PAYCHEX THRIVE
A BUSINESS PODCAST

Why Jobber is a Game Changer for Home Service Businesses

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Announcer:
Welcome to THRIVE, a Paychex Business Podcast, where you'll hear timely insights to help you navigate marketplace dynamics and propel your business forward. Here's your host, Gene Marks.

Gene Marks:
Hey everybody, it's Gene Marks, and thanks for joining me again on another episode of the Paychex THRIVE Podcast. We are glad to have you here. I am really glad to have Sam Pillar here, Sam is the CEO and Co-Founder of Jobber. I'm a CRM guy, I have a lot of questions for Sam. So, first of all, Sam, thank you so much for joining me.

Sam Pillar:
Hi Gene, it's great to be here, thanks for having me.

Gene Marks:
I'm glad that you're here. As I said, Sam, we just met, so just a little bit of background here. I am a CPA, but I run a 10-person company outside of Philadelphia and we do CRM software, so we implement five of them, everyone from Salesforce all the way down, and I love it. And I wish I could do more. In fact, I wish we could work with Jobber, I think it's an awesome platform, I've known it for years, but I don't have enough bandwidth. I just want you to know, I'm coming into this conversation with you, I want to find out more about Jobber, as well as our audience because I think it's a really unique platform. So, let's get started on that, first of all, tell us a little bit about yourself, let's start with you and then let's build up to what Jobber does.

Sam Pillar:
Sure. So, as you mentioned, I'm the CEO and Co-Founder of Jobber. I started this company just a little over 11 years ago with my Co-Founder, Forrest. And prior to that, I was a freelance software developer for a few years. And prior to that, I was a lifelong computer nerd and just always interested in computers and technology through a real renaissance era, the early days of the internet and dial up modems. I count myself very fortunate for having grown up on a transition period that was really interesting and provided me all kinds of opportunity to get into what I ultimately got into.

Sam Pillar:
And I think that the experience working as a freelance developer for a few years prior to starting what would become Jobber was really a formative period for me because I spent a lot of time working with small businesses on custom software. Not something that I would recommend small business owners do, should not hire custom software development. But rewinding to 2010, 2011, there just wasn't really a lot available for small businesses. And so, I had a couple of businesses and some not-for-profits who hired me to build some very point solution stuff. And that experience just showed me the impact that a little bit of software, a little bit of efficiency making through a software product could have for a small business.

Sam Pillar:
And more important than that, it gave me the exposure to small businesses and small business people. And as you know, through your work, entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs and small businesses are amazing and they're important. And so I went on this journey with my co-founder to build a company with the purpose to help people in small business be successful and do what we can to have an impact there. And that's what we've been up to the last 11 years now.

Gene Marks:
It's funny that... you and I have similar paths in the sense because we were selling CRM software back in the... One of the first products we sold was Goldmine, and Act!, you remember that? Just to age ourselves. And back in the dial-up world and even into the ISDN worlds of the internet, people were developing custom applications using access as a backend or SQL servers as a backend. And even to this day, we get a lot of competition if we're replacing homegrown systems.

Gene Marks:
And to their credit, I'm betting that some of the systems that you developed a thousand years ago are probably in use by some people. Business owners, they tend to get a lot of mileage out of what they do, even though you're like, this is so old. But they're like, well, yeah it's doing what we needed to do and so it's fun. You founded Jobber in 2011, so it's been around now for 12 years, which is really something. Tell me about the company itself, how have you grown from 2011 until now? And then let's dig into a little bit about what the product does.

Sam Pillar:
Sure. So, we're a venture-backed software company, we've raised a bunch of venture capital over the years. Just recently, actually in January, we announced our Series D led by General Atlantic and that was a hundred million dollar primary financing. But we raised a little bit of seed capital in 2012, an appropriate amount of time after actually getting started building a product, getting it in front of customers. My co-founder and I were super scrappy in the early days, we just scrimped and scrounged for enough money to not die while we were building this product, or the initial version, I should say, of the product and getting it in front of enough real world examples, real customers.

