

# Renee Demarco

*Wolseley Canada  
Regional Manager Showrooms -  
Western Canada*



## **How did you get your start in the plumbing & heating industry?**

I started with Veteran Plumbing & Supplies in Windsor in 1999 working on the old school counter-repairing faucets, flush valves, cutting pipes, etc. I got to learn a lot of the basics, and then branched into building an attached showroom. I worked in my family's floral business for a while, then came back into the industry working at TUBS in Scarborough. I was able to build lots of great relationships in the industry there. From there I was approached by Ross H Barber to join as a Toto sales agent for SW Ontario, then Toronto & the GTA. After that I approached to join Riobel as the SW Ontario rep, moved into Toronto GTA and was instrumental launching Riobel PRO. That's when I moved into more of a mechanical rep position drawing on my knowledge from my start. After holding that position I moved into the National Sales Manager role at Riobel and left in 2019.

## **What is your current job and what do you love about it?**

I'm currently the Regional Manager Showrooms, Western Canada for Wolseley Canada. I saw potential in the Wolseley Showrooms in the west. I'm able to draw from all of my experiences to best craft out what's needed for myself, my team and Wolseley as we craft out the channel.

## **What is the best career advice you ever received?**

It's not advice, but a learning from a conversation. A particular conversation with a leader wanting to know what my career path was going to look like. Now my husband & I work in the same industry, and the response I got from my leader at that point was "well don't worry about you because you'll probably want to go off and have babies soon and we'll take care of your husband." I think the intention was well meant, but it was a strong building block for me. That was the first & one of the

only times that I was faced with the unconscious bias of being a woman in the industry and I used it as fuel for the fire.

### **If you could go back in time and give your younger self career advice, what would it be?**

Don't ever be afraid to try anything new. Don't doubt yourself, trust in the abilities and experience that you have built up, and know that you belong at this table and in these conversations. If I knew that then it probably would have eased a lot of sleepless nights!

### **What are you looking forward to professionally/where do you see yourself going?**

I look forward to being able to be a mentor and coach for the younger generation. We're seeing a fundamental shift with the quintessential millennial coming into our industry and it's a completely different style of coaching, understanding, teaching, supporting, there's more involved than just setting out the boxes to be ticked. I love leading a team and if the team succeeds then I succeed. So where do I see myself going with my career in the future? That's all determined by how well my team succeeds in what their missions are, and then my career will fall into line. If I am planning out my own personal path and leaving those behind who are going to help me get there, then neither of us are going to win.

### **What energizes you outside of work?**

I'm a very avid traveller; I'm a fan of ancient history. I'm perusing a trip to Egypt & Jordan right now. Burnout is real and you need to allow time for yourself to enjoy whatever you enjoy in life. You always want to give your utmost focus & passion into whatever you're doing in your life. Not allowing myself passion for my own joy & time became a struggle to balance. At this point I've found that balance to be able to leave time for myself, because otherwise I can't perform when I should be performing in my career.

### **Do you have personal goals/dreams that you're working towards?**

I want to travel more, and I'm working towards purchasing a vacation home.

### **What is the biggest obstacle you've had to overcome?**

Proving that I was competent and excelled in what I did and my knowledge. In order to be seen on par with male colleagues I've had to work twice as hard. That was the biggest challenge- having to put in twice the amount of work to get twice the results. And I'm really proud of what I've accomplished.

### **What is your "superpower"/what are you really good at?**

Connecting with people. I pride myself on being able to make people feel comfortable around me, and that's my style of leadership. I'm here in the trenches with you & we're going to work through this together. In this world of growing technology that personal connection is still important and maybe even more important than it was in the past.

### **How do you challenge & inspire yourself to grow?**

Working with Wolseley I'm learning lots of new things, and Wolseley offers different training programs, both internally and externally. Being able to work for a company that gives you the opportunity to identify where you want to grow and then gives you the opportunity to go ahead and do that so that you can then craft out your own career path has been amazing.

**How would you/what would you say to attract other women to join our industry?**

You don't need to just be a plumber, but if that's what you want to do then go for it! No matter what your skills or strengths are in your toolbox you can exercise them in this industry. Sales, finance, project management- there are so many different avenues within this industry. Don't ever discount the industry because the sky is the limit for where you can go with it, no matter what your skill set.