

WTC 'Project Engage' with Lisa and Kassy

[00:00:00] **Angela Gardner:** Welcome Women Talk Construction family. I'm Angela Gardner and I'm here with Kristy Powell, my co-host. Hey, hey Kristy.

[00:00:12] **Christi Powell:** How's it going? Over there going great.

[00:00:18] **Angela Gardner:** We're bringing you courageous stories that will hopefully encourage more inclusion in the workforce. And, um, we release a new episode every Monday, so please check it out. And we also have. A forum called breaking barriers forum.com. So come sign up. We have two special guests with us today, so let's go on ahead and get that conversation started.

[00:00:41] Um, we have Cassie Slaughter and Lisa O'Brien here. From Procure Technologies, Cassie is the head of construction education, and Lisa is the director of industry culture. So, I first wanted to get us started and have each of them introduce themselves and, and share a little bit about what you do at Procure.

[00:01:04] So, Cassie, why don't you get us started?

[00:01:07] **Kassy Slaughter:** Well, good morning ladies. Thank you so much for having us. Good morning. I'm Cassie Fodder and um, I lead our construction education team. So for a little bit of context, about nine out of 10 people that join Procure have zero construction experience. So it makes pretty challenging when they come into the organization to try to connect with our customers and understand our mission and our vision, what's at stake.

[00:01:32] So it's my team's job to make sure that every new Procure that comes in understands how construction works, so that they can figure out how Procure can help. So that includes their onboarding and their, their ongoing education here at Procure.

[00:01:46] **Christi Powell:** That is excellent. Love that. Yeah. What a great opportunity too, to just get our industry in, in the minds of people who've never thought of it.

[00:01:55] **Angela Gardner:** absolutely. Lisa, you wanna share about yourself?

[00:01:58] **Lisa Obrien:** Yeah, it's nice to be here. Thanks for the invite. I lead our team called Industry Culture, which is a new team, and part of what we're doing with the industry culture is to begin to have conversations with executives in the industry. Around how do we create really healthy cultures, uh, inside this

industry in order to make it an industry of choice?

[00:02:21] As we look at the labor shortage that faces every single company in this industry, if this industry could figure out how to really attract and retain top talent and build career paths that build businesses, this industry, uh, ends up booing itself all the way around. And that's really the, uh, mission of my team.

[00:02:43] **Christi Powell:** I love that that's the mission of Women Talk Construction. You pretty much just nailed it, uh, aligned very clearly. Awesome. Thank you for sharing.

[00:02:52] **Angela Gardner:** Yeah. It takes us all together doing it right,

[00:02:54] **Christi Powell:** Christie? Mm-hmm. Absolutely. We can't roll that boulder up a mountain by ourselves. But I guess

[00:03:00] **Angela Gardner:** our first question then would be for, um, Cassie, we hear about your extensive onboarding at Procore and you, you just shared a little bit about that, and it's a award-winning and it's week long.

[00:03:12] And I think probably a lot of companies out there need to like take note of this 'cause I don't know many that really have, you know, that type of communication from the get go when they bring on employees and then you call it your new Pro Corian. I love that. I. What is the one thing that makes your own onboarding experience?

[00:03:32] Excellent. Or, or share with us some tips for that, that you can give some others about how to do it and why to do it.

[00:03:38] **Kassy Slaughter:** Oh, I could talk about this all day, but I will try not to promise. If I had to pick one thing about our onboarding process that really is sort of standout, I think it's the way that we double down on connection, and so we like to say that that first week is about connecting people to our company.

[00:03:56] So that's our culture, right? That's our. Mission, our vision, our values. We are huge on living our values because it really speaks how we work together at the company, not just what we do, but how we do it together. And it also connects everybody with each other. So we have these really large cohorts that come through.

[00:04:13] It could be, um, somewhere between probably 30 and a hundred people that start with our company every other week. So our company is becoming large, but because we focus so much on that connection with each other in week one, We make it feel like a much smaller company. So there's a lot of get to know you time.

