



2015
**WOMEN
IN COMMERCIAL
CONSTRUCTION
& FACILITIES**



IT'S A 'WOMEN'S' WORLD, TOO

Attendees laud rise of stature amid industry leadership

One of the most prevailing themes of the 2015 Women in Commercial Construction & Facilities Retreat in Denver was the vital impact that women continue to make throughout the commercial construction industry.

Take a closer look at the conversation generated through our afternoon roundtable discussion, and you can see how a keen sense of processing and disseminating information, the ability to build and foster relationships, and a dedicated approach to details drives each of the attendees on a daily basis.

These are all vital assets to an industry that continues to move full steam ahead on all fronts. The roundtable discussion was part of a three-day event at Denver's Hotel Monaco, Aug. 6-9, which featured a series of networking opportunities, including a little free-fall flying in the iFLY Indoor SkyDiving facility.

Following is the final installment of our Retreat coverage, including a look at our Friday afternoon forum. For more information, visit us at www.ccr-mag.com.



Heidi Bendiksen
Heidi's Brooklyn Deli
Founder/Vice President



Samra Savioz
Marco Contractors
Director of Business
Development



Susan Lloyd
Family Dollar
Project Manager
Construction Process &
Design Team



Lori Naas
Whataburger Restaurants
Manager, 3rd Party Services



Karen MacCannell
The McIntosh Group
Business Development



Caroline Roberts
Chipotle
Executive Director



Penny Czarra
AC Tech
President & Director



Gabriele Lawrence
Chatham Lodging Trust
Director of Project
Management



Melanie Gifford
Sargenti Architects
Business Development
Manager



Kelli Buhay
Retail Maintenance
Specialists
Director of Business
Development



Heather Lindsay
Academy Sports
& Outdoors
Manager of
Construction Projects



Jenny Feng
Behr Process Corporate
PRO Product and
Direct Channel Manager



Jenee Naples Massey
Heidi's Brooklyn Deli
Director of Franchise and
Vendor Relations



Diana Rico
LaZerCaD
Chief Development
Officer



Rabiah Reyome
GNP Development
Director, Project Solutions



Heidi Vassalotti
Crossville
Strategic Accounts



Colleen Biggs
The Little Gym
International
Real Estate &
Development Manager



Cha Nye Farley
Smashburger
Director of Facilities
and Procurement



Dawn Henning
General Shale
Director of Retail
Marketing



Maria Torres
Pizza Studio
Construction & Ops
Coordinator



Erin Wilson
Imagilux
Inside Sales Manager



Gabriela Settles
Office Depot/Office Max
Senior Category Manager,
Indirect Procurement



Cherisse Regnart
Re-AL
Principal



Grace Daly
Shop Talk 360°



CCR: What is the biggest advantage of being a woman in the, construction industry?

Samra Savioz, Marco Contractors:

Women differ from men, however, we complement men in the construction industry and work well together. We process information differently as women. This is a positive. I am a firm supporter of coming to the negotiating table and listening to our clients needs. Being direct, but at the same time a woman can bring a softness and understanding that her male counter-part may lack. Figuring out what is important to our clients helps me to build solid relationships, and provides me with the information I need to inform my team members of critical data, so we can provide excellent service at Marco. I am detail oriented and focus on creating value. Relationships are important. Women enhance the construction industry, and create an advantage for everyone involved.

Susan Lloyd, Family Dollar: I agree. I think women bring a different perspective



“Whether I’m with my boss, a peer or a client, listening is important. And when I talk to clients, it’s not to ask for the job. I call to chat and talk about other things. I think it has made a difference in our business, and we’re teaching the young ones at our company how important this is.”

– Karen MacCannell, The McInstosh Group

“Funny thing about problem-solving. You need to acknowledge there’s a problem! And acknowledging there’s “a problem” somehow implies vulnerability. Having a woman in the room often leads to more open dialog and the opportunity to drill deeper into what the stumbling blocks to a better solution truly are.”

