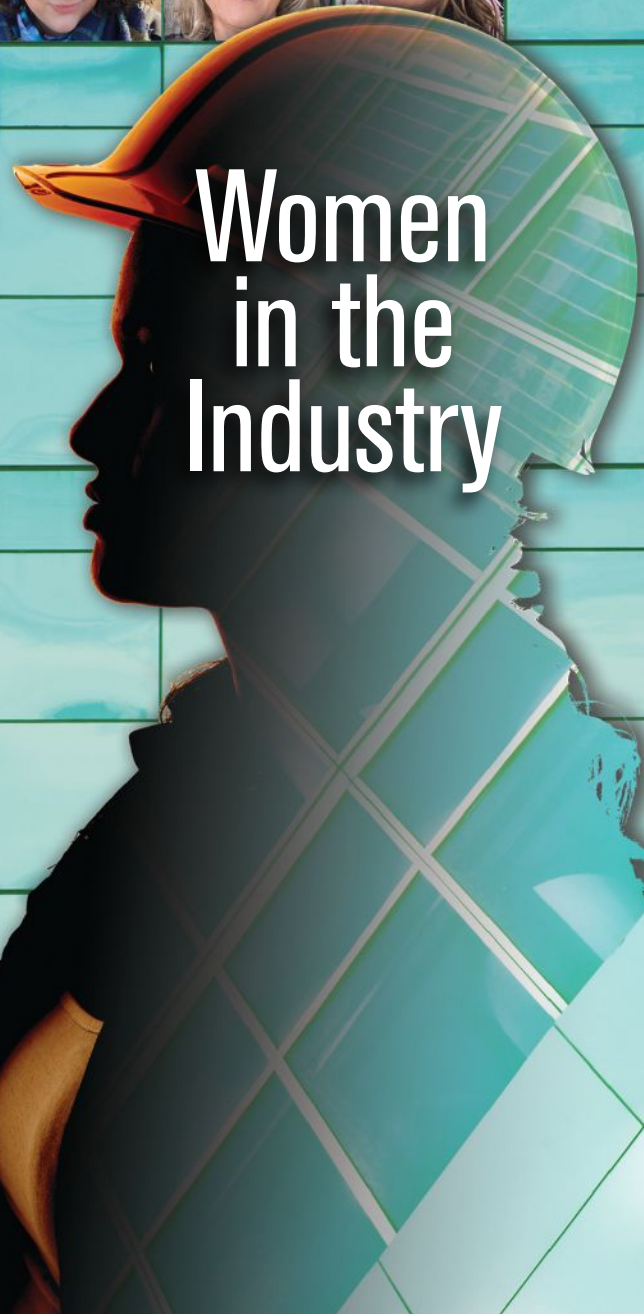


USGlass[®] METAL & GLAZING

THE MAGAZINE OF RECORD FOR ARCHITECTURAL GLASS INDUSTRY LEADERS

Volume 57
Issue 12
December
2022



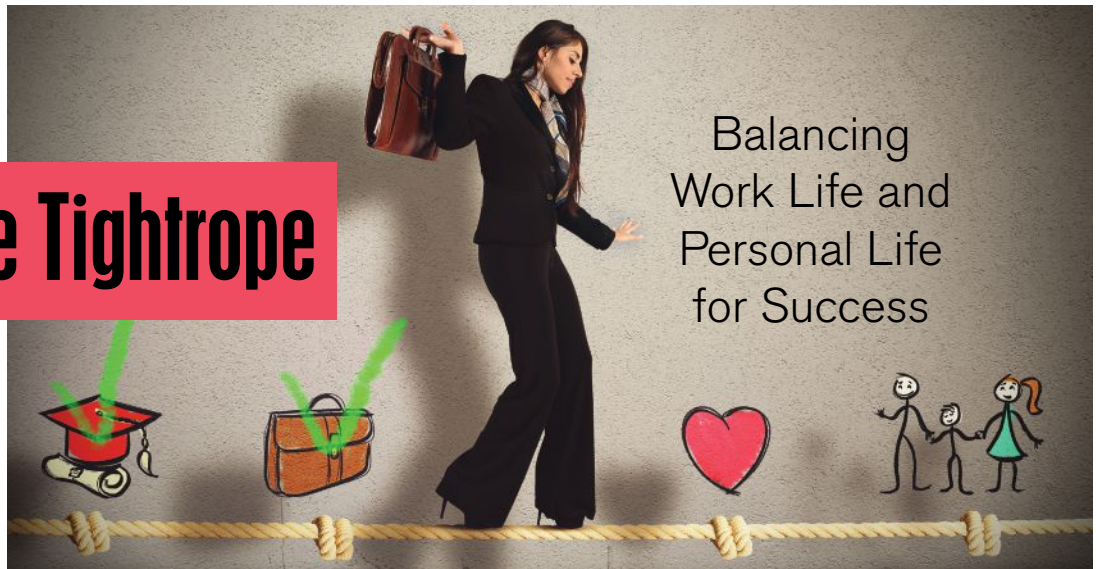
Women in the Industry

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Walking the Tightrope



“That tightrope feeling leads many women to be better prepared and more dedicated to their work. Many of us feel that we have to be, in case a personal emergency suddenly needs our attention.”

It's 5:30 p.m. on a Tuesday and I'm driving home from downtown Los Angeles. I am exhausted from a long workday and know I'll be stuck on the road for over an hour. I get the first call from my son, asking if I know where his Boy Scout belt is, and if I can wash his sweatshirt before his meeting at 7 p.m. My husband calls and interrupts that conversation. He says the doctor's office keeps calling, and wants to know if I ever made my mammogram appointment, and asks if I can make dinner tonight. I suddenly remember that tonight's Boy Scout meeting requires parents to attend and I need to be there as well. Today is like most days: a balancing act. It's a personal struggle as I try to achieve a degree of balance between the demands of work and family, both of which I love. I make my way across a tightrope, high above the ground until I make it—relieved and heart racing—to the other side. Then the day ends, and I get to do it all again tomorrow.

Home Life-Work Life

Am I alone in this predicament? Hardly! My experience matches that of the average working woman, no matter the industry. The most recent Gallup poll on the subject found that even though women make up half of the U.S. workforce, we are still responsible for over half of daily household chores as well. In 2019 they reported that for heterosexual couples, it is largely gender that determines who does what at home. Most of the time it's the women who are responsible for taking care of the laundry, cleaning the house and preparing family meals.

