

PROFILES OF SURVIVAL



BY
ROXANA TOFAN



ALMOST TWO YEARS LATER and companies are still dealing with local and customer mandates and staff challenges. In a world where all of us must stay ahead of the game, Power Engineering Services' largest department travels all over the US and even overseas to assist customers troubleshoot their electrical engineering issues. Power Engineering Services is an electrical engineering company with a home office in Converse, Texas and satellite offices in Cibolo, Austin, and Houston. I sat down with **Humberto Vega, the PES Controller** for his insight in their operations and how they have managed to thrive during these times.

Roxana: What is Power Engineering Services?

Humberto: We are a technical service organization specializing in commissioning, start up, and maintenance testing for utilities, industrial, governmental, and commercial clients. PES performs electrical system analyses, along with acceptance and maintenance testing of electrical distributions. Our staff has contributed to the successful completion of major generation, distribution, and commercial projects throughout the world.

Roxana: How did you end up at PES?

Humberto: I've been in the accounting field for about 10 years now and have done accounting work in various industries such as healthcare, realty, and now electrical engineering.

Roxana: Give me an idea of what an electrical engineering issue is.

Humberto: At PES we offer a wide range of services such as power system studies from our engineering department, substation testing, infrared scans, and NETA testing from our field departments. We also do cable terminations and fiber optic terminations, rubber goods testing from our lab department, and breaker testing and rebuilding from our breaker shop.

Roxana: Give me examples of your projects.

Humberto: With the number of services that we offer, we have large variety of customers, everything from a handful of residential projects that we do every year to large wind and solar farms, as well as large commercial buildings that seem to pop up in the central Texas area every day. Our testing projects involve a wide spectrum of electrical equipment including high to low voltage generators, switchgear, power transformers, motors, cables, and protective relays. Our expertise extends to the testing and maintenance of air, magnetic, oil, vacuum and SF6 circuit breakers at voltage levels up to and including 500 kV.

Roxana: How has COVID affected your business?

Humberto: COVID threw us, as well as the rest of the world, a curve ball, but we were able to adapt and thrive within this new landscape. We had all our office staff work from home at the beginning of the pandemic. Our field technicians had to adapt as there is a different set of regulations for each of our customers' sites. One of our biggest challenges was communication and being able to have our employees all on the same page while being spread out.

Roxana: What type of regulations are you referring to?

Humberto: COVID regulations – some clients required that our employees wore masks, but others went a step further and required temperature checks and negative COVID test results before a technician could work on a project. That, of course, added extra time and required extra resources for our projects.

Roxana: What type of communication worked best with the team?

Humberto: Before COVID most of our meetings and communication was in person. We had to not only switch to zoom



or google meetings, but we had to work with our technicians having different technology available and training them how to use their devices to join team meetings and communicate.

Roxana: As you look ahead for the company, what are some of the challenges and opportunities the company faces?

Humberto: Our current biggest challenge is also our biggest opportunity and that is growth. We have been named one of the fastest growing companies in the San Antonio area for the last 3 years. That is something that we are very proud of, but it presents its own set of issues. We are constantly hiring additional staff and purchasing additional equipment and vehicles. This has been difficult in the current market where resources are scarce. We're looking forward to a great 2022. We believe we have all the pieces in place to support our growth and continue to thrive in this ever-changing market. ■

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