— Penny Czarra, AC Tech



to the table. We do listen. I have people tell me that I don’t really say much in meetings. And I tell them it is because I am listening. You have to really listen before you can give an opinion.

Lori Naas, Whataburger: I think it differs from industry to industry. I think whatever industry you are in you have to project confidence. You have to know what you’re talking about and be open to listening and working for the best solution.

Karen MacCannell, The McInstosh Group: I think it’s the listening skills. Whether I’m with my boss, a peer or a client, listening is important. And when I talk to clients, it’s not to ask for the job. I call to chat and talk about other things. I think it has made

a difference in our business, and we’re teaching the young ones at our company how important this is. When we grew in 2010 and 2011, we hired about 10 college graduates with architecture degrees right out of school, and we have been working them to teach them the proper way to run a business – not just be architects, but how to run a business. The most important thing we teach them is to listen. That’s the key.

Carolyn Roberts, Chipotle: I make it a point to know the name of every person on my team’s name and family – whether it’s a spouse, significant other or child. You need to ask those questions. I treat everyone on my team like they are my kids, because I believe it’s my job to make sure that they’re successful. I want them to know that I believe in them. And when I say my team, it’s not just the people who get a paycheck from Chipotle; it’s every single person I interact with every single day. If they know you believe in them, they will believe in you.

So, as a woman, I’ve been able to bring more of that kind of motherly instinct to the table. My team knows it’s

a safe environment. Women tend to have those tough conversations a lot easier sometimes.

Penny Czarra, AC Tech: At the end of the day, we all have to be problem-solvers. Funny thing about problem-solving, though. You need to acknowledge there’s a “problem”! And acknowledging there’s “a problem” somehow implies vulnerability. No one wants to feel like an idiot.

Having a woman in the room often leads to more open dialog and the opportunity to drill deeper into what the stumbling blocks to a better solution truly are. If I can really listen, leave my pre-packaged solutions at the doorstep, and earn my client’s confidential trust ... there’s nothing we can’t figure out together.

Non-competitive / non-judgmental problem solving is a scarce skill-set that many women can bring to the table. I love it when a client and I can both “fess-up”, throw multiple ideas against the wall, select the better mousetrap, and then put it into action. It’s even better when we do all this before anyone else knew there was a “problem” in the first place.

Gabriele Lawrence, Chatham Lodging & Trust:

As a gender, I think we have a specific character traits that commends itself really well to the type of work that we do. It gives us the ability to see the big picture. At the same time, it allows us to understand the steps in the roadmap and the details it takes to get there.



Where some of our male counterparts are either visionaries or myopic or everything in between, we’re kind of that camera that allows a telephoto look at the same time that we can take a 360 picture. So, whether we call it listening or being collaborative or team players, it’s all part of it.

I think it’s what we bring to the table that incorporates a lot of those things into being able to see where the company needs to go and what it’s going take to get there. It’s having the ability to be collaborative, cheerlead, mentor and handhold all at the same time based on the personality make-up of the team we are leading at any given point in time.

“I think all women in this industry are unstoppable trains. In addition to being trains, whether you agree with that or not, we are sensitive. We are caretakers. We are nurturing. We are multi-taskers.”

— Kelli Buhay, Retail Maintenance Specialists



Melanie Gifford, Sargenti Architects: I am seeing more women in higher positions in the architecture industry. In my graduating class, there were over 50 percent women. Our office has over 50 percent women. One of my main jobs is to pair our senior project managers with our clients. Oftentimes, it is the women who understand the retail spaces best. Stereotypically, we are the ones to shop and understand the flow of the spaces and what it takes to work the store.

Kelli Buhay, Retail Maintenance Specialists: I feel like, that as a woman, I am a train that is unstoppable. I think all women in this industry are unstoppable trains. In addition to being trains, whether you agree with that or not, we are sensitive. We are caretakers. We are nurturing. We are multi-taskers.

