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Frankie Cory, CEO, Mischief PR



MBA

Day by Day

**Turn world-class thinking
into everyday
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Chris Dalton

Praise for *MBA Day by Day*

‘This book is one to read in a week and refer to for a career. It provides the models and theories to use, and inspires leaders to build stable and visionary organisations. I felt like a door had been held open for me into a world of ideas and experience that will help me in my management and leadership.’

Jo Youle, CEO and Founder, Missing People

‘In an age where the relevance of an MBA is being questioned, Chris’s book justifies why we need MBAs. This is my go-to book. Whether preparing for a module, undertaking an assignment or considering my next steps at work, I turn to this book as my North Star.’

Lt Col Chris Lane MBE RA, British Army

‘*MBA Day by Day* is the most read book on my bookshelf; there’s not been a week gone by that I haven’t referred back to it. It’s so good I’ve bought copies for friends and colleagues thinking about their own career development.’

Frankie Cory, CEO, Mischief PR

‘Not simply just another management book, *MBA Day by Day* offers a comprehensive overview of an MBA written in a highly readable manner. Whether an experienced or aspiring manager, this book will stimulate and challenge thought processes, encouraging the reader to stop and reflect about work and life.’

Roberta Pace Balzan, Brand Manager, Roche UK

Performance and reward

HR specialists are probably still the ones, even in smaller organisations, who take first responsibility for recommending financial rewards and they may also oversee the development and deployment of policies to evaluate employee performance. But what these practices and policies look like will vary, depending on national location and culture, company history and strategic intent. Without doubt, the organisation will also want you to pay most attention to performance. When you are in tune with the policies of your organisation, all this can be a very smooth ride. When you're not, it will dramatically interfere with your job, though you will have no one else to blame but yourself if that happens. I'll consider management involvement in performance from three perspectives – motivation, teamwork and the individual's performance.

Motivation: job satisfaction and happiness at work

US psychologist Frederick Herzberg's two-factor theory of motivation and satisfaction prompted a change in how we understand people's engagement with their jobs.⁵ Herzberg agreed with the idea that human beings have a set of needs and desires and that achieving these is what motivates us. Abraham Maslow had earlier presented a hierarchy of needs, arranged in a pyramid with basic physiological requirements such as shelter at the base and self-actualisation (never fully defined) at the summit.⁶ Herzberg thought, however, that motivation was a bit more complex. Basic needs demotivate us when they are absent but do not add to our happiness when present. Higher-level needs provide real satisfaction and these are what we truly seek. Herzberg saw two independently functioning factors:

- **Motivators:** these include being challenged by our work, receiving recognition, achievement or personal growth.

When present in our workplace, they give us meaning. They are also all concerned with carrying out tasks. When absent, they tend to make us feel less worthwhile and less competent, which is deeply dissatisfying.

- **Hygiene factors:** these are necessary because, when present, they prevent demotivation. However, they do not intrinsically lead to motivation when they are present. Examples include salary, fringe benefits and bonuses, and these will form the context of carrying out tasks, but not what brings us real satisfaction.

If this sounds like common sense, it may be that it is. But, like many basic business concepts, ‘the devil is in the detail’ and the infinite variation that arises in each particular situation (remember Schön and his swampy lowlands) produces dilemmas for you as a manager. For example, how important do you think praise for a job well done is in motivating a team? In some people and teams it won’t be valued, while for others it may be more significant than pay. Maslow and Herzberg’s are theories that point to motivation towards desirable goals or ends. Other theories focus on means, or the processes of motivation. Vroom’s expectancy theory says that people will choose a way of acting depending on their expectation of the result (the end dictates the means), so managers must remember that motivation is the relationship between effort and result in people’s minds.

It’s not a big jump from this to the idea known as the psychological contract (see Figure 4.1), which is a way of measuring how employer and employee see their mutual obligations in employment. At one end of the spectrum, it is as a *social exchange*, where psychological well-being, belonging and loyalty are highly valued. At the other end, it is as an *economic exchange*, a transaction of time for money with no expectation of an emotional or long-term attachment.

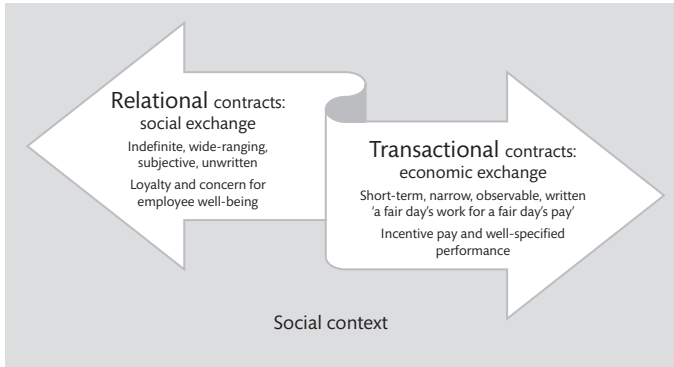


FIGURE 4.1 The psychological contract

Source: Adapted from Rousseau, D.M. (1995) *Psychological Contracts in Organizations: Understanding Written and Unwritten Agreements*, Sage Publications, Inc. Reproduced with permission.

