



2017
WOMEN
IN COMMERCIAL
CONSTRUCTION
& FACILITIES

Busy days ahead



Attendees cite aggressive to-do lists and opportunities on the horizon

New projects and renovations. Website and marketing programs. New opportunities and expansions. If you were able to sit in on the roundtable discussion during this year's Women's Retreat (and we did), you would hear about all of these to-do list items, and much more.

Optimism, opportunity and the promise of continued better days led the points of discussion for some of the industry's leading female executives during the 2017 Commercial Construction & Renovation Women's Retreat. This year, the annual gathering was held at The Andaz Hotel in Savannah, Ga., Aug. 3-6.

Every attendee talked about the surging trends driving the retail, restaurant and hospitality sectors. Along with several key networking events, dinners, cocktail parties and haunted tours, attendees gathered for the much anticipated one-on-one meetings.

Following is the first part of our roundtable discussion, which you can also see online at www.ccr-mag.com.



Sarah Appleton
Wallace Engineering
wallace



Lori Armstrong
Beam Team
BEAM TEAM



Michol Brandon
Crestpoint Companies
CRESTPOINT
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Marilyn Brennan
Egan Sign
EGAN SIGN



Kelli Buhay
Retail Maint Spec
Retail Maintenance Specialists



Kelly Burnette
F&D Commercial
F&D COMMERCIAL



Isyol Cabrera
IHG
IHG



Caroline Carithers
Woodforest National Bank
WOODFOREST NATIONAL BANK



TJ Cartier
Lee Health
LEE HEALTH



Grace Daly
Shop Talk 360
SHOPTALK 360



Julie Fox
ShopCore Properties
SHOPCORE PROPERTIES



Melissa Gallant
Spence Diamonds
SPENCE DIAMONDS



Jennifer Grieser
Tuesday Morning
Tuesday Morning



Laura Gross
Value City/American Signature Furniture
VCF VALUE CITY FURNITURE
AMERICAN SIGNATURE FURNITURE



Annada Hinson
Rogers Electrical
ROGERS ELECTRIC



Cynthia Hirsch
Sargenti Architects
SA SARGENTI ARCHITECTS



Faith Hoople
Fulcrum Construction
FULCRUM CONSTRUCTION



Debbie Kozar
Ulta
ULTA BEAUTY



Karen MacCannell
The McIntosh Group
McIntosh



Susan Marsh
Continental Realty
CONTINENTAL REALTY



Adrienne Natale
Topco
Topco



Gina Noda
Connect Source
CSG CONNECT SOURCE CONSULTING GROUP



Demetria Peterson
Bridgestone Retail Operations
BRIDGESTONE



Malinda Redman
Genesis Lighting Solutions
GENESIS LIGHTING SOLUTIONS



Roz Strapko
Automated Cutting Technologies
ACT Inc
Cutting Your Fixture Costs



Jackie Tomlinson
Woodforest National Bank
WOODFOREST NATIONAL BANK

What are the top items on your to-do list?

Demetria Peterson, Bridgestone Retail Operations: For the last couple of years, I have been observing the current processes in place. I am working to streamline and develop new processes to uncover obstacles that will prolong the due diligence period and carry over to the construction phase.

Gina Noda, Connect Source Consulting Group: I'm working on setting up my new company. I'm putting together a website, creating my logo and branding. It's in the beginning stages and is very exciting. There are a lot of moving parts right now.

Lori Armstrong, The Beam Team: One thing our company is working on right now, specifically me, is trying to grow our professional support system for franchises. This will be similar to what we give our retailers. With the franchises, you have a specific owner to each property, so therefore you're really dealing with a lot more customers than in corporate.

“I am trying to build a program for standards in finishes and furnishings so that our brand identity flows through all of our non-acute and acute care facilities.”

