WEXFactor

LEADING CONVERSATIONS

Welcome to the WEXFactor Room

JUNE 2024

Welcome to the WEXFactor Room where we invite Wexner alumni from across our network of programs to come together for a Leading Conversation about a pressing topic relevant to the exercising of creative, effective, and joyful leadership. On May 9, 2024, we gathered **Mina Bressler** *(WHP San Francisco Bay Area 22)*, **Omri Dagan** *(Wexner Senior Leader 2016)*, **Mimi Kravetz** *(WFF 1)*, and **Mordy Walfish** *(WGF/DS 22)* to discuss:

Talent Pipeline Crisis

Framing the Topic

Both Israel and North America are experiencing acute versions of this crisis.

In Israel, according to a recent Israeli study from **Coface Bdi for N12**, most public sector workers want to leave their positions. In the Israeli Public Sector, which is responsible for the most basic services in Israel, 66% of the employees want to leave and 62% are thinking about retraining (compared to 44% in the economy as a whole).

In North America, we are addressing the crisis in the context of the pipeline of Jewish professionals. Rabbinical school class sizes at JTS, the Conservative Movement's rabbinical school, for example, have dropped from around 40 students in the 1980s to 12 or fewer as of 2023. As of the 1990s, HUC, the Reform Movement's rabbinical school, was graduating 60 or more students on average across all three of their US campuses. In 2023, HUC ordained half that number of rabbis among its US campuses; in the 2022-23 school year, just 14 students began rabbinical studies.

The story is not limited to the rabbinate. We are seeing severe shortages of teachers, school directors, non-profit managers, CEOs, and others who wish to serve our communities, across the Jewish communal landscape.

For example, Shalom Hartman Institute's Identity Crisis Podcast, **"The Jewish Leadership Pipeline Problem,"** (July 17, 2023, in which Yehuda Kurtzer [WGF/DS 15] interviewed Mordy's colleague, Leading Edge CEO, Gali Cooks) captured the many facets of what has become a recruitment challenge of historic proportions and addressed debates over the value of expertise versus experience, and over precious versus scalable professional development models.

Among the various analyses of the challenge, some argue that for the NA Jewish leadership pipeline problems to be solved, Jewish institutions will have to evolve to at least make leadership possible, so that Jewish professional work is no longer 24/7 work. And in Israel, it has been suggested that for Public Sector work to regain its appeal, there will need to be salary increases, greater contact with managers, and increased desire to advance within the field.

WE ASKED THIS GROUP OF WEXNER ALUMNI:

How do you experience the crisis in your setting or community?

"I don't necessarily see this as a crisis."

Meet **Mordy Walfish** | mordy@leadingedge.org

Wexner Graduate Fellow/Davidson Scholar 22

CLICK TO LEARN MORE ABOUT MORDY

When I look at the landscape, at the kinds of folks who are devoting their time day in and day out to work in our sector, **I don't necessarily see this as a crisis.** I think it's absolutely a challenge. There's so much work to do with a lot of room for improvement. From what we see at Leading Edge:

1. There are a lot of talented young Jews who are not necessarily finding their way to early career jobs in the Jewish community, whether it's a question of prestige, or pay, or simply not being aware of the opportunities that exist.
2. We know that Jewish organizations have work to do to develop internal talent, to take on management roles, and C suite positions.
3. We also know that there is an increased shortage of Jewish educators and clergy, and a decreasing enrollment in educational programs that lead to those pathways. I do think some Jewish organizations are really struggling to offer competitive salaries and benefits.

That's just a few trends that come to mind. But I don't necessarily buy into the crisis frame.

Mordy is the COO of Leading Edge, helping Jewish organizations improve their workplace culture and leadership so that they can better achieve their missions. He recently relocated to Oakland, CA.

