



Spotlight on...
women in construction

**CONSIDERATE
CONSTRUCTORS
SCHEME**

Case Study: Danaher & Walsh Claudia Carroll - Site Engineer

1. WHAT FIRST ATTRACTED YOU TO WORKING IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY? HOW DID YOU FIND OUT ABOUT THE JOB AND WHAT QUALIFICATIONS DID YOU REQUIRE?

As a woman in construction, I was drawn to the industry's dynamic and challenging nature, aligning with my passion for problem-solving and mathematics. My BEng Civil Engineering Degree from Loughborough University provided a strong foundation in engineering principles, mathematics, and project management. However, beyond qualifications, qualities like adaptability, resilience, and effective communication are vital in the male-dominated construction industry.

2. TELL US ABOUT YOUR CURRENT ROLE. WHAT DOES A TYPICAL DAY LOOK LIKE? WHAT DO YOU LIKE AND DISLIKE ABOUT THE JOB?

As a site engineer specialising in civils projects, my role encompasses a wide range of responsibilities. Each day involves coordinating with the project team, reviewing drawings, and conducting site inspections to ensure compliance and safety. I am involved in activities such as surveying, setting out, and monitoring construction progress. Collaboration with subcontractors, designers, and clients is key as we address technical issues and maintain project documentation. Applying problem-solving skills to real-world challenges and witnessing tangible results is immensely rewarding. Despite the challenges, such as being exposed to inclement weather, the satisfaction of contributing to a project's success and the continuous learning opportunities make it a fulfilling career choice.



3. WHAT QUALITIES ARE REQUIRED TO DO YOUR JOB?

Qualities required as a site engineer include strong technical knowledge, problem-solving skills, attention to detail, effective communication and collaboration, time management and organisation, adaptability and resilience, and a commitment to safety. These qualities enable me to make informed decisions, address challenges, maintain accuracy and quality, coordinate with stakeholders, adapt to changing conditions, and prioritise safety on construction sites.

4. WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST SURPRISE OF WORKING IN CONSTRUCTION?

I was pleasantly surprised by the extensive collaboration and diverse expertise involved in construction projects. Witnessing professionals from various disciplines come together and contribute to project success was impressive. Additionally, the combination of innovative technology alongside traditional methods was unexpected but fascinating. This blend creates a dynamic and unique environment in the construction industry.

5. WHAT WERE/ARE YOUR FUTURE CAREER ASPIRATIONS?

In my future career in construction, I aim to become a site agent, overseeing projects and taking on further leadership responsibilities. I also aim to contribute to a cultural shift that supports the talents of both men and women by challenging stereotypes and promoting inclusivity in the industry.

6. HAVE YOU ENCOUNTERED ANY OBSTACLES IN YOUR CAREER BECAUSE OF YOUR GENDER?

In my career, I've faced some gender-related obstacles, including being initially dismissed based on my gender. On occasion I've had to prove my knowledge and experience due to bias and assumptions about my expertise, which I believe women face more than men. Practical challenges like ill-fitting PPE and limited access to suitable toilet provisions further highlight the need for gender-specific considerations. By sharing my experiences, I aim to raise awareness and promote a more equitable industry for all professionals, regardless of gender.

7. WHY DO YOU THINK WOMEN REMAIN UNDERREPRESENTED IN THE INDUSTRY?

I think the underrepresentation of women in construction stems from two main factors. First, the lack of visibility and representation makes it challenging for women to envision themselves in the industry. Second, there is a prevalent assumption that women are incapable or unlikely to have long-lasting careers in construction.

8. WOULD YOU RECOMMEND THAT YOUNG WOMEN SEEK OUT CAREERS IN CONSTRUCTION?

I highly recommend women pursue a career in construction. The industry offers a dynamic and rewarding experience where each day brings unique challenges and opportunities. By embracing the industry's diversity and making a meaningful impact, women can contribute to positive change and benefit from increasing support and resources. Being involved in the construction process allows individuals to

witness first hand the transformation of ideas into tangible structures, making it a truly rewarding and fulfilling career choice.

9. WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO ANY WOMEN WISHING TO PURSUE A CAREER IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY?

To women considering a career in construction: Go for it! Embrace the opportunity with enthusiasm and curiosity. Ask questions and actively participate in all aspects of the industry. Engage in hands-on experiences, challenge yourself, and collaborate with diverse teams. Be proactive, passionate, and build a strong foundation for success.

10. HOW DO YOU THINK A DIVERSE WORKFORCE BENEFITS THE INDUSTRY AS A WHOLE?

A diverse workforce in the construction industry brings significant benefits. It fosters innovation, as diverse perspectives generate fresh ideas and alternative solutions. Diverse teams improve problem-solving by leveraging a range of skills and approaches. Collaboration and communication are enhanced, leading to more effective teamwork. Diverse teams also improve decision-making by considering a broader range of factors. Embracing diversity enhances the industry's reputation, attracts top talent, and creates a positive work culture. Diversity in the workforce is a strategic advantage that drives innovation, problem-solving, collaboration, decision-making and customer understanding.

11. WHAT DO YOU THINK THE INDUSTRY AND WIDER SOCIETY SHOULD BE DOING TO ENCOURAGE MORE WOMEN TO WORK IN CONSTRUCTION?

To encourage women in construction, it is important to take several steps. This includes the promotion of role models to inspire and motivate women, increasing awareness of construction career opportunities, addressing gender bias and stereotypes and enhancing worksite conditions and policies. By implementing these and several others, we can create an empowering environment that supports women in pursuing construction careers and promotes diversity.



12. ARE YOU AWARE OF ANY SUCCESSFUL ORGANISATIONS OR INITIATIVES THAT HAVE BEEN IMPLEMENTED TO ENCOURAGE MORE WOMEN TO WORK IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY?

While I don't have specific knowledge of organisations or initiatives dedicated to encouraging women in the construction industry, I can highlight a positive development. The COVID-19 pandemic has prompted a greater acceptance of flexible working arrangements, which can benefit the industry as a whole and potentially encourage more women to remain in construction. This shift towards flexible work practices is a positive step that supports work-life balance and may help retain female talent in the industry.

13. DO YOU THINK THE INDUSTRY CAN GET TO A POINT WHERE THERE IS A BETTER BALANCE OF GENDERS?

The construction industry can achieve a better gender balance by addressing barriers, biases, and stereotypes. Creating a supportive work environment, providing equal opportunities for career advancement, and offering flexible arrangements contribute to inclusivity. Education, training, and mentorship empower women in construction. By valuing diversity and working towards equality, the industry can benefit from both genders' unique perspectives. Commitment and collaboration among stakeholders are crucial for driving positive change.