

"Women are a common sight on construction sites."

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INSIGHTS



Slawomira Bukowska's job means sustainability, as she handles building certifications. She is living proof that mothers can also be successful career women.

1. What do you do at PORR?

I'm a project manager at pde Integrale Planung GmbH, working in the Sustainability Department. Everyone in our team sees at least one project through to building certification. This encompasses life cycle analysis, simulations and a whole lot more.

2. What do you particularly like about your job?

I find sustainability a fascinating topic, and there's a whole range of tasks involved. I get insights into all sorts of trades, the service phase and the various departments. I'm constantly learning something new. Every project is different, but I see them all through from beginning to end. I also have to meet market requirements and the needs of our clients, the planners. That's how you grow in a dynamic market and keep on evolving. You never stop learning and you know that you're helping to bring about something good.

3. How did you come to join PORR?

I studied industrial engineering at the Berlin Institute of Technology, with a focus on civil engineering. I've been at PORR since 2008, having started off in Vienna. I switched to pde in 2012, when they founded a unit focusing on sustainability and building certification. I was allowed to help set it up because of my great interest in this area. I ended up in Berlin as part of the expansion.

4. What's changed for women in construction over the years?

I already experienced the changes taking place during my studies and later at work. These days, you see more and more women on construction sites, working as site managers, forewomen and young engineers. This has been a wonderful shift. The construction site is no longer a purely male domain. As a woman in construction, you're no longer treated like a little mouse, which was the case during my internship. That doesn't happen any more.

5. How would you describe the career opportunities for women in the construction industry?

I think family influence is a crucial factor. If someone close to you works in the construction industry, in a sense you grow up with it. If you have no points of reference, everything can seem a bit abstract and difficult. Today, women probably still have to do more than men, but then they want to do more, too. They're not content to rest on their laurels – they're constantly looking for new challenges and striving to improve their skills. I think women's skills are now recognised. And the structures aren't as rigid as they used to be, either. Women are no longer a rarity on construction sites; in fact, they're a common sight. In the technical and planning trades as well, you increasingly see women taking on managerial roles.



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6. You're living proof that women don't need to make a choice between successful career woman or hands-on parent.

No – it goes without saying that you can do both. I work 30 hours as my daughter still goes to day care. I lead a very busy life. There's a lot to do, but there are clear limits. For instance, my working day has to be over before my daughter's nursery closes. It helps if you can work at home, as you might sometimes have to do a bit of work on your laptop in the evening. Having that flexibility is very important.

7. How has PORR supported you in this regard?

After my maternity leave with my daughter, there were no issues when it came time for me to return to work. It's all very well set up here. This year I've registered for a second period of parental leave, so that I can support her when she starts school. It's nice to have the opportunity to devote a lot of time and energy to my daughter.

8. Do you have any advice for women who are considering a career in the construction industry?

Approach the world with a sense of curiosity. Go about tasks with an open mind and make sure you're well prepared. And don't worry about things too much.

9. Do you have a role model? Who has inspired you?

Meeting Maria Stadler was very inspiring. Maria is a project manager at PORR. The projects she's worked on have shown that women have a different feel for the job. Getting to know her and seeing that women can take on senior site management with such panache gave me a real boost. It was a real eye-opener. The more that women are visible and the more they are in the news, the more other young women can encounter them and feel empowered to become the leaders of tomorrow.

