

# 5 Electrical Contractors Share Their Stories

CertainPath makes businesses more profitable and lives more enjoyable with field-proven technology and expertise that puts contractors on the path to success.

The contracting world can be tough. It's not often others in your trade are willing to offer advice, let alone actually sit down and talk about their experience, including what's working and what's not. Whether that's because they view you as their competition, or perhaps like most contractors, they're too busy worrying and working.

CertainPath comes with a community of thousands of contractors who've walked in their shoes before them, our Plumbing contractors know they know they'll never feel alone in the process.

## Check out these 5 stories from electrical contractors just like you!

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While all of these stories are different, they all share one common bond—all five contractors found success with CertainPath's comprehensive business solution that is built by contractors, for contractors.



# Story of Dramatic Growth

From Spinning Their Wheels to 60% Growth at a 14% Net Profit

Owners Jesse Olson & Jennifer Howard Have Drastically Increased Their Sales & Net Profits, while Rebranding the Business & Creating a Workplace That Focuses on Culture & Uplifting Their Team Members



The recession hit The Happy Outlet, then named Sierra Nevada Electric, hard. The Carson City, NV, electrical company was down to its two owners: business partners Jesse Olson and Jennifer Howard. "We had to lay off all our electricians and essentially start over," Jennifer said. "I like to say that we had ideas on how we wanted to grow, but we didn't know where to start."

"We weren't bankrupt or anything, but we weren't turning much of a profit. We were basically spinning our wheels. We had enough cashflow to keep things moving, but that wasn't good enough for us. We wanted something more," Jesse added. "At that point, we didn't have the direction we knew we needed—it was open doors and make money, same as it ever was."

By 2014, the two went seeking some help. They stumbled upon CertainPath. They attended a CertainPath seminar to learn more and ultimately joined the organization after having a conversation with an active member who shared his heartfelt story. It was then time for Jesse and Jennifer to go to work in rebuilding The Happy Outlet.

### Dispatch Fees Eliminate the Lookie-Loos

The first change was not one Jennifer looked forward to enacting. "Everyone in our community still does free estimates—we're still the only ones who charge," Jennifer said. "So, when we first started the dispatch fee, in my head, I told myself to treat every client that calls as one who expects an estimate to cost something.

CertainPath's Call Taker training on presenting dispatch fees gave me the right words. It helped me get in the right mindset. Now, I love dispatch fees. It identifies customers, who I call, the lookie-loos. If they're not willing to pay a dispatch fee, they're not serious about us coming to their home." Adding dispatch fees without training on the presentation would have failed guaranteed.

## **Pricing on Their Terms**

When it came time to utilizing CertainPath's StraightForward Pricing® Guide, it was only Jesse and another electrician. "We both stumbled through the guide at first. We had to learn what to say, how to build value, and how to properly handle objections," Jesse said. "We could see it was working. We were happier—and more importantly, our clients were happier. And we were making more money. It was a win for everyone."



#### The StraightForward Pricing® Provides a Personal Touch

Even though The Happy Outlet uses the very latest industry software, bringing the StraightForward Pricing® Guide into the home helped in other ways. "We tried converting it to a PDF and putting it on tablets—but it's just not the same. We would invite a homeowner to flip around on the tablet—but they wouldn't. It's still a device—and it isn't their device. People aren't comfortable leisurely reviewing it like we found they are with a book. And the book still has a tremendous amount of value for presentation purposes and demonstrating your value."

#### Take Risks to Find the Right People

"We do everything imaginable to spread the word that we're hiring—even if we're actively not," Jennifer explained. "I'm always talking to people, we have signs on the back of our vans, we've done signs at the supply houses. We've done it all and you have to." When interesting resumes find their way into Jennifer's inbox, she moves into action, calling candidates quickly. The Happy Outlet now has a comprehensive interview process that identifies the very best candidates.

#### **Train with Purpose**

Once someone is hired, they enter a two-week onboarding that includes office instruction, ridealongs, and hand-holding. CertainPath provides a full on-boarding tool set for every role in the company which ensures new employees understand precisely what they should be doing and what's expected of them. Weekly technical and communication training help with electricians' development and success in the field.



