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Attracting Employees to the Backstretch Industry

The backstretch community is a tight community consisting of individuals that work every day, even holidays to maintain the racing horses in a stable and healthy environment. Although working in the backstretch has their advantages, the industry can also offer benefits and advantages for those with families to attract new employees. Like any other industry, shortening labor force is real. Thus, the industry needs to implement changes to attract new employees to the backstretch.

The industry could attract new employees if they offered healthcare benefits for their employees throughout the year. For example, if employees were given dental and medical insurance at their workplace, they would be more likely to work in the backstretch. Making healthcare accessible to the backstretch population would increase the chance of an employee to value their job due to the benefit of having healthcare coverage.

Another way that the industry can attract more employees is if the length of the racing year at each track was longer. For example, the Hawthorne racing meet is only a couple of months. For individuals that must travel out of state and leave their families behind it becomes an inconvenient job. If the racing meets were longer each year, individuals would be more attracted to stay working in the backstretch rather than seeking for a job where they can stay with their family.

Some of the entry barriers potential employees face are being afraid of working with horses. It takes time for someone that has never worked with animals before to adjust to working with them. There is a tactic to working with them and rewarding them with good behavior. Although depending on the work they do for the horses, horses can be intimidating due to their size. If an individual rides them, they must adapt to controlling them while being on top of the horse. Whereas, if the employee is a hotwalker, they have to adapt to the horses walking rhythm. In brief, no matter the position the employee works for in the backstretch, their life is always at risk since they are working with animals. Therefore, being scared of the horses poses a potential entry barrier to many individuals.

Adding on, another entry barrier potential employees face is being able to communicate with their employers or doctors due to a language barrier. For the most part, many individuals working in the backstretch are Spanish speakers, while the trainers and doctors are English speakers only. When that is the case, there can be miscommunication between the workers and employers. Over time, employees start learning and understanding the routine that is done with the horses on the daily that communicating becomes easier. Overall, language barrier to those that are Spanish speakers only can be an example of an entry barrier potential employees face.

To conclude, the industry can play a major role in attracting new employees by implementing changes to the industry such as healthcare benefits and longer meets. Aside from those changes, the industry overall can offer other benefits throughout the year in order for workers to feel appreciated and valued for their hard work. Thus, there will always be a

shortening labor force in the backstretch, yet there will always be individuals who will continue to work there due to their love and commitment to the backstretch.