

GRAND PARTNERS

Training & Consulting

Communication on Progress ~2020~

April 6th, 2021

I hereby declare that GRAND PARTNERS, Ltd. and its sister companies have been actively implementing the main principles of an ethical business since we started operating in 2004. Since joining the UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL COMPACT in 2012, we have made The Ten Principles our priority in a way we conduct business.

We make a conscious effort to communicate The Ten Principles to our employees, Clients, suppliers, and other stakeholders. We make sure that these principles are embedded in our everyday procedures and become a way of thinking.

We are committed to continuing participation in the UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL COMPACT with a hope of a better business and global environment.

Goda Azeneckaite-Petraviciene
CEO
GRAND PARTNERS, Ltd.

THE PURPOSE

GRAND PARTNERS, LTD operates in a private business sector in the area of business training and consulting. There are only the main legal requirement that our business needs to meet. Many of them are related to taxation policy as well as employment regulation laws. However, ever since the beginning of operating in the area related to most sensitive part of business - its people - we have made sure that our business decisions are based on the main ethical principles.

Confidentiality, sincerity and transparency are the basic principles that we believe to be a necessity in this business. In order to apply them in practice, equal rights and freedom of choice are equally significant. After we have learnt about The Ten Principles of UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL COMPACT, we were certain of our ability to support them in our everyday activities because they were our way of life since the beginning of this business.

Joining the UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL COMPACT was an easy and voluntary decision.

OUR STATEMENT

With this document we at GRAND PARTNERS state that we will continue our support for the Global Compact and we renew our ongoing commitment to this initiative and its principles for the year to come. With great pride we declare our participation in the GLOBAL COMPACT to our main stakeholders and share its Ten Principles encouraging them to join this initiative with a hope for a better business environment.

ABOUT US

GRAND PARTNERS training and consulting company has been successfully operating in Lithuania and neighboring countries since 2004. In 2010 and 2011 and again in 2016 and 2017, it was awarded as one of the fastest growing training and consulting companies in the country. From 2010 to 2012 we were a part of one of the leading leadership development companies in the world LINKAGE, Inc. We continue to participate in the international projects held by such international corporations as COCA-COLA, SAMSUNG, MC DONALD'S, MARS and IKEA, which made our participation in the GLOBAL COMPACT even more significant, since these organizations care about business ethics as declared by the Ten Principles as well. Our training projects have grown into training academies with a duration from 3 to 6 months or longer. They are tailor-made to suit every Customer's needs and requirements so that all the services we provide are meant to solve some business problem.

In 2019 GRAND PARTNERS became the largest company in the area of HR training and development in Lithuania according to sales turnover. Unfortunately, at the beginning of 2020 the global pandemic started. On March 16th, 2021 the government of Lithuania imposed a national lock-down and all the trainings were prohibited. This still continues up to this day with the exception of a few months in the summer of 2020.

OUR MAJOR AREAS OF EXPERTISE:

- ♦ Leadership and Management Training and Development;
- ♦ Team Work and Development;
- ♦ EU Funded Project Management and Implementation.

We operate to develop leaders who positively change organizations. We strive to become a provider of choice, employer of choice and investment of choice as a company working in the fields of our expertise in every market we serve.

OUR PROMISE TO CUSTOMER

We provide our Customers with the newest know-how in the most comprehensive manner, supported by the tools that are easy to apply in a Customer's work environment right away. Our team is fully committed to all the preparation and post-service work to create the most valuable experience to our Customer.

OUR VALUES

- We work to create maximum value to our Customer;
- We encourage people to use their talent;
- We seek open communication and constructive feedback;
- We create relations based on trust and respect;
- We only give promises that we can fulfill.

THE TEN PRINCIPLES IN OUR BUSINESS

Common principles of ethical business conduct such as non-discrimination and equal rights, maximum transparency, non-corruption as well as common sense acts of respect, trust and open communication are part of who we are as individuals and as a company. Since we joined GLOBAL COMPACT in 2012, we started consciously implementing the Ten Principles in our everyday operations and our business culture. Please find a report on our progress for the period of 2019 to 2021 below.

Human Rights

- Principle 1: Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and
- Principle 2: make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.

The respect for and protection of internationally proclaimed human rights is a very basic requirement that GRAND PARTNERS fully meets. Working in the areas of HR management and development we understand the basic needs for safety as well as the core psychological needs for respect and being heard.

But we have risen far above the basic requirements in that area, since we believe that as a business consulting and training business we set an example of how the employees should be treated. We invest a good part of our revenue into employee engagement in order to ensure their maximum satisfaction at a workplace. We organize different trainings in their area of expertise, they attend conferences in Lithuania and abroad. We have informal events a few times every year. We also conduct yearly employee satisfaction surveys and hold discussions on the areas for improvement.