[00:04:32] There's a lot of socialization. The facilitators are also modeling our values by showing the way that we speak to each other, the way we interact, the way that we run our sessions. And then the third, which I am a little biased toward, is connecting folks to our industry. So over a three day period, we have eight hours of construction education where we're teaching them the who, what, where.

[00:04:54] Of construction management and also giving them some exposure to procore's platform. But we really focus on the industry first. Nice. And we gotta understand that first. So

[00:05:05] **Christi Powell:** can be better at their jobs if they understand what they're trying to serve, correct?

[00:05:09] **Kassy Slaughter:** Absolutely. And they're more plugged into our mission and vision.

[00:05:13] If our vision is to improve the lives of those in construction. Why do you care about that? Unless you understand the challenges that they face every day. Right, exactly. We can't have people to be passionate about that unless we tell them what's going on in that realm. Exactly. That's

[00:05:26] **Christi Powell:** awesome.

[00:05:27] **Angela Gardner:** So you wait on, you said you onboard 30 to a hundred people every other

[00:05:31] **Christi Powell:** week.

[00:05:32] What? Yep. That's

[00:05:34] **Angela Gardner:** amazing. Okay. I just needed to reiterate that. That's a lot.

[00:05:38] **Lisa O'Brien:** Thank you for sharing that.

[00:05:39] **Christi Powell:** Absolutely.

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[00:06:15] **Angela Gardner:** So let's, let's say, let's, let's give Lisa a question.

[00:06:21] **Christi Powell:** Yeah. I wanna know a whole lot more about humanizing diversity. Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. Humanizing and inclusivity. It sounds like they've got a culture that is breeding that.

[00:06:31] **Angela Gardner:** Yeah. And they're, they're bringing in more women, well, more women are entering our industry, right, Christie?

[00:06:37] Yes. So maybe Lisa can share with us and tell us a little bit about maybe what she's seen out there. If women are staying in their roles in an organization. Um, maybe how they're, hopefully promoting that more and give us maybe two or three reasons that keeping. You know, women in roles and engage is really a good thing for our industry.

[00:07:04] **Lisa Obrien:** Yeah, those are all very big questions. They're, um, let me see if I can simplify my answer for the, for the sake of context. I think that, The current environment inside the construction industry is rapidly changing, and I think there are a lot of executives in the industry mm-hmm. That really recognize bringing women into the workforce, bringing women into leadership, bringing women into executive levels is actually a benefit not only to the industry, but to their business at large.

[00:07:41] Mm-hmm. Uh, I think that's happening slowly, slowly. Uh, I think that I also hear some executives say, it's really hard for us to get women in here. It is, it's hard for me to hire a woman. It's hard for me to get women in. And so my bigger question to the industry is, what's the environment that your executive team, that your leadership team, that your organization is creating?

[00:08:09] Are you creating an environment, a culture? Mm-hmm. That honors flexibility, that honors, uh, without sounding soft, the soft side of feminine leadership, which isn't always about pushing no, or forcing. Sometimes it's about curiosity. Sometimes it's about gentle conversation, a little bit slower pace. Yeah.

[00:08:34] Yeah. And so is your culture, is your executive team actually creating an environment where there can be slower pace, where there's room for curiosity, where there's a space for a feminine voice and feminine leadership to actually add the value that it adds? That's a really short snippet. I

[00:08:51] **Christi Powell:** love it. Talk about it all day.

[00:08:52] That's a great answer. Yeah, that was a great answer. And how exciting is it to hear the organizations have really. Put these things first and foremost in their, in their business acumen, things that they're doing to make not only the revenue bottom line, but the people bottom line, right? And just investing not only in the revenue side, but also investing in the revenue in the people side

of an industry.

