



CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT: Paragon Electric

Welcome to BuildOps: On the Spot, a series where we sit down with some of our most inspiring clients, and highlight the work they're doing in the electrical, mechanical, plumbing, and HVAC spaces. Today, we're talking with Tim Kassay of Paragon Electric. The New York City based team has been around for generations. We'll learn more about what types of projects Paragon does, how Tim's grandfather pioneered the company, and how BuildOps gets to be part of their journey into the future.

» Tell us all about Paragon! What projects are you most excited about?

Electrical maintenance service, energy efficiency, and renewable energy are the core of who we are as a business. We reduce our customers' expenditures with energy-efficient lighting, occupancy sensing, and smart building systems. We increase our customer's revenue with solar energy and battery storage systems. Sustainability is something we believe in. It's how we can do our part to help create a cleaner, more energy secure future for America.

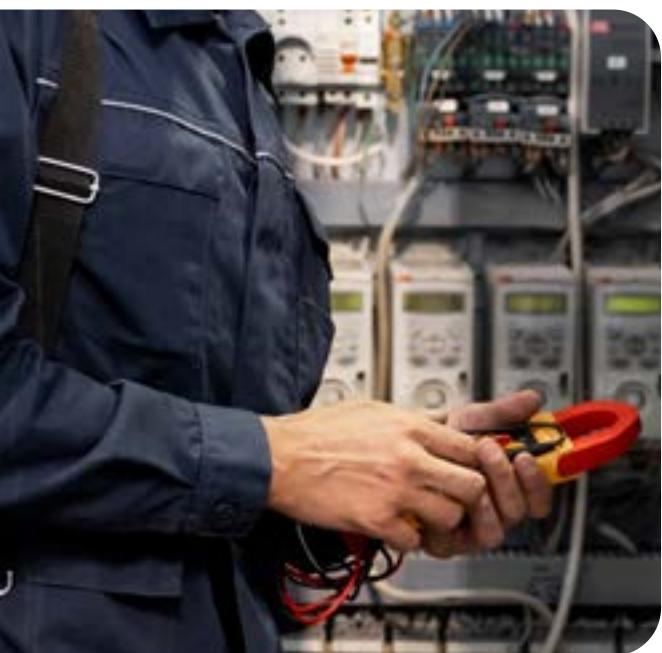


My whole family has been involved with the electrical industry for a long time. My grandfather was an electrician for the Navy on the Intrepid. When WWII occurred, my grandfather and his brothers enlisted. He went into the Navy learning the electrical trade. His brothers were paratroopers, divers and members of the infantry. All returned home except one.

In my family, work is a family affair. My father has a small family. He has 14 sets of Aunts and Uncles and 70 first cousins. Most of the males worked for my grandfather. In the 90s, my uncles started an energy-efficient lighting manufacturing company. Philips purchased their company in 2012 and unknowingly hired quite a few Kassay's through that acquisition. They saw a business opportunity that others didn't at that time -- one business selling another business products that will pay for themselves many times over via reduced energy consumption.

»» **Why do you think so many people are interested in retrofitting their buildings with energy-efficient lighting + electrical design?**

Property owners are making investments in equipment. They're upgrading their own buildings, as an investment, to save money in the long run. Not as sexy as buying stocks, but it's the same exact thing! Purchasing something in order to get returns from it, and the returns are similar, if not better. Plus it benefits the environment.



»» **How did you know it was time to roll out some type of program to make operations smoother? What were those key moments where you said 'yup, we need something to help us?'**

We were suddenly growing and our operations couldn't keep up.

We got a really large account working with a contractor who does the lighting for a number of national chains. We went from under 10 electricians to 50 in a very short period of time. It's so important to me that I always make each of my customers feel like they're my only client, and I wasn't able to do that anymore.

You know when you wake up, and your heart is beating a hundred miles an hour? I had way too many things to do, to stay on top of, and it felt like things weren't going the way they should be. The large corporations we started working with had stringent documentation requirements, and our outdated processes couldn't keep up. We had more electrical work than ever to perform and what seemed like an unimaginable amount of paperwork to submit. Unfortunately, electricians don't like to do paperwork!

I'd hear: "I got this job because I like to work with my hands and build things, I didn't sign up to do paperwork." And they weren't doing a great job with the paperwork. There are **strict deadlines** when you're working with large clients, and because of the incorrect way our field techs were managing the paperwork, we were hitting massive delays. Projects weren't getting completed properly, and if they were, it wasn't recorded anywhere. We also had no way of **giving feedback to field techs**.

The important paperwork would be lost, illegible, or come back with actual boot prints on it. So then I'd have to go into Microsoft Paint and clean it up, and then edit the whole document in Adobe so it was presentable for the client. Plus, it's all overnight work, and often they'd forget to submit it altogether. The worker is asleep, and I don't have the information of what they did the night before, and I'd have to give it to the company by 10am. Caused all kinds of anxiety, heart palpitations, stress, all that.