– TJ Cartier, Lee Health

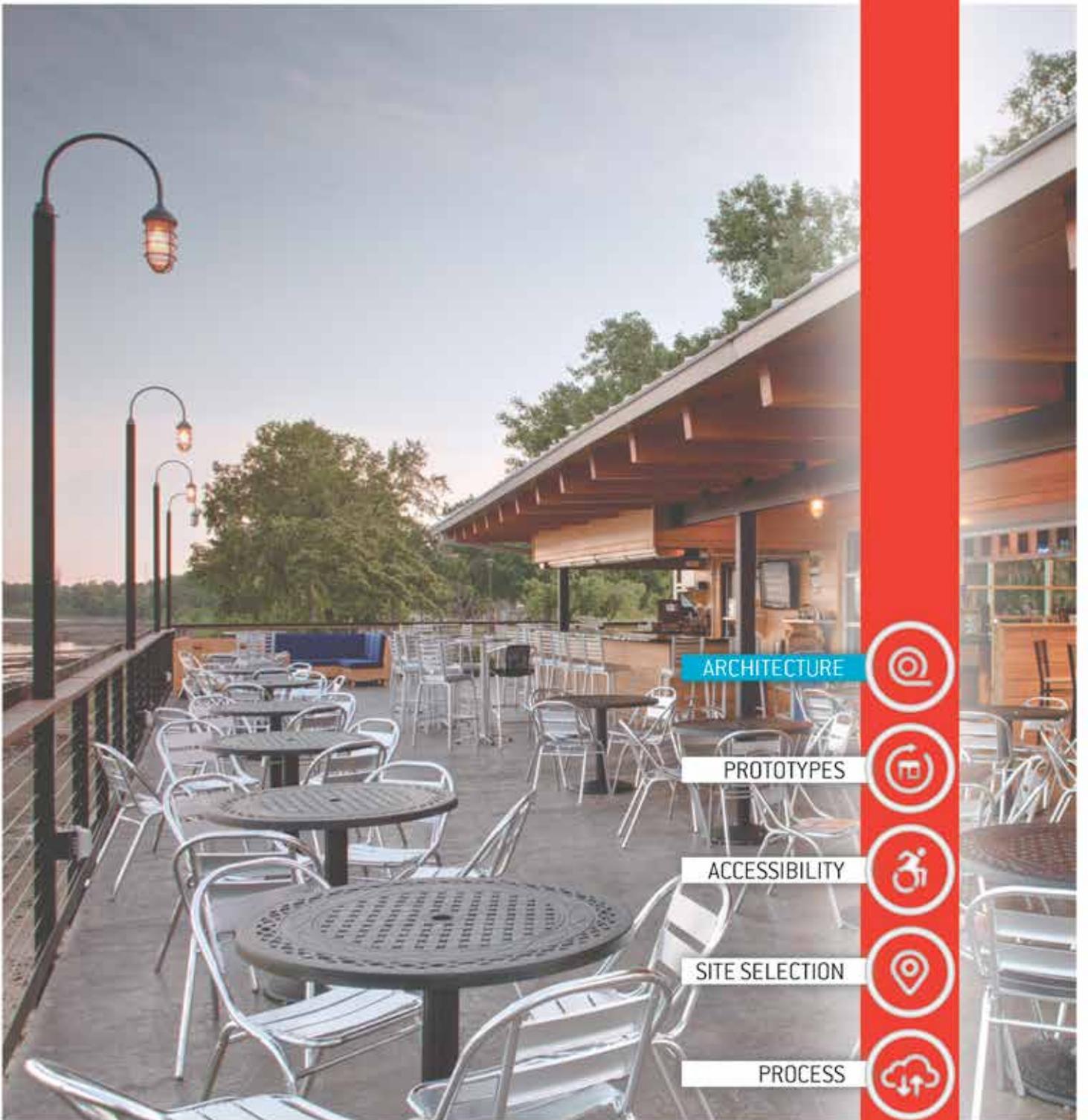
Melissa Gallant, Spence Diamonds: Since I joined Spence a year ago, we have opened our first three U.S. prototype stores. Next year, we will start our rollout. So my to-do list right now is pretty much everything. We need to get all of our processes, documents and plans perfect so we are ready for a successful 2018.

Roz Strapko, ACT: At the top of our to-do list right now is finishing our new website, which we are putting the finishing touches on. I am working on generating more new business opportunities. We're also focusing franchises, which we see a lot of value in doing.

Jackie Tomlinson, Woodforest National Bank: As a project manager in the Facilities Department, I'm learning to be efficient in all of the different areas that we cover – remodels, branch closures, maintenance, permits (etc.). Whatever is on the plate, I'm focused on being efficient in those areas.

Faith Hoople, Fulcrum Construction: The long-term goal for us – and something





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that is certainly on our to-do list – is continuing to develop our field staff. As most of you know, superintendents are leaving the field in greater numbers than people entering the occupation. Fulcrum is working on initiatives that focus on technical schools and other avenues that will engage students interested in more of a vocational track in high school. If we can get them interested in construction, they will see what a rewarding career it can be. We just have to connect with students and young people in a way that helps them identify construction as a viable career path. Another item on Fulcrum’s to-do list is developing additional markets. We are retail-focused, which can be very seasonal, so we’re working on developing a hospitality practice as a vertical market. Fulcrum’s retail superintendents have transferable skills for hospitality and working in this sector will allow us to even out the seasonality of our business.

“Since I joined Spence a year ago, we have opened our first three U.S. prototype stores. Next year, we will start our rollout.”

– Melissa Gallant, Spence Diamonds

Michol Brandon, Crestpoint Companies: I actually have three areas of focus, two being corporate and one personal. The first one on the corporate side is that we have two IHG properties opening soon, so I’m extremely focused in my director of operations hat. We are looking to hire some really awesome GMs, DOS and hotel staff. Even though the hotel is being built, we want to build a quality staff in place – from the GM all the way down to the janitorial services. With my director of real estate hat, I’m moving through an acquisition that we’re doing in the Cincinnati area.

On the personal side, I am focusing harder on being a first-time African-American hotelier. I’ve been working on owning and operating my own hotel, so that has introduced me to this industry. It’s an exciting industry to be a part of. We have development, operations and real estate all going on at the same time.

Sarah Appleton, Wallace Engineering: As a company, one of the main things we are focused on is streamlining our processes across all five offices for the projects we work on across all 50 states. Our goal is to make sure we’re One Wallace in everything we do, no matter which of our offices a project originated from.





