

SkillsforEnergy

CAREER CASE STUDY



NAME: Gabby Waterman

JOB: Skills for Energy Manager

COMPANY: East of England Energy Group

Can you describe your current role and the skills you use to undertake it?

As Skills for Energy Manager, I work with the Head of Skills to promote the SfE programme. This focuses on increasing the diversity of the energy industry and ensuring that there is an ongoing pipeline of talent into it. We undertake a range of engagement activities, such as school career fairs, classroom activities and working with the Job Centre to increase the number of people considering working in the energy industry. The main skills I need are strong interpersonal and communication skills, as I work with a wide range of people daily. It is also important in this role to be enthusiastic and passionate about what we do to inspire others.

How did you get to where you are today?

I studied BSc Geography at the UEA and I have recently completed an MSc in Climate Change: Environment, Science and Policy at King's College London. During my time at UEA I undertook a virtual summer internship with a large offshore wind developer, in which I focused on the social aspects of building a wind farm, such as the benefits to the local community and boosting skills. This is what sparked my interest in the less technical aspects of renewable energy, leading me to complete my MSc dissertation on the challenges to building an offshore wind workforce in coastal towns. This made me realise I would like to pursue a career which helps address the challenges, working towards increasing diversity and better engagement between industry and education.

Is there anything you would do differently?

I'm happy with how my journey has gone, however I think if I was to do it again I would've joined LinkedIn and started connecting with people earlier on, as it's a great way to stay up to date with the industry, and see any opportunities that may be arising. I would also say, although I had a great internship experience, I would've thought about internships from an earlier stage at university. You can often complete them throughout any year of university and I think they are a great way to gain experiences and skills you may not obtain through just education.

What do you enjoy about your current role?

I enjoy feeling like I am making a positive difference to people and the industry. If at an event we even get just one person leaving the event considering a role in the industry, I think it is a success. I also enjoy the breadth of what we do, we work with a range of different people and everyday is varied which keeps it exciting.

If you could give your younger self one piece of advice, what would it be and why?

To give yourself more credit and believe in your abilities, you will always celebrate your friends' achievements, so you need to do the same for yourself! By doubting yourself or even just not recognising what you're capable of, you will close off opportunities without even realizing it. Be confident, be bold and say yes to opportunities that come your way as you never know what they may lead to.

What challenges/successes have you experienced so far in your career or pathway to your career?

I have found on occasions that as I am a woman and I am not as technically minded, I have been perceived to not be as suited for a career in the energy industry, nor taken serious enough. This has at times made me feel like I have had to prove myself more, however for me personally these experiences have only been scarce. Successes include being recently shortlisted for a 'Rising Star' award within the energy industry and achieving strong academic grades.

What attracted you to the energy industry?

I was attracted to the energy industry because it is going through such an important, exciting change at a global level, but with so many opportunities right on our doorstep here in the East of England. We need to reach net-zero by 2050 to help tackle climate change, so the industry is not going to stop growing, and over the coming years the opportunities will be endless.

What does the future look like for females within the energy industry?

I think it is looking positive! There are still evident challenges, but I am confident that it is heading in the right direction and more people are realising the genuine importance of a diverse workforce. Changes are already being made to make the industry more inclusive, and I hope this continues further so over the coming years we will see more and more females thrive in the energy industry.

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