

IBP Digital Service of the Year – Construction News

At the beginning of this decade, CN committed to transforming its digital offering to provide not only news but also unrivalled insight and engagement.

The 12 months to August saw CN go further than ever before in bringing users the most valuable coverage, driving page views and digital engagement to new heights.

CN's page views increased 14 per cent in August 2018 year on year, reflecting strong growth over the 12 months. That period also saw 13,000 new registered users and 1,200 new subscribers sign up online.

Coverage of some of the past year's biggest stories illustrate how today's CN takes a co-ordinated and comprehensive approach.

Lakesmere's administration in November 2017 caught many by surprise. Following our initial report of its collapse, by lunchtime the same day the CN team had put up an analysis of the factors involved, a data-led biography of the company, and an illustrated look at its seven biggest projects.

The result was sustained traffic that produced the fourth busiest day of 2017, while calls to action drove significant user engagement that led to further stories.

Carillion was of course the biggest construction story during the 12 months to August. In the 48 hours following its collapse, CN took lessons from Lakesmere and raised the standards of our coverage still further.

A live blog kept users up to date while the CN team spoke to Carillion subcontractors to reveal the extent of the chaos. This was backed up by several insightful commentaries and further exclusive revelations.

The day of Carillion's collapse saw twice as many users visit CN's site than the previous high.

As well as breaking news, CN has also used its digital offering to investigate business-critical best practice. Ahead of the publication of gender pay gap data in April, CN teamed up with Randstad to conduct a major survey of women in the industry. The stark findings were visualised in our online analysis, which also served to engage users with CN's Inspire Me campaign that is working to support women into industry leadership roles.

Inspire Me has put on free workshops nationwide to discuss barriers facing women, all of which have been oversubscribed through our dedicated website and followed up with online videos highlighting the issues raised.

These examples are testament to how CN uses its digital service not just to promote headlines but to deliver essential insight for the industry and drive agenda-setting campaigns that engage our audience.

Links to three examples (also PDF-ed below):

Lakesmere: same-day analysis article (plus Daily screengrab below from the day)

<https://www.constructionnews.co.uk/companies/administrations/why-is-lakesmere-group-in-administration/10025001.article>

Carillion: screengrab below of our dedicated Carillion landing page taken 24 hours after its collapse – current iteration can be viewed here:

<https://www.constructionnews.co.uk/companies/contractors/carillion>

Gender diversity feature:

<https://www.constructionnews.co.uk/data/why-is-construction-still-holding-women-back/10028772.article>

For further reference, Inspire Me dedicated landing page:

<https://www.constructionnews.co.uk/events/inspire-me>

and standalone site:

<https://inspireme.constructionnews.co.uk/workshops>



ADMINISTRATIONS

Why is Lakesmere Group in administration?

3 NOVEMBER, 2017

Daniel Kemp



COMMENT

The collapse of Lakesmere Group, the UK's biggest building envelope specialist, has stunned the industry today.

MORE FROM: LAKESMERE GROUP COLLAPSES INTO ADMINISTRATION WITH 109 JOBS LOST

The firm is a well-respected business and has worked for the UK's biggest contractors on a string of prestigious projects in recent years, including Crossrail and the re-roofing of the Olympic Stadium.

However, rumblings began to emerge this week that all may not have been well as comments from staff appeared on social media.

CN has learned that Lakesmere staff were told at 5pm yesterday that the group had fallen into administration, despite attempts by the company's leaders to secure a deal. A total of 109 redundancies have been confirmed. Staff were left shocked by the news.

It has been striking to see rival firms expressing sympathy for the contractor's plight today, as well as offering to talk to any staff who have suddenly found themselves unemployed.

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CN understands the redundancies have mostly come in the support and administration side of the business, along with some site staff. This has left the "bare bones" of the contractor's project teams in place to keep contracts ticking over while the company's future is resolved, according to one source.

What's happening with Lakesmere's subsidiaries?

McMullen Facades, the group's wholly owned subsidiary based in Northern Ireland, is still trading with no redundancies, and a buyer is being sought for that part of the business. Likewise, the firm's international subsidiaries continue to trade from offices in the Middle East and Asia.

