



SHE BUILDS NATION

The Business Case for Supporting
Women in Construction

MARCH 2024 | LUMBER

[LUMBERFI.COM/SHEBUILDSNATION](https://lumberfi.com/shebuildsnation)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

■ Introduction	01
■ Key Figures	02
■ State of the Industry	03
Opportunities for advancement	05
Access to training and professional development	05
Equal pay with men in the same positions	07
Overcoming stereotypes and earning respect	08
Integrating within a male-dominated industry culture	09
Existence of gender-friendly restrooms at construction sites	11
Availability of gender-friendly and maternity-friendly safety equipment at construction sites	12
Support system for women	13
Ability to attract and retain talent	14
Career Opportunities and Growth	16
■ Conclusion	18
■ Spotlight	19
Jennifer Todd	20
Coralee Beatty	24
Gloria Marie Fuentes	27
Andrea Couture	29
Cory Fisk	32





Introduction

The "She Builds Nation: The Business Case for Supporting Women in Construction" report delves into the critical issues women face in the construction industry and advocates for greater support and inclusivity within the construction ecosystem.

We have gathered insights from diverse voices, including one hundred women in trade, construction owners, and industry executives. Our methodology included a ratings-based survey, allowing participants to assess various challenges encountered by women on construction sites, ranging from pay disparity to the availability of gender-friendly safety equipment. The results of this survey have shed light on the realities women face in construction, illuminating the urgent need for action and support.

We thank women owners such as Jennifer Todd, MLS, Gloria Marie Fuentes, Andrea Couture, and Coralee Beatty whose invaluable insights and recommendations have enriched this report. Additionally, we acknowledge construction influencers like Lance Furuyama, whose efforts have amplified the reach of our survey to ensure representation from key stakeholders.

"She Builds Nation" aims to catalyze meaningful change within the construction industry, empowering more women to enter and excel in this traditionally male-dominated field. By highlighting the business case for supporting women in construction, we aspire to inspire companies to adopt policies and practices that promote inclusivity, fostering a fairer and more dynamic industry landscape.

Join us on this journey as we advocate for a construction industry where every woman has the opportunity to contribute, thrive, and truly build nations.



KEY FIGURES

She Builds Nation



72%

of respondents believe there are ample **opportunities for women to advance** in the construction industry.

66%

of respondents say that there is potential for women to **thrive in entrepreneurship** within the industry.

63%

said they were able to **overcome stereotypes and earn respect** in the industry.



68%

agree that there is **access to training and professional development** for women.

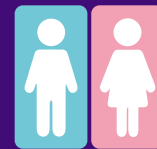
67%

of them found **integrating within a male-dominated industry culture** to be easy.



67%

of them said that **gender-friendly safety equipment** is not available at construction sites.



85%

of them said that there are no **maternity-friendly safety equipment** at construction sites.



64%

of them said that the availability of **gender-friendly restrooms** at construction sites was a challenge.

55%

of respondents said that there is no adequate **support system** for women.

52%

of them are finding it challenging to **attract talent and retain** them.

51%

say that the industry does offer **equal pay with men** in the same position.





State of the Industry

According to the Bureau of Labor, a mere 10% of the construction industry's workforce comprises women, with only 4% actively engaged in trade work at construction sites.

What's paradoxical is the industry's desperate need for skilled labor and the gender disparity that is recorded in recent surveys.

In 2023, 85% of construction firms grappled with unfilled positions, with 88% specifically seeking craft workers for on-site projects. Yet, the actual presence of women in labor roles on construction sites remains disproportionately low at 4%.

While many women hold roles within construction firms, primarily in administrative or support capacities, their representation in on-site labor is markedly sparse. Moreover, only 13% of construction companies are owned by women.



What lies at the heart of this disparity?

- Is it a dearth of opportunities or inadequate training? Or perhaps it's the enduring stereotype that construction is inherently male-dominated, perpetuating entrenched prejudices.
- What barriers deter women from participating in the construction industry?

In this report, we embark on a quest for answers to these pressing questions.

We gathered insights from **100 female construction owners, executives, and decision-makers** regarding the key challenges they encounter on construction sites. Utilizing a rating scale for our survey, here's how the feedback can be interpreted:

Interpretation of Survey Rating Scale System

Rating	Description
10	Completely agree, completely satisfied, or the highest positive opinion
9	Exceptionally agree or exceptionally satisfied
8	Extremely agree or extremely satisfied
7	Strongly agree, very satisfied, or strongly positive opinion
6	Agree, satisfied, or have a positive opinion
5	Somewhat agree or slightly satisfied
4	Neutral or neither agree nor disagree
3	Somewhat disagree or slightly dissatisfied
2	Disagree, dissatisfied, or negative opinion
1	Strongly disagree, very dissatisfied, or strongly negative opinion

