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2022 Women in Construction: Cassie Norton, Project Manager at ARCO National Construction New England

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Cassie Norton

What was your greatest professional achievement or most notable project in the last 12 months? ARCO's 396,375 s/f Pine Hill Dr. project in Boylston, Mass. This challenging project has made our team think outside the box and use our value engineering skills to successfully solve problems – including clearing the site by blasting 280,000 CY of rock. It has not only been personally and professionally satisfying to meet certain milestones throughout the project lifecycle but also an honor for me to be a part of this team.

When you're not busy, what is your go to book or podcast to help you unwind? Extreme Ownership by Jocko Willink & Leif Babin. This book was highly recommended by ARCO when I first joined, and it has become one of my favorites. The message underscores that everyone is part of a team and each contributor has a role to play, but the one that is truly responsible for the success and/or failure of any project is the leader. Having this as an important reminder as I lead a project team or participate as a team member provides me with the ability to wind down one day but keep thinking for the next.

Starting out in the construction business, who or what empowered you? Starting my engineering studies in college with just two girls in all my classes empowered me to drive to succeed. I feel empowered every day to demonstrate my capabilities and show other women what they can accomplish or aspire to as well. As a woman in the construction industry, I have had doubters and will continue to see this throughout my career, but I am determined every day to turn these doubters into believers. I am happy to prove people wrong while doing what I love, and I hope that I can inspire other women.

Within your firm, who has helped you succeed within the industry? How have they helped you? My entire company helps one another succeed. We all run multiple projects, but everyone is always willing to stop and help each other out. I have benefited greatly from the breadth of experience of other project managers, supervisors and executives. The work is demanding and the days can be long, but each person does whatever she or he can do to help others succeed.

What tips or advice would you offer to other women who are considering entering the construction industry? Be persistent, be resourceful and believe in yourself. Confidence will get you very far in this industry, and if you are confident in yourself, then other people will have confidence in you. There are always many moving parts, variables and unplanned activities in construction, and projects may get challenging. The ability to think - and act - creatively is key in addressing such issues. My main piece of advice to leave with anyone is: never stop asking questions. Use those questions and inquiries as a strength, not a weakness, as you demonstrate your ability to learn and grow.