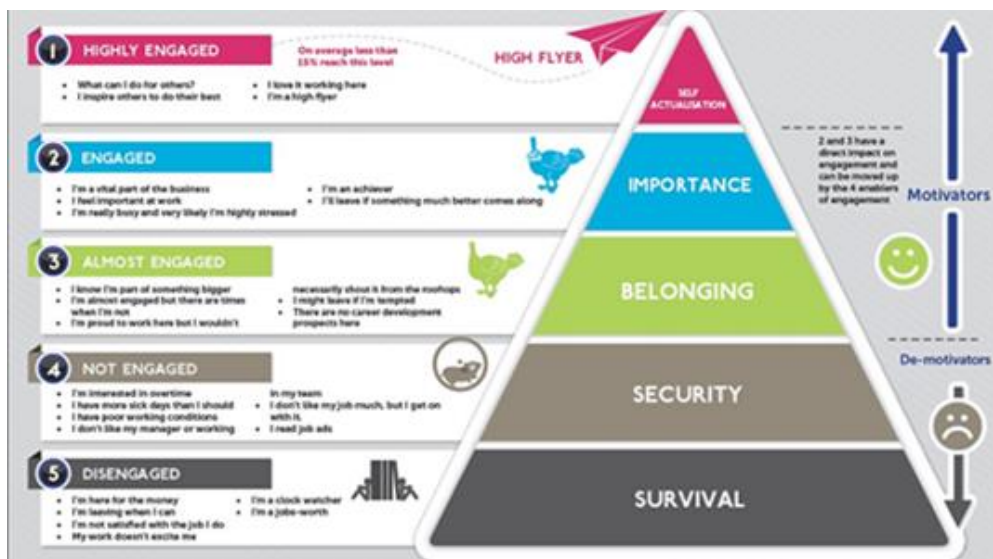


J. Michael Locke Musings

#145: Musing September 24, 2021

Some great inside looks at the evil empire of Facebook last week by WSJ. I hate leaks but, in this case, I praise an insider for giving reporters lots of internal documents. The Facebook algorithm focuses on MSI – Meaningful Social Interactions. It looks at how many people react to your post (like it, share it, comment on it) and how close in your network they are. The problem is that “extreme”/partisan content drives higher level of reaction and thus has better MSI and thus gets promoted by the algorithm. The algorithm actually predicts the potential of a post to go viral and thus serves up this type of content – “outrage bait”. The result: our hyper-partisan, filter bubble world! Here is a tweet from the former head of Facebook’s civic team: “When you treat all engagement equally (irrespective of content), increasing feed engagement will invariably amplify misinfo, sensationalism, hate, and other societal harms. I wish this weren't the case, but it is so predictable that it is perhaps a natural law of social networks”. Get off Facebook!

Remote/hybrid work is leading to more fragile employee/employer connections and thus higher levels of resignation and turnover. HR needs to think about employee engagement like Maslow’s hierarchy and create programs to drive to self-actualization. Interesting graphic on this:



It is not just important for employee development and engagement to get workers into the office but also for their own mental health. Employees need to interact F2F with other people. Good article (thanks Sunny Chico): [work-home-burnout-is-lot-more-complex-you-think](#)

A couple follow-ups from recent topics:

I shared that I find the “milquetoast” communication by many coaches to be poor leadership. Don’t count Northwestern coach Pat Fitzgerald in that group. He calls it like it is. After a recent loss, he said “I would like to stop doing what losing teams do. Losing teams turn the ball over. Losing teams have self-inflicted wounds. Losing teams give up explosive plays. Losing teams have communication issues. That’s why you lose games. This is not hard”.

According to Merriam-Webster it is “milquetoast” and not “milk toast”: *“Caspar Milquetoast was a comic strip character created in 1924 by the American cartoonist Harold T. Webster. The strip, called “The Timid Soul,” ran every Sunday in the New York Herald Tribune for many years. Webster, who claimed that Milquetoast was a self-portrait, summed up the character as “the man who speaks softly and gets hit with a big stick.” The earliest examples for Milquetoast used as a generic synonym for “timid person” date from the mid-1930s. Caspar’s last name might remind you of “milk toast,” a bland concoction of buttered toast served in a dish of warm milk.”*

I also highlighted the declining percentage of college students who are men. We are now at 60% women/40% men. Good opinion letter on why in WSJ ([why more women in college](#)) identifies four reasons: 1) the rapid rise in female labor participation with later marriages and fewer kids; 2) labor market shifts towards industries where women outperform like healthcare; 3) women doing better academically; and 4) lots of men are in prison compared to women.

The WSJ came out with their college rankings. They weigh economic outcomes (graduates debt, salaries) more than inputs. Rich schools win because they can be more generous with scholarships. [best-colleges-us-rankings](#). Top 10 are:

1. Harvard University
2. Stanford University
3. Massachusetts Institute of Technology
4. Yale University
5. Duke University
6. Brown University
7. California Institute of Technology
8. Princeton University
9. Johns Hopkins University
10. Northwestern University

Personally, I would focus on those schools with great engagement. That is what makes for a good community. Top Schools for Engagement:

1. Dordt University
2. Samford University
3. Harvard University
4. Baylor University
5. Brigham Young University-Provo
6. Cedarville University
7. University of Michigan-Ann Arbor
8. University of Notre Dame
9. Oral Roberts University
10. Purdue University West Lafayette

11. University of Southern California

Interesting stats: according to Bill Maher, AOC's dress is already happening as "the richest 65,000 New Yorkers out of 8 million people pay 51 percent of taxes."

jml