#### **One-on-One Support**

Jesse and Jennifer realize the development of individuals can't be accomplished through training alone. Time must be set aside for one-on-one interaction. Once a week, Jennifer will pull aside an employee for 10 to 15 minutes. "We just want to make sure they're doing okay. We see if they have any questions or if we can help with anything—professional or personal," she said. "It's also time for us to work with them on something if it's needed. It gets it out in the open. We try to keep it very upbeat and positive."

The changes to the business and the company's core philosophies have led to windfall of success in a multitude of ways. Electricians have started coming to them looking for positions. They recently hired two from one of their top competitors. The electricians heard of The Happy Outlet's uplifting, desirable company culture. Jesse and Jennifer are excited for the continued, profitable growth of their company.



The success in the business has been great, but it's even more rewarding to bring happiness to our community. That's why we rebranded ourselves to The Happy outlet. Thanks to the service we provide, and the great team members we now have, we can fulfill that goal of ours. We wouldn't be where we are without CertainPath.





We did \$1.2 Million two years ago. We did \$1.9 Million last year, and we're slated to do \$2.5 Million this year," Jesse outlined. "We also have plans to buy a new building.

I don't see why we won't accomplish these goals—we've hit every single one we've had since joining CertainPath.



# Story of Market Domination

How WireOne Grew Out of a Farmhouse into the Fastest-Growing Residential Electrician in Iowa

Jake & Amber Wheeler Have Transformed Their Company from \$300K in Sales to \$3.5 Million with 20% Net Profit Last Year & a Projected \$4.7 Million This Year.

Life for Jake and Amber Wheeler looks much different today than it did about a decade ago. WireOne, arguably the fastest-growing residential electrical service company in lowa, happened out of necessity. Jake never dreamed of becoming an electrical contractor.

"We were trying to actually get away from the industry," Jake recounted. "We had just purchased our farm. We were excited about the opportunity to raise our family while working together."

Jake was a union electrician, but by 2009, Jake found himself laid off. "We sold our house on contract to buy the farm. Those people left, we got the house back and suddenly had two payments. It was a bad deal. We didn't have enough feed for our cows. Then Amber tells me we're going to have baby number four."

Jake leaned on the skills he knew could make him money. With Jake's Master Electrician's license, he exercised every contact he'd made in his career. "I did anything I could," Jake said. "I was just trying to make sure we could eat. Then it sort of just snowballed. Three or four years go by. It felt like an uphill battle, but work kept funneling to us."

One evening in 2014, Jake and Amber sat down with a friend from a nearby roofing company. His company, Bakeris Roofing, had been a long standing member of CertainPath's group for Roofers. He planted the seed that the young couple should explore a membership. And that's exactly what they did, ultimately becoming members. They went to work right away.

#### Implement a Service Fee

Jake always valued answering every single phone call, never relying on voicemail. Giving that responsibility to Amber was a big step. Amber had a big challenge in her mind—she needed to begin asking for a \$69 service fee. Her first three calls yielded in zero appointments.



Frustrated but determined, Amber went through the CertainPath Call Taker and Dispatch Fee Training and learned how to build value and present it to customers. Dispatch fees help the company's profitability and eliminate price shoppers. Before long, the couple could hire someone else to serve as CCR (customer care representative), allowing Amber to work and grow the business with Jake.



#### **Increase Prices**

"We really didn't have a system of how we charged. People would call, ask us to do some work, and we'd do it," Jake said with a chuckle. "Most of our jobs were wrapped up in time and material. We sort of guessed what the job should be." That drastically needed to change-and it has over the years. Using the CertainPath's Performance Pricing System and the StraightForward Pricing Guide, WireOne hits the numbers recommended by CertainPath.

#### Increase Value

Jake insisted if WireOne would charge more, it had to be worth every penny. Jake and Amber invested in sharp-looking uniforms and professional truck wraps. They then sunk countless hours training their team—both in terms of communication and technical—so their electricians would be the very best in town.

#### **Network with Fellow Members**

To assist Jake and Amber with the many changes they made to WireOne over the years has been their fellow CertainPath members. They have built a network within the network. They have countless friends who they can call. "We've done the best we could to see how people who are winning are doing it," Jake added, "In my opinion, that is the biggest advantage of the CertainPath membership—the network of people."

#### **Training Must Continue**

One thing their Electrical Business Coach has instilled in them is that training doesn't happen once. It must be an ongoing process. Consistent, weekly training crafted by Jake as well as the CertainPath Learning Alliance Weekly online modules, has allowed Jake to replicate himself in the field and then remove himself from running calls. WireOne also does daily huddles so everyone within the company is on the same page. They can also talk about previous jobs, so everyone can learn from those experiences.

