

Podcast 12 – Run Your Business From Your Pocket



One of the most common fears that trade business owners have when it comes to marketing is success. What? Why?

It's the fear of getting really busy and not coping. I've talked to many of our clients about this, and it's totally understandable, because no-one wants to be so busy that it all turns to chaos and the customers suffer.

What's the answer? The answer lies with having the right systems in place so that you and your team are far more efficient when you're out on the job. In episode 10 we talked to Tom Freer of Wyntech and he gave us some great advice about having your network setup correctly, about ensuring your systems are secure and backed up and most importantly, investing in support.



*Clinton Cowin
CEO, TradiePad*

Today we have another great interview for you – this time with Clinton Cowin of Tradie Pad – and he shares some fantastic tips on getting the right software for your trade business. There's literally hundreds of software programs for you to choose from, and thousands of apps. One of his clients was able to take a month's holiday in Europe and still run his business from his iPad whilst he was away.

At the end Clinton provides a wonderful special offer for our listeners – something I honestly didn't know he was going to do, and we have a great business quote which ties in neatly with today's episode. Okay, let's dive right in and get super organised.

Interview with Clinton Cowin

Annette: Hi, it's Annette Welsford here from Tradie Success. Today I'm joined by Clinton Cowin of TradiePad with the strapline, "Lose the paperwork, find the time." I love that. Clinton is a plumber by trade and he started TradiePad after setting up iPads and apps in his business to see how technology could revolutionize his business. He and his team have now helped hundreds of tradies work out technology and have a look at what they need, how to use it, and obviously to make their business a bit more efficient. Welcome, Clinton.

Clinton: Thank you very much, Annette. Thanks for having me.

Annette: I'll assume that you're off the tools now, is that right?

Clinton: Yeah, absolutely. Ashamedly I have very soft hands now. I don't have tradies hands anymore. I've been off the tools for quite a bit.

Annette: You've got office worker's hands.

Clinton: I do. I do a bit of work now and I get blisters. It's very disappointing.

Annette: Oh dear.

Clinton: My business partner, Dave, he's still running the plumbing business. He's still involved in the day-to-day and I guess he's our finger on the pulse with the industry and he's our testing ground for new things that we come across. So Dave's still the tradie. I'm the office worker now.

Annette: Let's talk about systemizing business. This is one of the questions I get a lot from my clients. They worry particularly with growing that they're not going to be able to run their business efficiently and they need systemizing. What are the most common issues that you find that most tradies face when it comes to systemizing their business?

Clinton: I guess if I look back to when we first got our hands on the iPads – we got a few of the original iPads when they first came out and we looked at building a system of some kind – but the whole idea of systemizing was very foreign to us when we first started. It wasn't something that we were educated about when we did our trade or we did our license course. I think the first common issue is, understanding what a system does and how it works.

We get so busy with our day-to-day jobs and our day-to-day business operations that we don't stop to think that there is a system here, that there is a process that we go through of booking in jobs, doing scheduling, doing invoices, and doing job cards. So I think that's probably the first one is coming to realization that there is a process there and that it can be systemized. And thinking about it the right way to break your processes down into steps of what you do and how you do it, and I guess coming to that realization that there is a system there.

I guess the issue that we come across with most of our clients is they look at the options that are out there now, the technology-based with job management tools and project management tools and trying to wade through the variety of things that are there and work out what they do and what they don't do and have enough time to spend some valuable data entry of getting some information into

these various systems and various tools to get a feel for what they could do. That's probably the main issue that we come across is not having enough time to do that properly and making educated decision on what the right tools is going to be for them.

Annette: Yeah. I guess, too, that not only would they not have the time but they probably wouldn't have the knowledge either because some these programs, first time you look at it and you think, "What am I supposed to do with that?" They're not immediately obvious, are they?

Clinton: Yeah, that's right. Absolutely.

Annette: So the common issues are basically realizing that you do need a system – and you have already got a system, it's just a case of recognizing it – and then finding something to help you. I guess the third thing is what the benefits are of systemizing. Apart from making you more efficient, it helps you to grow your business because everything is done the same way all the time.

