



## **2023 Women in Construction: Michelle Dowd, Reidy Contracting Group**

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Michelle Dowd  
Vice President of Estimating

Which professional associations or organizations would you recommend to women who are starting out in the AEC industry? There are so many great organizations out there supporting women right now. I would highly recommend NEW|Nontraditional Employment for Women and the CoreNet NYC|Women's Leadership Committee. Both organizations empower women and provide the necessary resources for women to be successful within the AEC industry.

What was a pivotal point in your career? Becoming the head of RCG's estimating department in 2018. Realizing that the knowledge I've gained over the years, and the hard work I've put in, allowed me to step into this new role as a leader and it's a very proud moment for me. To have an opportunity like this at such a young age and to have the trust and support of my peers means a great deal to me. It's a role that allows me to grow as a person and mentor to my team. It's also rewarding to know that I've contributed to the success of the company and I'm excited for the future of RCG. During my time at RCG, I've been exposed to all sectors of how a job is built from test fits to move in, and I personally feel that knowledge is power and understanding all aspects of a project is important for any career.

in the construction industry.

In the past year, what project or accomplishment are you most proud of? Over the past few years, there have been so many rewarding projects, but the one that I'm most proud of was the build-out of Discovery's new headquarters in New York City. This was one of RCG's biggest projects and it had several moving parts to it. We worked with many talented and creative people throughout the life of this project and it was amazing to see it all come together.

This project involved the fit-out of 13 full floors, a cellar level, and a penthouse, totaling approximately 360,000 s/f for Discovery's new global headquarters.

Phase 1 and Phase 1.1, completed in October/November 2020, included floors 4-12. Floors 4-10 consist of open areas, private offices, chat rooms, pantries, core restrooms, mother's rooms, new elevator lobbies, and conference rooms. The 11th floor is partially agile and consists of the CEO suite, office, lounges, and high-end conference room. The 12th floor contains offices, a fitness room, and a wellness center.

Phase 2, completed in summer 2021, consists of the Amenity Floors (13th floor and penthouse) which are extremely high-end. The 13th floor contains a reception area, conference rooms, a town hall, and a fully fitted-out kitchen. The penthouse is a new steel structure containing canopies and a curtain wall. Also included are new roofing/landscaping on the roof level.

Phase 3, completed in October 2021, consists of a ground floor studio, cellar work, several fully exhausted kitchens on the 1st floor, and floors 2-3 containing studios, facility infrastructure,

conference rooms, and offices. This also includes a new elevator to service between the cellar and the 2nd floor. On this project, I had the privilege of working as head estimator and project manager onsite to ensure all phases of construction were running smoothly while adhering to the budget and timeline.

How can AEC companies recruit more women? I believe we need to start promoting AEC as early as high school. We need to educate women about the many different career fields within the construction industry. We need to let them know that whether they intend to graduate high school and join the workforce, or trade school, or college, there is a place for them within the AEC. It's our obligation to educate these young women about the various roles and opportunities within the construction industry, so they can make an informed decision regarding their next steps in life.

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