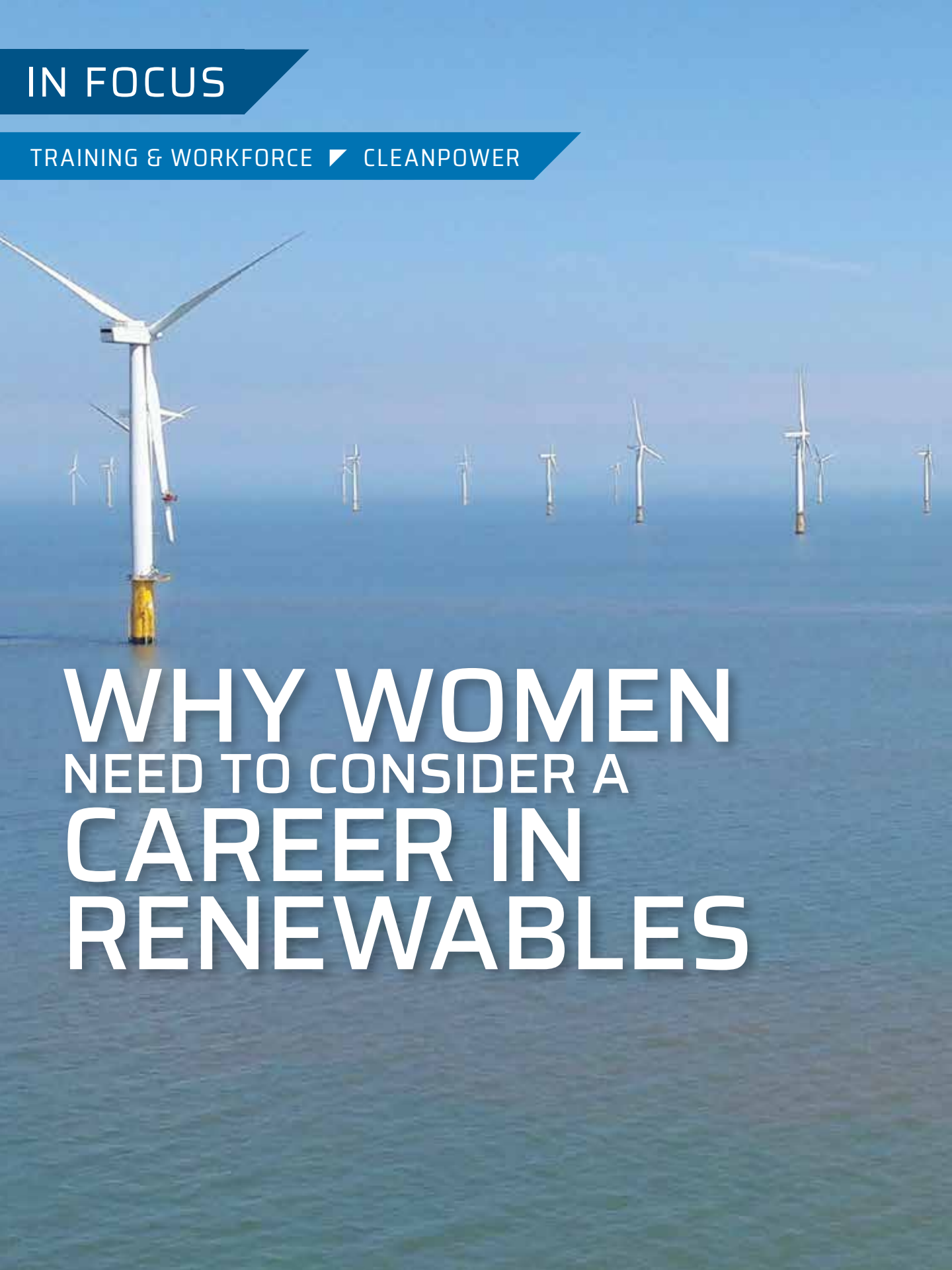


IN FOCUS

TRAINING & WORKFORCE ▸ CLEANPOWER

A photograph of an offshore wind farm with several white wind turbines on a blue sea under a clear sky. The largest turbine is in the foreground on the left, with others receding into the distance.

WHY WOMEN NEED TO CONSIDER A CAREER IN RENEWABLES

From young people to prosperous adults, the industry is proactively supporting the success of women who celebrate an interest in renewable energy.

