

BNP Paribas Personal Finance invites you to discover On The Way, the podcast that explores the paths to responsible consumption. Whether entrepreneurs, business people or researchers, On The Way gives a voice to those who day after day are helping to develop more sustainable consumption. Welcome, and I hope you enjoy listening

Hello, my name is Joaquín Gasca and I'm the Commercial Director at Engel Energy. So first of all, thank you very much for inviting me to speak on your podcast. It's a great pleasure to be here to talk about renewable energy and sustainability. I'd like to start by talking a bit about my professional career, and what led me to this field.

I started my career at Oracle, first of all in marketing, and then I moved into business development in the commercial field. Later I moved into the "Telcos" sector, when France Telecom started out in Spain: Wanadoo, Uni2, and Orange. All those sorts of companies that they rolled out. And then after a brief time at ONO, I decided to set up a consulting firm, focusing on business models, called Sendera, which, over time was integrated into a larger one, called Nexe.

And now I'm working on major future challenges at Engel Energy, in a new and developing market, with some major current and future opportunities.

My decision to join Engel Energy and to commit to the renewable energy sector, comes from a mix of very important factors. It all started from a desire for personal and professional growth, but later it evolved.

When you consider making the leap to another organisation, you really evaluate what new challenges you're best suited to, and you're looking for challenges in line with the values of social responsibility, the environment, and so on. The Engel Energy project was a perfect match for my expectations in those regards.

And also, the organisation's partners and the business model we're setting up were some of the other very important factors that I took into account when moving to an organisation like this. It's an organisation that's open, transparent, and has clear objectives about its identity.

Working at a company like this allows me to implement an idea that I deeply believe in: that sustainability is the future, and there are no two ways about it. Out of necessity, and to follow our survival instinct, the future has to be sustainable, because it's the only alternative we've got left. We're moving towards a very dangerous increase in temperature of over two degrees, and global warming is going to get even worse if we don't take truly significant and drastic measures. This situation is our own fault, and ultimately we created it. The greenhouse gases from fossil fuels, as well as extreme deforestation, have left our planet facing this dire situation. We've got to fix it, we've got to solve it, and one advantage is that we're now aware of it.

At Engel Energy we go beyond solar installations, we take on the role of an energy advisor, and we facilitate the eco-transition towards a more efficient, economical, and sustainable energy consumption model. Accessing renewable energies is only the first step towards later accessing many other ways of improving energy efficiency, and getting the most out of the solar panels that we install in homes.

In order for a family to truly save, and reduce their carbon footprint, it's essential to adapt to this new form of consuming. Installing solar panels is just the first step towards being able to use, for example, smarter appliances, or electric car chargers that save automatically by making the most of the highest production hours of solar installations, or a virtual battery that lets you take advantage of all the surpluses, and reduce your electricity bill, along with lots of other ways of improving energy efficiency in your home.

In this regard, when we select suppliers, we start from the basis of quality. So, we work with the most efficient solar panel manufacturers on the market (meaning higher energy production in less space, along with a 25-year production guarantee). We only work with top-tier brands, it's a really long-term investment, and so the quality of products is non-negotiable for us.

To move forward with the ecological transition, we all need to do our bit, and fortunately financial entities, such as in our case Cetelem, support us to facilitate access to renewable energies for our customers. Maybe in some cases the hurdle for installing solar panels is economic, even though installations have become far cheaper, and in many cases in four or five years they will have already paid for themselves, which is why it's a great advantage for us to be able to offer financing with the best terms.

Moving towards an economic and sustainable consumption model is in our own hands, and if humanity keeps moving in the same direction, then we can make the necessary changes to preserve our planet. There's not a moment to lose, but there's still time.

Installing solar panels is key to this transition, it's the starting point for everything. It's the starting point towards a more responsible consumption model, whilst providing multiple advantages to consumers. Saving money is one of the main advantages, but it's not just that. In fact, it's just the start. It's a chain: if you have solar panels then you can have a virtual battery, then you can install an electric car charger, you can install a physical battery, and then you can use smart appliances that make the best use of the hours when your panels are producing power. It's not just "fit the panels and forget about them", but it's fitting the panels and starting on the road towards the ecological transition and even more savings.

With Engel Energy, that initial step of installing the solar panels is an agile and simple process. It always starts with an obligation-free personalised evaluation. It's carried out by a specialist from our company, an energy advisor who evaluates each individual case, and who makes an approximate calculation of the installation that's most suitable, and if it's not suitable, then they

say so. That evaluation is the most important part because each installation is different, and it's important to have a real specialist to inform and advise you.

Then, in around two weeks, the installation can begin, and in one or two days the installation is finished at the customer's home. You don't have to worry about legal processes, building permits, legislation, or anything else. We take care of everything.

