

GROUNDBREAKING
WOMEN
IN
CONSTRUCTION



Supercharging & Recruiting Construction's Trade Base with Technology & Rosie Spirit

Demi Clark

Founder & Chief Spark Igniter
Spark Building Group



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Chief Spark Igniter

Spark Building Group -
Reimagined Rosies &
Varsity Welding



She was the youngest of seven top women leaders in the largest homebuilder in the world.

Ironman finisher, 12x marathoner & Six Star Finisher (*finishing all the World Major Marathons – London, Boston, Chicago, New York, Berlin, Tokyo*). A Guinness Book of World Records Holder. Survivor of the 2013 Boston Marathon tragedy as one of the last five timed & scored finishers (10 yards from the first detonation). A founder of She Built This City, empowering women+ & girls in trades with onboard programs. Accomplished mountain climber with Kilimanjaro, W Trek, Iceland & Salkantay under her belt in some of the world's toughest conditions.

Now, she's one of only 2% certified Women Business Enterprises (WBEs) in Construction with her company Spark Building Group - with an emphasis on welding/metal fabrication & general contracting.

She is passionate about solving deltas for women & moving the needle of equity – proving that welding is a STEM career & the GenZ will use welding science to put us on Mars with NASA & SpaceX. As a government & private sector entrepreneur, consultant to business & TedX Speaker (What Would Happen if We Gave More Girls Blowtorches?), Demi throws sparks for audiences around the world.



Rescaling & upscaling – today's workforce development- requires a strategic approach that aligns with values, communication styles & preferences. Here's how you can make construction appealing to all...



MAKE IT STEM! Real-World Applications of Construction in STEM

Aerospace: Used in the construction of airplanes and spacecraft, requiring high-precision and knowledge of materials science.

Automotive: Manufacturing of car bodies and engine components.

Construction: Building bridges, buildings, and infrastructure using.

Renewable Energy: Solar and wind turbines.





Emphasize the Opportunities and Career Pathways

Job Stability & High Earning Potential:

Highlight electrical as a high-demand skill with strong job security and competitive wages. Many electrical jobs provide the opportunity to work in various industries (construction, manufacturing, aerospace, etc.).

Skills Development:

Promote electrical as a valuable trade that provides lifelong skills. Encourage learning and growth, as it can open doors to advanced roles like engineering, project management, or robotics.



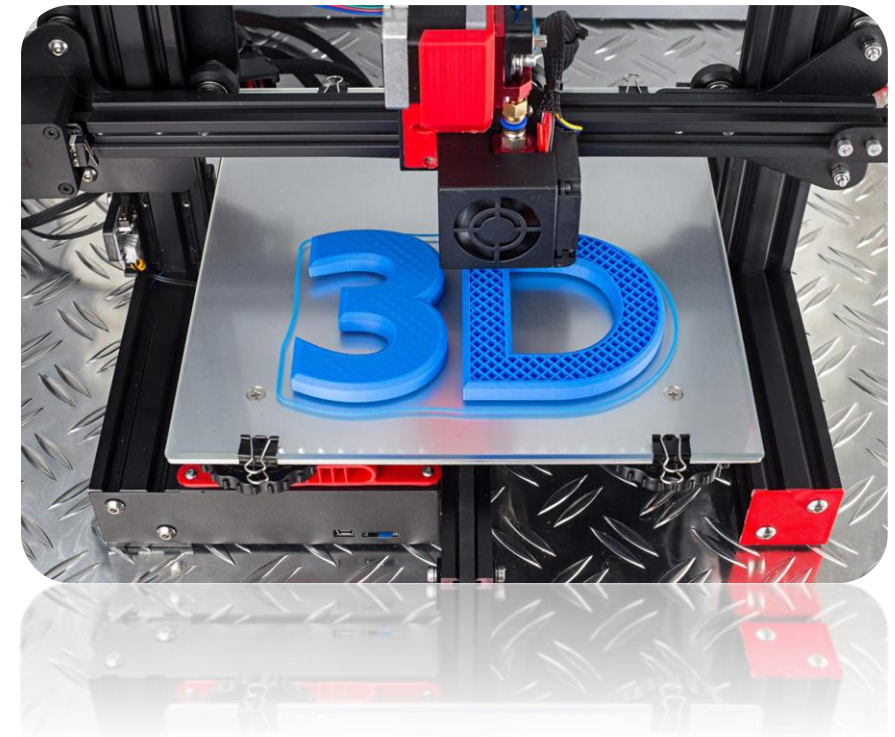


Leverage Technology and Innovation

Showcase Modern Techniques: Gen Z is highly tech-savvy, so emphasize how electrical has evolved with automation, robotics, and 3D printing. Highlight advancements such as automation, virtual simulators, data centers and high-tech equipment.

