

Thriving in Construction | 03 – Creating a Culture of Improvement in the Construction Industry with Regla Jimenez

INTRO

Today our guest is Regla Jimenez, the Owner and Founder of Kitchen Pro, a design remodeling company based here in Miami, Florida. Ms. Jimenez' career began as a Marketing Director of Pernod Ricard, a famous French company over 20 years ago and expanded across various trades and countries.

Her path in the construction industry began in Shanghai, China leading up to a successful career in the Miami high-rise construction management sector. She specialized in finishes such as wood, tiles, and stones; lastly culminating in the foundation of her self-owned business, KITCHENPRO. The company now represents two highly prestigious kitchen manufacturers from both Germany and Spain, among others.

Today I bring you Regla Jimenez, a businesswoman. She has built a successful career through what most would consider a man's world by bringing ease and comfort to her clients' construction experience.

Patricia Bonilla: Welcome, Regla Jimenez. Good Morning. Welcome to Thriving in Construction Podcast. This is our very first episode. So I want to thank you for being here.

Regla Jimenez: All the appreciation is mine being here to you.

Patricia: The honor is mine. After listening to your story, and what you've done, and what you have been able to accomplish, I'm so excited about how can we share this with other women around the world? So let's do that. You're awkward?

Regla Jimenez: Here we go.

Patricia: So tell me how did you get into construction? Tell me about you and your company, Kitchen Pro. You hear the name, and you think you're doing kitchens? So, tell us about you?

Regla: Well, let's say Kitchen Pro started because at the very beginning, we were thinking about the focus basically in the kitchen. Because you know, the kitchen is the heart of the house, the kitchen is the place where you go everyday where you meet with your, you know, with your kids, when they do their homework. It's something important.

So that's why we say okay, it's going to be Kitchen Pro which is more than a kitchen. Because the kitchen is more than that.

But then, because my background is construction, then we start with the kitchen. But then my client says, "Hey, could you do this, could you do that", because they know me to doing all that. So at the end, we did more. So the slogan "More Than a Kitchen" became not only for the name of the company, but also for the core of the company, then we who more than a kitchen.

Patricia: So, that's awesome. You're right about the kitchen being the place in the house that everyone uses the most. So that's smart. It's more than the kitchen is homey, right?

Regla: Yes.

Patricia: When you say my background is in construction, what do you mean by that?

Regla: Well, I mean, that I, as we were coming to before I was living in Shanghai for five years in China. So there I was working at the beginning in fashion industry, but then I have the opportunity here to see and to learn a lot about, you know, all the Italian fashion culture and all these fashion things all around the world. So I was always interested in design. So I started studying at the time, so design and interior design. And I made a friend, Chinese friend that is an engineer on mining. So I was really delighted about everything about stones.

So we started like a little company to explore and to sell stones, ports or tabs or all kinds of stones, the things you could do with it. So that's how I started and then later on, I came to live in the US. So one of the clients that I have here because I was used to come up very often, decided to get into another level in his business. So he was very knowledge in construction. But he wanted to get into the high-rise.

So he knew my knowledge, you know, so and so. So then and management. So he said, Hey, can you come with me to do this? And then that's how it started. And we have been in we built more than 12 high-rise here in Miami.

Patricia: Wow. And some people don't know that you're Cuban. So you actually went to China. Some people don't know the journey that you have to undertake in order to do or follow your dream.

Regla: Yeah, you know For Cubans, it's really, really hard to make your dreams come true. So, for a lot of people, the only way to do that is to let the company. So you go whenever you could. So not everyone had the money, you know, to pay to go to a dream place, so you need to go where they live, give you the opportunity, and the live opportunity to go to China because I have an Italian friend that have a company here. So he said, When you're ready, I would like you to manage my company here. And for me, it was an opportunity, you know, to be out.

Patricia: Wow, that must have been... did you have to learn a language?