Sam Pillar:
And our very first customer, Graham, owns this company called Painter's Enterprise here in Edmonton area, and he's still a customer today. He and a handful of other small business owners were super generous, just allowing us to get in front of them, show them what we'd built, they'd tell us, this is good, this is crap and we'd go back to the drawing board and fix the issues and refine. And that really has been agile software development methodology and all of this rapid iteration stuff that's very popular, is what we were doing. But that's actually what we've done all throughout, so we raised a little bit of capital after we figured out we had a product that people actually wanted and could use and we raised a little bit again over the next couple of years.

Sam Pillar:
In 2015 though, we raised our Series A, which was our first major institutional capital. And at the time, the company was about 20 people, we were all here in Edmonton, and that's a demarcation point for Jobber to 2015, which was very iterative, figure out a lot of the nuts and bolts of how different industries could interact with our product. And post 2015, we really started to grow a lot faster. At the same time, I think that small businesses in the industries that we're serving started to implement technology more rapidly and more aggressively. There was just a bit of a change in the mentality. And I know there's a long arc demographic shift going on as well and we see that a lot today, younger business owners coming in much more comfortable and familiar with technology and smartphones and they expect to use a product like Jobber when they're starting their lawn care business or they're taking over the family plumbing company or something like that.

Sam Pillar:
2015 onwards, we really grew quickly, the company's about 600 people today with employees all over Canada and also in the United States. But still very much with this, let's test and measure, get in front of customers all the time, we're customer obsessed as a company and really take the fact that we have these relationships with real small business owners with names and stories and companies that they are so passionate about and proud of and care about. And they've invited us into that world to act in partnership with them and to learn about, what are we doing that is helping and what are we doing that's not helping and how do we fix that? And every day everyone here comes to work to try and iterate our product and our service offerings so that we're helping more of these businesses be more successful and staying out of their way. So very iterative and we'll continue to be that way.

Gene Marks:
I'm going to dig into Jobber in a minute, but I have to ask, so 600 people based in Edmonton, you have people all around North America as well, not a great time to be in the technology industry. I'm curious how the past year has been for you and have you had the same impact of drying up of capital and labor issues that a lot of companies in the states and Silicon Valley have been having?

Sam Pillar:
Yeah, we've been really fortunate, I would say. I think maybe it goes back to the forming of the company and we started the company, we started building a product, we got it in front of users, we started to create value and then we went and raised capital. And that's-

Gene Marks:
What a concept.

Sam Pillar:
... It really works, have a product, generate revenue, be a real business, and go raise capital in order to grow the business and go faster. And so that's always been our approach. We didn't really get caught up in a lot of the echo chamber exuberance of some of these, especially in 2021, things were really wild and crazy. But we've just been very deliberate and very disciplined in how we raise capital and how we deploy that capital in order to build a real durable business.

Sam Pillar:
We're building a hundred-year company here, this isn't a flash in the pan kind of a thing. We want to be around for a long time for small business owners to rely on in order to pursue their dreams of building their companies. So, we raised our Series D and probably what is, at least in my 12 years doing this, the hardest fundraise capital-

Gene Marks:
Pretty lousy environment.

Sam Pillar:
... environment that we've ever had. But we had great relationships with investors for many years who have followed along what we were doing and seeing the impact that we're having on small business, believing that small business is important and will continue to be important for many decades. And it's a resilient category for us, and we can talk about that a little bit, but home services is, relative to a lot of other business categories, unique in its resilience in the face of the macroeconomic factors that are providing headwinds for a lot of industries.

Sam Pillar:
It certainly, it is always a challenging thing to fundraise and have a successful fundraise, but we had a very successful fundraise in what is an incredibly challenging environment. And I think that's a testament to the importance of small business, the category we're in, and the strength of the business that we've built here.