Heather Lindsay, Academy Sports & Outdoors:

I think women bring confidence, determination, assertiveness and passion to the industry. Women have proven to be successful at multi-tasking and organization, which allows us to step back and assess where we need to focus our energy. We know what we want the end product to be and will be persistent in making sure it gets to the end on schedule.

Jenny Feng, Behr Process Corporate:

Relationships matter a lot in the industry and women are great at forging and cultivating relationships. By nature, women are nurturers and that makes us good listeners and problem solvers. I have seen that our customers find that refreshing. Women in this industry are also open to admitting what they need to learn more about. They are able to step in quickly and leverage their relationships to find solutions faster.



“If the corporate culture is not progressive, the opportunities for women to advance become limited. It’s a two-way street. Because we are not all compelled, as women, to assume leadership positions, we carve out our own paths.”

– Rabiah Reyome, GNP Development

Jenee Naples Massey, Naples's Franchising:

I think the women in our industry are providing generational leadership. A lot of the women I have met here did not start in this industry. They have evolved and ended up here — carved their paths in a male dominated industry. Being in the restaurant industry, at a senior level, there are not a lot of women thinking about it or even understanding that there are opportunities out there.

So I think the more women who get out there and carve their ways are opening up incredible opportunities for the rest of us. We don't have to feel limited in our career opportunities. We can do something creative and hands on like a career in construction or project management. That's really what stands out the most. I think there is some really big advantages for the generations coming forward to be able to see women who are getting these roles and exceeding all expectations.



“I believe one of our strengths is that we go at it full force all the time. We are collaborative and nurturing. I believe we have to be the ambassadors for those kinds of things. I want to be able to step forward and say that this is what we're trying to do.”

— Cha Nye Farley, Smashburger

Diane Rico, LaZerCaD: I really agree with that. I think that as women we value the sharing of our empowerment. All of us who are here are empowered and used to utilizing that empowerment.

Rabiah Reyome, GNP Development:

I've worked in both large corporations and small private ones like GNP. For women, having leadership teams that advocate for diversity is significant as well as being part of a progressive culture. If the corporate culture is not progressive, the opportunities for women to advance become limited. It's a two-way street. Because we are not all compelled, as women, to assume leadership positions, we carve out our own paths. We bring those value-added lessons learned to those positions we are in today.



“I think that relationships are the common thread here. I see this with our clients and as a leader & mentor. We’re very fortunate that as women we are able to be professional and compassionate at the same time.”

– Cherisse Regnart, Re-AL



Heidi Vassalotti, Crossville: What I think is unique and dynamic about our group is that we all work so well together. In some cases, a man may listen to a conversation and walk away focused on a single point from the discussion. In our group however, we thoroughly think all aspects of the conversation through. Our combined skill sets make us better at visualizing things and seeing the big picture.

Colleen Biggs, The Little Gym: I really believe that behind every great woman is a great man. And behind every man is an even greater woman. This may sound silly, as it's an old fashioned phrase; however, from what we heard today, women have a different perspective than men. We each uniquely leave our “mark” on this industry. Women are strong, powerful and

strategic in many ways that differ from men. Women are unique in relationship building, as with our ability to listen with a caring ear we are able to create and build long lasting relationships with our teams and vendors. Because we are in a male-dominated industry, I find that over 80 percent of my partnered vendors are men.

It's refreshing to hear that The Little Gym is one of their favorite clients to work with. As a women in this industry I have learned that you need to be straightforward, having that vision and not wavering, letting those you work with regularly know exactly how you feel and where they stand at all times. I've been very thankful to have a team of three male executives that have been mentors for me for many years, (hence the phrase stated). Honesty is the best policy that I follow.

Cha Nye Farley, Smashburger: I believe one of our strengths is that we go at it full force all the time. We are collaborative and nurturing. I believe we have to be the ambassadors for those kinds of things. I want to be able to step forward and say that this is what we're trying to do. I think that we are paving the way for the things our daughters want to do. I started in restaurant development and worked there for 15 years. It has been a long time. I am starting to see more women now in positions like mine — positions of leadership. That is great. It means that we've been doing something right.