Clinton: Yeah, 100%. I had a session with a client this morning. We have these toolbox sessions once a month with our clients where we catch up to talk about what has happened throughout the month and drive the education about the various tools that we've setup. One of my clients this morning, Harley, he has just got back from a trip overseas. He did a month in Europe and left the business in the hands of his guys that work for him.

While he was away, he was able to monitor the business and keep his finger on the pulse with the jobs that were being put in, the scheduling, the invoicing, and the quoting. That was all going into his job management tool. And because it was online and it's cloud-based, he's able to access it from anywhere. So he took his iPad with him while he was away and he was able to log in and monitor his stuff. When he got back, there were a few little fires. He had to put out a few things, but it's the first holiday that he'd had for four years.

Annette: Wow! How good is that?

Clinton: Yeah, absolutely.

Annette: Well, let's get stuck right in, shall we? What kind of functions can you get now – what do people need?

Clinton: It depends on the type of business and the type of work that they're doing. I've put a bit of a separation between job management and project management. Job management for a typical tradie entails creating a customer record, creating a job, doing some scheduling. So as a plumber and an electrician, you might have a maintenance job or service job where you need to book in some time to go and do an inspection or whatever it might be. Job management is all about the ability to create that data out on the run, do some scheduling, and log some information from the field. It might be photos, time, and materials and create an invoice or quote on the spot.

Job management is all about replacing what's typically done in paper, job diaries, job cards, invoice books, quote books, replacing all of those paper processes with something electronic that ties all of those components together. Typically, with a job management system, when you create a job, it gets a number or an identifier and that job becomes the bucket for all of that job info. So the client

details, the photo, the files, the notes, the time, the materials, the invoices, and quotes and everything. Typically, job management is maybe multiple jobs a day where you're having to manage the scheduling and complete the job process out there on the road.

Whereas, project management is a bit less focused on the scheduling and the multiple jobs each day and a bit more focused on the analysis and the ongoing collection of the data, all the information about what has happened on the job. It might be logging of time and materials on an ongoing basis and then keeping a running tally of how much your labor has cost you, how much your materials have cost you, comparing that to what you'd quoted or what you estimated, being able to do progress invoicing and progress billing and not having to go and visit four or five different sites each day – your own site, on the one site the whole time.

Annette: So that would be more like for your builders, I guess?

Clinton: Yeah, absolutely. And even plumbers and electricians and typical trades that are doing more construction work than maintenance or service work. So builders are perfect example where they require project management because a building project is made up of lots of sections or components or cost centers as they're sometimes called.

Within a big project – it might be a million dollar project – we want to break that down into pieces and track time and track materials against the components so that we can start getting some visibility on how we're tracking on the various areas and keeping a finger on the pulse with how we're going on estimated versus actual and where we have to focus on different areas. So project management I guess is a bit more complex with sections or pieces of the project and having that reporting and data analysis on an ongoing basis.

Annette: You've got job management and you've got project management. Are there any other categories of software that you help people with?

Clinton: No. That's probably the top level. If we make a determination that we need some job management, we then look at the kind of information that needs to be collected and the type of jobs that are being done, what we want to be able to collect from the field, and more importantly how we want to report on the jobs.

Another really important thing is where the business is being operated from because, speaking from my experience, we have four or five guys out on the road. We didn't have someone in the office full time that was able to fill phone calls and booking all that jobs on a computer. We had to do all that from the field, so we needed a tool that would allow us to manage the business from anywhere, not just from a computer. So that's really a big controlling factor in which of the job management system is going to be applicable for a particular client.

Annette: You mentioned earlier that one of the things that most small businesses just don't have the time or the skills to do is to properly analyze all the systems available. Let's just get something straight here. You don't develop software, do you? You actually see what's on the market and analyze it all and test it all?

Clinton: Exactly. It's probably the first thing I should have said. TradiePad is not an app. We get that question all the time. What does your app do? But we're not an app. We're what we call a cloud integrator or a cloud service provider where we are completely independent of all the software companies that are out there and we provide setup and training services for a whole range of different job management and project management tools.

