

# Tips for a Successful Young Professionals Event

By Diana Hagan and Amanda Jenkins

**S**o you know you want to attract, retain and add value to the young professionals in our industry, but where do you begin? How do you get them interested and engaged?

Young Professionals (YP) is a versatile term. A Young Professional can be:

- someone right out of high school or college
- someone who has spent a few years in another field but is new to construction
- someone who has recently come into the workforce (e.g. former stay-at-home moms)
- someone who has been working in the industry for a few years, but may be new to NAWIC

These are only a few examples, but the point is: the term is meant to be inclusive to a target audience, rather than exclusive to a specific age or number.

Not every YP will have the same interests as others, and each city may have different attractions to offer. However, here are some things to consider when planning a Young Professionals event:

## 1. Avoid Stereotypes.

Don't discourage yourself by thinking that you don't have the same interests or hobbies as any specific group of women. There are many YPs out there who would love to attend an event because of the venue (food/drink/event), the activity (craft/fitness/community service), or just to connect with other women who work in the construction industry.

## 2. Partner with Another Organization.

A great way to get a larger audience is to partner with another organization in your area. There are several organizations that cater to women engineers and various contractor types, as well as those that focus on educating young women about STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math).

You may also find organizations specifically for women in colleges or vocational schools that want to connect their young women with those experienced in the industry. If you haven't heard of their organization, they may not have heard of NAWIC. And if you have heard of each other, what's stopping you from getting together for double the fun and double the outreach?

## 3. Be Adventurous.

Try something new! If someone in your chapter or a YP you are trying to engage has an idea for something "out-of-the-box," try it! You may end up having the time of your life, and the connections you make when you open yourself up will be greatly rewarding.

## 4. Be Considerate of Their Time.

Some YPs may be continuing studies at night or even working a second job. Many have children or a family to get home to, or a sports or fitness commitment. It may be helpful to do a little research with some of your members or target audience, and plan around their availability.

You won't be able to cater to everyone, but you'll get a lot more in attendance when you base the event around their lifestyle. For example, the Lexington-Bluegrass Chapter has alternating evening and lunch meetings for its diverse membership base.

## 5. Be Economical.

Some members are lucky to have their companies pay for NAWIC events, but others are paying out of their own pockets. Some companies will pay for admission only, but not "extras" like food, drink or parking. Try your best to make the event affordable or to offer incentives like "bring a potential new member and you get in free." Make the extra effort to reach out to invitees who have not responded. If money is an issue, see if the chapter or another member's company would consider sponsoring that person.

*"A great way to get a larger audience is to partner with another organization in your area. There are several organizations that cater to women engineers and various contractor types, as well as those that focus on educating young women about STEM."*

## 6. What Would Their Boss Say?

When a company chooses to invest its money and/or the time of one of its YPs, they are probably going to ask how the event was. Make sure your YPs know the message: NAWIC is here for professional development, for networking and for industry certifications. It also enhances women's careers, our industry and our communities. Let them know how much value they can receive from their membership. Finally, it's not a bad idea to thank the boss when you get a chance.

## 7. Become Genuinely Interested in Them.

One thing many YPs encounter is feeling overwhelmed by an organization like NAWIC. There are so many women, so much experience, and so many long-standing friendships. Where do they fit in?

Take the time to connect with them. Get to know their story, their interests, and what is important to them. Make them feel as though there is nothing you would rather be doing than spending your time getting to know them, and make them feel included. This will keep them coming back.

## 8. Include Your Entire Chapter.

A NAWIC Young Professionals event should not be

for one lone member of NAWIC to host with a room full of "young" potential members. Invite the whole chapter. Show these YPs what amazing value there is in our organization. Make sure your members know that it's everyone's job to recruit and retain Young Professionals to ensure a bright future for NAWIC.

## 9. You've Tagged Them, But Now You're It!

It's time to follow up. Get feedback from attendees and the people who planned the event on how the experience was for them. Note what worked, what kinks they experienced, and how the event supported your chapter goals. Reach out to everyone who attended and thank them for their participation. Keep them connected. Personalized notes are a great touch and make people feel special.

