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VIEWPOINT

Five ways to get priority access to STEM talent



TERRI EASTER
Guest Columnist

It is no secret that STEM workers have been the unicorn in recruiting for the last decade, avidly sought but seemingly impossible to find. The shortage of STEM expertise is well documented and seems only to be getting worse. The National Association of Manufacturing and Deloitte recently reported that in the U.S. alone, 3.5 million STEM jobs will need to be filled by 2025. The rub is that more than 2 million of those positions will not be filled because of the lack of highly skilled candidates. How is this possible? And more to the point, what can be done to stem the tide?

Closer to home, Delaware is not immune to the challenges of finding and keeping STEM workers. For the last eight years, my consultancy has had the opportunity and challenge of filling senior-level management and STEM positions in the state. Delaware is home to a diverse array of businesses across financial services, biotechnology,

pharmaceuticals, energy and chemicals, but lacks a sizeable talent pool. A recent report from the Delaware Business Roundtable cited the ability to attract and retain young educated professionals as a threat to the state's economic growth into the future.

While the challenge of attracting STEM workers is real, a hyper-focus on female STEM candidates may be Delaware's answer to this conundrum. We have the necessary ingredients, including a healthy percentage of women in STEM positions — in health technology, computer, engineering and science — to establish ourselves as a beacon for women in STEM; it is a matter of approaching such an effort as a united front.

We believe Delaware has a head start in this endeavor, as WalletHub ranked the state ninth among the country's "Most Innovative States" measured by the quality of its STEM workforce, among other criteria. We see a unique opportunity to leverage the state's existing assets to build greater diversity by attracting women to area and to its STEM landscape. It is conceivable that Delaware could lead the country as the preeminent home for women in STEM.

Here's what attracting women in STEM can look like for Delaware:

1. Leverage existing assets. Showcase the State's already healthy mix of STEM businesses, including E.I. DuPont, Chemours, W. L. Gore, AstraZeneca and Centrica.

2. Tell a great story. Feature the more-than-respectable footprint of top women in leadership roles, including women who served as CEOs of its most prominent chemicals companies; women who lead two of the top four-year universities; women who lead major state government agencies; and women who lead in philanthropy.

3. Inspire and connect. Grow and nurture organizations like Million Women Mentors, which are focused on inspiring girls to go into STEM.

4. Show the money. Address the pay gap that exists between women and men in STEM roles. According to a Bloomberg analysis, a list of 20 best-paid STEM occupations, ranked by pay parity, shows that women occupy an average of one-fifth the jobs and are paid an average 89 cents for every dollar a man earns in

top U.S. science, technology, engineering and mathematics positions.

5. Sustain to grow. Strengthen networks for women to support each other and that encourage young women to stay here and in STEM professions. Such networks help women integrate both professionally and socially while mitigating feelings of isolation prevalent in organizations with low numbers of women represented in STEM functions.

Through such a holistic effort, women would be attracted both to Delaware's job opportunities and its commitment to the institutional support so vital to women's success and overall business growth in the long term. Clearly the foundation for this initiative exists. What's left to do? Make Delaware not just hospitable to, but a beacon for women who seek to trailblaze in STEM.

Terri Hartwell Easter is the founder and principal of T.H. Easter Consulting, which brings innovative thinking and approaches to some of the toughest human resources challenges and revenue growth goals. With offices in Wilmington, Pittsburgh and Washington, D.C., more information is available at www.theasterconsulting.com.

Sam sees a 90-win season on deck for the 2019 Phillies



SAM WALTZ
Founding Publisher

Look for a 90-win season for the "Fightin's," our hometown Philadelphia Phillies, enough to likely have them playing in October in the 2019 playoffs. That was my forecast before three weeks at Spring Training in March, and it's still my forecast for the season, despite having watched the worst performances — in terms of Phillies' pitching — that I've seen in 11 years of attending MLB's own version of "March Madness."

For purposes of credibility, this time last year, I foresaw an 81-81 season of .500 baseball. The Phils were well ahead of that 81-81 pace before late August, when a historic collapse over the next four to five weeks brought them in at 80-82 for 2018. They lost 20 of their last 28 games, when just playing .500 ball would have brought them in 86-76.

This year was my 11th Annual Talent

Evaluation Project in Clearwater-St. Petersburg, what some people call Grapefruit League Spring Training Baseball.

It's not a "vacation," I assure my wife, since I work every morning and evening on "a split shift," only taking off time for baseball in the afternoons, plus I'm not a "beach bunny" with any time in the surf of the Gulf of Mexico.

She scoffs. Imagine that.

The addition of Bryce Harper to the Phils' lineup — albeit unnecessary in the view of many of us, but a commitment to winning by team ownership — brought a level of excitement there I'd not seen since my first trip in 2009, the season after the 2008 World Series championship. Tickets costing \$25 were reselling on StubHub at \$125 to \$150 for some of Harper's first spring training games.

The really strategic acquisition by Phils' management, in my view, was J.T. Realmuto, 28, which almost went under the radar, but will bolster the Phillies for years. He's an All-Star catcher whom Phillies' fans will come to value for his ability to call the games and

manage pitchers.

Frankly, spring training baseball is as exciting to many of us as regular season, evidenced by the crowds.

All over the Tampa Bay area, the home teams — six of them, the Phillies, the Yankees, the Tigers, the Pirates, the Orioles and the Blue Jays — seemed to be regularly drawing 9,000 to 10,000 fans a game. The first Yankees-at-Phillies game after Bryce Harper started playing drew a record 11,400 fans on St. Patrick's Day, a Sunday.

Last year, I watched about 20 games in 21 days in seven ballparks (including the Braves at Disney); this year it was 15 games in 18 days in five ballparks. It's a tough job, but someone has to do it.

Business readers of this column who are "baseball people" will value knowing how easy it is to get into and out of games, into and out of parking, and to enjoy the collegial baseball aficionado discussion with the guy in the next seat about baseball, history or life.

Remarkably, given our DuPont connections here in Delaware, one of those next to me was the president and CFO of Dow Chemical of

Midland, Michigan.

When I took note of the unfamiliar word on his Michigan blue shirt (he told me it was Hebrew for Michigan), I shared with him my favorite Jewish baseball player story. No, not Hank Greenberg, but the real first Jewish baseball player, Morris "Moe" Berg, 1902-72, who played in the 1920s and 1930s, before going on to become a spy for Uncle Sam during World War II, for William "Wild Bill" Donovan, the acknowledged founder of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), predecessor to the CIA.

"Catcher, Scholar, Spy: The Incredible Story of Moe Berg" is the talk I do about this virtually unique figure in the history of baseball.

Perhaps next year, despite the fact he's a New York Yankees' fan, readers of this column can encourage Today Media CEO Rob Martinelli to convene a "Hot Stove League" night in January over hot dogs and beer at a sponsor establishment to talk baseball and Moe Berg. **DBT**