

COMMERCIAL Construction & Renovation

Issue 5, 2022 • www.ccr-mag.com

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WAG N' WASH

Amy Putzler
Wag N' Wash
franchisee

How Wag N' Wash is giving pet owners more ways to cater to their four-legged friends



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Giroux Glass' Barbara Kotsos

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Restaurant Equipment listings

Answering the call

Conversation with Giroux Glass' Barbara Kotsos

When she answered the employment ad, her motive was to just try and revive her rusty interview skills. After 14 years at her last job, it had been 15 years since her last interview. What ended up happening was a combination of opportunity and fate.

For the past eight-plus years, Barbara Kotsos and Giroux Glass have been a perfect match—one that has enabled the Director of Marketing/Public Relations to use her uncanny talent to identify and grow new business opportunities and markets.

Highly visionary and creative, and with the perfect blend of communications, analytical and problem-solving acumen, Kotsos continues to help tell the Giroux Glass story in a diverse range of B2B and B2C stories in myriad industries, including construction, consumer packaged goods, food, consumer electronics, technology, telecommunications, office/school supplies, craft products, financial services.

We sat down with her to get her insights to what it takes to survive and thrive in today's ever-changing commercial construction landscape.

Tell us your story. How did you get started in the industry?

My start in construction was a completely unexpectedly fluke. I had been at my last marketing job for a consumer products high-tech company for 14 years. When they re-organized me out of my position, I had not been on an interview in over 15 years. I answered an ad for Giroux Glass simply to hone my rusty interview skills.

I was in for such a surprise. I was interviewed by a series of female executives, which I had not been expecting in this industry. I realized that I really liked everyone I was meeting with, admired what they did, and appreciated their enthusiasm.

Then, they toured me through the offices and I saw photos of all the beautiful projects displayed in the offices of people who had worked on them, and I recognized landmarks from all over Los Angeles and



Barbara Kotsos, president of NAWIC Los Angeles, CA 2020-2021.



Barbara Kotsos with CEO Nataline Lomedico admiring our installation at the Skywalk.

Las Vegas. I realized that due to my love of design and architecture, and the work this company did, this could be something I really enjoyed.

I started two days later, just in time to organize a big event that was going to take place in three weeks to celebrate something called “WIC Week,” a term I’d never previously heard.

I quickly realized the benefit of doing marketing and PR for a company in construction is that you’ve got almost eternal bragging rights—or at least as long as the building stands.

For a company like mine, which has been around for 75 years, there is a lot of potential content for a marketing person to work with. That was the opposite case of marketing consumer technology products, which become outdated and old news the minute they hit the store shelves. I love it.

What are some of the biggest changes you’ve seen over the past two years?

So many companies are now being so flexible about working from home, and that’s a welcome change for those of us who can and do. I limited my time spent traveling to our other office locations, since during COVID, it was risky.