Dawn Henning, General Shale: Our company is 87 years old and we have many employees who have been there 20, 30, even 40 years, which is awesome. But the majority of those long-timers are men. Very few women have stayed that long. Even



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— Maria Torres, Pizza Studio

today, there are only a handful of women within the company. I can say we are making concerted effort to equalize that, as we are hiring more and more women in sales, IT, HR and other areas in the company.

It's so great to see new women come into the company and into the industry at all levels. Sometimes you do feel you have to fight extra hard to have a voice, but it's so nice to look across the table and see someone who looks like you and nod to acknowledge you. The new female employees you want to help mold and teach them what to do, and what not to do so they don't make the mistakes that you've made.

I think these are the advantages to being a woman in the construction industry. We are good leaders; we listen; we help; we mold and shape; we sympathize, and we empathize, but we have creative, analytical





and strategic minds that can change the direction of business.

Maria Torress, Pizza Studio: Maria Torres, Pizza Studio: As women, some of our strong suits are being detail-oriented, good listeners and multi-taskers. These abilities add incredible value to any company and team. Our Pizza Studio team has several women on board and we are very proud of that. I believe that when you bring varied skills, characteristics and capabilities to the table, one only adds to the capacity and effectiveness of the team working towards their common goal.

Erin Wilson, Imagilux: I know what it's like to work hard. I used to be a stay-at-home mom before I started working at Imagilux. But this is an entirely different type of hard work, and it's every day, too. I'm very passionate about my work, and I think that's something different between a woman's approach and a man's. This pas-

“I think we are good at relationship building and, generally are better at it than men. Maybe that's because I'm in marketing. Being a woman in a male-dominant industry is kind of refreshing.”

— Jenny Feng, Behr Process Corporate

sion shows up and I think people notice it, from my boss to our customers.

Women bring a different voice to the table, and it's a voice that needs to be heard. We build customer relationships in a different way, and we work to build relationships that last, not just to close a deal. That really meshes well with our company values. We are, first of all, here to help. We provide more than just a product, we aim to be a valuable partner that our customers can rely on.

Gabriela Settles, Office Depot: For me, relationship building has been the key thing. The internal construction and facilities teams as well as the vendors I've worked with have responded well to my approach and personality type. Multi-tasking and the ability to handle things fairly quickly are a necessity in my role, and I feel that being a woman has made this a natural process for me.

Cherisse Regnart, Re-AL: I think that relationships are the common thread

“My biggest priority heading into 2016 is the evaluation and expansion of tools/services we can provide to support retail and hospitality, and how to best communicate these with our client partners.”

— Heidi Vassalotti, Crossville



here. I see this with our clients and as a leader & mentor. We're very fortunate that as women we are able to be professional and compassionate at the same time. I also believe women are able to balance work with personal goals and family. That can be challenging for anybody, but it is something we all want to make a priority. Everybody wants to be successful – with their jobs, with their family and with their personal goals.

Heidi Bendiksen Naples, Heidi's Brooklyn Deli: My mom was the first generation American and wanted desperately to go to college. But she was told that she was a woman. You're going to have make babies. Her brother went to prep school, college, and they joined the military. He didn't get his first job until he was 30.

My mother desperately wanted to forge her own path. So she opened a business when I was 5 and has it for 40 years. She loved it. There were no other options. She was my inspiration. When we

moved here, there were nothing to eat but steaks, it seemed. Being from the East Coast, we knew there was other good food out there. So I had the confidence that we can open a small business. And we did. There was no grand vision. It was one step after the other.

A lot of wonderful people, men and women, mentored us. They helped us. Advised us. Our two daughters helped us. My belief as a parent and my belief as a second mother to Jenée's community of girlfriends and my younger daughter's community of women are to be a teacher – a guide. I want them to learn from my mistakes. It has been an amazing journey.