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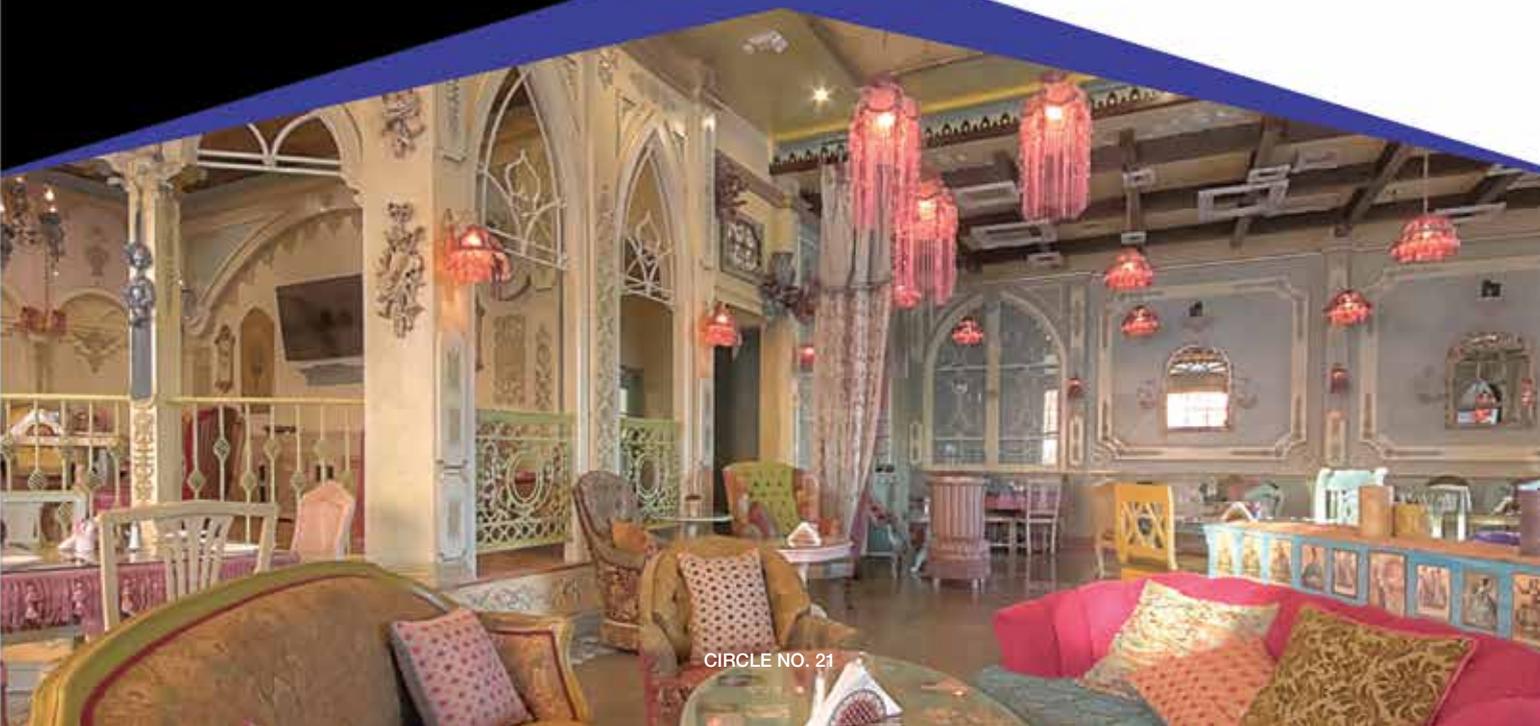
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We also have a new grocery store chain that's coming to the States, so I have been working with them as a new client. Each one of our clients has a different set of needs. Our job is to listen to what their needs are and work together with them to provide creative solutions to make those priorities happen, so much so that they become a lifetime client.

Debbie Kozar, Ulta: Our main focus is always to make sure our customers get the best experience they can when they walk into an Ulta store. And for me, that means working with the construction team to make sure that any kind of rollouts or fixtures that are needed are done. Getting things implemented in a timely manner is everything.

Isyol Cabrera, IHG: I am new to the particular position, so I'm working to get adjusted. We're a multi-brand company, so our design team works across brands in the rollout of food and beverage concepts. Right now, I am focused on launching a new restaurant concept for Holiday Inn, set to be released later this year.

“LED lighting is another trending item that retailers are turning to for creating an aesthetic environment that keeps shoppers coming back.”

— Amanda Hinson, Rogers Electric

Karen MacCannell, McIntosh Group: Being part of a small national firm, I wear many hats. As director of business development, one of my biggest priorities is working with our customers or, as I like to refer to them, my friends. It's important to stay in touch and stay on top of their needs. We also do a lot of internal training with technical staff to ensure they're communicating well with our clients.

Adrienne Natale, Topco: I have a couple of things at the top of my to-do list right now. Because the bulk of our membership is supermarket chains, one of the biggest things I'm working on is developing new programs to implement store equipment, especially with the changing needs of today's supermarkets. There are a lot of things trending in the supermarket industry, so they have a lot of equipment needs.

Second, I'm about to launch a CCTV project to aggregate all of the spend with our supermarket chains. I'm trying to gather all the right data so that we understand what type of equipment needs they have and what type of installation infrastructure is needed to move the project forward.



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Malinda Redman, Genesis Lighting: The lighting portion of Genesis Lighting Solutions has been around for six years, so there's a lot of growth potential and new markets to tap into. We are the lighting choice for many national accounts chains. We're provide lighting solutions for supermarkets, hotels, restaurants and retail chains to name a few. We can provide interior, exterior, landscape and aquatic lighting. We are the complete package with our signage for a one stop shop.

Caroline Carithers, Woodforest National Bank: On the facility side, we've been working to diversify our vendor pool. We've worked with a single vendor for many years and they've handled everything for us. Although they have been great, we feel now is the time to diversify and are looking for partners in millwork, construction and general maintenance. We are building a few automated / self-service type branches, so it's finding that fine line where customers are happy, but also that the branch has everything they need in the automated design to serve the customer. We are also involved in building out our commercial banking offices – we are just trying to be all things for all the different departments we support.