By ROTOS 360

Gender equality in the workplace is an increasingly pertinent issue. Across industries, there appears to be a continued imbalance with regards to the success of women in professional roles, including the renewables sector. Fortunately, this inequality has been met with a determination among energy experts to create a more welcoming and balanced working environment. As our efforts to create a professional culture that's unaffected by gender grow, 2020 could represent a significant turning point within the world of renewables.

The persistent nature of this gender imbalance is evident in recent findings obtained by The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA)[1]. This report, entitled "Renewable Energy: A Gender Perspective," summarizes findings from 2,500 respondents working in the energy sector across 144 countries. These results suggest women represent a mere 32 percent of full-time employees in the renewable energy sector. To tackle this disappointing finding, energy experts have placed a renewed emphasis on gender equality. From young people to prosperous adults, the industry is proactively supporting the success of women who celebrate an interest in renewable energy. As it has been reported that "encouraging women into STEM careers will fundamentally change our capability as a country" and that the "industry needs to be more flexible,"[2] this certainly appears to be a hot topic.

ENCOURAGEMENT NEEDED

Women must be encouraged to pursue their professional aspirations, no matter the industry in question. From our school years to the experiences we accumulate later in life, the renewables sector must show all women and girls a balanced and accepting approach to recruitment and leadership. Fortunately, a number of companies are embracing this new approach with open arms, leading the way for a pivotal industry transition throughout 2020.

One company fronting this gender equality focus is Rotos 360. Rotos 360 uses the latest innovations available to identify and repair damage, excessive wear, and other potential issues that affect wind-turbine blades. Working to support some of the largest wind-turbine farms across the U.K. and beyond, Rotos 360 is propelling this mission

The renewables sector must show all women and girls a balanced and accepting approach to recruitment and leadership. (Courtesy: Rotos 360)

throughout the energy sector. Taking responsibility for their contribution to the industry's growth, Rotos 360 is setting an example for fellow organizations that hope to stand behind women in the industry.

From encouraging young people to pursue STEM-based careers to celebrating the achievements of their female em-

ployees, Rotos 360 has a passion for equality. For example, they are tremendously proud to support the ongoing successes of Sarah Lancaster, the company's business development manager. Lancaster has quickly become a flourishing leader within Rotos 360, using her exceptional understanding of energy and her incredible work ethic to become the co-founders' go-to source of support. Only by encouraging

the success of women, and recognizing their achievements, will we see real, conceivable change.

Lancaster is also a determined advocate for female equality in her own right. Speaking to young women on a regular basis to support their dreams while passionately working to develop her own hands-on skillset, attending rigorous training sessions surrounding matters such as "working at height," Lancaster is an exceptional example of female empowerment within the energy sector. To amplify Rotos 360's message and support gender equality in the workplace, Lancaster discusses her experiences as a professional in a previously male-dominated sector:

"Since beginning my career in renewables, I have been involved in business development, focusing largely on operations and maintenance," Lancaster said. "However, I have simultaneously learned a huge amount about the entire business landscape, developing my understanding of various aspects of the energy sector. My experience in renewables is now comprehensive and strategic, as my practical knowledge includes topics such as what an 'Energy Yield Analysis' entails and the effects of leading-edge erosion on a turbine blade. I enjoy every day spent in the energy sector because they vary greatly; my weeks are never predictable or mundane, and it is this variety that allows me to thrive."

DIMINISHING STEREOTYPES

"The energy sector has been historically dominated by men, a stereotype that risks deterring women from pursuing renewables-based careers," she said. "They might feel that if they're under-represented, the opportunities available to them would be comparatively less. However, I have found unrestricted success within the energy sector, an accomplishment that I connect with my ability to develop prosperous business relationships. Through accumulating an extensive network of tal-

ented, trusted experts, I have become a reputable liaison to a variety of loyal customers and partners. I can also reliably emphasize that this success has not been affected, to any extent, by my gender. I have come to learn first-hand that the appreciated qualities within this industry are determination, enthusiasm, and reliability, no matter who you are or what you look like."



Sarah Lancaster, Rotos 360's business development manager, has quickly become a flourishing leader within the company, using her understanding of energy and her incredible work ethic to become the co-founders' go-to source of support. (Courtesy: Rotos 360)

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“I started working at Natural Power in 2013, and I was pleasantly surprised to find that whilst men did fulfil many of the industry’s senior roles, women were also finding success in prosperous positions,” Lancaster said. “From ornithologists to senior project managers, I witnessed their accomplishments and saw how they were becoming influential leaders. This experience drove me to set even higher goals for myself. I am extremely proud to work for a company that shares this determination to support female experts; Rotos 360 enables me to share this message however possible, for example, by attending events, extending my skills via training, and more.”

