



**2023 Women in Construction: Mariela Abreu, DBI Projects, LLC**

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Mariela Abreu  
Partner & Senior Director

In the past year, what project or accomplishment are you most proud of? Amongst the completion of many successful projects, what I am most proud of is the growth and strength of our team. As we grow, our team continues to uphold the values of our company and elevate the standards of our work. The three words we continually use to describe the qualities of our team are, hungry, humble and smart. We believe that these three qualities capture the values of our business and create a workplace culture that is inclusive, celebrates hard work and is something we are very proud of.

What is your favorite building in New York? This is impossible for me to answer. While I can be very impressed with the complexity of a building's architecture, simplicity can also captivate me. When I look at the façade of any building, I think about all the efforts and players that had to come together to make it happen – that's the most amazing part for me!

Which professional associations or organizations would you recommend to women who are starting out in the AEC industry? There are so many! It really depends on your personal interest. A couple with great initiatives are; CREW Network, ULI's Women's Leadership Initiative, Young Leaders Group and The Architectural League. Although this next suggestion is for women who are more advanced in their careers, I have recently joined Chief, which is a women's network that connects and supports women executive leaders. I think it's a meaningful step in giving women the tools to succeed in executive positions that have traditionally been apportioned to men.

What was a pivotal point in your career? The birth of my daughter a couple of years ago was a major turning point in my career. The juggle of motherhood and my professional life is something I am constantly working through. I try my best to completely disconnect from work when I get home for the day, so I can spend quality time with my daughter before finishing the working day when she goes to sleep. She is my number one priority and I want to ensure I set a good personal and professional example for her, paving the way for her to achieve what she wants in the future.

How can AEC companies recruit more women? There is no simple answer to this. Firstly, the company needs to have a genuine desire to create a more equitable environment for women at work, and this needs to be formalized in company policies that are clearly communicated to staff and prospective employees. Doing the groundwork to show that your company really cares about supporting women is a key step to attracting and retaining strong female candidates, that over time will build a more equitable workplace in industries that are traditionally male dominated.