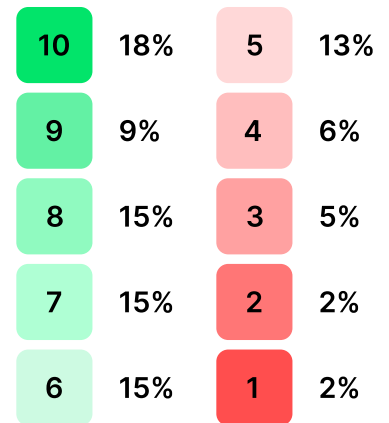


Opportunities for advancement

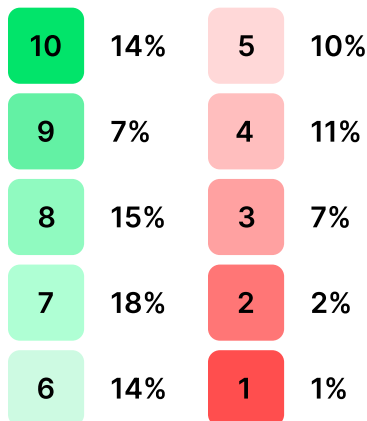
When we surveyed women in the construction industry, one of the key inquiries we made was about the opportunities available for career advancement.

Are there sufficient pathways for women to progress in their careers within this field?

The resounding response is yes. **A striking 72% of respondents affirm that there are ample opportunities for women to advance in the construction industry.**



Survey results #1: Opportunities for advancement



Survey results #2: Access to training and professional development

Access to training and professional development

Access to training and professional development is a cornerstone in the construction industry, particularly for women endeavoring to shatter stereotypes.

While 69% of women acknowledge the existence of access to training and professional development in this field, a significant portion feels that awareness regarding these opportunities remains alarmingly low.



Jennifer Todd, President of LMS General Contractors

Jennifer Todd, President of LMS General Contractors, asserts, "Undoubtedly, there is access to training and professional development. However, often women lack the male allyship and mentorship needed to advance their careers. Compared to men in construction, women are afforded fewer opportunities due to lack of sponsorship. So while access exists, the male championship needed remains a pressing question."



Gloria Marie Fuentes, the owner of GloJoy, a Construction Management company, affirms the availability of training and development opportunities for women in the construction sector.

“Access to training and professional development are definitely available within unions and government-funded organizations. These initiatives provide essential skills and present additional opportunities for minorities. There's a concerted effort to attract more women to the construction industry and expand its recruitment base. I am encouraged by the resurgence of shop classes in schools and the renewed focus on introducing construction to younger generations.



Gloria Marie Fuentes, GloJoy Construction

As we anticipate the baby boomer generation's retirement in the next four to five years, there remains a significant need to address industry gaps, and women are well-positioned to contribute to filling these voids.

Many women, including myself, are successfully transitioning from diverse careers to make meaningful contributions to this thriving industry."

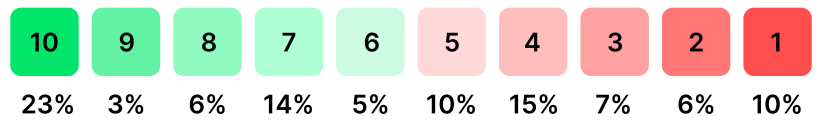


Equal pay with men in the same positions

The issue of equal pay for women, compared to men in similar positions, is a global concern spanning across all sectors.

Our survey revealed that 51% of women believe the industry maintains fairness by providing equal pay, while 49% feel they are not compensated at the same level as their male counterparts.

Moreover, there is a prevailing sentiment that this inequality is even more pronounced for women of color, particularly those who are Black or Brown.



Survey results #3: Equal pay

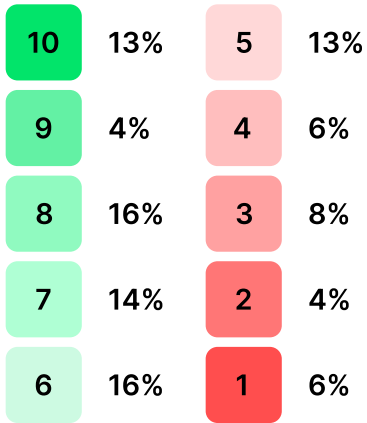


Coralee Beatty, Thrive HQ

Coralee Beatty, a former construction business owner turned mentor, stated, "While the disparity exists in the industry, it's not as pronounced as in other sectors. This is partly due to the presence of unions, which often operate under stringent regulations. **Many women find security and support within unions, which can mitigate some of the wage gaps seen elsewhere.**"

Gloria Marie Fuentes adds further insight, highlighting the role of assertiveness in negotiating salaries: "Overall, I think women are paid less than men, simply because they don't like to speak up in those situations. A man will go in and say, 'this is what I want to get paid' and be very firm about it. Whereas, a woman would tiptoe a lot with the job description, and overanalyze things. My suggestion to women would be to be assertive."





Survey results #4:
Overcoming stereotypes

"Now that we've identified the stereotypes, and we understand the steps required to garner respect. Now, it's time to put our knowledge into action and implement the necessary measures to achieve our goals."

