

Influential Women Celebrates Katie McDaniel: Visionary Engineer and Founding Principal of Cadence Consulting

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Empowering Communities Through
Sustainable Design, Leadership, and
Inclusion in Engineering

Influential Women proudly recognizes Katie McDaniel in its 2025 series, celebrating her as the Founding Principal of Cadence Consulting, a certified woman-owned small business based in Herndon, Virginia. With nearly 15 years of experience as a civil engineer, Katie has built her career on the pillars of sustainability, innovation, and community impact—values that continue to shape her approach to leadership and design.



A graduate of Virginia Tech with a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering, Katie is also a licensed Professional Engineer who has led projects across a range of market sectors, with a strong focus on public infrastructure that strengthens and serves communities. Before founding Cadence Consulting, she advanced through key roles at Christopher Consultants and IMEG, gaining invaluable expertise in project management, team leadership, and client engagement.

At the heart of Cadence Consulting is Katie's belief that thoughtful design creates lasting impact. Her firm collaborates with clients and partners to build infrastructure that not only meets today's demands but also sustains future generations. "Seeing designs come to life during construction remains one of the most rewarding aspects of my career," Katie shares.

Beyond her professional accomplishments, Katie brings the same discipline and dedication to her life outside the office. A dedicated equestrian, she recently earned her United States Dressage Federation Bronze Medal—a testament to her persistence and precision. Her love of

horses extends to her volunteer work with therapeutic riding programs, helping individuals with special needs experience the healing bond between rider and horse.

Equally passionate about empowering women, Katie volunteers with organizations that help women prepare for professional interviews and workforce advancement. She is an active member of CREW Northern Virginia and the Society of American Military Engineers, where she advocates for women in engineering and mentors those just beginning their careers.

Katie attributes her success to resilience, vision, and collaboration, along with a steadfast work ethic and a willingness to learn. She is quick to credit the mentors, colleagues, and peers who have influenced her journey, saying that “success is never achieved alone.” The relationships and experiences that have shaped her career remain at the core of how she leads today.

The best advice she has ever received? “Not to take myself too seriously.” Katie explains, “As women, it can feel like we have to work twice as hard to earn half as much, but what truly carries you through this business are strong relationships and genuine human connections—something that’s easy to overlook in such a technical field.”

To young women entering the engineering world, her message is one of confidence and courage: “Don’t be afraid to take up space—your perspective and contributions are needed, especially as you grow into leadership.”

Like many in her field, Katie faces challenges that include a highly competitive market, rising client expectations, and the ongoing need to attract and retain top talent while keeping pace with technological innovation. Yet, she views these obstacles as opportunities—chances to reframe client needs, invest in people, and create space for new ideas that anticipate where the industry is headed next.

The name Cadence carries deep personal meaning for Katie. “In the equestrian world, Cadence is the accentuation of the rhythm as a result of harmony and balance. At Cadence, we strive to establish a rhythm and harmony in our client relationships which allows us to accentuate your results,” says Katie.

Her leadership philosophy is grounded in initiative, accountability, respect, and determination—values she celebrates both in her team and in her clients. In her personal life, commitment, security, and family provide balance and meaning, keeping her grounded as a wife, mother, and entrepreneur. Katie lives in Fairfax County with her husband and their two beautiful daughters, where she continues to balance her passion for engineering, her love of horses, and her dedication to community service.

As the leader of a woman-owned firm, Katie is a proud advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion in engineering. She strives to inspire the next generation of innovators by fostering an environment that values every voice and perspective. Under her direction, Cadence Consulting

integrates environmentally conscious strategies into every project, working toward a greener, more sustainable future.

“We not only share your vision,” Katie emphasizes, “but become an integral part of bringing it to life to better our communities, one project at a time.”

With a career built on rhythm, harmony, and purpose, Katie McDaniel continues to exemplify what it means to lead with both heart and expertise. Her story is one of balance—between design and humanity, innovation and tradition, leadership and mentorship. And through Cadence Consulting, she is proving that when engineering meets empathy, communities everywhere thrive in lasting harmony.

Learn More about Katie McDaniel:

Through her Influential Women profile, <https://influentialwomen.com/connect/katie-mcdaniel> or through her website, <https://build-cadence.com/>

Influential Women

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