



# Ronald McVety

New Port Richey, Florida



FACTS Engineering, LLC

## *Learn about Florida Entrepreneur Ronald McVety:*

Within a few seconds of speaking with Ron McVety, Founder and President of FACTS Engineering, LLC, it's abundantly clear the level of pride, passion and care he has for his business and the well-being of his team members. With a focus on team member satisfaction, open communication, superior products and innovation, FACTS Engineering has transformed itself from a one-man shop, operating out of a spare bedroom, to an engineering powerhouse employing nearly 60 people in a 60,000 sq ft facility.

"After graduating from The University of Florida with a degree in Mechanical Engineering, I ended up in Indianapolis working for RCA Consumer Electronics," McVety said. "I did a few projects around automating the production of TVs in order to keep jobs in the United States. We used an industrial control system called a Programmable

Logic Controller (PLC). This device was used in many factories and industrial applications. After learning a lot about PLCs, I reached a point where I thought I could make a bigger impact and more money by building my own machines."

McVety left RCA and started to build his own devices. He was doing about one machine per month when a substantial opportunity came along. Unfortunately, the job was too big and subsequently put him out of business. Nevertheless, McVety regrouped and got back to work.

"At this point, I had learned a lot about PLCs," he said. "The most popular was the Series One. It was primitive to what we use today, but was effective at replacing mechanical relays. Unfortunately, there were many limitations with the Series One. To do analog, you had to buy a bigger box called the Series Three. If you wanted to do serial communication with other devices, you had to buy a Series Six. Along the way, I discovered that the Series One could do all those things, it just needed the right modules plugged into it."

McVety introduced a communication module for the Series One that essentially made it like a Series Six. The potential cost savings for companies were huge. McVety knew he had something good. After attending a trade show and receiving some great feedback, he introduced two additional analog modules and a high current relay output module. According to McVety, these four products really launched the company. After gaining some traction, he was presented with a new obstacle.

"We were buying our plastic from General Electric," he said. "We were doing so well that they eventually felt like we were getting too big for our

bitches and they decided to stop selling us plastic. I was in a position where I had to make a choice - either use up the plastic I had or find a way to get more. The only way to get more was to do tooling with injection plastic molds. In my mind, I didn't really have a choice. I got four credit cards, each with a \$5,000 limit, and maxed them out to set up the tooling. It was a bit of a gamble, but it paid off. Things really took off from there."

Guided by the belief that automation should be easy and affordable for everyone, McVety has gone from working 96 hours per week to only stopping by the office a few times per month. As he explained, this has a lot to do with his incredible staff and the tools and resources he's equipped them with.

"I learned early on that the best way to build a business is to ensure everyone has that entrepreneurial spirit," he said. "When our people talk about accomplishments, they talk about what 'we' do, not about what 'they' do. We don't have people trying to make maneuvers for a higher position. We also have so many great benefits including monthly bonuses and an outstanding health insurance plan."

McVety also places a heavy emphasis on training and leadership and creating an ideal working environment for all of his team members. With the introduction of an aggressive five year growth plan that started back in 2015, McVety hired a consulting company to work with the leadership team, and eventually the rest of his workforce, to reduce obstacles and improve outcomes. The result has been year over year growth of 17%.

"We started with 20 of us in a room for a four day offsite workshop," he said. "They asked us to identify a miracle that would change our lives for

the better. We all wrote down things like, 'get better sleep', 'have less anxiety' and 'have more time to fish'. At the end of the workshop, with the exception of one person, we all had those things happen to us. Thanks to the instructors, we learned how to put our invisible powers to use."

McVety shared other instances where the focus on training and company culture has paid dividends. In one situation, the leadership team established an extremely aggressive goal for the release of a new product. The team members sat down in groups, looked at what needed to get done, put together a plan and, with a sense of clarity and insight, were able to tap into everyone's 'invisible powers' to accomplish their objectives in half the amount of time. Other practices include having team members share their 'level of consciousness' before meetings to gauge where everyone's at and the use of 'Do Not Disturb' signs outside team member offices. According to McVety, reducing distractions and allowing team members to work without being interrupted has resulted in less stress and more productivity.

In 2018, McVety, working in concert with GrowFL, took advantage of an opportunity to learn even more about his market and potential opportunities to expand his product line. Through the Strategic Research Program, McVety and his team were given fact-based guidance to avoid pursuing a project that the research showed there was no market for. As a result, they saved approximately \$4 Million in expenses and, along the way, discovered a new product opportunity they're actively pursuing.

"We initially worked with the new product opportunities group to identify

what the market need was for a particular product,” McVety said. “After analyzing the research, we realized that what we were doing wasn’t what we should be doing. We switched gears, saved a lot of money and, along the way, came up with a new idea and discovered a new product opportunity we hadn’t thought of.”

That product will launch later this year and, according to McVety, will help their customers by making automation easier and even more affordable. The new product has even allowed them to work with customers that didn’t previously use Programmable Logic Controllers (PLCs). This has subsequently created new jobs for FACTS, their customers and other businesses that support their customers.”

“We’ve gone from 45 to 60 employees,” McVety said. “That has a lot to do with taking on exciting new products. We’ve also increased product time to market by eliminating bottle necks during the launch process.

We currently have the best team we’ve ever had. In the past, when I attended meetings with the engineering team, I’d occasionally catch something they would miss. Now, I’m just a bystander. They don’t miss a thing.”

McVety shared that working with GrowFL and the research team was a great experience and one he’d absolutely recommend to colleagues. A lot of time and effort went into the planning of the research and, when the team realized at the mid-way point that they needed to switch gears, they did so without hesitation and never pushed McVety and his team members to stay on schedule.

“The GrowFL team was extremely flexible,” he said. “Aside from the ease of working with them, the product they deliver is exceptional. With

a small company, you can only get so much information out of Google. The researchers have access to expensive databases that allow them to drill down to get the information you need. The Market Research deliverable definitely had the biggest impact on our business.”

What advice does McVety have for aspiring entrepreneurs? "I'd probably say don't do it," he laughed. "Honestly, the hardest part is creating that balance between having a successful company and keeping your family life together. Running a company can be consuming. Also, just because you're good at something doesn't mean you should start a business doing that thing. If you're good at making pizzas, it doesn't necessarily mean you'd be good at owning and running a pizza business. The technician does not always make a good business owner. Lastly, you don't need an MBA to run a business. I'm an engineer. I figured out the business stuff along the way. There are people and resources out there that can help you with your weak areas. Take advantage of them."

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