“Workflow and/or workforces are new challenges and trends we’re seeing. There can be benefits to both.”

– Sarah Appleton, Wallace Engineering

Marilyn Brennan, Egan Sign: I wear two hats that are closely related: business development and national account management. We have not lost any clients in years, but their needs have been changing. Rather than waiting for our clients to go out to RFP, we've been working with our clients, proactively, to value-engineer their programs, standardize their programs and bring value before they request it. I work closely with our project team to look at what we can do better – better priced signs, both interior and exterior,

inventory management, quantity breaks and bulk ordering. We are really developing these programs for our clients before they ask for it.

On the business development side, we want to increase our presence in retail. We're always looking to develop new, long term relationships. We feel it's where our strength is. So business development is really just the beginning of finding out what we can be doing with potential clients. It's about learning what people need and understanding where we can bring a perceived value to what they're doing already. Everybody has a sign vendor, so I don't want to knock on doors and just sell signs. Project Management and Service is where we differentiate ourselves in the industry.

My to-do list is to increase brand awareness in the retail environment.

TJ Cartier, Lee Health: We have a couple big initiatives. One of our Fort Myers (Fla.) hospitals is doubling the number of licensed beds in 2020. We've got a lot of work to do in the next three years to make that happen on time and within budget. We also have a hospital-without-beds kind of facility opening in Bonita Springs (Fla.). It's basically an acute care facility, not a long-term hospital facility that is opening at the end of 2018. In addition, I am trying to build

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a program for standards in finishes and furnishings so that our brand identity flows through all of our non-acute and acute care facilities.

Kelli Buhay, Retail Maintenance

Specialists: We're in the process of going through our third expansion since I've been with the company, which has been for three and a half years. We're expanding our staff and promoting within. Setting up streamlined concepts for our clients as well as expanding upon our in-house software to streamline that so we can connect.

Jennifer Grieser, Tuesday Morning: My top to-do item is to service our stores faster, cheaper, better so our team members can focus on taking care of our customers. In addition to servicing our stores, we are evaluating spend and best practices to reduce costs and gain efficiency.

Cynthia Hirsch, Sargenti Architects:

Since the majority of our business is retail based, one of the things we're doing now expanding more into the hospitality and restaurant sectors. We're starting to take more of those projects under our belt as we continue to grow having just recently opened an office in Dallas.

Laura Gross, American Signature:

One of the hats I wear aside from the facility manager one, is – procurement. I recently completed a multimillion-dollar janitorial contract. Now that the contract is active, I'm responsible for ensuring a smooth transition. While change is never easy, partnering with the right vendor invites a new perspective into our stores, paving the way for new insights. Communication and productivity will be necessary to foster a long-standing partnership between American Signature, Inc. and our newest vendor.

Amanda Hinson, Rogers Electric: Year after year each division within Rogers Electric is challenged to further develop our national footprint and self-performing man power. Internally this requires in-house teams as well as contractor-to-customer communication to be a priority on the list and continuously improved in order to be successful and meet yearly goals. Externally we seek to connect with facility

“Over the past two years, we built lab stores in several markets across the U.S. to find out what the customer is looking for. It all began with one store in the Chicago area.”

– Demetria Peterson, Bridgestone Retail Operations



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Waterworks Nationwide Retail Rollout

groups in new market segments in which we are not currently a big player in to learn what their needs are and in return establish initiatives to demonstrate how Rogers can be a resource for getting the job done for them.

Susan Marsh, Continental Realty: It's budget season. So I'm getting calls for capital expenses and snow removal. I also manage a retail shopping mall, so I'm getting ready for Santa. Winter will be here before we know it.

Kelly Burnette, F&D Commercial: One of our biggest goals this year is to continue in our mission to get the F&D Commercial name out there and expand our brand recognition in the commercial construction arena. We are one of the premier hard surface partners in the industry, and are very well-known on the retail side of the business as Floor & Decor. To this end, we will continue to foster a larger and more significant presence within the A&D community. Although we touch all sectors of the commercial construction & renovation space, our focus has been heavy in hospitality and multi-family. So in terms of greater brand recognition, it's also our goal to branch out to become better known in some of the other commercial sectors, such as retail and healthcare.

We will continue in our mission to be client-centric, with a strong emphasis on developing relationships and partnerships that provide valuable long-term solutions, as opposed to short-term, project driven transactions. That's a very important focus for us. We know we can beat our competition's pricing, but we want to be more well-known for the level of customer service and attention to detail that we provide to our clients, as well as for our logistical capabilities, which are unparalleled.

And finally, we're proud of the fact that we are disruptive to the industry in terms of the way we work with our clients. So it's probably the most enjoyable part of our "to-do" list for me. Rather than come to our clients with a specific and limited line of products for their projects, we like to focus on customer-led innovation and work with our customers to say, "What do you need? Let us source it for you through the direct relationships we have with over 180 vendors in 18 countries throughout the world." We want to be known as a hard surface partner that innovates and creates products with and for our



“We’ve been using Facetime to get real-time feedback. So if there is a question on the plans or what the project manager wants, we Facetime with them.

– Faith Hoople, Fulcrum Construction





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clients to suit their unique needs. We want to provide an endless aisle of innovative and creative hard surface options rather than a limiting and defined catalog.

What do you look for when deciding on bringing aboard a new contractor, vendor or supplier?

