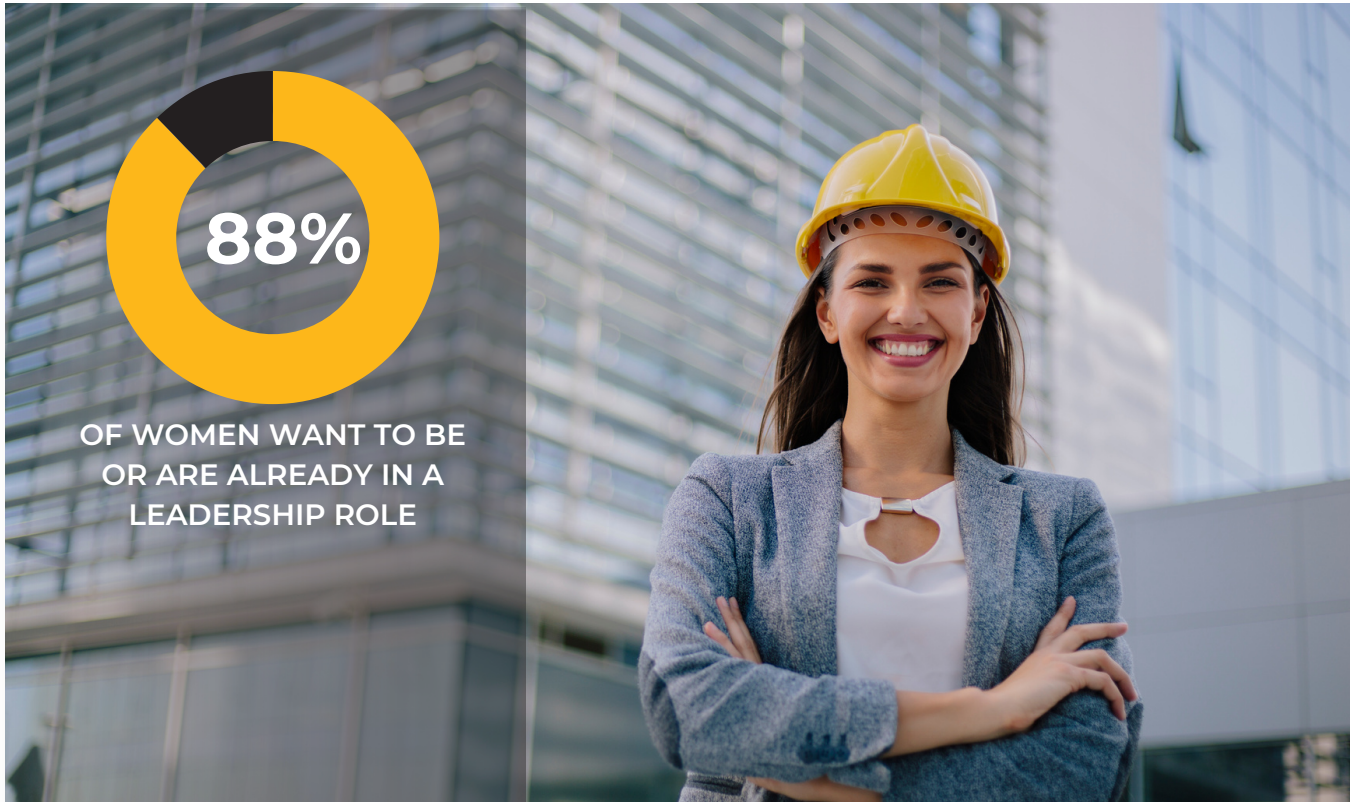




# SPONSORSHIP: HOW MEN AND WOMEN CAN ADVANCE TOGETHER



*This report provides a summary of the session delivered at the 2023 SFPE Annual Conference & Expo, made possible through the generous sponsorship of FM Global and Johnson Controls.*



## WOMEN IN THIS INDUSTRY WANT THE OPPORTUNITY TO RISE TO LEADERSHIP

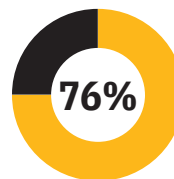
**W**ithin the construction industry, 88% of women want to be or are already in a leadership role.\*

### WOMEN IN FIRE PROTECTION ENGINEERING WANT THE SAME THING:

*"Being able to grow responsibility, oversee more portions of a project, and have a higher salary and benefits."\*\**

