CASE STUDY · L.E.B. ELECTRIC AND LEBS ELECTRIC · ELECTRICAL CONTRACTING

The first working system was live before the meeting ended.

How a 35-year-old electrical contracting group put an AI operating system in the hands of the three people who run it, across two operating companies in two states, on the Microsoft environment it already ran. No platform change, no pilot committee, no training program.

CLIENT	ENGAGEMENT	EXECUTIVES LIVE	TIME TO FIRST SYSTEM	DATE
L.E.B. Electric with LEBS Electric, Florida	**Strong Tide Concierge** Personal AI implementation	**Three** CEO, CFO, LEBS president	**One session** Each, live in the room	**July 2026** Engagement active

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CONCIERGE ENGAGEMENT, ACTIVE

COMPANIES L.E.B. Electric (NY) LEBS Electric (FL)	INDUSTRY Electrical contracting	IN BUSINESS 35+ years
STRUCTURE Two partner-owned operating companies	FOOTPRINT Long Island, New York City, Florida	ENGAGEMENT Strong Tide Concierge

THE CHALLENGE

The operating rhythm of the business lived in the memory of the people running it.

L.E.B. Electric has spent more than three decades building a reputation on Long Island and into New York City. LEBS Electric, the Florida company, is run by Brian Chierichella as president and partner alongside William Parker. Two operating companies, two labor markets, two margin profiles, one leadership team, and commitments that cross both constantly.

Those commitments get made where the work happens: on a job site, in a truck, on a call. They were landing in four places at once. Email, text, phone, and a handwritten notebook, none of them connected. One executive's inbox held tens of thousands of unread messages and was still the only place anything was tracked. Monday's action items faded by Wednesday, and follow-through depended on someone remembering to go looking for it.

This is the pattern Strong Tide sees in most well-run middle market companies, and a two-entity structure sharpens it: the people holding cross-company context are the same three who cannot hold any more of it. **It is not a discipline problem. It is a design problem.**

WHAT MADE IT HARD

A stack that was already working.

L.E.B. runs on Microsoft 365 and Exchange, supported for two decades by the same outside IT provider. Estimating and project systems were in place and functioning, and Microsoft Copilot licenses were already deployed. Any AI layer had to sit on top of that environment and respect both the technology and the relationship.

WHAT WAS NEEDED

Something usable the same day.

A tool that requires a training program does not get adopted by people who spend their day in the field. The bar was a system that could be demonstrated, understood, and put to real use inside a single working session, using the phone already in the executive's pocket.

WHO WAS IN THE ROOM

Three operators, two companies, three different jobs to be done.

WILLIAM PARKER · CEO, L.E.B. ELECTRIC

Makes commitments in the field and on the phone all day, and believes he adds the most value on job sites rather than at a desk. Outlook was the only tracker; memory carried the rest.

MIKE STEWART · CFO

Carries both companies plus a standing call load that produced no durable record. Installed meeting capture on his own initiative and administers the group's AI workspace.

BRIAN CHIERICHELLA · PRESIDENT, LEBS ELECTRIC

Mobile roughly three quarters of his time across three offices and job sites, with regular international travel. Works from a grid-paper notebook, and would rather speak than type.

THE APPROACH

Understand the work first. Then build the smallest thing that runs.

Strong Tide started with the operator, not the org chart. Discovery ran per executive, mapping how commitments actually moved through each company, then coordinated with the group's outside IT provider on licensing and mobile mail before anything was configured. The first deliverable was deliberately small: a capture layer that turns anything spoken, written, or recorded into a tracked commitment with an owner and a date. **Everything else in the roadmap sits downstream of that one habit.**

THE SEQUENCE, PER EXECUTIVE

STEP ONE	STEP TWO	THE SESSION	SAME DAY	ONGOING
Discovery with the operator A conversation about how this person's week actually runs.	**Align with existing IT** Licensing, mail, and permissions confirmed with the incumbent provider.	**Configure and demonstrate live** Built against this week's real commitments, not sample data.	**Left running** Cheat sheet in hand, system in use before anyone stood up.	**Weekly tuning** Short sessions to fix what week one exposed, then add the next workflow.

> “Now I say it once and it is tracked. They did not hand us software and leave, they built it around the way we already work.”
>
> WILLIAM PARKER · CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, L.E.B. ELECTRIC

THE EXECUTIVE DECISION

Why the engagement started with three executives instead of two companies.

The conventional move at this size is a company-wide program: choose a platform, license everyone, run training, then measure adoption. Strong Tide recommended against it, and the reasoning is the most portable part of this engagement.

