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Feb 20, 2020 Issue #44: HR & POLI SCI 1.5.0: Social Contract - Signature needed?

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"The real job of a leader is not being in charge but taking care of those in our charge" says Simon Sinek.

Or as I like to say: we hire adults - we need to treat them as such.

What do I mean by that?

Case-in-point: We employ people who are able to negotiate vacation planning with their spouses and kids, who are able to navigate the quagmire of housing, insurance and streaming options: who are able to make choices and decisions and bring their life experience to the door everyday. Their abilities are inherently there - otherwise why would we choose to hire them? Unfortunately all too often, people are micromanaged, treated like bad children, managed in accordance to the 1% of risk versus the 99%, and are not encouraged to bring their full potential and abilities to shine at work.

Newsflash, folks do not want to be micro-managed - but rather want to have an impact and grow. Which is why we as consenting adults choose to be part of a team or organization. Every employee/ colleague/ supplier/ customer/ consultant/ etc. has an option if they choose to work with you or not. Now, I am not saying that there might not be hardships (financially/ socially/ politically/ legally etc.) if they do not - but everyone has a choice.

This choice forms the basis the social contract we become part of a community, team, or organization.

Which is why nowadays the term of "social contract" is coming up more and more often as something that is changing in our broader world. For those of you who like me do not have a political science or philosophy degree, social contract theory is the idea that people come together to form a group or community. Which only can (somewhat) stably exist via implicit and explicit standards that are commonly agreed-to set around the moral, communal and political rules of behavior. In other words, we can live morally based on our own choices and not because a higher/or divine power requires it. The expectations around the social contract change with time.

For example, during the 80's it became commonly accepted that business leaders accountability was to their shareholders. Right now, there is a monumental shift from this social contract model of organisations and leadership like we saw in the 181 CEOs joining together in August 2019 to "broaden responsibility of business beyond profit, to incorporate all stakeholders impacted - the general public." The social contract around personal and leadership integrity is being examined on a broader scale. The employee experience is founded on the idea of a social contract. This new focus has led to the results of the 5 elements of responsible leadership being presented during the World Economic Forum meeting in January 2020. These elements were identified after interviewing more than 20,000 people around the world. The five elements for a responsible leader e.g. the social contract glue are: 1. Stakeholder Inclusion 2. Emotion & Intuition 3. Mission & Purpose 4. Technology & Innovation 5. Intellect & Insight.

This, in turn, means that for us as adults who are part of teams, organizations, society - no matter if the word leader or HR is in our title or not - it is an important opportunity to test the stickiness of the social glue and our own expectations around what we choose to be a part of.



What is the new social contract on how we interact and enable one another?

5.1 Social Contract: Leadership

Rewriting the Social Contract | Scott Frakes | TEDx Nebraska Correctional Center for Women

This is a great TEDx talk from Scott Frakes, Director of the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services to a group of incarcerated women. He talks about his journey as a leader of a correctional facility on how his behaviors, his willingness to fight bias, to guide with hope, respect and an ability to listen make a difference via the social contract he has with his facility's community.

www.youtube.com

How Business Leaders Can Rebuild Trust and Renew the Social Contract

A look at the business leaders role in the 10 years after the financial crisis on the imperative "that business leaders take a new approach—one that signals that this time things are different, that lessons have been learned, and that they will manage for the benefit of the company, the business network, and the wider community." This is a good guide as to what that looks like as a business leader.



This is similar to what the WEF 2015 Outlook on the Global agenda report around the need for a revamp in leadership.

The ideas continue in a good article around trust in boards and the social contract responsibilities they carry and need to restore.

www.bcg.com

Ending Our Obsession With Leadership - Paul Taylor

"Organisations need to completely rethink what it means to lead. It's not about one person or even those residing at the top anymore. In today's world, everyone has to adopt a leadership mindset. We have to think of ourselves as members of a leadership community" - Patty McCord, former chief talent officer, Netflix. This article looks at the major drawbacks of "worshipping" the leadership role - to the detriment of the social contract impact of the team, organization and broader community purpose.

paultaylor.com

3 pillars of responsible leadership for the 2020s | World Economic Forum

"Corporate stakeholders increasingly demand strong ethics and social vision. How can leaders shape this trend?" This is the introduction of the underlying societal shift and the pillars of responsible leadership which are according to WEF:

- Leaders are waking up to stakeholder demands for responsible corporate action.
The new generation of leaders will prioritize purpose over profit.
Implementing this can help identify unexpected spheres of action.



The full report from Accenture and Forum of Young Global Leaders that delves deeper into the 5 elements of shareholder inclusion, emotion and intuition, mission and purpose, technology and innovation and intellect and insight is most definitely worth a read.

www.weforum.org

5.2 Social Contract: Team

For Great Teamwork, Start with a Social Contract

This is a very simple and effective practice - which is to create an explicit agreement around how members will work together, make decisions, communicate, share information, and support each other. For example: "What expectations do team members have of each other? What is working well within the team? What is not working well? What should the team keep doing, start doing, and, as most importantly, stop doing?" So simple - yet they make such a difference.

hbr.org



How to make a social contract and build better teams | Scrum.org

This blog post looks approaches that help encourage positive behaviour and manage when things get difficult in cross-functional teams by examining why social contracts are important, how to create one and how to use them.

www.scrum.org

The New Employer-Employee Social Contract

This is a dive into people and culture practices as an employer. Be it compensation and management, to culture, to learning and development.



If you are in a people and culture role, I recommend reading and considering your own organizational contract you have with your employees - be they on your permanent payroll or not.

www.chieftalentnavigator.com

5.3 Social Contract: Society

Global Inclusive Growth and the Social Contract - Interview with Madeleine Albright

Recorded in November 2019 at the Global Inclusive Growth summit, this is a must-watch interview IMHO. The discussion between former Secretary of State - and refugee herself - Madeline Albright and Joshua Johnson from NPR, is about renewing the social contract with inclusive growth at the center. They discuss global issues - like rising nationalism and migration - that are at stake, and explain why inclusive growth is necessary to address them.

For fodder to support this stance, refer to this WEF 2018 report on why it is time for a new social contract.

www.youtube.com

A New Social Contract for the Digital Age: G20 Insights - Observer Research Foundation

"Digital transformations are rapidly altering the nature of work, models of employment, contracts, regulations and protections. Increasingly, the responsibilities of the state are becoming the obligations of, and a business case for, the private sector. This devolution of 'governance responsibility' is happening at a rapid pace. In many locations, this coincides with the decentralization of political power to local administrations. A new social contract between citizens, consumers, employees, the state, and enterprise is needed to delineate a new understanding around rights, responsibilities and entitlements." The authors outline seven norms for defining these relationships in the digital age.



A great read for any business leader - whether start-up or multi-national.

www.g20-insights.org

Question: How do you view the 5 elements of a responsible leader in your organization?

This post came about because I kept hearing the term "social contract" being thrown around but only with a vague sense as to what the concept actually meant. For me, it is a cornerstone of being able to find fulfillment in the work one does - be it via the impact, growth or relationships. I hope that the idea is a bit more clear and also inspires you within your organization to ask: how are we enabling and listening? What are the things we need to start/stop and continue doing?

If you would like my support in not only facilitating the asking of these questions but also working together with you and your team around answering, simply reach out to me. I would love to see how we can work on the "stickiness" of the glue together.

Wishing you a wonderful Mardi gras - Fasnet - Carnaval for those of you celebrating (may you get the prize in the King cake this year!)

All of my best regards,

Liz

Chief Talent Navigator at Transforming Talent

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