



We speak to C&S Partners's most recent arrival about the energy transition in telecoms, and the transition's main challenges from an HR perspective.

What attracted you to join C&S Partners, and what do you hope to achieve there ?

I came from a sales and marketing background, then transitioned to human resources (HR) and talent development, mainly in telecoms, years ago. I sensed it was time for me to remain in this advisory role, but not just for one company: having a preference for leadership advisory boutiques, I believed C&S Partners could be a great adventure. The fact that it's a small boutique is key for agility: it's truly international, built with a real variety of pasts and experiences – not all from HR; some from operational – which is a real plus for me when it comes to advising corporations. The fact that so many of the Partners are from the energy sector also excited me.

But the richness of the combined backgrounds of the Partners would mean little without the values, which include nononsense advice; telling the customer the truth even when it's not easy to say; and paying as much attention to execution as to strategy.

For the last seven years, you were at energy cables and solutions company Nexans. How much of your role involved thinking about the energy transition ?

I had two roles there: first, for five years, VP of Talent & Learning, then as HR leader of Nexans's telecoms solutions arm. I am well versed in talent acquisition and learning/development.

Nexans is part of the energy transition: it makes energy cables and is involved in, among other things, transporting energy from offshore wind farms. Heavy changes in the electricity grids have been triggered by the transition. I've been working with people in engineering and manufacturing, for example, whose skills are about helping the utilities change their setups or building complex projects involving several governments and private bodies.

You have experience in talent development and human resources in general. How would these skills be best applied to the energy transition, and what are the main challenges from an HR perspective ?

Whatever kind of big transformation we're going through, we need to develop leaders who are true to themselves, and who are not just speaking the right corporate languages but are truly able to seriously embrace change – which means rethinking day after the day the way they operate and lead the teams. They need the courage to learn and to remember that what brought them this far will not necessarily bring them to the next step. In talent management, we need to bring a group of leaders that are super solid, who can manage through complexity while remaining convinced of what they do and able to execute properly.

The energy transition is such a serious topic that corporations must keep challenging their leadership pipeline – especially with potential talent shortages ahead. They must carry on developing technology, business and human acumen, and bring consistency and transparency. Developing competent, humane leaders who are serious about the energy transition is part of our responsibility.

What did you find heartening and not heartening about COP26, and how does it relate to the telecoms industry ?

I'm still digesting all the elements! What is striking for me is the renewed interest in the role played by nuclear power, and the groups of people, especially younger people, wanting to investigate what the nuclear industry can bring to the transition. These are very mature behaviors compared to a few years ago.

What changes do we need to see from telecoms companies in general when it comes to the energy transition ?

The data part of telecoms is consuming an immense amount of energy; we'll need substantial technological progress to reduce this. But one beautiful combination of telecoms capabilities and the energy transition is everything related to smart connections and smart grids. Telecoms players can have an important role in rethinking and bringing a new intelligence to this connectivity, making it part of our everyday life to ensure everyone plays a role in the transition.



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