

Search4STEM Brenda Lane Rosen, A User Case

Brenda Lane Rosen is the CEO of a multinational company which produces handbags designed, as their marketing information states, “for women in the 21st century who need 24/7 access to their belongings.” The company, Portable, has added several features this past year which have resulted in a significant increase in revenue.

She wants Portable to engage in corporate philanthropy and is looking for a project in K-12 STEM (she understands its centrality in all professions now and into the future) to invest in which would reflect her values and the niche held by the company. She is not sure about whether she wants to support a project already scalable or an entirely new one which could fill a current gap.

The decision will be made by the Board of Directors but, of course, she will do due diligence before making a recommendation. She is aware that many major corporations already have developed programs in curriculum and professional development in and out of school in mathematics and science. She thinks engineering might be a perfect spot but wants to know what already exists.

She learned from one of her managers whose husband works for the Department of Higher Education that there is a fairly new site where interested parties can access information about all programs, projects, products, initiatives, collaborations and services in STEM education, preK through 16.

Aptly named “Search4STEM” the site opens with a welcoming screen which describes how to use the system. A page then appears which requests personal/professional information about Brenda which will inform and tailor any search in the future. It asks for a description of her business and role, her academic background and why she is interested in STEM.

The query asks for what she is exploring at this time...There are many elements she can check off: Grade levels for the intervention, STEM subject(s), Description of elements (for example, whether the program is hands-on, project based, teacher centered, only web based, hybrid, etc.), Contact Information, Evaluation Information, Cost and testimony from previous users. Videos of STEM professionals describing their careers and preparation are also available...

She reviews the relevant criteria and up come three engineering programs (one in a nearby state) which meet those conditions and which she did not already know about. She decides that since the number is so small she will contact all and ask further questions. Then she will be able to determine whether to support one or more of them or to fund the develop of one that does not yet exist but will meet some needs she has identified as she has reviewed the site.

Once she has explored the possibilities and determined costs, she will make a recommendation to the Board which she is sure the members will accept.