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## **2023 Women in Construction: Jessica Bourassa, Metro Walls**

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Jessica Bourassa  
Human Resource Manager

What was your greatest professional achievement or most notable project in the last 12 months? Working in people operations, more historically known as human resources, there are MANY different branches to learn and grow but for me most notable in the last 12 months, I obtained my Certified Plan Sponsor Professional (CPSP) certification. It is a credential program designed to attest to current employers that I have the knowledge and skills needed to evaluate, design, implement and manage a comprehensive employer-sponsored retirement plan. The rigorous curriculum ensures plan sponsors, like myself, have the knowledge needed to protect their organization from fiduciary risk and help secure their plan participants' retirement success. This certification is not usually one obtained in my role but felt it was necessary to ensure future success of Metro Walls' employees.

What made you interested in seeking a career in the AEC industry? To be honest, I was not seeking any particular industry when I found my new home at Metro Walls, but I do come from a hard-working, blue-collar family and construction seemed to be a great fit with my own personal morals, values and ethics. It takes a truly dedicated, disciplined and assertive type of personality to work in this industry and all those traits have been demonstrated throughout my personal life and career.

How are you involved in community organizations and/or charities? I am currently a member of SHRM (Society for HR Management) , MAHRA (Manchester Area Human Resources Association), PSCA (Plan Sponsor Council of American), NAWIC (National Association of Women in Construction); and sit as a Leadership Member on Grapevine's Manchester Professional Women for Good, which is a group of regional women "doing good for the greater community". I am 100% committed to mentoring and supporting women in leadership roles, like myself, succeed in today's business environment – at all levels and within a number of different industries.

What tips or advice would you offer to other women who are considering entering the construction industry? Develop confidence early on because even though it will take time to gain full confidence in your own voice, it does matter. We, as women, often believe our ideas are not worthy if they're not flawless, thought-out and fully planned. We tend to underestimate our abilities despite all indications that we are overqualified and overprepared for the positions we are hired for. Second, would be to break free from stereotypes. Our society still sees unconscious biases about men and women. As women in a male-dominated field like construction, we often need to be our own best advocate and we tend to become our own cheerleader.