



NEWS

## HOW TO START WORKING IN INDUSTRIAL: A GUIDE FOR WOMEN AT EVERY CAREER STAGE

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A career in industrial is many things. Collaborative. Dynamic. Rewarding.

So it's no wonder more and more women are turning to the sector – either to kick off or switch up their careers.

We sat down with Jessica Topelson – Development Manager at Vaughan Constructions and WIN committee member – for her insights on how to get into industrial at every stage of your career.

But first, what kinds of roles are available in industrial?

'Industrial' is a banner term for numerous industries, roles and career pathways, like:

- Portfolio, property or asset management
- Business administration or development
- Capital works or construction
- Development management
- Analytics
- Contract administration
- Architecture and design
- Bid management
- Marketing
- Sustainability

Understanding all the pathways industrial includes may take some time. But one thing is clear: it's integral to the economy. In other words, it's only going to grow.

This makes industrial a secure, stable industry to forge your career. And with ample opportunity to ascend to leadership roles – plus the growing demand for women in the sector – now's the perfect time to join.

'The industrial sector continues to be one of the best-performing property sectors in Australia and globally,' explains Jessica. 'We're seeing a lot more women choosing to come into industrial.'

So, whether you're just starting your professional journey or want to make a mid-career switch, let's explore how to make the move to industrial.



### High School Students

Jessica believes that high school is the perfect time to build foundational industry knowledge, get hands-on experience – and explore tertiary pathways to help you, or the teenager in your life, reach employment goals.

'It's crucial to engage with girls from Year 10, as this is when they're selecting their subjects – which will determine their tertiary pathways,' explains Jessica.

'At WIN, we work hard to educate girls in interactive ways about the rewarding positions they can aspire to within this dynamic industry.'

Here's how to get started:

- **Find work experience in an industrial company.** Get a real-world preview of your potential career through work experience – before committing to tertiary study.

Not sure how? Jessica has you covered. **'Check out WIN's list of industry partners.** Your careers adviser can help you draft a work experience application at one of those companies – and get it into the right person's hands.'

- **Embrace extracurricular programs and events.** Your school is likely registered for experiences that show what it's like to work in industrial – including career expo trips and programs such as Girls in Property. So, find out what's on offer. And sign up!

- **Consider vocational training.** Eager to jumpstart your career and develop core skills early? Consider vocational study in a subject like project management alongside your regular schoolwork. After all, these core skills are essential to your success in every

- **Plan your degree pathway.** Many roles in industrial require a tertiary degree. So, in years 10 and 11, find out which degrees will get you where you want to go. Also, be sure to learn what prerequisites you'll need for each before you lock in your subject choices.



### University Students

Uni is the perfect launchpad for your career – with its mix of theoretical and practical learning. But there are several ways you can take that process one step further:

- **Apply for a cadetship program.** You'll get the chance to practise key technical and soft skills as you learn them. You might even get paid or have some of your degree fees covered by your host company.

- **Apply to intern at your dream company.** An internship is a surefire way to demonstrate your commitment, skills and passion. Plus, it'll give you a foot in the door for any entry-level positions that open at your host organisation. See WIN's list of internships for vacancies in your state.

- **Participate in industry-related competitions, projects and events.** Many companies and associations – including WIN – host or sponsor initiatives that allow you the opportunity to hear from experts, apply your skills and meet mentors. So ask your lecturers what's on offer. And follow the LinkedIn accounts of potential employers to get a heads-up on new events.

Jessica has one last tip for university students gearing up for a career in industrial.

'Your job titles might change throughout your career, but some transferrable skills are always in demand. So always say yes to opportunities to become adept at communication, networking, negotiation, problem-solving and time management.'



### Graduates

The transition from academia to the industrial workforce can be nerve-wracking. But with the right preparation, it can be exciting too.

To set yourself up for your first year out of study:

- **Update your resume and LinkedIn profile.** Make sure these are ready to share as soon as your dream grad role opens for applications.

- **Apply for graduate programs.** Look for programs that offer a clear development pathway and are well supported by senior staff. Your program should be practical and challenging. Jessica says Vaughan's Constructions graduate pathways are a good reference point.

'Our programs are built around structured career pathways,' explains Jessica. 'We incorporate lots of real-world experience with all the necessary training to help our graduates move up the career ladder in a considered, sustainable way.'

- **Leverage your internships for full-time positions.** You may be lucky enough to receive a job offer during your internship. But if not, make sure you get back in touch with your mentor at graduation to let them know you're looking for your first role – and would appreciate any introductions or referrals they can make.



### Mid-career Professionals

Got a few years' experience in another career under your belt – and want to make a switch to industrial? Jessica says it might be easier than you think.

'You may not have all the technical skills just yet,' explains Jessica. 'But your years of transferrable skills will give you an edge when breaking into industrial.'

To make the switch, Jessica recommends:

- **Connecting with women already in industrial.** Ask what their work is really (We don't think you'll be disappointed!) You can also ask them to suggest roles that suit your existing skillset – or offer advice on what skills you need to develop to make the shift.

- **Upskilling to fill your talent gaps.** Through networking – and online research – you'll quickly understand what certifications you need to get into your dream role. Then plan to get those qualifications in a way that suits your lifestyle, like online part-time study.

- **Leveraging transferrable skills and experience.** You may not be able to get that fund management role just yet. But you can use your transferrable skills to apply for more accessible roles while you earn your qualifications. As a bonus, you'll start building your profile at your new company – and fostering relationships with the people in your dream team.

Want to know more about what it's like to work in industrial? **Connect with WIN on LinkedIn.**

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