

# FIRM PROFILE

## DAGOSTINO ELECTRONIC SERVICES, INC.



**W**hen Bob Dagostino was a child, he often spent Saturdays at the Buhl Planetarium on Pittsburgh's North Side. There, he marveled at the wondrous displays—seeing, touching, and learning about the fascinating technology before him. This sense of wonder fueled his interest in technology and electronics. That spark would ignite a hobby, a career, and, finally, a full-fledged company.

Today, Bob Dagostino is founder and president of Dagostino Electronic Services (DES), a full-service technology integrator in Pittsburgh. With its headquarters at a converted Pittsburgh public school building and about 120 people on staff, DES creates customized solutions involving technological needs and applications for all types of businesses. Like the technology that it works with, DES has grown, changed, and evolved throughout the years.

In its early days, Dagostino Electronic Services provided infrastructure and wiring needs to set up telephone systems. That was in the 1970s, and, needless to say, technology and the ways that people communicate have come a long way.

Soon after, computers, in all their bulk, began to emerge. "When computers started to come around, they were pretty much stand-alone devices," Dagostino recalls. "People were carrying disks to printers to print and things like that. So, networks became an essential need for any business to function."

DES began to work on creating networks for businesses, educational institutions, and other clients. In the late 1980s, DES teamed up with IBM and worked on creating a unified network for Carnegie Mellon University, allowing its students, faculty, and staff to connect.

As the years and decades passed, technology changed. The devices, systems, and gear that DES worked on would change too. But its focus on technology would not waiver.

"Our focus has always been in technology—how can we infuse technology into businesses to improve their business

outcomes?" Dagostino says. "We were never just satisfied with doing the wires and pliers portion of it. We always had a desire to dig into the active electronics that hung on to the end of those wires, be it telephones, computers, or data switches."

DES's extensive portfolio of telecommunications and technology includes work with multimedia and digital signage, security and surveillance systems, communications channels, and much more. Today, DES stays on the leading edge of tech and technological developments that can improve business operations. This includes exploring and developing emerging technologies in cybersecurity, the Internet of Things, Power over Ethernet lighting, and even Li-Fi, a cutting-edge system that uses light to transmit data.

When working directly with technology and electronics, change is constant. In terms of tech, staying relevant isn't so much the issue, but staying on top of tech development is essential.

"My job is to stay on the forefront of those technologies. That's my passion," Dagostino says. "We love what we do here. The team that we've built over decades here has always had the mindset of what's next and how can we stay relevant in providing a great service for customers and keeping their organizations ahead of the curve."

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has reshaped and even deepened our relationship with technology. It has also emphasized connectivity, Dagostino says, and has led us to adopt measures like distance learning, telehealth, and remote conferencing.

"I feel that we moved probably a decade in a matter of a year and a half or two years in accepting that digital world that we now are living in," he says.

At the onset of the pandemic, the question on every company's mind suddenly became, how well can we connect from home? People also wondered if the same technologies used at work could now be available to use from home. In terms of companies and their relationship with technology, the pandemic has tested their readiness to be nimble and to adapt to remote and digital transformation. For many businesses, the pandemic-induced focus on connectivity underscores its necessity in the broader picture.

"When I grew up, if you were going to start a business it was all about location, location, location," Dagostino says. "That used to be what it was. And today it's more about connectivity."

In terms of locations for connectivity, Pittsburgh is an ideal city for a company like DES that is so focused on technology. As

Dagostino says, the region's rebranding and embrace of tech-sector jobs, services, and companies makes for an exciting time to be working with technology. What was once a steel town is now home to robotics, autonomous vehicles, and revolutionary medical therapies.

"We've evolved from the Industrial Revolution that made Pittsburgh what it was. Today, we are in a technology revolution," Dagostino says.

DES is proud to be the preferred technology provider of the Pittsburgh Steelers. One of the company's largest ongoing projects has been providing technology solutions and systems support for Heinz Field since 2000.

"We built the infrastructure necessary for that venue to have everything that they have now, like the fan experience of wireless access, to the hundreds of miles of cable necessary for broadcasting," Dagostino says.

A stadium is so much more than an open field surrounded by seats and cheering fans—beneath the surface, it's a technological marvel. It takes real technological precision and planning to enable ticketless entry, install some 900 Wi-Fi access points, connect broadcast cameras, and even permit viewers at home to see those digital yellow lines that appear across the field. For more than two decades, Dagostino says that DES "has done everything necessary to connect everything to everything" at Heinz Field.

When DES began working at Heinz Field, setting up networks was a priority. So, the team worked to install great lengths of fiber optics, copper wire, audio cables, and other network components – more than 240 miles of cabling ensure that the stadium's technology delivers a flawless gameday experience. Antennas, RFID tracking technology, and a bevy of other components would all be added in over time. And since technology never stands still, when new devices and capabilities come along, DES gets to work. Next up will be enabling stadium-wide 5G access.


Looking forward, Dagostino says that many businesses are focused on green initiatives and finding ways to optimize energy consumption. Just as pressing, analytics and data governance integral to building optimization - and many other fields - will be increasingly important. Increasingly more devices and processes will generate increasingly more data that can be harnessed for insight and analytics.

"Analytics is going to play a big part. To be able to consume all of that data we are going to be overwhelmed with it as humans," Dagostino says. "So, we need to rely on artificial intelligence and machine learning to be able to leverage all of that data and take out the noise and just get those key objectives that are important to our businesses."

With all that data, it will be important to help businesses develop a strategic technology plan to integrate "Internet of Things" sensors with operational and business optimization tools and to make data useful.

"To normalize the data that we're generating and to catalog it properly is critical to being able to parse that data and make intelligent decisions based upon that," Dagostino says.

Suffice it to say, there's still plenty to come in terms of technology that will further revolutionize companies' capabilities. The development of new technology isn't stopping. And, so it seems, neither is Bob Dagostino.

"As long as we are being challenged and we've got the people that we have and the relationships with customers and manufacturers and things, it's a lot of fun," Dagostino says. "People ask me when I'm going to retire, and I just tell them, 'When I stop having fun.'" 



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