



**2022 Women in Construction: Danielle Drake, H2M architects
+ engineers**

March 22, 2022 - Spotlights



Name: Danielle Drake

Title: Discipline Engineer

Company Name: H2M architects + engineers

Why should women consider a career in construction?

I think any career that you show an interest in should be considered equally when you are coming out of school. If you have the drive and set yourself up to achieve your goals in life you can do whatever you put your mind to. I don't think that construction should be stereotyped as an all-male field. The further we push the stereotype, the harder it becomes to break through, and perhaps even close, the gender gap.

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

Do not be afraid to ask questions. I used to worry that I would look unknowledgeable but when anyone starts out in any industry, they don't have a wealth of knowledge to pull from. Asking questions is how you learn. There will always be at least one individual who may not be willing to share but I have found that, generally, people love sharing information about what they do; so, take advantage!

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

One thing that I feel really helped initially was my internship experience and mentorship program that I was involved in while I was at Manhattan College. As an intern there is less pressure, you can open yourself up to the learning experience and take advantage of the opportunity to figure out what you like or don't like to do. The mentorship program paired me with someone who allowed me to see what a strong female leader looked like within the industry. It left an imprint on my career.

Who within your own firm has helped you succeed within the construction industry?

I started my career working in the city and coming to Long Island has been an adjustment. The core of the engineering is the same, but it is a different world working within the variety of municipalities and local agencies. Joel Richardson, my direct manager, has been a guiding light through the transition. He has also been very supportive of life transitions as I recently had my first child. It is always helpful when you are surrounded by people who support you personally and in your career.

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