



Energy Systems Group Same Page; Sustained Success

By Tom Schuman

Steady growth is one of the four cornerstones for Energy Systems Group (ESG), a Newburgh-based energy services company that has employees and customers in 18 and 25 states, respectively.

Mission accomplished in going from five employees in 1994 to more than 200 today (60-plus in Indiana). But how does one maintain a positive workplace culture when more people, more locations and more operations are part of the mix?

“It’s the biggest challenge (managing growth),” says company president Jim Adams, who has been there from day one. “If it was a model easily replicated, we would be in all 48 (continental) states.”

Adams worked for 16 years in the industry in a corporate environment. There, “salespeople (he was one of them) were viewed as heroes and I didn’t like that a lot of other people were left out.” At ESG, salespeople receive their incentives on the profitability of a project over time, not just as a result of the new deal. Thus, they, and other team members, have the incentive to work as a team and continue excellent customer service. And, for every sales/management worker who earns a Caribbean awards trip, an equal number of operations/administrative personnel are selected by their peers for the same benefit.

The annual company meeting, held in various cities across the country, is three long days of work – and fun. All team members participate, with department and business unit success stories revealed in an interactive, unique way. “There’s something about humor, in presentations, that brings people together. It is very team-oriented,” Adams contends.

Human resource manager Roxanne Hudnall says the company gathering “lets everyone know they are valued”; human resource recruiting administrator Elexica McAlister terms it “like a family reunion”; and administrative assistant Brenda Hamman offers that she “gets a very insightful glimpse at the whole company and the opportunity to spend time” with people from different areas of the organization.

Hudnall, with nine years experience, points to an annually high number of internal promotions and the fact that “everyone understands our mission, our vision and what we’re about. I don’t think you see that in a lot of places.” Hamman, who joined ESG in 1999, adds, “Importance is placed on everybody’s ability to contribute – and there is strong acknowledgement of that.”

Adams relates that he balances the four cornerstones – customer satisfaction, employee development and sustained profit in addition to the growth – in each decision that is made. Profit and loss evaluations take place on every project, every location. The score is watched closely, with all benefitting when success is realized.

While all new employees are brought to Southwest Indiana for a couple of days so there is no “mystery about the corporate office” and Adams does go to lunch and try to set the tone, “what’s imperative is each person having a local mentor who can guide them.”

It takes six months to a year for people to get ingrained in the company (which features average deals that have a nine-month sales cycle and are in the \$3 million range), he says. Adams offers that ESG is selling a service, helping business owners modernize buildings – making them more comfortable, requiring less maintenance and saving money. The developers, engineers, constructions managers and all others that form the company are what make it so special.

“It’s the people – watching them grow, progress, succeed and transforming their environment,” Adams discloses. “All that is what keeps me motivated.”

Steve Pride, national director of sales and operations and a team member since 1996, calls the work environment “very entrepreneurial, very rewarding.” He cites the family atmosphere and integrity of the company, concluding, “We feel like a big organization, yet we’re small enough, charming if you will. Customers will tell you we’re sincere.”



Clearwater, Florida team members dress up as “The View” hosts to deliver updates at ESG’s annual meeting.

An Orlando airport project includes installation of a domestic chiller.

