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2022 Women in Commercial Real Estate: Sarah Ashley, Bowdoin Construction Corp.

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Sarah Ashley
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What advice would you offer to women getting into the CRE industry? Be confident, know your worth, and be knowledgeable. Being in a male-dominated industry, women are often underestimated in our abilities to perform until proven. At times it can feel like no one is taking you seriously or listening. My advice is don't be intimidated. Speak up—and even if you must repeat yourself, that's okay; be assertive and speak up. Thankfully, my coworkers are extremely patient and willing to help and answer any questions I may have as I continue to grow and learn.

What has been your biggest challenge and how have you faced it? The biggest challenge I have faced has been being respected. In a previous job my suggestions were often ignored until it came from a male coworker. I wasn't getting the credit I deserved, and saw others being celebrated for something I'd accomplished. I would discuss it with higher ups, and nothing would change. My resolution to the problem was to move on. A lot of people suffer thought toxic work environments. My advice is, if you find yourself in a negative work situation, leave it! You are your #1 responsibility; there are plenty of opportunities waiting.

What trends will dominate your industry in the coming months? I believe the use of Augmented Reality will become more and more prevalent in commercial real estate, primarily for its efficiency in project design. Through the ability to show how spaces can be programmed ahead of being built, clients can see their project come to life - instead of trying to picture it by simply looking at blueprints. By seeing how the plumbing and electrical systems flow; how office, manufacturing or laboratory spaces can be configured – better decisions can be made up front, with any changes implemented head of going into construction. It's a huge savings in time and money.

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