

# An Ideal Match for my Core Values: My Career Journey



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An interview with Rebecca Marino, the recipient of the 2017 Young Energy Management Professional of the Year award in the Energy Management Awards.

## What inspired you to pursue a career in energy management and sustainability?

I've always been drawn to understanding how we impact the world around us. I wanted to know what changes we could make to reduce that impact, so when I saw how much energy usage was a major contributor to how we impact our environment (not only the type of energy but how efficiently we use it), I knew energy management and broader sustainability was the right path for me. My journey in this field feels like a natural fit for my values and personal drive to make a difference.

It all started with my studies. I chose Geography for my undergraduate degree, then pursued a master's in Environmental Protection and Management. These programmes gave me a foundation in sustainability principles, data collection and analysis, and opened me up to a network of likeminded people. After university, I spent a year working at marine conservation NGO in the Greek islands as an Environmental Scientist. There, I analysed the impact of small-scale fishing on marine ecosystems. A

main part of that role was working alongside local fishermen to encourage sustainable fishing, which taught me that sustainability thrives when people work together.

When I joined Tesco as an Energy Engagement Manager, I was excited to bring that collaborative spirit into a larger organisation. I worked with over 120 stores in Scotland, engaging teams on how they can adapt the way they work to save energy. After a year of working on the project our efforts were recognised with an Edie Sustainability Leaders Award in 2015 for Employee Engagement and Behaviour Change. From then, my role evolved to managing energy projects across the stores, responding to energy alerts, improving energy efficiency within in-store bakeries and handling climate change agreements. It was incredibly motivating to see how even small changes, when scaled across hundreds of stores, could make such a big impact.

**You won the EMA's Young Energy Management Professional in 2017 when working at Tesco. What did it mean for you and how was it received by the organisation?**

Winning the EMA Young Energy Management Professional award in 2017 was such an incredible honour—it felt like validation for the hard work I'd been putting into my role even when I still felt so new to the field. Personally, it was a huge confidence boost, and it encouraged me to continue sharing what I'd learned with others. On the organisational side, the recognition highlighted how impactful energy management could be.

The award helped me advance into a Work Level 2 position, which opened the door to new projects and larger-scale initiatives. It gave me visibility within Tesco, which early in my career meant I could connect with senior leaders and make a case for even bigger energy-saving initiatives. This award truly helped shape my path, providing the confidence and credibility to pursue more ambitious projects.

## Can you identify a particular influence that shaped your career in the industry?

I've been lucky to have mentors who really believed in me and their support made a huge difference. Early on, I sometimes felt like an outsider in a field with a lot

of engineers - I wasn't sure my background would be enough. But my mentors helped me see that there are many ways to approach energy management and that fresh perspectives are needed to drive change. Their encouragement to step out of my comfort zone and keep learning was invaluable. I wouldn't be where I am today without that trust and guidance.

**In your experience, what are the three most important skills energy management professionals need for their day-to-day job?**

- Data Analysis and Storytelling: Data is essential in energy management, but it's not just about collecting numbers. Turning data into insights that tell a story and reveal opportunities for improvement is where the magic happens. This skill has grown with technology and each new tool makes our analysis even more precise.
- Strategic Thinking: It's important to look beyond individual systems and consider the whole building, how people use it and how to balance comfort with efficiency. A strategic approach allows you to see where adjustments will have the most impact.
- Stakeholder Engagement and Behaviour Change: Getting people to care about energy efficiency is half the battle. Building a culture

around sustainable practices requires strong communication and an ability to motivate people to come along for the journey. Engaging teams at every level of an organisation makes long-term change possible.

**What do you think is the answer to a net zero world?**

A net-zero world will require a combination of innovation, collaboration and policy support. We need to shift to renewable energy, improve efficiency and embrace a circular economy. It's not just about reducing emissions but about creating systems that restore and regenerate. Achieving this will take cooperation across industries and communities, with strong policies to support these efforts.

**What energy management actions do you use in your personal life?**

Many of the practices I promote at work have flowed over into my personal life. I use a smart meter and tracking apps at home to understand my energy consumption, and find ways to reduce it. I also have solar panels, which allow me to generate green energy right at home. Simple changes, like running appliances (like washing machines and dishwashers) during off-peak hours, help lower demand on the grid.

In a broader sense, I try to embrace

sustainability in everyday life. For example, I've started sewing to repair clothes instead of throwing them out, which reduces waste and extends the life of what I already own. Each small choice adds up, and it's rewarding to see the positive impact in both my work and personal life.

**What are your aspirations for the future?**

I'd love to keep expanding my impact in the sustainability space and inspire others along the way. In my role now as an Energy & Sustainability Manager at CBRE, I work across various industries, which has given me the chance to learn and innovate in ways I never expected. Ultimately, I'd like to become a thought leader in sustainability, encouraging organisations and individuals to make meaningful changes.

Mentorship has been such a positive influence in my career, so I also hope to support the next generation of energy and sustainability professionals. Whether through formal programmes or simply by guiding colleagues who want to learn more. I want to pay forward the support I've received. Sustainability is a journey, and every person who joins adds new ideas and energy to the movement. It's an exciting field and I can't wait to see where it takes us all.