- Jennifer Todd

Overcoming stereotypes and earning respect

Let's face the reality head-on: the construction industry remains heavily male-dominated, with a mere 10% of its workforce comprised of women and only 4% actively engaged in on-site work alongside their male counterparts.

The urgent need for more women in this field is undeniable. It's about dismantling stereotypes, fostering equal contribution, and earning the respect of the collective—a journey akin to joining a close-knit tribe.

Remarkably, our survey reveals a glimmer of progress. **63% of respondents express that they have successfully shattered these stereotypes.**

This suggests a growing awareness of these biases and a concerted effort by construction firms to overcome them.



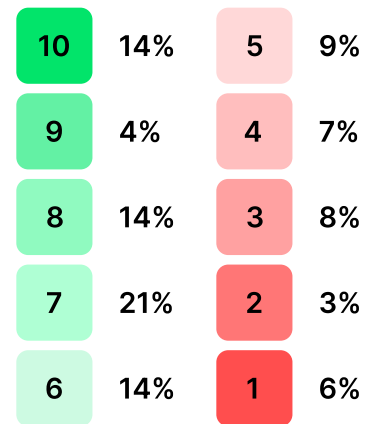


Integrating within a male-dominated industry culture

While overcoming stereotypes presents one challenge, seamlessly integrating into a male-dominated industry culture poses another hurdle.

Our survey findings indicate that 67% of respondents found the integration process relatively smooth.

However, voices like Jennifer Todd's highlight the nuanced nature of this issue, emphasizing the significant role played by company culture.



Survey results #5:
Integrating within a male-dominated industry culture

Jennifer shares, "When discussing skilled tradeswomen—those on-site—endure a unique set of challenges. Women leave the construction field in part because they lack support at work. It's not a construction issue, it's a workplace culture issue. If the goal is to attract the next generation, the construction industry must shift from being project-centered to people-centered.

With only 4% of women in these roles, it's clear that there's room for improvement.

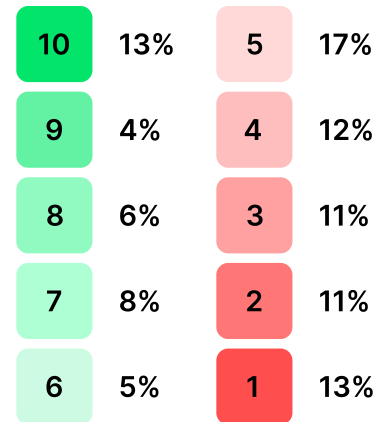
Considering construction's current labor workforce shortage, outreach to women is imperative. At the same time, retaining the existing workforce of women in construction is paramount."



Gender-friendly restrooms at construction sites

It's striking to observe the absence of basic amenities tailored for women in trade roles on construction sites.

A noteworthy 64% of respondents have raised concerns regarding the lack of availability of gender-neutral restrooms at these sites.



Survey results #6:
Gender-friendly restrooms



Jennifer Todd aptly highlights the issue thus, "I don't think there is such a thing as gender-friendly restrooms in construction sites. It's a portable potty, and you have to hope it has tissues. **This is definitely an issue, especially for women who are mothers who wish to pump or deal with their menstrual cycle.** The accommodations for these are not there."

Similarly, **Gloria Marie Fuentes** emphasizes the necessity for gender-specific restrooms, stating,

"No, there are no gender-friendly restrooms at construction sites, and we need to have gender-specific restrooms for obvious reasons. Women sit, and men don't. We have a monthly menstrual cycle, and men don't. We need a wastebasket, and it's so basic. These are things that a man planning out the mobilization for the field is really not thinking about. Involving women in the planning process is the next step in the construction industry."

The lack of gender-specific restrooms means women are often left to navigate uncomfortable and sometimes unhygienic conditions, impacting their ability to perform their duties comfortably and safely.

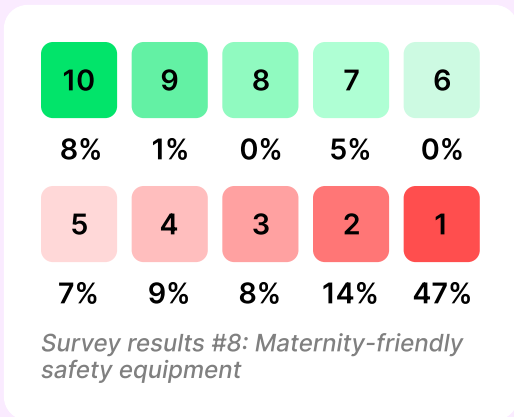
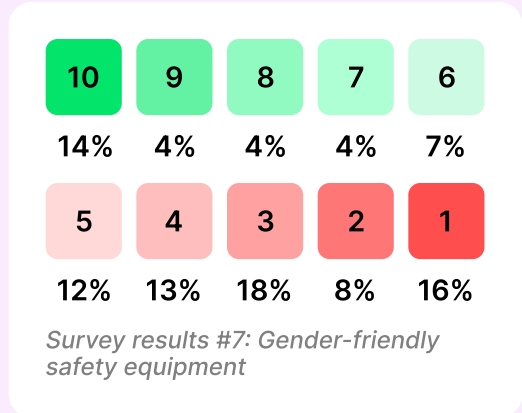