Administrators Deloitte blamed "a number of unprofitable contracts" for Lakesmere's collapse, which CN understands have mainly come in the UK market.

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Spurs stadium 'set for January finish' as pace and workforce reduced



Jobs lost as Stoke contractor falls into administration



Kier's profit jumps as previous results downgraded



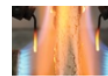
Scandal of unsafe towers: CN investigates re-cladding delays



Man dies after fall at Robertson site



Brexit report calls for restriction on EU construction workers



Two out of 205 private resi blocks re-clad post-Grenfell

RELATED JOBS

Junior Quantity Surveyor - Specialist Complete Building Envelope Contractor - SE London
£20,000 - £30,000 + Benefits DOE

Health & Safety Advisor - for Leading Rail Specialist Sub Contractor UK
£35,000 - £45,000

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£35,000 - £45,000

Health & Safety Advisor - for Leading Rail Specialist Sub Contractor UK
£35,000 - £45,000

Senior Quantity Surveyor - Specialist Sub Contractor
£60000.00 - £70000.00 per annum

Health & Safety Advisor (RAIL) for Leading UK Specialist Sub Contractor

But it would not be a surprise if the Middle Eastern region played a role, given the notorious difficulty in getting paid on time in that part of the world.

Sources have told *CN* the collapse is a culmination of multiple issues, with late payment both in the UK and overseas contributing to the problem.

What Lakesmere's boss said

I sat down with group chief executive Ted McMullen in September last year, not long after he had taken over the role following previous boss Mark Davey's move upstairs to chairman under a management buyout (although he was still managing the international business at the time).

Mr McMullen was in a good mood, chatty and open, and willing to talk about most topics. He said that the bottom line and profit were "of paramount importance" and that he wanted the company to remain flexible as it approached the challenges of Brexit.

He said: "We will achieve growth next year; it's practically in the bag. In 2018, we'll see what happens – but I certainly wouldn't expect a drop in turnover."

"CN has been made aware of certain projects which may have been causing problems and more news will emerge in the coming days"

And while he emphasised that the company would not chase turnover to achieve that growth, he did say that it would be "lean and mean in order to get the job if we need to".

We also discussed the threat of problem contracts, which of course have now been blamed for the group's collapse, and what he said seems striking

now.

Lakesmere carried out post-contract reviews on every significant job to identify why margins had varied, whether in a positive or negative direction.

He went on: "Then we try to introduce systems and procedures to prevent a recurrence, or to lower our price if we've made good margin on something that's too high and makes us less competitive."

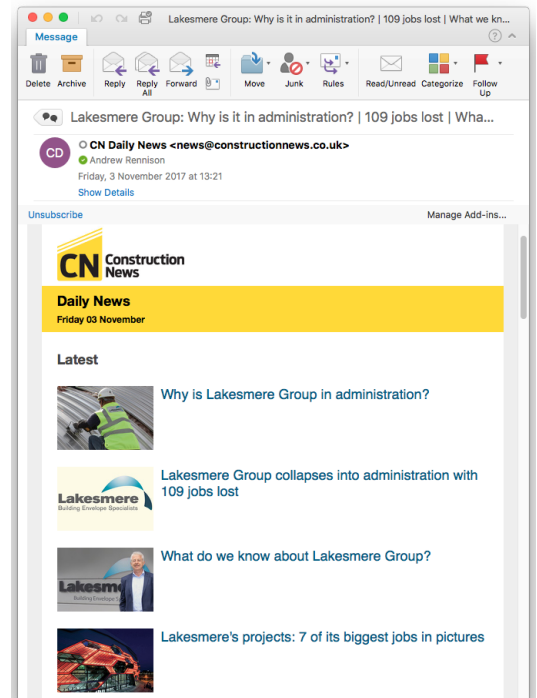
But, he told me, at the end of the day: "Shit happens on some jobs."

CN has been made aware of certain projects which may have been causing problems and more news will emerge in the coming days as tier one contractors and clients look to shore up projects – while the firm's own supply chain will also be very concerned.

For now though, it's a sad day to see a company of Lakesmere's stature collapse.

