FOUNDATION IN ACTION

A Prevailing Wage Contractor Gets the Payroll Features It Needs

BY FOUNDATION SOFTWARE

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Started in 1985, [Systems Tech Fire Protection](#) has spent the last 30 years delivering high-quality fire protection systems and solutions to the state of California. However, when it came time to change their accounting software, office manager Kathy Rambo discovered that finding the right solution to meet the needs of California's unique reporting requirements wasn't as easy.

A Bumpy Road

"As I was doing my research, I was finding little flaws in other accounting programs that couldn't accommodate us," she states. Though a variety of these accounting programs touted themselves as construction friendly, they were still falling short in meeting the construction-specific needs of her company — like having the right space for construction job numbers.

"It seems really small, but it was like — oh no, you can only have five characters. Are you serious? You're in construction! I've seen some of the project numbers from the general contractors — they're way larger than our numbers! If you're calling yourself a construction software program, how is it that you're limiting this to five characters?"

The even bigger problem, however, was the limitations she found with [certified payroll](#). Like a lot of construction companies, Systems Tech Fire Protection faces complex requirements from a variety of agencies and organizations across the state, from the Department of Industrial Relations to counties, schools and cities. Each project might have different wage and fringe requirements — but so does each unique employee, and that's where a lot of software was missing the mark.

"They wanted us to have this cookie-cutter approach," Kathy remembers with frustration, "like what the state puts out or the federal government: here are your fringes, and that's it. And that's not really how it works. Everybody has different deductibles, if they're single, if they have a family, which medical they choose." They needed something that would be flexible enough for a real construction crew. "It just drove me crazy that nobody was getting the concept. All the other programs fell short on that — terribly. They failed miserably."

That's when she discovered FOUNDATION construction accounting software.

A More Customizable Payroll System

"When I came across your company and I had my rundown of questions, and you were like 'Oh yes, we can do that. Oh yes, we can do that, let me show you how.' I was like, oh my gosh, I have found the accounting software of my dreams!"

Due to its customized sequencing, FOUNDATION allows users to set default pay and fringe rates based on factors like job, trade and employee. So it knows where to look for the right information. For Kathy, this meant that she just needed to enter the timecard information — employee, what trade they worked in, what job they worked on and the hours they worked. FOUNDATION could then pull the numbers from the right data tables to calculate how much the employee should make in wages, how much they should make in which benefits (education, health care, pension), what taxes and deductions need to be

withheld, etc. It was exactly what Kathy and Systems Tech Fire were looking for.

"If I could go out and put construction software together, this is how I would do it." Kathy says. "I was singing your praises to everyone that would listen to me. Because it was like: *finally*! Someone got it!"

Since FOUNDATION stores their timecard information in a robust, date-sensitive database, Kathy can always go back and pull new reports without having to re-enter data. "The reports didn't even have to be set up properly the first time around to capture the data!" she remarks, "FOUNDATION went back and got the data — some programs won't do that, but yours does."

This flexibility was especially important in the face of California's ever-changing reporting requirements. Rather than scrambling to create new reports or change information, FOUNDATION is able to pull whatever information Kathy needs. It was a game changer.

"FOUNDATION just does so much." Kathy remarks, "I'm looking forward to learning all the ins and outs of how to manipulate it to get the reports that I want in the future."