I wasted tons of hours making paperwork look professional, if I could even find it to begin with.

» What was the breaking point?

My job is to procure more work and process the work our field techs have done, so we can get paid on time. We need cash flow for future projects to keep everyone employed. Every time I don't sell enough work, we have to lay some people off, and I feel terrible. I'm letting everyone down.

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I knew I had to increase my capacity to eliminate all these problems to make myself more efficient to get everything done. I tried hiring someone else, and they ended up running into all the same problems, and kept asking questions all day. This wasn't working out. There had to be something else that was going to work.



»» What was your research process like? What initially drew you to BuildOps?

I always look on the [NECA Education Portal](#) to learn about emerging technologies and standards of installation and what's going on in our industry. I love knowing what's going to impact the market and everything. They provide us with everything we need to know about increasing the market share for union workers and contractors for good paying jobs.

I always have their videos playing in the background, and then [Alok](#) came on.

When his video came on, talking about BuildOps, I knew it was the right one. I knew it was going to have the biggest impact for us. It was streamlining the workflow of everything. I could see that so many inefficiencies were going to be eliminated if i were to implement BuildOps as our business system.

»» What was the first relief you felt after implementing BuildOps?

A big part of what I was trying to do was analyze my tasks, my father's tasks, and the bookkeeping tasks, and streamline them. I wanted to be able to transfer tasks between people depending on who had the capacity. Until BuildOps, I had no visibility into people's workloads. Finally, I was able to quickly assign tasks and remove old ones.

We also don't really need paper forms anymore, which is huge. The whole process of printing out all these forms and putting them in folders and getting them somehow to each job before the job starts was a nightmare.

Sometimes I would have to drive to our employees' homes to drop off paperwork and looking back, **that boggles my mind of the inefficiencies**. Now, I can upload documents right to their phone. Plus, no paperwork gets stepped on. And it won't get lost. We have sign-off sheets that have to be filled out, and we can't get paid unless they are. It's made anything paperwork-related so much easier.

»» What have the field techs loved most?

Most often, the foremen are in charge of keeping track of time. They need to keep track on a daily basis and record it. We'd give them a timesheet, and almost every single time they'd wait until the end of the week to fill it out from memory. Bookkeeping would process it, we'd learn the hours were wrong, and then people's checks would be incorrect.

This used to happen once or twice a week MINIMUM, and since we've implemented BuildOps, we haven't had to void a single check.

They also really like the fact that it takes less time for them to document what they did at the end of the day and what materials they used, because of the price book. They can start typing in a part, and a menu comes up that they can select from. It takes them **a quarter of the time to designate all the parts they've used** instead of writing it out by hand. We can create our own custom price books in BuildOps, so it's super easy for techs to enter their materials as opposed to having to look up what each part costs, which was way too much for them to do.

» **What has been a big unexpected benefit of using BuildOps that you weren't even planning for?**

I thought that BuildOps was just going to make ME more efficient, but it has truly made EVERYONE more efficient. It's allowing us to grow.

It's given everyone on the team visibility into what's going on, which is a huge benefit to us. I didn't realize how badly we needed that. With BuildOps, all the information is on the screen for everyone to see and everyone has access to it who needs it.

“The visibility is a huge lifesaver.”

In the past, a lot of the time my dad would call up the people we were working for, would take down all the notes, get a tech to the job, and the paper would be lost. We'd have to scramble on what we were doing there, and then if we lost the receipt, which did happen, we'd have to give the client the job for free. **Nothing like that ever happens anymore.** There's photos of everything, we can see how jobs are going, what was done well, and what needs to be tweaked. The visibility is a huge lifesaver.

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Also, if I want to hire someone else to help manage this team, it would not be like last time. I'd transfer knowledge to the new hire and show them BuildOps, and they'd have everything they need. Thinking back, we had too many electricians to be managed by too few people. How could we ever get past that? Now there's a path to that. BuildOps has made it so it's possible to hire people that have the chance to be successful.

» How has it been learning a new program?

The training BuildOps does... I can't say enough!

I'd say that a really important thing BuildOps does is schedule those meetings to train everybody on the team, to make them learn and use the software. In the past, I had purchased my father estimating software, and he hasn't used it once, because there's no training for it.

With the training you guys do, it forces you to learn it and implement it. Without those calls everyday in the beginning, it wouldn't have been implemented. It would have been another thing we bought, and then didn't use, and then said why am I paying for this.

Seriously, the training is the most critical thing you guys do. It's different than anyone else I've ever seen. Everyone else sells software and you never hear from them again. You guys don't do it that way. There are even some features I haven't implemented yet and I'm really excited

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It was a pleasure getting to talk with Tim about Paragon and his experience with BuildOps. If anything Tim talked about resonated with you, we should connect! [Reach out to us](#) with your questions -- we'd love to make your life easier, just like we've proudly done for Tim and the Paragon team.