



Photography by Ajith Narendra

ZULEMA SANCHIS

Director - Project Advisory & Disputes Accuracy

Standing in front of a city skyline, mesmerised by how buildings shape lives and societies—that was the moment Sanchis knew she wanted to be part of the construction world. “It wasn’t just about structures; it was about communities, progress, and dreams turned into reality,” she starts. She was warned it was a ‘men’s world’ and highly mobile, but that only fueled her determination. A career that began in industrial engineering and Industry 4.0 led her to business transformation, but her heart always belonged to construction. Dubai became the gateway to finally making that transition.

That same curiosity propelled her to take one of the biggest leaps of her career—moving to a city where she knew nothing of the culture and changing industries entirely. She recounts, “Transitioning to the construction industry in Dubai was a leap of faith, but it turned out to be the most transformative experience of my career.” The fast-paced, ambitious environment of the city proved

to be the perfect fit. “What truly resonates with me is the way relationships are built here. Unlike in Europe, the client relationships in Dubai are more personal, collaborative, and dynamic. I don’t see them as clients, I see them as partners.”

Leadership, for Zulema, is about more than just strategy; it’s about passion, resilience, and authenticity.

“First, you need to be passionate about what you lead. If you don’t genuinely believe in your vision and purpose, people won’t listen or follow. Passion is contagious, and it inspires teams to go the extra mile,” she imparts, with full belief that resilience is key. Sanchis also believes in leading with joy, as “Leaders who are too rigid, overly professional, or impersonal are not here to stay.” She argues that balancing ambition with humanity is key, proving to be the kind of leadership that leaves a lasting impact.

Navigating a male-dominated industry comes with its moments, but she refuses to let them define her. “It’s true that the construction sector is male-dominated, and yes, there are moments that aren’t entirely pleasant; like sitting in a meeting where you’re leading the conversation, yet eye contact is



directed elsewhere. But here’s the thing: challenges like these aren’t unique to construction; they exist in many industries.” She believes in shifting the narrative and meeting challenges with confidence, stating, “If you keep showing up, bringing value, and staying true to who you are, eventually, the barriers start to fade.”

Moreover, mentorship is a core part of how she supports the next generation. “At Accuracy, we have a mentoring programme, and I genuinely enjoy having 1-to-1 conversations with the next generation of leaders. For me, it’s not just about career guidance; it’s about showing them that we are here to stay, to support, and to guide.”

As a mother of two, she also understands the balancing act that many women face, saying, “Some

of us choose family over work, and that’s okay. It’s about embracing our priorities without guilt or apology because that authenticity is what ultimately leads to fulfilment.” She encourages women to forge their own paths and to stay true to who they are.

For women looking to enter construction, she sees far more opportunity than limitation, saying, “When it comes to challenges for women in construction, I believe they are the same challenges faced in any industry. It’s about navigating complex projects, managing teams, and driving results, none of which are exclusive to gender.” And where there are fewer women, she sees a competitive advantage.

“It’s a unique position where you can stand out, innovate, and influence the industry’s future.”

Ultimately, what excites Sanchis most is the shift in perception. She concludes, “More and more leaders are welcoming women into leadership roles, and we bring a different perspective to the table. I don’t see it as a competition, I see it as a balance. We complement each other, men and women, bringing out the best in one another. We are better together, and that’s where the real opportunity lies.”

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When I face uncomfortable situations, I don’t let them define me. I laugh them off, learn from them, and try again next time”