Robotics & AI: Stress how new tech is shaping the future, such as automated robotics, AI-driven quality control, and lasers. Show how tech-driven innovation is integrated into the trade.

Use Social Media & Online Platforms: Connect with Gen Z through platforms they use: TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, and Snapchat. Share videos, live demonstrations, and behind-the-scenes looks at what it's like to work in the industry.

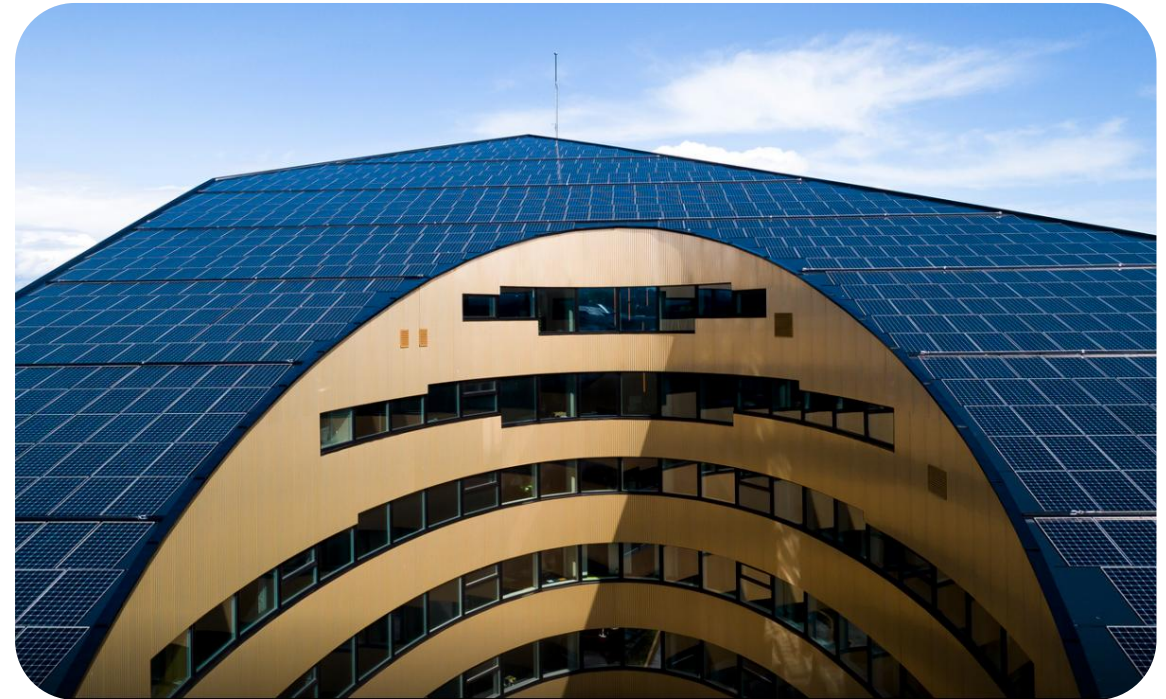




Appeal to Environmental and Social Responsibility

Sustainability: Gen Z cares deeply about sustainability. Highlight how electrical can play a role in green technologies, such as creating renewable energy structures (solar panels, wind turbines) or recycling metal in a sustainable way.

Social Impact: Show how electrical professionals contribute to infrastructure, disaster relief, and rebuilding efforts, which are tangible ways to make an impact on society.





Focus on Hands-On Learning and Creativity

Hands-On Experience: Gen Z values experiences over traditional education. Promote electrical as a trade where they can learn by doing, build tangible products, and see the immediate results of their work.

Creative Potential: Electrical isn't just about industrial applications- it can also be a give-back career (e.g., BattleBots, robotics). Highlight how electrical allows for creativity and innovation in game theory.

