

INDEPENDENT ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS PRESENTS

# 2022 **business summit**

SAVANNAH, GA | JANUARY 24-26

## ***Engaging Women in the Construction Industry***

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## Why is this a problem?

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- Let's talk about why the problem really exists
- Are the problems able to be solved?



# What are the facts?

- Women make up 50% of the US labor force, but only 10% of the construction jobs
- Less than 4% of those are field employees
- Women are capable of the roles, but don't seek them out
  - They don't consider them as an option, despite them being open with training available

Do you see  
this as a  
problem?

A woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a bright yellow long-sleeved shirt, is shown from the chest up. She has a thoughtful expression, with her right hand resting on her chin and looking slightly to her left. The background is a solid, vibrant yellow. The image is framed by a dark brown border at the bottom.

Why aren't women attracted to  
these roles?



**Stats show that diversity and  
gender equality improve  
company productivity and  
innovation.**

**Do you like that?**

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**We have to show women that  
they have value within our  
organizations!**

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## Here are some of the REAL problems for women in construction:

- Equal Pay
- Flexible benefits (let's talk childcare people!)
- Lack of Female Equipment
- Lack of Female Leadership
- Concern on Atmosphere (I hear this one A LOT!)



# Equal Pay Issue

- The construction trade is one of the fairest industries when it comes to pay with white women making over 95 cents to every dollar a man makes
- Women of color only make 81 cents to every dollar a man makes
- We need to close the gap AND let people know that the gap is close to being closed





# Flexible Benefits



- Construction trades provide well paid jobs without a college degree and without college debt, but certain segments don't know about this
- Women may have unique challenges that require flexibility
  - How can you create policies that help women understand the flexibility of their position
  - What facilities do you have on-site to show you care about these challenges

# Lack of Female Equipment

- Traditionally gear like safety glasses, hardhats, boots, and gloves have been designed for men and are therefore unsafe
- Some jobsites don't even have restrooms for women

There are  
resources, do  
you make them  
available to your  
female  
employees?





# Lack of Female Leadership



- Assumption of no personal growth
- Women need to see other women in the roles they seek
- Children don't see women in trades and therefore don't consider this a career choice
- Women are not included in the hiring process





## Concern about atmosphere



This is a real stigma that we have done little to retort

Women need to feel safe at all times, but especially when they are at work

No one wants to be made to feel less than or unimportant

What policies do you have to ensure these things don't happen?

**So how do you recruit??**



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# Tip #1: Make A Better Ad



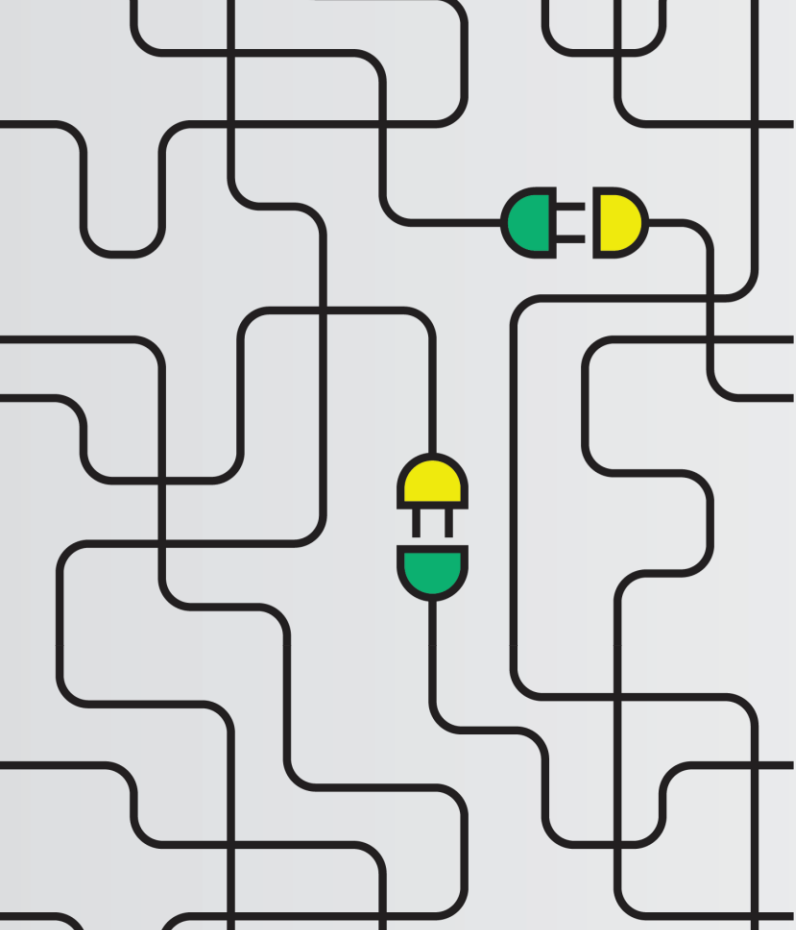
- Create an ad that attracts women
  - Use language that is inclusive
    - Avoid gender coded words like rock star, ninja, and dominate
    - Avoid industry jargon
    - Use gender-neutral pronouns
    - <https://www.totaljobs.com/insidejob/gender-bias-decoder>
  - The job listing should emphasize a commitment to diversity and inclusion
  - Create a targeted campaign