[00:09:18] I think it's awesome. Well, people make up the revenue, right? They do. If it wasn't for the people, there'd be no revenue. Correct? Yep.

[00:09:26] **Lisa O'Brien:** Yeah. The way we talk about it in our programs is that culture drives business. Mm-hmm. And when you have a strategy that drives your business, you double down. And so if you take on a mindset of culture actually drives my business, then my business will drive my culture.

[00:09:44] Absolutely. And I'll absolutely continue to make that investment because I recognize the relationship between the two.

[00:09:49] **Christi Powell:** That's great. So refreshing. You don't hear that every day in our industry. So refreshing to see folks, um, taking the lead and, and just moving forward in a place that we're humanizing people and people are first.

[00:10:01] Mm-hmm. So I've got a question, uh, for Cassie. So I saw that you had a mission to invoke positive change in your industry through education, and that is what you do. Give us a couple of topics that you're focusing on for your education. Can you share, is that like public knowledge or is that like, or very well protected information?

[00:10:21] No, there's

[00:10:22] **Kassy Slaughter:** no trade secrets here, right? Because yes, things we're talking about, like, we have to push those boulder up the hill together, right? Mm-hmm. So I think that one, one of the things that I, I didn't share in my intro that I'll, I think is relevant now is that in addition to educating folks internally, um, my team, the construction education team, Procore does educate, um, in the industry as well.

[00:10:43] So we're pretty partnered up with the A G C to deliver their, um, project manager development program, their supervisory fundamentals program, uh, their s t P program. Um, and so we partner with the national level, chapter level, and even individual companies to deliver this construction management training that can help upskill their workforces, right?

[00:11:06] Yes. Them common language within their, their organization to tackle these challenging projects and, uh, changes in the macro environment together. I would say that thematically there is just a big battle cry right now for, um, what Lisa's team focuses on, actually, which is leadership development. Yes.

[00:11:25] There's a lot of passing the torch happening right now, right?

[00:11:27] **Christi Powell:** Yes, absolutely. That's gonna be happening for what,

10 years.

[00:11:31] **Kassy Slaughter:** So how do we make that knowledge transfer happen in the right way? That we actually take all that wisdom from the generation that's stepping away and honor their legacy. Yes. And also give the leaders that are stepping into those roles, the tools that they need.

[00:11:47] To, to excel big shoes. Mm-hmm. Yeah. They're also filling big shoes, right? Mm-hmm. The generation that raised me in the construction industry prior to my time at Procore, those were amazing leaders. Mm-hmm. How do we extract as much of that information as possible and pass the torch? So I, I think that that's probably the, the hottest topic along with culture.

[00:12:06] **Christi Powell:** Yes. Leadership and culture. Yeah. Yeah. Mm-hmm. Yeah. Awesome. Thank you so much and thank you for educating. What I love about what you said is something that, um, 84 Lumber does, and I work for, uh, our women in business enterprise department, and we are very focused on serving the community. And what you're doing for the builders through a G C is serving your customers.

[00:12:30] You're, you're not just out there asking for sales. You're serving your customers first, and you're a value, you, you are a huge value to these customers that are doing business with you. You know, it's not a transactional thing, right? It's a partnership and you've gone hand in hand with these folks to, to be their partner and say, Hey, I'm gonna help you too.

[00:12:52] I love that. I love that. Um, that shift in thinking like back in when I was in sales, it was, it was, you know, we've been taught and, you know, just the way things have gone over the years and things were different. Just get the sale. Just get the sale. Just get the sale. I. And things have changed, right?

[00:13:09] People are human. We're humanizing sales, we're humanizing what we do, um, as a business because we are all humans and we need to to be better. And one of the things I think helped us with that was covid. You know, people saw our kids running around the background, right? And our dogs drinking or throwing up on the couch.