I believe in people. I see everyone as important, including our employees. Our best people are in our franchise stores. And those franchisees benefited from those valuable people.

So, I build relationships. And I absolutely believe in the community, particularly a woman's community.

Grace Daly, ShopTalk360: As women in the construction industry, we're natural collaborators and nurturers, which are critical traits to have when dealing with our internal teams and also the many external partnering teams that it takes to design, build and maintain a retail space. Having been in the Industry for more than 25 years, I can see the increase of women leaders have played a major role in shaping our industry with a greater focus on building and maintaining long term relationships.

CCR: What is your biggest priority heading into 2016?

Chatham Lodging & Trust's Gabriele Lawrence: With the amount of projects we have on the books for 2016 and beyond it is getting the best lead times out of our vendors that we can at the best price.

The McIntosh Group's MacCannell: Our biggest priority is staying ahead of the game for our clients. As ADA compliance lawsuits continue to rise, we are training our Accessibility team on not only

design requirements, but also on the most recent rulings and interpretations so they know how to best guide our clients.

Outside of the ADA teams, our Prototype Management and Design Teams are all going through in-depth Revit training so that we can offer the best possible services with the best technologies available.

Pizza Studio's Torres: For my line of work, 2016 is already here. Planning has begun for next year's development schedule. Perfecting today's systems and processes improves next year's effectiveness and ease in getting stores open. The plan is to work smarter, not harder.

Crossville's Vassalotti: We are always looking for ways to go above and beyond for our clients to exceed their expectations. My biggest priority heading into 2016 is the evaluation and expansion of tools/services we can provide to support retail and hospitality, and how to best communicate these with our client partners.

ShopTalk's Daly: One of my biggest priorities immediately heading into 2016 is my opening breakfast keynote at the CCR Summit in San Antonio, Jan. 21. It is both exhilarating and a bit daunting to be sharing my story with the industry, but I am very excited at the opportunity to reconnect with my peers at such a great conference.

The Little Gym's Biggs: My biggest priority moving into 2016 is the execution of the companies 2016 initiatives in the development department. The goal is to provide an opportunity to grow and expand our brand through several additional store openings. We are working on developing and implementing a smaller footprint for our The Little Gym brand that will accommodate several untapped markets in the United States.

GNP Development's Rabiah: One of the biggest priorities for 2016 is continuous improvement and collaboration with our clients' to ensure that we are delivering value-added strategies for the long-term.



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— Grace Daly, ShopTalk360



Imagilux's Wilson: We have a lot going on for 2016. We have some capital investments to increase our production capacity on one side. And we have a number of strategic partnerships that are developing.

But we really want to improve our ability to speak to our entire customer base with good information. That not only means more information on our product specifically, but information on how our product is used in a more general and inspirational sense.

We have many great projects in a range of uses that we we would like to feature this year and tell the story of how LED panels are an important part of the built environment. Both functionally and aesthetically. Current applications are only scratching the surface of what's possible. There is so much more you can do with LED panels than the typical signage or displays. We can't wait to see what creative applications our customers come up with in 2016.

Family Dollar's Lloyd: My biggest priorities are always finding new products or processes to make our buildings easier, faster and less expensive to build. This needs to be done without taking anything away from the customers shopping experience or safety and without decreasing the sustainability of the building.

AC Tech's Czarra: Our passionate advocacy for the "Go-Early" application of moisture mitigation epoxy to green concrete "before the walls go up" will continue into 2016 and beyond. It's such an easy change to make in construction sequencing and saves everyone so much aggravation, complexity, money and time. But it's a change that takes a little time to cozy up to. The technology is gaining momentum. I'll report next year on how it's making a difference in construction schedules and bottom lines.

Sargenti's Gifford: My biggest priorities for 2016 are to continue to grow the LA office and diversify our client base across all three offices. I would love to delve deeper into restaurant and hospitality work. **CCR**



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