Meet **Mimi Kravetz** | mimikravetz@gmail.com

Wexner Field Fellow 1

CLICK TO LEARN MORE ABOUT MIMI

I'll jump in and build on what Mordy said. It is also my instinct to be really careful about saying there's a talent crisis in the Jewish community, because that implies there's a dearth of outstanding professional and lay talent across the Jewish world. And as someone who has worked in all different sectors and financial services in tech, nothing could be further from the case. **There are amazing professionals who are choosing this work. And they are not only smart and hardworking and committed; they are choosing it because it is a calling. Maybe even more so since 10/7 and I want to honor that.** At the same time, I can still name, as Mordy did, some very specific challenges that I know that we are facing in this space:

1. Building on the rabbinic pipeline issue, yes, we know there are fewer people in school, and we know that people still need rabbinic talent. So, I did some research last year, and 64% of Jews 18 to 44 say that having a relationship with a rabbi and the functions a rabbi serves is important to them. And yet, very few of those people are actually members of synagogues. So, they need rabbis, and they need them in all different places. We also know that in our smallest communities they're hurting for this talent. So, I think we've got to get creative about what kinds of people can rabbi in a world where we have fewer people going into this.
2. Another challenge that concerns me is the pressure on CEOs and executive directors in the Jewish world. Despite the flattening of organizational structures and teams, we know that top leadership is still critical to everything about how a team performs and how the employees feel and are engaged. There is such an incredible amount of pressure that has been there since before 10/7, and there's even more so now. That pressure comes from all the real issues we are facing around Israel and antisemitism. **But the part that worries me most is the pressure from well- intended Jews in our own communities, who sometimes make it even harder for our leaders to do their work.**
3. One other challenge I'll name is a middle management challenge, which isn't special to the Jewish community. McKinsey & Co. had a **whole article** recently about the pressure on middle managers. Middle managers are critical because they're the people that supervise most of the staff who keep an organization running. And if they're feeling the pressure from the top to the bottom, with a lack of growth opportunities, and they need help prioritizing, I think that can lead to a real challenge. But it is one we can address in the Jewish community.

MIMI WANTS YOU TO HEAR THIS IDEA | **LISTEN HERE**

"But the part that worries me most is the pressure from well- intended Jews in our

Mimi is the Chief Impact & Growth Officer at Jewish Federations of North America (better described as Chief Data Wonk by a colleague) supporting Federations and partners in using data to build flourishing Jewish communities. She lives in Berkeley, California with her husband Lee, two dynamic teens, a dog, two cats and fish.

own communities, who sometimes make it even harder for our leaders to do their work."

"No, it's not that there's a crisis, it's that we aren't looking at the right solutions for this challenge."

Meet **Mina Bressler** | Mina.Bressler@gmail.com

CLICK TO LEARN MORE ABOUT MINA

Wexner Heritage Member, San Francisco Bay Area 22

I'm glad that both of you named the crisis word as maybe not the most accurate way of describing this, even though we tend to experience it as a crisis. I think it's actually an adaptive challenge. I was having a hard time thinking through this question over the last week, so I talked to a few people in the field. And they absolutely said, **"No, it's not that there's a crisis, it's that we aren't looking at the right solutions for this challenge."** For example, here is the way we experienced the challenge at my synagogue, where we lost our long-term rabbi. Two years ago, 30% of Conservative synagogues ended up without a rabbi in their search. So, we went on for a second search year. And we are part of a community that actually received a lot of applicants. So, it wasn't a pipeline issue. Last week, I checked in with the person with whom we worked most closely in that search, and she said that still this year the Conservative seminaries are not graduating enough rabbis. This is probably not surprising to any of you guys. But there are all sorts of other kinds of seminaries that are graduating rabbis that are not able to work in the movement.

So, here is what I wonder: Maybe in part because of the pandemic and in part because of other challenges, we are seeing rabbis who have been retiring early from jobs, delaying retirement from jobs, and not coming in at the bottom end to rabbinic rabbinical school. And so that resulted in a shrink in the talent pool for us. At the same time, echoing what Mimi and Mordy said, there is an incredible amount of creative stuff happening around educating our rabbis. Also, for the most part, the people who did not come to us for jobs were going places where their families lived. And I wonder if this is part of the ouch that Mimi, you talked about, and an offshoot of that may be the desire to be close to family became really strong. I'm a therapist in my professional life, and I noticed our rabbi left to be close to family and wonder if rabbis chose other jobs to be closer to family, as well. I wonder if this is about how we've distributed the whole workforce in general.

Part of the bristle for me about calling this a crisis is that it's in the interest of legacy organizations to frame it as a crisis, because that serves them. When we take away the framing of crisis, there is opportunity that excites me. But I think that there may be some loss and challenge associated with this reframe from the perspective of organizations that have been around for many, many decades.

MINA WANTS YOU TO HEAR THIS IDEA | **LISTEN HERE**

Mina is trained as a psychotherapist and policy analyst, which are both skills that come in handy as the President of the Board of the Ronald C. Wornick Jewish Day School and as a member of the Board of Peninsula Sinai Congregation. She lives in San Mateo with her family and two cats.