The first step of working with a client – if we have someone who comes to us and says, “I want some help with technology. What do I do?” the first step for us is to do what we call the scoping session where we spend some time with the business and learn what they do, how they do it, what their requirements are, whether it's job or project management like we spoke about, where the business is being run from, where the business is going in the future, setting the scope, whether we need something that's going to be really scalable, and then help the business owner look at the alternatives that are out there and make a decision on what's going to be the best for you and why it's going to be the best for you.

If that's something that we work with as a setup and training partner, then we can provide some assistance with getting it all up and running, teaching everybody how to use it from the admin side to the business owners, the business admin people, and the field staff. Getting field staff to introduce some training on how they again use this and how it's going to affect their life. Basically, hold the business' hand throughout the whole process and get it all up and running as short of time period as possible and as painlessly as possible and let the business owner focus on what they're good at which is running the business and making money. We focus on what we're good at, which is the software setup and the training and implementation and get it all live and active.

Annette: I know from my own experience – and it's not in this area but with other types of software – that there's just so many available these days. Just even in accounting packages alone there's full majors and a heap of small ones. What sort of criteria do you put them through when you go and select which ones that you're going to offer? Do you have like choices in each category or just one or how does that work?

Clinton: Yeah there are choices in each category. Like you said, there are new ones popping up the front and center. I'm constantly monitoring the things that are coming up, what features and functionality they have, and how they fit into the whole space of their products. But we like to pick what we call best of breed where we look at the reliability, the longevity of the product, what the features and functions are, where it fits into the whole kind of space of what businesses it works for, and just make sure that we have something that's going to be a good long-term solution for our clients because we had to learn this the hard way. We worked with a software company quite a little while ago where it was a great product in the early days but there was some dramas with it, with some bad release of some functionality that really affected our clients and really affected our business because overnight some functionality was rolled out that wasn't tested and really affected operations of these businesses overnight.

Annette: Gee, that's handy isn't it?

Clinton: Yeah. Now it's a matter of looking at how do the development schedules work? What are the testing procedures in place for the products? What's the reliability like?

Annette: I guess, too, how complicated they are to use. I've seen some that you virtually need an engineering degree to figure out how to use them and you don't need that when you're out on the job.

Clinton: A hundred percent, yeah.

Annette: So you spend all your time checking out software. Keeping up on what's going on.

Clinton: Yeah. That's a big portion of the time. That basically goes back to the early days when we first started TradiePad. I spent so many hours just going through the App Store, and this was back in the early days of the iPad when there were maybe 200,000 or 300,000 apps. Now there are over a million apps, which is ridiculous.

But we have some channels that we keep an eye on of industry distributions of software information. We're on mailing list and stuff of things that are coming out and a lot of notifications setups just to keep an eye on certain products and certain things. When we come across something that's getting to a point of being a good option and fitting into a gap that's otherwise not filled then we'll take it on board as one of the products in our suite after lots of testing, of course. But there's a lot now.

I have about four or five on my plate at the moment that we're dealing with, just at the early stages of discussions and looking at what they do and how they do it, that are really going to be a part of the suite. So it makes it hard from our side. Not hard, but it's a challenge from our side of things, for all of our staff and our project managers as we call them to be across all these different products.

So what I've done in the early days with TradiePad, I was by myself. I did everything. I did all the sales. I did all the setup. I did all the training. I did all the support. But there's now a whole team of us in the business and we all have our focuses now and our niches, so a lot of people will just do the job management products and know those inside and out. My people will just do the project management tools and knows those in and out. When we take someone on, they go through focusing on specific products and getting to know them 100% before moving onto the next one.

Annette: That's a good way to be because anybody knows if you're going to do everything yourself, you're never going to grow very much as a business. It's physically impossible. Yeah, it's better. That's good that you've gone that way.

That was leading into my next question. Once you've done the scoping inside which is the best kind of systems that a particular company needs, do you go to their location and physically install everything for them on their computers, phones, and iPads and everything?

Clinton: Yes. We provide a couple of different options around what we call implementations. We can either do it onsite where we can go to the place of business and we can get face-to-face, do all the setup and all the training. But the vast majority of our projects now are done online, so we do it through some online tools.

We use a tool called GoToMeeting where we're able to catch up online through the computer where we can provide training, we can share screens. I can bring my phone and my iPad up onto the screen and show you what I've got on the screen, talk clients through their stuff, through setup and configuration and obviously training.