Availability of gender-friendly and maternity-friendly safety equipment at construction sites

The availability of gender-friendly and maternity-friendly safety equipment at construction sites is yet another critical and often overlooked aspect. **This concern was brought to the forefront by 67% of respondents, emphasizing the risks associated with the unavailability of safety gear tailored specifically to women's bodies.**

While gender-specific safety gear options like vests, hard hats, and suits are available on the market today, companies have been slow to incorporate them into their inventory.

Additionally, the issue of maternity-friendly safety equipment still needs to be addressed. **A staggering 85% of respondents answered with an emphatic 'no' when asked about the existence of such equipment at construction sites.** Given the scarcity of gender-friendly safety equipment, finding maternity-friendly options seems nearly impossible.





Gloria Marie Fuentes sheds light on this issue from a practical standpoint, stating, "There are companies where gender-friendly equipment is available; however, it is very few and far between. **Often, companies have one-size-fits-all equipment for the workforce, including large men, petite women, women with curves, and all kinds of shapes and sizes.** Recognizing these diverse needs, I've found that for small companies like mine, it's more practical to provide the workforce or subcontractor's team with an allowance to purchase PPE that fits them precisely. Rather than sharing equipment, this approach ensures a safer and more hygienic environment."

Jennifer Todd underscores the dilemma from a construction owner's perspective, noting that decisions often revolve around cost considerations. Purchasing PPE in bulk typically leads to lower costs, while smaller quantities can be more expensive. Consequently, some companies need more time to make the transition, balancing price against safety. However, it's crucial to acknowledge that inadequate and ill-fitting PPE poses risks to individuals regardless of cost considerations.

With only 4% of women in trade currently working on construction sites, the challenge for construction companies to supply equipment in bulk is evident. However, this situation may evolve positively with an increase in the number of women entering the workforce.

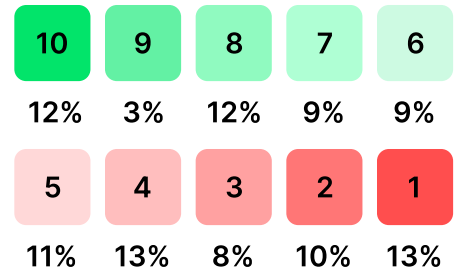


Support system for women

Perceptions regarding support systems for women in construction vary among respondents.

While 55% expressed inadequate support, 45% held a contrary view. The reality likely lies somewhere in between.

Gloria Marie Fuentes sheds light on the importance of building a support system, stating, "There's a very robust online community for women who are now rallying together to create reports like this and also to build a community. Women on the internet are vocal and loud, but the women on the site or in the office don't speak up much. One factor could be fear because the job market is very competitive. One thing that could help is the open-door policy so that women are heard."



Survey results #9: Support system

SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR WOMEN IN CONSTRUCTION

There are organizations to support you; however, it doesn't do any good if you are not aware of the information.

Jennifer Todd

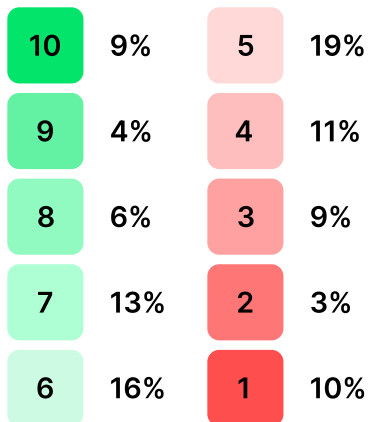


Organizations like [NAWIC](#) and numerous others offer support, training, advice, and mentorship to women in the trade and those aspiring to start their own businesses and become entrepreneurs.

However, the lack of awareness of these initiatives may contribute to the sentiment among many respondents that they need more support systems.



Ability to attract and retain talent



Survey results #10: Attracting and retaining talent

Opinions are split among respondents regarding the ability to attract and retain talent in the construction industry.

While 52% find it challenging, the remaining respondents feel otherwise.

It's widely acknowledged that there's a shortage of skilled labor in the industry, prompting efforts to bolster the workforce with qualified talent.

Retention of the construction workforce, particularly women, demands increased effort and the implementation of more effective policies.

"The journey has been filled with its share of challenges and victories. We've encountered remarkable subcontractors, tradespeople, and crews with whom we've built lasting partnerships over the years. Like many others in the industry, we've faced our fair share of obstacles. However, it's also presented us with endless opportunities for growth and innovation. We're constantly on the lookout for fresh talent, even those who may not yet realize their potential in the construction industry."



