

empower magazine


Connected Locally, Networked Globally


Winter 2021

*Leadership Tips
Managing Stress
and Finding Healthy
Rhythms in Leadership*

*Member Insights
Prioritizing Self-Care:
Just Do It!*

*2022 WEN Conference
We're live!*



 Women's
Energy
Network™

LOOKING FOR YOUR NEXT CAREER OPPORTUNITY?



The WEN Career Center is a part of the Engineering & Science Career Network, a nationwide network of employers and job seekers.

VISIT THE CAREER CENTER

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President's Message



December 2021

As the end of the year approaches, I'm reminded of the hard work and accomplishments the Global Board has achieved over the past 12 months. I'm so very proud of the board, their resilience, and their dedication to power through a year that faced so many challenges. Not only did they hurdle every obstacle, they blasted through them and prospered. Together, they increased membership, welcomed new sponsors, and completed our first ever virtual programs. They enlisted speakers and events virtually, including diversity every step of the way. Each board director met and exceeded goals that were set for the year. Due to their hard work, we hope to end this year stronger than ever as we approach our transition into 2022.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the board directors for taking time away from family and personal interests to work so diligently for this organization. **Jana Grauberger** has been an integral part of the Global board formation and served as President in one of the toughest years (2020). She led the organization with ease and taught the rest of us, especially me, how to be a great leader. **Mary Frances Edmonds**, another fabulous leader will be ending her term as Chapter Relations on the Global Board. She is leaving behind many great practices, updated policies, and highlights. **Katie Wilson**, Sponsorship Director from the WEN Global Board,

leaving behind a legacy of success with sponsorships, processes, and leadership. All these women share in the success of the WEN organization, and their achievements are truly appreciated.

Additionally, I would like to welcome the directors that will continue, or join, the Global Board for 2022. They will begin this new chapter in our organization under the leadership of **Kara Byrne**, Houston Chapter, as President. **Andrea Tettleton** with the South Louisiana Chapter will be President Elect; she has served the Global Board as Secretary for the past two years. **Kara Herrnstein**, previously membership director of the Ohio Chapter, is elected to the Global Board as the new Secretary. **Sarah Derdowski** from the Colorado Chapter will join us in the Chapter Relations director position, and **Sucheta Gokhale** from the North Texas Chapter will be the new Sponsorship Director for Global.

Please join me in congratulating these impressive ladies as they lend their talents to the board.

The continued success of Global and the entire WEN organization is guaranteed for many years to come. I have enjoyed my term as President and will offer guidance and advice in my role as Past President. I am very thankful of everything WEN has taught me and will continue to admire, and be a large part of, this organization.

I look forward to seeing everyone in April for the Biannual “Power On” Conference; until then, I hope that everyone enjoys the winter months and get to spend quality time with their family and friends over the holiday season. Happy Holidays!

*Tara Meek
Williams
WEN President*



Q & A with WEN Board of Directors

What's your
favorite WEN
Conference
memory?



Tara Meek

WEN President
Williams

I have so many favorite memories. Walking through all of the amazing floats to go to the riverside networking reception in New Orleans, the line dancing by the Texas shaped pool in Houston, the s'mores station in Denver. Each of the Conferences are so unique to the town they are held in which makes them all different and special. The keynote speakers always leave you feeling empowered. Above all, meeting and seeing people that are the same as me, have the same ideals and feel the same sense of empowerment from the Conference. It's a rejuvenation and education all in one.



Kara Byrne

WEN President-Elect
Baker Hughes

Beyond the great keynotes WEN has secured in the last years, my favorite part is meeting with the other WEN Chapter members and making lasting relationships that have helped me in both my WEN career and my "real" day job!



Kitrina Pople

WEN Treasurer
Ernst & Young

Having the opportunity to learn from and meet members from around the network!



Andrea Tettleton

WEN Secretary
Seabaugh, Joffrion, Sepulvado, Victory

Judy Smith as the keynote speaker for the 2017 WEN Conference was definitely a highlight for me!



Mary Frances Edmonds

WEN Chapter Relations Director
Williams

Hearing the former general counsel of BP in 2017. He shared his thoughts on his management of the Deepwater Horizon crisis. During crisis, he strove to make reasoned, ethical decisions in an inclusive and respectful manner. He had several helpful tips, including admitting that we all need a coping mechanism during a crisis and to not abandon that, especially in a crisis. I still have post it note with his comments on my computer monitor!