Regla: Well, in my Chinese, it's very low class. Let's say I know a lot. No, not a lot. I know enough to eat, to travel, you know, to talk. But not that much. All the reasons were done in English. But I know.

Patricia: I can imagine. So tell me how you come here to the US after this journey in China that probably prepared you to do what you're doing now. Because life always has a way. The hardship, the challenges, they prepare you to the next level. And you overcame a lot of them, I can imagine. So tell me, you get you come here. And you incorporate you started your company. What why is it that gut inside of you that said, I want to have my company?

Regla: Well, you know, I'm a person, then I have a purpose, you know, I said, Okay, I want to do these. What do I need to do to go there? So that was important. So when I get here to say, Okay, this is what I know how to do. What can I make myself here? Because it's like to reward. So okay, maybe I kind of work in fashion here. Or I can work in design. What can I do? So I knew that I have this knowledge.

And then I started with that. I also did a lot of trade, that gave me also the opportunity to know how to work with the suppliers, how to manage the stocks, you know, that kind of thing. So, as you say, step by step, you know, life is preparing you to what is going to be the future. Also, I have the family, you know, that I have to support so I needed to work I needed to make my day to support my people.

Patricia: So you're saying that you started your company very clear as to what your purpose was? Right? What was your outcome? So your purpose was... was it to raise your family? Which was your daughter, right? What was the? Did you? Yeah, I'm sure you have declared, this is what I want to do, can you give us more clarity things express what it was the outcome?

Regla: Well, when I create Kitchen Pro, which is was not my first company, but when I create Kitchen Pro, you know, I wanted to, to do beauty, because that's really made me happy. And I think made people happy. So the opportunity to transform something for people, it's part of transform their life.

So I knew that something that looked sometimes ugly or in bad condition could be amazing at the end. It's you know, it needs some TLC, you know, so that that was the reason and also doing that it not only made me happy, but all my team, you know, it was people that work really hard, and they know how to create these. And also I think this will inspire you know, my daughter that you know, you need to find her if you want to accomplish things in life.

Patricia: Work hard then. Have to grind.

Regla: Yes.

Patricia: That's awesome. It was such a beautiful outcome. You know, you wanted to do this for your daughter, for you. Create a wealth and also make people happy through your product. Every time you see a client, right with the outcome of them being happy, they are being transformed. You're going to be successful. And that's a beautiful formula for success.

Regla: Thank you. You know, it's like when you do construction, especially if you do a residential, you get to know your clients so good because you get deep into their house you get inside their walls. You know everything That's creative one that really drive you through. It's really super good when you can see, you know, we have these products, how we could overcome these, we need to do that.

And it's really nice. And at the end, you have a bunch of friends that will help you also to keep going, because they are the one who will recommend you to some more people. So that's how it works.

Patricia: I hear that you engage with a client, with the idea not on purpose, but you care about them so much, that they become friends, they relationship, it gets so strong, it's empowering. And they also are able to recommend you further and further as you go.

Regla: You know, for me, the human relations are the base of all the relations. So it doesn't matter if you want to build your house, or if I want to sell you a coffee, you know, when you interact as a human being with other people. And it works if you connect, that's what makes the difference. Otherwise, you are another salesman.

And that is something we try to do, you know, do offer a service to work together. We're a team, we're all in this one, you know? This is my house; this is the things I would like to do for me. So that's why I do it for you. If it's a house, or if it's the airport, or whatever kind of work it is. So you put your idea.

Patricia: And so you put your heart, you just said, and you approach a project with love. And this is where the beauty of feminine energy brings into construction, in my opinion. Sometimes, you know, it is a male-dominated industry. Right? You it's 10% of women that are in the construction industry. I agree totally with you, when I have personal work, it's been the same concept. I've never seen a client with a dollar sign in their eyes, I always want to go to the heart. And I prioritize the relationship just so you said it's so beautiful.

