

Women Helping Women:



New WiMI Chapter is Bringing Women in the Mechanical Industry Together.



MCA of Kansas City
WOMEN *in the*
MECHANICAL
INDUSTRY

The Mechanical Contractors Association of Kansas City (MCAKC) recently had an event exclusively for women working in the mechanical construction and service industries. The Event was “Ask Outrageously! The Secret to Getting What You Want”, presented by author Linda Swindling.

This is part of a new MCAKC effort, called "WiMI" - Women in the Mechanical Industry - to help women in the industry with education and networking opportunities.

According to Jacki Conn, Deputy Executive Director of MCAKC, “At my previous association, our women’s leadership committee was extremely involved and enthusiastic, leading me to believe that it would thrive here as well.”

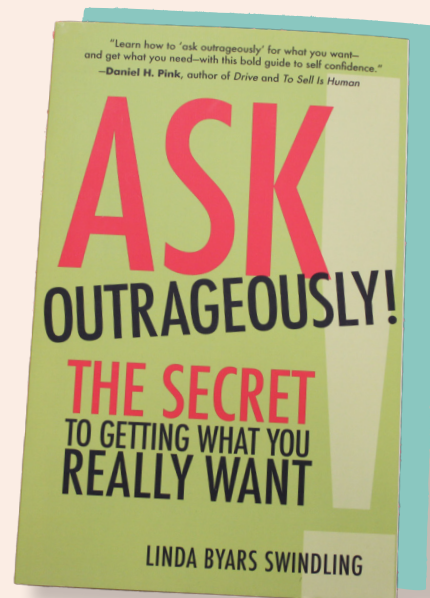
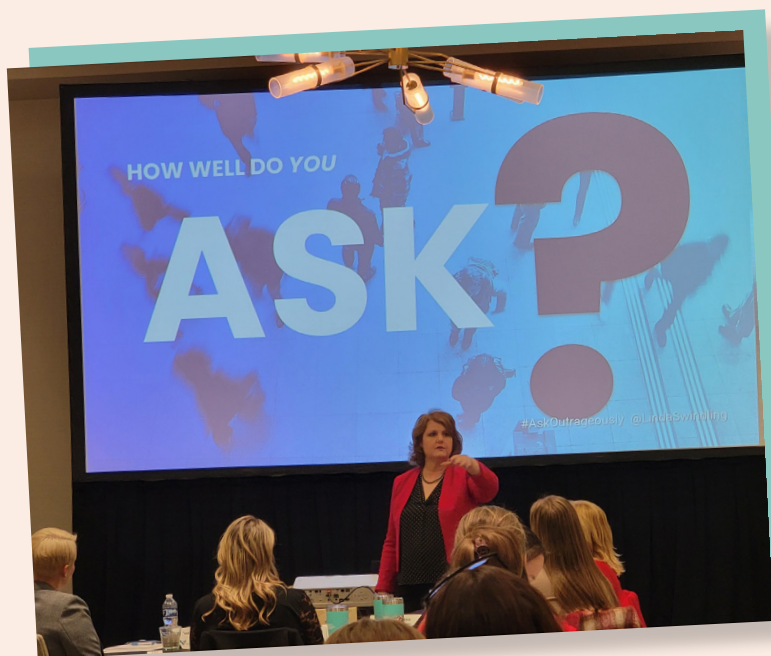
“This approach is an ideal way to encourage, guide, and involve women in the mechanical contracting industry,” she said.

And about one year ago, WiMI-KC was born.

This is not the first WiMI committee, there are currently a total of nine in the U.S.

WiMI-KC's mission statement is “To form a community that engages, empowers, inspires, and mentors women in Kansas City's Mechanical Industry by educating, supporting, collaborating, sharing best practices, and volunteering together.”

P1 Proactive Solutions Consultant Taylor Clouse is on the WiMI board.



“I was excited for something different since not a lot of women go to MCA events in general,” Taylor said.

“WiMI provides a more comfortable forum, since it’s all women”.

The wildly popular “Ask Outrageously ” event filled up so fast the event was moved to a bigger event space to accommodate the 50 attendees.

Women from P1 made up the largest slice of the attendees, with 22 representing at the event.

P1 had so many faces there, Jacki asked the room (in jest) whether P1 was even open that day.

P1 General Manager Heather Richards-St. Clair said she loved seeing all the P1 faces.

“P1’s huge presence in the room made me feel grateful to be working for an employer that encourages and supports this growth in their team members,” she said.

“Seeing all these women in the same industry, together in a room, just showed that even though this is a male-dominated industry, women play a critical role.”

At the beginning of the event, each woman stood up, introduced herself, and explained why she chose to be there.

The reasons varied, but a common theme emerged: these women wanted to learn to make their voice heard by the people they work with. ➡

🕒 The women of P1 represented strong at the second annual WiMI-KC event in March.



They wanted to be able to ask the questions with more confidence and actually get the answers they need.

"It was amazing to hear such a clear common theme, even with all the different areas these women work in, from laborers, to accounting, to marketing - and even a student from one of the local universities," Tiffany Oldham, P1 Digital Media Specialist, said

By the end of the day, attendees learned some new tactics: how to successfully ask questions; how to push back when the answer is no; and how to continue the negotiation

One takeaway P1 Project Coordinator Linda Scott had was this:

"Remember, an ask is moreover a negotiation where your focus is as much about what's in it for them as what's in it for you."

Taylor agrees.

"When negotiating, come armed with what is in it for both sides," she said.

"Just because I think I know what they want or how to talk to someone, their take may be completely different. We have a better chance of success when we understand their needs and what's in it for them, especially with internal customers."

Presenter Linda Swindling had the crowd doing multiple exercises to practice what she was preaching.

"For me, that was one of the most beneficial aspects of this event," Tiffany said "Seeing and using these tactics in real time gave me even more confidence to use them in my professional life." ➡



“ When negotiating, come armed with what is in it for both sides. ”

-Taylor Clouse, WiMI Board and P1 Proactive Solutions Consultant



“ Going forward, we plan to arrange golf clinics, seminars on leadership and work-life balance, happy hours, and community service activities. ”

-Jacki Conn, Deputy Executive Director, MCAKC

WiMI is still new to MCAKC, this being their second official event. Currently, three P1 associates are on the board, including Project Engineer Silvana Alcantara, Proactive Solutions Consultant Taylor Clouse, and Architectural Metal CAD Modeler Hayley Leonard.

WiMI-KC plans to continue providing educational and networking events.

Jacki says there is a method to what events they choose to do.

“Last year, we surveyed our members to learn their preferences for events and learning opportunities for women in the industry,” she said

“Using the feedback received, we organized a wine tasting networking event and educational programs focused on developing assertive communication skills. Going forward, we plan to arrange golf clinics,

seminars on leadership and work-life balance, happy hours, and community service activities.”

The next WiMI KC event is the webinar “Assertive Communication – Powerful Communication Skills for Women” on May 11th.

Whether you’re interested in strengthening communication skills, or checking out the many other offerings of MCAKC, you can find more information on the [MCAKC website](#).

If you are interested or have questions about WiMI-KC, feel free to email any of our three P1 board members with your questions or suggestions. ❖

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