



**2023 Women in Construction: Swarupa Samant, DI Group
Architecture**

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Swarupa Samant, AIA, LEED AP
Principal

In the past year, what project or accomplishment are you most proud of? Last year, I had what I consider to be dual successes. The first is in New York City while working with NYCSCA, where I oversaw the fast-track design AND construction administration of a 3-K facility in Brooklyn to open in time for the upcoming 2023 school year. In the second, I led the LEED certification process for NJSDA's Camden High School project, which helped earn LEED Silver level. The project also won USGBC-NJ's 2022 Leadership Award for LEED Project of the Year (in the Schools category). Designing and constructing healthy learning environments for students and the community, and the personal and professional satisfaction we derive from the experience, is truly priceless.

What was a pivotal point in your career? I have been very fortunate to have had positive experiences in all my past workplaces. Ever since I joined DIGroup Architecture, my career has been on an exciting upward trajectory that has exceeded my expectations. It is a company that believed in my capabilities from day one and supports its team members through various work-life experiences so that each individual can realize their full potential and, as a result, perform at an even higher level.

Which professional associations or organizations would you recommend to women who are starting out in the AEC industry? The two that come to mind are ones in which I have participated or remain active. The ACE Mentor Program conducts programs for high school students aspiring to join the Architecture, Engineering and Construction (ACE) field. As a woman, I believe this is an effective way to welcome and create a pathway for future professionals in the AEC industry, particularly women and people of color. Professional Women in Construction (PWC) is another network of professionals across every industry in the construction field where members are committed to helping each other, being cheerleaders for our peers and celebrating their successes.

How can AEC companies recruit more women? Women in the AEC industry need to be the messengers and plant the seed in the teenage-girl mind that careers in this industry are an option for women – many of whom are on the frontlines because they are talented and skilled, not because they are women. This level of early and continuous mentorship allows us to be a role model for and cultivate the next generation of AEC professionals. Being in front of high schoolers and college students makes a statement of one's success that helps others envision their future and professional potential in a male-dominated field.

What is your favorite building in New York? There are so many iconic high rises and smart-looking buildings in New York City – it is truly an architectural paradise. When picking my favorite, I do have to admit to a soft spot for the Empire State Building. It has such simplicity that embraces the 'less is more' adage and it makes me smile whenever I see it. I still cannot fathom that it took a little over a year to build this magnificent landmark.