Ulta's Kozar: We look to partner in regards to manufacturing fixtures. I like to see how long a vendor has been in the business. What type of manufacturing facility do they have? Square footage? We look at financial background. Depending on what the project is, I typically start out small and give the people the opportunity to see how they can work for me before giving them something big.

Crestpoint's Brandon: Because we're in a hospitality industry, we want to make sure the vendors align themselves or submit to our core value, which is to deliver exceptional service and experience. If they are responsive and if can deliver the service and/or product, that's at the very top of our list.

“On the facility side, we've been working on diversifying our vendor pool. We've worked with a single vendor for many years in our build out/maintenance side.”

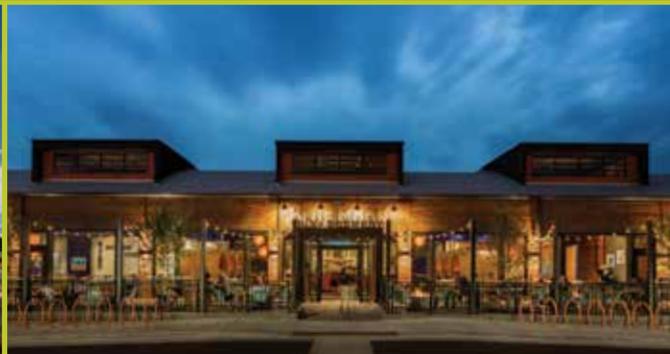
— Jackie Tomlinson,
Woodforest National Bank

At the very beginning, I know our president and CEO, Kal Patel, really submits to just exceptional service and experience, so we almost have to feel that connection at the beginning. I really feel it goes from the top with vendors, all the way down to the staff.

Spence Diamonds' Gallant: It's very hard for me to try a new vendor or a new contractor. I'm very loyal to the ones I work with, but that doesn't mean I won't try new ones. It's mostly just getting me on a the right day or saying the right thing that will open up an opportunity. It's really the partnership that works. I've never been one to just look at pricing. To me, the price is the price, and you typically get what you pay for. I don't find that the lowest bidder is always the best. It's who wants to build that relationship? Who's going to be there when I call them and say, “I know that this is totally crazy, but I need you to do this.”

Bridgestone's Peterson: I enjoy working with new contractors. It can be risky but I believe everyone deserves a chance. It begins with the initial conversation. I love hearing how they got into the business and why they are still in this industry? Most of the contractors that contact me have some level of retail experience. Now, I need to find out if that experience will translate to automotive service and retail. Another factor





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“Because we’re in a hospitality industry, we want to make sure the vendors align themselves or submit to our core value, which is to deliver exceptional service and experience.”

– Michol Brandon, Crestpoint Companies

I consider is their level of communication and responsiveness. Will you be the point person for all communication? It’s a deal-breaker for me if I have to contact more than one person to get an answer or request a service.

American Signature’s Gross: I don’t consider our vendors as just a service provider. Vendors are our partners. In any partnership, communication is a key component, but other variables play important roles, including cost. For example, if a specific trade or emergency response time is requested through our maintenance software, a senior technician is typically required. If a lower skilled tech is sent, completion of that service call may take longer than required to remedy the issue. This approach can also drive cost up. Because of the extensive work done to establish these relationships, our vendors know our priorities. They maintain our account at a informed level to help reduce cost and completion times, plus match the correct skill sets to our store’s service calls. To become a new and valued vendor with us, they must exhibit the ability to meet these requirements.

Tuesday Morning’s Grieser: When considering a new vendor to align with, we discuss what additional benefit they bring to the table other than their goods and services. We need partners who will can be an extension of our team and help keep our data up to date, provide best practices, and solutions to common Facilities issues.

Lee Health’s Cartier: The baseline is having the right product at the right price that meets healthcare standards. Partnership and trust are really important, too. Being a partner means you are expecting a certain level of service. Our partner help resolve issues such as; why did it fail? What do we need to do going forward to remedy it? I think that’s really critical.

Woodforest’s Carithers: That is so true, because we can’t know everything about everything. Especially with a GC, they are the ones that should point out flaws in the design or any issues. If you have a problem, they’re supposed to be able to point it out and say, “This is an issue.” What we need is someone who’s going to have our back. We want our vendors





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Topco's Natale: When I think about what I'm looking for in our vendor partners, it is a great manufacturing background and great locations to ship from. I'm working with 50 supermarket chains and talking to thousands of locations across the United States. I need to ensure our vendors are recommending what we need. I have the ability to see what the quality assurance or quality control process is. Is the plan consistent to the changing trends or changing needs?

IHG's Cabrera: One very important thing to me is that the vendor always has my back. I have worked with people and companies that can be sneaky, so I need a vendor who can call me and say, "I have this issue. How do you want me to handle it? What do you want me to do?"

The other thing I look for is distribution centers. If it's not going to work, it's not going to work. I need multiple distribution centers. And flexibility is key. Bring solutions to the table. Don't tell me what the mistakes are. Give me a solution.

What type of trends are you seeing out there?

Connect Source Consulting's Noda: We keep hearing that retail - brick and mortar is dying. Brick and mortar is not dying, it's changing and evolving. I'm on the opposite end of the spectrum, to me, it's exciting!! It is becoming more experiential with more technology. We are now bringing movie theaters back in to malls. So I absolutely love what I have been seeing out there.

A trend that I'm seeing that I don't like and I'm having an issue with is all the technology replacing the human element customer service, the personal touch. I think we have to find a balance between the two.

