



INFORM, INSPIRE, AND MOTIVATE with **JILL BAUERSMITH**

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What inspired you to join the energy industry?

Originally, I was inspired to join the energy industry because I wanted to know more about one of the industries that make life happen. When I joined, I really did not know much about energy and all of the amazing parts and pieces. From my naïve perspective, there were poles and wires that magically electrified my life. Living in South Florida, I had no idea about natural gas or propane usage, especially in the state of Florida. A zest for learning was my biggest motivating factor. Eight years later, I am so thankful that I started down this journey!

Can you tell us about your current role?

In my current role, I am incredibly lucky to work with some of the best people around! I get the amazing opportunity to lead innovation daily by directing the efforts of the Energy Logistics Group, the Operations Technical Services Group, and the Business Process Development Team. My units are currently working on a number of essential projects as well as continuing their daily roles. Personally, I guide these critical projects, create a vision for my teams, as well as assist with the future of the Company by managing our capacity portfolio, both upstream and downstream. I am the go-to person for transportation, process, and technology changes for the Florida division. I could not do this without a devoted team. I am constantly inspired and invigorated by their determination.

Additionally, I work out of the Florida division corporate office in Amelia Island. Because of this, I am afforded the opportunity to assist with some activities that might not necessarily be in my “normal” domain. I love wearing multiple hats while learning from some of the finest role models that the energy industry has to offer.

Before you entered this field, had you ever considered that it would hold such potential for an accounting professional?

I definitely did not know what I was getting myself into, but I could not be happier about how it turned out! When the opportunity was put in front of me to leave my internal audit role and join the operations group, I was apprehensive, but I love a challenge and have a relentless spirit. This was the point where I became an Energy Logistics Analyst, and I fell in love with learning about energy. Once I learned about the transportation of natural gas, I had a thirst to learn more about all aspects of our business. Having proven myself to be results oriented, I was afforded the opportunity to explore different aspects of the industry, one project at a time, through my Business Process Development Team. We get the chance to constantly study the business from our folks who love what they do!

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What is an idea, a motto, an insight, a person, or an experience that you feel has motivated you along the way as your career progressed?

I have a very supportive group of people standing with me - my family, friends, and coworkers, who inspire and motivate me on a daily basis. Additionally, there is a quote that has helped shape my career: “[t]he most dangerous phrase in the language is, “we’ve always done it this way.”” In order to stay ahead in any industry, a company needs to look at everything they do and evaluate if those current steps are going to be what catapults them into the future or what drives them into failure. In today’s world with the technology we have at our fingertips, everything is constantly evolving. If companies do not question if what they are doing is still the right thing, they will be left behind. I love getting the chance to help shape the future of the energy industry!

What is the most memorable lesson that you have learned in the industry?

Thank a lineman! Moving to Amelia Island about two years ago, I had the opportunity to watch our electric operations restore power to the island twice after a hurricane. Each year I was lucky to be a part of the support team for those linemen by helping to coordinate logistics. Our crews work hard all year long, but there is something remarkable about watching them work extraordinarily long days, nights, and weekends during a restoration effort. As a customer waiting for power to come back, the effort that it takes from these men and women is not always your first thought. Seeing this angle of operations makes you appreciate everything tenfold.

You oversee a number of high importance projects. In rising as a woman leader in energy, what specific lessons would you share about the experience related to leading such projects?

I have learned one specific lesson that I believe applies to anyone when it comes to leading a project – Don’t take things personally. I know most professionals in the business space are aware that business is business; however, projects can be more difficult. The difference between a project and a routine activity, for me, is that projects have a way of consuming you, not just while at work, but throughout your free time. Many people can get attached to their projects, which makes sense, as buy in is a critical step in the process. It’s important to remember, however, that it is just a step. If for some reason the project is scratched, you have learned valuable lessons and insight along the way. If it veers to a different direction than expected, it is likely because the company needed to be agile to keep up with requirements from outside forces. Do not take it personally. It has nothing to do with the work you have accomplished.

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What advice would you give to other women who aspire to join or are just starting out in the energy industry?

Be authentic, be open, and ask questions!

Being your true self (not a vision of what you think you should be) is an important aspect of being a woman in the energy industry, as well as in being a leader. Authenticity creates deeper connections with your network which will assist in the shape of your career. It inspires engagement and creates trust. It’s the added personal connection that makes my life enjoyable, both at home and at work.

Being open-minded is critically important. Just because you have always pictured things to be one way doesn’t mean they need to stay in that picture. Be open to suggestions from people in all levels. You never know where the next big idea might come from. In my career, being open-minded has led to many unexpected opportunities that I would not change for the world.

Always ask questions. Never be afraid to learn more about the variety of subjects that come your way. Do not be intimidated by others that are smarter than you. Perhaps they are looking for the perfect person to impart their knowledge on. Be sure to listen to their explanation. I have learned so much by asking questions rather than leaving discussions with regret.

Describe the energy industry using one word, and share with us why you chose this word.

“ENERGIZING.”

I know that might sound a bit corny, but this industry gives life! We literally get the chance to impact lives on a daily basis. We supply the world with what is needed to make life happen. At this time in the industry, as everything is evolving, from the creation and exploration of energy sources to the savviness of our consumers, we are being kept on our toes. It is energizing and invigorating to get to be a part of the energy revolution! We have a chance to question everything in order to prepare for the future. It is an industry of endless possibilities!

The annual Florida's Women in Energy Leadership Forum (FWELF) aims to promote opportunities in the energy industry by recognizing the success that women leaders in the energy industry have demonstrated in growing Florida's economy and diversifying an already tremendous workforce.

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