VARIED INDUSTRY ROLES

“I have equally found that despite the stereotypes often imposed on industries like the energy sector, female success is not restricted to any particular roles,” she said. “I work with women who love working as rope access blade technicians, ecological consultants, and UXO managers, for example. We are by no means limited to office-based positions. By saying farewell to outdated assumptions and continuing to stand behind both men and women who show the commitment required to succeed in this industry, we can create an equal and exciting space for talented professionals.”

“Of course, as we experience continued progress, we will naturally welcome an increasing number of women into the sector,” Lancaster said. “However, this triumph isn’t coincidental; we are experiencing a critical tipping point in Britain’s energy transition, facilitating the employment of even more skilled professionals – gender regardless. If you are hoping to find success in a role that simultaneously supports the environment, then the energy sector could be the perfect fit for you.”

DAILY CHALLENGES

“Driving sustainability is an indisputable benefit lying behind renewables-based professions,” she said. “However, there are a number of other advantages that Rotos 360 is determined to showcase to any interested women. For example, I have found that a career in renewables has allowed me to challenge myself on a daily basis. I have never dreaded Monday mornings and find the number of successful women within this industry, for example Claire Mack, the CEO at Scottish Renewables; Melanie Onn, the recently appointed deputy CEO of Renewable U.K.; Lindsay McQuade, the CEO of ScottishPower Renewables; and Juliet Davenport, chief executive of Good Energy, to be personally inspiring. Being surrounded by women who are leading the way for female leaders certainly leaves me feeling excited for the future.”

“In 10 years’ time, the renewables industry is going to be booming,” Lancaster said. “An international interest in renewable energy and sustainability is becoming increasingly significant; we are experiencing a global transformation, and I cannot wait to see how our sector changes over the next decade. As an industry, we are collaborative and welcoming; we all support one another’s successes. However,



Rotos 360 is setting an example for fellow organizations that hope to stand behind women in the industry. (Courtesy: Rotos 360)



Sarah Lancaster recently attended a practical training course to extend her knowledge of sea survival. (Courtesy: Rotos 360)

women within this sector are particularly supportive of the female empowerment cause, for we are a group with shared values and goals. As a result of our combined efforts over the next few years, I'm sure a seamlessly balanced industry will have materialized. Women can have the confidence that they will be joining an industry that is genuinely supportive of their success."

"If women like me hope to enjoy a challenging and motivating career that simultaneously benefits the planet, then the energy industry is a great space to explore," she said. "Roles within this sector give you the opportunity to create a healthier planet using your business acumen, an achievement that I have personally found to be incredibly fulfilling."

CELEBRATING WOMEN'S ACHIEVEMENTS

"As the world recently celebrated International Women's

Day, an event created to celebrate the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women, there has never been a better time to emphasize the female force that's redefining renewable energy," Lancaster said. "Opportunities in our industry are endless and exciting, as the sector continues to grow at an unprecedented rate. For example, Rotos 360 hopes to welcome a wonderful variety of skilled experts into the industry. As a company, we are going to continue standing behind women throughout 2020 and beyond."

"No matter what corner of the industry you hope to explore, the world of renewables is vast and accepting," she said. "For example, I have focused largely on business development, yet I recently attended a practical training course to extend my knowledge of sea survival. As a female leader within the business, I will continue to work alongside Rotos 360 to make incredible opportunities like this available to all. A varied team is the key to creativity, and creativity is the key to developing long-lasting, sustainable solutions. As this is a key priority moving forward, supporting the success of both men and women is a focus that no renewables-based business can afford to ignore."

Knowing that your job facilitates the development of a healthier world is a fulfilling message that many women would like to embrace. If so, renewable energy is a natural and inevitable end-point, we simply need to

give women the courage and confidence to take this step and enjoy the journey. ✨

REFERENCES

- [1] www.irena.org/publications/2019/Jan/Renewable-Energy-A-Gender-Perspective
- [2] www.goodenergy.co.uk/blog/2017/11/01/women-careers-in-energy

ABOUT THE COMPANY

Rotos 360 uses the latest innovations available to the industry, incorporating platform deployment, composite technology, and marine solutions to identify and repair damage, excessive wear and other potential issues that can affect the performance of wind turbine blades. For more information, go to www.rotos360.co.uk