



2021 Women in Building Services: Lysa Russo, KOW Building Consultants

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Name: Lysa Russo

Title: Director of Technical Services

Company Name: KOW Building Consultants

In the past year, what project, transaction or accomplishment are you most proud of?

I recently completed the construction of a day care center in Wantagh, N.Y. The project was different than others that I have previously worked on because I was representing the owner, rather than the lender. While the 'sticks and bricks' of the project were not unique to me, working so closely with an emotionally invested owner, was. While the owner was familiar with the operations of a daycare center, she had never been a part of the ground-up construction of one. My role on the project was to effectively communicate the owner's vision and use of the space to the contracting team. I'm proud to report that we successfully navigated many obstacles throughout the project, mostly attributed to the pandemic, and completed the project on schedule and on budget.

What trends will dominate your industry in the coming months?

I believe that the supply chain issues and resulting material price increases resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic will continue to be a significant issue in our industry for at least the next six months.

In the past, many industries reduced their inventory levels and had a 'just in time' production philosophy. I don't believe that any industry predicted what impact a global pandemic would have on these types of business models, but today, after over a year of living through it, I do believe that many businesses will revisit them and work towards reducing the resulting impacts and risks. Relying on a global supply chain to manufacture building components certainly has its upsides but now we are living through what the downsides can be.

What did you want to be when you grew up?

For as long as I can remember, I loved to build. It started early on with Legos and Lincoln Logs. When I was old enough to handle power tools, you would find me in the garage or out back building

tree houses or go-karts. There were no engineers in my family so I really didn't know how my "hobby" would translate into a career until high school, when my classmates started discussing which engineering schools they were interested in attending. I actually had to ask them what an engineer did and when they explained it, I instantly knew that I was destined to become one. Even today, almost thirty years into my engineering career, there is nothing more exciting than walking onto a construction site and envisioning what it will soon become.

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