



Lenore Janis of PWC is expanding the possibilities and borders of B-to-B networking

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Professional Women in Construction (PWC) National, under the leadership of president Lenore Janis and PWC vice president and trade show committee chair Gwendolyn Colbert Kushner, is preparing to launch its largest ever Northeast Trade Show & Professional Recruitment Fair on October 31 at the Roosevelt Hotel in midtown Manhattan. Aptly titled The BIG Show, the event made its successful debut in 2007 and attracted a lot of industry buzz from major global construction companies and leading government agencies as well as mid-sized and small businesses, including many women- and minority-owned enterprises (WBEs and MBEs).

Following the fall 2007 event, the praise was enthusiastic. William Brody, vice president, Ibex Construction, said, "We couldn't have been in a better place - with the crème de la crème of construction companies. PWC did an amazing job of creating an opportunity to network with our peers as well as everyone involved in the industry. They created a real 'happening.'" Sydney Koerner, SPHR, v.p. human resources, STV, Inc. noted that having a recruitment fair as part of an industry event rather than on a college campus was a first: "The Recruitment Fair brought out good candidates in architecture and engineering as well as construction professionals - everyone from college students to people with 20 years experience. I'm not aware of anything else in this industry quite like this."

Colbert Kushner said, "We anticipate an even greater crowd this year than last."

PWC activities today are a far cry from 1980 when Janis and 11 other women formed a support organization dedicated to the advancement of professional, managerial and entrepreneurial women struggling to gain a foothold in the industry. Before the year was over, the pioneering women had hosted a two-day conference in Manhattan on industry issues affecting, and stonewalling, women. Soon after, Janis and other PWC members began lobbying in Washington and Albany to establish stated goals for the participation of women in publicly funded projects. In 1983, they were rewarded when the State of New York set a WBE goal of 5%. By 1985, the organization voted to give men in the industry full membership privileges - to increase business-to-business interaction for the women.

In the 1980s, Janis made news as the first woman owner of a steel erection firm in the New York metropolitan area and later as the first woman director of the Bureau of Building Management for the NYC Department of Sanitation (in charge of 250 tradesmen). Today Janis is continuing to make headlines as the president and CEO of PWC National, a widely respected nonprofit association with chapters in N.Y., N.J., Conn., Capital Region (D.C., Md., Va.), Northeast Penn. and, coming soon, South Fla. PWC now counts over a thousand members comprised of business and professional women and men, corporate entities and public agencies. PWC National's website, www.pwcusa.org, receives over 25,000 visits a month. Since its early days, PWC has attracted capacity crowds of

construction and real estate professionals to its interactive industry sessions, trade shows, golf outings, awards receptions, and breakfast forums. Clearly, Janis' commitment to the cause has propelled the organization's phenomenal rise and continues to fuel it now.

Janis concludes that while PWC may have started off like the "Energizer Bunny" bumping into walls, but never giving up - it has been on the fast track for the past dozen years. "The success of The BIG Show, the spread of PWC chapters throughout the east coast, the phenomenal number of visitors on our unadvertised website, the brimming, capacity crowds at our events, all these demonstrate that we're filling a need in the industry - big time."

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