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FOCUS:

The Women's Network at GE Healthcare

EVER SINCE ITS INCEPTION 30 YEARS AGO, ONE OF THE MOST FUNDAMENTAL FUNCTIONS OF AMCHAM HAS BEEN TO MAINTAIN PLATFORMS FOR SHARING PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE BETWEEN ITS MEMBERS. THERE ARE SEVERAL SUCH PLATFORMS, INCLUDING AMCHAM MONTHLY MEETINGS, THE AMCHAM COMMITTEES, AND THE PAGES OF THE CHAMBER'S MAGAZINE. IN THIS DISPATCH **ANNA ZEMŁA**, OFFICE MANAGER, SECURITY LEADER AT GE HEALTHCARE, AND LEADER OF THE WOMEN'S NETWORK AT THE COMPANY, WRITES ABOUT HOW THE NETWORK SUPPORTS ITS MEMBERS DURING THE PANDEMIC CRISIS.

FOCUS

The Women's Network at GE Healthcare



Stronger together: In-person meetings have always played an important part in the support programs of the Women's Network.

COMING TOGETHER

INTERACTING WITH FELLOW WORKERS IS IMPORTANT AND ONLINE TOOLS CAN HELP

When faced with the "winds of change," one must readjust the sails. The pandemic is a huge challenge for many corporations, but above all, for their leaders. Managerial influence is significantly limited in situations in which 90 percent of employees are working remotely. With this, companies are beginning to monitor their teams' commitment to ensure all individuals are adequately integrated with their companies. Leaders and managers thus face quite a challenge. For some, the situation provides an excellent opportunity to develop and take their career to the next level. For others, it is a moment to reflect and consider whether the path they have chosen is the right one for them.

THE LEARNING CURVE

In 2019, as the leader of the Women's Network group at GE Healthcare, I prepared a plan for the group's activities in 2020. It was comprised of many ambitious projects, training sessions, and meetings. It kicked off successfully, but it took just one day for everything to stop in March.

As an office manager, I have had many of my responsibilities increase due to the pandemic but have managed to maintain

our network's regular meetings. Once every three weeks, we connected for 30 minutes to talk and see each other over video calls. Every online meeting makes us realize how much we miss each other and our human interaction.

I also learned that not every woman can talk to her manager about what is bothering or worrying her. It is difficult for many women to speak their minds on a range of issues. This was why we decided to hold an online session with makeup artist Katarzyna Rucińska. In 90 minutes, we learned more about makeup than in our entire lives and shared our thoughts as well. This led me to take the idea further and hold our first-ever online training, on the subject of communication. It felt very natural to me because I had learned that it is so important to know not only how to speak your mind but also how to listen to others. We scheduled a set of training programs provided by Leaders Island, an independent consulting company, which was very appreciated by participants. Following this, I have prepared a program exclusively for women aspiring to become leaders. The workshops will be largely based on building relationships and on emotional context. After all, there is nothing more valuable than knowing yourself

and your value when it comes to leadership.

BEING TOGETHER MATTERS

I also realized we needed to attend to our physical side as well as our psychological side. A group trip to Turbacz, the highest peak of the Gorce Mountains, seemed to be a perfect idea to spend time together outdoors while observing social distancing and all other safety requirements. Thanks to the support of Tomasz Radczuk, Leader of the GE HealthAhead group and our guide on the trip, we were able to get to know each other in entirely new circumstances. The time spent together made us realize our strengths and weaknesses, and coping with fatigue on the trail boosts your confidence. The next day, we all took part in a run held by the Poland Business Run Foundation. The GE Women's Network group also funded the awards for the best women's team, which were presented for the first time this year.

MOVING FORWARD

We are delighted with what we have achieved so far and continue to move forward. We plan to hold meetings in October and November to discuss preventative care. This is an important issue to discuss, but it is even more important to act and lead by example. This year, the GE Women's Network joined forces with GE HealthAhead and held a run to Piłsudski Mound, one of the landmarks of Kraków. The event helped us remember that "prevention is the foundation," which is important to know, especially during the pandemic crisis. The project's organizer was Natalia Jarzębska, distinguished by her participation in the Women in DT program.

We continue to be active despite the pandemic. Together with the GE Branding Team group and its leaders Magdalena Fuczko and Katarzyna Żydek, we are working on a series of interviews with people from the GE Women's Network. Our group also includes men who support us and participate in the training programs and workshops we organize. The results of our work will soon be available online for all to see.

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