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2019 Women in Construction: Alexandra Parker, Project Manager, Retail at Shawmut Design and Construction

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How many years have you been in your current field? 6

Which project, deal or transaction was the “game changer” in the advancement of your career during the last 10 years? Arc'teryx was the first project I managed at Shawmut, and it helped me create organizational systems and procedures I still use to this day! The feeling of accomplishment was incredible, and it really propelled me to where I am now.

What are you doing differently in 2019 that has had a positive impact on your career? I've started asking for help more. You always want to prove you can do it all, but jobs can get incredibly overwhelming and it's important to seek guidance and advice from mentors to continue to learn and grow.

Who are three women – living or dead – that you would like to have drinks with and why? Robin Roberts, Meryl Streep and Martha Stewart. Robin for her passion, Meryl for her attitude and demeanor, and Martha for her grit.

What was your first job and what did you learn from it? For one of the first projects I managed, I ordered door jambs that were too big for the wall size. I was so upset—I had been so meticulous in confirming all the details, and knew this meant additional costs and schedule delays. When my boss reviewed everything, he wasn't mad. He acknowledged the great things in the project, and trusted that this wouldn't happen again. We notified the client as a team, and I was so proud to be part of such a supportive project team. I always try to ensure my projects have a good sense of teamwork and collaboration.

What were your biggest fears when you started out in your profession? That I wouldn't know the lingo or fit in with the boys! Every day I learn something new, and I don't think that will ever change. I am still working on knowing it all and loving the journey, and asking sub-contractors and superintendents questions has really helped me grow. I was worried about the field being male-dominated, and not being taken seriously because of my age. I haven't always had the easiest time, but it's empowering to see more and more women paving a way to the top of the industry, and I hope to be right there with them.

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