

## Interview Questions

### 1. Tell us the inspiration behind forming and founding ExecuPOWER?

ExecuPOWER was founded by successful women from the fields of business and engineering. Maria Larson and Andrea Turley, the CEO and COO of ExecuPOWER, respectively, foresaw a need in the industry for quality technical services provided by an experienced women-owned business. Changes taking place in the utility industry, such as the aging workforce, increased outsourcing, and greater infrastructure spending, created an opportunity for them to combine their talent to form a firm whose mission is to deliver premium design and consulting services. Maria's business acumen comes from her experience as an entrepreneur who developed a small outsourcing and staffing business that she grew into an international firm in a span of 25 years, ultimately becoming the largest woman-owned diverse service provider in that industry. Andrea, a professional engineer with approximately 30 years of experience in the water, electric, and gas utility industries, brings an in-depth knowledge of the technical and operational aspects of the business. As a result, ExecuPOWER began operations in a well-capitalized position, with knowledgeable back-office support and a technical staff highly experienced in the utility industry. ExecuPOWER's goal is to leverage the best expertise in the industry to build solid client relationships while offering high-quality services in a safe, consistent, responsive, and proactive manner.

### 2. What intelligence or qualities sets ExecuPOWER apart from other energy and power design firms?

Maria: As a young entrepreneur, I started a small company out of my home, which I eventually grew into a major, woman-owned, diverse, international business that currently employs more than 1,000 people across the globe. Under my leadership, the company expanded across 40 states and 70 countries. I also created a distinctive business model for my company, which incorporates flexible models of service and technologies to support every aspect of large capital projects. When I sold my company three years ago, it was producing \$100 million in revenue with 98% repeat business. To achieve this level of success, I always ensured that I evolved with the client and consistently examined how I could achieve cost and time efficiencies without sacrificing the quality of services I provided. While building my business throughout the years, I had many hurdles to overcome. One of the best qualities I possess is resilience. I understood that I was the minority in the industry, but I never let it affect me. Additionally, I have always emphasized the importance of customer service and am highly skilled at developing motivated teams and understanding what it takes to succeed in a competitive environment.

Andrea: Because of my extensive experience with utilities, I understand the changing nature of the utility business. My experience in water, gas, and electric utilities has provided me with a solid foundation of knowledge and expertise that enables me to lead successful teams. My utility experience, blended with the experience of knowledgeable and veteran experts in the consulting industry, creates a perspective that gives ExecuPOWER a unique advantage. Together, we are confident that we will provide a quality product, as we offer both technical and operational expertise along with solid business acumen. Our executive team's impressive past achievements in the utility industry and business world sets us apart, making us a valued partner in the success of all of our clients.

### 3. Why is it significant for women to be part of the engineering design industry?

Approximately 20% of undergraduate engineering degrees are earned by women. However, only 13% of the engineering workforce is made up of women. This creates a twofold question. Why aren't women enrolling in engineering programs that would be more representative of the overall population, and for those who do earn a degree, why do they not stay in the profession? The lack of equal representation of women results in an absence of needed resources and a lack of perspective on designs that might better reflect the needs of women. Although women have always played a significant role in the areas of science and engineering, the historical lack of broad acknowledgement and visibility leaves a perceived void. As leaders at ExecuPOWER, we feel the need to demonstrate to young women that they can indeed have a successful career in the engineering profession. That it is something they can pursue in their academic studies, and a career they can maintain once they begin to work in engineering. Just as importantly, our firm is also a symbol to other disadvantaged youth, demonstrating that it is possible to pursue their dreams in engineering. ExecuPOWER supports these efforts by having its employees speak to disadvantaged youth about opportunities in engineering, hiring interns and coops, and supporting STEM programs. Respect for diversity is one of our core values and we routinely review its importance at team and staff meetings.