01

START WHERE THE WORK ROUTES

In an owner-led company, the operating system is not software. It is three or four people.

Every consequential decision across L.E.B. and LEBS passes through the CEO, the CFO, or the LEBS president. Deploying AI anywhere else on the org chart improves work that was never the constraint, and the improvement stays invisible because the bottleneck did not move. **Concierge starts at the bottleneck on purpose.** The return on an hour returned to the person every decision waits on is not comparable to an hour returned anywhere else in the company.

02

THE FORMAT HAS TO FIT THE BUYER

An executive is the one person a training curriculum cannot reach.

Senior operators do not attend courses, do not read documentation, and will abandon any tool that costs them a week of friction before it pays. They also cannot afford to look slow in front of their own team while learning something. The only format that works is a practitioner in the room, building against this week's real commitments, until the system runs without the executive thinking about it. **That is the entire design of Concierge:** weekly working sessions, unlimited access between them, and at least one workflow in production per month.

03

PROOF BEFORE BUDGET

Company-wide programs stall at the business case. Adoption at the top removes the argument.

A broad rollout has to be justified before anyone has felt the value, which is where most middle market AI budgets die. Invert it and the evidence arrives first. Once the three executives were running the system daily, leadership began assembling its own use-case list across both companies and brought it back to Strong Tide. **The next phase of scope originated inside the client, from their operators, not from a consultant's proposal.** That is a materially different conversation, and it is faster.

04

RISK THAT CAN BE UNWOUND

Nothing was migrated, purchased, or taken away from anyone.

The engagement runs on licenses the group already paid for, inside the tenant its IT provider of twenty years already manages, on the phones the executives already carry. No new system of record, no data project, no integration work, and no vendor for the incumbent IT partner to defend against. **If it had not worked, there was nothing to unwind** and no sunk platform commitment. That is what made a same-week start possible.

WHAT THIS SEQUENCING AVOIDED

A pilot committee	No steering group, no evaluation phase. One executive, one session, a working system at the end of it.
A training program	No curriculum to build, schedule, or chase attendance for. The system was taught by using it on real work.
A premature purchase	No platform decision made before the company understood what it actually needed the platform to do.
A vendor fight	The incumbent IT provider stayed in place and was brought in as a partner to the work, not around.

THE LIMIT, STATED PLAINLY

What an executive engagement does not do.

A personal system in three executives' hands does not fix a process problem two layers down, and it does not produce company reporting. Anyone selling it as a company-wide answer is overselling it.

What it does buy is more useful first: a leadership team that knows from its own daily experience what this technology is good at and where it fails. That is the only durable basis for deciding what to build next, and it is why the roadmap now moves outward from the operators rather than downward from a plan.

WHERE THE MONEY IS

The math an owner can check.

The case does not rest on a productivity percentage. It rests on three questions an owner can answer without a study: how many commitments were dropped last quarter, what the largest one cost, and how much of the week the top three people spend reconstructing what they already decided.

At this scale, one recovered change order or one avoided schedule slip covers the engagement. **The rest is time returned to the people the company cannot buy more of.**

WHAT WENT LIVE

Three workflows, built around how the work already happens.

Each was demonstrated live against real commitments and left running in the executive's hands at the end of the session.

01 · CAPTURE

Say it once, and it is tracked.

A commitment made in the field is spoken into a phone in plain language, the way it would be said to a person. It is parsed, assigned an owner and a date, and routed to the right list automatically. No form, no app switching, no typing on a job site.

Result: spoken to tracked in under a minute, without stopping the work

02 · ACCOUNTABILITY

Two lists replaced a dozen open loops.

Rather than a generic task manager, the workflow was built around the two questions an operations lead actually asks: who owes me something, and what do I need to verify myself. Every captured item routes to one or the other, so nothing sits in an ambiguous middle state.

Result: every commitment carries an owner and a check date

03 · THE PAPER PROBLEM

The notebook connects to something.

Handwritten notes were the hardest habit to replace, so Strong Tide did not try to replace them. A photo of a notebook page is read, the action items are extracted, and they land in the same tracked queue as everything else. The same path works for a recorded call: transcript in, structured list out.

Result: paper and recorded calls reach the same queue, with no retyping

DESIGN RULES THE BUILD FOLLOWED

- [x] **Nothing new to log into.** Every workflow runs on an account and a device the executive already carried.
- [x] **Do not change a working habit.** The grid-paper notebook stayed. The system was built to read it.
- [x] **An owner and a date, or it does not enter.** Anything without both is not a commitment, it is a note.
- [x] **One session, one working outcome.** No session ends with a plan to build something later.

THE STACK

Every tool kept its job.

