


Peltz's proxy fight with P&G misguided



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I'm confused by Nelson Peltz's recent comments on how Procter & Gamble's attitude on innovation is holding the company back.

Every day for the past two years, when I walk through the front doors of Union Hall – the startup hub in Over-the-Rhine – I'm reminded of the origin story of Cintrifuse – a story that hinges on the vision, backing and engagement of companies like P&G.

Since we cut the ribbon on this building, more than 40,000 visitors seeking inspiration, connection and investment have come through our co-working space – a \$17 million, 38,000-square-foot building where innovation reigns supreme.

In 2011, Bob McDonald, CEO of P&G at the time, led the Cincinnati Business Committee's innovation task force.

He and his team built a strategic

framework and action plan that would dramatically accelerate the development of an innovation economy in the region benefiting existing companies and startups alike – a bold economic development angle never before attempted by a city of our size.

Simply put, P&G showed us how to innovate. The result is Cintrifuse.

From the very beginning of Cintrifuse's existence, P&G was driving our success. McDonald would serve as the first chairman of the Cintrifuse board. Today, Valarie Sheppard, P&G SVP, comptroller and treasurer, holds this position. Our first CEO was Jeff Weedman, a P&G executive-on-loan, responsible for the company's Global Connect & Develop program designed to help innovators and patent holders connect with P&G. The DNA of Cintrifuse is the DNA of P&G.

I'm proud to say that Greater Cincinnati is recognized as the No. 1 startup region in Ohio (number five in the Midwest) by the Kauffman Foundation, and we're still just getting started. None of this success would be possible without the commitment and leadership of P&G.

Reading the recent comments attributed to Peltz, CEO of Triam Fund Management, I grow wary. Peltz called P&G's local research and development arm a "hobby" and proposed to move large portions of jobs from the company out of our region. This is simply not acceptable. Fewer highly skilled, well-paying jobs at P&G's headquarters in Cincinnati would be devastating to the entrepreneurial ecosystem that P&G has worked so hard to develop locally.

The relationship that P&G has worked tirelessly to establish with our startup ecosystem (Startup-Cincy) is symbiotic. Greater Cincinnati, as a region, is able to attract, cultivate and retain talent because of P&G's involvement in the city's development and our community.

When I said that I'm constantly reminded of their collaboration, it's because every day I walk past their logo on the walls of Union Hall. They are a founding investor in Cintrifuse, with commitments that allow us to operate as maximalists on behalf of our BigCos, startups, investors and universities. And this is only a single instance of their involvement in the

broader community. Participation at this level is NOT a "hobby."

StartupCincy has never been more vibrant. Powered in part by nearly 400 tech-enabled startups, the Cincinnati innovation community holds more promise for moving our region forward than ever before. This momentum is thanks to the foresight and influence of P&G and its stewardship of the city from which it was born.

P&G is Cincinnati's original startup, and the reason we are known as city "built by entrepreneurs." P&G's innovation culture isn't holding the back. In fact, P&G's innovation culture is driving them forward to new heights. It's a culture that is driving this entire region forward. So, in the face of this misguided campaign by Peltz, we're standing with P&G. **Voit Blue.**

Wendy Lea is CEO of Cintrifuse, a public-private partnership between the state of Ohio, city of Cincinnati and global businesses headquartered here, committed to developing the next stage of growth for the region – growth from entrepreneurs and tech-based startups.

[1] Statement above based on a conversation that took place among David Taylor, Jon Moeller and Nelson Peltz on March 7, 2017 and a subsequent conversation among David Taylor, Jim Mc Nerney, Ken Chenault, Angela Braly and Nelson Peltz that took place on July 11, 2017.