And so what can we do for women, young women to come into this industry because I say this industry could be so much better if more women were in it. Right now it's very transactional. It's harsh. You know, people go for the throat. It's the highest rate of suicide in the construction industry and mining. And I am a firm believer that women in

this industry can bring an amazing balance in our energy, right? Not that we're going to be the weak, some people tend to confuse women are weak.

And that's I think that's not the case. So what can we do to tell women out there, this is a good industry for you. This can be so powerful. And for you, how can you help women?

Regla: You know, I think as you said, this is a man's land, you know. We're only 10%, but at the same time women serve the opportunity to bring diversity to bring a knower point of view. And you know, in construction, you need to be flexible to face problems that you have every day. So, the opportunity to have a knower point of view, it is important to get the best solution.

So I am convinced that women could bring that to construction, a point of view that will allow to innovate, to evolve, to be in a more holy thing. Because it's a team. In a team work, you need people that think different. So when the people are thinking different, they give a different perspective. I think this one is really important for the women to bring here. And then it is a lot to conquer. So why not to come?

Patricia: And there's billions, trillions of dollars in construction. Why not?

Regla: You know, yeah, well we're doing that. When people are talking about construction and you imagine you know, you think about the hard hat, the vest. That is always a man. Usually you don't see a woman like that. So we need to change that culture. We need to demonstrate that we can.

Patricia: How do we change that?

Regla: I think we could change that. First of all, being prepared, you know, study, learn, you need to be prepared. Because one of the most common things is that in construction for us is that sometimes people don't believe you could do it. So you maybe that you are not capable of, or you don't have the knowledge to. So you need to be upfront, you need to be twice as good. So you need to say, No, I can do it, and I can do it these good.

And I'm sure this will open you know, the road for a lot of women to come. I think that is important. And the only thing is, you need to put your heart. Women have the sense to put a lot of ideas on the things. So you know, you've got your child, you educate, you help your host by, you keep your house. You are capable to do a lot of things at the same time. So yes, you could do go through.

Patricia: We're doing a whole project by [inaudible]. But we need a mentor. Yeah, you know, that's absolutely right about diversity, you know, diversity and inclusion, you know, people tend to think that diversity is, you know, half black people, white and black. That's not, that's absolutely not the case. It's, it's about, like you said, not only gender diversity, but it's also it's also different cultures. It's also age, you know, now

there's the conversation that millennials, you know, they don't want to work. And I think that's totally not the case.

You know, sometimes people neglect that older people, all they don't want, they don't like technology. Diversity and inclusion are so powerful. If we can embrace the talent that everyone can see.

Regla: The skill is something that it's begun the age of the gender of the color, it's, you know, whatever is the skill. So I think if we're able to motivate people, to learn those skills, you know. To be a super nice carpenter. To be, you know, super good in old furniture, that kind of things. People need that.

Patricia: So what you're saying, you've done really good in outlining very key points for success. You know, you've talked about the outcome, starting with an outcome in mind, what's the purpose? That's what gives you the card. Then why, why am I doing this? You've said that relationships are key. And, and I mean, you're amazing. It's see you're giving people that their real formula for success.

You're telling people here, that diversity and inclusion matters, for us to make a difference in this industry. And I think in the world, the time for that has come for us to for us to do that. And you're telling people we got to prepare, it's not a handout, you have to work hard, and you have to be prepared.

Regla: You have to earn it.

Patricia: You have to earn it. And in the industry, when we talk about women coming in the industry, sometimes there's when I started a long time ago, you know, I've seen women in the industry, not a lot, but they look masculine. They look, they cursed a lot. And it was very, it didn't look... not that we cannot curse. And it just didn't look like the essence of them that hard. They pull it where their soul was in them, you know what I mean? It's like they adopted somebody else's personality.

And you said very, it's true. We can... we don't want to give women the perception that it doesn't happen. You said that, practically speaking, you show up into a project into a business meeting and the assumptions that you don't know, right? I'm sure you've lived it. And I want to know more. You know, when you when you have that situation, what do you do?