The online option is so much more convenient, so much more cost effective. I think it's a better learning experience, as well. Because if we do we do an onsite project, we might go and spend a full day onsite with the client. That day is made up of a lot of learning and a lot of information to take in over a one-day period, whereas with our online projects, they're done in blocks of two hours over a space of a week or a couple of weeks.

Annette: Oh, that's better.

Clinton: Get a chance to bite size pieces, get a chance to think about what we've covered specifically and come up with questions and digest that before we move on to the next session. So we do a mix of onsite and remote, but we do either way we go. We do either talk through or do it ourselves where we set up the devices, set up all the accounts, and then train or create the workflows around the various products that we've set up and then train everybody on how to use it all.

Annette: Do you provide that service all over Australia? I guess you do.

Clinton: We sure do. We have a lot of clients here in Sydney, all on the eastern seaboard but lots of clients over on the west now. We have clients up in the northern areas of western Australia. We've done a few projects up there now.

Annette: What kind of trade businesses who use your services and what size are they?

Clinton: It's the whole kind of scope, from sole trader through to enterprise level trade businesses. I did a scoping session this morning with an electrical business that have 50 guys on the road. They obviously have quite a few people in their admin team and they have quite a clear system already. It's a matter of analyzing that system and working out what tools they can use that are going to work for their guys in the office and their guys out in the field. So we go to the other end of the spectrum to the sole traders.

The sole trader has the same kind of process. They have the same kind of requirement. It's just not as many people doing it. So it's a huge range of sizes. An industry is the same thing. Lots of traditional trades of plumbers, electricians, and builders but lots of random service providers and trades as well. We have plastering businesses, mobile car wash, mobile mechanics, anyone that has a mobile team or a mobile requirement where you're not in an office, you're not sitting at a computer all day, you have to run your business from the field or you have people out on the field doing work for you.

They're a good option or they're a good candidate for us because it's all about collaboration, so being able to share information between people within the business and all around mobile devices. So phones and tablets and being able to access the information or access the jobs in a live format

where as I create a job from the business owner, I get a phone call from someone and I need to create a job and I need to give it to one of my guys, I can do that on my phone or my iPad or my computer. That instantly gets fed out to the guys in the field and they can then see who, what, when, where. They can then log some time, log photos, log materials and that's instantly fed back to me in the office or in the field wherever I am. But it's that live feed of data flowing backwards and forwards.

Single entry – that's a really important piece to talk about, single entry of information so that stuff is nothaving to get duplicated over and over again. We all liked doing it, of writing it on the job card, writing it in a diary, writing it in an invoice book, and then that having to be interpreted, putting into an accounting system. That's gone.

Annette: It has only really been in the last couple of years that single entry has become quite feasible. I think there are still some systems – not many – but still some systems, they don't talk to each other.

Clinton: Yeah, absolutely. That's what I call traditional software products that are program-based where you get even a disk or you have to download some software and install it on your computer. That really limits the capabilities of integration or communication between products. A good example of that is accounting software.

Annette: So you do accounting? You install accounting software for people?

Clinton: We don't do the accounting side ourselves. We're not bookkeepers. We're not accountants. We're not specialists in the financial software. But we do what we call the operational software that works hand-in-hand with the financial software. We have constantly people coming to us saying, "I want to move to a cloud-based accounting program," and we will advise on the best option for them because we can look at it from the business owner's perspective on what they're going to do. But the actual setup and the training and the conversion from the old system to the new system, we leave that up to the specialists that are specific partners with the various products.

At Xero, for example, we have a network of Xero partners that we work with all around the country that can provide the setup, the training, and the advisory around getting moving to Xero and how to use it properly. But then we work hand-in-hand with that in configuring the tools – the job management or the project management tools – to bolt on to Xero, to feed the information in and out. So it's a real team effort.

I'm a firm believer of being as focused on what you're good at and what you do and work with the network of people that can provide focused specialized services for the other things that we don't do. So that's what we've done over the last four years is build this network of trusted advisors that we work with that do things like marketing like yourself and all the financial advisory and setup with accounting software and all the other bits and pieces that go together.

