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2019 Women in Construction: Caitlin Ferris, Project Manager, Luxury Homes at Shawmut Design and Construction

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How many years have you been in your current field? 9

Which project, deal or transaction was the “game changer” in the advancement of your career during the last 10 years? My two current luxury residential projects – they’re each \$20 million projects, and I’m the lead project manager working under a senior project manager and project executive who have so much construction experience. They have shared invaluable advice and knowledge that has really helped me grow as a project manager. Both projects are for a very important client with extremely high expectations, which has been both challenging and rewarding. These projects require a lot of collaboration with the architects and engineers for design development, as well as coordinating the logistics for working in a high-profile neighborhood.

What were your biggest fears when you started out in your profession? It was very overwhelming to come into this profession feeling like I didn’t know anything. I went to college for civil engineering with a concentration in construction, but it still felt like completely unfamiliar territory. Getting on-site as an assistant superintendent really helped me learn and gain confidence. My college internships in construction office settings helped me get to know the basics of a job flow, but going into the field helped me fully understand how construction works. You learn so much being on site and seeing everything as it’s happening.

What was your first job and what did you learn from it? My first job was working for a very small general contractor in a combined role of administrator, assistant project manager, and assistant accountant. I was fresh out of college assisting project managers on their projects while also entering payroll, invoices, etc., and writing up training modules. This experience helped me understand what it takes for a business to run, and how many roles are involved to make it successful.

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