Jennifer Todd highlights,

"As a woman business owner, representation makes a significant difference. Seeing another woman owning a company can inspire confidence and connection.

Moreover, employing women fosters an understanding of their needs, such as time off for family commitments. It's about creating an environment where employees feel understood and supported."



Download *She Builds Nation* Media Kit at lumberfi.com/shebuildsnation



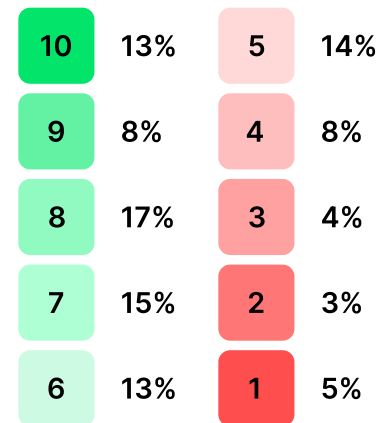


Career opportunities and growth

In our survey, we delved into the topic of career development and growth opportunities for women in the construction industry, particularly exploring the possibility of women in trade establishing successful contracting businesses.

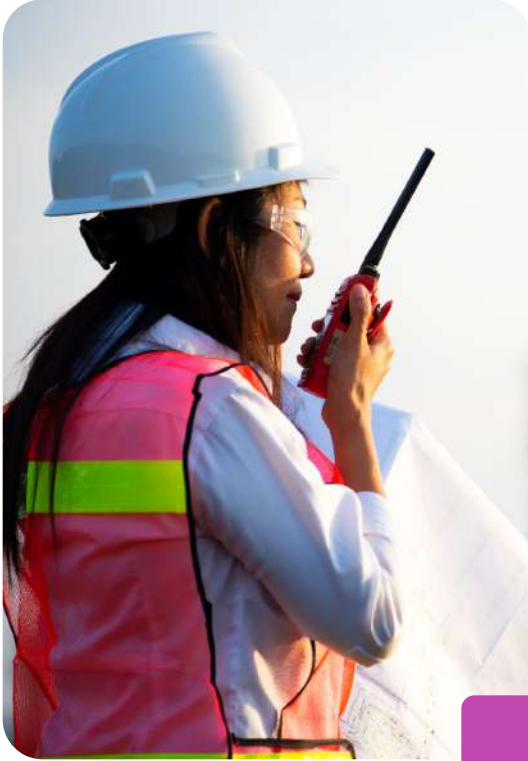
Encouragingly, 66% of respondents answered affirmatively, shedding a positive light on the potential for women to thrive in entrepreneurship within the industry.

However, it's crucial to note that many respondents emphasized that venturing into business ownership should stem from a genuine passion for the field rather than solely as a means of survival in the industry.



Survey results #11:
Career Opportunities and Growth





Jennifer Todd provides valuable insights, remarking, "Launching a construction business today is far more challenging than it was in previous decades due to the significant financial investment required. The landscape has evolved with stringent licensing requirements, tests, insurances, and sureties, amounting to substantial costs. Moreover, there's the added hurdle of gaining experience, which is often undervalued.

This challenge is compounded for minorities and women, who may lack established networks and references.

Starting a construction business is challenging, one is never truly ready. Becoming a contractor in today's market requires resources. Financially, becoming a contractor is costly. At the same time, you must understand your market, your audience, and whose problem you're solving. You'll never know any of those things until you start."

Coralee Beatty echoes this sentiment, emphasizing her dedication to supporting women who aspire to entrepreneurship within the industry. She acknowledges the potential and opportunities available but underscores the importance of genuine interest and readiness for the challenges entrepreneurship entails.

She elaborates, **"For those considering business ownership solely as a means to remain in the industry, I caution against it."**

”





Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings of this report underscore both the progress made and the persistent challenges confronting women in construction.

The Business Case for Supporting Women in Construction is clear: achieving genuine gender equality requires concerted action on multiple fronts, from rectifying wage disparities to fostering inclusive workplace cultures and ensuring access to gender-sensitive facilities.

Additionally, building awareness about support systems, mentorship programs, and career advancement opportunities is essential for more women to join and thrive in this industry.

By acknowledging and confronting these challenges head-on, the construction sector can harness the full potential of its diverse workforce, paving the way for a more just and inclusive future.





She Builds Nation SPOTLIGHT

Spotlighting the diverse talents, leadership, and innovation of women shaping the future of construction.



SPOTLIGHT

Jennifer TODD

The youngest Black woman to earn a CSLB (A) General Engineering license in California, Jennifer Todd leads LMS General Contractors in demolition, disaster recovery, and more. Recognized for her trailblazing spirit and industry expertise, she's a **2020 Outstanding Woman in Construction** in Construction Business Owner Magazine, who shattered glass ceilings to become the **first Black woman on the magazine's cover.**

Jennifer shared with us her unique insights about company policies that can help promote gender equality and foster a culture of innovation in construction companies.



Should companies implement specific policies or practices to promote gender equality in the construction workforce?

