



**Spotlight on...**  
women in construction

**CONSIDERATE  
CONSTRUCTORS  
SCHEME**

## **Case Study: Morgan Sindall**

### Liz Moss - Apprentice Site Manager

#### **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?**

In secondary school I was very creative and enjoyed problem solving; my careers advisor suggested looking into the architecture which is where I discovered the endless list of white-collar roles in the construction industry. After completing my Extended Level 3 Diploma in Construction and the Built Environment I was encouraged to explore work experience and apprenticeship opportunities. I joined Morgan Sindall's online work experience where I was appointed a real-life project to strategize in teams. This experience allowed me the chance to apply for a summer placement and an apprenticeship thereafter both of which I was accepted; the specific requirements was four GCSEs over a grade 4 including English and Maths (light requirements considering the elevation opportunities in the 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?**

Currently I am working alongside a Quantity Surveyor and a Site Manager, both who have appointed weekly responsibilities and interchangeable tasks daily. This includes coordinating site operations using daily briefings and subcontractor meetings. I am also responsible for gathering quotes for future works packages following a strict procurement schedule.



I thoroughly enjoy working with the subcontractors on site and studying construction technology on the job, it also gives me the chance to ask an abundance of questions and challenge installation methods. The fluidity of a construction site generates new learning spaces every day which I can logistically manage and organise. This can be challenging alongside other responsibilities, but organisation and future-planning adds value to the project down the line.

#### **3. WHAT QUALITIES ARE REQUIRED TO DO YOUR JOB?**

The industry has a high involvement with stakeholders, the public and clients, therefore, interpersonal skills and maintaining a professional appearance and behaviour is imperative. Within your teams there is a need for understanding different points of view and using that to your advantage as a team. For this reason, teamwork and collaboration are a major part of the construction industry.

#### **4. WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST SURPRISE YOU FOUND WHEN YOU STARTED WORKING IN CONSTRUCTION?**

It was different to any job that I've had before. Previously I have worked in hospitality and catering where the environment was heavily stressed and often disorganised. In construction despite my assumptions working at Morgan Sindall the day-to-day activities were process driven even though the site tasks are often spontaneous. My first impressions of site were also very different to what I perceived, there was a fully heated welfare set up with separate female facilities and even sanitary products in the toilets.

The environment on site was so welcoming, there was a great relationship between the Morgan Sindall team and the subcontractors which made communicating to operatives very easy for me as a newbie. The overall experience of being on site was fantastic and encouraged me to get more involved each time I went and ask more questions.

#### **5. WHAT WERE/ARE YOUR FUTURE CAREER ASPIRATIONS?**

I am very career driven and have a thirst to learn. Part of my aspirations include developing knowledge in specific areas of the industry that are up and coming such as sustainability and 4D planning. Both of which have widening influence on how we are building for future generations to come. I have been able to express my interests in these subjects and pursue them alongside my apprenticeship by taking on the role as a Carbon & Environmental Champion for my region.

My company's horizontal management structure has allowed me to easily communicate my aspirations for the future. In the long term, I hope that I will be able to utilise my developed knowledge and skills to effectively manage my own business unit bring sustainability and innovation into the limelight of our clients and supply chain.

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

The industry has certainly developed from a male dominated scene. On occasion it can be more obvious with the scope of personalities you work with through a project. I believe this inconsistency within the industry is also due to my title as an apprentice. There are still businesses that operate bureaucratically which can create obstacles. I can confidently say that there is a mutual respect between anyone on site and that the main conversation that I have surrounding my gender is curiosity as to why I chose construction.

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

Similar to my first experience on site; the real perspective of working in construction isn't replayed to society and unfortunately this leaves old ideas around dangerous working environments, bad pay and uncomfortable welfare facilities to roam free. All of which are not desirable working conditions. It is also still deemed a male dominated sector. This causes a lot of uncertainty in the industry which can be intimidating for women interested and may even be omitted as an option because of this stigma.

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

During my 2 years at Morgan Sindall, without doubt I would recommend career opportunities in the sector for all women. The construction industry includes an approachable amalgamation of white and blue-collar roles that are accessible to anyone at any level. It also contains pockets of satisfaction working in a diverse team to create a building and add to its legacy.

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

I would definitely recommend expanding your network with other women in the industry by joining a professional body like the CIOB or a charity such as Women Into Construction. These organisations provide support to industry professionals and people starting their career in construction which proves useful with simple advice or perspectives. It is also vital to keep an open mind and do some research about what avenues you would like to explore; I have been through an extensive rotation programme which gave me the chance to choose my career out of six different roles.

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

Women in construction are underrepresented alongside other characteristics among our societies therefore by encouraging an EDI (Equality Diversity & Inclusion) employment schemes companies begin to self-advocate the advantages of a diverse team. Not only does a diverse business out-perform other businesses but it gives visibility to the public of the accessibility into construction which is the strongest advertisement for younger generations to adopt and move into the sector.

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

From my experience in my company, we are constantly providing work experience, seminars, school talks and placements to the younger generation to shape their perspective of construction. Although there is a huge gap nationally where education facilities are not getting reached and other Charities such as WIC (Women Into Construction) could be more visible for

women wishing to make a career change. Its also important for the women in construction to share their experiences and break the stigma for everyone.

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

I play an active role on the CIOB committee as a Tomorrows Leader Representative and an EDI Ambassador; part of this role generates discussions around analysing the distribution of our members and focusing on minority groups. This is where we hold EDI workshops where companies can learn and develop their own strategies to improve diversity within the business.

There are also Charities such as WIC who provide support for women struggling to find work in the industry by providing training, resources and 1 to 1 mentoring with construction professionals. This is extremely effective and a fantastic charity to utilise.

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

Overall, I believe that the industry has changed already from my studies at college to now working in the industry at an impressive rate. For this reason, there is no doubt that the sector will overcome the stigma and develop enough to a balance of genders but also where we are investing in people equally regardless of their characteristics.