Meet **Omri Dagan** | omrida@csc.gov.il

CLICK TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OMRI

Wexner Senior Leader 2016

I can tell you that in order to understand the pipeline challenge in Israel, we need to examine the challenges that we faced during the past five years, which have demonstrated that we operate in a very chaotic terrain where consecutive and interrelated crises have emerged, all of them extremely challenging. First, looking back on 2019, there was a political crisis here in Israel which led to five general elections within three and a half years, breeding a budget freeze to our ministries, which naturally raises difficulties for implementing and executing policy. It was later that the COVID 19 crisis erupted, further escalating these previous two crises. In other words, in Israel, the crisis didn't begin post-Coronavirus, we entered that period already damaged. In addition, because that was only the first three years of the five, we had two more challenges to come. The first was of social cohesion and social unrest, prompting every faction in Israeli society to take to the streets with protests about some decisions made by the current or the previous government. The second challenge is that almost every year, there has been a significant security event. And the public system must deal with the entirety of this burden.

I would say the number one challenge that we're facing in the public service system is implementation. And this challenge is not, of course, because senior civil servants are not clever enough, or have bad intentions. It's not about brains, it's about structure. Besides the usual reasons for unattractiveness of the civil service such as low pay, or limited opportunities for advancement, the thing that makes the difference in the Israeli case is that **the system suffers from a fundamental problem related to its structure that doesn't serve the strategy which needs to be dynamic and flexible.**

Omri is the Director of Ha'Midrasha Ha'Leumit, Israel's National school for Leadership, Governance & Management at the Civil Service Commission. Besides being a Civil Servant at heart, he is passionate about music of all kinds and lives with his beloved family in Giv'atayim.

"...the system suffers from a fundamental problem related to its structure that doesn't serve the strategy which needs to be dynamic and flexible."

Omri

For example, take any aspect of life –welfare, health, education, economy, the environment, etc.– every aspect passes through more than one unit within a government office. And then more than one government office within the civil service. And then more than one government agency within the greater public service, and sometimes even more than one sector in the state. At the same time, there is a sharp fragmentation between authority and responsibility that each senior civil servant experiences. Some come to understand only after they begin catalyzing change that they do not have exclusive authority to make decisions about areas under their responsibility. And you have a legal adviser, you have an accountant, you have human resources, you have a bunch of languages and functions that you need to consider.

To summarize, in order to catalyze change, you must be a real interface person. But the system lacks an adaptive and dynamic structure and culture, which leads to lack of implementation. The public sees and feels this, which leads to the growing lack of trust in the system. All of this lessens the attractiveness of the civil service as a workplace where direct, fast, broad, and profound influence *could* be generated. As a result, we find ourselves with this pipeline crisis, or challenge, or hopefully, opportunity.

And I want to give a disclaimer that no doubt, especially in light of October 7 and what led to it previously, it's still premature to draw conclusions regarding the motivation of new talented people to be attracted to the Israeli civil service or about our capability to influence from within.

Mordy

I have a question for you, Omri.

Do you see a distinction between Civil Service and the Third sector?

At least from America, we hear a lot of amazing stories about the way that the Third sector (volunteers) in particular, stepped up and is perceived in Israel. How accurate would you say that is?

Omri

Yes, there's a very flourishing Third Sector in Israel. We witnessed its capabilities during the pandemic, and during October 7. Just today, I read a poll of 1000 young adults who were asked before and after the seventh of October whether they would join the Civil Service, the Business sector, or the Third sector, and on average,

there was a change in the motivation of young leaders to contribute to society,

which was expressed in their preference to work in non-profits.

Mordy

Fascinating. Okay, I'm curious about how managers are accountable for so much more than they used to be. I read that something like 54% are suffering from work induced stress and fatigue, and

one in five managers say they prefer not being people managers.

In my career I remember feeling so proud when I was promoted from an individual contributor to people manager, but it seems like a lot of people are not wanting that responsibility anymore. Of course, this affects people's trajectories. I'm curious what sense you may all make of this? Is it just so exhausting to be between leadership and our individual contributors? And if so, what can we do about that?