If you have been affected by Lakesmere Group's administration, email credit@emap.com

Daily newsletter on the day



LAKESMERE GROUP COLLAPSES INTO ADMINISTRATION WITH 109 JOBS LOST



[Why is Lakesmere Group in administration?](#)



[Lakesmere's projects: 7 of its biggest jobs in pictures](#)



[What do we know about Lakesmere Group?](#)

CONTRACTORS

Carillion news



Minister shifts blame for Carillion collapse

A senior government minister has described Carillion's fall into liquidation as "the failure of a private sector company" and told MPs the contractor's problems were "not from government contracts".



'Catastrophic losses': Carillion retentions crisis looms

Thousands of subcontractors have been left in limbo over retention payments owed by Carillion after the country's second biggest contractor fell into liquidation on Monday.



Carillion leaves Balfour and Galliford with £80m bill on road job

Galliford Try and Balfour Beatty will foot a bill of up to £80m to cover the cost of finishing the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route, following Carillion's liquidation.

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Inside Spurs' stadium: 'I've never in my life worked like that'



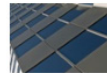
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CARILLION FEATURES AND ANALYSIS



Road to ruin: 5 graphs charting Carillion's collapse



Don't cry for Carillion. Support its staff and specialists



Reaction as Carillion collapses into liquidation



Carillion government contracts: 5 sectors to watch



Subbies facing chaos in wake of Carillion demise

Subcontractors have told Construction News of the confusion and chaos on Carillion projects following the firm's collapse.



'You will be paid': Staff and subbies told to keep working

Carillion staff and subcontractors have been told by PwC to continue "work as normal" and expect payment for their work during the liquidation proceedings.



Government promises to fund Carillion's public contracts

The government has promised to provide funding to ensure all of Carillion's government contracts continue, following the compulsory liquidation of the firm this morning.

CARILLION: KEY BACKGROUND



Carillion gets extra time from lenders over financial covenants



Carillion's largest shareholder dumps half its stake



Carillion to breach covenants amid fresh profit warning

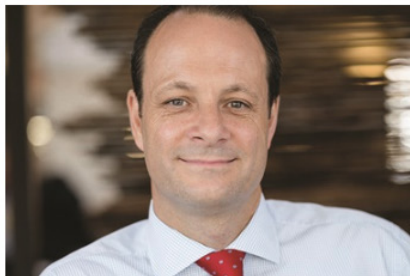


Carillion sells UK healthcare arm to Serco for £50m

MORE NEWS



Carillion collapses into liquidation as talks fail



Carillion: HS2 partners have plan in place



Taxpayer 'not exposed' to Carillion over Middle East loans



Carillion: Lenders have not rejected rescue plan



Carillion: Market 'very negative from this point forward'



Carillion 'minder' job vacant for three months, minister confirms



CARILLION: RESULTS BACKGROUND



Carillion to breach covenants amid fresh profit warning

Carillion has issued a fresh profit warning and confirmed that it expects to breach its financial covenants at the end of next month.

