

VIEWPOINTS

Q: What is one mistake, made early in your career, for which you have learned?



JULIE HOLMES
PRESIDENT
JK2 Scenic, LLC
Apopka, Florida

As a woman graduating from the University of Florida with a degree in civil engineering and having obtained my engineer intern certification, I made the mistake of thinking I would quickly gain the respect and confidence of peers and clients in my industry.

I learned early on that I always needed to be one step ahead. Instead of walking into a meeting with little or no preparation, I always planned and made time to think through scenarios and discussions that may come up during the meeting. If there was even a possibility that utilities runs and easements could become a topic of discussion for a new project, I would pull as-built surveys, research historical information and even color-code the existing utilities, so the discussion would go more smoothly with “easy” answers already in front of me.

A little preparation and pre-planning go a long way, making it simpler to earn the trust, confidence and respect of others in the industry (especially those with more experience) early on in your career.



MATT RYAN
PRESIDENT AND CEO
S&ME
Raleigh, N.C.

I have always been a curious and inquiring person. While it is cliché to say there are “no dumb questions,” this can be tempered—for good reasons—for young professionals.

Early in my career, I had a supervisor who told me to “just listen” during client and team meetings—listen first, then follow-up with him on any questions. After nearly six months, I found myself yearning to actively participate and contribute in meetings. I shared this sentiment with my supervisor who then encouraged me to engage in meetings.

A short time later, my supervisor commented that my questions were on-point, thoughtful and sought a different perspective than his own. He also said that I should have spoken up sooner to ask to participate; he had built trust and confidence in me and my approach to a professional conversation.

My suggestions are to listen first, but stay curious. Build genuine relationships with your colleagues, clients and teaming partners. Be a life-long learner and ask questions.



October 2019

CE
CONSTRUCTION
EXECUTIVE

RISING STARS
Young Professionals Shine in Construction Leadership Roles

PLUS
HOT COMPANIES
IMMIGRATION REFORM

request an RFI be submitted. One thing I have learned is to avoid ever submitting an RFI without fully understanding what you are asking or submitting; it is far better to ask for clarification and solve an issue right away than to be unsure. A good self-check is to try and explain the issue to someone who has no prior knowledge, ensuring they are able to clearly understand based on your tutelage. This will help you clearly convey an issue to your architect or owner while improving your general knowledge. There's truth to the saying “you don't know what you don't know,” and each day should be a learning experience. 