Topco's Natale: One of the biggest trends I'm seeing is developing the experience for the customer. We need to make things more aesthetically pleasing. The look of things is very important. In the supermarket sector, energy efficiency is becoming more important.



“Customers want the experience, but they want the service, too. We are seeing a lot of redesigns happening.”

– Cynthia Hirsch, Sargenti Architects

Genesis Lighting's Redman: There is more automation out there. And it's not all just remote controls. In a supermarket, you can walk down the aisle and watch all the lights come on as you walk by. We're seeing automation in décor, where people are actually interior-decorating their homes with lighting. And now it's happening in retail commercial developments. There's more of a fashion sense with lighting than there used to be.

Egan Signs' Brennan: Digital is becoming more commonplace. There's a lot of WiFi-based and cloud-based automation, so managing things is easier on the store level. People can do it at the corporate level.

Lee Health's Cartier: We're seeing shorter hospital stays and less Emergency Department visits. As a result, we are building facilities that are more like a Convenient Care to avoid hospital visits for illnesses that do not warrant them. There are more outpatient clinics, as opposed to going into the hospital.

Retail Maintenance's Buhay: It has made the experience more interesting, as opposed to ordering something online. That's huge. Retailers are happier, the lack of customer service seems to be an issue.

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Rogers Electric’s Amanda Hinson:

There is an undeniable trend shift currently going on not only in big box retail but restaurants, grocery stores, convenient stores, drug stores etc. Customer experience has been brought to the forefront as these markets are now competing with online product sales. Brick and mortar stores are being tasked to implement creative more aesthetic features to drive buyers into the store while also competing with online prices. One of the avenues many retailers are turning to is LED lighting solutions that allow for both a more appealing display of products for customers as well as an increase in profit margins for the operator. Omnichannel strategies are another trend on the rise aiming to bridge the gaps between brick and mortar, on line retail and smartphone connectivity to create a seamless shopping experience for shoppers and allows the retailer to customize their marketing to specific customer interests.

Wallace Engineering’s Appleton: Workflow and/or workforces are new trends and challenges that were previously mentioned.

We are experiencing these as well and utilizing them to meet the client’s main objective - to get a store completed and opened as soon as possible. For example, we recently worked alongside the architectural and construction team of a national C-Store chain to think outside the box and provide creative solutions to their proto-

type. In doing so, this type of collaboration resulted in cutting over 20 days off the construction schedule, thus allowing their store to open ahead of schedule.

F&D Commercial’s Burnette: We are focusing on customer-led innovation. It’s a trend that resonates with our client base and is applicable in all areas of commercial construction. We’re introducing a new way of selecting finishes to our customers. The commercial construction industry is programmed largely to select finishes from the defined collections that their hard surface vendors present to them each year. What F&D Commercial does differently however, is that we work with our clients to come up with creative solutions and innovative products to meet their specific needs. We can see a marked and rapid change in the thought process of our clients, and in how they are moving toward selecting finishes vs how they have done so in the past.

There is a trend across all sectors of commercial construction to use more durable products that will last longer and provide

“We’re seeing automation in décor, where people are actually interior-decorating their homes with lighting. And now it’s happening in retail commercial developments.”

– Malinda Redman, Genesis Lighting



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cost effective solutions, while maintaining the aesthetics and integrity of the design.

We are helping to drive the trend of using materials in non-traditional ways. We have the capability to do this to solve customer's needs when they have a look that may not be suitable to their application or cost effective to their projects. For example, sometimes we have customers who love the polished concrete look, but for whatever reason, it's cost-prohibitive to them. We might be able to get them a vinyl or porcelain that looks like polished concrete to solve the issue. We're seeing people use hard surfaces on walls and ceilings. It's listening to our customer's needs and challenges and then innovating with both them and our manufacturers to bring them what they're looking for and solve their issues. It's a continuous and ever-evolving process that keeps things fresh and exciting.

Most importantly when it comes to trends, it key to note that we have the ability to innovate and develop new products with our manufacturers to bring our customers the latest technology as well. A good example of this is in the luxury vinyl category. We have a product called Nucore that eliminates the need for underlayment, adhesives and time-consuming and messy installations. It's a waterproof vinyl/laminate hybrid plank that has a built on a water proof core, with cork-backing for a more realistic and softer feel under foot, as well as outstanding sound absorption. It is a rigid plank, which allows for imperfect sub-floors and eliminates the issue of telegraphing, which is common with traditional dry-back vinyl. It does not require an acclimation period, and because it's a floating application, installation time is typically cut in half, making it more cost effective and convenient. Businesses experience less revenue loss, as projects can be completed much quicker. It's the perfect application for everything from hotel guestrooms and multi-family and residential units in memory care and senior living facilities, to restaurants and retail.

How do you put customer service back into the equation?

The McIntosh Group's MacCannell:

We're implementing a new position, a Client Relations Manager, and I'll wear that hat as well. We just find that it helps to have someone outside the project check



“We’re seeing a trend in customer-led innovation. We’re working with our clients to come up with creative solutions to some of the things they may want.”

– Kelly Burnette, F&D Commercial



in with the client to make sure we are on the same page and everything is going smoothly, to prevent issues in the future. It's amazing how much more clients will be honest about what they want when they are talking to someone who isn't the project manager, so they are uninhibited about saying what they really want.