Stephanie Warino

WEN Membership Director
Zweig Group

I barely knew anyone for my first, and only, Conference. It was exhilarating, but also quite intimidating. My favorite memory is noticing someone who looked ill at ease - I went up to talk with her, and we have stayed in touch to this day!



Sally Hallingstad

WEN Marketing & Communications
Director
Western Energy Alliance

As part of the planning team for the 2019 Conference in Denver, my favorite part was watching all of the pieces come together and finally relaxing while cooking s'mores and drinking wine.



Katie Wilson

WEN Sponsorship Director
Wilson Workforce Solutions, LLC

Getting to hear from amazing keynote speakers like Susan Asch and Judy Smith!



Dannetta English Bland

WEN DEI Director
University of North Texas

My favorite Conference memory was the all-star lineup of speakers in 2017. Everyone from Christi Craddick (Railroad Commissioner) to Elizabeth Killinger (NRG Home and Reliant) to Colette Honorable (FERC Commissioner) to the amazing headliner, Judy Smith (the crisis manager expert and inspiration for Scandal).



Jana Grauberger

WEN Past President
Liskow & Lewis

I really loved the "glamping" networking event at the 2019 WEN Conference in Denver. I'm inspired and re-energized when I walk into a WEN event with hundreds of WEN members reconnecting with old friends and making new ones.



Regina Eco

WEN Programs Director
Dominion Energy

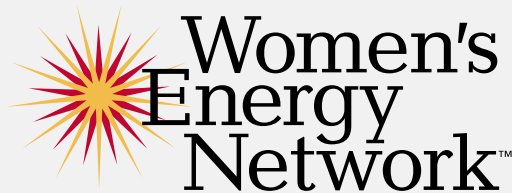
WEN 2022 will be my first! I am looking forward to it especially with all the feedback from the BOD members!



POWER *On*

APRIL 3-5
WEN 2022
CONFERENCE

Omni – Fort Worth, Texas



#WEN2022

womensenergynetwork.org

Conference: How will you participate?

Sponsor



Conference sponsorship will provide your company with recognition and visibility to Conference attendees as well as the WEN organization as a whole. Depending upon your level of sponsorship, your company will be featured on communications to our 6,000+ members in chapters that span the United States and in Mexico.

[Click here for details.](#)

Speak



We're planning an exciting list of expert speakers and panelists to support attendees' educational needs. If you're interested in joining our line-up, [register with our speaker database today!](#)

Attend



Join us IN PERSON for a content-rich agenda reflecting our core values of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and a focus on substantive programming and compelling speakers. And if that doesn't sound appealing, then just think of the networking opportunities you will have!

[Click here and register now to receive the early bird rate.](#)



Managing Stress And Finding Healthy Rhythms In Leadership

by Brandon Towle

The energy-sector is filled with some of the most gifted and adaptable leaders. The evidence of that gifting has been on display throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The industry was severely and specifically impacted, along with the broader global economy resulting in M&A's, with downsizing/lay-offs, reorgs and in some cases, bankruptcy. Preserving during these challenging shifts was only plausible by accessing the grit the industry is well known for.

This began suddenly in Spring of 2020, is ongoing and now here we are over one year later. There was a glimmer of hope this Summer when many were finally able to take some time off, the struggled was to truly disconnect. Anxiety was provoked by the looming Delta-variant and the fear of what the Fall might look like. Now Winter is here and it doesn't feel like we've had a chance to breathe and recover. Most leaders across industries are running on fumes, and many are on empty.

This stress and anxiety are starting to impact both individual and team performance, productivity, quality, and sustainability. Some of the lagging indicators of this chronic stress are fatigue, miscommunication, in-fighting, abdication, missed deadlines, and increased turnover.

Pressure Vs. Stress

Not all stress is a bad thing. All living things grow under duress, and anything of value doesn't come easy. Pressure is normal and tends to bring out the best in most people. The bump in adrenaline keeps us in the optimal performance zone and without some stress, we are prone to boredom and complacency.

