

What is your job/role in the industry?

- Jennifer Patrick Howard is the Senior Vice President at the Washington D.C. office of the Lochten company. Her job involves managing client relationships; she works mostly with construction and real estate firms to help them understand what types of risks their organizations face and how to manage those risks.

How did she first get introduced into this industry?

- In college, Jenna was a mathematics major. One day, when an actuary came into class to speak, she knew that that was what she wanted to pursue. So, Jenna started her career as an actuary, then moved into the broker side of the company, and then moved into the construction and real estate side, which she loved because the projects she was working on were more tangible.

What are the parts of her job that she finds most interesting?

- Jenna's job mainly entails talking people through problems that could threaten their organizations. This requires a lot of creative thinking, which she not only finds interesting but challenging too.

What challenges has she faced in general or related to being a woman in the construction industry:

- In her response, Jenna points to the fact that, for most women, their careers involve being the only woman in the room. For the most part, in her career, that has been to her advantage because it sets her apart from everyone else in the room; being one of the only, if not the only, woman has led to more doors opening even if the process through which those doors were opened was uncomfortable.

How does she think the industry could benefit from having more women?

- Jenna believes that having a more diverse range of people, including more females, can lead to more perspective, which allows for a more creative solution to be made (and therefore benefits the industry).

What misconceptions about being a woman in the construction industry has she faced?

- Jenna has noticed that the misconception that women working in construction-related jobs are forceful because the industry is hard, is extremely prevalent. She finds this assumption far-from the truth, for while many women are hard-working, many are also welcoming. Jenna believes that because of this, there is a real value in building a pipeline of women and girls in the industry.

What advice can she offer young females looking to get involved in the industry?

- She urges young females to seek out internships and people in spaces that are able to help them, to build a network that will support them, and to make sure that they find a good peer and mentor group. Along the lines of finding a good peer group, Jenna also points to the importance of building a sort of “personal board of directors” and having a larger group of people able to support you.

Has there been any particular lesson that she has learned in her career that she finds valuable?

- Own your mistakes. Jenna has learned that by being able to find a solution and show people a way to move forward after a mistake is made, she has become a much stronger and better person.

What is one (or a few) particular accomplishments that she is proud of:

- There are several accomplishments that Jenna is proud of. One of which is her ability to build teams and manage people. She finds this role, as well as her current job where she works to manage client relationships and budgeting, challenging and fun. Moreover, during her response to this question, she pointed to the fact that everything is a learning opportunity and that taking advantage of those opportunities is important.

Her career mainly focuses on client relationships, so does she have any advice on how to manage those relationships well?

- Jenna has noticed that relationships are built upon trust; that being technically sound, owning your craft, and being an authentic person creates a good reputation for you in the market, which allows you to build deeper, better relationships.