Annette: That's good. I agree entirely. I have some many of my clients ask me questions that are outside the scope of marketing and have to do with systems – how do I get emails on my phone and all that sort stuff. Quite frankly, I'm so glad to pass them over to you because it's an area that I

understand a lot about or want to. You have to stick with your core business and work with the series of experts who are very good at what they do.

Just one more little question. You mentioned earlier – I don't know if it was today or another time I was talking to you – about a business operating platform. Could you just explain? Is that like a piece of hardware or software or is it both? What is that?

Clinton: A bit of both. When we work with a client, we want to build this thing that we call a business operating platform. It's the technology that's used within the business to run the business, to run the operations. It's made up of hardware like you said, devices. This whole change in the industry with what the technology is doing is being driven by the fact that we have computers in our pockets now. We have these phones and we have these tablets and we have these things that we can use where in the past, taking a laptop out in the field or a desktop obviously wasn't viable. But now we have these things that are constantly connected to the Internet that have amazing processing power, so we want to make sure that the devices within the business are set up correctly and the clients, our customers know how to use them to their potential, and basically just make sure that the devices are being structured correctly. The first is business operating platform we create. It's made up of devices, communications, financial software and operational software.

Annette: Okay. So you've covered everything they need?

Clinton: Yeah, exactly. Around technology. The hardware being the devices, communication is a big one. You mentioned e-mails. Having a good, solid e-mail platform and a professional e-mail address, not a big Pandora's Box.

Annette: G-mail or something.

Clinton: Exactly. Having a good, professional e-mail address that can point people to your website and can drive a bit of traffic to your online presence. We work with a product that Google provides called Google Apps. It's a communication platform for the business but primarily it takes care of your e-mails. The best thing it can do for your e-mails is make your e-mails all synchronize across your devices. If you get an e-mail on your phone and you read it on your phone, that e-mail shows up as red across all your other devices. If you delete it off your phone, it deletes across all your other devices.

Annette: I just recently got onto Google Apps and I think it's the most amazing thing since sliced bread because before I had to delete it from the phone and then go and delete it from the computer and then delete it from the iPad. But now it just syncs and does it all magically itself.

Clinton: Yeah. The other really important one there is Sent Items. In the past it was a typical e-mail setup. You'd send an e-mail off your phone and that would show up in the Sent Items on your phone but it wouldn't show up in Sent Items on your computer or iPad.

Back when I was plumbing, so many times I had to go back to the office to find an e-mail that I had sent off the computer to a builder or an architect or an engineer or something. That's just a massive waste of time.

Annette: Absolutely.

Clinton: Synchronizing of all those Sent Items across all your different devices is a huge time-saver.

Annette: I believe you also will look at Office 365 if Google Apps isn't suitable. Is that right?

Clinton: Yes, absolutely. They're very similar products in their functionality. Office 365 is a great product for people who have a lot of files or a lot of use of the Microsoft Office products – with Excel and Word – and they spend a lot of time on their computer in those products, whereas Google has got their own versions of Excel and Word. Google Apps is a bit more focused on the mobile device side of things, some really good apps that you can use on your phones and the tablets to view as documents and create the documents. But in terms of functionality, they're very similar. It's a matter of finding the right fit for what the business needs.

Annette: Wow. There's a lot to it, isn't it?

Clinton: There is. We break it down in the scoping session and look at each of the components. What devices have you got? What devices are you going to need? Do we need to look at e-mails? How is your financial software going? Do we need to look at changing that? And then the operational software slotted in there with job management or project management or whatever.

When you break it down and you put all the pieces together, and you look at how they talk to each other, it's quite straightforward. I guess it's a matter of working out what the right tool for the job is.

Annette: Just to finish there, once you have people all set up and they have their systems up and running, you catch up with them regularly to do these toolbox sessions to see what else you can help with or if they're using things properly or whatever. What happens if they have a bit of an issue? They're out on a building site somewhere and they can't get something to work or they don't understand how to make something to work, do you provide support? Or do they need to go to the software people to do that?