Carillion boss confirms £10bn cut in project pipeline

Carillion reveals £1.15bn half-year loss as problems spread to support services

Carillion chief steps down after profit warning

Carillion construction margins fall in 2016 results

Carillion secures £112m refinancing

Support services boost turnover and profit at Carillion

Support services surge for Carillion as it pays £10m for blacklisting

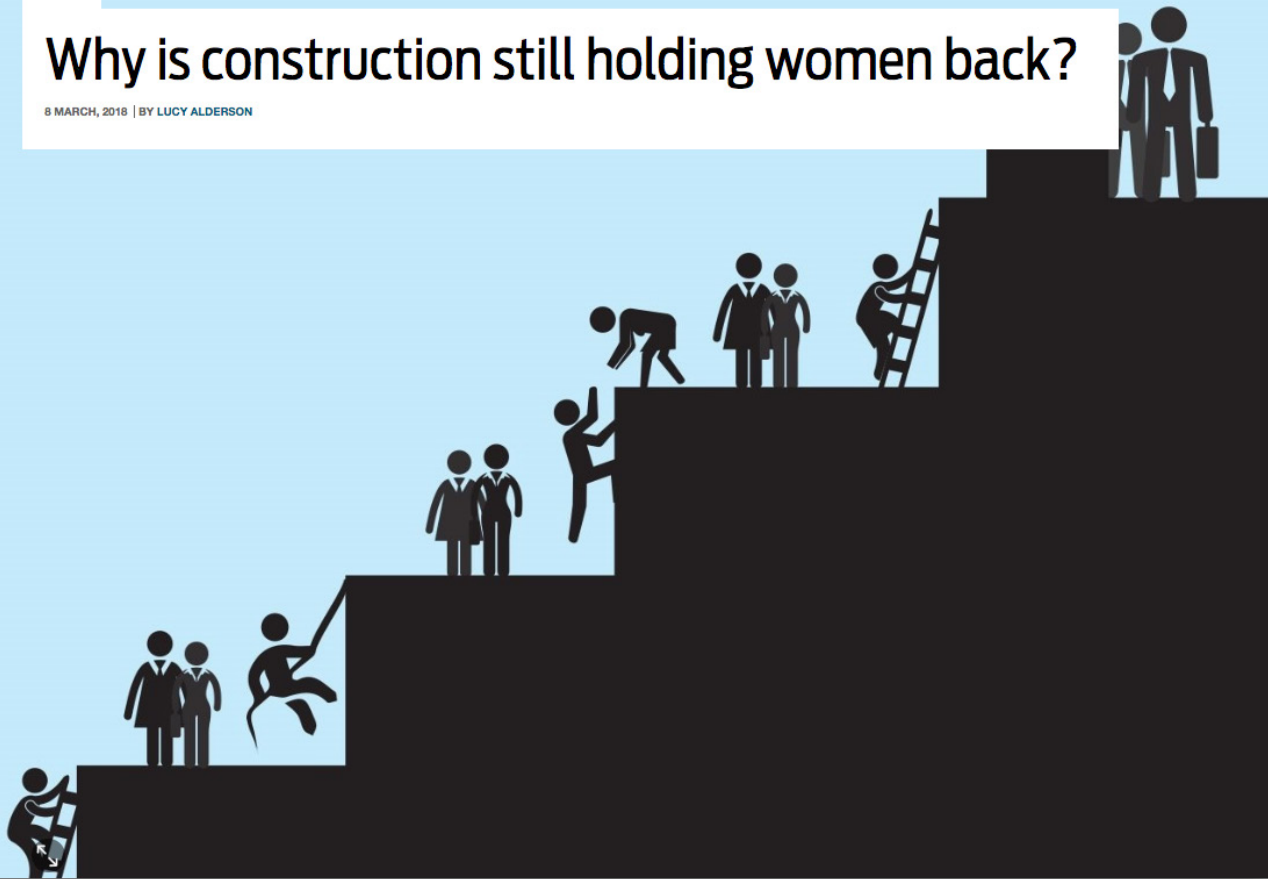
Carillion's UK construction margin down to 3%

Carillion order book declines despite £1bn of new work in H2

DATA

Why is construction still holding women back?

8 MARCH, 2018 | BY LUCY ALDERSON



1 COMMENT  

- > Bad behaviour
- > Who's your role model?
- > Battling to the top
- > Benefiting men as well as women
- > Progressive thinking
- > Meet the leaders

Discrimination. Sexism. Inequality of opportunity. Exclusive research has revealed that these factors are holding back women's construction careers. *Lucy Alderson* investigates the deep-rooted causes and how these barriers can ultimately be torn down.

One hundred years ago, the first women were given the right to vote in this country.

They fought for equal opportunity. They fought for better treatment. They questioned why they were being held back for no reason other than the fact they were women.

But one hundred years on in 2018, exclusive research conducted by Randstad and *Construction News* shows that women are facing some of these same issues of disenfranchisement in this industry.

The findings are stark. Half of women in construction say they have experienced gender discrimination in the workplace. A quarter of women believe they have been passed over for a project or a promotion. And 20 per cent of companies have never promoted a woman into a senior position.