Companies absolutely should implement specific policies that promote gender equality in the construction workforce. It's about shifting the focus projects to people. The industry understands how to open billion dollar systems and infrastructure but seems unable to solve labor shortage.

Leaders have to duty to protect its work from unsafe and harmful situation even verbal harassment is deemed unsafe. The US construction industry has the 4th highest suicide rate. Women leave the trades at three times the rate of men. It's unacceptable. Today's workforce desire for companies where they are seen, heard, and respected.



Yes. It's just a matter of zero tolerance. When you show that no one is above the rules. You have to lead by example. If you are always allowing certain individuals to misbehave or behave inappropriately just because they are a 'good worker' - then what you are saying to other people is that you don't care about what they are feeling. You are not concerned about their health, well-being, and safety. It starts with zero tolerance. Have a conversation with them, and if they do it again... they are gone. That's it. There are so many good people out there that you don't have to keep the bad apples.

What strategies has your firm employed to attract and retain women in construction roles and foster a culture of innovation, advancement, and leadership?

We've found that simply being present and engaging with our employees personally has been instrumental in attracting and retaining women in construction roles.

Recognizing that everyone has good and bad days, we make a concerted effort to understand each individual's personality and identify their short-term and long-term career goals from the outset of their employment.

As owners, we take it upon ourselves to support and propel their aspirations forward. Regular check-ins every couple of months allow us to stay connected and address any concerns proactively. By demonstrating genuine care and concern for our employees' well-being and career development, we foster a culture where they feel valued and supported, ultimately encouraging them to stay with us.

Creating an open space for communication ensures that any issues or grievances can be addressed promptly, preventing dissatisfaction from festering and leading to turnover. Our goal is to create an environment where every employee feels heard, respected, and empowered to thrive.



Are there any specific programs or initiatives that have particularly attracted women to the industry? Please describe.

Absolutely. I'm passionate about attracting women to the construction industry, which is why I established the non-profit organization, A Greener Tomorrow. Our apprenticeship program was specifically designed to support women and minorities by providing hands-on training in heavy equipment operation and environmental remediation. This program combines classroom instruction with on-the-job experiences, including an introduction to demolition work.

The program has been particularly successful in attracting women because it offers two key benefits: flexibility and support. We understand the importance of accommodating diverse needs, and our program allows women to balance their personal lives with their professional goals. Additionally, we provide mentorship and guidance throughout the program, fostering a supportive environment where women feel empowered to thrive in the construction industry.

This year, we're thrilled to announce the production of a five-part documentary series, Breaking Barriers, showcasing women leaders in the construction industry. As a woman with over 16 years of experience in this field, I understand the challenges of feeling isolated. This docu-series aims to change that. By highlighting the journeys and achievements of other women in construction, we hope to inspire and motivate future generations. We want women across the AEC industries to see themselves reflected in these stories, feel empowered to overcome challenges, and find a sense of community and belonging.



Have you encountered any challenges in implementing these policies or practices? If so, please describe.

Implementing these policies and practices has indeed presented its challenges, primarily due to the inherent resistance to change within the construction industry. As one of the oldest sectors, construction has traditionally been slow to embrace change.

People expect more from their employers, as they should. Today, employees are vocal about their desire to be seen, heard, and valued for their contributions in the workplace. Construction leaders have a duty to be intentional in curtailing the workforce deficit because affects all of us.

What additional policies or practices should construction companies adopt to create a more inclusive environment for women?

Companies must prioritize intentional efforts to create a more inclusive environment for women in construction. Recognizing that women constitute 50.5% of the population and minorities comprise 49.5% of the country, it's crucial to attract and retain diverse talent actively. This entails collaborating with women-led organizations, shifting marketing strategies to be more inclusive, and fostering a supportive community within the industry.

Construction companies can cultivate a more equitable and forward-thinking workforce by proactively addressing the labor shortage and embracing diversity.



SPOTLIGHT

Coralee BEATTY

Coralee Beatty is a **seasoned professional specializing in empowering business owners in the construction industry** to realize their visions. With a wealth of experience as a **Fractional COO, business consultant, and leadership trainer**, Coralee offers invaluable insights and strategic guidance to drive success. She is renowned for her expertise in facilitating leadership training sessions and sharing her knowledge as a **speaker and podcast host**. Coralee's passion for fostering growth and innovation in the construction sector makes her a trusted advisor for businesses seeking to thrive in today's competitive landscape.



Coralee shares with us her insights and perceptions about what construction companies should do to become more gender inclusive.

What strategies did you employ to attract and retain women in construction roles and foster a culture of innovation, advancement, and leadership?

In my experience as an employer in the trades, equal opportunities were always extended to workers regardless of gender. While I didn't have the chance to hire female workers in the field then, it wasn't due to bias but rather a lack of opportunities. Now, as a fractional COO, I assist numerous companies in hiring women in trade and construction roles. I actively seek out platforms followed by women in construction to advertise open positions, recognizing the value of diversity and the contributions of female workers.