You know, those challenges, let's say when you started a company, and you were trying to show people or try to get business. How did you get your first project? How did you overcome a situation where you knew the person didn't have same view, how do we do that?

Regla: Well, there are different kinds of people. There are people that doubt about you because you're a woman, so they have no reason at all. And there are people that doubt because they have knowledge and want to be sure that you also have. So that's

the point for the first kind of people, that has nothing to, not too much to say, like, one I was talking about it. Kitchen countertops, I was saying, okay, you need to in order to work over here, you need to do this. And he asked me, "but have you ever done a kitchen?" Like that, you know, in front of everyone. So I started laughing. Because I think if you put a no duh, you have to know to relax. So instead to be angry, I started out and say, "you know what? I think I've been doing like, around 5000 kitchens. Do you think that is enough?" So then people were laughing, you know? And then the people who know me were like, "Hey, why are you doing that?" And they are, then it's also, you know, I don't get offended. So I tried to demonstrate if you have a doubt, so I explained to you, so when you listen to me, you know that I know. And the only thing is, I try to be humble, because there is always opportunity to learn from everyone. From the guy that is guarding the slot, or for the driver, or for the girl that is sweeping the floor, for everyone you learn. So you know, you need to be humble enough to do what is necessary. Our company is also a small company. So we do everything, and everyone do what it needs to be done. So if today I need to claim this is my job, even though tomorrow I will be you know, with my high heels, I'm talking but today, hey, today's the last day here. Today, everyone is cleaning. So that kind of things, it creates, you know, a team work and the people respect you because you don't think you are the boss. No, you were the boss today, but you were the clean girl tomorrow.

Patricia: Absolutely. Tell me about a challenge. Tell me about the most difficult challenge you've overcome. You had to face in these three, almost three years in business that you have. Tell me what happened? What was the situation like and how you overcame the challenge? How do you plan it, strategize? And how do you what do you do about it? And where are you today?

Regla: Maybe one of the biggest challenges was in one of the [inaudible] we were working on the owner want us to do more. To do even things that we didn't have too much knowledge about it. So we said, okay, we could say no, we cannot do it. Or we learn and, you know, with team with the people who know how to do it. And it was it was hard because it was things that we weren't used to. So everyone needed to learn. And it happened also a lot on the industry that we have, for example, new materials. So sometimes they say you are used to do these countertops using granite, but now you have quartz, or you have portside or you have marble or you have porcelain, and you know, it's another work, then you need to evolve, and then you need to learn. So yes, I have been pushed to learn a lot. And I think this is good. Because even though you know, keep me awake for it a lot of nights, at the end, you know, it's something that you have, and no one can take it from you.

Patricia: So learning, you like learning.

Regla: Yes.

Patricia: It pushes you to grow.

Regla: Yeah.

Patricia: How do you feel when you're growing?

Regla: I feel happy. I really feel [inaudible] You know, happiness, it's different for everyone. I think that realization making up.

Patricia: Well, that's great. Do you think the construction industry needs more women now?

Regla: I think construction really need a lot of women. First of all construction needs people. There are not enough people on construction. So yeah, we need more people in general and for sure, more women, as I said also, we will bring this diversity which is super good. And also women are skilled workers, some matters that could really you know, put more in construction, like control, like supervision, like interpretation. I think this is really important. I am sure this is a tribe to grow for us.

Patricia: So what advantages would you say? Tell me three things that you believe a young woman that starts in this industry will obtain in 20 years. Let's say that she starts in this industry, and she stays in the industry in [inaudible], top of the challenges and stays persistent in 20 years, Where will she be? What are the three advantages that she will obtain?

