**WOMEN’S DAY ARTICLE**

When going to work is a real blast

**Kate Bester, Contracts and Project Manager,** [**Jet Demolition**](http://www.jetdemolition.co.za)

**4 August 2022:** I have been with Jet Demolition for eight years. Due to the nature of what we do, which is large-scale, heavy industrial demolition works, I get to see and experience something new every day.

One of my favourite memories was the first time I was able to be in close proximity to a controlled implosion. I was expecting the typical movie scene: huge fireballs, rubble being blown out everywhere, people running and panicking – this could not be further from reality!

Yes, it was loud and overwhelming, but also controlled and elegant. Ironically, the point that truly stuck with me was the silence: When a building is ready to be imploded, the exclusion zone is cleared for safety, resulting in city streets being somewhat desolate and eerily still. The surreal quiet, contrasted to the absolute exhilaration of the final implosion, describes our work perfectly.

I graduated with a National Diploma in Civil Engineering from the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in Port Elizabeth in 2009. During my studies, I did my in-service training with Aurecon (then Ninham Shand) and stayed with the company until 2014. I started as a student technician and worked my way up to a Resident Engineer on large-scale, remote sites. I joined Jet Demolition in 2014.

I have insight into a project from inception to closing. When we receive a Request for Quotation (RFQ), my scope is visiting the site, validating or determining the scope, determining possible methods and approaches to the works, and then preparing a commercial bid and offer based on provisional resource allocations, durations, and methodologies.

If our bid is successful, I am responsible to manage the project, including all commercial and contractual phases, and offer technical support to our on-site team as required. In addition to my primary project management role, I also serve on Jet Demolition’s executive committee and look after the company’s marketing efforts.

There are a few challenges and common frustrations associated with being a contractor in the South African industry. With the construction industry as a whole being under pressure, there is an increasing focus on commercial competitiveness, as opposed to the quality or legitimacy of the service rendered. It is often frustrating to spend many days or weeks analysing and preparing a bid that meets all best practice and legal requirements, only to see the project awarded exclusively on price. Price is a critically important factor that must be considered, but not at the expense of responsible contracting.

Regarding being a woman in industry: Industry has come leaps and bounds from the time I first set boots to ground versus today. There is still the odd person that immediately assumes you are the appointed safety officer, but generally after a quick correction, we have a good laugh about it and get down to business.

I am fortunate that I get to meet many different contractors in many different industries, but very seldom do I get to meet a female site manager or site agent. Despite this apparent gap, I am not convinced it is because these opportunities do not exist. Simply put, the construction industry demands a unique set of skills, work ethic, and commitment, which is wholly under the control of the individual.

In the bigger picture, fostering an environment for a gender diversified workforce is a relatively minor consideration – it is much more of a challenge to actually find the individual who wants to pursue a certain career path and is willing to step into the proverbial boots of their colleagues, irrespective of their gender.

My advice to young women who want to pursue a similar career path: Today, you are the only person who can determine your own future. Recognise that you, your effort and commitment are the only possible way to achieve your goals. Along the journey, you will be faced with many, many challenges, some failures and some false starts. However, in the end it will all come together, and you will have found your truth.

***Ends***

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**Notes to the Editor**To download hi-res images for this release, please visit <http://media.ngage.co.za> and click the Jet Demolition link to view the company’s press office.

**About Jet Demolition**

Jet Demolition has been undertaking industrial demolition works since 1994, and is the leading, largest, and most technically advanced demolition company in Africa. It offers in-house, full-range demolition services, including advanced mechanical solutions and controlled implosions. It actively pursues ongoing development of skills and equipment suited to the changing needs of the industry.

Jet Demolition is a technically based company, with various staff members holding MSc, BSc, and BTech Degrees, as well as National Diplomas, in various engineering fields. This expertise gives it the technical foundation to successfully engineer solutions for large and complex demolition projects, and furthermore fuels its drive to deliver quality projects safely. Jet Demolition strives to offer its clients innovative and technical solutions to demanding demolition challenges.

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