Mimi

Not sure, but I have some hypotheses. I think a lot about what makes this so hard has to do with what's so hard about middle management. There was a day and age where management itself was held in such high regard, and you could really focus on it. Today, middle managers are often supposed to be both individual contributors and producing at a high level, and managing other people's work, which is part of what's creating all the additional angst and tension. And there are aspects of people management that have gotten even harder post-Covid, in a hybrid work environment when you're not in person and building relationships in the same way. The actual management and supervision of people and the expectations of employees on their companies and on their managers, and the caretaking role that they need to play is all potentially even more difficult. I also think sometimes we aren't training people to do that management job. There's been a real intentional push towards training managers at a few of the institutions I've been at. We did this on my Google People Ops team, at Hillel International, and I know it's happening at Jewish Federations, too. But if you don't do that,

people get promoted into those roles who aren't always equipped to do the really difficult work of being the key person in charge of other people.

And yes, you're right, this affects people's trajectories.

Omri

From the perspective of senior civil servants in the Israeli public sector, I'd say we have to develop and empower a sense of ability and managerial resilience in senior civil servants who are leading changes and who are dealing with current and future management challenges. Because it's endless, I would put an emphasis on strengthening the strategic and systemic vision and promote inter-ministerial and intersectoral collaborations because sometimes we lack this kind of collaborative thinking.

We tend to think about coordination and cooperation, but not enough about cross-boundary collaboration.

Mina

I do think that there's a training piece to this. In my world, in the synagogue, there's not a whole lot of middle management. But

I think that there's a training piece about what management looks like in a seminary education.

What it means to lead a giant group of people, a congregation, and have to do all of the tasks associated with rabbi-ing, and also have to manage an organization and also have to manage the people below you, it does start to be sort of an endless pool of tasks that when you're well compensated in the corporate world, maybe is a little bit easier to take. And increasingly, I think rabbis are becoming available to everyone, so there are fewer and fewer boundaries around your time. And maybe this is reflected in other parts of the sector, too. But I think that is huge. And I think Covid really brought that into stark relief. Because there really were no boundaries now that we could be online and doing services from our homes.

Why do you think this was happening before 10/7? What is your analysis of the challenge currently?

Omri

When it comes to the exercise of leadership among senior civil servants, it's not about walking alone. I mean, in our reality? You cannot do it alone. We no longer live in the era where the expectation is that high-ranking employees within government will arrive and fix everything. We live in a VUCA world today: of volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. I mean, who can do this alone? If it is true that senior civil servants need to be an unrealistic combination of every skill set – a unicorn – then

we should at least seek out groups of unicorns, not just one.

Mina

That's part of my answer to the analysis. Is doing this work by oneself part of what makes it unappealing to go into some of this work? I wonder if there could be some messaging around what it means to be a unicorn on your own in these organizations, or what it means to join a group of unicorns, which, by the way, is called a blessing of unicorns! Loneliness is an epidemic, we know. And when you're working, even in an organization, even when there's breakdown in silos,

to be the only one that has been either trained in some of these skills or knows how to apply them, I think it's really hard.

Mordy

I think both of you are really right. I think

there's still this emerging or persistent perception that we're waiting for our messiahs, and that the CEO is the hero leader.

Oftentimes, that impacts how boards and professionals relate to one another, because boards inevitably become disappointed when the messiah turns out to be a false one. Then there's these dynamics that end up burning people out. There's something about nonprofit work as endless, that you can rarely finish your day and feel like you've actually made progress towards the mission. I do think burnout has been an issue for quite some time in our community; certainly even more so since October 7.

Mimi

Another piece of the analysis, that could also be related to the feeling of crisis, might come from the fact that things are changing. If people are looking for stability in leadership, they're going to have a really hard time. But there is amazing talent in our midst. And that talent might look different than it did a generation ago. So, if we were still trying to hire for the old jobs, then maybe we don't have the right people. But we have outstanding people if we can lead to a new place. So, who are the other people who could do this work? What are other ways of talking about the work to attract outstanding people to do the jobs that we need to do? And yes, I think it is groups of people. One of the reasons we might have a sense of crisis is that we can't find this unicorn. But as Omri points out, groups of people can together bring the different skill sets and talents we need.

I think we have all the talent if we utilize it in the right way, and if we support people in the resilience that's required.

But with those talented leaders, I can't help but think they will help the world and the Jewish people get to a new and positive place.

Mina

Yeah, the last few years have required us to become very adept to change after change, after change. It caused a lot of stress and anxiety. And I don't see the pace of change going to revert to being nice and stable again any time soon.