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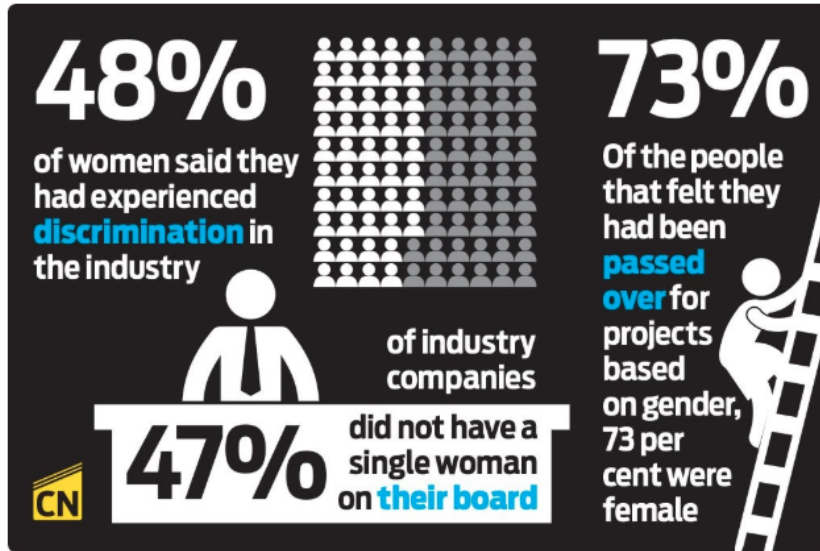
Two out of 205 private resi blocks re-clad post-Grenfell

The survey has revealed construction can be a tough place for female workers. So why are women finding it difficult to reach the top, and what can be done to remove these barriers?

Bad behaviour

More than 5,500 professionals and 500 companies working across the built environment were surveyed by Randstad to assess the challenges women face in construction.

The results suggest women are being overlooked and face discrimination because of their gender, while industry firms are failing to spot the barriers that prevent women from progressing.



SOURCE: RANDSTAD

Nearly half – 48 per cent – of all the women surveyed said they had experienced gender discrimination in the workplace. The most common form this took was 'comments or inappropriate behaviour', which 28 per cent of women reported received from male colleagues.

Behaviour like this is clearly still a major issue in construction. Yet things have improved, according to Skanska executive vice-president Katy Dowding, who oversees the company's building operations.

While she says progress in attitudes has been made over her 30 years in the industry, everyone has a responsibility to call out the bad behaviour that continues to occur.

"We should take the same approach to bad behaviour as we would to safety," she says. "You do not walk past an unsafe act happening on site: you stop, call it out and speak to someone. We should do this in the workplace for people behaving inappropriately."

"Everyone has a duty to call it out and feel comfortable that they will be supported"

Katy Dowding, Skanska

Employees need to feel assured that they will be heard and action will be taken when they report incidents of this behaviour to their superiors, Ms Dowding says. "We need to help people feel empowered to call this out, so they know their line manager and senior manager will support them. Everyone has a duty to call it out and feel

comfortable that they will be supported."

Feeling like a minority in the construction workforce could affect whether women feel confident enough to put themselves forward for senior positions, suggests VGC Group services director Ciara Pryce. Women may not be putting themselves forward for promotion, she says, because they feel they have to do more to prove their capability due to their gender.

"You do stand out as a woman in the industry, which means women may feel they have to be the best at what they do to justify their position," Ms Pryce says. "I think women feel they have to build up a case for

