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Ones to Watch 2019: Cheryl Saldanha, Simpson Gumpertz & Heger

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Cheryl Saldanha
Senior Staff Member
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What do you consider to be your greatest professional accomplishment in the past 12 months? This year, I became a certified passive house designer from the Passive House Institute – a credential that I have wanted to obtain as I have seen Passive House take our industry by storm. As an engineer, I love that Passive House is both a performance- and outcome-based standard focused on simple concepts to reduce energy consumption in buildings. I have taken every opportunity I can to spread the word by presenting on Passive House, which has led to stimulating discussions with colleagues and clients, fostering an environment of learning and opportunities to apply these principles in all our projects.

Who or what do you attribute to your success? I feel like much of my success stems from the fact that I do what I love. Work doesn't feel like work because I am passionate about engineering and believe my work is impacting the built environment in positive ways. I am also surrounded by professionals who both inspire and challenge me on a regular basis.

, and that has had a strong positive impact on my development and ultimate success.

?What advice can you offer to someone who is interested in a career in your industry? When I speak with college students or young professionals, I emphasize that future successful engineers need to be adaptable and commit to lifelong learning. One good example is how automation is transforming our industry. It is happening in small ways now, but technology is advancing faster and faster, requiring creativity and ingenuity to think of new ways to do things. Current standard procedures and "business as usual" thinking will not work in the future. It's tough to figure out what you're going to do with the rest of your life, so understanding that the industry is constantly changing is necessary.

How have your life experiences impacted who you are professionally? When I was first out of school, I threw myself into everything and anything I could. I was a sponge, eager to absorb new

knowledge and experiences. Over time, I have learned the importance of balance – you can't accomplish everything right here and now, and sometimes focus takes practice. Our careers are demanding, but we still only have 24 hours in a day. The term 'time management' is thrown around quite a bit, but by accepting my limitations and understanding where and how to focus my energy, I am more successful professionally.

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