#### The Quest to Find Technicians

WireOne invests an extraordinary amount of time looking for their next electricians, even if they're not necessarily hiring. Should someone move on, they know they must have a quality candidate ready to take his place. It's also helped the company exponentially grow quickly.

Speaking of growth, much has changed for WireOne the last few years. The company that started with only Jake and Amber generating \$300K in sales, did \$3.5M with 20% net profit last year and they're on target to enjoy similar profit at \$4.7M this year. It's been hard work, but implementing the CertainPath roadmap, has made growth possible.





We've always been a cash-forward business. It's easy to go into debt, and it's hard to get out. We've maintained our growth curve, and we've done so without sacrificing profit. I know everybody seems to get wrapped up in grow, grow, grow your topline. We've remained committed to being profitable. CertainPath's principles have helped us do that.



# Story of Finally Being Able to Get Out of the Truck

Frank Luersen Now Has Time to Work On His Business Rather Than in His Business

Frank Joined & Then Left ESI, But Returned Years Later Craving the Systems He Missed. Today, His Company Has Grown at Least 25% in Each of the Past 5 Years

Talk with Frank Luersen about his company, Home Team Electric, and it becomes quickly apparent this group likes to get together and have a good time. More often than not, these gatherings involve food—whether it be company breakfasts in the office or parties at Frank's home. It stems from Frank's passion for building culture.

Home Team Electric has an amazing, family-like culture, which has helped it grow at least 25% in each of the past five years. "We had so much work to do," Frank said. "But now we're in such a better place. We did \$1.2 Million last year, but we're in operation-growth mode. We should add another truck this year, and another three next year. I believe we can get up to 10 trucks very soon."

Frank wasn't always this happy with the business. He was among the first electrician members, joining in 2007. He left after several years during a time when CertainPath, then SGI, was bought by a large International Corporation focused on new construction.



He saw that corporation taking CertainPath in a different direction. He missed the camaraderie and the information shared by being part of the entire CertainPath family, so in 2013 when he heard CertainPath was going back to its roots, being a member/employee-owned organization, focused on the independent, residential contractor Frank attended another CertainPath seminar, and rejoined. He immediately went to work on the business—he knew much work needed to be done.

### **Investing in Structure**

"I immediately put StraightForward Pricing® back into place," Frank said. He finally took the time to really focus on his financials with the help of his Electrical Business Coach at CertainPath. It allowed him to truly run the company by the numbers.



#### **Getting Better Through Training**

Finally, in 2019, Frank removed himself from the field. He now works in the office and on the business. He was able to do it by successfully replacing his production. It was a process by investing into considerable training for his team, and making that a priority. Frank has attended virtually every class offered by CertainPath. Now, he and his team meet two times a week for up to two hours each time. They are dedicated to getting better with the help of CertainPath's Training division, Learning Alliance.

#### Hiring for Character

Training is only as effective as the individuals receiving the information. Frank has learned that he can't impact those who don't want to improve and grow. Consequently, Home Team Electric only hires individuals who demonstrate character and work ethic over technical competence when hiring.

#### **Growing Technicians**

Home Team Electric prefers to hire quality people, green to the industry, and train them from the groundup. It's been a successful initiative. Frank has one apprentice who's turned into a superstar technician, and he has two more apprentices working their way toward their own trucks. "When you have people that are proud of where they work, and you're also making money and are happier than you've ever been, you know you're doing something right."



"When I left CertainPath, I thought I could recreate the systems and pricing. But it's not the same. It's like Grandma's cookies. You can get close, but it's never the same making them yourself. We're thrilled to be back to CertainPath, networking with other members, and seeing it affect our growth. We're growing every year profitably again.





"You know, we want to continue to get bigger. But it won't happen at the expense of the culture we've built," Frank said.

"We have such a tight-knit group. I love it. When you have people that are proud of where they work, and you're also making money and are happier than you've ever been, you knowyou're doing something right."



# Story of Earning Real Money

From Not Collecting a Paycheck in 10 Years to Donating Large Sums of Money to Their Favorite Charities

Owners Winona & Darrell Furgison Have Doubled Their Revenue & Increased Their Net Profit by 25% in Only 3 Years, While Providing Industry-Best Pay & Benefits for Their Team.

