



2023 Women in Construction: Annie Vargas, Schimenti Construction

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In the past year, what project or accomplishment are you most proud of? I am most proud of being part of the project team for the 28E28th St. repositioning commercial office building in NYC's Flatiron district. It is a 15-story, 703,000 s/f building, and we were tasked with significant demolition, white boxing, enlarging multiple floors, HVAC and electrical system upgrades, a new floor-through lobby connecting 28th and 27th Sts., and fit-out of multiple floors for multiple tenants. This project was my longest and largest scale project at Schimenti and took extensive coordination, teaching me a lot of the value and importance of teamwork. This project won an ABC Excellence in Construction Award.

What was a pivotal point in your career? Nearly two years ago, I experienced a major work setback resulting from a clash with my teammate while juggling multiple projects amid our busiest season. The experience was difficult and frustrating and led to feelings of disappointment, self-doubt, and uncertainty about my future. That setback became an opportunity to reflect on my career goals and make strategic decisions about my future direction. I took time to assess my skills, strengths, and weaknesses, and ultimately opted to pivot in a new direction with the mentorship of my direct manager. That collaboration led to the promotion I was working toward and more.

Which professional associations or organizations would you recommend to women who are starting out in the AEC industry? I'd recommend joining Professional Women in Construction or CoreNet Global for women starting out in the AEC industry. These organizations offer a wide range of networking opportunities, including monthly chapter events, global summits, online forums and advocacy efforts. Membership benefits include a variety of educational & professional development opportunities like workshops and webinars, and access to industry insights helping women make informed decisions on market trends, best practices, and emerging technologies. By connecting with other AEC professionals and staying informed about industry trends and best practices, women in construction can enhance their careers and make meaningful contributions to the industry.

How can AEC companies recruit more women? To recruit more women in the AEC industry, there are several steps that can be taken. First, it is important to create a welcoming and inclusive culture that supports diversity and equality. This can be achieved by offering female-specific training and development programs, implementing flexible work arrangements, and promoting female role models within the company. Additionally, establishing outreach programs and partnerships with educational institutions will encourage young women to consider careers in construction. Finally, job postings and recruitment materials should be gender-neutral and focus on the qualifications and skills needed for the position, rather than perpetuating stereotypes and biases.

What is your favorite building in New York? One of my favorite buildings is The Edge, a 1,131-foot-tall outdoor observation deck located on the 100th floor of 30 Hudson Yards. It's the highest outdoor observation deck in the Western Hemisphere and offers 360-degree city views. The deck features a unique triangular shape jutting out from the building, giving visitors the sensation of floating in the sky. The platform is made of nearly transparent, 15-foot-tall glass panels, providing

unobstructed views. There is also a glass floor section, allowing visitors to see down to the street below. The experience is completed with a champagne bar, restaurant, and event space.

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