In 2016 we started a new team development initiative, called High Performance Team Collaboration. Its main purpose is to engage all the team members to be the positive change that they want to see in the team. This two-day get-away helped us to:

1. Become stronger as a team;
2. Express and hear the expectations that we hold for each other;
3. Set some priorities for team development for this year.

We continue with those sessions once a year, improving their content and also the quality of input by our team. Furthermore, we implement our decisions into our monthly meetings and daily procedures, so that they are executed as planned.

During the pandemic we have been firmly encouraging people to work from home. We have drastically adjusted our policies as well as different everyday agreements so that people are comfortable working from home while also taking care of themselves as well as their families as much as they needed to.

Labour

- ♦ Principle 3: Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;
- ♦ Principle 4: the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour;
- ♦ Principle 5: the effective abolition of child labour; and
- ♦ Principle 6: the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

Lithuania has regained its independence in 1991. Since then its economy has experienced very fast growth and development in many respects. Forced and compulsory labour have not been an issue after the collapse of the Soviet Union and Communist rule, which happened way before we started our business. Child labour has never been a problem in this country.

Lithuania has lost a big part of its labour force to Western members of the European Union as well as Norway and even the United States. Therefore the fight for top talent as well as regular employees has been going on for the past few years. Many companies are looking for new ways and more effective means to attract and retain employees. Wages have been rising and unemployment rates have been going down during these past few years.

Even before that Lithuanian labour laws have always been on a side of an employee. In most cases which are taken to court, employees win and previous employers pay fines and compensation. On the other hand, there are still employees, who do not know their rights, or are afraid to stand up for them because of the risk of losing their job. That is particularly true in the rural areas.

Therefore, we believe that even though the basic labour principles are definitely met, there is still room for encouraging effective collaboration among employers and employees in order to ensure better results for both sides.

From 2013 to 2020 GRAND PARTNERS conducted 15 very large EU funded training projects for various business associations. A total of about 250 various-sized companies were involved. In some of them there was a requirement by the EU that every participant takes training in the area of gender equality. Thus a great number of employees learnt more about their rights, got a better understanding of what gender discrimination is and how to protect themselves in those cases.

Since collective bargaining is still one of the hot topics in Lithuania, GRAND PARTNERS participates in projects that allow local labour unions and employers have more productive conversations and negotiations.

We also have an ongoing cooperation with one of the main trade-unions in the country and do pro-bono work for them to help them develop their effectiveness as well as build their influence.

Every year we have employees who are on maternity or paternity leave. Some take 1, some 2 and some even 3 years off and we still provide them with an opportunity to return to their previous job. We need to be especially cautious not to be overstaffed when we have people returning from maternity/paternity leave.

During the pandemic one of our top priorities was to retain all the employees. We made a promise not to make lay-offs and have kept them up to this day despite the fact that all the trainings are prohibited (we work online; we deliver webinars instead to those Clients who agree to work online).

Nonetheless, we make our hiring and compensation decisions purely based on competencies and not on gender or other differences.

Environment

- ♦ Principle 7: Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;
- ♦ Principle 8: undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and
- ♦ Principle 9: encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.

We still implement the very basic principles that help us stay as green and environmentally responsible as possible:

- ♦ Think before you print!
- ♦ Recycle!
- ♦ Reuse!
- ♦ Use scratch!
- ♦ Car-sharing at all times possible!

In 2019 we implemented a paperless strategy for our trainings where all training materials are sent to the participants via email, so we reduced the use of paper to a minimum. All the rest materials are recycled. In 2020 and during the pandemic all of our services are delivered online, so we save up a lot on all the materials as well as fuel and so on.

Anti-Corruption

- ♦ Principle 10: Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

We are proud to be a responsible tax payer. We make our business as transparent to legal institutions and even our stakeholders as possible. We make sure that our business deals are based

on what our Clients are willing to pay for the value we create. When we participate in legal tenders, we attract sub-contractors that see ethical business as their priority.

We choose our suppliers, partners and consultants based on the core competencies they can offer our Clients and make decisions based purely on the value we can create together.

CONCLUSION

We are proud to be one of the very first ones in our business area to join UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL COMPACT. Though this movement is gaining its popularity fairly slowly, it has served us a motivational purpose within the team and with other stake holders as well. The 10 PRINCIPLES have always been very close to the core of our business values and they are have grown into our everyday decision making criteria.

CEO

Goda Aženeckaitė-Petravičienė