

Interview with Ashleigh Bradley, Crane Operator for 4 years – Working at Vancouver Pile Driving

Jul 14, 2014



CranesY: What do you love about your work with cranes?

Ashleigh: I love the focus it takes to do a lift controlled, smooth, safe and efficient. I want what's under my hook to look good and at the end of a lift be proud of what I just did. I also enjoy seeing a finished product if it's something we have been building. It's nice to know you were apart of something that is going to exist for so many years to come.

CranesY: Would you recommend other women to undertake this career?

Ashleigh: It would be great to see more women get into cranes. With that being said though a job in cranes definitely isn't for everyone. It can be a very intimidating trade for some people. If you think you want to be a crane operator start by working around cranes and see what you think. Ask other operators lots of questions and gain a good understanding of the risks and liabilities; if it seems like something you can handle then you're already off to a good start. For the Canadian women looking to get into cranes I'd highly recommend going to Alberta to start your apprenticeship. Alberta has some of the highest standards and the most top notch education you can get in the Mobile Crane trade. I am so grateful for the education and training I received while living there.

CranesY: It's usually to say that construction sector is male dominated industry... do women have to work harder to gain credibility in this sector?

Ashleigh: It's hard for me to say if women need to work harder because I don't know what it's like to be a man in the construction industry. I was 23 years old when I first got into cranes and started my apprenticeship, and I think the construction industry is hard for any young apprentice. From my personal experiences I felt that being a young woman in cranes worked both for me and against me. I had my fair share of opportunities that were occasionally countered by chauvinistic sexism. I encountered many people who wanted to see me succeed and a few people who wanted to see me fail; some of which took it further than others. But I pushed through my 3 year apprenticeship and when I obtained that Red Seal Journeyman ticket I gained a sense of confidence and empowerment that no one can take from me. Now at the end of the day once people see what I am capable of there is nothing left to prove.

CranesY: The best way to achieve a work-life balance?

Ashleigh: People in the crane/construction industry tend to work longer hours than most. The work/life routine sometimes doesn't leave much for spare time. It's important to remember to take some time for yourself, even in that means doing absolutely nothing! Plan date nights with your husband/boyfriend and make a point of going out for some much needed girls nights.. even if you have to schedule it 3 weeks in advance because you're working out of town in the middle of no where.

CranesY: Aside a work, how do you spend your spare time?

Ashleigh: I have 2 dogs that are everything to me and together we live in the most beautiful city in the world, so that's all I need.

CranesY: Best lesson you've learned along your career?

Ashleigh: Patience. I have to remind myself that just because I know the proper way it doesn't mean the other people involved in my operations will know. So I take the time to teach and explain.

CranesY: Your "recepte" to stay positive?

Ashleigh: I live a holistic lifestyle and maintain balance through my life and home by only allowing in positive vibes. By being a positive person I attract positive people and things, and the cycle just continues on like that. I accomplish this by always being aware of my thoughts and the energies around me. Staying active with my dogs is always good medicine for the soul and is a huge stress reducer. I am also a firm believer in karma and treat people the way I wish to be treated.

Through this interview I would like to take the opportunity to thank my ex-husband Sam Bradley who supported me throughout my whole apprenticeship. Whenever I thought about giving up he encouraged me to continue. He always promised that I would be so proud of myself once I got my ticket, and he was right.