

Shining a light on solar power



EXECUTIVE SUITE
Patricia Kitchen

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Having majored in economics and Japanese at the University of Vermont, David G. Schieren started his career on Wall Street in equity sales, specializing in companies in Japan, which at the time, he says, "was a global leader in renewable energy technology."

"I started to get very interested in energy issues," says Schieren, 32. "I was very concerned, frankly, with money flows and global imbalances related to oil."

He became so engaged that in August 2001 he left Wall Street with an eye toward diving into "self-directed research" on renewable energy.

He co-founded EmPower in 2003. And to further round out his education he enrolled the next year in the master's degree program in energy management at New York Institute of Technology.

What led you to focus on solar?

"The solar decathlon project crystallized my commitment and deep confidence in solar power [while he was at NYIT]." (That's a U.S. Department of Energy biannual challenge to 20 collegiate teams to design and build solar-powered houses.)

Your perspective on the slowly improving economy?

"Banks and credit unions are back at the table; we see access to capital has improved dramatically as compared to two years ago. . . Investors are back in."

Your main role as a leader?

"One of my most important jobs is to inspire people. We're working on a mission here. We almost approach renewable energy as a military operation. We refer to it as 'operation solar century.' We want to make this the dominant energy technology of this century."

Book read recently?

"Who: The A Method for Hiring," by Geoff Smart and Randy Street, which "provides practical tools for building a repeatable hiring system that enables you to hire right."

What do you look for in a job candidate?

"A great skill set. Also people who have a true passion for renewable ener-



David G. Schieren, chief executive of EmPower Solar, charges his Chevy Volt.

CORPORATE snapshot

Name: David G. Schieren, chief executive

Company: EmPower Solar, Island Park — engineers/installers solar electric systems; installs charging stations for electric vehicles

What they do: "Empower people to take control of their energy costs and environmental footprint."

Staff: 24 full-time; two part-time; in roles such as engineer, architect, installation technician, sales, marketing

Revenue: \$10 million in 2010

gy. It's fairly easy to uncover that in an interview. Do they demonstrate easily their knowledge about energy issues? Are they familiar with the industry?"

How do you keep your creative juices flowing?

"I always take Saturdays off and try hard to take a week off twice a year. Even in the winter I walk on the beach. The beach is a huge inspiration. I'm very attuned to the environment and the ocean." Also, "I try intentionally to study and learn things that are slightly unrelated to business."

Your most fun workplace perk?

"My priority parking space and getting to charge my car [Chevy Volt] at the company charging station."

If there were a fire alarm, what in your office would you save first?

"Second, after people, I would make sure my electric vehicle is safe."

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