4. Where do you see the electrical power generation industry moving or evolving to over the next five to twenty years?

The electric utility industry is undergoing a period of dramatic change. Concerns about climate impacts associated with human activity as well as the continuous reduction in the price for distributed generation, such as solar, wind, and hybrid systems, are dramatically increasing the mix of available generation alternatives. Traditional centralized generation technologies, such as nuclear, gas, and coal must compete against ever-decreasing prices from distributed energy sources. The growth in distributed generation and battery storage is impacting the way new distribution and transmission assets are planned, with greater expectations to consider nontraditional solutions, such as non-wire alternatives. Increased efficiency in the use of energy has resulted in little to no growth in peak or long-term loads. Regulatory uncertainty on the recovery of capital investments and how competitors will be treated as they enter the electric market creates a potential deviation from the traditional utility recovery model. Electric vehicles and associated recharging stations represent a tremendous opportunity. However, whether the utility or private sector will deploy, own, and operate these assets creates further uncertainty. Residential, commercial, and industrial customer expectations continue to grow with respect to clean reliable power, while severe weather events, aging infrastructure, and plant closures place more strain on the system. Technology is enabling customers to have greater control over their energy use and allowing greater opportunity to implement individual generation and energy storage alternatives. Competitive pressures are driving investor-owned utilities to merge to improve their economies of scale and capture value for their shareholders and customers. At the same time, new players are entering the market that are adept at managing information as well as deploying their accompanying technological changes. Greater pressure exists to support societal, environmental, and economically sustainable programs for customers, communities, and stakeholders. At the same time, customers and developers are demanding greater responsiveness to their requests for interconnecting to the grid and managing their energy use. The higher level challenge is twofold, the utilities must continue to provide the reliable service that customers have become accustomed to while at the same time implement the technology, processes, and systems that will prepare them for tomorrow. An additional complication is that the workforce is aging with both field crews and professional staff retiring, requiring utilities to turn to outside partners for assistance. The utilities with the greatest likelihood for success will be those that build a

team of people, comprised of both employees and external partners, that can effectively implement the technology, responsiveness, and flexibility needed to adapt.

5. What's your take on joint ventures, mentor protégé', and teaming agreements with other design or construction management firms to approach new work and please the owner?

We have a multi-tiered approach to working with our strategic partners to meet our clients' needs. ExecuPOWER has the staff and experience to perform work directly for many of our clients. When we need an area of specialized expertise, we routinely work with our partners to provide seamless end-to-end support for our customers. ExecuPOWER also routinely works as a subcontractor to larger firms, such as Black & Veatch and Burns & McDonnell. Our mission is to create and work with the team configuration that will provide the optimal performance for our clients. In addition, being a certified women-owned business, we look for opportunities to hire other diverse companies in order to help support our client's diversity goals and to expand opportunities to disadvantaged businesses.

6. Why is safety so important in the energy and power industry?

The industry focuses on prevention. When it comes to safety, you do not get a second chance. By identifying and addressing hazards before they can cause harm is a shared responsibility of the labor force and management. This focus helps the industry maintain reliability for its customers, while also ensuring the safety and health of all of its workers. We want all of our employees to go home to their family's injury free every day.

7. Did you have mentors along the way that assisted your growth and professional development? If so, how did they affect or inspire you?

Maria: I would say I had a "personal" inspiration rather than a "professional" one. My source of inspiration faced more obstacles than any human should have in their lifetime. He taught me to never complain, always look for the positive, and know that regardless of the situation, there is always a solution. Most importantly, he taught me to never give up! Because I listened, I have been successful in both my personal and career endeavors, which I plan to continue as the CEO of ExecuPOWER.

Andrea: I have had a number of mentors throughout my career. However, working in the utility industry made me realize the strength of cross-functional teams, which has had the biggest impact on me. In a complex environment, such as the energy industry, resources with different areas of expertise and diversity need to work together in order to successfully implement projects. In addition, I learned the importance and the pride in serving customers knowing how the electricity, water, and gas we provided was key to their ability to run their businesses and provide comfort to their homes. Finally, working in the utility industry made me appreciate the importance of safety and the need to ensure that everyone goes home injury free every day, as well as the need to conduct my job in a professional manner.

8. What other services would you consider getting involved in going forward?

In addition to our existing capabilities described in the attached brochure; we would like to expand our services in the following areas:

- Natural gas construction management services
- Greater expansion into the renewable space – solar, on/off shore wind, and energy storage
- Geographic Information System (GIS) for gathering, managing, and analyzing data
- 3D modeling