



Elaine White on the energy evolution and the importance of critical thinking

Deloitte is proud to introduce the next profile in our series of women in the energy industry. By highlighting the stories of women in energy, we hope to help facilitate meaningful conversations, create connections, and showcase the myriad of opportunities available to enter and thrive in the energy industry.



Elaine White is a principal with Deloitte Consulting LLP, in the US Strategy practice, more specifically Technology Strategy & Business Transformation. Elaine joined Deloitte with a 20-year professional career, previously working as a management consultant and then a senior IT leader/deputy CIO within the energy industry. Elaine advises business and IT leaders on how to translate their strategic choices into a digital agenda that can help increase revenue, reduce operational costs, and improve human performance. She brings digital transformation to core operations for asset-intensive organizations. Elaine has spent the past few years helping organizations define their digital ambitions, close their business and IT capability maturity gaps, and establish pragmatic roadmaps that scale for value.

Elaine White
Principal
Deloitte Consulting LLP

A full-circle consulting career

While Elaine's career has been directly focused on the energy industry, she's had a more circuitous path navigating a professional career that started in consulting, moved into industry, and then back to consulting. While in industry, she earned street credibility by working closely with business leaders in refineries, as well as chemical and utility plants, as part of optimization and six sigma teams. It was there where she developed deep relationships with the shop floor and business teams to understand how technology could hinder or help daily operations.

Upon return to corporate IT, she leveraged her experiences to develop fit-for-purpose process and technology solutions that yielded positive business outcomes. After several business and IT secondments, Elaine came to the realization that her true calling was to return to consulting where she could influence change more effectively and contribute an insider's point of view.

As an experienced hire returning to consulting, Elaine's challenge was in quickly building teams and determining which colleagues to go to market with. She realized the importance of developing an internal network and developed an intentional plan to address gaps in her knowledge. She is known to say that "in consulting, your network's network is your network, so pick wisely."

Elaine believes that in today's world, perception is reality. She feels that how she shows up, what she has to say, and how she says it can make a difference in how she is perceived and if she is invited to return. She encourages female professionals to invest in themselves and their careers and work with trusted advisers and mentors to help them identify areas for improvement.

"Courage comes by being brave; fear comes by holding back."

– Pubilius Syrus

Shaping the future of energy

Elaine works to help her clients shape their technology agenda in an uncertain world. This includes helping them make strategic choices on where to focus based on the market, industry trends, competitor moves, and their own company's aspirations and goals.

The energy evolution is here and will influence companies' business and digital strategies. Organizations should have a response for how they are going to evolve for customers, society, and shareholders, and these are all distinct personas that tend to require a unique consideration and response.

When Elaine speaks with C-suite executives, she shares three focus areas she believes

they should be concerned with as leaders. One is how they are recruiting, upskilling, and retaining key talent needed for the future. The second is how they are ensuring that they will get a rate of return on their digital investments. Lastly, how they are determining which capabilities should be built in-house and which make sense to shift to more well-suited partners.

On the power of critical thinking

For people joining the energy industry, Elaine advises to be intellectually curious and to self-teach. Elaine advises, "Don't wait for someone to train you; do it yourself and ask questions." In addition to on-the-job training, she expects team members to be critical thinkers. Elaine suggests subscribing to a wide range of resources to keep up with, and ahead, of the market. Additionally, she encourages her teams to learn the industry and ask probing questions to understand situational nuance. Within the industry, different forms of energy are needed to support a global economy in a responsible and affordable way.

"Learn how to sit uncomfortably. It will bring about new ways of thinking."

Elaine White: The lightning round

Women in Energy

Describing herself in three words: Positive, perceptive, persistent

Favorite food or drink: Chocolate peanut butter overload ice cream

Favorite place to travel: Cusco, Peru—the launching spot for the trek to Machu Picchu

One thing on her bucket list: Throw the ceremonial first pitch at a professional baseball game



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