



Working in Construction - A New Perspective

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If you were to tell me a few years back that I'd be working in construction, I would have laughed assuming it was some strange set up for a joke. Me? Construction? If there's anything this white-collar boy knows, it's that physical labor and I don't get along. I grew up studying English and learning how to master the world of marketing and advertising. Theatre was my favorite activity and the closest I had ever come to construction was volunteering to help build a set. Even then, I did more hammer holding (and goofing off) than I did actually building.

So when I first accepted the job to work for EDiS, I thought I'd be in for a challenge. What kind of topics does the AEC (architecture, engineering, and construction) industry care about? Will the content be too technical? If you've never been involved with construction these are questions you might have thought of. And yet they aren't actually pertinent. The technical aspect was the only aspect I was focused on because I didn't have any other perspective to view it from. When a building gets built, us outsiders block it out until the yellow tape magically turns into a building a year or two later. If it weren't for the incredible staff at EDiS, it'd have taken me a lot longer to figure out where I fit into the bigger picture. And then I had my first site tour.

I showed up woefully out of my element to the Dec. 4 Fairview Campus Tour. My (very snazzy) neon jacket barely fit over my peacoat. The classic construction helmet you see in movies would not be tamed, and it took a very patient DiSabatino brother to make it right. The weather was dark and rainy and my camera equipment would need to be looked after carefully. But it was all worth it. Because I finally got that other perspective I mentioned earlier. An actual, up close look at the inner workings of a construction project. And not just any construction project - one of the biggest K-12 education projects that the State of Delaware has ever seen.

I snapped plenty of pictures of the tour as we went while listening to the site guide. He explained the nuances of each hallway, the way they set up the site in the first place, where their trouble spots were, how they specifically built each part of the new middle school and high school and the surrounding sports fields. Yet the most interesting part was their description on the impact it would have for the kids who would be attending. It was fascinating to see the guide's eyes light up when he talked of the open floor planning in the cafeteria and how it was designed to give them plenty of room to socialize and relax while bringing in natural sunlight from the glass above. He spoke on the relief parents would have when they learned of the meticulous security measures installed within all parts of the campus. The expansive theatre and stage area (my own stomping grounds) were shown a reverence that I can certainly appreciate. Other EDiS office employees came along on the tour to see exactly how their hard work had translated into physical form. Representatives from the Appoquinimink School District got to see first-hand how each part of the campus would help students navigate the next eight years of their life.

Seeing all this, it was clear to me how I fit into the bigger picture; I was to tell the story behind each building. As cheesy as it sounds, it's my job to find the heartbeat within the mortar. The



Fairview Campus Tour felt more like a life lesson than one centered on just construction. Immediately I thought of EDiS's motto, **Building What Matters**. Now I understood what it all meant. It's not just all site schematics and construction equipment, it's the human element that ties it all together. It's about seeing the bigger picture in its entirety. I was glad I got to see the culmination of that so soon into my tenure at EDiS. Without it, I wouldn't be able to fully capture the spirit of the AEC industry, or how it relates to the communities they support, and that, I am definitely grateful for.

