



PWC golf outings' success bolstered by industry encouragement

August 25, 2008 - Spotlights

On Monday, June 9, Professional Women in Construction's first (PWC) golf outing of the year drew an overflowing, sellout crowd of women - 35% of the players - and men, all undaunted by temperatures that spiked close to 100o. PWC president Lenore Janis credited IBEX Construction president and CEO Andy Frankl, chair of the event, for helping to attract "an amazing group of women and men," to Elmwood Country Club in White Plains, N.Y., and thanked him for supporting PWC's efforts to make the sport more accessible to women.

Said Frankl, "We're seeing more high-level women in the industry nationwide, but their presence still needs to grow in the New York area. Since the golf course is where deals are created, we should see more of a mix at industry outings."

PWC recognized the enormous networking potential of golf in 1992, when it initiated its own industry outings featuring mixed gender foursomes. The organization now hosts two well-attended golf outings each year.

Said Janis, "The tide is starting to turn. Companies in this industry now encourage women staffers to participate; some are even picking up the tab for lessons."

Turner Construction's Jackie Horowitz, senior project manager, concurred that corporate attitudes have progressed. "Today having women participate in company outings is in keeping with corporate policy. This is the first time I've seen an event where almost every foursome includes women."

Ken Brynildsen, project manager/estimator with Jacobson & Co., agreed that PWC events draw large numbers of women. "There are more women here than at any other industry golf outing I've attended."

SimplexGrinnell general sales manager Kay Lee said that the number of women in the industry still needs to grow - and such outings are a good way to boost the trend. "There still aren't that many women in senior staff positions...This is a great way to meet people I wouldn't have had the opportunity to see, and possibly recruit. It's fantastic," she said.

Christopher Heller, field superintendent with Schindler Elevator, said that just as women are no longer hidden "behind the scene" on projects, more are coming out to play and to network. Heller said, "It's becoming clear that many women hold key positions in this industry."

On a similar note, Gottfried Weissgerber, AVP, director of customer relations with PJ Mechanical, said, "Professional women were always a part of the industry, but now they're more in the limelight as a driving force."

Alexis Miller, an account executive with TAC, took a pragmatic approach. "Men are usually the ones with the power roles in this industry, so it's important to have the opportunity to network with them on the golf course."

Moises Perez, president and CEO of Alianza Dominicana, was glad to see the huge mixed crowd,

noting, "Golf is the ultimate networking game."

Others praised the networking. Martin Garcia, Ambar Construction, said that playing with new people "gives you opportunities to meet people you might work with in the future."

Gerilyn Spadafino, account executive with Siemens Building Technologies, said, "Five hours on the golf course - you can't help but bond with the players." STV project engineer Jacquelyn Tookmanian, currently working on the Freedom Tower, said, "Playing in a company foursome furthers relations with co-workers. It opens up conversations."

For Billy Procida, president of William Procida Incorporated, the equation is simple, "What makes this event worthwhile is the chance to meet new people in more diversified areas of the business. A wide spectrum of the industry is represented here."

Erin O'Reilly, risk manager with Plaza Construction, summed it all up: "This was the best PWC golf event I've been to. Despite the heat and the pressure, the game was fun and a lot of connections were made."

PWC's next golf outing will be Monday, September 22, 2008 at the Elmwood Country Club. Other events held this summer included a Developers Forum on July 31 at The Yale Club and Meet the Architects & Engineers on August 21 at Club 101.

Golf event sponsors were: Medco Plumbing Inc.; IBEX Construction; Wal-Mart; R.S. Knapp Co., Inc.; Altus Metal & Marble; Gig-Werks; and MSD Visual.

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