[00:13:28] Carpet, whatever. It happened to me. I didn't, that did not happen to me, but I've been in a room where somebody's dog was throwing up on the carpet right behind him. So, you know, it, it did bring a, a piece of humanization to all of us, not just in our industry. So thank you for, for all that you're doing to

[00:13:46] **Kassy Slaughter:** educate.

[00:13:47] Absolutely. And, uh, just a, a quick funny comment about the covid and sort of what's going on in the background in our, our new hire orientation. We

always like to tell folks, we know that your background will come into your foreground. Yes. And it's okay. So the dogs, the kids, the roommates, the spouses, the food deliveries, it's, it's all good.

[00:14:06] **Christi Powell:** Well, I just wanna say, I don't know if this will be on YouTube. It, it will eventually. But, um, those of you who are just listening today, I'm super, super jealous of Cassie's background. She's got two surfboards in the background, so you have to tell us where do you live? Why, why do you have surfboards hanging on your wall in your, what looks like your, might be your living

[00:14:26] **Kassy Slaughter:** room.

[00:14:27] Yeah, this is, this is my office and the only wall that was long enough to actually hang a long board on. Um, I am in, uh, Ventura, California, which is just south of Santa Barbara, just north of la for those of you that kind of know the landmark cities in California. Nice,

[00:14:42] **Christi Powell:** nice. So I, I'm definitely gonna have to come and visit you one day.

[00:14:46] Welcome time. Nice. Yeah. Nice. And I love that it humanizes us right when we see the flamingo. She's got a flamingo back there too, and the surfboard. Oh, does she? Oh

[00:14:57] **Angela Gardner:** yeah, she does. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. My daughter would like that. She's tries to surf. I do not surf. Christie. No,

[00:15:04] **Christi Powell:** it, it's fun. I like it, but I'm not good at it for sure.

[00:15:08] Uh, so sorry we won't get off topic too much. Yeah. But it is always fun to like, you know, just put some real things to people's faces and names and, uh, we love business. We love what you're doing. We love our industry, but we also love people and you know, what makes them who they are. Exactly. So, um, Angela, I think you have a next question, don't you for Lisa?

[00:15:27] Yeah,

[00:15:27] **Angela Gardner:** I do. So if you could have anything you wanted to change in the workforce for the women, and you probably have heard a few things that they've maybe shared with you or even yourself. I. What would it be like? What are you hearing that needs to change out there and it's, it might even be something that y'all are actually doing right now.

[00:15:48] **Lisa O'Brien:** Yeah. I think this is a large request that's happening not just in construction, but kind of in the macro environment for women. I think that there's a couple things that I hear. Hear a lot. What I hear from very successful

women who've been able to kind of get into the executive realms, uh, is that they've, they have had a champion.

[00:16:10] They've had an advocate along the way. So I think the one thing that I would change, and the thing that I would call the construction industry to is for those men who are getting ready to leave the workforce, those men who built this beauty, Beautiful industry to find the women who need an advocate, who need a champion and begin to create their path for them.

[00:16:32] Help, yes, help, help open the doors to create a space for them to actually step into some of those gaps. I think for the construction industry, that would be my biggest desire. Um, I think beyond that in the construction industry, the other thing that I would say is that the construction industry is, there's so much grit.

[00:16:52] Mm-hmm. And it's like the most. Passionate industry in the world, it's, it's amazing. And I would love to see the construction industry have just a tiny bit of spaciousness to it to allow for the feminine grit to enter into that and create a ton of balance. Yes. It's the idea of like slow down to speed up.

[00:17:14] Yeah. And I think that if the construction industry and executives in the construction industry could begin to adopt the mindset of if we slow down just a minute, we can. Speed up. I think that would create more space for women to step into those gaps as well.

[00:17:27] **Christi Powell:** Absolutely. Yeah. Awesome, awesome. Love it.

[00:17:30] Gosh, this is such an empowering conversation, thankful. So, Cassie, same questions. If you could have anything you wanted to change in the industry, what would that be? Uh, or workplace for women or, you know, just, just the general where we're at, right. In our, in our lives right now, in, you know, the, the demographics that we are facing, the challenges we face.

