

Improving Productivity through Automation Technology



Richard Milam
Founder & CEO

About EnableSoft, Inc.

Since 1995, Orlando, Florida-based EnableSoft Inc. has helped organizations save time, save money, and improve productivity through automation technology. The EnableSoft team develops and markets Foxtrot, software that eliminates the burden of manual data processes by behaving, deciding, and working just like a person.

Interview conducted by: Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor, CEOCFO Magazine

CEOCFO: Mr. Milam, what is the concept at EnableSoft?

Mr. Gilbert: Our goal at EnableSoft is to help organizations to improve productivity by equipping their knowledge workers and subject matter experts with “digital employee” technology. Our Foxtrot software empowers these employees to enter, change, maintain, and integrate data themselves, in just about any web, Windows, or legacy application, without programming.

CEOCFO: Many companies will say they can help facilitate all of those things. What do you understand fundamentally at EnableSoft that allows you to have a product that really lives up to its promise?

Mr. Milam: For 19 years, we have been working with our customers to solve their manual and unstructured data problems, which every business has. Too often, organizations handle large data projects manually, or they resort to using an informal network of spreadsheets and other database applications. This work is usually unregulated, untracked, and cannot be easily transferred between employees.

We developed Foxtrot in the 1990s to help Savings & Loan institutions convert and migrate large amounts of data to banks following the RTC divestiture. These organizations had the option of handling the work themselves; manually entering names addresses and account information for each of their customers into a new system of record. We saw a better way – an automated way – to handle these projects, and Foxtrot was born. As recently as last month, our customers were acknowledged in a major trade publication for how they use digital employees to address things like data breaches and other large-scale data projects.

CEOCFO: Would you walk us through a typical scenario? How does it work, and what is actually happening with the product so that we can really understand what is going on?

Mr. Milam: Foxtrot automates processes inside of most applications. To the system of record or target application, our product looks like a human entering data, clicking the mouse, copying data and pasting it into another system. By working through the user interface in this way, our software abides by all security rules, leaves audit trails, and handles logins and errors just like a person would. It’s one reason we refer to Foxtrot as a digital employee.

The subject matter expert “teaches” Foxtrot to perform a job by writing a script. It’s just a series of instructions that tells Foxtrot what to do, just as they themselves would do. The user simply drags a target over a field, button, drop-down menu, or whatever, and tells Foxtrot what to do with that object. The process is the same, whether we’re scraping data off of a website and putting it into a spreadsheet, or processing thousands of insurance claims. We show Foxtrot how to handle a job and Foxtrot does it, perfectly, at set intervals or on command.

CEOCFO: Can you see that on the screen or is this all out of sight?

Mr. Milam: You can see buttons as they are clicked, and data entered on the screen just as if you were doing it.

CEOCFO: What is the challenge in creating a product like that?

Mr. Milam: There are a lot of macro-like cut and paste, inexpensive pieces of software on the market. Applications like these don’t care if the data they input is valid, if an error message is displayed, or if data is input into the wrong location over thousands of records. Undoing errors like this can take longer than the original job.

The challenge is making our product industrial strength in a way that operates with integrity and handles data effectively. We focused on that for almost two decades, and we are working in the Windows and Internet Explorer realm. Quite frankly, it is very difficult to do. Think of millions of developers doing things different ways, yet our software has to recognize, understand and deal with those intricacies. One-third of the largest 1,000 banks are customers, and they are using Foxtrot to handle all kinds of bank data that has to work, and it has to work every time the right way. The same is true for our healthcare payer and provider customers, and so on. These are very different applications, and very different data, but it's all vitally important to our customers' business.

We have spent a lot of time and effort to make sure that our technology works in any environment and circumstance. Our technology lets the user know if data is not accepted for some reason. That error can be logged and then an email or text can be sent to notify somebody so they can go back and take care of that exception later, or if it is critical they can take care of it now.

CEOCFO: *When you are talking with a potential client, when do they believe?*

Mr. Milam: When they see it. It is a "show-me" environment out there in software in general, and especially when you are talking to them about something that they have never heard of before. We provide them with presentations and possibly proof of concepts or trial periods so that they can experience and actually Foxtrot at work. It's like a probationary period for that new hire. Once they get to that aha moment, if they have an urgent need, the sale is pretty quick.

"EnableSoft is growing, and we are singularly focused on helping companies be more productive and successful." - Richard Milam

CEOCFO: *How are you so sure that what you have created will work with any system?*

Mr. Milam: Because it works with any system today, and we do our best to listen to our customers and monitor the environment to make sure that remains true. On the rare occasion where we discover an issue, but we offer customers a money back guarantee if they buy the software online. If they buy the enterprise edition, we certainly do not want them to have software that is not working for them. In those cases, we work with our customers to find a solution and help them find many other ways to utilize Foxtrot. We sign long-term agreements with our customers because we want to partner with them for the long term. EnableSoft has been doing this for a long time, and we have every reason in the world to help our customers continue to solve every new data challenge they face.

CEOCFO: *How could a company resist?*

Mr. Milam: We do have customers that buy it for that very reason of moving data around, but most businesses are running a very disciplined operation these days. There is not a capital expenditure that is made without a justification or return on investment analysis. They want to see it and they want to have a problem to solve. Depending on the culture of the organization, they may want to see that their peers are already using it. That is our feeling. If you are in business handling data and you are relegated to manually handling tasks, you are risking errors and you will want to implement our technology. It pays for itself in usually less than 90 days. The ability to eliminate costly errors that cause your customers to be ill served cannot have a price tag put on it.

