

POWER & UTILITIES

**WINNER**

**CRAIG HURLBERT**  
CEO  
Turbine Air Systems Ltd.



## Coach 'em up

How Craig Hurlbert put together teams and systems to drive Turbine Air Systems

**C**raig Hurlbert put his boyhood dream aside, but he still became a coach as the CEO of Turbine Air Systems Ltd.

Hurlbert, who left his dream of coaching a high school basketball team on the table to join Turbine Air Systems in 2001, has instead turned his coaching vision to the company that designs, manufactures and services high efficiency cooling, heating and power systems. With just a few basic tweaks, Hurlbert, who joined the company at the request of his longtime friend and company founder Tom Pierson, has combined the company's institutional knowledge and experience in the power generation business with expertise in the HVAC business and packaging know-how to produce a synthesized solutions approach, which brings all solutions to its customers.

Among the unique approaches that have helped place TAS at the pinnacle of the market is the in-house engineering and design department. Along with that, Hurlbert has worked to expand the company's customer service offerings. In that effort, the company has expanded its business to include chilled water cooling systems, clean heat and power systems, boiler plant heating systems, and industrial refrigeration systems.

And while those advances have helped push business, the re-engineering of the company's culture has truly made a world of difference. Ever the coach, Hurlbert tips his cap to his people for helping drive a culture that values and respects the contribution of each employee. To help drive that home, TAS has come up with six core values: integrity, safety, customer passion, innovation, teamwork and growth. Hurlbert lives the values daily to help set the tone for his team, and the response is a company where employees feel valued enough to share ideas and show passion. So while he may not be pacing in front of the bench and calling plays, Hurlbert has worked hard to create a group of employees that work as a team. <<

**HOW TO REACH:** Turbine Air Systems Ltd., (713) 877-8700 or [www.tas.com](http://www.tas.com)

POWER & UTILITIES

**FINALIST**

**MIKE DONOVAN**  
principal  
Heat Transfer Solutions Inc.



## Winds of change

How Mike Donovan changed the marketplace to grow Heat Transfer Solutions

**M**ike Donovan picked up a clever mantra early in his career that has helped him shape Heat Transfer Solutions Inc.: Good is the enemy of the best.

That mantra has helped drive Donovan every day, as he wakes up each day wondering how he, as principal of the exclusive McQuay supplier in Southeast and Central Texas, can better create solutions for his clients.

So when HTS came to Houston in 2001, Donovan realized his product didn't have a great reputation in Texas because of previous suppliers. So he worked to recreate trust by incorporating market-changing concepts like offering five-year parts and labor warranties, presenting clients with customized sales terms and incentivizing his sales force with top-notch compensation plans.

By 2002, HTS had grown to become a full-fledged solutions provider of equipment design, maintenance and operation, and the company began to invest largely in HVAC parts and added internal departments focused on building controls and service and parts sales. The growth continued in 2004 when, on a tight budget, the company added a service component offering aftermarket parts storage and distribution, client consignment of parts, and establishing a marketing presence. As a result, the company continued to offer more and more services and expertise to customers.

All this growth came at a great risk, but Donovan had his mind set on being the best, so the company took on the debt and has begun to build the McQuay brand into a name customers can trust in Texas. So while it would have been good enough for Donovan and his employees to be good, they have continuously taken the steps to become the best in the industry. As a result, Donovan has overseen growth of more than 5,000 percent since he took over the McQuay brand in Texas. <<

**HOW TO REACH:** Heat Transfer Solutions Inc., (832) 328-1010 or [www.htseng.com](http://www.htseng.com)

POWER & UTILITIES

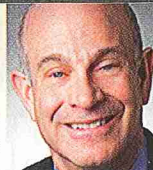
**FINALIST**

**MARCIE ZLOTNIK**  
co-founder, chairman and COO  
StarTex Power



**FINALIST**

**ROBERT ZLOTNIK**  
co-founder, president and CEO  
StarTex Power



## Felling giants

How Marcie and Robert Zlotnik have tackled the biggest in the industry to grow their company

**C**all the story of StarTex Power one of Robert and Marcie vs. Goliaths.

Marcie and Robert Zlotnik founded StarTex Power in 2004 with the goal of bringing the highest standards of customer service and competitive pricing to the retail electric industry. As a result, the two have had to create unique systems to tackle the big kids on the electric power block. Since Marcie, who serves as chairman and COO, and Robert, who serves as president and CEO, were unable to find any venture capital firm or angel investor for their start-up, the two initially drew no salary and invested more than \$300,000 of their own money to keep the business alive.

Along the way, they created a one-of-a-kind hedging program that locks in customers to the lowest rate and structured an innovative supply agreement that allows the company to hedge without tying up unreasonable amounts of capital resources. Additionally, they utilize a broker model to extend their sales force to a wider audience of residential and business customers. StarTex Power evaluates each customer and it proposes pricing to ensure that it only takes on profitable opportunities.

In order to better serve those customers, StarTex Power provides simple, clear and easy-to-understand invoices that show the electricity rate promised by StarTex Power and the actual usage — something that greatly differs from the industry practice of a nearly incomprehensible charging rate. And when customers do have questions, StarTex Power makes responding its No. 1 priority. In fact, both Zlotniks list their e-mail addresses on the company Web site.

As a result, the company hasn't just become a customer service example, it has also felled the Goliaths and grown into a success worthy of a story all its own. <<

**HOW TO REACH:** StarTex Power, (713) 357-2800 or [www.startexpower.com](http://www.startexpower.com)