

Q&A: Shelli Wassall, 2016 Operations Professional Employee of the Year

Shelli Wassall, the first Operations Professional in the 20-year history of Aschinger Electric Company in Fenton, MO, as a TEGG contractor, credits a strong team and supportive family for helping her become the TEGG Operations Professional Employee of the Year at the 2017 Continuing Education Conference in Atlanta.

Shelli began working for Aschinger Electric in 1996, and the company became a TEGG franchise in 1998 – the same year she married her husband, Grant. In fact, one month after their marriage, Shelli flew to Pittsburgh to undergo training at TEGG University's Pittsburgh Campus.

"Fortunately, I have a very supportive husband who encouraged the new opportunity," she said.

Shelli left Aschinger Electric in September, 1999, after having her first daughter, Hannah, and came back in 2003 to temporarily help finish several reports. Once Hannah began kindergarten, she contacted Principal Eric Aschinger, who was then serving as President and General Manager, and became his assistant and the company's Operations Professional in 2004.

Shelli had her second daughter, Abby, in 2009. In all, she has worked for Aschinger Electric for 16 years, and has been part of TEGG for 14 years.

Outside of work, Shelli said she takes pride in being a wife and mother, and enjoys teaching a free cardio kickboxing class at her church.

Q: *What is the most challenging part of your job and how do you overcome it?*

A: "I am certainly never bored with my position! There is always plenty to do. One of the biggest challenges is juggling the many people I support and their different needs. I am not exclusive to the TEGG side of things – I also support the President of our company, along with the treasurer, two project managers and two sales people. This includes TEGG Reports, billing, correspondence, bid preparation, etc. I also assist our electricians and field technicians with their schedules and distribution of job numbers.

"Besides supporting my own team, I am often called upon to assist the other project managers in our office with purchases, registering for classes, events and travel. I plan and coordinate parties and events, and handle corporate gift ordering and distribution.

"I also keep our licenses up to date for several cities and municipalities across Missouri and Illinois. I manage to get it all done, but some days I'm a bit more exhausted than I am on other days when I leave the office! I enjoy the satisfaction that comes with completing the tasks before me each day. After a busy day I am fortunate enough to go home to a great, supportive family and teaching kickboxing twice a week certainly helps me keep my emotions in check!"

Q: *Operations has a lot of responsibilities, ranging from customer billing, team scheduling, reviewing upcoming work and doing company reports, just to name a few tasks. How do you successfully manage all the moving parts that come with your position?*

A: "I make a lot of lists! I keep a notepad handy and end each day writing a list of things I need to do the next day. I prioritize my list by most important to things that can wait. Items on the list will move up or down according to what is most important not only to me, but to each person I support. I take a couple minutes each morning to go through my list so I know exactly what I need to accomplish that day. I've even been known to shoot myself an email or leave a voicemail after I've left the office if something else pops in my head, even at 3 a.m.!



Robb Cohen Photography & Video

Shelli Wassall of Aschinger Electric Company (center) won the 2016 TEGG Operations Employee of the Year Award. It was presented by President of ABM Technical Solutions President Scott Giacobbe; ABM Franchising Group Senior Vice President Bert Kendall; TEGG Senior Vice President Brian Myers; and Elizabeth Heisel, Director of Support and Development at ABM Franchising Group.

Employee of the Year Q&A

"Flexibility is key. Just because a list sits in front of me doesn't mean that will be the only items I face each day. If someone comes to me needing assistance, I often have to stop what I'm doing to meet their need. We move pretty fast around here so it's very important to stay on my toes and be willing to change course from my goals for the day when needed. There is a certain satisfaction that comes from taking my pen and scratching through items as I complete them.

"I also have two large dry erase boards on the wall behind me. One is plain and one is a calendar. On the plain white board I write down which TEGG Reports need to be edited, printed and bound as well as which ones are ready for delivery, I also write down the upcoming jobs that have yet to be scheduled. The other board is a blank calendar that I fill in each month. I color code the jobs for each TEGG Sales Representative, and write the job name and initials of the technician completing the job on the corresponding dates. Both boards are out in the open and allow any one of our team members to see what the status of each job is. Not only does this help us not double-book a technician, but it also helps us track job status and billing."

Q: *How does the TEGG system help you in your day-to-day role?*

A: "When we started in 1998, the software looked a lot different than it does now! There were many more steps involved with preparing a job for the technicians, and a handful more for retrieving the job when the technician completed a scan. Change is scary, and I'll admit I had my doubts and concerns when we changed over to TEGGPro, but now, I am very grateful for it. There are still a few steps to take, but it moves far more smoothly than it did in 1998, and enhancements and changes are always underway to further improve the software! The online system is most beneficial, in my opinion, to our technicians. They are able to synch information back to me from just about anywhere with a 99% success rate. That is a huge improvement from almost 20 years ago!

"The TEGG System is a well thought out system. A lot of time and attention to detail was taken to make sure contractors are successful with Preventive Maintenance. The tools we are provided ensure that from the first phone call to the delivery of the reports, our customers are receiving an informative, easy to understand report of their electrical systems. Not only is it informative, it looks professional and provides customers with the assurance that the TEGG Contractor is also the best contractor to meet all of their service needs.

"Access to technical support is a huge plus as well! With a quick email, any issues we are having are usually resolved within the day of our request. Having knowledgeable support on the other end of the telephone gives us as a contractor the peace of mind that we will be able to fulfill our commitments to our customer with minimal interruption. We don't have that many issues arise, but it's nice to know we have the support we need if one does!"

Q: *What's the most rewarding part of your job?*

A: "I work with a great team – I really do! We have great relationships with one another, and are supportive of one another, both on a business level, as well as a personal level. We genuinely want to see each other succeed in our positions. Any relationship encounters the occasional conflict, but we are a professional team and are able to resolve issues quickly. We laugh a lot together, which is important. Our bi-weekly meetings, which I schedule and enforce as schedules permit, are a great way for us to connect and see what each other has going on.

"We all view each other's roles as an important piece of a bigger puzzle. We cannot do one job without another, and recognizing that is key to being successful. We are blessed with a supportive General Manager. Emily Martin takes pride in TEGG and encourages each of us in our roles so we can be successful. We truly have a family atmosphere here and that makes getting up each morning to go to work all the better!"

Q: *What advice would you offer other Operations Professionals to also be successful in their companies?*

A: "I can't stress flexibility enough. In a perfect world, all the moving parts would be in synch all the time, but things come up, schedules change, and emergencies happen. Approach each day positively; say a quick prayer in the parking lot before walking in if you have to. One thing that helps me is remembering that our position is unique – not every person in your office knows how to do your job. There is only one you, and you have talents and skills that not everyone has. Make a list of your skills. Sometimes we need to see on paper just how talented and special we are. Not just in business, but in everything that you do.

"Even if you have two or three back up people, you are still part of a unique network of people in a huge pond! You have a great network of Operations Professionals across the country and around the world that you can reach out to for advice and support. The everyday average contractors in your area do not have that! We all have our own way of staying organized and keeping a healthy balance at work. When you find yours, it's a blessing. Be willing to reach out to your peers if you need something and on the other side of that coin, be willing to support someone who is reaching out to you!"

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