



A Fashionista in Construction!

How does a girl from the fashion industry make it in the construction industry? The two are more alike than you may think. I went to school in New York City for Accessories Design and graduated after 2 years with my Associates Degree in Fabrication. I lived in NYC for my first year of school and worked in a retail store in the middle of Times Square. Everyone thought I was living the most amazing life, but honestly I was a broke college student. In my second year, I lived at home and commuted back and forth from outside of North East Philadelphia to NYC three days a week. I transferred my job from the retail store in Times Square to the one near my home. After I graduated, I continued to commute to NYC 3 days a week to work in the fashion industry creating and making handbags. I worked 10 hour days in the downtown area of NYC called SOHO. I loved what I was doing, but I didn't love NYC and started to get worn out with the commute. Then I got a job as a store manager back home. I really didn't like retail, I got bored and wanted to get back into designing and creating things. I knew I no longer wanted to do fashion when all the jobs I was applying to were in NYC. So, I moved on from fashion and started to think of other areas that interested me.

I was remodeling my bathroom at the time and realized how much I loved construction. I loved sketching out different designs and planning out what was going to go where with cardboard and tape on the floor. My other favorite thing was going to Lowes to pick out all the materials, like my marble counter tops and flooring, and getting the best deals. I grew up around construction with my dad always remodeling or adding on to the house. Then it really hit me that fashion and construction are the same; something is designed and built and all the little details in the middle could be linked together.

I'll break down the steps of creating; by reviewing how to make a handbag. I would spend hours sketching out the perfect handbag. Once I had my design, I would figure out the size of the bag. Once I had the dimensions, I had to figure out all the pieces. What kind of fabric do I want to use? What about zippers, hardware, handles? I had to get all the pieces that would come together to create this handbag. Once I figured out all the materials I would be using, I created a specification for the bag, gave it a name and started to create the pattern for all the different pieces. After I created my pattern on paper, I would go shopping for all my materials making sure not to forget anything that I will need once I sat down to sew this bag together.



This is similar to construction and my job of being an Assistant Project Manager. Once I receive a new job, I review the specs, figure out all the materials being used, and check out the drawings. The specifications tell you everything you need to know. When I get to ordering material, I need to make sure I'm not forgetting the little things that are most important, like fasteners. This is similar to creating a handbag. I can't forget the most important part, the thread. The things that hold it all together. Assistant Project Manager Alayna Melle would always say in the beginning "think of fasteners like buttons it's all the same thing". I think that has always helped me and made me realize that my background in fashion was something that would really be able to help me in construction.

So how does a girl from the fashion industry make it in the construction industry? Well, with my fashion design background, I think that helps me because I already have a sense of how to build something. Building a bag is no different than building in construction. It's all the little pieces that are used to come together that make it different but the concept is very similar!



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