Regla: Well, first, she will learn a lot. And she will learn things that not only will make her grow, I say, in the construction industry, but as a person, so because you learn about how the pipes are put in a house. So when you live in your house, and you have a [inaudible], now you know where you can find [inaudible], and you know what you need to do, so that we prepare you for life, not only for construction, but for life. You need to put your TV on the wall. So now you know, okay, how do I okay, I need to start, how do I know where the sub arcs, so you grow as a person. So that will be for sure. It's something good. And also, if you know, if you go off and off inside that industry, you will be able to not only be part of the big machine, but also you will be able to run the machine. And that would be amazing. And if you like it, then you could create your own company. And do more you know and do more [inaudible] is always rewarded. It's always nice. I have been short period for us. I think, I don't know, eight years ago, people were looking at the women wearing pants, like freaking out, you know Only 18 years ago or and I know I think it was in 1979 the first time a woman run the whole breaks for the highways. So we have been in this battle for short periods, I think we have a lot to do.

Patricia: Right. So one of the things you said that you can advance is growth, right? Growth have multi levels, grow personally, and grow also professionally, but on your personal life. So one of the areas is growth, I'm looking for two more advantages that you can think of. What other advantages have you seen? Financial?

Regla: Yeah, for sure. Right now, you know, women get less money for their work compared with the same type of work with men. But I think that is something that we

could, you know, make balance in the future, if it will be there more women and construction. If the women have better, you know, high ranking, that is something that really could work. So for sure, construction will renew financially comfort. And that's important. So not only the knowledge, but the realization but also financially you will be in better conditions to do more for yourself.

Patricia: When you talk about realization, you talk about fulfillment and it's beautiful when you say do more for others than for yourself. And that is the key and the formula for actually a financial wealth. When you're able to do your product can transform and help more people, it just comes back to you. So that's beautiful. I am blessed to have you here and have this conversation. You're going to do wonders.

Regla: And you inspired me so, hello.

Patricia: So tell me what makes you proud of your work? When you're done with a kitchen or your renovation of a house because you were showing me some pictures, and they're really beautiful. I know you're proud of all your work. How did you get there? How do you overcome the challenges that come day to day with people and you know with environment, or something happens. The pandemic, I want to hear about the pandemic. How do you get to a finished problem that makes you proud?

Regla: Well, you know, one of the things that made me proud of my work is when my clients get something even better than they were expected. So that is important because. You know, in construction, there are a lot of chances that you make mistakes, because it's difficult to make a perfect line between the ceiling and the wall. And you know, it is difficult. So when you create something that your clients feel happy, it really makes you proud. And it makes me proud of my team. Because construction is a kind of a work that you can't do alone. There is no one like no one, the best one cannot do a house or a building alone. So you need people from different disciplines, and you need teamwork. So when at the end, we sit and we look at it, I feel, you know, proud of ourselves, I feel really proud of my team, because this is what we created. You know, it's not me, it's all so this is important. And this helps you to overcome those leader problems that every day you know that you need to face because it happens, someone came here and tried to hang pictures, and then he hated like, it happened. So that is the kind of things that okay, it happened. What we're going to do? How we're going to solve, you know, that kind of things. And that also gives confidence to your client, like, okay, things will happen, but we'll get a solution.

Patricia: So basically, you're saying that you focus 95% of the time on this solution out of the problem?

Regla: Yeah. Always.

Patricia: I get five and what happened here, you're focusing on how we're going to solve and move on make a decision.

Regla: Yeah. It's like, okay, you were doing this. And then, hey, the wall should be five feet, but now it is four feet, then what we do with that inch, so here's your solution. Nothing more we could do.

Patricia: So the pandemic, right and get your company started. You're so excited. Oh, my gosh, my company. I finally have it. I register. I have my first job. I got it done. And then the pandemic case. What went through your mind?

Regla: Yeah, it was really, really tough. Well to my mind, everything.

Patricia: Why?

Regla: Because I put everything there.

Patricia: All the money you have?

Regla: Yeah, all the money [inaudible]. [inaudible], it was like, "This would kill me." I literally mean with the family of all my people, you know?

Patricia: So what did you do?

