

# BUILDING SUCCESS



## featured

- Cary & Associates Builders, Inc.
- Foundation Software

Cary & Associates at work on a pre-engineered metal construction cold storage facility for Cotati Food Service

## Bay Area Contractor Capitalizes on Building Opportunities

In Northern California, where the valleys and hills are home to some of the most famous California vineyards, a full-service general contractor is serving the unique construction needs of the area.

Cary & Associates Builders, Inc. is located just an hour north of San Francisco in Sonoma County. They are a design-build company that specializes in negotiated projects for wineries, industrial complexes, cold storage, barns, equestrian centers, office buildings, churches, and schools.

Bob Cary, President and founder of the company, has more than 30 years of construction experience that began in 1969 when he was a construction steelworker with the Navy SeaBees. A Vietnam veteran, Cary is an active community and business leader.

"We have the unique ability of being able to integrate pre-engineered metal building systems with complex conventional building designs," Cary said. "I think we owe our success to high-quality service and workmanship." The company philosophy is one of teamwork, and they encourage owner participation in all phases of construction.

Service, however, was not what Cary & Associates received from their previous accounting software vendor. Despite being loyal customers for 17 years, customer service and technical support for the product

was almost non-existent, according to Jane Bryant, Office Manager and Bookkeeper.

In addition, Bryant said, the construction-specific system was limited in handling accounting functions that crossed a calendar year end. For example, liability and workers' compensation audits had to be hand-summarized on Microsoft® Excel spreadsheets from a compilation of printouts. When the software was upgraded, it did not always convert data from the previous version. When that happened, the office would spend days setting up new vendors, jobs, employees, and cost codes before entering beginning balances into the system.

### THE CHALLENGE

At the end of 2002, Cary & Associates spent several thousand dollars for the latest upgrade to their software. Included in that cost was the purchase of a new server designed to meet the exact specifications required for the new upgrade. After the computer technician installed the upgrade, they began to experience almost weekly crashes of the software program. The vendor's customer support staff blamed everything from personnel to the new server. In April, the software crashed for an entire week. During the time the software was down, Cary & Associates received an \$8,000.00 invoice for technical support for the coming year.

## CUSTOMER



## CORPORATE PROFILE

Cary & Associates Builders, Inc.  
Sebastopol, CA  
General Contractor  
Employees: 8  
Annual Revenue: \$4 - 5 Million

## SYSTEM PROFILE

### Foundation Software Modules in Operation

- Job Costing
- Payroll
- General Ledger
- Accounts Payable
- Accounts Receivable
- DataGenie Designers
- Conversion Quick

## BENEFITS

- Ease of completing certified payroll
- Smooth handling of liability & workers' compensation audits
- Stress-free year-end reporting
- Elimination of manual calculations
- Excellent support, training, and company culture

With only two weeks left on their contract, the company decided it was time to cut their losses and find a new software system that could meet their needs without crashing.

"I called everyone I knew for references on new software," Bryant said, "and I researched products on the Internet. I finally accepted demonstrations from four companies, one of which was Foundation. They seemed to all have similar capabilities, but my instincts were leaning towards FOUNDATION® for Windows®. The salesperson was professional and knowledgeable and did not speak derogatorily about the competition like the other three companies were doing. Foundation actively encouraged me to check all software since they felt that not every software fit every company."

Bryant knew the company needed a reliable, efficient accounting package that would function with less stress and down time to the office. After talking to her accountant, she also hoped to find a system that was date-sensitive. This would facilitate both year-end processes and audits. She was pleased to find that with FOUNDATION, "you just put in the date range and it prints the report."

### THE SOLUTION

With no time to waste in the transition process, Cary & Associates chose Foundation's classroom training. "Foundation was able to translate vendors, jobs, cost codes, and general ledger account numbers from the old software and had the data ready when I walked into the classroom," Bryant explained. "After one week of training, I was able to open my general ledger account balances and actually run my first payroll checks, all from what I learned in the classroom setting."

Bryant brought the updated data back with her and gave it to Cary & Associates' computer technician, who was easily able to install it with the help of Foundation's support department. "We were up and running on the day I returned," Bryant said. "After the installation, my computer technician came over and congratulated me on buying software that was based on Microsoft® SQL Server."

At year end, when it came time to close the books and payroll, Bryant was thrilled to find how easy it was with FOUNDATION .

**"To close the books for the year, I simply had to check a couple boxes to prevent any posting back to the previous year, then close at my leisure. That was fantastic, and it was the first year, for as long as I've been in bookkeeping, that I didn't have to work the holidays."**



Kiln-dried redwood barn constructed for Turley Wine Cellars of Napa Valley

As a California-based company, Cary & Associates was at first skeptical that a Midwest company three time zones away could provide prompt support and technical help. But not any longer. "We have excellent support from 'real' people who know how to walk us through the problem and who always call us back promptly," Bryant concluded.

Bryant's advice to other companies looking for an accounting solution? "Research the product, talk to other customers, find out what support is like and what training is available. Although it's difficult to make a change from software you've had for a long time, don't settle for poor service."