

March 2019

STEM
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Spotlight

INDUSTRY TOUCHPOINT



To Xfinity & beyond: Local ladies lead Comcast's next-gen innovation era



(Photo courtesy of Comcast NBCUniversal)

Carolyn Terry, Senior Director of Engineering for the Comcast West Division, has built many things over the years – including the infrastructure for digital video and Gig-speed broadband.

Promoting women in tech » Studies show businesses across all industries are more profitable when women are represented in top leadership positions. STEM fields are seeing the greatest need for women in general, and especially in leadership roles.

The number of women in tech jobs dropped 11 percent between 1991 and 2018, according to a study by the World Economic Forum. A lack of mentors and female role models in the field is among the reasons women are underrepresented in technology – they hold just one-quarter of technology and IT jobs and just 5 percent of leadership positions in the tech sector.

In Utah, Comcast is among companies at the leading edge of actively recruiting, growing and supporting female employees at every job level. Utah's growing demand for STEM talent to keep pace with the rising tech industry and growing economy has prompted a greater push for women in STEM jobs, and Comcast's investment of more than \$702 million in Utah technology and infrastructure has prompted its intensified focus on further building a diverse and inclusive workforce



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— one which already boasts an existing talent pool of trailblazing women leaders.

Among Comcast's lineup of leading ladies is Carolyn Terry, Senior Director of Engineering for the Comcast West Division. She has 30+ years of experience in telecommunications and broadband industry. While she's built many things over the years – including the infrastructure for digital video and Gig-speed broadband – Carolyn is most proud of the teams she's created and the professionals she has helped to grow.

When Carolyn started as a technician in 1986, she quickly felt like part of the Comcast family. But she remembers feeling like she stood out from the other installers in one regard.

"It was totally male – there were no women in the field at all," Carolyn explains.

She took this distinction as a challenge, volunteering for the toughest jobs to prove she could handle them. (Growing up with three older brothers fed her competitive spirit.)

Even then, more than three decades ago, Carolyn saw the future possibilities of technology innovation, and the promise of connecting more people with each other and their communities.

She had a vision for building a different kind of network – one which was the envy of the world and included more female technologists, engineers, designers and executives working and leading in the telecommunications and technology industry.

Thanks to the vision, innovation, and involvement of role models like Carolyn, today many other women are succeeding in engineering and technology positions at Comcast.

One of those women is Michelle Hathenbruck, of Riverton, Technical Operations Supervisor for Comcast Utah. She started her career with Comcast 13



(Photo courtesy of Comcast NBCUniversal)

Michelle Hathenbruck started her career with Comcast as a technician 13 years ago and has since worked her way up to Technical Operations Supervisor.

years ago, working her way up from a technician. Today, Michelle supervises a team of eight – all men – based out of Park City.

Asked why there aren't more women in her area of the company, Michelle observes, "People think of the tech guy – not the tech girl – and that creates a stigma."

When Michelle took the supervisor reins seven years ago, she admits she felt a bit intimidated to be supervising a team of men, some of whom had been at the company longer than she had. But the feeling didn't last long.

"Gaining respect was the first step," Michelle says. "There are different ways to do that, but for me, it was about working alongside my team, showing them that I know what I am doing, and helping them grow in their career."

Many thanks to Comcast NBCUniversal for sharing this story as part of Women's History Month, and special thanks to Comcast team members Carolyn Terry, Michelle Hathenbruck, and the many other leading ladies who are inspiring more females to pursue STEM.



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