

Testimony

Katie Walthall Mehnert, CEO and Founder of Pink Petro & Experience Energy

Before the U. S. House of Representatives

Committee on Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Energy

Hearing on **“Clean Energy Infrastructure and the Workforce to Build It”**

Wednesday February 27, 2019

BACKGROUND

Dear Chairman Rush, Ranking Member Upton, Committee Members and fellow witnesses:

My name is Katie Mehnert and I'm Founder and CEO of Pink Petro. It's an honor to be here today to testify before this hearing and to have my 8-year old daughter, Ally Rees Mehnert present to see what's possible for women in America.

After two decades working for global oil and gas companies, notably Shell and BP in safety, environment and culture change, I left the corporate path to become an entrepreneur to fill unmet needs I saw in our workforce.

Pink Petro is working on four fronts to address the gender gap

- We help women inside the sector network to understand career paths, connect to role models, and to share their own experiences, so they can advance to their full potential.
- We funded the non-profit mentoring program, Lean In Energy that leverages software technology to pair mentors for women in energy across the value chain.
- We are marketing the energy industry through personal storytelling and career opportunities on our Experience Energy careers site with the aim to attract new recruits, women, minorities and millennials.
- We help companies to shape culture by bringing peers together to learn from each other.

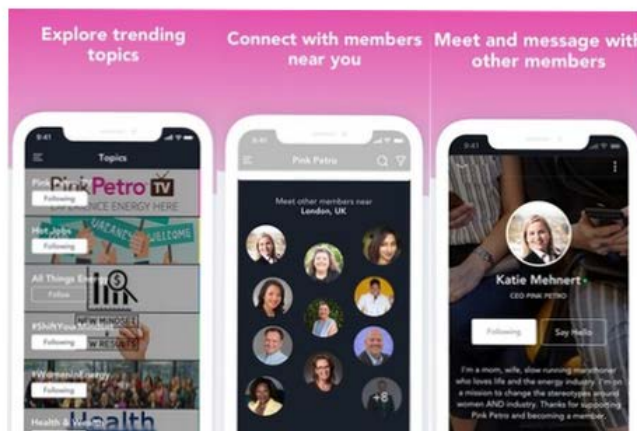
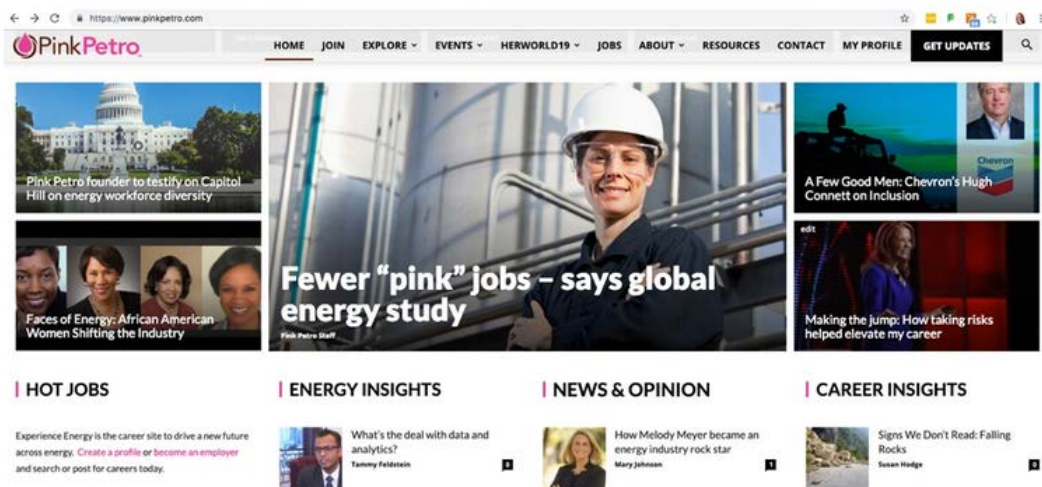
My company and our community of members believe that it is critical we bring all forms of energy and talent together to look at the workforce of the future to make the necessary investments to position America to take a leading role in the global energy transition.

OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY / INTERNAL FOCUS

Pink Petro launched in 2015 amidst a sharp drop in crude prices. Our digital community connects oil and gas members to knowledge share around best practices and storytelling. The website shares the stories of role models, career resources, jobs, continuing education and diversity research. Corporate and academic members provide a delegate to sit on our Global Community Council which provides a neutral platform for dialogue and actions to address gender equality and inclusive culture.

On an individual level, we keep members connected through a desktop and mobile app that allows for peer development, coaching, networking and knowledge sharing.

