



2023 Women in Construction: Cathy Savino-Berger, Levine Builders

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What was a pivotal point in your career? When the housing market crashed in 2008, it was a very difficult time for the construction industry. With current projects ending and no new work on the horizon, a lot of difficult decisions needed to be made. I remember sitting in a meeting with our owner and other executives discussing how we would weather the storm, and as I spoke, I looked around and realized I was the only woman in the room, yet my voice was equal to and respected by my counterparts. In that moment, I realized the value and contributions I had made to our growth and the impact and success I could continue to make in the future.

How can AEC companies recruit more women? Reaching out to school-aged women and girls has great potential to increase the visibility of career paths in AEC companies and is a key component to recruiting the demographic. The industry has evolved extensively over the last few decades, with more women interested in the STEM fields than ever before, and we need to continue to ensure that the next generation feel encouraged and empowered to join our ranks. We can do so by showcasing the various opportunities within the construction and AEC industries to further highlight that construction doesn't have to be majority male dominated.

In the past year, what project or accomplishment are you most proud of? As CFO at Levine Builders, I'm tasked with overseeing the firm's financial reporting, as well as leading the charge on the planning, designing and implementing of processes and procedures for that reporting to ensure we remain in compliance with all federal, state and city agencies as it pertains to the wage and hiring requirements across our portfolio of projects. Throughout my tenure, I have been fortunate to work alongside an incredible team that are continuously finding new ways to streamline practices that increase efficiency. Together, we have achieved the building of over 14,000 affordable, market rate and hospitality units, while continuing to grow as a company. With a large volume of projects in the backlog, this past year was spent homing in on our internal operations inclusive of integrating our project management and financial software while updating processes and procedures to track and report cost and revenue more efficiently. Additionally, we developed wage tracking systems and protocols to produce various reports for those projects with compliance reporting requirements.

Which professional associations or organizations would you recommend to women who are starting out in the AEC industry? Having worked in the construction field for over 30 years, we are fortunate to now have many professional organizations available for women in the industry. Professional Women in Construction is one example of this, hosting professional and networking events that enable women in construction to connect with other female professionals in the space and encourages growth and support within the heavily male-dominated industry. I highly recommend researching the local organizations in your area to see what they offer and engaging with the one that best suits your personal goals and interests.

What is your favorite building in New York? When my daughter and son were growing up, I always loved taking them into the city to The Met, Natural History Museum, a show, shopping, or to eat. My

favorite building was always Grand Central Station. My kids would look up at the celestial ceiling in the main terminal and just be in awe. My son would comment on the window walkways always wanting walk through them, but we never got to before they were closed off. He also just loved looking at all the buildings as we walked through the city and told me he wanted to design or build them and with that love he became an engineer. Grand Central not only showcases stunning design and architecture but the many beautiful memories shared with my family.

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