



Profiles of Electrical Engineers and Computer Scientists



Paula M. Taupier

**Account Representative/Engineer in Training
Northeast Utilities Service Company
Hartford, CT**

Education:

B.S. - Electrical Engineering, Western New England College
M.S. - Electrical Engineering, University of Hartford

Job Description:

Account Representative involved in wholesale marketing, working with municipal utility companies to provide a wholesale power supply.

Advice to Students:

"Being a woman engineer in a predominantly male work environment offers unique challenges and opportunities."

Video Transcript:

"How I got into marketing is a complicated story. I started off in the distribution side of the company working on getting electricity to our customers' homes then I moved into the transmission engineering department working on the issue of electric and magnetic fields for our transmission facilities and decided that I had spent a long time in engineering and wanted to try something different. Given the communications and interpersonal skills that I had, I thought I might be well suited for marketing and sales."

Interview:

Paula Taupier works in wholesale marketing for Northeast Utilities. She began her career as a field engineer for Massachusetts Electric Company, making sure electricity reached the individual customers' homes. "I was the one who got called in the middle of the night to try and figure out what the problems were." When she changed companies, she took a staff engineering position, dealing with "the reliability of our systems to serve electricity our customers' homes and the reliability of our equipment. Taupier's purview also included concerns with electric and magnetic fields, which led to her taking a position in "the transmission engineering group, responsible for designing our transmission facilities and also predicting what the electric and magnetic field exposure would be from those facilities."

Using her technical skills and the communications skills she has developed on the job, Taupier has made a dramatic switch to wholesale marketing, the part of the company that markets bulk power to other utilities in New England. Taupier describes what she does: "I deal with customers on a daily basis, helping them solve their power supply problems and helping them address their long-term power supply needs. I interact with people on a daily basis as well as work with technical issues that they bring to my attention as their representative."

Taupier anticipates that deregulation of the electrical industry will create job opportunities for engineers. "New companies and new jobs will open up for them. I think having an engineering degree opens up many doors, given the fundamental thinking skills we have and the ability to problem solve." She adds, "Certainly, if you have the customer skills and the interpersonal skills, marketing might be something you might want to think about."

Taupier cautions female engineers not to expect things to be too easy. "I think being a woman engineer in a predominantly male work environment offers unique challenges and opportunities. I think that you have to continuously establish your credibility, and I think you have to continually work very hard to keep up the credibility that you have. And I think that it's probably a lot more work for female engineers to succeed, but it's possible."

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