Gene Marks:
It's impressive. I could get sidetracked and I promise you I won't because I have other questions about just operating the company, having a tech company in Canada versus Silicon Valley, all that kind of stuff. But, our time is limited, I do want to jump into the product a little bit. Sam, so you're talking here to an audience mostly of Paychex customers, these are small business owners and there's a lot of software being thrown around them. You mentioned home service businesses has been as a focus of yours as well, so who are you selling your product to? Of the people listening to this right now or watching us, who do you want to attract and why do you want to attract them?

Sam Pillar:
The home services category, it covers dozens of different industry verticals, but the common denominator theme is that, you're providing your service at your customer's property, whether that be their home or their business. Most of them are residential properties, so plumbers, electricians, HVAC companies, residential cleaners, commercial cleaners, roofers, landscapers, arborists, we've got over 200,000 service pros across over 50 different industry verticals using Jobber to service now over 29 million addresses, households.

Gene Marks:
Stop for a second, so literally just last week, I had a plumber come into our place to fix a problem we had in a bathroom. So I'm in Philadelphia, so longtime family owned business, been around for a while. And Sam, the guy came in, he did his thing, he was great, and he had a clipboard where I had to sign off on the work agreement and then he left a copy of the invoice and I'm like, how do you want payment? And he's like, not yet, just call in the office and give a credit card. So I literally had to call their office to pay, it was something out of 1975, nothing has changed. And I'm assuming that's the market you're going after because there's a lot of companies out there that are just like that, right?

Sam Pillar:
That's exactly it. You're lucky he had a clipboard and you didn't get the back of a torn envelope or something, which is...

Gene Marks:
He turned around, I was to sign up on his back. You're right, I was lucky.

Sam Pillar:

It's a great point, Gene. I think this category and business size, we've got lots of customers, lots of employer businesses, so under 20 employees is really our sweet spot. We've got a lot of solopreneurs or two or three employee businesses, but 10, 15 employees, we're really focused on that very small business. And most of them are still using pen and paper as you described or what we call some digital pen and paper. So, maybe you're using a Microsoft Word template to generate invoices and you've got 35 Google Maps tabs open on your computer with the addresses of all the jobs that you're doing for the day. And then you've got your coil bound notebook stuffed with post-it notes and if you lose that thing, you're totally screwed, that's your business.

Sam Pillar:

We're displacing that, we're transforming this industry and the set of industries and getting them into the digital world, which is a benefit to them from an operating perspective. So more organized, more efficient, better cash flow, you can just do more with less. But it's also really important from a competitive perspective because you don't want to have that service experience as a consumer, it's inconvenient, it's clunky, your expectations as a consumer are different today than they were even just a handful of years ago. And Jobber helps these businesses present a much more sophisticated and organized business to the consumers, that's more competitive, it's more convenient, you're going to engender a better relationship with your customers as a result.

Gene Marks:

First of all, you're absolutely right, and it's not just that, it's also from a cost standpoint internally at the business itself, I literally had to call up somebody and give them credit card information. Somebody had to manually put that in and do it all that could have been done automatically. And I'm not saying you would then fire the person in the office, although in these days of tight labor, and we're using technology to be as productive as possible, but it's just like a must have thing. Jobber, is there accounting ? So, much of this is billing and collecting, let alone the whole CRM aspect, I know there's scheduling as well, there's outreach and marketing and all that, but is there accounting that's possible? Is that the core of this application or would you say your CRM functionality is more of the core?

Sam Pillar:

No, the CRM and the scheduling is the core. The unique thing about home services as a category and as a set of industries is, as I said before, you're doing jobs in the field at a customer's property and address. And so, keeping track of that customer information, the commitments that you've made to people for jobs that you're going to do, and when you're going to do them, who's going to do them, what information they need to have when they're doing them. So, our mobile app is great for that, your employees have it in the field, they've got all the information they need. And accounting is not a core part of the product, we integrate with QuickBooks for accounting, that's a great accounting package.