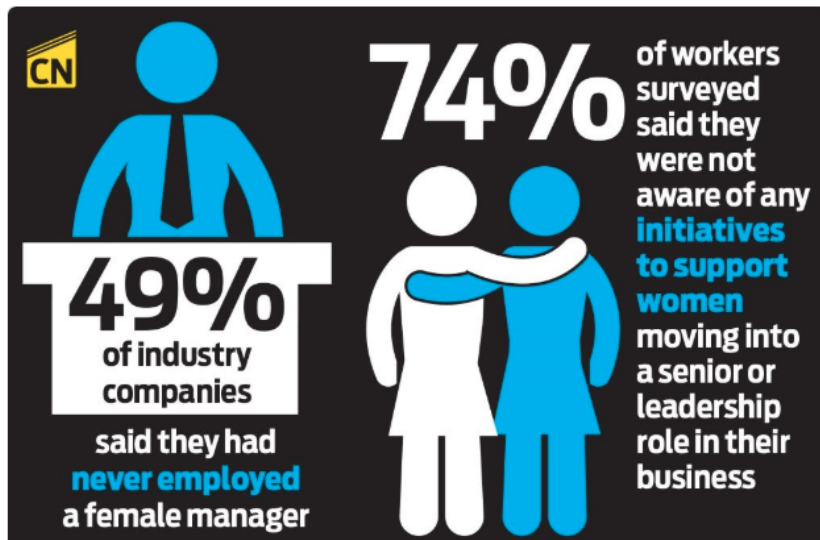
their promotion, whereas men may feel more confident in their ability or competence.”

Who's your role model?

One way women can be better supported in their careers is by being assigned a mentor, according to Amey FM defence and justice managing director Amanda Fisher.

She mentors ambitious junior employees in the business who are just beyond graduate stage to help support their careers. By inviting these employees to board meetings and assigning them projects, Ms Fisher offers her insight into how to be successful at the top while acting as a visible role model for junior staff.

“They can see how I make decisions and how I work through business in general,” she says. “They can see how I interact with the teams I work in.”



She says mentoring is crucial to helping remove perceived barriers among female junior staff members.

“They may say to me, ‘I would have thought that would have been difficult being a female’, when actually it hadn’t even mattered. They may put barriers up in their own heads. By trying to break through them, you can pull these women through.”

Ms Fisher concedes that the male-dominated culture of construction could be a reason why women have a perception that they are being held back. But she says an increase in millennials coming through will bring about a cultural change in the sector. “Younger men coming through into the industry, they hold different views on women based more on equality. They tend to look beyond gender,” she says.

And as a more forward-thinking workforce works its way up the construction career ladder, the gender imbalance between men and women will be addressed as a natural consequence, she says.

Battling to the top

In addition to the individual survey respondents, 476 companies working in the built environment also answered questions on how they were encouraging women into the industry.

The statistics suggest women are struggling to move into senior positions within construction companies. Nearly half – 48.5 per cent – of the companies said they had never employed a female manager. Among the individual respondents who felt they had been passed over for a promotion, three-quarters were women.

Around one in five companies had never promoted a woman into a senior position. However, 39 per cent said they had promoted a woman into a senior position within the past six months.

There was an almost even split between the proportion of companies that had at least one woman on their boards (53 per cent) and those that did not (47 per cent).

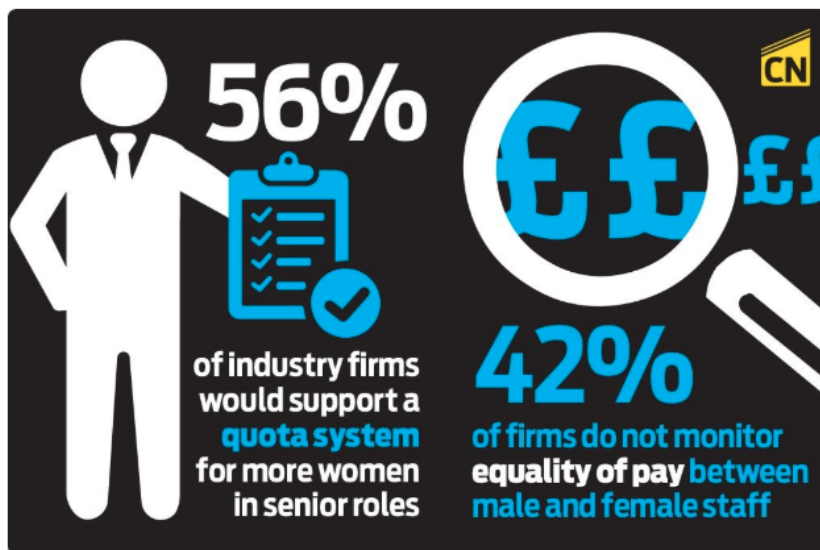
“When are we going to put a line in the sand and say, ‘Here’s a 20-year plan and we are not going to let this carry on’?”