The challenge becomes when we operate under stress for an extended period and fail to implement healthy rhythms and boundaries required for high performance. This negatively impacts health (physical, mental, and emotional), the quality of output and often meaningful

relationships...including family, teams and communities. Ironically, we are generally our own worst salesperson, and we have tried to convince ourselves that being busy is the same as being productive.

Your Leadership Voice

Each leader has a distinct Leadership Voice, and Leadership Voices play a critical role in the way one experiences and reacts to pressure and stress.

Pressure causes us to rely on and over utilize our strengths. This is largely because our strengths are easy to access and have contributed to past success.

The challenge is that every situation is different, and the present situation likely requires us to engage differently than we have before in order to be influential and significant.

Under stress, our Leadership Voice regresses to our most unnatural Leadership Voice and is not usually well received by others. Extreme and continued stress can cause our leadership behavior to change over time, without knowing it.

If you don't know what your Leadership Voice is? [Click here to take the free 5 Voices Assessment.](#)



Below are four solutions to help you begin bringing back some sense of equilibrium. Two are intended for immediate application, and the others require an investment in your team and self.

Immediate Implementation

Creating Healthy Rhythms

Health is not a one-size fits all approach, and is more than just mental health, although this is extremely important. The common human experience to being healthy is physical health (i.e., safety, sleep, healthy

food, exercise, etc.), true relational connectivity, a community where we can be known and a sense we are contributing to a purpose greater than ourselves.

Just like beauty requires periodic maintenance, so does high performance. Do you currently possess healthy rhythms required to perform at the highest levels? We have repeatedly found that one's ability to be intentional with personal health and boundaries tend to correspond with their level of confidence.

Self-care is a competitive advantage.

Guarding Your Energy

There are two types of energy - Active and Innovative. Active energy is accomplishing tasks, where Innovative energy is idea generation, creativity, and innovation. Everyone has unique ways to access these; they are a complex combination of Leadership Voice, developmental experience, and environmental factors. But it is imperative to utilize them both regularly.

Utilizing both energies require mental transitions, implying you cannot be in back-to-back meetings for days or weeks on end. You'll likely have to quit saying "yes" to every meeting. By saying "yes" to something, you are effectively saying "no" to something else. White space is the secret sauce to guarding your energy!

Prior to accepting your next meeting invite, ask yourself or the invitee 1) What is the goal? 2) Why did you invite me? 3) What are you expecting me to contribute?

This may require your presence, but it also gives you the option of providing a deliverable beforehand or a response afterward. You can declutter your current meeting schedule by following this same principle in reverse.

Longer-Term

Team Retreat

A team retreat is a deliberate pause on the day-to-day grind to invest in the team and their individual and collective capacity that is essential for high and sustained performance. It is important to take the time to understand stress behaviors within your team - and for yourself - to build mutual respect pertaining to healthy rhythms, to access and empower energy, and to set aside time for strategic planning.

WEN 2022 Global Leadership Cohort

Yielded Consulting is a WEN Global Partner, and as their "preferred provider of leadership and people development", we facilitate the Global Leadership Cohort.

This year-long program is an intentional space where you can be fully known, not competing against others and with peer accountability to grow professionally and personally. It is a heavy dose of self-awareness combined with the relational connectivity and influence needed for growth and advancement. Our mantra is "When you know who you are, you know what to."

[Registration for the 2022 Program is currently open](#) until the end of January.

You can find out more about the Cohort on the [WEN Global YouTube channel](#). You are EMPOWERED!

Each of these steps has a proven ROI to improve and sustain individual and team performance, even during the most trying times!



Brandon Towle

WEN Houston Member
Yielded Consulting Services

The Manager Paradox

by Rachel Pacheco

The worst interview question of all time is “What’s your biggest weakness?” And the worst interview response is “Well, my biggest weakness is that sometimes I just *care too much*.” Shame on the interviewer for asking a terrible question, and on the interviewee for humble bragging in his response.

Yet, as managers, we often *do* care too much. And, managers who care deeply about making sure that their team members are valued, motivated, developed, and challenged face what I like to call: The Manager Paradox.

