

## **Employee Activism: Seeking a Modern Robust Value Proposition (Part I of II)**

In every culture there is both synergy and strain among church/charity, business, and governments. Each sector has a role to play in advancing society. When their tension is in balance, it can lead to innovation, equity, and self-actualization.

However, when any one gains too much power over the others, extreme harm can come to people, prior progress, and natural resources: from the extremes of child labor and revolution, to modern failures like discrimination and lack of progress.

Back in the day, Henry Ford paid workers \$5 per day so they could afford to buy the product they made; clearly this is not applicable to all industries, e.g. Boeing! The historical truth reveals 2 major caveats:

- 1) Ford actually made the change because of high staff turnover costs
  - 2) That pay rate came with strings, many are anathema today (ex. home visits)
- Today, 4 in 10 US adults could not cover an unexpected \$400 expense. (SunTrust)

With today's low US unemployment rate and 21<sup>st</sup> century enlightenment, employees expect more than fair pay – transparency, equity, retirement plans, professional development, flexibility, a healthy environment, purpose, diversity, etc.

Social media is a global catalyst for attaining, a robust employee value proposition.

Consider:

Google (YouTube, AdSense, DoubleClick) “Time’s Up” global walkouts

Marriott (Ritz, W, Starwood, Westin) “Unite Here” strikes

McDonald’s “Fight for \$15” protests & march on their HQ by workers across US

A 2018 PWC report found 80% of execs say, “culture must evolve in the next 5 years to attract, grow, and retain the best people.” Korn Ferry research estimates that, “by 2030, the qualified labor shortage will cost the US economy \$8.45 trillion a year.”

This *shift from employment to engagement to fulfillment* requires a long-term view: today’s savvy workers pursue more than Casual-Friday or Day-of-Service.

Many companies are meeting the challenge directly and creatively:

Chick-fil-A has a generous, extensive scholarship program for restaurant associates.

SunTrust’s “onUp” offers financial education for employees and customers.

Starbucks has a cafe run by hearing-challenged workers who “speak” ASL.

SalesForce, despite a stellar reputation, hired a Chief of Ethical and Humane Use.

Businesses need cultural innovation to develop products, services, brands, growth, and the future workforce that will extend their value into the future. 3BL Media finds “8 out of 10 corporate leaders believe CEO’s now have an obligation to speak out on ESG (Environment, Social, Governance) issues”: [Hartz & Minds #45 & #46](#).

In our next Hartz & Minds, we’ll share more examples of internal improvements that businesses can adopt or adapt to prevent or address employee wants and needs.