Steven Beechey, Wates

Mabey chief executive Juliette Stacey points out that one of the reasons there are fewer women being promoted into senior roles is simply the lack of female representation in construction’s workforce. “If you have a small pool of women in a big pool of men, obviously more men are going to be selected for promotion,” she says. “Until we have more women in the sector it will be difficult for that

statistic to go upwards.”

She says it is “shocking” that 20 per cent of the companies surveyed have never hired/promoted a woman into a senior position, and questions whether enough companies are creating sufficient opportunities within their own business for women to move upwards. “I see senior women in the sector and I wonder whether they are getting into those divisions through recruitment,” she says. “Are people having to select themselves into senior roles through changing jobs? If so, this would be a real shame.”



Bowmer & Kirkland board director Chris Kirkland says it is “critical” for any business to advance the careers of their employees, regardless of gender. “We have to champion a clear career progression for our best people, and we have to make sure everyone is aware there is no glass ceiling,” he says.

He says there is a “massive imbalance” between the number of men and women in our sector and that men in particular need to make a “special effort” to tackle this. “The skills shortage is a complete nightmare to manage in our sector,” Mr Kirkland says. “By promoting a more gender-balanced industry, [it] will hopefully lead to more women coming in at grassroots level, solving this problem in a sustainable way.”

Wates group strategy director and managing director for government affairs Steven Beechey agrees that changing perceptions of the industry at school level is critical. Children’s perceptions of construction are set at a very young age, he says, adding that the sector is “always going to have an issue around attracting female talent” if this is not addressed.

“When are we going to put a line in the sand and say, ‘Here’s a 20-year plan and we are not going to let this carry on’?”

Benefiting men as well as women

Aside from helping tackle construction’s crippling skills shortage, changing the industry’s culture around gender diversity will provide benefits for everyone – not just women.

The CN/Randstad survey reveals that construction’s workforce wants more women in top positions. Asked how having a female manager would affect their jobs, 93 per cent of respondents said it would either stay the same or have a positive effect, with 31 per cent of women saying having a female manager would improve their working environment.

“Men and women in our business wanted the same things. Any activities or improvements we were planning for women would actually benefit men as well”

Julia Barrett, Willmott Dixon

The industry's workforce appears increasingly aware that the gender imbalance needs to be addressed to boost productivity. One way to do this is by setting internal targets, such as Willmott Dixon's announcement last month that it aims to reach gender parity in the business by 2030.

Under the leadership of sustainability director and head of gender diversity Julia Barrett, Willmott Dixon is implementing measures such as agile

working to help attract, retain and support women up the career ladder.

But these initiatives aren't only helping support women; they are benefiting men as well. Willmott identified this benefit last year during research into gender diversity in its business, discovering that many of the challenges women were facing were also having an impact on men. "We realised men and women in our business wanted the same things," Ms Barrett says. "Any activities or improvements we were planning to make for women in our business would actually benefit men as well."

An example of this is agile working, which has allowed both men and women in the firm to work remotely or take time off during the working day. "Agile working is about working in the right way, in the right place in the right time, with the right tools to do the best job you can," Ms Barrett says. "You might be at your desk; at a conference; maybe you might need to do something outside of work in the middle of the day; maybe you have caring responsibilities. But if you give people a bit of flexibility, you will get a return."

Inspire Me: Get involved

Construction News has launched the [Inspire Me campaign](#) to encourage women to seek leadership roles in the industry.

We aim to inspire future leaders and promote construction as being a gender-neutral industry that is welcoming of women in all roles.

For information about the Inspire Me campaign and to register to attend our next free workshops in Manchester and Birmingham, go to inspireme.constructionnews.co.uk

If you're interested in becoming one of Inspire Me's sponsors, you can also contact Perry James at perry.james@emap.com or by calling 0203 953 2906.

Flexible working is a useful strategy to help women back into the workplace after having children, according to Skanska's Katy Dowding, who says certain preconceptions companies may hold about new mothers also needs to change. "When women take a career break to have a baby, it's important for organisations to deal correctly with those career breaks," she says.

