

Interview - Executive VP / CAO

What is your job/role/title?

- Executive VP / CAO

How or why did you enter your industry?

- My dad owned a small construction company so I was around construction my entire life. My Christmas presents were always wrapped in Blueprints!

What are the barriers/obstacles of being a woman in this industry?

- In my career, I'm very grateful to say that I have not experience many. However, I think one of the more challenging barriers for me as well as many other women I've talked to in the industry is the working hours combined with childcare, particularly for single parents or couples with no other help at home. There are no daycares or schools in the US that I'm aware of that open at 5/6am which is what would be needed for most of our jobsite hours. Additionally, there can be long days and you can't leave your kid at school or in daycare for 12 hours! This can be extremely challenging to manage and navigate successfully as you also have commitments to your project and/or work teams and you don't want to let them down either.

Why do you think there are so few females in the industry and what would you do to change that?

- Unless you grew up around the industry or had an immediate relative in the industry, I just feel it is an industry that people in general know so little about. They don't know the details of the work, the opportunity, the earning potential, etc. And that lack of knowledge combined with many misperceptions of the industry keep it from being top-of-mind for many women or even being turned off from the industry all together. I'd like to see the industry band together to work with high schools, their students, AND their parents to educate them on the industry, the opportunity, and the earning potential. Educating the parents is often forgotten and they can have significant influence over their kids' choices! Additionally, educating high school personnel, especially counselors, on the industry is essential so they can encourage students to consider careers in the industry an an informed fashion.

What would you title your autobiography?

- Bagels and Alligator Wrestling: Being All In

What is your favorite hobby?

- Exercising (Peloton!)

What is your go-to song at karaoke?

- Any song by Notorious BIG

What advice you would give your younger self?

- Be patient! I also wish I had read more at a younger age. I love reading now and it provides so many benefits personally and professionally. I feel it would have really benefited me if I had read more in high school and college.

What do you like most about your work?

- The people I work with and the problems/challenges I get to work through. I love that I haven't had a day in my entire career that felt the same as any other day. Every day brings new work, new challenges, new problems to solve, new things to learn, and often new people to work with! This was certainly true on the jobsite and continued to hold true in the many other roles I've held throughout my career.

What is the best career advice you have ever been given?

- "You can be right or you can maintain a great relationship - which one is most important right now?" This also holds up pretty well in your personal life as well! This business is all about relationships. That is something they don't "teach" you in college and I think it takes some years to learn - and sometimes you learn the hard way. There is nothing more important than building and maintaining trusted relationships with your colleagues and your business partners of all types!

What was your first job?

- High school job, lifeguard and laborer for my dad. Official full-time job after college, Project Engineer (starting in Estimating).