Yet, we adapted as *individuals*. But I'm not sure organizations have adapted.

It feels as if the ecosystem is kind of holding on to the last vestiges of what things used to feel like; I wonder how far behind the ecosystem as a whole is, to adapting to a mindset of inhabiting a world of change. Like Mimi said, we're expecting stability, but maybe if we change our expectations, that could be transformative. I see how a lot of organizations are still doing strategic planning like they used to, but not accounting for the way in which the world is adapting will continue to change at a pace that we can't even imagine.

Omri

Ah, it reminds me of the days of "scenario planning."

I don't think that we can plan scenarios nowadays; instead, we need to plan capabilities.

I mean, you don't know what you need to know, at all. I think of the classic **Shackleton case study**, where he shifted his goal entirely. It's an example of instead of bringing a chair to the expedition, you bring a craftsperson.

Mina

I love that. And it speaks to what you do Mordy and Mimi at Leading Edge to build these capabilities and capacities within organizations. Mordy, how are organizations that you guys work with holding this tension?

Have they caught up to this mindset of change?

Mordy

A lot of the people we work with who are in the trenches absolutely have, especially if we think of CEOs who have begun their tenures in the last four or five years. All they know is change. And I will say that

it's this new reality that is often making the role of the CEO very unappealing for folks.

Mimi

When we hired at Google, one of the attributes we hired for was comfort with ambiguity, based on the idea that people feel their strongest when everything is moving around them and they can navigate an environment where things were unstable, changing. And we created that expectation in the hiring process. When I speak to colleagues in the Jewish nonprofit sector, sometimes I hear a sadness about the fact that things are constantly changing. They'll say, "In the X number of years I've been in this job, my managers changed Y number of times," or "I started out the year with goals and everything shifted." And they cite these as negative. I think it's about expectations. If your ideal is that your year is going to end having completed the goals that you set out for yourself, and maybe at some point that was a realistic expectation, but then there's something to mourn. But it's different going in with the expectation, "I'm going to create these goals so I'm heading in a direction, while knowing that they're going shift over time," and "that my leadership – including my board and my manager - their expectation is also that things will change." So, we don't have to complete all our goals, knowing that lots of other things are going to come up, which are going to help me prioritize. Maybe that's just the way of the world. I think developing that professional resilience is a little bit about expectation setting. And certainly the expectation now should be that things are going to constantly change and that

we want people to come do this work who see that change as exciting because it leads to a level of openness and constant interest in waking up every day with something new to do,

as opposed to feeling like, "Oh, my goodness, I just can't, this is crazy, I can't focus on what I'm trying to get done because things keep moving."

Omri

As Professor Heifetz notes,

it's not about managing change as much as it's about managing people's disappointments.

Mina

At a rate people can handle, right?

Omri

The ability to digest is very limited.

Mordy

I've been curious about that idea,

"at the rate people can handle." Is that possible or feasible today?

Mimi

Along the theme of expectation management, one thing worth naming is that people working in the Jewish community, their job is engagement. It should be accepted as a given that we need to work to draw people in as opposed to being handed a congregation of people who are going to show up. We just did some **research at JFNA** that shows a surge in Jewish engagement since 10/7. But many times, people who are finally showing up, are not being engaged.

That we need to build our communal participation, as opposed to expecting membership, should be an expectation of all people doing Jewish communal work today.

I would also add the importance of setting an expectation of working cross-functionally across an organization. This feels critical in the Jewish world where we have very specific missions about a particular community or issue or topic or angle, because there's a need for the whole to address meta issues. The expectation should be that we're working in a cross-functional way that enables greater change. That's hard to do, even when you're in a large company, across departments. So, it is not at all surprising that it is difficult to do across a sector. But I think it's essential and should be an expectation of people who are going to come lead in this sector.

Omri

OMRI WANTS YOU TO HEAR THIS IDEA | **LISTEN HERE**

I would also like to stress that

organizations who seek to find newcomers to lead change, also need to be able to change themselves.

And I'm not sure that we're doing that quite well. We need to walk the talk.

Mordy

I think that we sometimes hold on for too long, either as individual leaders or as organizations.

Not every organization needs to exist ad infinitum. Organizations sometimes just need to exist for a certain period of time. They can grow and evolve, and they can shut down. I see a lot of leaders, too, clinging on too long to their roles past when that's actually strategic for them, for the organization, for the community writ large. It pains me sometimes that we think a little too "organization" in the Jewish world. Can we think of ourselves, instead, as an ecosystem that is moving towards something as a whole unit?

