

Diane Jean Cruz

Project Scheduler



When Diane Jean Cruz speaks about her career, she doesn't begin with titles or milestones — she begins with meaning. A civil engineer by training, her path into the industry wasn't meticulously planned. In fact, it began with an accidental course selection that she chose to embrace rather than resist.

More than a decade later, Diane has built a career spanning construction, project management and now specialist scheduling. Along the way, she's led benchmark projects, navigated male-dominated environments and evolved her leadership style through reflection and mentorship.

Outside of work, that same depth shows up in unexpected ways — from free diving in the open sea to competitive gaming and a love of philosophy. Beneath the calm exterior is someone driven by purpose, integrity and the belief that every action creates a ripple.

1. This year's IWD theme is "Give to Gain". What does this mean to you?

For me, "Give to Gain" reflects how I see the world. I believe that whatever we put out — whether positive or negative — creates a ripple effect. The energy, effort and intention we bring into our work will always come back in some form.

In the workplace, that means choosing to show up with integrity and value.

When you celebrate others, support your team and contribute meaningfully, it builds a culture that lifts everyone.

Being surrounded by supportive women in this environment has reinforced that for me — positivity is contagious, and so is ambition.

2. Can you share a moment in your career that really shaped who you are today?

Unconventionally, it really started with my love for gaming. Growing up, I spent hours playing simulation games — not for the storyline, but for the building. While others focused on playing the game itself, I would design houses and create structures from scratch. Looking back, that curiosity for building was always there.

When it came time to choose a degree, I was considering architecture and communication arts, but I accidentally placed civil engineering as my first choice. When the results came out, I decided to give it a chance rather than shift immediately — and I ended up loving it.

3. What's something you've had to learn to back yourself on over time?

Early in my career, when I was working at Uniqlo, I was asked to rescue a project that was already delayed by 50% of its timeline. The lead engineer was leaving, deadlines were fixed, and there was no room for extension.

I was hesitant — I was still new and unsure of my capability — but my manager trusted me and gave me the authority and resources to take ownership.

That project became a turning point. It not only delivered successfully, but went on to become a benchmark within the department.

More than the outcome, it changed how I saw myself. That was the moment I realised I was capable of more than I believed.

5. Do you have a favourite quote or saying that inspires you or reflects how you approach work or life?

I'm drawn to the Japanese philosophies of Ichigo Ichie — "one time, one meeting" and Ikigai, "living with purpose".

I don't believe purpose has to be one thing; it can exist across what you love, what you're good at, and how you contribute.

4. What's one change you'd love to see in our industry over the next few years?

My mother shaped my moral compass, and my sister showed me strength and tenacity.

In my professional life, I'm inspired by the women around me — their work ethic, resilience

and confidence show that capability speaks louder than stereotypes.

For me, power isn't loud; it's steady, principled and grounded in character.

6. If you could give your younger self — or a young woman starting out — one piece of advice, what would it be?

Never limit yourself. Dream boldly and chase those dreams with integrity. You may not end up exactly where you imagined, but getting close to it without hurting anyone — while protecting your values — is far more meaningful than success earned by losing yourself along the way.

“ Never limit yourself. Dream boldly and chase those dreams with integrity ”

Getting To Know Diane



What's your favourite movie?
Everything Everywhere All at Once



What's your favourite cuisine?
Japanese



What's your Go-to karaoke song?
Halo – Beyoncé



You're on a desert island — what's the one thing you're bringing or having?
Her phone



What's something people would be surprised to know about you?
Former competitive gamer in the Philippines.