



BREAKING GROUND

by **CASSIDY MANTOR**

WOMEN BUSINESS LEADERS IN THE FLATHEAD VALLEY

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg famously said, "Women belong in all places where decisions are being made." *Western Home Journal* prides itself in developing and enhancing the relationships that make up the luxury mountain home architecture, construction, and design community. In keeping with our own mission of helping people bring their dreams home, we wanted to celebrate female leadership and amplify women's voices in what is traditionally viewed as a male-dominated industry. While altering communication styles and navigating impostor syndrome might come to mind as issues that professional women frequently navigate, the leaders we've selected show us that there is no set formula for being successful and inspiring.

From architectural hardware to custom home building, interior design to real estate, their work speaks for itself.

In the spirit of truly honoring these women, we also wanted to explore the different identities they take on personally and professionally, and how they find personal satisfaction while balancing work with a multitude of other roles and responsibilities including being mothers, partners, and coaches. We are honored to have the opportunity to spotlight their accomplishments and share a little more about what makes them so special. Above all, their stories remind us that groundbreaking work in our industry is not reserved just for men.



ANNA DURKIN

MONTANA
BUILD



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—Anna Durkin,
Director of Marketing & Sales,
Montana Build

Anna Durkin is the Director of Marketing & Sales of Whitefish-based Montana Build. She studied hospitality and tourism in college and found her skills directly transferred to custom home building. Montana Build emphasizes client relationships and clear and consistent communication that Anna leads. When she is not working, she can be found spending quality time with her two young children and husband, and also running long distances including 50k and 50-milers. She is planning to run the local Foy's to Blacktail Trail Marathon this fall, and she loves trails because they connect people. This will be Anna's first marathon since having her two children. She's looking forward to getting dirty and feeling the deep breathing and lightness that comes from being on the trail.

whj : WHO ARE YOUR ROLE MODELS?

Overall, my mom is my ultimate role model. She exemplified the idea that you can make anything happen with an upbeat attitude and hard work. She had three kids and was a single working parent. She got it done at home and had a great career at the same time. My other role models have evolved too, based on where I am in life. Now, I value the importance of hearing stories about working moms. I listen to many inspiring podcasts and find their insights helpful and empowering.

whj : HOW DO YOU FIND THE WORK/LIFE BALANCE?

My son is two-and-a-half and my daughter is four months old. My husband is a true partner in parenting. My work schedule is 8am to 5pm and his work schedule is a little more flexible, so he really

helps fill in the gaps! As far as finding a balance, I try to be really efficient at work and keep my work hours clear cut from my time at home. Not that I don't continue to think about work, but I generally leave at 5pm and I don't work weekends. As the company becomes more of my life and my kids get older, I'm sure it will blend, but for now I just make sure I'm as efficient as possible at work.

whj : WHAT ARE YOUR TRICKS FOR BEING EFFICIENT?

Staying grounded. Meditation has become key. If someone told me to meditate several years ago, I would've laughed at that suggestion. I'm new to meditation, but it continues to teach me to live in a state of mindfulness, provides mental clarity, and has enabled me to become more productive in all areas of my life. Meditation gives me a sense of ease as a new parent and helps me realize letting go and doing your best is ok. There are applications to work too. So much of custom home building is dealing with works in progress and staying grounded helps me manage the ever-evolving process.

whj : IS THERE A MOMENT YOU'RE MOST PROUD OF IN YOUR CAREER?

Taking a big leap of faith and moving into this role at Montana Build. I love it so much. There's nothing else like a home in someone's life and building someone's home is really special. Because I studied hospitality, I have a sense of people's desires, motives, and goals. With homebuilding, we don't have to convince people

how important their home is to their everyday life, but we are fortunate to accomplish the goal of taking care of their needs – that is hospitality.

whj : HOW DO YOU DEFINE MONTANA BUILD'S WORK CULTURE?

Along with my marketing and sales role I also oversee human resources at Montana Build, and as an organization we try to empower our team to take charge on whatever they're working on. Paul encourages us to bring ideas to the table and trust that our success will help guide the company's growth. An example is with my maternity leave; I thought through how I could take care of myself and family in addition to what would be beneficial for the company. Paul was generous and granted me what I asked for. It allowed me to come back and be fully present at work.

whj : WHAT DOES BEING A BUSINESS LEADER MEAN TO YOU IN THE MALE-DOMINATED INDUSTRY OF BUILDING?

It's often said that women have to work twice as hard to get the same appreciation that men get. What's so lovely about living here in the Flathead Valley is everyone is welcoming and down-to-earth – it is very easy to connect with people in this tightly-knit community. Here at Montana Build, we are valued for the work we produce. It is refreshing to work for a company that allows women to excel along with our male counterparts. At this time, we have some very special women on our team. I'd go as far as to say that because we are women, we're able to be highly successful. It is important to celebrate the unique qualities women bring to the table! ■