Sam Pillar:

The reality is, most small business owners and entrepreneurs in these categories who are running a lawn care business or plumbing business, the thing that they're doing every day when they're running the business is not accounting. Jobber is an operations management platform, our customers, the first thing they do when they wake up in the morning, is they open the app to see what's going on in their day and to see new requests for work that came in overnight, figure out whether they need to reschedule anything. And they're in the product all throughout the day and it's usually the last thing that they're looking at before they go to bed at night to figure out what's going on tomorrow. Accounting is something that happens a little bit more end of the week, end of the month, maybe you're bringing your bookkeeper in to help manage that process and make sure you're getting things right. Jobber is operations management, that's the prime objective for us.

Gene Marks:
Digging in that just a little bit deeper, and I feel comfortable asking you this because you've been doing this for a hundred years so, you know the product inside and out. But let me use the plumbing example, I had to call these people to make a appointment for the plumber to come out, and I heard nothing from them until the guy came knocking on my door, of course. And I did not go to their website to do it, I don't even know if they have a website.

Sam Pillar:
And then the guy came, he did the work, I had to call in the office to pay after signing off the form. And no offense with these guys, they're very nice people, whatever, I haven't heard from them since, and it was like over a week ago and I'm probably not going to hear from them ever again unless I need something from them, so I'll have to reach out to them. So, given that scenario, say you are the owner of that business sitting across you right now, what would you tell that owner? Like, this is how Jobber will completely change your business.

Sam Pillar:
It's a great example of a typical workflow, and it should all be automatic, all of that. And by the way, that plumbing company, you're lucky that they even reached out to get paid. A lot of these businesses, they forget to invoice and they sit-

Gene Marks:
It's insane.

Sam Pillar:
... on these receivables for months or longer, and as a customer, you're having to reach out and be, "I think you did this job for me four months ago and I don't think I paid you, do you remember? I don't remember." That's a bad way to run a business. And the problem is, for a lot of these people, like you said, they're amazing people. I love these entrepreneurs who have this like, take no prisoner's attitude to just getting out there and starting a business and going and doing the thing that they're good at for customers, doing a great job of that thing that they do, whether it be plumbing or roofing or just general handyman services, lawn care, whatever.

Sam Pillar:
The thing that they're not necessarily good at is the administration of running a business. So Jobber helps to melt all of that away. And so, you take in any request for work through your website or social media or whatever else, that loads automatically into Jobber, you can assign somebody to go out and quote for the work or you can do a quote just totally remotely, schedule the job. When that job is actually happening on a day, the employee who's doing it, they get a notification on their phone, they know that that's something that they have to go do. There's on my way text message automatically sent to you or the consumer, so you're not surprised out of nowhere where somebody's knocking on the door, you know that they're coming. They do the job, the employee marks it complete, all of the invoicing and the payment collection happens automatically.

Sam Pillar:
If you forget to pay as the consumer, Jobber's going to remind you periodically on behalf of the business. Following up afterwards for reviews, like all of these small businesses referral and like a review driven new customer generation is a really powerful thing. And you should be taking advantage of the fact that you do great work for customers to get them to leave you reviews so that more people find out that you're doing a great job in your industry. All of that stuff and more is what Jobber automates a way so that you can focus on doing the thing that you're really good at, which is the thing that you started the business for in the first place. And so, I think that's what I would tell that small business owner.

Gene Marks:
All right dude, I have so many leads for you, that's another conversation to have because my whole life is with service people that I have to be chasing them down to pay them, so it's a whole other story. Implementation model, you said that you're dealing with very small companies, usually less than 20 employees, people are busy doing other things, they're not technology people. So, how is Jobber implemented? Do you guys use overpriced consultants like my firm or do you do this directly with your customers and walk them through the process? And how do you recommend for people listening now or watching and they're like, this does sound like something up my alley? What would you say, what can they expect to prep them for doing something like that?

