



2022 Women in Construction: Christella Xu, Elite Builders and Management

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Name: Christella Xu

Title: President

Company Name: Elite Builders and Management

Starting out in the construction business, who or what empowered you?

I feel empowered when I'm in control, and making positive decisions based on my vision—my story—and I believe real empowerment comes when I convert intention into action. As a female entrepreneur, I spend many hours advocating for and advancing each of our client's interests—projects where risks are high and problems are very real. I am empowered when I convert my unbending commitment to our clients' advocacy to the successful delivery of our products, services, and projects. My first brush with client advocacy as an entrepreneurial business came at Brewer Attorneys & Counselors. I worked directly with Bill Brewer, the firm's founding partner, as an executive director. The time for me was transformational. I learned that if I could envision a life full of great accomplishments, then I could—and I must—achieve them. Building a successful company is just one of them.

Bill had a saying—a mantra really—“Steer by vision, not by sight.” Ultimately, he helped me believe that if I learned to “steer by vision,” everything I always wanted was there for me. Bill believed endlessly in his ability to achieve his vision—his art of advocacy. Art is powerful because it has the potential to influence people, culture, and most importantly, art can conceptualize shapes and forms and then bring them into being. As I build my own company, I start to appreciate the art behind all building structures. And slowly, I begin to create my own art for each of our steel structure projects. I call it, “The art behind steel,” a personally curated—a moment of connection—with each of our clients.

What advice would you offer to other women getting into the construction industry ?

As I arrive at the start of each opportunity for my clients, my business and myself, I am grateful for the guidance I received from successful people in the industry with whom I worked who impressed upon me the energy and enthusiasm required to provide excellence to those we represent. At the end of day, regardless of your profession, It's not about what you do, it is why you do it and you've got to do it with endless energy, passion and love. It is the journey that matters the most.

As a female entrepreneur who has built an operation at the intersection of steel structure design-build, steel fabrication and installation, I have experienced a full range of challenges, successes, and joys. I learned that entrepreneurship is a process, not a place and excellence in advocacy for my clients is not a place, it is a process and a way of traveling - every day.

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