Promote Flexibility and Entrepreneurship

Freelance Opportunities: Highlight how electrical can lead to entrepreneurial ventures, such as opening their own business or offering freelance services.

Job Flexibility: Many Gen Z workers value flexibility in their careers. Electrical offers a variety of work environments (construction sites, factories, residential/commercial jobsites, union), which might appeal to those seeking a less traditional work setting.





Highlight Training and Apprenticeship Programs

Shorter Training Time: Electrical typically requires less time for training compared to many 4-year degree programs. Emphasize quick entry into the paid workforce with practical, hands-on training that leads to immediate employment opportunities.

Apprenticeships & Mentorship: Gen Z values mentorship and guidance. Promote apprenticeship programs that offer real-world experience, allowing them to learn from seasoned professionals and advance at their own pace.

Create a Welcoming, Diverse, and Inclusive Culture

Inclusive Workplaces: Gen Z values diversity and inclusivity in the workplace. Emphasize that electrical offers opportunities for people of all backgrounds, genders, and experiences.

Community Building: Engage in community outreach programs to create a sense of belonging. Electrical organizations can host events where women ARE or local career fairs to attract a broader demographic. **Don't forget Saturdays...& invite the parents!**





Workplace Benefits and Culture

Work-Life Balance: Show how electrical jobs can offer a balance between time on the job and personal time. For instance, some electrical jobs are project-based, allowing for longer breaks between contracts.

Competitive Benefits: Many jobs offer benefits such as health insurance, retirement plans, and even housing allowances for remote jobs. Gen Z will appreciate these perks as part of the overall value proposition.

Success Stories and Role Models

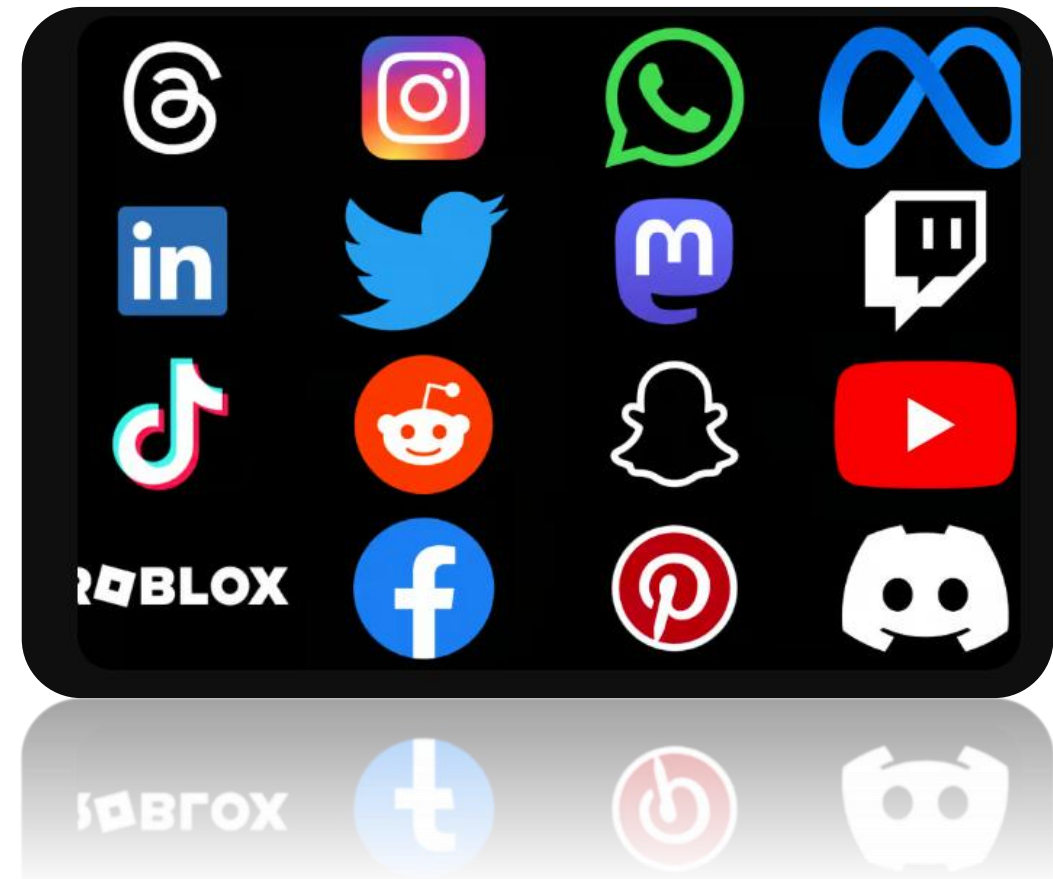
Showcase Inspiring Individuals: Highlight successful young workers, especially those from underrepresented backgrounds. Social media platforms can be a great tool for sharing these stories.