Darrell Furgison opened the Shocking Difference in 2006. In those early days, he took on any work he could. Mostly friends gave him jobs and referrals. Before too long, the demand for his services necessitated the addition of employees. With more people comes more problems. On time and material, while Darrell's more technically sound electricians worked more efficiently, their jobs made less money. His slow electricians could bill more hours but angered customers.

"So, I slowly got pulled more and more into the office. First, I was doing quarterlies. Then it was payroll. More and more kept getting added to my plate, while I was still working 36 hours a week as a nightshift nurse," Winona explained.

"And neither of us were taking a paycheck—and this was 10 years into the business," Darrell shared. The memory of those frustrations were on his face for a moment.

"Darrell wasn't making a paycheck because he was too nice. He never thought he could charge more. Finally, in 2016, when we hit that \$670,000 in revenue with \$150,000 in receivables, I told him enough. I wouldn't allow him to use my paycheck to subsidize the business."

The Furgisons needed help. They found it in the form of CertainPath. After attending a seminar to learn more about CertainPath, they took a leap of faith and joined the organization. From that moment, the couple has been "all in."

They've made considerable changes and have seen remarkable success.





#### Immediate Success with StraightForward Pricing®

"While we were at CertainPath's Executive Perspective, we had a customer email us asking for a price to put in a hot tub." Darrell said. "Winona told me to use the brand-new price book from CertainPath. It was the one they give you, before you can customize it. I thought she was crazy.

No way would someone pay that price. It was more than double what I would have charged. I emailed the customer the price, and within 20 minutes the guy asked when he could get on the schedule. My jaw dropped. That's when I was like, okay, maybe this will work."

#### **Invest in Outside Training**

That immediate success gave Darrell and Winona confidence to send all their electricians to communication training. "We joined CertainPath in November. We went to Executive Perspective in December. By the end of it, I said, 'We're sending everyone to Service Essentials as fast as we can. Let's book flights today. We flew all four of our journeymen to the CertainPath Service Essentials Training through Learning Alliance in January. We couldn't afford to put them all up in hotels, so I found an Airbnb for \$40 a night for all of them. And away they went," Winona shared. They came back pumped and with a clear working knowledge of how to be more effective in the field. That class has served as their foundation for what would become a tremendous success story.

#### **Enhanced Organization & Efficiency**

Among the biggest changes for the business was the addition of CertainPath's software solution, designed to streamline fieldwork and to simplify and solve the challenges facing your business, not just move them online.. They've adopted different features of it, one bit at a time, learning and tweaking as they've gone along. "Now, we can see everything that's going on. I can see every single job. I know our materials and labor. It shows my gross margin!" Winona said excluding excitement. "We're so happy with everything it does for us. You can see when you make money every day."

## Hiring for Attitude & Fit

Shocking Difference's team has grown since then. Darrell and Winona hire very carefully, following CertainPath's guidance. They insist every potential new hire must ride-along with a different electrician every day for four days. "We pay them to do it," Winona said. "We want our crew's opinion. Most of our people have come from outside of the industry. We train them up. We find that's where we get the best attitudes."

## **Invest in Internal Training**

Darrell trains his electricians three times a week. He keeps it no longer than 20 minutes. The topics often vary. "If we're struggling with code, we'll talk about code. If there's nothing in particular to work on, we'll hit on the price guides. I'll give them scenarios, and I'll ask each of them, 'What would you charge?'" he explained. "Often we'll review videos on the CertainPath HUB."

Darrell and Winona also try to keep training lively. "Oh yes, we have a prize wheel. Every Wednesday, if you get a five-star review or sell a club membership, we tally them up, and you get that many spins. They can win anywhere from \$1 to \$50," Darrell said. "It's a lot of fun. You have to have some fun when you can."



#### Give Back to Their Team

Shocking Difference's team is well treated. They enjoy industry-best pay, paid for healthcare, a retirement plan with 4% match, everyone gets a three-day weekend, and everyone gets two weeks off a year. They even enrolled everyone into Dave Ramsey's "Smart Money," nine-week course, which helped one of their electricians get completely out of debt.

