

TECHNICALLY SPEAKING

by Fred Ode

Editor's Note: Looking for answers to your tech issues?

Send your construction-related technology questions to heyfred@foundationsoft.com.

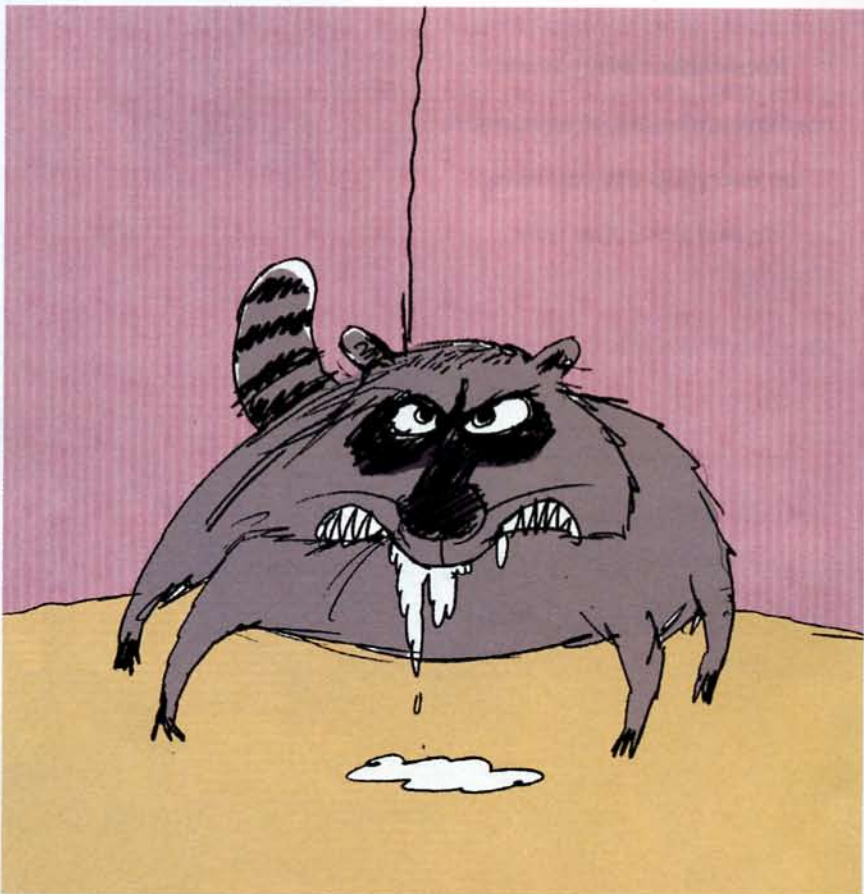
Q: After several months of searching for an estimating software application, we finally settled on a package, or so I thought. We did everything by the book. First, we created a long list and narrowed it down to a short list of four products. We had several demonstrations, conference calls with the vendor, and we did extensive reference checking. When told about our decision, one of the other vendors on our short list sent me a list of issues about the package we chose.

With so many potential problems pointed out, I no longer feel comfortable with our choice. This is a critical decision for our company, and I feel like I'm back to square one. What should I do? Everything tells me we made the right choice, but I can't bring myself to finalize the deal.

Hank

A: Given the situation, I would be very skeptical...but more so about the vendor who is trash-talking the competition. This vendor sounds like a rabid raccoon that has been cornered and has no way out. Let me guess. He also asked you to keep it confidential?

The first thing you should do is scratch this guy off your short list.



Remember, you are not just investing in software, you are also partnering with another business, and you want a company that operates with integrity and professionalism. The next thing you should do is provide the chosen vendor with the opportunity to specifically address every issue and problem identified. Odds are that most everything can be addressed to your satisfaction. As a precaution, you may want to call additional references and ask about the areas in question. If necessary, ask for another

demonstration to go over the critical issues on the list. Finally, understand that selecting software may require some time and patience, but "mud-slinging" should never be part of the process. ■

Disclaimer: Fred Q & A reserves the right to change names and edit questions for privacy, length, and readability issues.