On a final note, the most important tip is to have fun! It's contagious. Excitement about NAWIC and your chapter can lead to more members, more volunteers and more overall enthusiasm.

---

*Diana Hagan is NAWIC's Young Professionals Committee Chair and a member of the Lexington-Bluegrass, Ky. Chapter. Amanda Jenkins is a member the Young Professionals Committee and of NAWIC's Richmond, Va. Chapter.*

---

## Go Red for Women

*Continued from page 19*

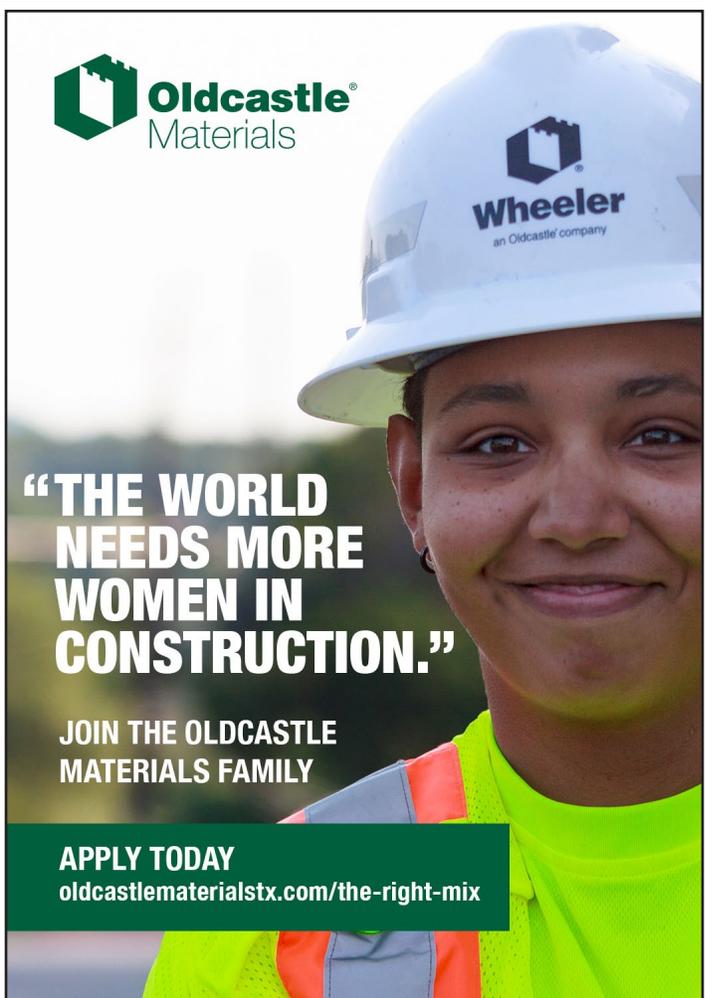
**Symptoms of a Stroke:** While these are not always the same for everyone, these are the best guidelines to follow according to [www.goredforwomen.org](http://www.goredforwomen.org).

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body (feeling heavy)
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding (having to concentrate more than normal on everyday tasks)
- Sudden trouble seeing or blurred vision in one or both eyes
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination (feeling off)
- Sudden severe headache with no known cause (especially on one side)

As women, we are strong and we fight through so many challenges on a day-to-day basis that we make excuses for our ailments or put off seeing a doctor. To combat the one every minute and the one out of three statistics, we must work together to make a change. For more information, please visit [GoRedForWomen.org](http://GoRedForWomen.org).

---

*Renell Grantham is the Co-Chair of NAWIC's Health and Safety Awareness Committee and a member of the Greater Birmingham, Ala. Chapter.*



**Oldcastle<sup>®</sup>**  
Materials

**“THE WORLD NEEDS MORE WOMEN IN CONSTRUCTION.”**

**JOIN THE OLDCASTLE MATERIALS FAMILY**

**APPLY TODAY**  
[oldcastlematerialstx.com/the-right-mix](http://oldcastlematerialstx.com/the-right-mix)