[00:17:53] What, what would it be if you had anything you wanted, uh, for women in, in the

[00:17:58] **Kassy Slaughter:** workplace? Well, since Lisa stole the answer that I was gonna give, I'll, I'll give you one that's per perhaps a little bit more lofty, but, but maybe not. But when I reflect on my 10 years in the construction industry, before joining Procore, one of the things that I was always asking for and craving was experience in the field.

[00:18:20] So I was on the project management side of things. So I came to learn things about the way that the nuts and bolts worked in the field, but it's still like a really harsh learning curve when you're not not out there doing it yourself, right? Mm-hmm. And so I had this vision that I would take like a year long sabbatical

and I would spend two weeks on site, like at every trade.

[00:18:41] Nice. And also just build a little bit of credibility, right? Because that is one of the. Drawbacks is that, um, I think as a woman you're still looked at as less credible until you prove otherwise when you walk into a room. And that would give women, uh, the, the tools so to speak, that they need to really come to the table with that credibility and say, Hey, when I was in the field, this is how it was going down.

[00:19:05] But I know that that's lofty, and not every company could afford to send out their workforce to the field for a year and then welcome them back, but, mm-hmm. In my dream world, that is both happening.

[00:19:19] **Christi Powell:** Build xact customers grow, they convert more quotes and win more work. Build xact is a provider of cloud-based residential construction software for small builders and trades, connecting them with suppliers online. For job estimating and management, thousands of builders around the world use build XACT to run smarter businesses.

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[00:19:54] Uh, and, and the dream is necessary. Um, I'm just gonna tell you that I love that you said this. I had a conversation yesterday with one of the presidents of, uh, associated builders and contractors, the South Florida chapter, and she and I were discussing that um, we would love for all, all genders to be able to.

[00:20:17] See things the way we see them. But then at the same time, they didn't get all the training we got. Right? So meaning we were boots on the ground in the field. I, me 27 years, her 17 I believe, and then she moved into a role where she was directing and people were following, right? And so having all that experience and then being in a role, you, I had to learn how to talk like a girl, walk like a girl, act like a girl, and dress like a girl.

[00:20:47] Honestly, I didn't really remember what that was like. Even though I was in an executive way back in, before I fell into end the industry, I had to like kind of, you know, get my head in the right space. So one of the things that we noticed as we were talking is it's our responsibility to teach what not very many people have been through.

[00:21:08] Right. And so you're saying that. You're, it's exactly, it's like right on. If you could get somebody out there in the field seeing the challenges that they have, seeing the, the love that they have for each other, seeing the love that they have for their trade, and then move them into a role where they're in the office or they're in business development or, or any role for that matter, right outside of the

field.

[00:21:32] I think that, that, I love your, I love your lofty vision and I would love to see it happen tomorrow. So, um, thank you. For sharing that. It was, it was really cool. It was kind of a aha moment with Michelle and I when we were like, you know, there's only a few people that have our training. And I was like, what do you mean?

[00:21:50] And she's like, you know, we've been through it all. We've seen it all, and then we get to come into this role. And so we, we can see things from perspectives that 99% of. These folks don't get to see. And so, um, you know, it, it also gives you more compassion for those that don't. But she also reminded me that I need to do a better job of training the people that are around me.

[00:22:13] So, I love that. Thank you so much. So one of the things that we like to do on our podcast is just kind of wrap up how to get ahold of you, like what's going on in your industry. But I've gotta tell you, before we do that, I want you guys to keep up your passion. Your passion is very notable on this call.

[00:22:32] Yes, yes. And I love, love, love that. Um, thank you for teaching our industry and creating an excellent culture, but also fostering champions. We love what you're doing. So, Lisa, share with us, um, first I'll let you share first how to get ahold of you, how to get involved with Procore, how to do business with Procore.

