



Women in Microwaves

Women in (Wireless) Power

■ **Valentina Palazzi** 

The IEEE Wireless Power Technology Conference and Expo is a prestigious event, gathering experts from both the IEEE Microwave Theory and Technology Society (MTT-S) and the IEEE Power Electronics Society community, working on wireless power technology solutions for a variety of applications, ranging from electric vehicles to Internet of Things and medical devices. Since its first edition in Perugia, Italy (my home region), in 2013, it has grown tremendously, attracting ever more people from industry and academia interested in the latest advances in the field.

The 2023 edition was held in San Diego, CA, USA, and I had the privilege to organize the Women in Microwaves event. The event consisted of a plenary session, which took place on 6 June 2023 in the Emerald Ballroom of the Westin San Diego Bayview Hotel (see Figure 1).

The session was titled “Women in (Wireless) Power.” I chose this thought-provoking title to raise attention to



the session and to highlight how cool working on wireless power can be. The percentage of female researchers and professionals in power electronics

is still significantly low [1]. However, the design of power technologies is extremely fascinating: a wireless power transfer system, for instance, is composed of many different components, and each of them needs to work in perfect harmony with the others since we cannot afford to waste any drop of power. This topic requires creativity, rigor, perseverance, and most of all, the capability to think out of the box to solve the many challenges along the road. So, I wanted a title that expressed the feeling of achievement and control that one can have working in this field.



Figure 1. The Women in Microwaves event at the 2023 IEEE Wireless Power Technology Conference and Expo.

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Figure 2. A pin displaying the logo of the Women in (Wireless) Power session.

As a small gift to the attendees, pins with the logo of the event were distributed at the entrance (see Figure 2). I would like to express my gratitude to Baisakhi Bardyopadhyay, member of the MTT-S Electronic Information Committee, Department of Electrical Engineering, IIT Kanpur, India, for creating such a gorgeous logo.

At this event, we had three distinguished speakers: Prof. Jasmin Grosinger, associate professor at Graz University of Technology, Austria; Jennifer Grenz, chief revenue officer at Ossia; and Amy Barzdukas, chief marketing officer at WiTricity (see Figure 3). The speakers provided engaging talks about their experiences and their feelings about technology.

Jasmin recalled the main steps of her career, highlighting the key turning points in her studies and research. Then, she focused on her achievements and showed her latest research results on HF RF identification in environments with metal.

Jennifer provided a powerful talk on the importance of developing soft skills such as leadership and people management and stressed the importance



Jasmin Grosinger
Associate Professor,
Graz University
of Technology



Jennifer Grenz
Chief Revenue Officer
at Ossia



Amy Barzdukas
CMO at WiTricity

Figure 3. The distinguished speakers: Prof. Jasmin Grosinger, Jennifer Grenz, and Amy Barzdukas.

of focusing on commercialization of research products and on understanding what the market wants, to avoid self-referencing design.

Amy described her experience of working in different tech companies, highlighting the struggles and the opportunities that she found along her path. She also underlined the impact that her career had on her growth and how she managed to learn a lesson from each experience.

After the talks, there was a long question and answer session, where the speakers addressed questions from the audience concerning different aspects of their talk (see Figure 4).

I was amazed by the level of engagement that they achieved. Some people from the audience also decided to share their personal experiences, which made the discussion even more touching. Overall, it was a memorable event!

I take this chance to thank the general chairs of the conference, Regan Zane and Manos Tentzeris, and all the staff, for their availability and strong

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Figure 4. The question and answer session.

support of the event. I thank the great audience, for their presence and interest in the session. I also would like to express my gratitude to the speakers for accepting my invitation, for their remarkable stories, and for their willingness to put themselves in the game. I thank them and all the great women who worked extremely hard to reach the top of their career, for being role models for the present and future generations.

Reference

- [1] K. A. Kim, L. E. Kegley, S. Watts Butler, C. Di Marino, M. Rasheed, and R. S. K. Moorthy, "Women in IEEE PELS: Progress and opportunities [Women in Engineering]," in *IEEE Power Electron. Mag.*, vol. 9, no. 2, pp. 74–81, Jun. 2022, doi: 10.1109/MPPEL.2022.3169875.