



# The Power Source

## Igniting the Future of Florida



June 2020

**Power Profile: Danielle Mulligan**

Assistant Vice President

Marketing and Corporate Communications

Chesapeake Utilities Corporation

**Congratulations on your recent promotion to Assistant Vice President of Marketing and Corporate Communications for Chesapeake Utilities Corporation. What lessons have you held on to since starting your career at CPK's subsidiary Florida Public Utilities that are preparing you to face the challenges of today?**

First of all, thank you, Lila. It is a great honor to be featured in this month's Power Profile. Stepping into this new role during a global pandemic, economic turmoil and social unrest has certainly come with its challenges. The importance of clear and effective communications has never been more important than during this time.

I began my career at Florida Public Utilities in 2010 with a strong background in sales and marketing, but little experience in the energy industry. I was extremely fortunate to be surrounded by extraordinary thought leaders such as Jeff Householder, Kevin Webber, Aleida Socarras and others who encourage employees to share innovative ideas and never shy away from new challenges.

As I gained experience in the industry, I continually stepped outside my comfort zone and rarely said no to an opportunity to try something new. Even if I wasn't experienced in a particular business area, project or task, I always made sure to find the right people to collaborate with who were willing to combine talents, and together, deliver desired results. This quality is not unique to me but inherent in the organization in which I work.

Leadership has instilled in us the importance of resiliency, creativity and innovation: All of these values are at the heart of who we are. The guiding principles that have helped me grow in my career include collaboration, the hunger to learn new things and the willingness to trade perfectionism for forward movement.

In Nelson Mandela's words, "I never lose! I either win, or I learn!" I am grateful to have received the guidance and support of so many incredible leaders and co-workers. I look forward to new opportunities for learning and accomplishing great things together.



# The Power Source

## Igniting the Future of Florida

**As you think about your association work (SGA, FNGA) and now your increased responsibility with the Chesapeake Utilities family of companies, what do you see as the natural gas industry's greatest challenges going forward?**

Today, we see our country struggling with a current economic crisis, a global health pandemic and the consequences of social injustices and inequality. In our current state, we cannot continue to operate "business as usual". To be successful, we need our communities to be thriving and sustainable. Our industry, like every other, has an obligation to do our part to enact widespread change for the betterment of society. This means developing impactful Corporate Responsibility programs that create measurable results that are relevant to our core businesses.

We also need to eliminate the perception that natural gas is a bridge fuel. We are so much more than that. We need strategic communications that promote non-traditional sources, such as creating renewable natural gas from waste, without diminishing the importance of the traditional distribution services that our customers depend on. There are many underserved communities that would benefit from having energy choice. Natural gas expansion is needed and wanted, therefore barriers to our expansion need to be eliminated in order to facilitate serving more customers. Finally, we need passionate people who understand the concept of the triple bottom line, people, planet and profit, to come into our industry, innovate and work with us to create a better, cleaner future.

**The importance of communication during times of crisis cannot be overstated. What are some of the best practices you would share in the balance of relaying information while fostering calm and professionalism?**

When relaying information in a professional manner, crisis communications have to be strongly rooted in integrity, accountability and transparency. By using these key guiding principles, our leaders are able to express themselves clearly and consistently. We have found that employees appreciate a direct line of communication with leadership. Each week our CEO, Jeff Householder, conducts an all-employee call to provide updates and critical information to our employees. After the call, we distribute a survey that provides employee feedback to our Senior Leadership Team, which they then use to formulate action plans that keep employees reassured, informed and engaged. Best practices should always include transparency, consistency, the willingness to listen, and just as importantly, the willingness to take action.

**For young people pursuing a career with the energy industry, are there new opportunities in the areas of communications and/or marketing? And if so, what is the best skill set they could have to bring the "A" game with them?**

Young communication professionals entering the energy industry should pay close attention to the areas of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Environmental, Social and Corporate Governance (ESG). Innovative business leaders see Corporate Responsibility (CR) as a way to create shared value for society and the communities their businesses serve. CSR, ESG, CR, and Sustainability are all different names for the same strategic discipline used to guide operations and communication plans that help responsible companies effect positive change in society and the environment. If communicating about real notable change is your passion, pursuing a career in the energy industry is where you want to be.



# The Power Source

## Igniting the Future of Florida

To bring your A-game, you have to be a good storyteller, so come to the table with creative ideas, innovative ways to solve problems and the ability to deliver results. Don't be afraid to bring new insights and opinions with you, but remember that success is about the relationships you build. There are a lot of smart and talented people in the world, but what sets you apart is your ability to inspire, motivate and be helpful to the people around you. Seemingly impossible endeavors are rarely accomplished alone; they are accomplished by combining efforts, talents and hard work.

### **As the world continues working remotely due to the coronavirus pandemic, what communications challenges and opportunities do you see?**

One of the biggest challenges, with the majority of our staff working remotely, is how to maintain our family-like culture. We need to have the right tools to stay connected, productive, and in good communication. We recognize not all of our employees are comfortable working from home, while others have expressed a preference for it and are experiencing increased productivity. This presents us with both a challenge and an opportunity. With the right technology tools and management processes, we can transition our new work environment into something that is practical and productive for everyone.

Technology will continue to change rapidly, but the latest tools are not necessarily the best. We must be methodical and thoughtful about onboarding the right solutions to ensure working at home is as effective as or even more effective than in-office environments. And we need to provide the correct training so that we leverage these tools to their fullest extents.

### **You are part of your company's Women in Energy (WIE) working group. What are the benefits of having such an internal group?**

As an attendee of the first Florida Women in Energy Leadership Forum in 2016, I remember being enamored by the leaders who took the stage that day. As they spoke about their life experiences, career progressions and work-life balance challenges, I found their stories surprisingly relatable – and very inspiring. I began to envision the type of leader I wanted to be and the skillsets I'd need to one day earn my place on a stage with such accomplished people. I remember speaking with one of my company's executive leaders, Cheryl Martin, about how much I still had to learn in order to progress in my career. Cheryl's words that day set me on an incredible journey of self-development and leadership transformation. She said, "Danielle, everybody is good at something, and you are very good at what you do. Dive deeper into the skills that set you apart, ask for support, and know who you can count on to help you get where you want to go." Today, Cheryl is the Executive Sponsor of Chesapeake Utilities Corporation's Women in Energy program. In her 30-plus years with the company, she has inspired many men and women along the way. The benefit of having a WIE program is that it gives aspiring women the opportunity to align with accomplished leaders in order to foster personal and professional growth. Together, we elevate one another, cheer for each other's successes, and appreciate all the men and women that have helped us along the way.