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## **2021 Women in Construction: Kelsey Dunning, Accounting Manager, Vantage Builders**

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What are you most looking forward to post-pandemic? The pandemic has had such a big impact on every aspect of everyone's lives. What I'm most looking forward to are the small things, just the

return to normalcy. That will be different for each person and that's what's nice about normalcy. For me, it'll be simply going out to dinner with friends, to be able to visit family without worrying, and to travel.

How have you adapted and changed in the last 12 months? Like so many in our industry, I had to adapt to working from home and being able to communicate and collaborate with coworkers via Zoom rather than in-person. As I'm in finance, I am usually in the office and used to working with people when they stop by my desk, so this was a big change. Parts of that adaptation have been difficult but some parts have, in retrospect, been positive. I've seen an improvement in work/life balance and while working from home, my productivity has increased.

Why should women consider a career in construction? Construction is still widely considered to be a male-dominated industry but even during my career that has begun to change. More and more women are entering the industry, and are succeeding in all departments, including in the field, and in leadership roles, as well. Construction is a growth industry and there is tremendous opportunity for both women and men to climb the ladder. For women who do choose construction as a career, there are plenty of mentors available and everyone is willing to help others succeed.

What steps have you taken to ensure the continued success of your firm? When I first started at Vantage Builders, I was still very new in my career. I decided early on that to help make an impact I would need to grow stronger in my own role, so I made sure to not be afraid of asking questions. I wanted to learn as much as possible about accounting, Vantage Builders' business, our clients and the construction industry in general. Management at Vantage Builders has created an environment where everyone's input is sought after and I'm now in a position where I offer my expertise to help the company in decision-making.

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