Sam Pillar:
It's a great question. So we do everything ourselves, everything direct, and actually, when we're doing the best job of it, you don't even have to talk to us. So, Jobber has a free trial, we don't collect a credit card upfront. Everyone listening to this right now, they can go to our website, jobber.com, J-O-B-B-E-R.com, sign up for a free trial, download the app, and you can actually use the product and you can see in minutes what this thing is capable of and how it can help you in your business. And if you believe that that actually will be of value to you, you can subscribe and become a paying customer.

Sam Pillar:
Now, we have a sales team, we have customer service, and we have all kinds of support because a lot of people in these industries are adopting technology for the first time. And our number one priority is to help these entrepreneurs, help these people in small business be successful and we're going to do everything that we possibly can to help everyone get there. And so if that means sitting on the phone with you for a little while to help understand your business and show you exactly how the features and the product work because this is your first time using technology, then that's what we'll do and we're set up to do that, and we do that for a lot of entrepreneurs that are doing this thing for the first time.

Sam Pillar:
But increasingly, this demographic shift that we talked about means that there's a younger generation of much more comfortable technology users in the space taking over businesses or starting businesses, and they actually don't want to talk to anyone. They want to go download an app and they expect it to work with a consumer grade utility, it should be as easy as downloading any consumer app that you would download and figure out how to use and they shouldn't need to talk to us. And so, that's the goal, the goal is to make sure that the product speaks for itself and is super easy to use.

Sam Pillar:
Our user experience is second to none, we are the best in the space by far, but we backstop that with a very robust capability to help people figure out the product, get to success, get comfortable. It's a big deal, you're going to use a product like this to interact with your customers and to really sit as the foundation of your business and your business is the thing that you care the most about. And so we take that responsibility very seriously and we do what it takes to help people get comfortable.

Gene Marks:
And you're leaving out the most important part, the fact that you guys are Canadian means that it's a much nicer experience than dealing with an American software company.

Sam Pillar:
That's right, we say sorry a lot.

Gene Marks:
Yeah, you say sorry a lot and it's just nicer because you guys are nicer. I am assuming, we get in our business people wanting customizations, everybody walks around thinking their business is so incredibly special and unique when we all know that 90% of most businesses are pretty much the same, there might be a little bit of tweaking in there. Do you get requests for customizations or do you find, because you are dealing with smaller home service type companies, that you really don't need to spend a whole lot of effort customizing Jobber, what do you say?

Sam Pillar:
That's a great point. So, there's a tension between customization and the CRMs that you work with that they require the expensive consulting support because they're really complicated. It's difficult to figure out how to set it up, how to configure it, how to get it mapped to the business processes, and so that makes sense. What we're focused on is, like I said, ease of use and just making sure that this product is really easy to use, really easy to get comfortable with, really easy to get your employees to use. Usage is the most important thing, you have to adopt it in order for it to work.

Sam Pillar:
But that said, there's a lot of workflow and use case that can be generalized and can be applied to all kinds of industries. And so, we work really hard to make sure that those workflows are the best ones possible and that they are accommodating and flexible to be able to work for different industries and different workflows. But we also have a rich and growing base of integrations. So we have a public API that's available for third party partners and different software providers to integrate into and deliver additional functionality and things that are maybe more specialized to certain industries or certain use cases on top of Jobber.

Sam Pillar:
And one of the examples actually is Zapier, so I'm sure you've heard of that or aware of that product. So, through something like that, you can actually link into all different products and figure out all different customizations and workflows. But we have a large and growing list of just software integrations as well that can help in that situation where somebody wants more customization or something more specialized for their industry.

