



Marlene Motyka on gaining mentors, finding confidence, and reigniting passions

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.



Marlene Motyka is Deloitte's US Renewable Energy leader and a principal in the Financial Advisory practice, but she didn't get there on her own. Learn how her career has continued to change and how mentors have helped her along the way.

Marlene Motyka
Deloitte & Touche LLP

Entering the energy industry

Marlene Motyka had a career change before she ever had a career.

After getting an undergraduate degree in mechanical engineering from Lehigh University, she landed a job at an architectural engineering firm, getting her first exposure to the power sector.

"My dad had a PhD in electrical engineering, and I was always better at math and science, so I gravitated toward that," she says. But her career story was far from over.

"In my first job, I was doing some mechanical design work on a nuclear power plant before it was up and running," she says. "But ultimately I decided I didn't want to stay in engineering because I thought I was only seeing one side of the picture."

She was on the technical side, but wanted to get exposure to the financial side, so she went back to school to get her MBA in finance from Rutgers University.

After her MBA, she got a job at Deloitte, where she valued power and utility assets. "I was immediately entrenched in the sector," she says. "I was really excited that I could use my engineering knowledge and leverage my MBA to work with clients."

Twenty-five years later, she's still working at Deloitte—but the rest is far from history. And a lot has changed.

"When I first started at Deloitte, I had the opportunity to travel the globe related to the valuation work I was doing," she says. "So, I got to go to Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Chile, and all over Europe. It was a career highlight."

Being always ready to pivot—and never afraid to network

The work Motyka loved abruptly came to an end about seven years into her career, when the IRS made a change that eliminated the need for her work.

"I had to pivot along with many of my colleagues," she says. "I had this knowledge that I could no longer use in the way I did before." So, she focused her efforts on developing relationships and starting fresh in the US power and utilities sector.

"What really helped get me through that time was that I had a good network within Deloitte," she says. "I am so thankful for that support system."

Throughout her career, Motyka has seen the importance of having both mentors and sponsors.

"A mentor is someone who can give you great career advice, but a sponsor is someone who can really pound the table for you," she says. "My first sponsor was someone who told me he thought I could be a partner at Deloitte. I had never thought of myself that way before."

Motyka says it was helpful to know that somebody had this confidence in her and would continue to help her develop her skills. This person was so supportive of her that when he retired, she was in a bit of a shock, realizing that she still had mentors, but no longer had her sponsor.

"So, I think people need to always be aware that you want to have multiple mentors, but you also want to have multiple sponsors, because they can help you at different points in time in your career," Motyka adds. "The more people you have as sounding boards and resources, the better off you're going to be."

Having confidence in yourself, no matter what

Motyka says that, growing up, she always had confidence in areas in which she was comfortable. "If I felt like I had 'been there, done that,' I was confident," she says. It was in the areas where she had less experience that her confidence was never as high. But that all changed thanks to her mentor.

"In areas where I didn't have exposure, I am not sure I had confidence there," she says. "But to be a partner, you need to say I can do XYZ and feel confident that you can do those things even if you're not doing them now."

When Motyka was first approached to be an LCSP (Lead Client Service Professional), her mentor at the time, who was leading the industry sector, said she would be perfect for this role. "I said, 'really?' I hadn't thought of using my skill set in that way.

The fact that he had confidence in me when I hadn't been in that role before really made a difference and made me look at myself in a different way."

Motyka's advice for gaining confidence (especially for women in the industry) is to think about all the things you've accomplished in your career that you never thought you could have done.

"Sometimes going down new paths is scary," she says. "But know you always have lots of things to draw on."

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Continuing to find her passions

Fourteen years ago, Motyka started something new herself: her first renewable energy project. "I had done valuations of other power plants, so I thought, 'OK, I can do this one,'" she says. "So, I did it and I found it so interesting, and I felt like it was really important for the future. It revitalized me in terms of the work I was doing."

She says it was cutting-edge at the time and that it was so exciting to be at the forefront of a new industry that was going to continue to grow and develop.

"It ignited my passion for the sector," she says. When asked about her advice for women entering in the industry, Motyka thinks being open to new opportunities is key.

"Sometimes people think of the utilities as a bit slow and not progressive, but that's just not true," she says. "There is so much going on, and it's such an exciting time, so you should always be on the lookout for something new."

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Marlene Motyka: The lightning round

Women in Energy

Describing herself in three words: Collaborative, engaging, and hardworking

Favorite food or drink: My husband's homemade pizza

Favorite place to travel: France

One thing on her bucket list: I would love to take my kids and husband to Australia and New Zealand

Where is the first place you'll go now that you can travel again?:
Go to see my sisters in Massachusetts

What's one thing you'll miss from quarantine and one thing you won't?: I'll miss seeing my kids and husband every day and getting to run and walk outside during the day. I won't miss just being in front of my screen for hours on end.

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