**Title:** Why Women Leaders Excelled During COVID-19

**Subtitle:** Successful Women in Roofing Discuss Leadership Skills

There are many talented and successful women in the roofing industry. While women make up only [0.5%](https://www.nationalwomeninroofing.org/women-in-the-roofing-industry-statistics-support-achievement-iko/) of roofing professionals, they have a growing influence. A study from the [Harvard Business Review](https://hbr.org/2020/12/research-women-are-better-leaders-during-a-crisis?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+harvardbusiness+%28HBR.org%29) helps explain why women rank ahead of men when evaluating 13 core leadership skills — and the difference grows even more during a crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic.

We asked three accomplished women in the roofing industry to share how these leadership skills have made a difference while navigating the pandemic.

* Jackie Locklear is the owner of [Locklear Roofing](https://www.locklearroofing.com/) in Holly Springs, North Carolina, where she oversees a team of 21 employees and 85 subcontractors.
* Rachael Thompson has been a branch manager at [ABC Supply](https://www.abcsupply.com/) in [Panama City, Florida](https://www.abcsupply.com/locations/location?BranchNumber=349), for four years and leads a team of 21 associates.
* Amber Lea Johnson manages a team of 15 associates at ABC Supply’s [Bryan, Texas](https://www.abcsupply.com/locations/location?BranchNumber=300), location.

Here is how these leadership competencies have helped them — and can help you — be successful in the roofing industry.

* **Inspires and Motivates Others**: Jackie, Rachael and Amber Lea have been inspired by other women leaders in the roofing industry and in their local business communities, so they understand the difference having a mentor can make. For Jackie, motivating others was particularly important during the pandemic. “As the business owner, I had to be the person who kept everything running and made sure everybody felt safe. I had to be reassuring and express confidence that we’ll get through this.”
* **Collaboration and Teamwork**: The women understand the importance of including others in their decision-making, especially during a pandemic. “We came together as a team, and everyone gave their opinions on how to handle working during the pandemic,” explained Jackie. “Everyone listened; we voted, collaborated and followed through on our commitments.”
* **Takes Initiative**: All of the women have taken proactive steps to ensure their teams were set up for safety and success. “I started an accountability group with other managers so we could talk about how things are going and issues we’re having,” said Rachael.

Being mothers has also provided experience in thinking ahead. “As a mother, I think I understand crisis and handle it differently,” added Rachael. “I’m used to things being a fire drill, so I have a lot of practice being levelheaded.”

* **Makes Decisions**: The pandemic challenged Jackie, Rachael and Amber Lea to make decisions with a renewed sense of empathy. “Every decision came back to what’s right for the team,” said Jackie, who put herself in her employees’ shoes by thinking about how it would affect their families. “I asked myself if I would put my granddaughter in that situation. If so, I was confident it was the right decision.”

Amber Lea agreed that empathy is a crucial part of making decisions for her customers and associates. “We need to have patience and respect for our customers, and it’s my responsibility to make sure my team is safe while at work.”

* **Champions Change**: While change is scary for many people, these women embraced possibility when facing the unknown. “When we had to change procedures, we needed to be flexible,” explained Amber Lea. “It was a lot of work, but once we made our adjustments, we hit the ground running. That was exciting to me.”
* **Drives for Results**: While the pandemic made planning for milestones or anticipating results challenging, the women still drove their teams to achieve. “We set different goals each month,” said Rachael. “They weren’t just bottom-line-driven goals but people-oriented goals too. The winner earned a free lunch, so we could have some fun while still working toward our goals.”
* **Builds Relationships**: While a more virtual world made relationship-building difficult for many people, Jackie, Rachael and Amber Lea found that this was one of the easiest leadership skills for them to lean into during the pandemic. They spent a lot of time connecting with their customers and teams. “I became a counselor,” said Amber Lea. “I know a lot of my customers on a personal level. We discussed fears and opportunities — the pandemic was scary. I always tried to listen and remain calm.”
* **Communicates Powerfully and Prolifically**: The women say being confident and unflappable in your communication is an especially important skill for women in a primarily male field. “You’re in your role for a reason,” said Jackie. “I’ve studied a lot, so I’m knowledgeable and able to make decisions and communicate confidently.” Amber Lea also added, “You can’t allow doubt to dull your shine.”
* **Learning Agility**: If the pandemic taught us anything, it’s that continuous learning and adapting are essential to success. “Yesterday’s roofing industry isn’t the same as today’s, and how we operate today is likely not how we’ll operate in the future. Don’t become an expert and then stop learning,” advised Amber Lea.

Becoming more agile has served Rachael well as she has navigated a career in this industry. “If I don’t know the answer to a question, I figure it out,” she said. “It’s tough being in a primarily male field. I’ve been questioned a lot, but by learning the answers, I’ve earned the trust of my male peers and proved my worth.”

Women have been leading the roofing industry successfully before the pandemic started, and they will continue to make an impact well into the future. For more advice on how to be successful in the roofing industry, visit [ABC Supply’s blog](https://www.abcsupply.com/blog/).