Bridgestone's Peterson: You have to hire the right person. It begins at the initial interview. You can't just put somebody in that role and say you're a customer service manager. This will be the first person your customer will see and first impressions are lasting. I know of a small company that has every employee take a personality test. If you didn't fit certain criteria, you would not be considered for the position.

Retail Maintenance's Buhay: You have to make an ongoing investment in your employees. It can't just be when you hire them. You have to continue to train them. It has to be ongoing process.

Grace Daly, ShopTalk 360: I think it stems from leadership. It's a trickle down effect. Ultimately, leaders create company cultures. Flourishing environments have happy employees and happy employees have positive interactions with customers.

Egan Sign's Brennan: People are going to spend money in the places they get service. I will say that I'm one of them: You want to walk in and have people who want to help you. Banks do that very well. They're very adept at making sure they are customer-service driven. And when you have a bad experience, you don't come back.

ShopTalk's Daly: No matter what the experience is – good or bad; true or untrue – social media has an instantaneous massive reach.

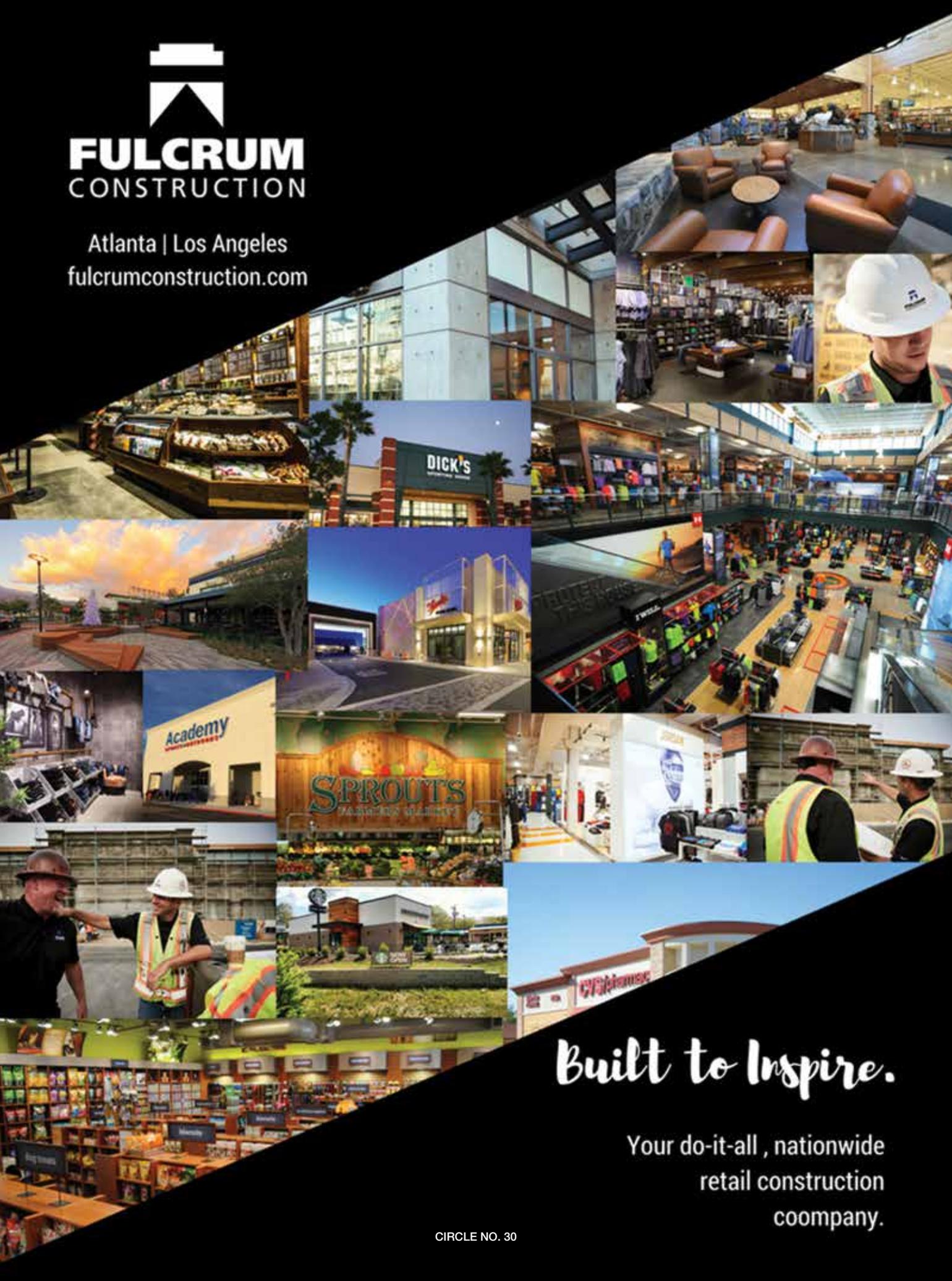
Sargenti's Hirsch: Social Media is forcing salespeople to think before they speak to their customers, which actually is a good thing.

Tuesday Morning's Grieser: We share the passion for finding the incredible deal with our customers. Our buyers work hard to find



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products our customers will love at great prices. Customers pay close attention to our ads and social media to seeking deals on gotta-have and too good to pass up products. We focus on making our customers feel excited, confident, and connected.

Sargenti's Cynthia: Customers want the experience, but they want the service, too. We are seeing a lot of redesigns happening. Some are completely changing the look of their stores in order to get that customer to return.

