



2023 Women in Construction: Julie Yun, Suffolk Construction

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Project Executive

What was a pivotal point in your career? During the COVID-19 pandemic, healthcare management and construction were deemed essential services in New York. We aimed to construct safe and efficient spaces for hospitals, as quickly as possible, while continuing with our ongoing projects. It was a major growth period for me in healthcare construction in building and leading a department to turn over vital new facilities and handle the surge in demand during that challenging time. It was also a reminder that the work we do in the AEC industry is important, and how rewarding it can be to create spaces for other important professions and purposes.

How can AEC companies recruit more women? We need to do a better job attracting women to the industry and improve the environment to provide active mentorship and growth to retain them. It starts with a responsibility to change the idea of what a traditional construction worker is in the minds of STEM students. Many young women aren't aware of the variation in skills and how much teamwork is needed between skilled trades to create the projects we do. Knowing the details of these roles allows young women to understand a more accurate idea of where the industry is heading and ultimately be more enticing to women.

Which professional associations or organizations would you recommend to women who are starting out in the AEC industry? I always recommend joining the professional organization related to your discipline early in a career, whether it be trade skill programs to improve your craft or national/regional societies for engineering and architecture (ASCE, AIA). Many of the organizations have designated young professionals' committees that foster development and provide an environment to connect with other women in the industry. It is especially important that women support each other as we only comprise a small portion of the AEC workforce, and there are many national membership-based organizations that provide a great environment to network, provide professional education and connect with mentors.