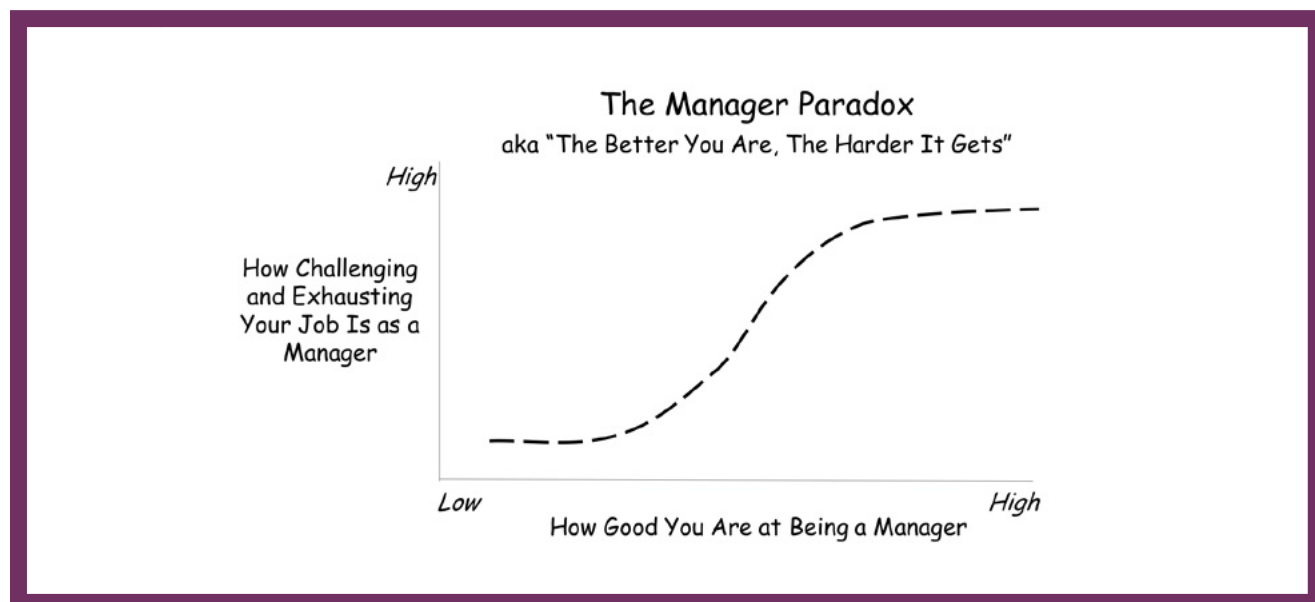
The Manager Paradox is that the better you are at being a manager, the more challenging and exhausting your job is. That’s because great managers invest so much of themselves into the success, fulfillment, and development of their team members. And, great managers are impacted and affected by their team members’ happiness and sense of fulfillment (we are all prone to [emotional contagion](#), especially from those people we work most closely with)! And this all takes a lot out of you.

Here are a few ways you can continue to care as a manager, but also take care of yourself (and as one manager said recently: break out of the Manager Paradox)!

Say “I don’t know” more. Take the pressure off of yourself for having to know all the answers when it comes to managing and communicating with your team. We often refuse to roll out an initiative, communicate a change, or have a hard conversation until we know the answer to every single possible question our team members might ask. Instead, be in the space of not knowing and learn to “love the questions.”* And, when you say *I don’t know* to your team, you’re actually building trust.

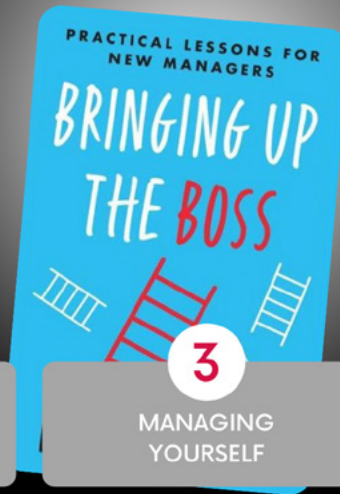
Focus on what brings you joy as a manager. Good managers understand that each of their team members is motivated by a unique combination of things. Similarly, understand how *you* are motivated and what brings you meaning in your role as a manager. Often we get so overwhelmed as a manager, that we forget about the parts of the role we truly love. (Need more tools to focus on joy in your role? Try [job crafting](#), one of my favorite activities.)

