

**Roles of Women in Manufacturing Series**

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## Engineers in Manufacturing: Madison Park and JoAnn Vlach

Two women share their journeys to engineering, and give advice to anyone seeking a career in manufacturing.



Engineering = math + problem-solving. Madison Park and JoAnn Vlach factor into that equation. Madison Park is a manufacturing and quality engineer in the CNC production department of Sorenson Engineering in Yucaipa, California. At Efficient Machine Products Corporation in Strongsville, Ohio, JoAnn Vlach turned 16 years of engineering into a vice president position. Both women share their journey to manufacturing.

### Madison Park's Journey

After earning her college degree, Madison joined Sorenson Engineering and, shortly after joining, she began working on the pilot program for the nickel alloys. The pilot program became a new high nickel alloys and stainless steel department, which is where she still works. She likes working with high nickel alloys since not many people work with them. She also enjoys that there is always something to learn. Madison states, "It provides a lot of opportunity for problem-solving, and I've never been bored."

### JoAnn Vlach's Journey


JoAnn misread a job ad over 16 years ago and found herself at Kerr Lakeside switching from civil engineering to mechanical engineering. Although it was challenging, she was mentored and allowed to use the machines in the shop while she grew her skills. Now, as the vice president of Efficient Machine Products, one of her responsibilities is customer support and development and her engineering background helps her determine if a part can be made with the available machines and if they are a good fit. JoAnn states, "I enjoy making a difference throughout our industry, my company and our customers. I also enjoy engaging with PMPA members and friends."



JoAnn Vlach, vice president of Efficient Machine Products Corporation.

### Advice to Women (or Anyone) Seeking a Career in Manufacturing

Madison thinks anyone can be successful in manufacturing if they're willing to learn. Madison says, "Ask questions and don't sit on the sidelines; the best way to learn is to do it yourself and make mistakes along the way. It can be intimidating because it tends to be a male-dominated field, but women may have a unique perspective that the industry is missing."

JoAnn's advice is to take the leap. "It's very rewarding," she continues. "I can remember being the only female at the 2008 National Technical Conference. It was overwhelming, intimidating and rewarding all in one. It's an experience I wouldn't trade. You just have to jump in feet first and know you got this!" 

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