Clinton: They can go either way. We do provide support. Our support is independent of the software companies. Each of the software companies we work with has their own support teams. We generally speak to them whenever there's an issue with the software, if there's a functionality issue of the software. But nine times out of ten, the enquiries that we get for our support, we have someone full-time dedicated to support. The customer service manager's name is Roger. He fills all our phone calls and e-mail enquiries, answers questions, and solves problems. Nine times out of ten, the queries and the questions that we get are to do with workflow or to do with the specific way we've set things up for their business.

Annette: So you can solve it for them then and there.

Clinton: Exactly. If they were to go back through the software company, you'd have to explain how it's been set up for you and what it's doing. If it's not something that's software-related then sometimes you can end up with a bit of a dead end.

Support I think is a really important piece for what we do because from my experience, Dave is not the most technologically savvy person in the world so I'm his lifeline there. He calls me and says, "It wasn't doing this, it wasn't doing that. How do I fix this?" I think having that person that you can call that understands your system and what's been set up and understands your business, I think that's a really important business partner to have.

We really push that. We want to have the long-term relationship with our clients where we are like the IT department for trades. That's a bit of weird thing to say because we've never ever had to have IT departments before in businesses. But you see now, everyone has a computer in their pocket, in their phones, in their iPads.

Annette: Tradies these days are completely different kettle of fish to what they were even ten years ago. I think you know. You're right. They have their own IT department. They have their own technology. They have their own websites. They have their own marketing department, which is us. It's really about running the business, isn't it? It's just as important, if not more important than turning up and doing the work.

Clinton: That's right. We're running this business for a reason. We want to make some money. We're doing it because I love it. But we get up and we go and do our jobs because we've got to make a bit of money here, so we want to do it as efficiently and effectively as we can so we can make as much money as we can.

Annette: Absolutely. And also I guess making the customer experience. That's one of my key passions, to ensure that the customers get a fantastic experience when dealing with people because that's a key differentiator.

For example, one of the things I saw recently which just blew me away was we had a tradesperson come to our house to give us a quote. He sent me a text seven minutes saying, "I'm on my way. I'll be there in seven minutes." I'm like, "What? You're kidding. That's outstanding!" Inquisitive me. I had to find out. So he showed me on his iPad. There was a link. I could actually track him and see the route he's taking. That has really changed the game.

Clinton: Yeah, absolutely. That's one of the products that we work with, a product called ServiceM8, which has some really cool, unique functionality you don't find in a lot of other products. One of those things is that notification to the client to say that you're on the way, you're this far away, and the number of minutes. They can track your progress on coming to the house.

Annette: That's amazing. Not only can this technology improve your workflows and systemize your business so you can scale, so you can go on holidays, but you can also delight the customer.

Clinton: That's right. That's one of the things I noticed when we first started using our iPads four years ago when seeing a tradie with an iPad was rather unique. But the way that the customers reacted when we put our iPad and we created an invoice there on the spot or we created a quote there on the spot, the difference in the professionalism I think was huge.

Unfortunately, tradies have this stigma attached to them where they don't turn up on time, they never send in the quotes through, they never send invoices through, they have their butt cracks hanging out. That is changing. We are now business people that have all of the tools at our disposal that the rest of the business world has had for decades and we can really start to show that we are business people running our businesses professionally.

I guess that's one I'm so passionate about what we do because I can see it's making a really positive change in the industry and it's really progressing things in leaps and bounds. Whereas before, we've been strangled by pens and papers and having to run things the old way. The consumers didn't understand that. They've been using some of this in an office all the time but uses their calendar and they have their reminders, notifying appointments and all that kind of thing. We never had that before but now we do. So we can hit the accelerator and really optimize our businesses.

Annette: That's fantastic. We're on the same page. I'm very excited about the business changes or the changes to the business side of running things to tradies. This is just the icing on the cake. It's a fundamental. If you don't have technology and you're not running your business in an efficient way, not using technology to help you do that, you're not going to stay very long. You're not going to be able to take any time off.

Clinton: Yes, exactly.

Annette: It's been illuminating and fascinating. If our listeners would like to find out more, the first tip as you mentioned is they'd contact you and you would set up a scoping session to see what they need. They can do that by going to TradiePad.com.au. I'll put a link in the show notes. Or there's a phone number there they can call.

