

QUESTIONS
AND ANSWERS

TRICIA BREEGER

CEO of the Mitsubishi Electric
Power Products, Inc. (MEPPI)

WPS: How did you decide to go into mechanical engineering? Do you think the power systems industry is a good career choice for women and why?

Tricia Breeger: While in high school I developed a strong aptitude for math, logical learning, and abstract thinking. As I prepared to enter college my parents, both school teachers, asked me if I wanted to be a teacher. I said no, that wasn't the right profession for me. So, they strongly advised me to pursue engineering. It was my college advisor at the University of Arkansas who guided me towards mechanical engineering. He helped me appreciate that a mechanical engineering curriculum was broad enough to be successfully applied to numerous industries. He felt it was a solid base for a technical career path and also a strong foundation to build upon.

Regarding the power systems industry, when it comes to career choice, I don't often think in terms of what is good for women versus men. I believe it's more important to let your strengths, interests, and passions guide you towards the right career for you. If you are true to your own interests, you'll have the drive and passion to be successful regardless of whether the field is predominantly filled with men or women.

Q: Why did you decide to study business as well? How did both of these education paths help you in your career?

A: Studying business was an interest that developed several years into my career. Although I enjoyed applying my technical knowledge to my work, once I became aware of the broader responsibilities associated with running a business, I found myself drawn to it. I had begun to develop a strength in leadership and organizational management, but to be excellent I felt I needed a formal education in business. Not long after completing my MBA I ran my first P&L for MEPPI, and I was hooked. When talking about career paths I often counsel employees and colleagues to sincerely recognize their strengths and weaknesses and then put themselves in a position that best utilizes their strengths. Of course, with hard work and dedication, you can improve your weak areas. However, if you apply a similar commitment to your strong areas, the results are exponential. I had a passion and a talent for running businesses, and I knew it was the most impactful way for me to contribute to MEPPI's success.

MEPPI is a company that leads with engineering excellence in products, systems, and services. Therefore, a foundational education in engineering proved to be extremely beneficial in understanding and communicating the technical benefits and differentiating factors in the products and systems we provide. Early in my career I had the good fortune of leading service operations. Nothing emphasizes the importance of customer relationships and customer care like service. My service management role really honed my skills in customer engagement, conflict management, and the importance of the customer experience. I learned that even the most challenging field situations are an opportunity to demonstrate a commitment to your customer that will ultimately strengthen the relationship. In addition to service, running manufacturing operations has been a strong influence in my career. I carry my passion for manufacturing forward as the Vice Chair for Catalyst Connection, a non-profit organization supporting small and medium manufacturers in southwestern Pennsylvania.

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Photo: MEPPI



“Remaining a student of the business with a sincere curiosity in the markets and industries that you serve is key... Lead by example. Challenge employees to stretch themselves to higher levels of performance.”

Q: How did you start your professional journey in the power Systems industry? Do you have any practical advice for young people at the beginning of their own journey?

A: Prior to joining MEPPi, I was a design engineer for Westinghouse at their Bettis Atomic Power Laboratory. The move to MEPPi gave me the customer engagement experience I truly desired. So, it was really the opportunity to engage customers directly, paired with the opportunity to join a great organization, like MEPPi, that resulted in my move into the power systems industry. Today, the power systems industry is undergoing a transformation not seen in 50+ years. The clean energy transition, load growth, resiliency requirements, and federal funding are creating unprecedented momentum and change within our industry making it a very exciting place to be.

If any readers are interested in being a part of the clean energy transition and supporting decarbonization, MEPPi is a great option and a great place to work. We are driven by deep commitments to quality, integrity, our employees, and the customers that we serve. I am proud to say that we also have a strong and impactful Professional Women's Program.

Not necessarily unique to power systems but unique to finding your way in a male-dominated field... Whether you want to build a strong relationship with customers, colleagues, or executives, you need to commit some time to it.



Q: When did you first come into a leadership position? What are your obligations and responsibilities in your current role?

A: My first leadership position was the service management role I referred to earlier. I was given the opportunity to build a team from the ground up. We were a small organization with a big responsibility - customer care. The lessons I learned running service continue to guide my decision making today. This includes: a) deliver bad news quickly, honestly, and with transparency, b) do what you say you are going to do, c) every problem is an opportunity, and d) equipment issues don't kill a customer relationship, it's how you respond to them that is most impactful to the relationship.

In my current role as President & CEO, I oversee business strategy, growth, and development while transitioning MEPPi towards digitization and decarbonization. I continue to lead the company's operating groups with the purpose of creating increasing value for our customers through solutions, systems, products, and services all with the long-standing quality of the Mitsubishi Electric brand.

Q: What are the qualities of a good leader? What are the qualities you have that helped you in your journey towards leadership?

A: Remaining a student of the business with a sincere curiosity in the markets and industries that you serve is key. I recommend doing more listening than speaking, but then communicating clearly, and also writing things down. Lead by example. Challenge employees to stretch themselves to higher levels of performance.

Seeing things through the lens of our customers. Working and collaborating with talented and dedicated colleagues. Standing up for the needs of the business and our employees during difficult times. A sincere passion for the work.

Read the full article in our [September 2023 issue](#) of Women in Power Systems.

Photo: MEPPi

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