

Commercial Real Estate • Women in Construction

Women in Construction: CEO rolls with the challenges in industry



Megan Toeniskoetter, CEO of San Jose-based Toeniskoetter Construction Inc.

TOMAS OVALLE

By Rebecca Logan – Contributor
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Not quite two years since her appointment as CEO, Megan Toeniskoetter has only a vague recollection of what she thought that job would actually be like when she took it.

Expectations get even harder to recall when she thinks back to 2021. That's when she and her brother and a third executive bought the commercial construction company from its founder, her father Chuck Toeniskoetter, and his longtime business partner.

The construction landscape has just changed so much since, she said.

"Every year has been completely different," she said. "Going from pandemic, to post pandemic, to whatever it is now. Every year ... brought very different challenges."

Material shortages. Labor scarcity. Now there's the question of where the office market is headed.

That's a big question mark for a company that specializes in complex tenant-improvement projects and multiphased occupied renovations.

"It's constantly trying to keep up with the challenges and trying to get ahead of them," Toeniskoetter said.

That takes collaboration, something she said Toeniskoetter Construction is good at. A collaborative spirit is part of what drew her to and kept her at the family business she originally had no plans to join.

Utilizing a Notre Dame University bachelor of marketing degree, she worked elsewhere, including as manager of alumni relations for the UC Berkley School of Law before starting at Toeniskoetter in 2011 as a project coordinator.

Her 2022 promotion made headlines.

"There is a trajectory toward more women in management and leadership positions in construction companies. And there's a long way to go," Toeniskoetter said. "Having the visibility of women in leadership positions is a really great trend. But it's still an unusual thing. It's still seen as something that's unique ... We've certainly not reached parity yet."

As a leader, she's focused on moving a legacy company into the future, she said. Part of that means finding companies to grow alongside — companies just starting out or starting to expand. "They need a company to work with them so that they will understand what this construction world is," she said.

"Construction is a very opaque industry. It's hard to understand all the facets of it," she added. "We're very good at partnering with clients to educate them, let them know what we're doing and ... collaborating so we understand their priorities and helping them build their spaces toward that."

Megan Toeniskoetter

CEO

Toeniskoetter Construction, San Jose

SVBJ Silicon Valley general contractors List rank: N/A

2022 revenue: N/A

What she loves about the construction industry: "Getting to know what companies are doing, what people are doing. Understanding what their priorities are. And there's always something new you've got to figure out."

How can the industry attract more women? "Pay attention to the women already possibly in an organization, provide career paths ... build an inclusive space."

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