What do you see or imagine could be some promising ways to address the challenge in North America, Israel, or both?

Mina

I have the hardest time with this question, from my very small lens. I was so excited to hear everyone that was going to be on this call because everyone else has these bigger lenses. But I do have some ideas. I talked recently to a couple of people who are part of alternative seminaries that aren't part of movements. They told me that part of why they didn't seek a more traditional route to their pipeline is that the other choices were just too limiting. There are a lot of people in our stages of life who might seek this kind of work. I wonder how we can get them in the pipeline too and look at different entrances into the pipeline.

That may mean shifting our expectation of what it looks like to become a rabbi or Jewish professional and how we train them.

Is someone like me going to move across the country to go to school? No, not at this age. So, how do we support not just those other ways of training individuals, but also the institutions that could hire them and change their expectation of what it looks like to hire someone out of the norm?

Mimi

Okay, here are a few things that come to mind for me. One, we have to build upon our strengths. The most important factor determining whether somebody comes, and stays is if they understand and believe in the mission, and they feel they can impact the mission. We have that in spades. If you look at the Leading Edge scores that we get in our sector compared to other sectors, we are doing better. Parker Palmer has this idea about vocation and calling. And I truly think people come to this work because it's a calling. And we need to build on that. I think it's even greater among this next generation. Especially post 10/7, we are seeing a surge in Jewish engagement. Something like 45% of the Jewish community is showing up more. I don't have data yet that says whether that's influencing the talent pipeline, but anecdotally, I hear from colleagues that we are getting more applicants. I heard recently from someone who works at one of the rabbinic schools that they saw more people open applications this year. And I know that retention rates are actually going up, not down.

So, at a time when people should be exhausted and burnt out, and probably are, they're staying.

So, I think we can build on that calling and help find people for whom this is a calling and try to build from that spark. And Mina, I totally agree with you that it can't only be in that moment right out of college. I think we can work collectively across the sector to get more people at that moment when they're making career decisions. There are so many other moments now when people are making clear decisions because people shift so much more often. We also need to think more broadly about the kind of candidates who can do this work. Instead of a one-person-to-do-everything-unicorn, you might find many people with different skills. Specifically about the rabbinic challenge, I often wonder what it means when people say they want a relationship with a rabbi. What do they really want? Do they actually need to be a rabbi? Are there lots of other talented people who can provide the pastoral, educational, and community building skills that they really need? On the one hand, yes, we need more rabbis. On the other hand, maybe we can find other awesome people who can rabbi and get that kind of training at different parts of their careers, to build out the talent pool of people who can serve the very real needs of the Jewish community.a large company, across departments. So, it is not at all surprising that it is difficult to do across a sector. But I think it's essential and should be an expectation of people who are going to come lead in this sector.

Mordy

MORDY WANTS YOU TO HEAR THIS IDEA | **LISTEN HERE**

Plus one to all that. I think we have to focus on the micro and the macro simultaneously. I think when we look at the Leading Edge data, we see that

the biggest retention drivers are all the "M's": mission, money, and manager. So, how do we ensure that everyone who enters the Jewish world has the best possible experience? And then how do we scale that?

We know that for better and worse, people in the sector are the best recruiters for those outside the sector. How do we elevate the brand and the professionalism of our sector in a way that presents it as a compelling career? There are top down and bottom up ways to do all that. And as I named at the beginning, compensation is a factor, and inflation is contributing to the inability of organizations in our sector to retain employees. We are seeing something of a shift in some funders wanting to fund general operating and believing and investing in employees, and a drive towards salary transparency, which is huge work that Mimi did when she was at Hillel. But we definitely have work to do there.

Although the strategies recommended in the recently published **Jewish Day School Educator Pipeline Playbook** focus on how to advance the day school pipeline, many if not all of the ideas could be applied across our leadership sectors (**Prizmah** and **JEIC** collaborated to create the Playbook and this **Pipeline Report**, May 2024).

Mimi

I will add a point about lay training. Helping people do that is so critical when they're new to it. Because when you show up as a lay leader, you can have such an incredibly positive impact, or you can very quickly do the wrong thing or overstep your bounds, if well intended. This lay/professional partnership is such a critical aspect of making the sector work and making sure talent feels supported in in all those realms.