Nothing here is custom software. Each piece was chosen for one job, and the systems the group already depended on were left alone.

Claude ANTHROPIC · REASONING	The layer that handles judgment: turning plain speech into an owner and a date, reading a photographed page, structuring a transcript. Runs in **L.E.B.'s own team workspace, with an L.E.B. employee as administrator**, and per-executive instructions written from each person's actual priorities.
Microsoft 365 Copilot ALREADY LICENSED · RETAINED	Copilot was licensed and deployed before Strong Tide arrived, and the group's IT provider had recommended it. It stayed in place for document and mail work inside Office. Where executives used both on field capture and on reasoning over unstructured input, they chose Claude. **Treating this as a two-tool question rather than a bake-off** kept the work moving instead of stalling in a platform debate.
Granola MEETING CAPTURE	Records and summarizes calls that used to produce nothing durable, including a standing Monday block. Action items route into the same tracked queue. **The CFO installed it himself before Strong Tide asked.** It was deliberately left out of the LEBS setup, where the CFO administers it for the team instead.
Exchange, Outlook, To Do SYSTEM OF RECORD	Tasks live in the Microsoft account, not a consumer cloud. A commitment captured by voice in a truck appears in Outlook on the desk and in Microsoft To Do on the PC. **This is exactly where the first attempt failed**, and page 5 documents the fix.
Phone, four lists CAPTURE SURFACE	The device already in the pocket, with four lists structured for accountability rather than by project: **My To-Do, Team Follow-Ups, Verify, Personal.**
Estimating and ERP UNTOUCHED, BY DESIGN	The estimating, project, and accounting systems were left exactly as they were. No integration was attempted in this phase, so no part of the work depended on one.

OWNERSHIP, ON PURPOSE

Nothing here is Strong Tide software. Every component is licensed product L.E.B. could have bought directly, and both the workspace and its administrator belong to L.E.B. No code was written, so there is nothing to patch and nothing that stops working if the engagement does.

THE SECOND COMPANY

Two companies, one leadership team, and the growth engine 1,200 miles from headquarters.

LEBS Electric is the Florida business, led by Brian Chierichella as president and partner alongside William Parker. Different labor market, different margin profile, and the operation where growth is currently concentrated. That makes the LEBS president's operating rhythm a group-level concern rather than a regional one, and it is why he was the third install rather than a later phase.

ENTITY LEBS Electric, Florida	LEADERSHIP President and partner	TIME AT A DESK About 25%
WORKING SYSTEM Grid-paper notebook, three sections	CAPTURE PREFERENCE Voice, not keyboard	TEAM AHEAD 20+ across precon, field, accounting

THE OPERATOR'S REALITY

Designed for a president who is almost never at a desk.

He is mobile roughly three quarters of his time, moving between three offices and job sites, with regular travel to South America on top of that. He works from a laptop and from a grid-paper notebook divided into three standing sections: administrative and accounting, preconstruction, and construction with running notes on anything trending toward a problem.

He told us two things that set the whole design. **He would rather talk than type, and he does not need an instant answer.** Both are unusually useful constraints. They rule out anything keyboard-first and they open up workflows that can take a few seconds to think.

So the system was built voice in, paper in, phone out. He was explicitly told not to change the notebook. The software was built to read it.

WHAT LANDED IN THE SESSION

- [x] **Five real commitments captured by voice** inside the first hour, in his own words, against live jobs rather than sample data.
- [x] **A photographed notebook page turned into tracked action items**, which is the moment the system stopped being theoretical for him.
- [x] **Four lists structured for accountability**, not by project: My To-Do, Team Follow-Ups, Verify, Personal.
- [x] **A one-page cheat sheet in hand** before the meeting ended, tuned to his three notebook sections.

THE CRITICAL PATH

The blocker was mail configuration, not AI.

The first attempt was remote and it failed for the whole session. His four lists existed, but capture kept writing to the phone's default list instead, so nothing reached Outlook or Microsoft To Do and none of it was visible on his PC.

Root cause: the phone was syncing Reminders to a consumer cloud account rather than to Microsoft Exchange. Three things had to be true and none of them were. **The Exchange account had to be present on the device**, which needed Microsoft Authenticator plus a texted second factor and could not be done over a shared screen. **List names had to drop their parentheses** before capture would match them reliably. **Full permission had to be granted** to the app after the account was added.

One remote session was lost to this. It was closed in a single in-person visit, coordinated with the group's IT provider, and the system was live inside the hour. **This is the most transferable lesson in the engagement:** on a mobile-first install, identity and mail plumbing is the critical path.

THE DEMAND IT CREATED

Email triage, then the team.