Gene Marks:
Good. And by the way, for you guys that are watching or listening, Zapier is, Z-A-P-I-E-R, there's another application, Workado is another one that's also very good. And there are these incredible middleware integration tools, they're very easy to set up and they can connect products like Jobber, which is about anything as well as any other product that you might have, but another topic for another day.

Gene Marks:
All right, I got a couple more minutes left with you, Sam. First, just very quickly, we were talking about the whole implementation or whatever just to give our audience. How long typically does it take on average to get yourself up and running with Jobber, is this a day, a month? Just quickly, what have you seen?

Sam Pillar:
It really depends on general comfort with technology and maybe also how big your team is. But if are using QuickBooks already today and you've got your customer list in there, you can be using Jobber to run your business the same day that you sign up. And you can actually be doing that in trial, you don't even necessarily need to be a paying customer. You can set it up, you can sync with QuickBooks so it

automatically imports all of your customers and your data about the jobs that you do and things like that and you can be running your company right away. Generally speaking, people want to play around a little bit and get things configured, get things set up, so I would say a handful of hours, maybe a couple of days is a pretty standard implementation window.

Gene Marks:
Final question is, we've been talking about the demographics and the plumbing guy that comes to my house and you see this all over. This is a generational thing, the average age of the U.S. small business owner, I said this a thousand times, the majority of them in the U.S. at least are over the age of 50, so there's some people that are used to doing things their own way.

Gene Marks:
And I look at this, a lot of your customers are being family owned businesses and the next generation comes up and they're like, what the heck are we doing here, mom and dad? This is ridiculous, we got to put something. So, it almost seems like it's just going to take time for that to transition and because the way you're positioned right now, it's like very serendipitous that you're at this stage right now just as this transition is taking place. Is that fair?

Sam Pillar:
Absolutely. And it's incredibly exciting because it's one of the largest and last remaining small business categories to make that transition. There's 6.2 million small businesses in these categories just in North America, and there are so many of them having that dinner table conversation right now. Mom and dad, what the heck are you guys thinking? This is crazy, we have to do a better job of this.

Gene Marks:
It's always worked this way, since back in the war, we've been doing it this way.

Sam Pillar:
Exactly. The other thing I would add to that is, it's an enormous entrepreneurship opportunity, there is a very significant shortage of labor and just companies doing this work. And if you've tried to hire a plumber or somebody to remodel your kitchen or anything like that in the last few years, you know that it's brutal, it's really difficult. And so that's great for small businesses in this space to have more work than they can handle, but it also means that it's an enormous opportunity for young people or people who are changing careers.

Sam Pillar:
There's a lot of people who are going to be affected by the macroeconomic factors that are swirling about, and so I think it's a really positive, really exciting thing that the home services and all those industries within it have to offer to the world. And those small businesses are important, they're really valued in their communities, they're the backbone of the economy, it's almost 50% of GDP comes from those businesses.

Gene Marks:
And I think the bottom line is like, ChatGPT is not going to fix my toilet, somebody is going to have to be trained to do that, and that is a business opportunity for a lot of people.

Sam Pillar:
That's right.

Gene Marks:

Sam Pillar is the Co-Founder and CEO of Jobber, it's jobber.com. Sam, am I giving the right ... J-O-B-B-E-R.com? I definitely recommend, this is why we had Sam along because this podcast is all about products and people and things that impact businesses. And like you said, Sam, there's more than 6 million in North America that provide these services, and this is a really good platform, so consider it and look into it. Sam, thank you very much for joining me, it was a great conversation.

Sam Pillar:

Thanks a lot for having me, Gene, this was fun.

Gene Marks:

You guys have been listening to and watching Paychex THRIVE Podcast, my name is Gene Marks, thank you so much for joining me. If you need any help or advice or like to suggest any future guests for the show, please join us or link to us at payx.me/thrivetopics, that's P-A-Y-X.me/thrivetopics. Again, thanks for joining us, we will see you again real soon, take care.

Gene Marks:

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Announcer:

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