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2019 Women in Construction: Alexandra Banks, Project Manager at Timberline Construction

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

What are you doing differently in 2019 that has had a positive impact on your career? In 2019, I have put a focus on the exterior factors of the construction industry. Being a project manager in construction is not just about focusing on the job or task at hand, but also about focusing on the future of the industry. To do this, I have decided to go to more industry events, continue my education through an MBA with a focus in project management and sustainability, and help the company create a Corporate Social Responsibility Plan. We can only get as much as we put into our jobs and lives. Anyone has the ability to make a difference.

What was your first job and what did you learn from it? The first job I had was cleaning cottages on the weekends at the age of 13. This taught me a great amount about responsibility and work ethic. Some of these houses would be trashed, because the previous tenants didn't have any respect for the property. I learned I never wanted to disrespect property or people after being the person burdened by others' disrespect. This job also taught me that everyone has the choice to succeed or fail, it all depends on what you put into the job, the project, and even yourself.

Which project, deal or transaction was the "game changer" in the advancement of your career during the last 10 years? I believe that there were two things in my career that were "game changers" for the advancement in my career. The first "game changer" was my choice to go back to school for an MBA with a focus in Project Management and Sustainability. The "second game changer" was during a job that was projected to be a large loss for the company and the project was extremely behind schedule. I had a choice to step up to the plate and turn the job around. In the end, we were able to turn the job around and leave the client happy.

Who are three women – living or dead – that you would like to have drinks with and why? Three women, living or dead, I would like to have drinks with are Helen Keller, Katharine Graham and Wendy Henry. Helen Keller should be an inspiration to all as she was able to take an impossible situation and make it exceedingly possible. Katharine Graham was the first-ever female CEO of a Fortune 500 Company and could talk of breaking social norms, doing something you love and making sure it matters. Lastly, Wendy Henry is described as the first female editor on fleet street. Because of this, women gained confidence that there is no job/industry that is inaccessible for women.

What were your biggest fears when you started out in your profession? My biggest fear when starting out in the Construction Industry was would I be taken seriously. Over the past 10-20 years there has been a significant increase of women in construction, however, women only make up about 10%-15% of the industry today. I was also worried that being a woman would hinder my ability to have my voice heard and grow within the industry. Being a woman in construction is a rarity, but you have the choice to make that negative a positive. It is up to you to determine your path in life, you are your only obstacle.

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