

Wednesday, May 31, 2006

## **Book Review**

Work 2.0: Rewriting the Contract

Author: Jensen, Bill ISBN: 0-7382-0569-9 Format: Hard Cover Pub. Date: 2002

Publisher: Cambridge, MA: Perseus Publishers Pages: 194 Cost: \$25.00 (List) Available: Amazon at as low as \$0.50 (new paperback) \$0.03 (used paperback, shipping \$3.99 at eBay(TM))

(Note: if you are short of cash, wait until our review next month, and buy another book by Bill Jensen. This review tells you everything a teacher needs to know about this new concept of work.) Subtitle:

Rewriting the Contract

This book really is about how information the economy is different from the Industrial Age economy, and how talent is an organization's most valuable asset.

The Books' Topics:

Finding and retaining talented workers is the most important aspect of an Information Economy

Information workers need to be supported in the creative and individual expression of their talents

People need to interact, find inspiration, motivate each other, and collaborate...and these relationships should not be restricted to a company or organization. Collaboration should be world wide

Leadership means supporting and nurturing talent, trusting people and allowing for wildly better results than were first anticipated

The central themes of this book are:

No one needs companies to help them collaborate in our information society

Talented workers won't stay on a job that restricts their output, or their expression

It is difficult (or impossible) for talented employees to accomplish organizational goals with a top-down structure

Leadership (and supporting talented workers) means delivering what workers need, now; and in creating easy solutions for that worker to use on the job

Keywords:

Invisible Workplace

Asset Revolution

Peer-to-Peer Value

Extreme Leadership

Main Idea:

The old-style, top-down, chain-of-command management of bureaucracy is ineffective and obsolete

Talented employees are the most valuable asset of any organization, and collaborating employees leverage (multiply) that value still further

Leadership and management is about trust, and about understanding that meddling with the talents and creativity of employees is always detrimental to the positive outcomes and beneficial results that the organization needs.

Management support means getting out of the way of these talented employees, and letting them express their abilities.

Quotes:

"The biggest shift in the next few years will be how leaders lead."(p. - 46)

"Your company may serve a critical marketplace or customer need. But nobody needs companies anymore to help them collaborate, share, or create. People can now self-organize amazingly well, thank you. Their daily challenge is to get the most out of each connection, often in the least amount of time."(p. - 47)

"If I'm not working on something that is incredibly challenging and incredibly important, I'm not going to be there...My Work My Way includes the way we need to work in order to meet the team's goals. Nonnegotiable are the best tools, total flexibility about how to achieve results, and completely open information sharing."(p. - 51)

"Extreme leaders constantly ask, "Am I doing enough to demonstrate that I respect and trust the people around me? Am I changing enough?"(p. - 120)

"Extreme leaders constantly ask, "How far will we go to ensure that employees can control their own destiny?"(p. - 120)

"...freedom and autonomy ranked equal to, or higher than, compensation in job-interview questions...in order to attract and retain key talent in highest demand, companies will need to create more opportunities to affect company decisions,

build businesses, and share in wealth creation."(p. - 184)

Issues Addressed by the Book:

This book addresses the issue of employee's autonomy and creativity. This concept is important to teachers in two ways:

Politicians and school administrators need to understand that teachers are the most valuable asset of a school (and district), and need to understand that support for autonomy and just-in-time delivery of materials, supplies and resources are the leader's main job

Teachers should be telling their leaders what they need, and leaders performance should be gauged by how well the employee's needs are fulfilled.

Students have the same talent and value as workers. It is the teacher's job to listen to students and to deliver what students need to create, collaborate and produce.

Teacher who demand that school leaders deliver what they need should provide a similar level of support to their students.

The Book's Shortcomings:

This book's style is a bit boring and objective. The book presents information and ideas, rather than a compelling story.

Comments:

The ideas that are presented in this book are valuable for teachers on two levels:

For teachers' contribution as talented knowledge workers

For teachers' "Extreme Leadership" with students

The author's belief that "trust is central" is precisely right-on.

Politicians and school administrators must trust teachers, and teachers must trust students.

The impulse toward mastery and achievement is innate in all people...a force that traditional, factory-oriented schools have been targeted for elimination.

Supporting and nurturing creative minds is required for a society to remain competitive in the global, information economy.

Posted by Classroom Toolkit Newsletter in Book Review at 05:00