

Career in Energy Management

The Energy Managers Association aims to encourage and enable more professionals to enter the world of energy management and environmental roles. Being an energy manager may not seem like the most obvious career for many. The EMA has taken on a challenge of changing the perception of energy management, by raising the sector's profile and sharing its members' – leading energy managers – insights into their career progress and achievements. In this issue, we have asked Ashley O'Neill, the Senior Energy and Compliance Manager at Hilton, about her career in energy management.

What made you choose energy management as a career?



At University, I studied Meteorology and Climate Science, which stemmed from a passion for the Environment and Climate as well as a love for Maths! During my degree, I developed a huge interest in

Energy, particularly its relationship with Climate Change. This led me to undertaking an internship at the Department of Energy and Climate Change – it was then I knew that the Energy Industry was where I wanted to begin my career. Four years ago, after I graduated, I was delighted to obtain an entry level role at Hilton as Energy Analyst. The role provided everything I was looking for, combining my passion for data analytics with my interest in energy management perfectly. Working for a large company like Hilton means the work we do can have a huge impact, which is a definite highlight for me.

What does your role at your organisation entail?

Sitting within the Engineering Department for Europe, Middle East and Africa, I am responsible for energy procurement and contracting for hotels across the region – covering over 250 hotels in over 50 countries. Within this, I carry out performance tracking, forecasting, budget and target setting for both

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utility consumption and costs. It's essential that we focus on reducing our environmental impact, whilst delivering value for our owners. I'm also responsible for managing environmental compliance, legislation and reporting for the group.

What is the most exciting part of your job?

The most exciting part of my job is without a doubt working with a fantastic team of like minded individuals all focused on achieving our goals to reduce energy, water and carbon whilst delivering exceptional guest experience and value for our owners.

There is a real family feel within both my team and at Hilton as an organisation. Each day I am inspired by those around me – creating a caring culture where we can thrive together.

What is your biggest achievement to date?

One of my biggest achievements has to be the quick progression I've had within Hilton from Energy Analyst to





Senior Energy & Compliance Manager in under 4 years, but I'm also particularly proud of some of the external recognition I've received within the industry.

At the EMEX 2018 event, I was thrilled to have the opportunity to join the panel discussion on Empowering Women in Energy. The Energy Management industry can often feel very male dominated and something I'm extremely passionate about is empowering others and encouraging more women to join the industry.

I'm also a part of the edie 30 under 30 group for 2019, which allows me to bring an energy management and engineering perspective to the group and highlight the importance of diversity in our sector.

What was the most exciting project that you worked on and why?

Since my role is much more analytical than hands-on Energy Management, for me the most exciting project I've worked on is developing a dynamic and functional Excel Reporting Tool. We use this to forecast hotel utility costs and consumption, and share it with our finance teams on a monthly basis. This involves collating data from numerous sources; financial plan, hotel level forecasts, market costs, invoices, as well as projected and half-hourly actual consumption across more than 60 hotels.

This report is now in its 3rd year and developing in both features and accuracy on an ongoing basis. From this I've also had the responsibility of compiling utility budgeting advisories for our hotels across EMEA.

What is the most frustrating part of your job?

Working in such a large organisation, it would probably be the time it can take to get from idea to implementation. However, this is due to the preparation required to ensure that any ideas are well thought through so that roll out can be consistent across multiple locations. This means that when an idea is implemented, the ripple effect and impact we can have is significant.

If you had the opportunity to change one thing that would make your job easier, what would you change?

For me, I've seen so much change in the industry in a very short space of time with climate change and environmental issues now such a focus in every day life and businesses

becoming more aware and engaged in the impact they can have. Hilton is the first major hotel company to institute science-based targets, pledging to cut its environmental footprint in half by 2030 by reducing Scope 1 and Scope 2 carbon intensity by 61%. While we have made good progress to date, in order to achieve this, we need everyone to be on board.

In Hilton's first 100 years, nearly 10 million Team Members have welcomed more than 3 billion guests, therefore the one thing I would focus on would be getting everyone to be an ambassador of achieving our goals. That way, we can make our impact as significant as possible.

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What is the best approach to attract women into energy management sector?

As I've mentioned, this is something I'm really passionate about and I believe it's important to share our success stories and become role models, not just to those interested in energy management already, but to those who haven't thought about this as a career option. For those people, hearing our stories might spark an interest in pursuing this path, and that's where we can make a real difference.

At Hilton, we celebrate International Women in Engineering Day every year to engage our female team members to be proud of their achievements.

This is important not just for women but also to encourage young people to explore a career in the energy management sector. Exploring opportunities to engage with students either through school and university outreach or offering work experience and internships can also have a really positive impact.

What advice would you give to someone looking to become an energy manager?

If you're looking for a career that's varied, challenging, exciting and gives you the opportunity to make a difference then energy management is for you! Bring your passion, ideas and willingness to learn and the role can really be what you make of it. From Engineering to Sustainability issues and from Energy Data Analytics and Environmental Compliance – it's a growing industry that requires enthusiasm, the confidence to ask questions and strong transferable skills such as decision making, communication and problem-solving.

What is the most absurd statement that you have heard in your job?

It has to be that climate change is a myth and not human induced!

What are your long-term motivations?

As mentioned, Hilton recently set bold targets to reduce its energy consumption. I believe that as an industry we need to collaborate even more, sharing best practice and setting challenging targets to make a difference and reduce our collective environmental impact. There's so much more we can learn from each other and I'm motivated by the opportunity we have to make a difference. My long-term motivation is to be a change maker, working with others to create innovative solutions and strategies to deliver these targets at Hilton.

It's down to us to pave the way for positive change and set an example for others and that's what makes this career so exciting in the long term.



THE EMA RECOGNISED ENERGY MANAGER

Professional status awarded for successfully demonstrating the knowledge and skills in energy management.

Does the EMA Recognised Energy Manager status highlight your credentials as an energy manager?



JOEL KIRBY

"Absolutely, and this is one of the main reasons I wanted to become a Recognised Energy Manager. I would like to think that this also helps me to demonstrate competency to key members of staff within my workplace. It has not been long since I got the status, but it has helped from a confidence point of view if nothing else, knowing that your knowledge has been validated and that you do know what you are talking about."

PAUL GRAHAM

"Yes. It demonstrates a level of competency and knowledge which I have used to assure my organisation of my abilities."



CHARLIE COX

"It is nice to have the official endorsement of the EMA, and I am sure that it will increase my profile both inside and outside of my organisation. My natural position is to think that it shouldn't matter what qualifications or recognition someone has, as long as they do a good job. However, in reality it is essential for an energy manager to be seen as credible by a broad spectrum of colleagues, in order to garner support for the important work that they do."

DEWI DAY

"I believe that an energy management training programme like this is an important aspect of my career development and has helped broaden my skillset. I have learnt a great deal from the modules that I completed as part of this programme as well as other professional training courses. Shortly after gaining the EMA Recognised Energy Manager status, I was recognised as a star performer in my department at QinetiQ. I also believe that having a recognised energy management qualification can strengthen a CV and help future career progression."



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