



## **Working together with women in business: A large part of what is fueling our success**

July 21, 2008 - Spotlights

For years, women have strived for and achieved leadership roles in business through determination, acumen and grit. In construction and other related industries, there are scores of women who either run companies or work in senior management positions. They are women who have not only broken glass ceilings; they head the teams re-building them.

In the New York metro area, my women colleagues comprise an eclectic and tight-knit group of professionals who work together in various capacities. Through organizations such as the Association of Real Estate Women (AREW), Professional Women in Construction (PWC) and WX, we have created numerous networks and made invaluable business contacts. Many women who started long before I was in the construction industry paved the way by overcoming prejudices about their abilities and appropriateness. Their thoughts about our shifting roles in business, as well as those of our peers, are relevant to all women in New York real estate today.

### **Women Working Together**

Jodi Pulice, founder and president of JRT Realty Group, Inc., one of the largest certified WBE commercial real estate services firms in the nation, eloquently describes the need for women and minorities to support each other. "For certified WBEs, especially those in the commercial real estate field - from architectural and brokerage firms to construction companies like ACC Construction - mutual support is essential. JRT Realty Group, Inc. and ACC share a common vision, which is to open doors for other M/WBE companies by inviting them to be a part of the bid process. By leveraging our certification, together we enhance our commitment to advancing diversity not only throughout construction and commercial real estate, but within other sectors as well."

Susan May-McLean, principal, Horizon Land Services, LLC, emphasizes the bond women have working together, "In an industry which has historically been 'male dominated,' it is an honor to befriend, work with and respect other highly successful women. We are mindful of the success of other women by being a vehicle to them in insuring a smoother transition in today's time and economy."

Well known interior designer JJ Falk, IIDA of JJ Falk Design, LLC, says that, "Working with another professional woman in construction, especially in a male dominated industry, in itself serves as a special bond. I believe it's a bond that is more genuine, not fueled by competition, egos or one-upmanship."

These responses have a common thread, i.e., the need to support each others' businesses and reinforce diversity. Having grown up in this industry with parents who did not believe in gender-specific roles in business, and a father who groomed me as his successor, I inherently have a positive attitude towards colleagues, both men and women.

ACC Construction is a Woman-Owned Business Enterprise (WBE) and also carries the national

WBENC certification, which has presented us with opportunities to bid on a broad range of projects. Although our WBE status has opened doors, ACC is awarded projects based upon an excellent reputation and the dedication our team brings to each project. They are the only standards to which we subscribe.

Amy Breslaw of Mac Felder, Inc., a leading WBE plumbing company with 70 years of history, summed up our mutual philosophies for success. When asked how she would advise women entering the industry, she simply said, "Go for it. Believe you can do it."

As women in construction, believing in ourselves has been much of the battle, while much has been in getting the opportunities to demonstrate our abilities. Increasingly, our own networks have become important, especially women supporting and helping other women in business - it's a large part of what is fueling our success.

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