

Increasing Support for the Increasing Number of Women in Construction

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The construction industry has long been male-dominated, but the tide is turning as more women are making their mark in this traditionally challenging field. It's invigorating to witness the increasing presence of women in various roles within the industry, and the importance of this trend cannot be overstated, as it brings a diverse range of skills, perspectives, and experiences to the table, ultimately benefiting the sector as a whole.

The growing participation of women in construction not only provides women with rewarding career opportunities but also addresses the industry's skilled-labor shortage. By embracing the wide range of career paths the construction industry offers, from project management and engineering to hands-on trades, women can contribute to and benefit from the industry's growth and success.

CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN IN CONSTRUCTION

Despite this progress, women in construction continue to encounter various challenges. The industry has historically exhibited a low representation of women, with only 9.9% of construction workers being female.

This underrepresentation is further compounded by limited opportunities for advancement and gender pay gaps, although this gap, at 95.5% of what men make in construction, is not as wide as it is in other industries.



FEDERAL LEGISLATION AND CONTINUED GROWTH

Federal legislation could help to normalize the presence of women not only in construction careers but on construction sites. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, offering more opportunity for infrastructure spending and building, also offers more opportunity for hiring women to fill positions on new projects – a great way to introduce women to the field from apprenticeship and/or undergraduate programs and get more female project managers on more jobsites more often, following the years of remote and/or hybrid work of back-office employees.

The COVID-19 pandemic not only impacted office dynamics,

but it also impacted – or rather benefitted – gender dynamics within the construction industry. While many industries experienced layoffs, construction proved to be an exception by providing opportunities to women who were rethinking their career paths amid the pandemic. In about a year, women recovered all their pandemic-era losses in construction, further demonstrating their resilience and contribution to the sector.

VICTORIES AND OPPORTUNITIES

While challenges abound, women in construction have made significant strides. The share of women in construction has hit a record high, with over 1.1 million working in the industry nationwide.

And even more women are joining the industry, not only in traditional office roles but also in trade and executive positions. Plus, about 13% of all construction companies are now owned by women. There is a growing recognition of the value that women bring to the construction sector, leading to increased support for their professional development and advancement.

INCREASING REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN CONSTRUCTION

The construction industry is becoming more open and accepting of female workers, offering a wide range of career opportunities, from project management and engineering to trades like carpentry and plumbing. To address the underrepresentation of women in the industry, several initiatives have been launched to support and empower women in construction.

Mentorship Programs: Mentorship programs play a crucial role in fostering an inclusive environment for women in construction. By providing guidance, support, and opportunities for skill development, these programs help women navigate the challenges and barriers they may face in the male-dominated industry.

Professional Conferences and Workshops: Professional conferences and workshops dedicated to women in construction provide valuable networking, mentoring, and growth opportunities. Organizations such as the National Association of Women in Construction and Commercial Real Estate Women strive to change the representation of women in

the industry by making it more appealing and accessible. These organizations and their events facilitate the increase of women in construction by providing a platform for knowledge sharing, skill development, and professional growth.

Advocacy for Diversity and Merit: Advocacy for more diversity and merit in the workplace is essential to create a more equitable environment for women in construction. Companies and industry organizations like the Women's Construction Coalition and Women Construction Owners & Executives are increasingly advocating for gender diversity, challenging stereotypes and promoting the value that women bring to the construction sector.

Flexible Work Arrangements: The construction industry offers flexible work arrangements, such as part-time work and job-sharing, which can be appealing to women who have caregiving responsibilities or want a better work-life balance. These arrangements help attract and retain female talent in the industry.

Leadership Development Programs: Initiatives aimed at developing leadership skills among women in construction are gaining momentum. More women are being promoted to leadership roles and owning their businesses, contributing to a more diverse and inclusive leadership landscape within the industry.


These initiatives are instrumental in addressing the challenges faced by women in construction and creating a more inclusive and diverse workforce. By supporting and empowering women in the industry, we can ensure their contributions are fully recognized and valued, ultimately leading to a more vibrant and successful construction sector.

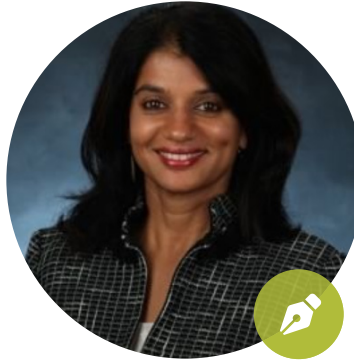
CELEBRATING WOMEN IN CONSTRUCTION

The National Bureau of Economic Research published a paper showing that women exceed men in the ability to communicate, a highly prized skill in the construction industry. This highlights the unique strengths that women bring to the table, further emphasizing the importance of celebrating their presence in construction.

Highlighting the success stories of women in construction and promoting their visibility inspires more individuals to pursue careers in this dynamic and rewarding field. The annual

Women In Construction event hosted by Finance & Commerce is just one example that shines a spotlight on some of the outstanding female construction leaders.

It's apparent there are still challenges for women to overcome in the industry. But with personal commitments to champion diversity and inclusion, it's possible to create a more equitable and thriving environment where women and all professionals in the field can thrive. 



About the Author

Shanthi Rajan is the founder and CEO of [Linarc](#). She's a seasoned entrepreneur focused on enterprise applications and a product leader with experience in all aspects of company building: ideation, product development, product-market fit, building teams, and go-to-market.

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