Accept that there will be times when you mess up in an epic way. Things I’ve done as a manager that were awful: poorly managed an employee and then had to fire him because he was doing a bad job; accidentally projected on a big screen to a room full of junior team members a sensitive email about firing an executive; inadvertently played favorites on my team and irreparably hurt a team



Bringing Up the Boss

PRACTICAL LESSONS FOR NEW MANAGERS



1

MANAGING AN INDIVIDUAL

2

MANAGING A TEAM

3

MANAGING YOURSELF

First-timers want to quickly learn what it takes to be a successful manager - like they learned how to program, how to design, how to operate - and put those learnings into practice. But what does it mean to manage, and how do you teach someone to be a good manager? Author Rachel Pacheco focuses on three key sections to help you understand the basics. [Click here to learn more!](#)



Check out Episode 27 of the WEN Podcast to hear Rachel talk about the book!

member's feelings because of it; and advocated for and hired someone who turned out to be a terrible employee...the list goes on and on. Managing is fundamentally about people. And what's tricky about people is that we can plot, plan and prepare for our actions, but we can't always plan what someone else's actions might be. Because of this, there will be times when we think we planned the right course of action, but it goes a completely different way from what we anticipated. But the good thing about managing is that we get better with time and practice. So be kind to yourself and accept that you will mess up in managing over and over again.

So keep caring about your teams and the people you work with, just do it with an openness to saying "I don't know"; a focus on the parts of the role that are energizing, and an acceptance that you will at times be a complete disaster. And if you're one of those people who ask the interview question, "What's your biggest weakness?" please stop!



Rachel Pacheco

Author, *Bringing Up the Boss*
Professor, The Wharton School

WOMEN'S ENERGY NETWORK PODCAST



Apple • Spotify • Google • Anchor
[HTTP://BIT.LY/WENPODCAST](http://bit.ly/wenpodcast)

Prioritizing Self-Care: Just Do It!

by Vinitha Rajan

For the longest time, the focal point of my life was to be resilient - at work and beyond. Functioning rationally under pressure and finding energy to strive forward with empathy and kindness as disruption seeps through routine has been a goal I have actively worked on and in fact prided myself on. And then March 2020 happened.

Fast forward to Fall 2021, and I'm tired of being resilient. The past year and half, I've been constantly digging deeper and deeper to be strong and brave. To continue being the resilient fighter I've always been. Lately, it's become impossible to keep up the fight. I cannot fight any longer.

The pandemic, the political unrest, the economic crises, the swirling discussions on diversity, equity and inclusion, homeschooling, caregiving, the loss of hugs and touch has exhausted me.

I've always tried to be open to change and the unexpected. Seeing problems as opportunities was my superpower. But embracing change has been harder this year. I cannot fathom dealing with yet another change where I am the cheerleader, both at home and at work. Gone are the days when I felt excitement and joy at the prospect of change.

I tried to be there for my friends, family, and colleagues. Socially distanced but still present. I listened with empathy and concern to stories of love, loss, grief, and anger. And soon, their stories became a part of me. They continued to stay with me, shadowing the little plant of resilience I had growing. The optimist in me withered away, leaving a hollow pessimist playing the role of someone I was in January 2020.

Many mornings I wake up with anxiety gnawing my insides and my mind catastrophizing what will happen next. My situation is not unique. Millions of women around the world have been feeling the same and more. The toll of the pandemic on women's mental health has been researched and studied as I write this.

In my quest to be empathetic and to reach out to others, I had forgotten all about self-compassion and self-care. I forgot I'm a living, breathing human being. I forgot that I needed to be kind to myself and to make time to take care of myself.

Theoretically, I knew all about the benefits of putting myself first, but it was different to define

what self-care meant for me this year. It was not my pre-2020 vacation with friends and family. It was not a trip to the bookstore or library. It was not sitting at my mother's kitchen table and eating comfort food.

Self-care in 2021 did not start with binge watching web series or baking sourdough. It started with denial and dismissal. The very idea of being frivolous and indulging in self-care seemed disrespectful when people I'm close to were fighting the harder battle against the virus. Acknowledging my resistance and feelings was the first step.

I had to re-learn that being resilient meant that I made time for myself. It also meant being vulnerable and telling my family, friends, and colleagues that I'm not okay. It meant owning my self-care, which resulted in coloring books coming out and the genre of books I read changing.