Ultimately, my goal is to hire the best person for the job, regardless of gender, and to support women in the industry. Female business owners may find it particularly advantageous to create opportunities for other women in the field.



Are there any specific programs or initiatives that have particularly attracted women to the industry? Please describe.

Not that I'm aware of. While some unions do offer programs specifically tailored for women, these programs are not the primary factor attracting women to the industry. Instead, women are drawn to the trades based on their inherent interests and seek out opportunities that support their career goals. As far as specific programs go, none come to mind that have significantly influenced women's decisions to enter the industry.

Does your firm have specific policies or practices in place to promote gender diversity and inclusion?

I firmly believe that everything must be equal, and there should be no decisions based on any gender, sex, or race. Any policy that is implemented must make things equally available for both genders. If a policy is made to divide men and women, I am not 100% behind it.

How can construction companies create a more inclusive environment in their workplace?

To create a more inclusive environment for women, construction companies must adopt policies with zero tolerance for discrimination, harassment, or bullying. While some may brush off such behavior as harmless joking, it's important to recognize its detrimental impact and ensure everyone feels respected and valued. This means holding everyone accountable, regardless of gender, and implementing the same standards for all employees.

Additionally, addressing practical concerns like restroom facilities is crucial for ensuring equality in the workplace.

Do you provide training or resources to educate employees on diversity and inclusion issues, including unconscious bias and harassment prevention?

Yes, absolutely. I actively encourage the companies I work with to incorporate training on diversity and inclusion into their leadership programs. It's essential for raising awareness about issues like unconscious bias and harassment prevention.

Many people may not realize they have unconscious biases, so this training is crucial in fostering a more inclusive and respectful workplace environment.



SPOTLIGHT

Gloria Marie FUENTES

Meet Gloria Marie Fuentes, a **third-generation entrepreneur, seasoned real estate professional, and captivating keynote speaker** with more than a decade of experience. With a passion for nurturing startups and offering strategic guidance for business expansion, Gloria is a trusted mentor in various industries. Her influential voice resonates strongly in the construction sector, particularly advocating for women in trade and providing invaluable mentorship support.



Gloria Marie shares with us her insights about the construction industry and why this is the right time for women to join the industry.

Are there any specific programs or initiatives that have particularly attracted women to the industry? Please describe.

I don't think we have an issue bringing women into the industry. I believe that we have a retention issue.

We need to focus on company culture and industry culture and ensure it is welcoming to women and accepting of their ideas. I don't think we need specific policies to be in place to recruit more women. I think that core values of a company need to embrace a diverse culture with an open-door policy, encourage people to speak up, and provide ideas.



How challenging is the construction industry for women?

No construction project is perfect. It's essential to maintain equilibrium while navigating the complexities of construction projects. Being adaptable and responsive to unexpected circumstances is crucial in this dynamic industry. Challenges are inevitable, but our ability to effectively address them is what truly defines our success.

Is this the right time for women to join the construction industry? What kind of opportunities exist for them?

The potential for women's advancement in the construction industry is virtually limitless at this juncture. Opportunities abound, whether it's pursuing government contracts earmarked for minority and women-owned businesses or delving into the intricacies of government bid projects. The private sector also offers avenues for diversity and collaboration, catering to those seeking alternatives to conventional contracting approaches.

Women are poised to seize the moment in construction due to the sheer volume of projects underway. Whether it's as welders, crane operators, engineers, construction or project managers, or even in general contracting capacities, women are making their mark across various roles. They're equally prevalent in office roles, driving operations behind the scenes and ensuring the success of projects on the ground.

The antiquated notion of the 'girl in the office' as a supporting figure is evolving. Now, more than ever, women are at the forefront of construction projects, contributing their expertise and leadership. This shift opens up opportunities for men to take on office-based roles, fostering a more inclusive and dynamic industry landscape.

In essence, the construction industry presents boundless opportunities for both women and men alike, with roles spanning from the field to the office. It's a moment of unprecedented opportunity and growth for all involved.



SPOTLIGHT

Andrea COUTURE

Andrea is the **owner of Intra-State Terrazzo & Concrete and Shaffer's Irrigation** and a dynamic and forward-thinking professional. With a passion for empowering women in the construction business, Andrea is committed to promoting diversity and inclusion while shaping the future of the industry.



Do you think companies should implement specific policies or practices to promote gender equality in the construction workforce?

As someone deeply involved in the construction sector, I firmly believe that promoting gender equality within companies is not just a choice but a necessity. In most corporate companies, especially in the lumber industry, these policies and practices are already considered rudimentary and have been adopted for years. While I appreciate the question, I see it as a fundamental obligation for companies to implement specific policies and practices to ensure gender equality in the construction workforce.

In an industry traditionally dominated by men, proactive steps are essential to foster an inclusive environment where everyone, regardless of gender, can thrive and contribute to their fullest potential. These policies should encompass recruitment practices, training and development opportunities, mentorship programs, and initiatives to address gender disparities in pay and advancement opportunities.