American Signature's Gross: As a furniture company, we know homes and families grow, which means our customers are constantly evolving. We carry designer looks at low prices, and we allow customers to create their own style to ensure whatever



room they're furnishing is one that reflects their personality. In our stores, customers can be eclectic, urban, rustic. We have modern and traditional collections with pieces that can be bought as a set or individually so they can create a stylish look that's entirely unique to them.

Rogers Electric's Hinson: Most of the trends we are seeing on the electrical and lighting side involve a personalization aspect that creates an excitement for the buyer. For example in store digital displays give the customer a touch, see, feel interaction with products that they can't necessarily get through on line shopping. Self-serve kiosks are becoming more and more common as people are getting comfortable with how to utilize them for a more efficient shopping experience. LED lighting is another trending item that retailers are turning to for creating an aesthetic environment that keeps shoppers coming back.

Continental Realty's Marsh: In the retail industry we are seeing more office sharing and service type business which is really helping the retail market right now.

Bridgestone's Peterson: I agree. The customer experience is more important than the service. So, the challenge for us is to provide an inviting space for you to wait for your car to be serviced. Today's customer is looking for more in a short amount of time. Besides beautiful interiors with comfy seating, they want WIFI, satellite TV, a place to work and surf the web.

Over the past two years, we built lab stores in several markets across the U.S. to find out what the customer is looking for. It all began with one store in the Chicago area. We took what we learned from this store to the next and so forth.

The Beam Team's Armstrong: On the construction side, we're seeing a lot of companies having a hard time finding workers. It's hard to find a young person who wants to be a master plumber.

They really don't know the opportunities that are out there.

Spence Diamond's Gallant: From our perspective, the two biggest trends we talk about most days is going paperless. I think the LED lighting thing came out years ago and everybody's sort of there. Now it's going paperless. We have three stores in the U.S. that are totally paperless. Another big conversation is how to appeal to Millennials. They are the ones with the money. They are doing the shopping, and it's a little different from past generations.

ACT's Strapko: We're seeing lots of requests for LED. It's becoming more popular. A lot of that is coming around. It unfortunately can add an expense to the fixtures, but when you have to list the UL, that's where we're at.

Fulcrum Construction's Hoople: We've been using Facetime to get real-time feedback. So if there is a question on the plans or what the project manager wants, we Facetime with them.

Crestpoint's Brandon: A major trend and conversation in our office, and in the hospitality industry, is Airbnb. It is a major disruptor for us. At almost every conference I attend, the talk is on service. How do we service that guest? Airbnb doesn't have to play on the same field. They're not regulated by the brand.

Second would be supply. Look how many hotels are being built. If you look at the Cincinnati and Columbus (Ohio) market right now, it's supply. Everyone is building and developing right now. It's time to get in, because eventually we'll hit a downslide. So, they're either trying to acquire or develop.

Ulta's Kozar: The trend we're seeing is giving the customer the best experience when they walk into your store. Digitally, they are connected. They have their phone out. They are looking for trending products and a great guest experience. **CCR**



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Opening Night dinner at Garibaldi

Welcome to Savannah Garibaldi hosts opening night dinner

Garibaldi Cafe, the local restaurant favorite comfortably located in historic downtown Savannah, served as the perfect host for the first night of this year's Women in Commercial Construction & Facilities Retreat, Aug. 3-6, at The Andaz Hotel. Defined by its simple elegance, the restaurant is one of the "must-try" stops for visitors to America's favorite haunted city. The opening night's Italian fare was part of a weekend of networking, roundtable discussions and one-on-one meetings, sponsored by *Commercial Construction & Renovation* magazine.



Old Town Trolley Tours of Savannah

Riding the rails

Trolley tour showcases the streets of Savannah

The grand mansions. Victorian architecture. Cobblestone streets and riverfront cafés. The natural beauty of Savannah was on display for attendees of this year's Women in Commercial Construction & Facilities Retreat, thanks to the Old Town Trolley Tours company. Right before they jumped into the Retreat's roundtable discussions, attendees boarded a trolley and took in a personal tour of the haunted city.



Day 1 Lunch Moon River Brewing Company

Did you hear that?

Haunted saloon plays host to Retreat lunch

Oh, it's haunted. Nobody is allowed upstairs at the Moon River Brewing Company. Why? You'll have to ask management. What else would you expect from a city known for its ghost tales? If you must know, Moon River is housed in one of the oldest, most historic and genuinely haunted buildings in Savannah – the place where the last guest in 1864 checked out right before the arrival of General Tecumseh Sherman during the War Between the States. Attendees of the Women in Commercial Construction & Facilities Retreat braved it for lunch. As *Commercial Construction & Renovation* went to press, no attendees admitted to seeing a, you know...



Dinner at Vics on the River

Vics on the River

Historic building hosts final night dinner

During the War Between the States, General Tecumseh Sherman's lesser officers used the building that Vics on the River occupies as empty offices for housing and planning space. The main dining room showcases a map that was hand-drawn by Union soldiers detailing Sherman's march from Tennessee through Georgia. How's that for a dinner spot? The historic venue played host to the final night of the Women in Commercial Construction & Facilities Retreat in Savannah.

One-on-Ones

Get to know me

One-on-one meetings help personalize the networking experience

After several days of networking, industry discussions and a search for ghosts, attendees of the Women in Commercial Construction & Facilities Retreat settled into the vaunted one-on-one meetings, where end users and vendors can talk shop and pursue leads. The highly anticipated discussions helped bring home the three-day event's networking session.