Taking the time for myself has helped me reset. I still have my anxiety filled moments and days when I want to hide it out, but I have realized that being kind to myself is never not an option. Being kind to myself means I take the effort to make time for self-care. Self-care is an individual experiment - there is no one size fits all. But when you take the time to test it out, it's the best gift you can give yourself.



Vinitha Rajan

WEN Houston Member
Targa Resources



7th Annual
Boots & Ballgowns
Gala

On August 13th in downtown Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Women's Energy Network Greater Pittsburgh celebrated its 7th Annual Boots & Ballgowns Gala. The annual gala brings together our members to celebrate truly outstanding women and companies who support them in the energy industry.

The event not only celebrated the contributions of several female leaders in the energy industry, but it also served as a fundraising event for the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank. The event raised over \$4,450 for the local charity equaling 22,250 meals for those facing food shortages in Southwestern Pennsylvania.

2021 Gala Winners



Above picture left to right: Woman of the Year - Kelly Nissenbaum, Manager of Business Development at Castle; Trailblazer - Hilary Mercer, Senior Vice President, Shell Polymers, Pennsylvania Chemicals Project; Pioneer Award Winner - Katie Wilson, President at Wilson Workforce Solutions, LLC ; and Presidents' Award Winner - Angela Lundy, Senior Environmental Manager at GAI Consultants, Inc.



Above Picture: Company of the Year Winner - Williams

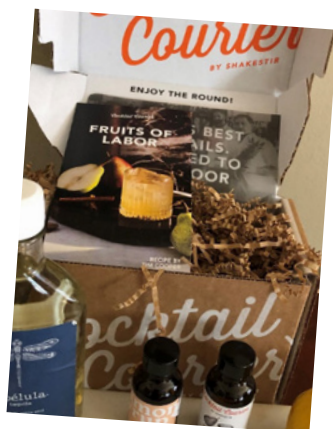
FWEN Foundation

CREATING BRIGHT FUTURES

The Foundation for the Women's Energy Network (FWEN) hosted its first ever symposium on September 21st and 22nd. The symposium addressed barriers for women in the Energy Industry after COVID. The symposium was held over two successive evenings and provided real, actionable steps to deal with career barriers specific to women.

Emily Thomas, FWEN Vice-Chair and symposium sponsor spoke about the event, "It was an amazing two days of information, conversation and fun. It was FWEN's first symposium event. We had over 90 registrants and raised over \$5000. This money will be used to fund the Re-Imagine Upskilling Grant used for education needed to update technical skills and re-imagine a women's career. I would like to thank all the FWEN presenters that were so open in discussing their life experiences and making the sessions come alive. I would also like to thank our event sponsors, Dimension Leadership Group, BakerHostetler and Deloitte. Their contributions were invaluable."

The technical aspects of career barriers were addressed by Ashlee Grant, Partner at BakerHostetler, (legal aspects of equal pay) and Kara Byrne, Commercial Leader North America and Inclusion, Equity & Diversity Advocate at Baker Hughes, (diversity in the workplace). Lindsey Bruner, Vice President, Project Development at Cyrus One, discussed the practical aspects of getting equal pay for women. Christine Selph, Global Communications Leader, and Nhu Fabros, Managing Director, both with Deloitte, presented a fascinating study on external post-COVID women's issues. For more information about this study, please contact [Christine Selph](#).



We heard real life and inspirational experiences around Getting Back on TRACK. (Tenacity, Resilience, Adaptability, Community & Knowledge) from Deb Ryan, Head of Low Carbon Market Analytics at S&P Global Platts, Corlis Simmons, Educational Consultant and Mary Lou Fry, Legal Manager at Equinor.

Mental fitness was discussed by the esteemed Dimension Leadership Group. Symposium registrants completed a questionnaire ahead of the symposium to determine their individual "saboteurs" or inhibiting behaviors. Shirley Wulf and Alison Valli, Partners, discussed how to recognize these behaviors and focus on positive behaviors needed to thrive and lead through uncertain and turbulent times.

For more information about this program, reach out to [Alison Valli](#) or [Shirley Wulf](#).

We were able to discuss our own learning moments in breakout sessions, then adjourn to Sean Beck, head sommelier of H Town, teaching us how to prepare a margarita from a kit of ingredients delivered to our door.