CEOCFO: *What are some of the industries or types of companies that would benefit from Foxtrot that have not embraced it yet or not aware yet?*

Mr. Milam: Foxtrot is employed by organizations in 14 different verticals, so there is an application for just about every organization. We started in banking, but have really worked to expand our footprint among healthcare payers. With all of the regulation and restrictions surfacing as a result of the Affordable Care Act, it's not hard to imagine that these organizations need to automate processes like claims processing and fee changes in order to reduce costs. Manufacturers use Foxtrot for ERP automation. Law firms, telecom companies, retailers, accountants, and even web companies use Foxtrot to automate some competitive shopping functions. Foxtrot is a true renaissance employee – skilled in every job in every industry.

CEOCFO: *How do people find EnableSoft?*

Mr. Milam: They usually swerve into it because they are looking for something else, like macro automation or data conversion. Today, most of our customers find us through word of mouth, and we do market directly to certain industries and at tradeshows. We are investing more into making sure that when people look for certain things online that they find us. Our newly designed website, www.enablesoft.com, provides detailed information on how we help companies be more productive.

CEOCFO: *Do you get many customers who are using some form of a macro-type product, see what you can do and upgrade or is it more people who have not used anything in this realm?*

Mr. Milam: Both, really. One of our recent health care customers was using older macro-type solutions that would continually run off the rails inputting data in the wrong spots, making errors, and requiring a lot of babysitting. They are

thrilled with our product because Foxtrot delivers more automation power than macros with none of the problems inherent in those lesser solutions. I can tell you that there are many companies out there that are trying to solve these unstructured manual processes with what is called VB Script or Macro Programming. All those solutions, not only do they require a highly intellectually capable person to deal with, but they do not work very well because they are not industrial strength. When they experience Foxtrot, they become raving fans very quickly.

CEOCFO: *What is involved in an implementation?*

Mr. Milam: It is a utilitarian product, like Excel is a utilitarian product. Foxtrot is a Windows program that is installed on the workstation in a few minutes. We offer training videos for those who buy the software online, and for enterprise customers we offer training. An hour or a couple hours of overview, and the customers is usually off and running. Some of our customers buy some professional service time, and we do the first couple projects for them or along with them.

CEOCFO: *What are some of the more unusual circumstances where EnableSoft has been helpful?*

Mr. Milam: Many of our customers are using our technology to access their websites and perform transactions like a synthetic user to ensure the website and its ancillary systems are functioning as they should. When they are not, Foxtrot will send them a text or an email. We had one customer that we were working with in that regard, and they said your product is not working because it said our website down and I am on our website, but it is up. While they were talking to us, they got an internal phone call that one of their servers was down, so our software was right. It is very important to businesses that their websites be up and running.

CEOCFO: *How would they be using it to check on their website?*

Mr. Milam: They have Foxtrot run every week or five minutes, or whenever, and then run a synthetic transaction, like an inquiry, to an account. Foxtrot logs on, does an inquiry, keys in the log on credentials and account number, pulls up a balance Foxtrot checks to see if the balance amount is there. If it is not, then they script Foxtrot to send an email. Foxtrot is really operating the applications just like a human would, clicking links, copying data and comparing values if necessary.

CEOCFO: *So, there are very good checks and balances with Foxtrot along with all of the other features?*

Mr. Milam: Yes, because we are leveraging the checks and balances that are already built into the systems.

CEOCFO: *I would imagine as people start using Foxtrot they get more and more excited about what they can do!*

Mr. Milam: They do, and we have a lot of customers who buy additional licenses every year because their culture is starting to adopt it.

CEOCFO: *What is your geographic range today?*

Mr. Milam: We have customers on four continents.

CEOCFO: *Does it matter? Do people look at it differently across the world, or do the people who understand it do so regardless?*

Mr. Milam: Business people across the world have the same problems. Business is a universal language.

CEOCFO: *How has EnableSoft kept such a secret?*

Mr. Milam: We have 40 percent of the banks over one billion dollars in assets as customers, so the banking industry knows about us. We were pretty much a lifestyle business for quite a while, and in the last five years I decided to grow the company because I know this technology would change the way people handled manual processes in their business. Foxtrot can give people more time with their family and more success in their business. We could create jobs in a business while we were doing so. We have been actively growing at about 20 percent a year without outside investment. We are a customer-funded business. By nature, we have been forced to grow fairly slowly. It takes a lot of capital to do market ourselves and to get the word out, and sometimes that still does not work. By design, we have not grown fast, but we are now getting some press coverage. We were recognized as one of the Florida 100 Companies to Watch just recently, and we are very honored by that. It helps to get the word out.

CEOCFO: *Why pay attention to EnableSoft?*

Mr. Milam: EnableSoft is growing, and we are singularly focused on helping companies be more productive and successful. We want to make our users the efficiency heroes in their organizations, and we are going to do it.

We are committed to helping them be more efficient and leverage this new technology in a way the empowers their people to be heroes in their organizations and grow their organizations by reducing unnecessary cost due to manual and unstructured processes.

BIO: Richard Milam founded EnableSoft in 1995 and serves as the President and CEO. Foxtrot Software from EnableSoft helps organizations automate manual unstructured tasks by working like a "Digital Employee" to automatically perform data entry, maintenance, and integration tasks just like a person would, but with total accuracy. Foxtrot is empowering nearly 500 organizations across 14 industries and 4 continents, including leaders in banking, healthcare, manufacturing, and business, to eliminate the burden of routine data processes without programming or coding.

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