Industry Leaders: Introduce Gen Z to industry leaders and role models who have found success here and in related fields.



Action Plan:

- 1. Social Media Campaign:** Create content (posts, stories, reels) featuring young apprentices, success stories, and behind-the-scenes glimpses of the electrical process.
- 2. Collaborate with Schools & Universities:** Partner with technical schools, high schools, and universities to create outreach programs that introduce students.
- 3. Host Interactive Events:** Offer virtual or in-person demonstrations and workshops where Gen Z can try techniques in a safe and supportive environment.
- 4. Partner with Influencers:** Work with influencers who align with Gen Z's interests (tech, sustainability, entrepreneurship) to show how this ties into their world.





Blind Spots When It Comes to Talent Development

1. Over-reliance on Initial Role Fit

BLIND SPOT: Assuming that hiring someone for that specific role means they should stay in that lane long-term

IMPACT: High-potential employees stagnate or leave when their broader capabilities are overlooked

FIX: Implement career-pathing & regular check-ins/growth projects beyond current role

2. Bias Towards “Loud” Talent

BLIND SPOT: Equating visibility or charisma w/competence & potential

IMPACT: Quiet high-performers (often women & minorities) get overlooked for stretch roles or promotions

FIX: Use objective performance metrics, 360 reviews & diverse leadership input when evaluating potential



Blind Spots...CONTINUED...

3. Underinvestment in Soft Skills Development

BLIND SPOT: Prioritizing technical or hard skills while assuming soft skills “just happen.”

IMPACT: Promising employees struggle w/leadership, communication or conflict resolution

FIX: Offer training in emotional intelligence, storytelling, influence & feedback delivery

4. Confusing Engagement w/Development

BLIND SPOT: Believing that good perks or culture automatically leads to development

IMPACT: Employees feel happy – but not necessarily engaged or growing

FIX: Tie engagement programs to intentional skills growth, such as job rotations, mentorship or side projects



Talent Development Blind Spots...CONTINUED...

5. Not Developing Recruiters or People Leaders (storytime – 6G welding)

BLIND SPOT: Assuming recruiters & people leaders know how to “spot” or grow potential

IMPACT: Inconsistent talent pipelines and/or missed promotional opportunities

FIX: Invest in talent spotting training, coaching models & succession planning practices for leadership

6. One-Size Fits All Development Plans

BLIND SPOT: Offering generic training programs w/little personalization

IMPACT: High performers plateau while others disengage entirely

FIX: Build Individual Development Plans (IDPs) tailored to both business goals & aspirations



Blind Spots...CONTINUED...

7. Ignoring Lateral Growth

BLIND SPOT: Valuing only upward mobility over lateral skill-building

IMPACT: Employees leave to learn what they could have explored internally

FIX: Normalize lateral moves into new functions or teams as a sign of breadth, not loss

8. Delayed Development Until Proven

BLIND SPOT: Holding back development resources until employees “earn it”

IMPACT: Early stage high-potential talent gets poached by more proactive companies

FIX: Adopt a “develop early, grow fast” mindset – especially for entry-level to mid-level talent



STRATEGIC SHIFT...

Smart companies are moving from “talent evaluation” to “talent acceleration.”

This means not only asking, “who’s ready now...” but also asking – “what would it take to get them ready?”



The secret to Gen Z & STEM in a nutshell...building VARSITY TRADES...emphasize:

- Hands-on Nature
- Sustainability Aspects & Opportunities
- High-tech Innovations
- Career Trajectories
- Minimize Recruiting Blind Spots
- Go Where You're NOT Currently Recruiting
- Don't forget PARENTS



