

Sandi Rhys Jones, OBE

Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Building

Member of the Chartered Institute of Marketing

Member of the Institute of Public Relations

Associate: Chartered Institute of Arbitrators

Accredited Mediator

MSc Construction Law & Arbitration, Kings College London

Honorary doctorate, Sheffield Hallam University

Career details

A passionate advocate for the construction and engineering industry, and in particular the role of women, Sandi Rhys Jones has more than thirty years experience in strategic marketing and management, communications and training for technical, professional and business to business organisations. Since co-founding RhysJones Consultants in 1976, she has worked for a wide range of clients, including consultants, contractors, suppliers, representative organisations, local and national government. Sandi is a non-executive director of **Simons Group**, a construction, design and property company employing 800 people with a turnover of £250 million. She has a particular remit to increase and support women in the company, establishing a number of programmes including an innovative mentoring scheme with clients.

Sandi is Corporate Affairs Advisor to the **UK Resource Centre for Women in Science, Engineering, Construction and Technology**, set up in 2004 with significant funding by the DTI. She is a member of the **Strategic Forum for Construction**, with particular responsibility for diversity, and is a founder member of the Raising the Ratio group of the **Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors**, looking to recruit and retain more women in the profession.

She was a non-executive director of **Docklands Light Railway Ltd** from February 1998 to October 2000, when it became part of Transport for London. Between 1997 and 2002 she was a trustee and chair of the voluntary sector organisation **Women's Education in Building**, which trained disadvantaged women in building trades.

Sandi's particular interest in the role of women in construction developed during study for the MSc course in Construction Law & Arbitration at King's College London. In her thesis, completed in 1992, she addressed the relationship between the industry's very low representation of women and its reputation for high cost, poor quality, slow delivery, adversarial nature and high levels of death and injury.

She was invited to chair the government/industry working group on equal opportunities in construction, set up following the far-reaching review of the industry's performance by Sir Michael Latham in 1994, which highlighted the lack of women in construction. The working group's report *Tomorrow's team: women and men in construction* was well received and a number of its recommendations implemented.

She has continued to campaign for greater gender diversity and performance improvement, taking an active role in initiatives such as the **Housing Forum**, the **Movement for Innovation and Constructing Excellence**. She is increasingly in demand as a coach and mentor, particularly for women in non-traditional occupations, and also as a chair and facilitator at conferences, workshops and training seminars.

In 1998, Sandi was awarded the OBE for promoting women in construction. In 2005 she was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by Sheffield Hallam University.

Typical projects

Typical projects carried out by Sandi include:

- Devised and piloted *Managing Diversity*, a practical training programme on equal opportunities and diversity for the Construction Best Practice Programme.
- Conceived, manages and funds *Change the face of construction*, a web-based pan-industry information hub and network for women and other under represented groups.
- Devised and participated in *Building Work for Women*, developed to beat the Catch 22 facing many tradeswomen – getting from training into work. Worked closely with contractors to get more than 100 women improvers into work.
- Vice Chair of the *Respect for people* group of The Housing Forum, which produced practical guidelines and a poster on recruitment, retention and respect for people.
- Worked closely with Professor Marilyn Davidson and Dr Andrew Gale of UMIST since 1996, including devising and implementing *Building Equality in Construction* projects in the North West, North East and London and the South East. Used Action Learning methodology to bring together contractors and housing associations to explore and implement practical ways improving gender equality. Produced practical guidelines and also developed successful projects such as training in maintenance and DIY for women tenants. www.change-construction.org and click on *Building Equality in Construction*.
- Delivered the materials for the diversity and health and safety modules of the Construction Best Practice Programme.
- Devised and delivered a roadshow programme *Creating something real* to five universities in the South East, using young female and male role models to inform and enthuse students about housebuilding. Supported by the House Builders Federation, The Housing Forum and the CITB.

Speaking

Sandi Rhys Jones is known for thought provoking and informative presentations and is also in demand as a chairperson for debates. She speaks regularly on equal opportunities, career development, ethics and law, marketing and project management. Presentations include:

- Keynote speaker at *Paths to Success*, for Lloyds TSB plc annual women's conference
- Chair of *More Sex, Lies and Videotape*, conference for Public Awareness of Science and Engineering on roles for women in science and engineering in tv drama
- Chair, *How the Construction Industry Works*, training seminar organised by the International Building Press
- Presentation on gender diversity to the British Association of Construction Heads
- Keynote speech at the International Conference of the Institute of Building Control, Belfast
- Keynote speech, conference on non-traditional careers for 6th form girls, Warrington
- Paper on diversity at Construction Law Annual Conference, King's College London
- Paper on Health and Safety to the Institution of Civil Engineers, Manchester.
- Opening address on women in construction, Opportunity Now conference, Liverpool
- Presentation on Public Private Partnerships, Chartered Institute of Marketing, London
- Charing workshop on recruitment and workplace issues, Housing Forum, London
- Keynote speaker on non-traditional careers to undergraduates at Oxford and Cambridge Universities for the Women in Business initiative, organised by leading businesses
- Occasional lecturer at the postgraduate school Interdisciplinary Design in the Built Environment at Cambridge University

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