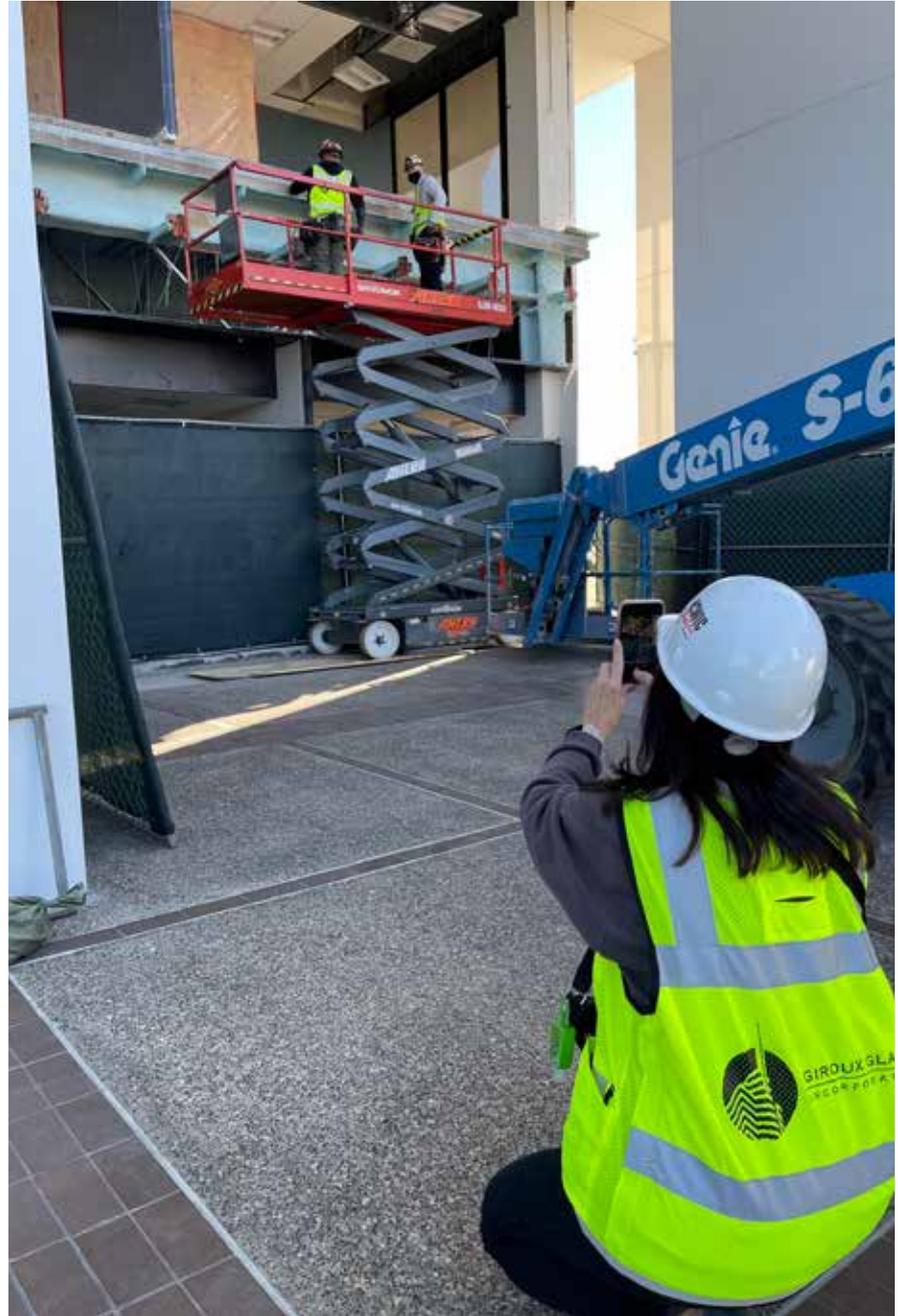
The upside is that we have all become accustomed to virtual meetings, and waste a lot less time in LA traffic traveling to meetings. Labor has become such a tough challenge, and it has gotten worse in recent years.

What opportunities are out there for the industry as we move forward in 2022? For women?

I believe the sky’s the limit for women in construction. The demand for employees is so strong right now that no company can afford to consider not hiring any type of minority.

There are plenty of role models of successful women in the industry to prove that we not only can, but are doing it as well as men. The challenge is to attract young women to become interested in the industry as a career, and that is an education issue.

From what I have seen in my eight years in the industry, the more young women learn about what it’s like to work in construction, the more they want to. I’ve



tried to help on that front with my involvement in NAWIC LA and WWT.

From a financial point of view, it certainly pays better than anything else out there for someone with just a high school degree. Why take on the debt of a college education if you can start earning a nice salary from a young age? And if they choose an ESOP company, like my company, they can quickly build themselves a healthy savings account and be an owner in their own business.

It makes sense from every standpoint; young women just need to hear what the benefits and opportunities are.

What type of trends are you seeing today?

When I started in the industry, no one knew much about marketing. They would say they did, and then point to their business development person. Both of these roles understand just how different the two roles

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really are. Or, they would hire a student to post photos on social media for them and consider it done. Again, that was not quite it either.

Now I am seeing more companies hire experienced marketing people, and it is reflected in a higher caliber of website and corporate communications, and that's a welcome change.

What advice can you share?

Be open and give it a shot. What I thought was going to be a quick stint in the industry seriously hooked me, and here I am still, eight years later. Pick a company whose work you admire and who treats their employees well, and you will gain nothing but some great experience and knowledge.

What's the best piece of advice you have ever received?

Don't wait to do the things you really want to do. Do them now, one at a time. And I do that. My favorite activity is to travel, and I do that whenever I can.

What's the single best thing every woman can do to make sure they continue to get a seat at the table?

Don't wait to be invited. Assume that one of those chairs has your name on it, approach the table and seat yourself. We are well past the point of waiting for someone to pull out and hold the chair for us, metaphorically speaking. Say what you can offer, do it well, then say what you did. Our male counterparts do it all the time, it's something women need to make a habit of doing more often.

What's the biggest item on your to-do list?

Making it to Machu Picchu this year. My trip with friends has been rescheduled twice; we are hoping to go in September. **CCR**

