SCIENTIST SNAPSHOT

Matt Miklas

At Sterling, our highly experienced team members and their passion for what they do are central to who we are. This month, we spoke with Matt Miklas, Senior Technical Manager at Sterling's Germantown site, about his role and the site's capabilities.

Can you describe your background and current role at Sterling?

I attended the University of Wisconsin and received my degree in Chemical Engineering. Shortly after graduation, I started at Cambridge Major Laboratories, which is now Sterling's Germantown site. I initially started as a Process Engineer, at a time when the site was building additional expertise in scale-up and commercialisation to complement its strong chemistry competencies for greater project continuity. Another one of my early focuses was redefining the site's process and cleaning validation procedures to align with the evolving regulatory requirements.

Early on, I became really interested in how the three areas we consider part of our development organisation—engineering, chemistry, and analytical—work together to ensure right first time manufacturing. In 2018, I started in a Technical Manager role, which gave me the opportunity to help implement the work cell model at our site. It's been really exciting to see a more integrated approach take shape since I started at the site, as it enables us to work more collaboratively as a team and provides a lot of advantages to our customers. Most notably, it supports greater consistency when a customer has multiple projects, as they can work with the same core team members to build relationships and expectations. It also provides redundancy, as having multiple resources within the cells allows us to apply additional resources when necessary to support project timelines.

How is the Germantown site's work cell model set up?

At its core, the work cell model is in place to drive as much collaboration as possible across the three key development teams I mentioned and build a comprehensive control strategy for each project. This collaboration starts as soon as we bring in a new project, as all of the teams involved review proposals to ensure alignment, develop controls, and present them internally. The same team then works with the customer throughout the entire project for greater continuity and collaboration.

Our work cell model definitely drives how we approach development. We get a lot of feedback from customers that really enjoy this model, particularly those that have larger or multiple projects at our site. They appreciate the ability to work with a team they know well when bringing in new projects or repeat development or manufacturing campaigns.

Fast Facts

ROLE

Senior Technical Manager

JOINED STERLING

October 2013

EDUCATION

B.S. in Chemical Engineering, University of Wisconsin-Madison

SPECIALISATIONS

Process engineering, process integration, GMP, design of experiments

LINKEDIN

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Sterling

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What does a typical day look like as Senior Technical Manager?

My day involves a lot of interaction and collaboration, both with our customers and with our internal teams. Internally, my focus is largely on ensuring that the development team works together smoothly and efficiently. I always want to ensure that everyone involved in a given project is on the same page from day one to avoid any unanticipated hurdles. I also foster collaboration with other areas of the Sterling organisation, such as supply chain, quality assurance and manufacturing, to ensure a seamless transition into the plant when the time comes, and then continue to provide support at that level.

Externally, I work with customers to keep them up-to-date as their projects progress. It is critical that we're aligned on a clear path forward on both development and manufacturing. Transparency and continuity are crucial for us, so we always make sure that our customers have full visibility. These are key pieces to building strong, lasting relationships with our customers, which is something we really value at Germantown and across Sterling.

Can you talk more about how you collaborate with customers in your role?

From the very beginning of a project, we work closely with our customers on evaluating proposals and creating an action plan to work through the lifecycle of the project. We try to drive customer collaboration as much as possible. In general, we have regular, standing calls with our customers to go over development and project progress. The teams working on the projects generally lead these calls to deliver first-hand updates and insight, but I'm there to provide any additional support as needed.

Across the Germantown site, but also across all of Sterling, we feel that working through any challenges together with customers is really key to success. If any key challenges do arise, I step in to work with the customer and our internal teams to overcome them. In addition to these regular customer meetings, I provide support from a technical side for any onsite customer meetings and audits that occur.

Why should a customer choose to work with Sterling?

Customers often like to work with a single, strategic partner, so I believe that's why ours continue to come back to work with Sterling. We have a strong history of getting projects to commercialisation, even for projects starting in very early phases, which shows customers that we have the expertise and knowledge to help them throughout the entire lifecycle of a project.

As I mentioned, I think the continuity and collaboration enabled by the work cell model would be another reason. With different teams working on the project together, our customers gain the insight and support they need at every stage. I strongly believe that the level of collaboration and transparency we have with our customers sets Sterling apart. It is the single most important reason our existing customers continue to work with Sterling, and why potential customers partner with us as they aim to bring their projects to commercialisation.

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What are some goals you have moving forward within your role and at the Germantown site?

We've added a number of different capabilities to our site in recent years, from spray drying, to micronisation, to investment in additional HPAPI capabilities to support integration with our Deeside ADC conjugation facility. We continue to consider our customers' objectives and changes in the industry at large as we invest in new technologies and capabilities.

We've also made strides to integrate more across all of Sterling's sites and work together collaboratively. One way we've done this is through our Learning Lab, where all of our sites come together to share successes. In addition, we were able to tap into the Dudley solid state team's expertise when implementing micronisation here at Germantown. It's extremely beneficial for all of our sites that we have the ability to take advantage of our network, bringing in other sites' areas of specialisation to improve and expand processes from a technical standpoint.

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