

Sue Contonio • Vice President & Project Coordinator • McPhee Associates, Inc.



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For those imagining what success looks like, Sue Contonio’s career in the building industry has been one to model. Starting in the real estate industry, her innate ability to absorb and disseminate information quickly qualified her for an opportunity as a project coordinator. Contonio has been in the industry for 24 years and has been a vital member of the McPhee team for almost a decade. Always eager to learn and continue to master her responsibilities, Contonio

credits the seasoned tradespeople and other professionals for taking the time to answer her questions with answers that fully explained the “why” of it all. “They helped me understand their parts of the project, and how the puzzle pieces fit together,” she recalls. Her reflections of the industry and the opportunities for women clearly illustrate how a career in this industry involves so much more than the technical accomplishments, as she references the lessons she has learned from mentors like Jon Phillips, vice president and construction manager at McPhee. “He has shared his experiences and skills in all phases of the business: management of personnel, scheduling, organization and a whole lifetime of wisdom.” In addition, she sees opportunities specific to women that promote critical dynamics like client trust, and patience from tradespeople and mentors who take the time to teach her something valuable. She also sees a shift in the paradigm of what has been known as a male-dominated industry. “I think these days there are more women in the field—behind the scenes—than I have seen in the past. Every day involves a lot of collaboration with design and vendor teams which have always been men as well as women.”