*"To learn new things, do bigger and more complex projects, earn good money, and be in a high position in the company."\*\**

\*\*Source: SFPE Survey Response, October 2023



Within the industry, 76% of women say they understand what they need to do for their career advancement.\*

### HERE'S WHAT WOMEN IN FIRE PROTECTION ENGINEERING SAID THEY WANTED TO SUPPORT THEIR CAREER ADVANCEMENT:

*"Mentoring, feedback, ongoing training, and development opportunities."\*\**

*"The possibility to have training by the best professionals in fire protection."\*\**

*"A quantitative rubric of what is expected of me to advance."\*\**

\*Source: Building Better: A Women In Construction Benchmark Study, Ambition Theory + NCCER 2023







## WOMEN IN FIRE PROTECTION ENGINEERING ARE ASKING FOR MENTORSHIP. BUT THIS ISN'T THE ANSWER.

**WHEN WE ASKED WOMEN ABOUT THE TYPE OF SUPPORT THAT THE MOST SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE RECEIVE, WE GOT A DIFFERENT TYPE OF ANSWER.**

*"Be invited to the same meetings that my male counterparts attend." - National Survey Respondent\**

*"It feels that the most successful people in my organization have a strong relationship with someone in upper management." - National Survey Respondent\**

*"Buy-in from the company. To know that others have your back. Confidence is instilled in what we say, and clients are more likely to believe our commentary." - SFPE Survey Respondent\*\**

*"Encouragement to own a project." - SFPE Respondent\*\**

*"Upward opportunities." - SFPE Respondent\*\**

### **WOMEN IN FIRE PROTECTION ENGINEERING NEED SPONSORSHIP TO ADVANCE**

There is a disconnect between what women are asking for (mentorship: advice and preparation) and what it actually takes to advance to the next level (sponsorship: exposure and opportunity).



# TAKING ACTION: SOLUTIONS FROM WITHIN SFPE

*There is an opportunity to shift the mindset from one of advice and preparation to one of exposure and opportunity. During our workshop on October 8, a passionate group –including both women and allies–discussed actions that can be taken in order to move this forward.*



## **ACTION 1: INDUSTRY-WIDE TRAINING**

Gender equity isn't a problem for women to solve alone. The group emphasized the importance of sharing key learnings across the industry through training available for everyone.

*"Bring the men along for the ride."*

*"Support your network, support each other, more education and sessions like this!"*

*"Provide opportunities for staff to attend events that cover learning like this."*

*"Consider sponsorship training!"*

*"Create more forums like this to bring men and women together to have these discussions and brainstorm further."*

*"Know the difference between mentorship & sponsorship."*

## **ACTION 2: OFFER SPECIALIZED TRAINING TO ADVANCE WOMEN**

The group recognized the need for targeted training opportunities for women that provide them with coaching and help them develop the leadership skills they need to advance their careers.

*"Provide opportunities for staff to attend events and training that covers learning like this."*

*"Create programs that provide additional opportunities within our organizations."*

*"Educational opportunities."*

## **ACTION 3: CREATE A CULTURE OF SPONSORSHIP:**

Foster awareness and support for sponsorship as a means to advance women in the industry. Special emphasis should be placed on ensuring those in leadership positions understand the difference between sponsorship and mentorship and adjust their approach to help women actually advance.

*"Focus on your part of sponsorship - make sure you put in what you get out of it."*

*"Give people credit, provide equal opportunity, make a conscious effort."*

*"Assess ourselves for unconscious bias and look to reduce or eliminate it."*

*"Find opportunists to assign to up-and-coming people. Make introductions."*

*"Don't be afraid to delegate some of your workload. It's not a sign of weakness."*

*"Willingness to provide support in the form of professional connections."*

*"Lean toward sponsorship rather than mentoring of our junior peers."*

Source: SFPE 2023 Annual Conference Participants



## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



***BUILDING BETTER:  
A WOMEN IN  
CONSTRUCTION REPORT.***

Download the full report here.

[DOWNLOAD](#)



**WHAT WOMEN WANT:  
HOW TO BUILD A  
WORKPLACE WHERE  
WOMEN CAN THRIVE**

Listen to the Podcast Episode here.

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**IMPOSTER SYNDROME.  
IF YOU'RE A WOMAN IN  
CONSTRUCTION IT'S NOT  
ALL IN YOUR HEAD.**

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