## Tip #2: Reach Out!

- Reach out to groups that can help you
  - Identify potential candidates and encourage them to apply
    - Remember women and men view ads differently, so encouragement is key
    - Meet someone who has a personality you think would fit your org? Encourage them!
  - Workforce Development Groups
  - NAWIC (National Association of Women in Construction)
  - Girl Scouts, Girls on the Run, Strong Women Strong Girls, STEM Groups
  - Consider other trades like welding, general labor, your associate partners when recruiting





## Tip #3: Include Women in the Hiring Process

- Women seeing other women allows them to visualize themselves within the organization
- Diversity in perspective helps you in the process
- Shows a network of support and collaboration







## Tip #4: Show them that Advancement Exists

### Standardize Training and Advancement

- Explain from day one what training exists for ALL new hires
- Explain the opportunities that exist for advancement (merit shop philosophy)
- Talk about apprenticeship!
- Talk about real life examples either within your company or IEC
- Do you have?
  - Training
  - Networking
  - Mentorship
  - Benefits





## Tip #5: Have Equipment and Facilities Available for Women

- Make sure there are restroom facilities at all locations for women
- Provide resources for PPE designed for women
- Separate changing areas, safe areas, etc.

**You got them in the door, how do you keep them and engage them??**



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# Tip #1: Consider Gender Bias Review and Training

You may think you don't have bias, but do you?

- Develop a zero tolerance sexual harassment policy
- Examine the stereotypes you believe and fight those that exist in the trades
  - Women can't do the same type of work
  - Women should only do certain roles
  - Women need men to help them
  - What language are you using day to day?





## Tip #2: Assemble Great Teams



- Create teams that support women in the workplace and make up a range of diverse skills, personality types, and backgrounds
- Don't create an environment that is uncomfortable for ANY employee
- Make sure the journeypersons overseeing apprentices understand the value of gender diversity in the trade
- Remember that diversity gives your organization a competitive edge

# Tip #3: Be an Ally and Advocate for Change

- Remember that you don't have to be perfect out of the gate and that small changes can make big differences
- Start creating infrastructure and support BEFORE you start hiring
  - Consider handbook changes that outline expectations and guidelines
  - Align with groups outside of your organization that can offer help and support
  - Show you care about the experience of ALL employees by asking questions and having conversations
    - Don't be too afraid of saying the wrong thing
    - When your intention is to learn and grow, this shows that you want to foster a place of inclusion and equity
    - Understand privilege



# Tip #4: Show 'em your benefits!

## Why should they work for you vs. someone else?

Consistently remind employees of what you offer that extends outside of the workplace but affects work

- Maternity Benefits
- Family Friendly flexible work policies
- Professional development
- Mentoring (In House and through other organizations)

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## Tip #5: Don't STOP!

- Don't just say you need to have more women in your organization without doing any other work!
  - Work first to create a culture that is inclusive (the status quo won't work!)
  - Root out sexism and discrimination
  - Tackle pay imbalances
  - Support and encourage career advancement
  - Leaders are models!





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***Let's  
Connect!***

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