"Women haven't lost their minds over those nine months: they are still the useful, intelligent employees they were before they went on maternity leave. If people take time off work because of an incident or an accident, when they come back, you don't demote them or treat them differently. So we shouldn't be doing this to women or make huge assumptions that they won't want to travel or do particular work."

Progressive thinking

The issue of gender inequality has been simmering for a long time across all industries. But now it has reached boiling point.

Alleged mistreatment of women has been reported from Hollywood to Westminster, and for construction these reports have reached even closer to home.

How industries treat women is now being assessed as a matter of urgency. If the statistics revealed by the CN/Randstad survey are to be addressed, the sector will need to work together to tackle the underlying issues.

After all, can we afford to wait another 100 years for equality in construction?

The CN/Randstad survey received responses from more than 5,500 professionals and 500 companies working in the built environment. The survey took place in January 2018

Meet the leaders

It's challenging being a leader at the best of times – and can be even more so if you are female.

Here, five trailblazing women reveal their experiences and how the industry can break down barriers.

Lianne Lawson, project manager, Interserve

I fell pregnant halfway through my degree. There were tears on the night I found out – some were happy, and some were because I was scared because I thought everything I had worked towards was going to be thrown away.

I had my daughter and took a couple of months off. Then I met some companies, including Interserve.

Interserve gave me a fantastic opportunity to come into the industry and go back to university on 'day release' to finish my degree.

The idea of flexible working is fantastic. Once it becomes a norm, women will see that working in this industry is like working for any other sector.

Juliette Stacey, chief executive officer, Mabey

I moved into construction from the property sector by joining Mabey as chief financial officer in 2012.

I spotted an opportunity to put myself forward for a leadership role as chief executive. Ultimately, I was lucky enough to have got the job.

I might have joined a different firm in construction, have been just as eager to progress, seen an opportunity for a leadership role, but might not have been supported as well.

I don't think we are yet in a position where everyone can count on it always being a fair process and a level playing field. I think I was lucky to be in the right organisation that did not discriminate.

Leena Begum, health and safety co-ordinator, Tideway

When I started off as an apprentice, it took me eight months to go onto site because I didn't feel comfortable with the PPE I was provided with. It was a male uniform and didn't go with my religious dress code requirement.

I went on site and looked in the mirror at the male PPE I was wearing. I remember thinking: 'I've never done anything like this before and I don't dress like this.' I went to the site offices, and because I felt what I was wearing was too much [to handle], I fainted.

I moved to a Tideway site and met another female Muslim who was having the same experience. I decided to design PPE for female Muslims to encourage a talent pool into the industry and to empower other women to come into the industry.

Katy Dowding, executive vice-president, Skanska

When I was doing my A-levels, I had no idea what I wanted to do.

I was chatting with my friend Paddy in the canteen and I asked him what he wanted to do, and he said he wanted to be a quantity surveyor. It sounded quite interesting.

So I got the Yellow Pages out and phoned up 10 businesses who had the biggest adverts saying I wanted to train to be a quantity surveyor, and asked them for a job. One replied, I went to interviews and became a trainee quantity surveyor.

I wanted to run my own construction business and realised that most people running these firms had operational experience, so I decided to get that same experience. But it was tough.

At the beginning of my career, people were starting off on a negative assumption about me that I had to prove wrong. I was a quantity surveyor and a woman, so if I was in a room full of male engineers, I would be starting two steps back in their estimation already.

Lana Shaylor, business development director, Shaylor Group

If you asked me at 18 years old if I wanted to join the business, it would have been the last thing I wanted to do. I had a degree and a Masters in theology and had no formal training for construction – I did that after university.

My brother approached me to help set up the London office; I took up the opportunity and it was the best decision I ever made. I never realised construction offers as many opportunities as it does, and I became a board director this time last year. I am one of only a handful of women who hold executive positions – which is an awful statistic.

I've had some challenges over the years – you're always going to come up with barriers against your career. But I think the biggest barrier was my own insecurities.

 [VIEW COMMENT \(1\)](#)