Clinton: Yes, absolutely. That will go through to Scott who is our enquiries manager. He'll make contact and explain the process and just talk about what we do with the scoping session. There is cost involved in our scoping session because we're spending our time on helping the business owner understand what systems are going to work for them and why it's going to work for them. We do charge \$250 included to this fee for the scoping session.

I guess that's more of a qualifier than anything. We want to know that we're spending time with a business owner who's ready to make some changes and ready to make some positive progress in their business. We don't want to waste time with people who are just kicking tires. So we charge for the scoping session. We put together a proposal around what the right products are going to be and how we can implement that. If the client decides to go ahead without implementation then the cost of the scoping session comes off the cost of project.

Annette: That makes sense.

Clinton: As an added bonus, to anyone who's listening to the podcast, if you do come through and you mentioned to Scott that you've listened to Annette's podcast and you've got the details through the podcast then we'll bring the cost of the scoping session back to \$200 instead of \$250.

Annette: Oh, thank you. That's fantastic! Remember that, folks. Just mention that you heard Clinton on the Tradie Success podcast and you get a bit of a discount. Love it! Well done. Thank you very much for offering that.

Clinton: Absolute pleasure.

Annette: Great! Thank you.

Clinton: Thanks, Annette. Thanks for having me.

Annette: No problem.

Four Key Learnings from Clinton's Interview

Don't know about you but I got heaps out of that chat with Clinton. He's very passionate about technology isn't he! Great to see. What's really great to see is that he's the real deal – a techno geek who loves helping people get organised – and also is a tradie. Perfect.

So here's my key learnings from Clinton.

1. You all have a system in your business – you just maybe don't recognise it yet. Your system is the way you do things so things are always done efficiently and consistently, for every customer.
2. In this day and age there is no need to be scribbling on bits of paper any more. There are easy to use job management systems, diary management systems, job scheduling systems and quoting systems that integrate together with your accounting system so there's no doubling up. It's a case of choosing the right system or systems for your operational needs.
3. If you have the systems setup properly – you don't need someone in the office or to do loads of paperwork after hours – you can be taking enquiries, providing quotes, scheduling work with your team, notifying customers of their ETA, issuing invoices and receiving payments – all from your phone or ipad.
4. The public perception of tradies being rough, disorganised and unreliable is changing. Tradies are now business people and you now have all the tools at your disposal that the rest of the business world has had for decades and you can really start to show that you are business people running your businesses professionally.

If you'd like Clinton and his team to assess your needs, recommend the most suitable software and apps for your business and help you get systemised – then get in contact. And don't forget to mention that you heard him on tradiesuccess **so you save \$50**. Contact them at tradiepad.com.au

Today's quote comes from J Willard Marriott, the founder of the worldwide hotel chain and I thought that is was very apt, in light of today's discussion.

It's the little things
that make the big
things possible.
Only close attention
to the fine details
of any operation
makes the operation
first class.

J Willard Marriott

Resources

Want to get organised? Contact Scott at Tradie Pad at tradiepad.com.au or on 0437 394 044 and mention you heard Clinton on Tradie Success and they'll cut the cost of your scoping session from \$250 to just \$200.

Need Marketing Help?

If you want help with marketing and growing your business, that's what we do. Check out our list of services at tradiesuccess.com.au/services. We help with websites, copywriting, social media marketing, graphic design, brochure design and a whole lot more.

Want to Learn Marketing?

If you or any of your team members would like to learn more about how to market your trade business – we have an exclusive marketing training program – where you will learn step by step how to differentiate your business, how to market online, how to get more referrals and much much more, over at tradiemarketingsecrets.com. For just \$20 per month you'll get access to all the fabulous lessons, tools and quizzes to help you become a gun marketer – plus we'll add you in to our members only Facebook group where you can meet other tradies and get answers to your burning marketing questions. I'm in there every day.

Share With More Tradies

Please share this episode with any other tradies or business owners you think would find it useful – share on Facebook or Google Plus or LinkedIn, share one of the tweetables in the show notes or even send a link by email! And make sure you never miss out on an episode, subscribe by clicking on the [itunes](#) or [stitcher](#) links.