

Kevin Wilcox

Sanford, Florida



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Learn about Florida Entrepreneur Kevin Wilcox:

Originally from Shoreham, VT, Kevin Wilcox, President, CEO and Co-Founder of CLX Engineering, an industry leader in Industrial Controls, Electrical and Automation Engineering, and Systems Integration, moved with his parents to Florida in the late 1980s. After graduating from high school, Wilcox, uncertain of what path he wanted to take, spent four years working in manufacturing and warehouse distribution facilities in mostly manual labor roles. As he shared, the results of an aptitude test after a career changing injury presented an opportunity that changed his life forever.

“The results of the aptitude test said I should go into the engineering field,” Wilcox said. “Between that and my injured back, it seemed like a good time to go back to school. I initially started a certificate program at

Seminole Community College until one of my instructors encouraged me to pursue an engineering degree. After graduating with an engineering degree in 1999, I 'fell' into a great opportunity. I met a man that worked for G&T Conveyor Company, a conveyor manufacturer based in Tavares, who offered me a job."

Wilcox was hired as an Electrical Field Technician, where he spent approximately two years working on baggage handling systems. From that entry-level position, he was promoted to Electrical Engineer and then into a Senior Systems Engineer position. In these roles, Wilcox designed the electrical and controls components of baggage handling systems, programmed them and eventually designed the entire systems to ensure the electrical, mechanical and software components all worked together.

While climbing the ranks at G&T and honing his abilities as an engineer, Wilcox became great friends with his boss and mentor, Mark Walk. This friendship would soon lead to a new opportunity.

"After several years of working together, Mark and I knew we could do a better job as an independent controls company," Wilcox said. "Before he moved to Florida, Mark lived in Louisville, KY, where he initially started ControLogix, Inc. In 2009, Mark and I revamped the dormant company, retained the name, and launched ControLogix LLC as equal partners."

Using their strong reputation and relationships in the industry, the two partners started working with local manufacturing facilities. They spent eight months juggling careers at G&T and ControLogix before deciding to focus exclusively on the latter. According to Wilcox, it was a period of mixed emotions.

“It was scary and exciting at the same time,” he said. “We had families and went from six figure positions to not knowing when and how we would get paid. Neither one of us had significant investments to fall back on. Needless to say it was a big risk.”

During their first year in business, Wilcox and Walk partnered with Universal Orlando and landed a multi-million dollar contract at Miami International Airport. The opportunity in Miami represented a significant step back into the baggage industry and necessitated the hiring of additional support staff. By the end of year one, they had a total of six employees. As Wilcox shared, the next few years represented steady growth until 2012, when the company reached a tipping point.

“For the project in Miami, we were originally a subcontractor to a major baggage handling company,” he said. “By 2012, the port authority awarded the final phase of a more than \$200M project to us. We ended up finishing the project on time and underbudget – an opportunity that really put us on the map and showed who we were and our capabilities in the baggage industry.”

Wilcox continues, “That opportunity brought in additional revenue that allowed us to expand with a focus on research and development. We used the new capabilities to position ourselves ahead of our competition. From there, it was strong growth going forward.”

In 2014, Contrologix rebranded itself into CLX Engineering.

When Mark Walk passed away in 2015 Wilcox was devastated, but he

was determined to keep the company moving in the right direction. While growth-minded, Wilcox was also careful not to expand too quickly.

“Managing our growth had a lot to do with learning which projects to take and which to pass up on,” he said. “We never wanted to grow too fast. We didn’t want to hire people to do a project and then lay them off after a year. Our growth was calculated and fueled by our excellent reputation in the industry. We focused on being a partner and building relationships, not just being a sub-contractor.”

Wilcox continued, “Besides our commitment to building strong and lasting relationships, we set ourselves apart with our cutting-edge software and R&D. We compete with companies that are six to seven times our size, because we stay ahead of them on the development side. We’re all pretty much doing the same thing. Beating out the competition comes down to better quality technology and R&D.”

Looking ahead, Wilcox, who’s proud of the family-like culture he’s developed and nurtured at CLX Engineering, is committed to sustainable growth. He wants the business to continue to be a place where people want to work and one that produces high-quality work.

What advice does Wilcox have for aspiring entrepreneurs that may be hesitant to start a business? “You just need to make a decision,” he said.

“There’s no choice that can’t be changed by simply making another choice. Just decide to do it and you’ll find out that once you start moving in a certain direction, it’s easy to continue. People procrastinate because the hardest part to anything is just getting started. Once you get started, everything just flows. There’s a song by Nickleback called If Today Was Your Last Day. There’s a phrase in that song that I think

about often that says, 'That first step you take is the longest stride'. No matter how scared or overwhelming it may be, just take that first step and then you'll find the other steps get easier and easier."

Wilcox continued, "Also, it's important to surround yourself with people you trust and learn to let go. People often think it'll take longer to teach someone how to do something than to do it yourself. However true that may be, you have to do it or you will always be doing all the work. I only recently learned to let go of things. Lastly, being an entrepreneur requires blood, sweat and tears, a strong work ethic, and support from family and friends. I wouldn't be where I am if it wasn't for the incredible work ethic my parents instilled in me and the support my wife has given me. Between extended trips out of town, late nights, and long hours, my wife has been supportive and understanding. It's important to have that kind of support."

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