Regla: So we were looking for... Okay, but what we're going to do? Then we found that we could do stuff that could be done, even though you are at the pandemic exists. So we started doing works in places where we're really separate one from the other. So besides to be you know, coconut all this. So we were working for example, in a kitchen restaurant.

Patricia: Well, how do you get that project? We'll say something that you go out there and you look for the job? Or did they come to you?

Regla: Well, we start talking with some friends, "Hey, we're looking for work that we could do in these kind of things." And one friend of mine, which is a DC say, "Hey, you know why it happened. Client that needs to do this work, and I think you will be grateful for it." So that's how we did it. So it was good, because even though we're a few people there, we were completely separate, you know, we turn up our everything and then we put it back again. So that really help us to go through.

Patricia: So your relationships that you have built helped you continue in the worst time.

Regla: Yeah, I have to say that I really appreciate that kind of relation. And yeah, from that one from that job, some more jobs came. And they have some foreigners and they introduced us to the foreigners. It was good. But it was really it was really hard. It was and you know, we weren't afraid because our families and so we were like wearing masks and I spend so much money on the super masks, you know, the N95 we have them all. Yeah, we were waiving glow about in check in. We protect ourselves. And I

need to say, no one in my day, no one get the COVID during that time. We got it later. But not that time.

Patricia: My company, I don't know if it's prayer or what, but nobody has ever. We couldn't stop either. We have to work, it was mandatory for us to work. And we had we could not stop the clock. We even had the police showing up. And many of us were virtual, there were a lot of people in the field too. Let me tell you, no one got COVID. I did. And I got COVID just because I went to an event with a group of people. I love people. Yeah, so. But it was good. It was it was nobody has to this day has ever had that in COVID in our company. It's a blessing. It's been a blessing. Let me ask you, have you ever had a challenge with a client that I know you work really hard on relationships and serving the client. But have you ever had a client that you've done your best, and this person is still not satisfied? Tell me about that.

Regla: Unfortunately, it happens, you know it's a human nature, there are different kinds of people. And there are people that can never be completely satisfied. I think they are unhappy people. So we do our best. And we explain our best. And that's all we could do.

Patricia: For what do you do? We agree that there's happy people, unhappy people. I believe that hurt people if you hurt inside, you're going to hurt. Then when you are inside comes out, especially under pressure. You did a job the person paid a lot of times they don't want to really pay. They find an excuse. What do you do?

Regla: That's what I can say. Sometimes when it happened, there are some other motives behind that, like, they don't want to pay you. So they start complaining about stuff in order not to pay you. But sometimes it's you know, it's just a matter to try to explain and try to bring people to senses. I have to say one of my worsts is, there were people that have no manners. So that is difficult, you know, to trade. People are used to talk about them in a bad way. And then they think they could talk to everyone like that. But so those kind of things you need to say, you know what, let's leave the conversation here. Just take your time, and then we come back later, because I'm going to use to talk in this I think the most important, is a respect. So let's keep this one and then we'll talk later. So when the people see that, they you know, they back off, and yeah, they come by in a different levels.

Patricia: Have you got paid?

Regla: Yes, worst [inaudible]. Well, you know, it's, it's part of the job. Sometimes you get super nice clients and sometimes they're not so nice. But it's their it's their way of life. It's not that they want to be bad with you. It's that's how they lead. So you use try to accommodate.

Patricia: So what thing that challenge because I know your daughter is very important for you. Have you ever had a challenge, a personal challenge that you wake up today and you're like you know you have this work to do, and you have to deliver this job on

time and they're waiting for it and something is going on, on the job but then you have a personal challenge. And you want to be there somebody's got sick someone in your in your family, and you don't know how to divide yourself, but you want to be in both places at the same time. What do you do?

