



Influencers in the Field

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Women Leaders' Impact on the Construction Industry: Demonstrating Strong Leadership, Driving Innovation and Empowering the Next Generation

In a male-dominated industry, women don't always get the recognition they deserve. However, despite only making up **14% of the field**, plenty of hard data and success stories show they have had an irrefutable impact on the construction industry.

Their leadership skills foster safer working environments and strong team chemistry. Their creativity and vision drive innovation. Their willpower and determination are an inspiration to young aspiring construction professionals.

Women's presence in construction is **growing**, and it's important to acknowledge and understand their impact. In this article, I will take you through the unique qualities they bring to every project, show how they push the industry forward and shout out a few superstars.

Emotional Intelligence to Build Stronger Team Relationships

Women often excel in emotional intelligence, which is crucial for effective communication and relationship-building in the workplace.

They especially possess these attributes:

- **Empathy** – Understanding others' perspectives and feelings
- **Self-awareness** – Recognizing how their actions and behaviors impact the team
- **Gratitude** – Showing appreciation to team members and acknowledging their contributions
- **Decision-making** – Keeping a level head, not getting emotional and making rational decisions in stressful situations

These leadership attributes and **interpersonal skills** foster a supportive work environment where everyone feels comfortable voicing their opinions and knows their contributions matter. It builds team cohesion when everyone trusts one another and works better together, leading projects to meet or exceed their goals.

Those qualities are also especially helpful with **conflict resolution**. A manager who creates a safe environment makes it much easier for disagreeing team members to find common ground. Further, respectful disagreement can lead to an exchange of ideas that expand people's perspectives.

In construction, building strong relationships with clients, subcontractors and employees is key. Women in these roles understand the needs of their teams and clients, ensuring smooth communication on projects.

Collaboration and Team-Oriented Leadership for Better Communication

Women tend to adopt **collaborative leadership styles**, valuing input from team members to enable inclusive decision-making processes. These free-flowing environments invite unique perspectives from team members of different backgrounds, leading to:

- New ideas and creativity.
- More inclusive project management.
- Stronger teamwork.
- Increased innovation.
- Better problem-solving.

The construction industry often requires input from multiple disciplines, and keeping everyone on the same page can be **challenging**. Female leaders are especially skilled at organizing these different perspectives to ensure clear communication and good chemistry between all teams, leading to better output.

Adaptability and Resilience During Stressful, Complex Projects

Women often demonstrate exceptional adaptability and resilience in the face of any complication or setback.

This is vital trait in the construction industry, where every project faces a number of complex challenges. Project heads are always faced with managing tight timelines, addressing unexpected issues or balancing diverse responsibilities. Also, there is so little they can control — such as weather delays or supply shortages.

Managers must be able to handle a fast-paced environment where unforeseen mishaps occur frequently, and women leaders are up to the task. They can maintain their composure while moving the team and project forward; keeping everything organized and averting total crises.

Vision and Strategic Thinking That Sparks Innovation

Despite only making up 14% of the industry and **1% of chief executives**, women bring long-term vision and strategic thinking to their roles, **moving the industry forward with innovative solutions**.

Here are a few examples:

Tiffany LaBruno, Strategic Industry Advisor

LaBruno is a construction technology professional with years of experience pushing companies forward. As a consultant, she helped with project and financial management. In her next role, she assisted with her company's implementation of technical and software solutions — such as process optimization, safety reporting, building information modeling and more.

Denise Carnahan, Human Resources Coordinator

Carnahan developed and implemented a safety program that led to five consecutive years of zero recordable hazards and zero lost-time incidents — an outstanding achievement in an industry with **many safety risks**.

Theresa Lehman, Director of Sustainable Services

Lehman has **influenced** green construction practices in her home state of Wisconsin and across the U.S. She was instrumental in developing **Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) v4**, one of the most widely used green building rating systems. She also consulted on the design of an elementary school that reduced student illness. She now works for Miron Construction, where her vision made sustainability a key factor in the company's rebrand and repositioning.

These are just a few examples of how women trailblazers see the bigger picture, and they know how to keep up with industry trends, as well as the other fields with which they collaborate.

Mentorship and Empowerment

Women leaders taking an interest in the next generation — over solely prioritizing their own careers — charts a better path forward for others entering construction.

Many **are passionate about supporting and mentoring** emerging young female talent. They get involved by:

- Recruiting from female training organizations.
- Serving as board members on empowerment programs.
- Mentoring young college women majoring in engineering and related construction fields.
- Speaking at schools about career opportunities in construction.

One inspiring leader even hosts a podcast interviewing other women in the industry!

This is another aspect of how they possess a strong vision. Their commitment to mentorship fosters a culture of growth, encourages diversity and helps create a pipeline of future leaders in the industry.

Nancy Novak, chief innovation officer of Compass Datacenters, [said](#), “Real change only happens when people in positions of influence and power take on the roles of advocates for talented women and minorities.”

Prioritizing the Safety and Wellbeing of Team Members

Safety is the most important aspect of any construction site — an environment with multiple hazards.

Women often emphasize safety and wellbeing, advocating for the protection practices and healthy work environments all workers deserve. There are [many who are at the forefront of safety efforts in construction](#):

- **Implementing plans** – Concepted, developed and implemented effective safety plans
- **Serving on committees** – Sit on safety committees to maintain the wellbeing of the workers at their organizations
- **Advocating for training** – Often push for the creation of safety training programs as a preventative measure against worksite hazards

A culture of caring and safety gives workers peace of mind and makes them feel better about their jobs. Construction site heads who prioritize the wellbeing of their workers have [higher morale](#), which leads to better overall productivity and retention rates among teams.

Every Leader Needs a Strong Insurance Partner

As we’ve demonstrated, good leaders are always finding ways to improve worker satisfaction, which increases the retention of quality employees. Associations can do the same for their members by offering custom insurance solutions.

A partnership with Gallagher Affinity allows members to access comprehensive solutions that meet the unique personal and professional needs of its members. Their experienced team of professionals collaborates with associations to create tailored benefits from a broad range of benefits — such as flexible health plans, business insurance and consumer savings programs.

With Gallagher Affinity’s help and expertise, associations can increase membership value, satisfaction and retention.



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