



February 24, 2017

Good afternoon.

For those of you that I have not had the pleasure of meeting previously, my name is Phil Wilson. It all started because of a need and an idea. The need was income. The idea was that we could satisfy the need by getting into the computer business.

Before I go any further, what young people out there need to realize is that at this point in time Personal Computers (think Desktops) were in their infancy. You had an option of one or two floppy disk drives. That was it! Floppy disks stored 360K of data each. You had one hard disk with a capacity option of 5 or 10 Meg, and you had a dot matrix printer. Available software was a rudimentary compiler named Basic, a word processor and a form filler.

What I knew was that my background was programming main frames. What I also knew was my son, Mark, had recently graduated from Clemson and was convinced personal computers were the future. What I didn't know was that IBM and Radio Shack was going to run our butts into the ground in less than a year. But, not having that last piece of information, we mortgaged the house to the max, hocked Mrs. Wilson's jewelry, obtained a Toshiba franchise, and incorporated WCA as a hardware company in 1981.

Less than a year later, and under the circumstances, I was trying to decide which high building to jump from when an Appraiser dropped by the office and asked, "Why don't you write some appraisal software?" What I didn't know about appraising would fill books, but I knew the URAR was a form, and I knew we had form filling software. Ergo – install the form filler, use it to create the URAR form, market it and the personal computer as a package and be solvent in no time. What I didn't know was that we would exceed the capacity of that form filler before completing page 1.

I am afraid of heights, and I knew we had the Basic compiler. I knew we still had Mark and he had some knowledge of Basic. By him working sixteen/twenty hour days for a few weeks we could accomplish our objective. For once we didn't run into any issues that we couldn't handle. There were very few bells and whistles, but we had a program that would fill out and print both pages of the URAR form. Our appraiser was satisfied and happy, so it was time to offer the package to other appraisers in the Greenville, SC area.

What I didn't know was that other appraisers in Greenville did things differently than our appraiser. It became necessary to rewrite the software to accommodate those differences. That done, a few other appraisers in the area purchased the program so we expanded into the State. Very quickly we discovered that they have different appraisal issues in the Low Country of South Carolina than we have here in the Upstate. Another rewrite, but more sales. You can guess what happened next. Another rewrite when we went national because they have different issues on the West Coast than we have here on the East Coast.

Over time other appraisal forms and many bells and whistles were added. We acquired a sketch package and added the ability to store and manage comparable properties. We started training classes to educate appraisers about computers and the benefits of our software. We developed Photo Imaging. And we started exhibiting in Appraiser conventions.

We learned some lessons about marketing at these conventions. I remember one year in Tampa, Florida in particular. To illustrate our acceptance, I had purchased a four by eight-foot map of the United States and used pins with colored heads about the size of bee-bees to spot our appraiser customers. What I didn't know was one of our competitors had the same idea. Fortunately for us he had set up his booth before we arrived. When I looked at their booth, they had a map a third the size of ours, and his markers were labels about the size of lollipops. We had about the same number of customers, but you couldn't see their small map because of all the big lollipop markers, and our small bee-bee markers were lost on our big map. Our map never saw the light of day.

Another convention was in Montreal Canada. Just before the convention's opening day, a gentleman by the name of Wayne Pugh appeared in our booth with a problem. He had a Toshiba printer that his exhibit depended on, and it had gone on the fritz. We still handled Toshiba products and he wondered if we could help. We did and this small courtesy to a competitor started a business friendship that has lasted to this day.

Later that day, over dinner, we found out Wayne had recently revamped his forms software to include the latest technical improvements. In our case, Mark had devoted our development time to something new - photo imaging. Wayne needed photo imaging, and we needed our forms software brought up to date. Wayne's question was, "Why re-invent the wheel?" Why not merge resources and re-market the others products? I had finally gotten a little smarter and agreed. Since then each company has developed several products and contributed to the common good.

Fast forward to today. A few years ago I noticed some things that indicated it was time to ease off, and for Mrs. Wilson and I to do something else for whatever time the good Lord may grant us. In order to accomplish that, I determined three objectives that had to be met. One - our customers, many whom have been with us since the beginning, and many who have become friends as much as business associates, had to be able to continue their business with as little difficulty as possible. Two - our staff, who have been with me for many years, must be allowed sufficient time for re-employment if they so desired. Three - I must obtain sufficient compensation to take care of Mrs. Wilson in our declining years. Wayne agreed to meet those objectives, so we opted to merge with SFREP.

On forms - Software for Real Estate Professionals was the obvious choice for our users. There will be no learning curve. You have been using the forms software for many years. The only difference will be seeing the SFREP label instead of the WCA label.

The same is true for other products, such as Sketching and Image/Photo Management. Options for these programs have been changing for both companies to meet technical and industry standards, ultimately with the same results - one program shared by both companies. Now they will be available under the SFREP name only.

Your user contacts will stay the same with Joy, Janice, and Pat who have been with me forever and each in their own way are one-of-a-kind. We wouldn't have come this far without them.

On technical support - knowing its importance to our customers, we always placed a high value on providing the best possible. Over the recent past few years, technicians from both companies have assisted each other time and time again. All have benefited from the cooperative effort. Going forward your technical support will not change but simply merge, grow, and improve.

In closing, we tried to think of everything, but of course that is impossible. I am sure, however, that assistance will be provided to resolve any issues should they arise.

As for Mrs. Wilson and I, both of us will turn 87 this year. We regret the change is necessary in some ways, but as a vaudeville's soft shoe dancer said, "Nothing works the way it used to any more". We wish all of you the very best and are looking forward to whatever the future holds for us.....and you.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P. Wilson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and a long, sweeping underline.