



Executive of the Month: Cadman, VP at Shawmut Design and Construction, delivers elevated client experiences

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Columbia University Irving Medical Center's Alumni Auditorium includes a three-story glass façade with laminated glass panels that allow for light to fill the gallery inside.

New York, NY The New York Real Estate Journal recently sat down with Sharon Cadman, vice president at Shawmut Design and Construction, for a question and answer session.

NYREJ: Can you tell us more about yourself and Shawmut's New York presence?

Cadman: As a national construction management firm with a reputation for completing complex projects for the world's most recognizable and elite brands and institutions, Shawmut Design and Construction has built a reputation for delivering client service excellence and high-quality building solutions for challenging and demanding projects. Since establishing an office in the heart of New York 17 years ago, Shawmut has become the leader in delivering world-class projects for the region's most high-profile clientele—including Columbia University, NYU Langone Medical Center, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Louis Vuitton, Eleven Madison Park, and InterContinental New York Barclay to name just a few. As a firm whose reputation is built around delivering an elevated client experience, Shawmut is known for our expertise in the sectors we operate—with a unique combination across retail, hospitality, institutional, cultural, tenant interior, and luxury residential.

As vice president of Shawmut's Tri-State division, I co-lead the division with my colleague Steve Giordano and oversee business development and overall project execution. With 24% year-over-year division growth in 2018 and forecasted 43% growth in 2019, Shawmut's Tri-State division is increasing market share and bringing our world-class customer experience to more clients, projects, and partners throughout the region.

Columbia University Irving Medical Center's Alumni Auditorium—a new 648-seat, 6,464 s/f space that includes new acoustic integrated walls and audiovisual system.

NYREJ: What are your opinions on women in construction and how are you contributing and mentoring as an executive leader in the industry?

Cadman: The construction industry is notorious for being a predominantly all-white, male industry. However, more women are coming into the construction field than ever before, and with that, we need to continue to encourage women to find their voice and leadership abilities—this starts, and is continued, with support and mentorship. Women need to reach out and find mentors to help them grow and develop. A mentor looks for qualities in a mentee that are smart, committed, strong, ambitious and creative in thought—and collaboration is key. In an industry that's 9% women, Shawmut's executive leadership team has worked to actively combat such imbalances in the industry. Today, Shawmut is 35% female, and female representation on our executive leadership team has increased by 23% over the last three years—including adding a woman to our board of directors. In fact, over the past five years, Shawmut has increased females in core function jobs—including construction operation roles, at the entry and manager level by 9% and 7% respectively across the board.

NYREJ: How did you get started in the construction industry?

Cadman: After many years in Europe as a VP at an international publishing company with a mentor that taught me to find my voice, build a team, encourage collaboration, think outside the box, and to be creative and strategic in thought, I returned to the U.S. with a role at Shawmut. Here, I developed a knowledge of the construction industry and leveraged my past business expertise to develop an integrated approach to my career. This year, I'll celebrate 23 years at Shawmut, following numerous high-level finance positions within the organization—including a post as national director of business finance.

Sculptural ash millwork curves overhead inside Columbia University Irving Medical Center's Alumni Auditorium Schaefer Awards Gallery.

NYREJ: What sets Shawmut apart in the New York region? Can you provide insight on recent experience and projects?

Cadman: Shawmut has become a leading player in shaping the city's ever-evolving rich and vibrant culture. With nearly 20% year-over-year growth from 2017 to 2018, we provide a consistent world-class client experience while maintaining steady and remarkable progress. Shawmut stresses the importance of accountability and accessibility with each project and strives to create a collaborative environment with all our partners—including owners, architects, consulting engineers,

and trade contractors. We employ a diverse mix of project managers, superintendents, estimators, and support personnel with extensive industry experience. Here, we concentrate on creating an unrivaled client experience through innovative construction techniques, maximized quality delivery, and effective systems.

In addition to completing projects nationwide, Shawmut has made an impressive foot stamp in New York. For nearly two decades, Shawmut has worked with the region's most elite clients and institutions. Our institutional team has established itself as a go-to partner—like a recent renovation to Columbia University Irving Medical Center's Alumni Auditorium that reimaged the once fortress-like space into a highly sophisticated, bright, welcoming, and modern learning environment along Upper Manhattan's West 168th St.

Our niche expertise in historic preservation, renovation, and adaptive reuse has allowed Shawmut to be an integral part in the revitalization of New York's landmarks. Our team recently completed a restoration of the Grolier Club—the oldest existing bibliophilic club in North America—that helped to preserve its Georgian-style architecture and exhibition hall which recently celebrated its centennial.

Our projects are just as impressive as our people—and thanks to them, Shawmut has been honored as a Fortune Magazine Best Workplace three years in a row. Delivering on our promise to offer the best client experience in the industry is essential to who we are as a company, and when over 80% of our business is repeat business, we believe it's working.

NYREJ: What is Shawmut doing to combat imbalances facing women in the industry and what is your vision for the future?

Cadman: Since our incorporation in 1982, Shawmut has actively supported its employees with an understanding that our people are our greatest asset. Our executive leadership team has driven a company-wide strategic priority to combat imbalances in our industry—specifically those facing women and those from non-majority groups in the workforce. Our commitment to diversity and inclusion is a central tenet to this. That's why we created a Diversity Leadership Council—a 14-member council who is accountable for driving Shawmut's D&I strategy and efforts. The group represents each division within our company, and is made of 50/50 female/male, includes internal, construction, and field operation employees, and represents three generations of experience. Shawmut, like many other leading companies, benefits from improving such imbalances. However, unlike many companies, we are 100% committed to doing something about it.

As we set our eyes on the future, I am eager to see what's to come—not only from Shawmut as a company, but from the incredibly talented and ambitious women within our industry. We may already be making impactful differences as a company within the industry, but we're just getting started—and I couldn't be any prouder to stand beside other women to drive a force of change within the industry and professional workspace globally.