Once the installation is finished, Engel Energy solar panels have a 25-year production guarantee, so you can be sure that they're going to last for at least a quarter of a century, although it's normal for them to last even longer. And to extend their useful life to the maximum, and to give you the best performance, it's advisable to have insurance and maintenance insurance, just in case. That said, they don't really need much maintenance, we recommend that you clean and inspect them once a year, to make sure everything's working properly.

That cleaning and inspecting helps the panels make better use of sunlight, which of course is where their energy comes from. The more hours of sunshine you have, the more hours you can produce energy. That's why in summer you get more. But remember that there are urban legends that say that, for example, when it's really hot, solar panels produce much more, and that's not true. Because when solar panels overheat, they produce less energy. When it's cooler the panels produce more.

In Spain there are plenty of hours of sunlight. To give you an idea, the leading European country for solar panels is Germany. And the installations up there that produce the most, due to their location and orientation, would seem like little to us down here. Thanks to the number of hours we get we can easily outdo the production of any installation in Germany.

One of the myths about installing solar panels is that it's expensive and very complicated. But really, with current electricity prices, and the fact that installations have become cheaper in recent years, not to mention the amount of assistance and subsidies that are available, installing solar panels is very affordable and very profitable for everyone. Now's really the time when access to renewables is being democratised, thanks to their price. The technology's getting better and cheaper all the time. In the beginning it was less efficient, and was more expensive, but now we're in a different phase. It's a more efficient technology, and at a lower cost. Now we're in the optimisation and price reduction phase. They're getting better all the time, with costs that are more suited to a wider market.

In part, this technology and these installations are cheaper thanks to the assistance and subsidies that are currently available. There are the next generation funds, where you can get up to 50% off your investment, reductions in your property tax and in the construction, installations and works tax, as well as deductions in income tax.

The future of solar energy in Spain is getting better all the time. It's getting easier, more affordable, and profitable to access solar energy. Companies in this sector are constantly working hard on research and development for new products and services which will allow more and more people to benefit from this type of energy. For example, at Engel Energy we're developing a new service, and while I'm afraid I can't give you any details yet, it will greatly facilitate access to solar energy for households that, until now, didn't want to or couldn't afford to get it.

In order to massively roll out the energy transition of households, ever more facilities are being provided, such as financing, competitive prices, and maintenance services, and more and more products and services are being designed to help people get the most out of their installations.

In the future, multiple solutions will be developed to make the most of renewable energies: leasing solutions, new financing formats, and new technologies, combining complete solutions with different ways of generating, or ways of optimising energy: solar, aero thermal, and more.

Something very important in the future will be new patterns of behaviour in terms of energy use, that will allow people to be more efficient when using energy more intensively, but with lower and more efficient consumption.

And to move towards the ecological transition, and the greater energy efficiency that everyone's talking about at the moment, we utilise products and services that complement solar panels, for example batteries, both virtual as well as physical, which are already a reality, and we're already marketing them.

It's crucial for us to be able to make the best possible use of energy.

Virtual and physical batteries are solutions for making much more use of the energy people produce. Virtual batteries have the major advantage that, at least with Engel Energy, they're free, they cost you nothing, and they let you make the most of absolutely all the energy you produce. The energy that you produce but don't consume is saved in a sort of virtual wallet, where you save up that energy in the form of euros, and then you get the balance deducted from your bill.

The most important advice I can give to your audience is: don't wait around any longer - go for it! There are solutions for all your different needs. People should do it in order to be environmentally responsible, for their own benefit, and for the benefit of their own community.

Changing the way we consume energy is not only necessary for the survival of our planet, but it's also very economical. Once you've got your installation as a starting point, my advice is to not stop there. That's just the starting point. It's not enough to just put solar panels on your roof to fix the environment and reduce your electricity bill to zero. What's needed is a significant change in our behaviours in terms of energy use, trying to consume more energy during the hours of peak production, and use less energy during off peak hours, and using appliances with good energy ratings. And, above all, trying to eliminate our use of fossil fuels at home, for example, swapping your petrol-powered car for an electric one, or switching from gas to aero-thermal energy or electricity. The first step is to carry out a personalised study for each case, which is completely free with Engel Energy.

Basically, in the end, the transition towards a more responsible consumption model starts with making a change to our own habits. At Engel Energy, we support all our customers in this process, and facilitate access to a way of consuming energy that's highly environmentally friendly and that helps improve people's quality of life.

For me, I've always been proud to be part of this company, and it's been a great pleasure to share a little of what we do with you. I hope you enjoyed hearing about it, and most of all that it gives people a bit of impetus to opt for greener energy with Engel Energy. Thank you all very much, and I'm sure we'll be seeing you soon.

You can find all the episodes of On The Way on your favourite podcast platforms, and on the personal-finance.bnpparibas website. Any links or references made by guests can be found in the introductory text of each episode. And if you'd like to take to our microphone and tell us your story, please contact nicolas.meunier@bnpparibas.com. See you very soon.