#### **Give Back to Their Community**

Shocking Difference has more than doubled its revenue and seen a 25% upswing in its net profit since joining CertainPath. Darrell, Winona, and their son, Jacob, prayed deeply after the success Shocking Difference enjoyed in 2018. Collectively, they decided to anonymously donate a significant sum of money to charitable causes close to their heart. They plan on increasing those donations soon, as the year comes to a close.



When we joined CertainPath in December of 2016, we had \$150,000 in account receivables with only \$670,000 in revenue. We were at a negative 14% profit. That January we jumped both feet firt. By the end of 2017, we were at \$970,000 with \$20,000 in receivables and roughly 5-6% profit. By the end of 2018, we ended at \$1.1M at a 14% profit—still with only 4 trucks on the road! Here we are at the close of September, and we're already at the \$1.1M, and we're doing it at 19.8% profit. We're both taking a paycheck, and the company has paid us back about \$80,000 that we had loaned it over many years. CertainPath has truly changed our lives.





"We feel beyond blessed," Darrell said. "I just wanted to be able to have a small business that provided for us. Now, we're helping families, and it's allowed us to help others outside the company."



# Story of Claiming Freedom of Time

From Working Around the Clock to Always Home by 4:30 PM & Never Working Weekends

Owner Vincent Tingley & His GM Ryan Kerrissey Have Nearly Tripled Their Revenue at Double-Digit Profitability in Only Five Years.



Tingley Electric's revenues have nearly tripled the last five years. The company's sales ended at \$2.5 Million by the end of 2019, and those numbers came with double-digit profits. Looking back at 2014, it was just Vinny Tingley and his now business partner Ryan Kerrissey working long, hard hours. The two wanted to grow the company into something substantial, but they couldn't move it beyond a means to earn a living.

"We always made a little bit more each year, other than 2009 and 2010 when the world fell apart," Vinny said. "The biggest bane of my existence was something called time-and-materials billing! We'd have these arguments with customers over 10 or 15 minutes! I knew there had to be a better way to do business. I knew we didn't need to reinvent the wheel."

Having attended a CertainPath seminar, and understanding where their business could go, even though they were still feeling apprehensive, they ultimately decided becoming a member was the right move for their business.

Together, the men found it to be a new beginning for Tingley Electric.

#### **Increase Your Prices**

"The biggest hurdle for me hands down was increasing our prices. I couldn't believe what they said we needed to be charging," Vinny admitted. "It takes a change in mindset. Once you consider all that goes into building that price—how much we offer as companies and the incredible costs to deliver our services—the pricing absolutely makes sense.

You have to value yourself. You're a skilled tradesman. We're worth far more than most suspect."



#### Slow Your Techs Down

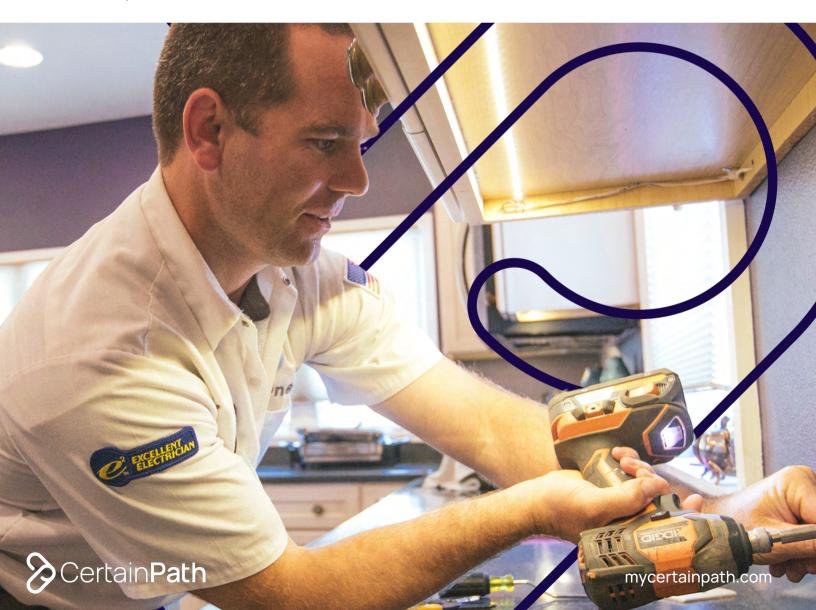
"The other biggest change was learning to slow down," Ryan said. "We used to call our techs and constantly ask, 'When are you going to be done?' We constantly pushed them, which meant they constantly pushed our customers into decisions. That's not doing anyone any good. Now, we hammer home the idea of them taking their time. When they're done, they're done. We never push. Everyone is so much happier that way." CertainPath's Service Essentials course really taught us the importance of taking our time and building value.

