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Melanie Ziemniak



Project Manager

Growing up on a farm in Arizona, Ziemniak was always fascinated by construction sites.

"My brother and I would ride our bikes to places such as where they were building a new school and play around on the site — until our parents caught us," she said. "Then my dad built our new house and we so-called 'helped.'"

Now she's helping build things for real. As a project manager for BNBuilders, she is among the small minority of women — fewer than 9 percent — who make up the construction workforce. She has taken on some of her company's highest profile projects in Southern California, including the new 60,000-square-foot laboratory and office building for biotech ear therapeutics firm Otonomy Inc., developed by Alexandria Real Estate Equities Inc.

"That building is our company's first cast-in-place architectural concrete structure," Ziemniak said. "It has fantastic interiors with huge attention to detail, and I was the project manager for the building and the interiors. Fortunately, my background includes working with architectural concrete."

She has more than 25 years of experience managing complex projects costing up to \$75 million, including new construction, renovations, tenant improvements and campus additions. She earned her bachelor's degree in communication from Arizona State University and her master's in executive leadership from UC San Diego.

For UC Irvine, she is managing a two-year fire and life safety improvement project.

"We just started. Our subcontractor is doing a building survey to see exactly what we have," she said. "The building was built in the '70s, so there are a lot of upgrades in store. We'll be adding sprinklers and alarms and new ceiling tiles. It's challenging to work on a building where students are active daily."

Ziemniak has extensive experience with fast-track projects, which have complex phasing, renovations within occupied facilities; mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems; and specialized equipment. Her work includes more than a dozen projects throughout San Diego for clients such as Sharp Healthcare, Palomar Pomerado Health, and the Skyline Hills Branch Library.

"I still enjoy it all, and I'm still fascinated by construction," she said. "I learn something new every project."

— John Roemer