



PWC golf outing at Elmwood Country Club in White Plains: Paving the fairways for women

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As late as the 1990s, construction industry golf outings reflected the scarcity of women in high-ranking positions: the links remained visibly all-male. As women continued to make inroads in the A/E/C arena as owners, professionals and executives, they discovered the need to "buddy up" to prospective clients...but the traditional "good old boys" industry golf outing was intimidating to many. Professional Women in Construction (PWC), founded in 1980, has sponsored two annual industry golf outings since 1992, most recently at the Elmwood Country Club in September. According to PWC president Lenore Janis, "We were the first construction association to actively welcome women and mixed foursomes. Our first golf event drew six women, 80 men and a tornado warning. By late October's 'rain date' the number of women golfers had doubled. Now we average thirty to thirty-five percent women at the outings. Our players tell us that the game encourages camaraderie, strengthens business relationships and provides a relaxing break from office routine."

Jennifer Murphy, vice president, Plaza Construction, was among the players to second Janis' assessment. "Some women might feel intimidated at industry golf outings. At a PWC event, they feel more comfortable. Women playing in a male-dominated sport parallels our industry," she said.

Jackie Horowitz, project manager, Turner Construction and PWC board member, said, "Golf outings give women an opportunity to bond. There are definitely more women at PWC events than at other outings."

Geralyn Spadafino, account executive, Siemens Building Technologies, held a similar view. "I went to my first golf outing through a PWC event. It helped me find the courage to play at other industry outings," she said.

The men were fully supportive. Neal Eckles, sales manager, Tac Tour Andover Controls, pointed out, "Golf strengthens relationships with clients. I encourage women in our firm to take up the game."

David Grossbaum, vice president, True and Associates, agreed, "Traditionally golf is a place where men have made deals, now women are on the same playing field. It's a business person's world today."

Morais Miranda, RCDD principal Lilker-Technology Solutions Group, said, "Golf isn't a man/woman sport - it's a people sport. It isn't man-centered anymore. With women more active in higher positions it's natural for them to close their own deals on the golf course. The course is the new board room. In fact, stories told on the golf course stick better than those told at dinner."

All confirmed that the fairway provides an ideal environment for fostering business relationships.

Sula Moudakis, director high-rise installations, Schindler Elevator Corp., said, "The customers we bid to are gcs who attend the golf outing."

Paula Myruski, vice president with Interior Construction Corporation, began playing when her boss

sent her to a golf clinic. She found that it "has generated a great deal of business. It can bring in a lot of contacts."

Similarly, Jody Brown, vice president, Carter & Burgess, noted, "I took up golf for business and to expand my network. It's good to get out of the work environment."

Alma Smith, vice president, Hill International, pointed out that the game offers a different ambience which can create an easier rapport. "In our industry, we compete every day. Here we want to have fun and network. Competing isn't necessary," she said.

John Marone, senior vice president, Component Assembly Systems, put it simply, "It's a good way to mix and mingle with clients. There's more one-on-one and a relaxed atmosphere."

Rose Friedman, Wenig Company, agreed, "Golf outings promote networking. It's an informal social activity where we meet others in our field of business."

Frank Grippi, president of Coordinated Metals, Inc., chaired the PWC outing. Event sponsors were: Turner Construction Company; National Reprographics; DP Consulting Corp; IBEX Construction; Altus Metal & Marble; Gig-Werks; MSD Visual; Wal-Mart Realty; Wass Group LLC.

Photographs by Trish Giaquinto

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