EXTERNAL WEBSITE



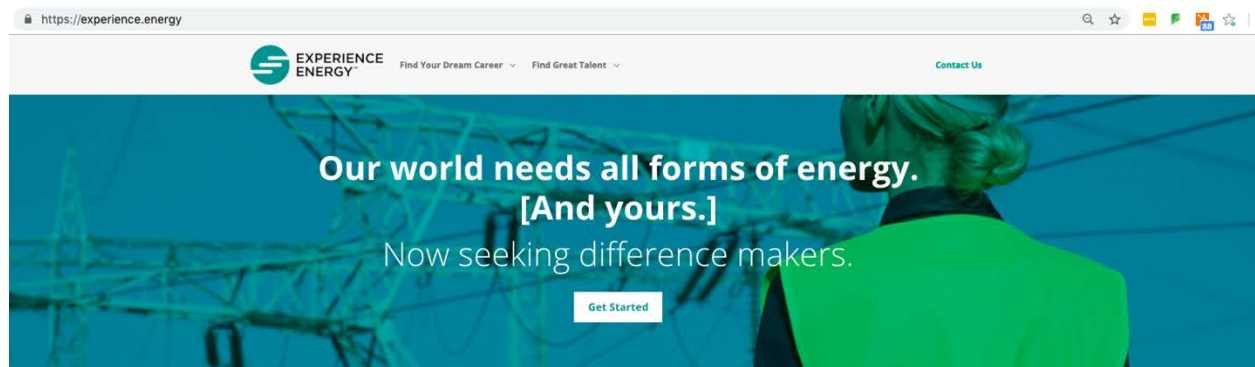
PRIVATE MEMBER APP

In January 2016 when oil plummeted to \$29 USD, The World Economic Forum and 22 energy and oil and gas CEOs published a Call to Action to End the Gender Gap¹. Pink Petro gathered stakeholders and prepared a response and action plan for consideration².

External Focus

After extensive research we determined that oil and gas is not the only part of the sector with projected job growth, as well as gender and minority gaps. We're extending the Community Council to connect with other energy firms in utilities, renewables and diversity organizations to develop a wider network of resources to address these gaps together.

In 2017, Pink Petro launched **Experience Energy**³, a careers site geared at helping energy companies connect to diverse candidates. My vision is to educate new recruits on the exciting benefits and social impact one can achieve in energy.



In 2018, in an effort to address growing mentoring needs at scale, Pink Petro, Hess Corporation, Emerson, FedEx Corporation, WorleyParsons and Vantage Energy

¹ [WEF Call to Action to End the Gender Gap signed by 22 oil and gas CEOs](#)

² [Pink Petro Community Response to WEF Call to Action, November 2016](#)

³ [Experience Energy Careers Website](#)

supported the formation of a non-profit organization **Lean In Energy**⁴. Utilizing **Chronus**⁵ Mentoring technology to match mentors, Lean In Energy has matched mentoring groups across oil and gas, utilities, and renewables in the US, Europe and some parts of the Far East. The organization is presently exploring ways to resource itself through returnship programs offered by major universities across the USA.

OPPORTUNITIES

This work is addressing three opportunities the industry faces in creating a diverse and inclusive workforce.

First, we need to make the industry a more highly sought-after career choice.

Energy underpins everything we do. There's a strong correlation between human development and energy consumption⁶, however there is a misperception of its positive impact on society. It's an exciting time, however. Billions of people are being lifted out of low incomes, helping to drive economic growth and the demand for energy. And the transition to a lower-carbon energy system is opening up a wide range of economic possibilities. These are all reasons we need to involve women and underrepresented populations in the workforce.

Second, we need increased understanding around the diversity of jobs and the skillsets needed.

There is a mindset in America that everyone must have a 4-year college degree, which is desirable but not necessary. Workforce development programs in skills like welding, electronics, technical operations and like go unfilled because there is a perception that they are lower status roles despite offering well-paying careers. Companies need a wide

⁴ [Lean In Energy Website](#)

⁵ [Chronus Matching Site](#)

⁶ [2040 Energy Outlook, BP](#)

range of talent. The skills of the energy workforce for tomorrow are not the same as they were in the past. As the industry moves into the transition, new ways of working and new technologies like artificial intelligence, drones, big data, robotics and blockchain are play a role in the jobs of the future.

The Blue Collar to Green Collar Jobs Development Act of 2019 recognizes theses needs and the government's role. I agree with the recommendation to language develop a comprehensive and detailed understanding of the workforce skills needs of energy-related industries, and job opportunities in such energy-related industries, by State and by region; and sharing this information with the public in an annual report on numbers of jobs and diversity within the energy industry. sWe need to make energy careers visible, well understood, and attractive.

Finally, diversity is critical to energy, but we need to be inclusive and work together across all forms and all people.

As I explained to **CNBC**⁷ and **Barron's**⁸, our economy and our nation stands to gain tremendously from having greater diversity and inclusion in energy. The time to act is now. With the best and the brightest coming together in a diverse and inclusive energy workforce America has the opportunity to lead in the global energy transition. However, for us to accelerate this work, we must work together and join forces, all aspects of energy and all people to progress.

I'm very happy that you, as leaders in Congress, are looking to take action and welcome any questions you have. Thank you for having me a part of this conversation.

Respectfully submitted,

Katie Walthall Mehnert, CEO & Founder, Pink Petro & Experience Energy

⁷ [Just 15% of the oil and gas workforce is female – these women want to change that](#) – CNBC, January 2019

⁸ [The Financial Case for Hiring More Women in Energy](#) – Barron's, January 2019