During the worst days of Covid lockdown, it was yet more skewed. Working women added daycare, babysitting and home schooling to their list of daily responsibilities, often while

putting in a full workday from home.

Even with a retired husband who helps tremendously, the twinges of guilt from being a working mom and wanting to nurture my family often keep me declining more help. Yet when I am home, after work hours and on weekends, I regularly check emails and phone messages. That tightrope walk leads many women to be better prepared and more dedicated to their work. Many of us feel that we have to be, in case a personal emergency suddenly needs our attention.

One Step at a Time

We don't give ourselves a well-deserved break. We carry the weight of our roles on our shoulders, only to come home and try to catch up with taking care of our children/spouse, or keeping friendship connections strong. I tell myself, “If I keep this up and don't make time for friends now, I'm not going to have any when I retire!”

I can offer a few tips to avoid feeling that we personally have to do it all:

- Give others the opportunity to feel the satisfaction of helping.
- What doesn't kill anyone can wait.
- It's okay to not do everything yourself.
- Establish a list of the obligations that are most important to family or household members--and set priorities.
- Accept that not doing for others sometimes gives them the chance to grow.

Balance isn't about fitting everything into your schedule. It's more about starting with what's important, then letting the rest fall as it will.

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➔ **Nataline Lomedico** is the president and CEO of Giroux Glass, headquartered in Los Angeles. The company has been in business since 1946.