Gwen Hulsey, Tax Attorney commented after attending the sessions. "Sessions were really informative! I liked how the sessions started with technical aspects of barriers for women such as equal pay, then moved to how we as women can recognize and adjust our behaviors to be more resilient in changing times. I appreciated Alison Valli and Shirley Wulf of the Dimensions Leadership Group instructing us in the neuroscience behind using cognitive and performance techniques to develop peak performance and better relationships. I also really loved hearing the real-life experiences of women in career transitions and beyond. It really connected with me. And what a great way to end, with celebrity sommelier,

Sean Beck, teaching us how to make a delicious pear and cinnamon margarita!"

RE-IMAGINE YOU

The Re-Imagine YOU! grant opportunity gives funding to WEN members who need to acquire new knowledge, skills, and experiences to compete for new and transformational roles.

APPLY ONLINE TODAY!

WWW.WOMENSENERGYNETWORK.ORG/WENFOUNDATION

WEN Foundation Re-Imagine You Grant

The Foundation for the Women's Energy Network (FWEN) recently launched its Re-Imagine You Grant. The world is changing more rapidly by the day, and the energy industry is one of the careers most in flux. Technological advancements along with the COVID-19 pandemic have left many WEN members wondering how they can compete. FWEN is committed to investing in its members for their entire careers in this diverse industry. Thus, we created the Re-Imagine You Grant, which recognizes that many members need to acquire new knowledge, skills, and experiences to compete for new and transformational roles. Often called 'upskilling', it can be a gamechanger for many, but can come with a price.

For women that have been working in STEM related and energy industries for five (5) years or more and would like to 'step up' their careers by updating their skills, the Re-Imagine Your Grant is available to help supplement the cost of training for professional development, certificates, compliance/regulatory educations, and other approved opportunities.

Details of Upskilling Training Re-Imagine You! Grant Criteria

The grant application process will remain open throughout the year. Grant applications should be received by the WEN Foundation board no later than 90 days prior to the

commencement of the program, in order to have an adequate timeframe to process applications. When “Early Bird Pricing” is available, applicants are encouraged to submit applications within the discounted window whenever possible.

Funds will be allocated to cover all or a portion of the training costs. Travel expenses are NOT included as part of the grant. WEN Foundation will directly pay for registration of development event to the provider, on behalf of the grant recipient.

To be eligible for the Re-Imagine You Grant, you must be:

- A current WEN member
- Have more than 5 years of professional experience
- Have not received WEN Foundation scholarship or funding in the same calendar year
- Complete a [grant application](#)
- Currently, not a member of the WEN Foundation Board of Directors
- Applications to re-apply for a repeat professional development program will be approved at the discretion of the grant committee.
- Maximum grant amount per awardee is \$750
- Submit proof of successful completion of professional opportunity within 30 days.

The Re-Imagine You Grant does not include:

Funding of WEN Membership Dues. The WEN Foundation has a separate program for this that can be accessed [here](#).

Funding to attend conferences—as this grant supports workshops, certificates and training only.

Funding for college/university tuition. The WEN Foundation provides both Undergraduate and Graduate Scholarships for energy programs, more information can be access [here](#).

Grant Review Process:

- Volunteers will review new grant applications on a monthly basis.
- Volunteers to review grant recipients will originate from donors to the Foundation100. Participation will be voluntary, and tenure will last for one year
- Grant approvals will be subject to funding of the program through the WEN Foundation and the number of applications in a given review period
- Matrix ranking of opportunities to help prioritize approvals

If you are interested in donating to support this initiative, please [click here](#) to donate to the Foundation100 program.

Lessons Learned

Has your chapter gone back to in-person events? If so, how did you transition and prepare? If not, what has prevented you from doing so and when do you anticipate going back?

Boston

WEN Boston took advantage of the summer weather and created a “Summer Networking” Series, which included outdoor events coupled with networking. Outdoor events allowed us to provide ample room to socially distance.

Our first event was a golf clinic and networking at Granite Links with the Boston skyline in the background. Despite a significant storm blowing through, we did have ample time to both golf and network. Our second event, an outdoor self-defense clinic, was followed by yet another storm but allowed enough time for networking afterward. Our final session, Headshots & Happy Hour, had both indoor and outdoor space. Our only issue during our in-person events was storms that seemed to blow in at the end of our events!