By prioritizing gender equality, companies not only create a more equitable workplace but also enhance innovation, productivity, and overall business success. It is about creating a better future for the construction industry.



What strategies has your firm employed to attract and retain women in construction roles and foster a culture of innovation, advancement, and leadership?

Attracting and retaining talent in the construction sector has posed significant challenges for firms, irrespective of gender. In recognizing this, our firm has implemented a multifaceted strategy to attract women to construction roles and foster a culture of innovation, advancement, and leadership.

One unconventional approach we have adopted is the implementation of flexible work arrangements tailored to accommodate diverse lifestyles and personal commitments. By offering options such as remote work, flexible hours, and job-sharing opportunities, we ensure that talented individuals, regardless of gender, can thrive in our organization while maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

In line with our commitment to inclusivity, we also welcome second-chance team members, firmly believing everyone deserves an opportunity for redemption and personal growth. Our ethos is rooted in the belief that to thrive as an organization truly, we must be compassionate, human, and true to our values. By embracing creativity and compassion in our approach to talent acquisition and retention, we create a workplace where individuals can flourish, innovate, and lead with purpose.

How successful have these strategies been in increasing the number of women in your workforce?

While attracting women to fieldwork has been a challenge with minimal applications, our strategies have seen remarkable success in diversifying our office workforce. Addressing the disparity in fieldwork remains an ongoing endeavor, requiring innovative solutions to attract and retain talented women in these roles.



Are there any specific programs or initiatives that have particularly attracted women to the industry? Please describe.

While no specific programs or initiatives are designed exclusively to attract women, our firm remains committed to fostering an inclusive environment where individuals of all genders are welcomed and valued equally. We believe that true gender equality involves providing equal opportunities and treatment to all employees without favoring one gender over another. Our recruitment and retention efforts focus on creating a supportive culture, offering professional development opportunities, and implementing flexible work arrangements that appeal to a diverse range of talent. By prioritizing fairness and inclusivity, we aim to create an environment where everyone, regardless of gender, can thrive and contribute to the success of our organization.

How can construction companies better support women in the workplace and address any issues related to gender equality?

Construction companies can better support women in the workplace by implementing mentorship programs, providing equal access to training and advancement opportunities, and fostering a culture of respect and inclusion where everyone's contributions are valued and recognized, regardless of gender.

SPOTLIGHT

Cory FISK

Cory boasts **over 18 years of diverse experience spanning all sectors of the Construction Industry**, from Federal/Tribal to Commercial & Residential projects. With roles ranging from Field Engineer to Construction Manager and Facility Director and a mentor for women in construction, Cory brings a **unique blend of academic prowess and practical insight**. Cory's innovative curricula, including Construction Management Online and Construction Management Essentials, are reshaping the industry landscape.



Do you think companies should implement specific policies or practices to promote gender equality in the construction workforce?

So long as the policies are not discriminatory or favorable but instead create equity without diminishing the advancements that have been made thus far.

What strategies has your firm employed to attract and retain women in construction roles and foster a culture of innovation, advancement, and leadership?


Education for both women AND men in the construction industry to create a more welcoming environment by focusing on the differences between men and women and the good those differences bring to the industry when working together.





How successful have these strategies been in increasing the number of women in your workforce?

They have been quite successful as they help to become more confident in their own abilities instead of attacking the traditional issues of the past. Staying focused on the positive and preparing women for the "difficulties" of joining a male-majority industry.



How can construction companies better support women in the workplace and address any issues related to gender equality?

By educating on the topic without causing division among men through exclusion or favoritism.

Construction Owners Summit 2024

May 9, 2024 | 8:00 am – 5:00 pm

Waukesha County Technical College (WCTC)

Anthony J Natalizio Center (Building S)
800 Main Street
Pewaukee, WI 53072

Why Attend?

40+ Exhibition Booths

Explore the latest technologies and innovations in the construction industry.

Breakout Sessions

Learn about emerging trends and best practices to stay ahead in the competitive market.

Networking Opportunities

Connect with fellow construction owners, experts, and potential collaborators.



Artificial Intelligence



Payroll and Benefits



Construction Contract Law



Leadership Planning



Marketing in Construction



Safety, Health & Wellness



CO '24 SUMMIT

Connect • Collaborate • Conquer

where construction owners

connect.
collaborate.
conquer.

About the event

Level up your construction business, expand your network, and be part of a transformative experience at the Construction Owners Summit – **where connections are made, collaborations spark, and challenges are conquered.**



Reserve your spot now!

co-summit.com

General Admission: \$60

WVCC Members: \$40

Co-organized by



Key Partners





Lumber is an all-in-one construction workforce management platform that seamlessly streamlines payroll, time tracking, safety, compliance, field productivity, rewards, and recognition for building contractors.



She Builds Nation is an initiative by Lumber.

lumberfi.com/shebuildsnation