

## Hurdles and Hidden Opportunities for Women in Construction Tech

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Reports about the underrepresentation of women in the construction industry are all too familiar. Only a small percentage of jobs in construction are held by women. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, women comprise only 11% of the construction industry workforce. That's true not only for skilled trade or labor positions, but also for administration, support, management, and leadership positions. And it's true throughout AEC professions, not just for contractors.

Similar conditions exist in the technology industry. According to a Deloitte report, only one-third of computing jobs in the United States are held by women; fewer women are entering the industry, and women leave tech at a much faster rate than men.

So it's no surprise that women make up a small part of the workforce in the construction technology industry. The challenges and misconceptions that hold women back from pursuing careers in AEC and technology are compounded when it comes to construction tech.

While the situation may seem daunting, the underrepresentation of women in construction technology also offers significant opportunities for women to enter the industry as well as to thrive and advance their careers.

There may be misconceptions about the number and kinds of opportunities available for women in construction technology.



### EXPERIENCE

Women with skills and experience in technology don't need construction industry knowledge to be qualified for construction technology jobs. Similarly, women with no professional technology experience who understand construction and design can offer powerful knowledge to construction tech providers.

### COMMON PROCESSES

Understanding construction may not provide detailed technology expertise, but the broad insights and principles involved in each sector apply to both. In fact, women with experience in both industries recognize that the processes

that drive construction and software have many elements in common. Both processes begin with identifying the needs of the client or user, consulting with them to determine what to build, establishing a foundation, and then refining the design and maintaining quality checks throughout development or construction.

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## OVERLAPPING SKILL SETS

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Just as the processes are similar, the skills necessary for success in either field easily transfer to the other. Effective communication, project and team management, lean processes, and flexibility, among many other common skill sets, apply to AEC and technology careers.

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## INSIGHT

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The fresh perspective of a deep expert in one field often provides invaluable insights in the other. Technology providers rely on the insights and expertise of AEC professionals to fine tune their product development and messaging for the building industry. At the same time, construction and design firms benefit from experienced technology professionals who can offer guidance on technology adoption, implementation, training, and application.

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## EDUCATION AND TRAINING

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Many companies in construction and the related technology field offer numerous opportunities for employees to continue learning and developing professional skills. On-the-job training, as well as opportunities for certifications and other milestones, may be supported. Additionally, professional organizations offer training and education options and may offer unique opportunities or special offers for women.

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## OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE

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The wide range of opportunities available throughout the

construction and construction technology sectors is often overlooked by women. Software development and engineering are not the only viable jobs for women in the technology industry. The AEC industry requires more than skilled tradespeople, engineers, and project managers. Both industries rely on project management support, customer experience teams, marketing, sales, training, and HR, among others. Women interested or experienced in any of those fields may find widespread opportunities for competitive advancement with construction or construction tech companies.

While these widespread misconceptions create opportunities for women to join the construction and construction tech industries, it will take proactive efforts by AEC and technology firms to leverage those opportunities and reverse the current underrepresentation of women in these fields.

As companies consider how to enhance their competitive position, given the fierce competition for talent, promoting the wide range of career opportunities available for women in construction-related industries has emerged as a critical strategy. As businesses implement this strategy, women committed to careers in construction technology will stand out and can position themselves for recruiting, retention, and promotion.

By increasing the number of women employed in construction technology, companies actively participate in dispelling the common misconceptions that act as a barrier to full representation. As women begin to fill technical positions in the construction industry, more career opportunities also become available in leadership positions.

Further, as these strategies advance, companies will recognize the competitive benefits of women's participation in construction-related fields: the innovation and profitability linked to women in leadership positions, recruiting advantages, and the valuable experience, insight, and skill sets that women from other industries can bring to construction and construction technology. 



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### About the Author

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Marge Hart is Vice President of Product Management at Newforma. She is a well-known figure in the software industry with more than 20 years of experience in design, customer research, and validation with a focus on AEC technology.

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### About the Article

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