When key people leave, he absorbs their inboxes. He currently receives two departed colleagues' mail on top of every bid invitation reaching the preconstruction group, and estimates **roughly half his volume is duplicate traffic he keeps on purpose** for visibility he is not willing to lose.

That makes the obvious next workflow easy to measure: a daily bid digest, duplicate collapse, and filtering on the streams he inherited rather than owns.

WHAT THE SECOND ENTITY CHANGES ABOUT THE ROADMAP

A group is not a bigger company. It is two companies that have to be compared.

The CFO is the join. He is the only person carrying both companies daily, which makes his capture layer the one place group-level commitments coexist. Installing him second was deliberate.

The comparison is the prize. Florida runs a different labor market and a different margin profile. Once both companies produce structured data instead of recollection, the useful question becomes answerable: what does Florida do that New York does not, and which of it travels.

Two system estates, neither touched. The estimating and project tools, the accounting platform, and a newly signed HR system all stayed as they were. A group-wide integration project would have taken a quarter to scope and delayed every outcome on the previous pages.

Rollout order follows the operators. Florida asked for a team-wide install first, so that is where the next wave starts, rather than wherever a plan would have pointed.

> “This is crazy.
>
> BRIAN CHIERICHELLA · PRESIDENT, LEBS ELECTRIC, WATCHING A PHOTOGRAPHED NOTEBOOK PAGE BECOME TRACKED ACTION ITEMS

OUTCOMES TO DATE

What changed, and what it took to change it.

01 **Three executives live across two companies, one session each**
Configured, demonstrated against real commitments, and running before each session ended. **No pilot phase, no rollout plan, no training curriculum.**

02 **Adoption without enforcement**
Each executive began entering real commitments in his own words during his own session. In the LEBS session, **five live commitments were captured by voice inside the first hour**, unprompted. Adoption did not have to be driven afterward.

03 **Handwriting stopped being a dead end**
A photographed notebook page now produces tracked action items. Nobody was asked to give up the notebook, which is **why the change held past the first week.**

04 **Built on the existing stack, alongside existing IT**
Nothing was replaced and nothing was bought. Copilot stayed. Strong Tide worked directly with the group's IT provider of two decades and **cleared the mail configuration issue blocking production use**, in person, in a single visit.

05 **The next scope came from the client**
Leadership is now assembling its own AI use-case list across both companies, and the LEBS president wants the system in the hands of a 20-plus person Florida team. **The expansion conversation is being led by the business, not by the consultant.**

06 **One system across two companies**
New York and Florida now run the same capture layer, the same list structure, and the same tracked queue. **Commitments that cross both companies stop living in two separate heads.**

WHAT IT TAKES TO RUN THIS · FOR A COMPANY CONSIDERING THE SAME START

Executive time	One working session of roughly 90 minutes, then a short weekly touch. No homework between sessions.
Licensing	A team workspace on the reasoning tool, plus the Microsoft 365 licenses the company already holds.
IT involvement	One point of contact for mail and mobile configuration. Expect this to be the step that actually gates go-live.
Time to value	The first workflow is in production before the session ends. Nothing on this page waits on a later phase to be worth having.
Not required	No data project, no integration, no new system of record, and no change to the estimating or accounting systems.

WHAT THE FOUNDATION ENABLES

A capture layer is not the point. It is the platform everything else sits on.

Once every commitment across both companies carries an owner and a date and lives in one queue, the group has something it did not have before: structured, current operating data produced as a byproduct of normal work. That is the prerequisite for everything below. None of it requires a new system, and each piece is additive to what is already running.

ADD-ON · ACCOUNTABILITY

Follow-through without a follow-up

Commitments extracted from meetings automatically, a weekly digest of what has slipped, prep briefs assembled before calls, and a structured morning brief that opens the day with what is owed and what is owed to you.

ADD-ON · TRIAGE

Volume reduced to signal

The same capture layer applied to inbound mail: a daily digest of bid invitations, duplicates collapsed, and inherited streams filtered without losing the visibility an operator deliberately keeps.

ADD-ON · OPERATING INTELLIGENCE

The questions an owner cannot ask today

Receivables movement, job margin drift, backlog change, and commodity exposure surfaced each morning. With two companies producing the same structured data, the comparison between them finally becomes answerable.

IF THIS SOUNDS FAMILIAR

Most middle market companies have this problem and do not call it one.

If the operating rhythm of your business depends on what your best people can hold in their heads, that is a design problem with a known fix, and the first version of the fix takes a session rather than a quarter. It gets harder to ignore the moment you run more than one company. Strong Tide starts with a scoping call, not a slide deck.

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