Chicago

WEN Chicago had our first in-person event on July 29th at Topgolf for an evening of golf, dinner, and drinks! As WEN Chicago begins to transition to a hybrid approach of hosting both virtual and in-person events moving forward, there are some key factors we are considering.

1. Having clear communications
2. Understanding people’s comfort level
3. Setting event restrictions

WEN Chicago made sure to clearly communicate the details of the in-person event prior, including the key benefits and reasons to attend the in person-event, safety procedures and precautions, and attendee limit.

Colorado

WEN Colorado transitioned back to in-person events in August. Our leadership team saw that face-to-face networking was a key component to the value we provide to our local community and thought creatively on ways to provide that once again. We also realized that participation in these events is voluntary, meaning our members are empowered to choose if/how they participate.

We’ve pivoted our expectations on the size of events and focused on smaller opportunities for in-person connection and opted to utilize outside space when possible. We’ve hosted hikes, paddle boarding happy hours, and golf-based activities, and have made it clear to our membership that we’re going to follow best practices for gathering at the time of the event, which of course, could mean mask policies.

We do see some change on the horizon with new variants concerns and continue to have hearty conversations about the right mix of in-person vs virtual opportunities to continually provide our membership that delivers value. There is a balance to strike between the level of effort it takes a volunteer team to coordinate activities around an event and the overall value it provides to membership, so we work together throughout the process and stay flexible to change.

Greater Oklahoma

WEN Oklahoma continues to monitor CDC, state, and local COVID-19 guidance as we work on realistic strategies to host in-person events. The chapter has returned to Thirsty Thursday happy hours with safety protocol measures communicated in advance. We’ve also provided hybrid event options which includes the highly anticipated Mentoring Circles fall kickoff and WEN OK’s fifth anniversary celebration, where we hoped to welcome members and guests in-person based on individual comfort levels. In selecting the right setting for these events, the planning committee



searched for venues that offered adequate space for social distancing. We are monitoring the current COVID-19 status and surveyed our members, listening to feedback on their preference to be back in-person with their friends and colleagues. We want to be thoughtful and respectful of all our members and allow as many people to participate in events as possible and feel like the hybrid option currently allows us this ability.

Greater Pittsburgh

WEN Greater Pittsburgh successfully transitioned to providing a combination of in-person and virtual events to support the needs and comfort levels of members. In order to keep attendees safe while also limiting chapter liability, we have instituted a variety of measures from member surveys, in-person event waivers, extended communications on event precautions, and limiting the total number of attendees to fall well below venue thresholds. Feedback indicates that members are happy to have a variety of options for attendance and assurances that the chapter is considering their safety when planning events.

Ohio

WEN Ohio offered in-person events using outdoor venues beginning in October 2020 with a field trip to an archeological dig. We continued in-person programming in 2021 with outdoor hikes or birding events at different nature preserves, and currently offer activities with both a virtual and in-person attendance option when possible. We planned and



prepared for these activities following the state or county COVID-19 and CDC guidelines, and talked amongst the Board regarding event execution, to ensure masking and social distancing was possible. Currently, member company policies are still restricting travel and in-person events, which is why we are still offering a virtual option, when practical.

South Louisiana

WEN South Louisiana has recently hosted two in-person events. First, in June, our chapter conducted an in-person board meeting followed by a Happy Hour open to all members and prospective members! Second, in July, the South Louisiana Chapter hosted “coffee dates” at local coffee shops in Baton Rouge, Lafayette, and New Orleans on the same date to give our members a chance to connect with other WEN members in their community. During these events we adhered to the CDC guidelines as well as local mandates to be certain all our members felt safe during these unprecedented times. We are looking forward to more in-person events in the future!

Susquehanna Valley

WEN Susquehanna Valley has returned to in-person events. Thus far, all in-person events have been held in outdoor settings. Events have included an Adopt-A-Highway clean-up day and picnic luncheon at a nearby local park, a happy hour membership drive at a local brewery with outdoor seating, and a WEN information booth at the Troy County Fair. Susquehanna Valley also hosted an Energy Industry Noncompetitive Clay Shoot & Picnic on October 1 in Muncy Valley, Pennsylvania.