Regla: Yeah, that is really, that is really hard. Because you know, I think it happens to all the moms you know, sometimes you're really sick, and then you need to work. So you wake up and say, Hey, come, how do you feel? Do you feel? This one, okay, stay here, do this. I will be back maybe in three hours. So I go there. I do what I need to do and then you come back to be with her. You know, it is tough to do it. And in my house for example, we like to sit on the day home to have dinner every night. So sometimes it takes me long to be in the office because I am preparing a presentation or something I need is already nine. I feel the pressure because I know they are waiting for me to arrive to me. So, but at the same time is good to know that you have that backup, you know that they're there for you. So it is hard to say Sichi she's my angel. She's the one that drives me. Because I wanted her to know that you need to fight, you need to work hard in order to accomplish whatever you want in life. So this is the work to do it. Nothing would come from, you know, fortune from sky, I said work and so. Go to work.

Patricia: And she's learning that she's learned from you. Are you proud of her?

Regla: Yeah, I am. She's doing right now below at the UN. She's doing super good. And she's really involved from everything that is the big diversity and climate change and women, everything related, similar to a lot of things. So she yes, she's fighting, man, and agree, proud to be here.

Patricia: If she's listening to you now, what would you tell her?

Regla: She knows I adore her. So I just want her to be happy. And in order for anyone to be happy, you need to realize in your life, you know, you need to do things that you love, because only you learn what you do, you could wake up every day at 5am, you know, I'm working the whole day.

Patricia: So work doesn't feel like work when you're doing what you love, right. It is like more like play.

Regla: Playing to be working.

Patricia: So, what's next for you? Where do you see yourself five years from now?

Regla: Well, we are growing you know. We want to create a brand. We would like to be recognized for the job we do. Do more deeply, not do more jobs, but do jobs more deeply. We could do different style using different materials. Bringing creative. Because sometimes the job is the simple ones, everything the same. But no. You could create.

Patricia: Always in the residential space?

Regla: No, we have the commercials. Right now we're working in commercial place in [inaudible]. Yeah, we could do that.

Patricia: Commercial and residential?

Regla: In both and I would like to start creating more...

Patricia: You want to participate in the design process?

Regla: We do, we do.

Patricia: You do now? In this bigger projects, you want to have the opportunity to participate to design project...

Regla: Yes, like include more stuff and people are using now more enforce one. They are creating new materials. They are creating new devices that make kitchens more comfortable. They are creating different lie-in. That kind of things that you could introduce and make the life of people better.

Patricia: And if you consider you're an expert on kitchen and design 5,000 kitchens or more, if somebody plan that kitchen. I know kitchens are important for... I think it's most important space in the house and the bathrooms. So what are the three things people made to consider, three big things that people made to consider what they are planning their kitchen?

Regla: Well, one of the things is how to make your kitchen functional. Because if beautiful kitchen... the kitchen is not there just to make to decorate your house. It is there to allow you to create food for your family. So it needs to be functional. If you cannot access to anything, it is crazy.

First, it needs to be functional. Secondly, I think it needs to be like for a long time. Because a kitchen is the kind of investment you do maybe one or twice in your life. It's like to buy a car. So, it has to be durable. In my opinion, I will suggest don't go to extreme because you will passed, and you will get worn, and you will get sick of a worn kitchen. So do something that you will love it today and 10 years from now, or 5 years from now.

Patricia: Yes because the changes...

Regla: Now it's on fashion with the stripes and it won't be in two years.

Patricia: What else?

Regla: And the third one is you need to invest. If you want your kitchen to be functional, you need to invest on your kitchen. So you need to have good appliances. You need to have [inaudible]. You will do it once. If you put something bad, it won't last. So in 5 years you will have a problem more than the kitchen. Appliances are important. And the materials you use for your own kitchen. So you use crappy materials, they will fall down

as soon as they get wet, or if something happens, or if you select the [inaudible] not from the best source, it will stain. So you will lose your investment.

Think about it like an investment. It's an investment for pleasure because you will enjoy it every day, and it is an investment for your own house. Because even if you are selling your house, one of the things that you get most is the kitchen.