#### Always Charge a Service Fee

Throughout their training room, you can find Meares Plumbing Scoreboards. Black numbers are good—red numbers are not. Every week, during training, they openly discuss who's doing well and who's struggling, even asking those struggling what they could do differently. It seems direct, but it works. "You should see their numbers spike the very next week," Travis said.

### **Always Conduct Inspections & Give Options**

"Getting good at going through the inspection and offering options probably happened about two-and-a-half years ago. That took a lot of time," Ryan shared. "Really, going through CertainPath's Electricians Advanced class—even the basic Service Essentials class—both helped a lot. Almost everyone in the company has been through both. It's good for them to see that we're not the only ones doing business like this, too. It helps them buy-in. Then, they get back and they see their numbers soar."



#### Managing by the Numbers

"It wasn't probably until a year and a half ago that we said to ourselves, 'We've got a lot of the systems in place, we're making money, now we need to get better at the day-to-day,'" Vinny explained. "We need to get better at tracking our KPIs [Key Performance Indicators] and using CertainPath's DMER [Daily Management Essentials Report]. Now, we're tracking everything daily, if not every half a day. We're making decisions based on the numbers."

Our membership with CertainPath has led to tremendous financial success for Tingley Electric. "On our plane ride back from Executive Perspective, Vinny and I both wrote down our 5 and 10-year plans. Where we wanted to be. It's funny to think about, but we crushed our five-year plan within those first three years. It's really cool to be able to reflect on that accomplishment."

All these changes have led to tremendous financial success for Tingley Electric. "On our plane ride back from Executive Perspective, Vinny and I both wrote down our 5- and 10-year plans. Where we wanted to be. It's funny to think about, but we crushed our five-year plan within those first three years. It's really cool to be able to reflect on that accomplishment."



Our guys work so hard for us because they know we listen to them. For example, if a guy says he really wants to get to all his kid's baseball games, and we know they start at five, he knows he's going to get to that game. Our guys can see it, and they appreciate it. That motivates them to work even harder for us because they know we're a team. It's led to a huge jump in revenue and profit in our business. CertainPath helped us to understand the value of company culture. It's made all the difference.

Vincent Tingley, Tingley Electric
 Member since 2014



Best of all, Vinny and Ryan are not investing every minute of every day working in the business—and neither is their team. "My attitude is, we're all working for our families. I value our employees' time, and we pay attention to what time they get home each day. As much as possible, we like it if they can get home by 4, 4:30 pm at the latest. And when they get home, they're not bothered," Vinny said with conviction. "I want them to feel like they can go home, take off their hat at the end of the day, and not have to worry about Tingley Electric until the next morning. That goes for weekends, too."



This is just 5 out of our 1,000s of Electrical contractor success stories from our over our 20 years of helping contractors better their businesses. We've seen all types of plumbing business owners looking to get a little something different from the CertainPath systems and roadmap for success.

Regardless of where they start or what they want to focus on improving, CertainPath puts every next goal in reach to make businesses more profitable and lives more enjoyable.



You can achieve a level of success in contracting you once thought unreachable. You can do it by using the same strategies and systems we've used to grow our company.





# Success Made Certain.

CertainPath provides a comprehensive business solution that is built by contractors, for contractors. We understand what you need for your business to be a success because we've built it before. Our combination of professional coaching and technology solutions is tailor-made to meet the everyday business needs of contractors and make the challenge of running a business less of a challenge. That means building an office around a comprehensive system, advising workers on everything from the moment the phone rings to the day the truck rolls.

- Delivering better sales and profitability, not just better workflow.
- Find peace of mind and a sense of security in knowing your business is on the right path.
- A support system of contractors who have been in your shoes ensures you never feel alone in the process of change.
- Enjoy a greater work-life balance knowing your business is in good hands, even when you're away.
- Technology designed to simplify and solve the challenges facing your business, not just move them online.

Schedule a no-obligation call now with a CertainPath Business Advisor.

Discover what CertainPath can do specifically for your business. (866) 362-3455