The nature of work, however, is undergoing change at a rate unprecedented since the very first days of the industrial revolution. We're now used to flat and matrix management structures, the movement of services and jobs around the world, and the pressures on equality and diversity in the workplace, but these are trends from the past acting on the present. We are now more in tune with the 'human' in human resource management than we used to be.

CASE STUDY

Breaking the Silence

David Beeney enjoyed a successful career in media and achieved his goal of becoming the managing director of a regional daily newspaper by the age of only 35. His career continued to blossom and he rose to become one of the commercial directors of Auto Trader. Despite David's success, he hid a huge secret from everybody in his life, both

professionally and personally, until 16 May 2016 when he outed himself about his mental health. The decision to open up and be honest about his life-long struggles with panic attacks and anxiety has changed his life dramatically.

David founded Breaking the Silence Ltd⁷ in October 2016 and in only two years he has become one of the leading advisers in the UK on how you create cultures in the workplace that are free from the stigma of mental ill-health. He demonstrates the link between well-being strategy and business results and how the creation of kinder environments drives employee energy levels. His clients include HSBC, Virgin Media, TUI, Direct Line, Sainsbury's and the NHS and, in 2018, he was named one of the top 101 influencers globally on employee engagement.

David struggles to understand why so many boardrooms still regard mental health awareness as a fluffy subject, focusing on numbers more than the well-being of their people. Senior leaders need to set the tone from the top of their organisation by sharing how mental health has touched their own lives. He believes that too many CEOs lose their job because they are scared to share vulnerability, seeing it as a weakness. He coaches senior leaders to understand that when you share vulnerability, you inspire those around you and strengthen your position as the head of an organisation.

Managers tend not to speak to staff about mental health because they do not feel qualified. The great news is that they do not need to be. When Breaking the Silence delivers mental health workshops, it trains managers on the benefits of kindness rather than increasing knowledge of mental health. To quote David, 'It took me five years to qualify as a mental health counsellor and it's still a tough job. You can't send managers on a two-day course and expect them to come back qualified to fix people.' David believes that the job of a people manager with regard to mental health is twofold. ►

First comes creating a personable relationship where employees feel safe to open up. Then it's a matter of signposting professional help and checking in with that person until you know they are seeing either a counsellor or their GP.

David believes that, unless businesses get better at dealing with mental health in the same way they deal with physical health, they will have increasing numbers of HRM issues to deal with and lose many more employees to long-term work-related stress. Businesses have to create kinder cultures for employees to feel they can break their silence and talk openly about their emotional well-being. David has committed the rest of his career to 'breaking the silence' that exists around mental health and creating stigma-free environments.

How do you feel about the explicit call to organisations to bring a full awareness of mental health and well-being into their tactical and strategic awareness? Do you think it the right thing to do? Is it possible?

In the future, what will managing people be about? Well, we can expect the following to feature (and also expect some surprises):

- lifestyle career choices
- gap years at all ages, not just between school and university
- lifelong learning
- a move from corporate social responsibility to a business model of sustainability (see Chapter 12)
- more interest in talent and succession management involving millennials
- a lot more virtual teamwork.

The last one on this list, teamwork, is a perennial MBA topic, second only to leadership as an object of scrutiny. From talking to executives about their experiences at work, my opinion is that organisations are cautious about the future. They will want managers who are confident with virtual working, willing to be flexible about how and when they work, and committed to putting their personal development goals on hold, if possible. Not great news for the self-directed, lifelong learner, who will be looking for balance between work and home. Technology will blur the lines between work and 'life' even more in the future, which means that building networks will be the key skill.

Teams: working with and through others

First-line managers will be expected to demonstrate a willingness to become part of them; middle managers a proficiency in leading them; senior managers a command of the subtleties of managing people in them. With increasingly flat management hierarchies and matrix reporting structures, teams and teamwork have become a ubiquitous feature of large organisations in the last 30 years. Even small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) often construct work around them. Teams and groups interest academics, too, and have been studied for decades. Influential psychologist Kurt Lewin coined the term 'group dynamics' in 1945, and the subject has filled the pages of management textbooks ever since.⁸ Our study of group covers many scenarios, including a workplace team. All teams must have a specific reason (or charter) for their existence, but there are really two basic types:

- 1 Collaborative:** any group whose aim is achievement of one shared goal or output; in other words, the output can be achieved only by working together.