Patricia: Absolutely. You have inspired tons of people now. There's a lot of women who want to start their company, they want to start in construction. If somebody wants to start a company in the construction space, what are the three things that you will tell them in person to really conquer not in the retrospect. If you have to start all over again in your own company, what would you do different?

Regla: Well, I think it's important to have a team. I have it now, but it really cost me time and effort for us to find. I think it is important. As I said, you can't do anything at all, so you need to have back-up. Not only back-up. You need to have people in front of you that will say "Hey, you know what? I think you'll be better if you go this way. I think we'll be better if we do this one." So you need this. And even you need people to challenge you. Because once you get challenge, you grow. So this is important in life, but in construction especially. So, things you need to do; one, create a team and find the right people to go this road with you. Also you need resources because construction is [inaudible]. So you need to invest in tools. All this really requires money. And depending on the quality of your tools, it will depend on the quality of the job you can do. And then invest and learn. Learn a lot. It will prepare you for everything. Whatever you need to do even if you think you know. As I said, I do kitchen. Okay, I need to put a new marble tile

never use before. Where did it come from? From which country? Does it have more limestone? So learn about it so you'll have less problem later or not at all. Or you get more problem. So learn, I'll give you my support.

Patricia: So how did you learn? How did you keep yourself growing? Do you read?

Regla: Yes, I read a lot.

Patricia: What book are you reading at?

Regla: Oh, if we're talking about books, I like different kind of books but one of my best books 'The Times of the Earth'. So it tells me when the cathedrals were made. It's the life of an English family in 18th century. It's amazing to see how they were able to adapt at that time that even today we appreciate. So that's the kind of things that inspired me. Things like 'Wow! These people are really good.' I read a lot. Because if you ask me for something I will learn and will look for [inaudible], where it come from? What would do? Let me see how it works. And I think to be curious is important.

Patricia: Absolutely. That is why you created a culture and a team that you have. You allow them to bring opinion. You allow them to tell you if you're in the wrong direction and you have to be curious. I'm very proud of you.

So tell me about transformation. In my experience, business has been aspirational transformation for me. I believe my business has been transforming and obviously raising 5K. there's a transformation there. Where do you think you've seen your biggest transformation in you as a person, as a soul?

Regla: I think the biggest transformation for me is being more open-minded. Besides construction, one of the things I love the most is to travel. I love to go places. I love to meet new people and new cultures. So you could understand that, and you will know why they do the things they do and you appreciate that.

So in construction, I have been more open to treat different kind of people. You learn things from everyone. If tell me [inaudible] if I could say like because sometimes I am... so Jeremy says, "yes, we could do this and you know...", and then I say no, you cannot. That kind of thing. So I think the best transformation for me is I listen more, so I think I'm right because of them.

Patricia: Open, listen, curious. That's beautiful, really. Can you remember when you did the shift? What was before, what was [inaudible]?

Regla: I cannot say that there was an instance. But I could say when we start. As you say we started a few months later. Then pandemic came, so it was really hard. But then when the pandemic start, the time start passing by, and we survived, it really gives me more energy. Because I said, "Okay, if we survive this, we will survive anything." And it was good to see that we were able to go through it and get to other side.

Patricia: Well, thank you so much.

Regla: The pleasure of it is mine.

Patricia: I hope your business continue to thrive. I agree with you. If you have been able to do this through the pandemic... many businesses closed down and you've been able to be resourceful, empower your team, empower yourself, and keep it in your mind of what you've started and what you want to do. So I really congratulate you and continue to inspire people. You're good.

Regla: Thank you very much. I think you're doing really great job. Trying to help others and to show others the way to go, it's really enough. Because you are not keeping for your own. You're not just sitting there and enjoying. You are telling everyone, "Hey, come this way. This is how you'll get it." I really thank you for that.

Patricia: Thank you.

Regla: My pleasure.

OUTRO

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Thanks again. We'll see you next week, here in Thriving in Construction, the Podcast.

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