I also want to share something I've learned about compensation. When I came from Google to Hillel, I was convinced based on the work we did at Google that salary didn't matter. It was mission, transparency, voice; it was all these cultural things, right? And that matters, as long as you're compensated at *some minimum level.* What I found out when I came here, is that

many, many people in the Jewish nonprofit sector are not compensated at a high enough level for money not to matter.

And that is especially true because a lot of the people who are choosing to do this work also want to live a robust Jewish life. Synagogue membership, day school, summer camp, all these things are expensive. So, I changed heart and we did a lot of work at Hillel to create salary transparency and help elevate salaries with bands because it turns out it does matter, *until a certain level.* It's not in the micro, but below a certain compensation level, especially for people who want to live a robust Jewish life, money matters.

Omri

In terms of how to minimize the gap, I'm reminded of what Winston Churchill famously said when he was working to form the United Nations after World War II. He said, "Never let a good crisis go to waste." Especially in light of October 7, and the sharp criticism in the streets regarding the performance of the public service, I would like to believe that the trend will reverse and there will be a strong call from many segments of the Israeli public to join the public service in order to rehabilitate and influence from within. I already see this this trend emerging in opinion articles in the press, and in documents or working papers from civic society influence groups. And I believe that we will also see growing interest in recruitment for the public service programs and positions. As for the operational steps, I think that we need to be prepared.

In our organization, we need to think in terms of employer branding, and operate in both internal and external axes to promote the organizational connectedness between employees, and create unit pride and increasing of course, salaries, and things like that.

I think that once existing employees are better connected to the organization, they receive value and significance, that will also be reflected externally,

to make the public service attractive for talent acquisition, for sustainable and forward-looking talent management infrastructure that can identify, recruit and train, and promote managerial talent in the public service.

In Israel, we've already begun with a strategy called "**Atudot L'Yisrael,**" which is an inventory of managerial programs, starting with the preparatory programs, and then on the upper level cadet programs on the local government and central government continuing with on the job training programs for mid-level career management, finally culminating in system wide leadership programs for senior leaders, such as Ha'Midrasha Ha'Leumit - Israel's National School for Leadership, Governance & Management. And I would like to think that the candidates that are included in these programs are expected to enhance the cross-boundaries collaborations (XBC's) between units, agencies, ministries, and sectors and will therefore occupy those future targeted positions that influence the public for good.

Mina

Something I've been thinking about for this last hour is how pleased and relieved I am to hear that even coming from so many different parts of this picture, we're looking at it in a similar way. We are looking at the opportunity. From this conversation,

I'm going to hold on to the idea that it's maybe not a crisis, but a set of challenges that is affecting an ecosystem that also results in a huge ecosystem of opportunity.

And I want access to that. That is a piece I'm going to hold on to.

Omri

The piece that I take with me from this session is managing expectations.

This is something that needs to be incorporated into work routine of any organization that seeks to integrate talented people within it. Any kind of organization that ceases to think about new avenues of communicating with young adult leaders, of development and integration of processes of recruitment, selection, training and nurturing of professional and quality, managerial talent, will also cease to be relevant.

Mordy

That's exactly my piece:

leading in an ever-changing world.

When I think back to when I did Wexner 15 years ago, that was the core of adaptive leadership. And it strikes me that even though it feels so new for today, leading for an ever-changing world has been the core of our Wexner experience.

Mimi

I definitely leave thinking a lot about the analysis I've heard here of everything that's happened over time that's led us to this moment of constant change. Omri described it in Israel, and certainly it's true in North America that we're talking about 2016 and 2018. Crises of divisiveness in America and security crises and Covid, and all the things that have led to this moment, this talent pipeline question is truly something that's built up over time. I'm inspired that this group sees the opportunity because I think there is a real opportunity both for internal and external branding and culture, someone called it, to really make sure people see how important this work is, especially those people who are doing it. I think that's why I've wrestled from start with the crisis framing.

I want people who choose to do this work, whether they do it as professionals or volunteers, to feel so respected in what they do.

Not only because I think they're incredible, but because I believe that the solution to the crisis that people are seeing will come at least in part from elevating those who are choosing to do this work and having so much kavod/honor for the work itself, and for the people who are making us their living.

Thank you for joining us in the WEXFactor Room! The participants would be happy to continue the conversation. Please feel free to reach out to them at their emails above.

Expand the room! We encourage you to use this text to continue the conversation about the **Talent Pipeline Crisis** with your staff, your boards, your Shabbat tables...