[00:22:53] You know, tell us some things and then we'll let Cassie also do the same. I. Yeah,

[00:22:59] **Lisa O'Brien:** you can find me on LinkedIn, Lisa O'Brien Procore. I'm pretty easy to find. If you really wanna reach me, Lisa dot O'Brien, o b r i e n@procore.com. And I check my email every day and happy to answer anything, any questions. Uh, if you wanna get involved with sort of what my team is doing, um, the best thing to do, uh, Honestly, there's a couple ways that you can kind of really get involved.

[00:23:24] One is a program that we are developing, we'll be launching our next year soon. Uh, it's called Project Engage. Uh, and it is a leadership development specifically for the construction industry where we focus on culture and leadership and industry and business. Cassie's team partners with my team, and that's what we deliver to the industry.

[00:23:45] Uh, and it's in partnership with a d c of California. That's a great way to get involved and really get your hands dirty with what we do on a regular basis. Nice. If you wanna, if you wanna get face to face with me and like, have chats. Ground break is our big, uh, industry conference happening in September in Chicago.

[00:24:03] Nice. And Cassie and myself and our teams will be there. Uh, and we love having conversations with, uh, industry professionals. So those would be some of the ways you can reach me.

[00:24:13] **Christi Powell:** Awesome. What's the date on that? September. Do you know? I

[00:24:17] **Lisa Obrien:** do know when I look in my calendar that's,

[00:24:21] **Christi Powell:** we can look it up on your website.

[00:24:22] We need to get a whole bunch of website visits for you today, September. So don't

[00:24:25] **Kassy Slaughter:** even do

[00:24:26] **Lisa Obrien:** it 19th and 20th. Yeah, it's 19th and 20th of

[00:24:30] **Christi Powell:** September in Chicago. Awesome. Thank you for sharing. Cassie, how about you? How do we get ahold of you and, you know, what do you wanna share with the audience about, you know, just getting, getting engaged with Procore, maybe finding a job with Procore, whatever it is that you have that you wanna be able to reach folks.

[00:24:47] **Kassy Slaughter:** Yeah, absolutely. Um, well, I, I would double down on what Lisa said, you know, would love to see some folks at ground break, um, in September would be great to connect in person. Those are really magic moments also. Yeah. If anybody is interested in checking out our jobs board, our, uh, jobs board is, let's see, I think it's, so it's careers.procore.com.

[00:25:07] Okay. And, and sort by all sorts of different criteria, get a glimpse into our mission, vision, and values. And learn a little bit more about what makes Procore special. If you wanna get involved with, uh, some of the A G C programming that my team partners with, uh, the industry on. Um, if you just Google a g C Edge program at Yeah, I'm sorry.

[00:25:30] I. It's Friday morning, it's still working.

[00:25:33] **Christi Powell:** It's all, it's Friday morning here too.

[00:25:35] **Kassy Slaughter:** Yep. The a g C Edge program. So it's all virtual training. Um, and that's available through a g c National. And then lastly, like Lisa said, like happy to share my email and talk about all things construction education, all things construction, all things onboarding.

[00:25:51] Definitely here to, to collaborate network with folks. Um, my email is Cassie k.

[00:25:59] Like slaughterhouse@procore.com. And then I'm also available on LinkedIn under Cassie Slaughter. So would love to, uh, connect with you folks.

[00:26:08] **Christi Powell:** Awesome. Thank you so much. And keep fostering champions. Thanks for being with us today. We can't, we can't thank you enough for just sharing the wonderful things that you're doing.

[00:26:19] Thank you. Thank you for all you're doing. Thanks so much.

[00:26:26] Well, that's all for this episode. Thank you so much for listening to the Women Talk Construction podcast with your host,

[00:26:32] **Lisa Obrien:** Kristy Powell and Angela Gardner.

[00:26:35] **Christi Powell:** See you next time.