better than doing something that you're unsure of, because he's 11 and there's something he wants. He's not sure he has enough money and he wants to... so I was like, "Listen, if you're not sure that's what you want, save your money, do nothing. Then maybe in another month if you still want it, spend your money on it. There's no rush." So yeah, I think it's not a sprint, it's a marathon. We're in this for the long haul, I'm in this for the long haul. I think a lot of our clients are as well, and let's just take a step back and think 3D press and just see what the next level it brings to us.

From a leadership level, passing that down to our team so everybody's not reacting to things so quickly right now, is only a good, good thing.

**Mike Merrill:**

No, that's great. I think it's great for not only business but personally. Good advice and wisdom there.

**Steve Antill:**

Cool, thank you, so.

**Mike Merrill:**

Thank you. Well, again, thank you for joining us today. We're always, always excited to have these great conversations and this has been certainly no exception to that today.

**Steve Antill:**

Thank you, Mike. I really appreciate being on the podcast. Thank you.

**Mike Merrill:**

You bet, so thank you for joining us today on the mobile workforce podcast, sponsored by About Time Technologies and WorkMax.

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