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2019 Women Who Build: Lauren Bord, Amenta Emma Architects

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Name: Lauren Bord

Position: Interior Designer

Company: Amenta Emma Architects

How many years have you been in your current field? 10

What were your biggest fears when you started out in your profession? The design field is extremely competitive and when I graduated during the recession, I had a very difficult time finding a job. I applied to over 50 firms in Rhode Island, New York and New Jersey with hardly any responses. My first thought was, "am I not good enough and is my portfolio not strong enough to be considered?" It was extremely discouraging but, there was one woman who responded to my application and gave me hope, she told me that she just laid off fifteen employees, but my portfolio and resume were strong and to not give up because this hard time has nothing to do with my talent and design capability.

Why and/or how did you decide on the A/E/C industry? Growing up, art and math were my favorite subjects in school and in 8th grade I had a mandatory CAD class I fell in love with, so I felt interior design was the perfect profession to incorporate all. After 10 years, I am still happy with the career path I chose!

Which project, deal or transaction has helped in the advancement of your career during the last 10 years? The past year I have been put in charge of the furniture package for our state project, 165 Capitol Ave., which has really helped strengthen my furniture knowledge. At around 1 million s/f, the state office building is the largest furniture package I have ever worked on and will take over two years to fully complete. I have learned so much about state contracts, furniture contracts, bidding, and furniture specifications. I am extremely grateful for this opportunity to strengthen this section in my profession.

What are you doing differently in 2019 that has had a positive impact on your career? I am asking more questions. If I don't know an answer to a particular question or don't understand a problem, I will research it or ask for help. I always thought that asking for help showed weakness but now, knowing when to ask for help has allowed me to grow even more as a designer and prove that it's

not a fear or judgement anymore but a way of benefiting ourselves.

What was your first job and what did you learn from it? I graduated around one of the toughest times, during the 2008 recession. I lived in Rhode Island but landed my first job in New Jersey at an interior design firm, Frank DelleDonne Interiors, Inc. doing high-end residential interiors in NJ and NYC. Residential design was not studied much in the school I attended and because it was a small firm, I took on all the all the responsibilities of the different design stages from purchase orders, designing custom millwork and furniture to managing \$20M homes. I worked closely with clients and subcontractors and due time, strengthened my relationships with them. Some of the best advice taught to me at FDD Interiors was to never assume anything whether it's related to a design decision or what you "think" the client wants; to this day, it's advice I abide by.

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