

Creating an Integrated Employee Experience Program



HRExchange
N E T W O R K

introduction.

Anyone who has ever held a job has had an “employee experience.” Notice the statement does not include the word “same” when defining the experience. To further add credence to this, if a worker walked around his or her office and interviewed co-workers on the subject, specifically asking those individuals to define the term employee experience, the results would vary in detail. It would be fair to say the worker would not be any closer to defining or fully understanding the concept.

When attempting to create an integrated employee experience program, you will inevitably come up against a singular problem: defining what employee experience is. The reality here is it is tough to building something you cant define. So where to begin?

“In a nutshell, this global engagement pattern provides evidence that how performance is managed, and specifically how people are being developed, is misfiring.” ~Gallup~

It started in the 1990s with the concept of employee engagement. More than two decades later, there is an entire industry of study and analysis dedicated to the concept and it has massive influence on the way companies think about their employees.

But a shift away from employee engagement is happening. Gallup recently released their State of the Global Workplace report. In it they stated 85% of employees are not engaged (67%) or actively disengaged (18%) at work. Furthermore, the organization said this type of crisis has cost approximately \$7 trillion in lost productivity.

When this statement is coupled with the reality that people in the workforce now are looking for purpose, developmental opportunities, and accept the interconnectivity of work and life, one could see the reason for moving toward an employee experience strategy.

challenges.

- 1 Provide an exceptional and positive onboarding experience for new employees that imply new hires are welcome, valued, and prepared.
- 2 Continuously measure and analyze the employee experience.
- 3 Create a high impact learning culture with continuous investment in people.

employee experience components.

“As we shift to the future of work, where organizations are focusing on the reasons why employees want to work versus need to work, it is important to understand employee experience.”

“Jacob Morgan, Author of The Employee Experience Advantage

Jacob Morgan, author of The Employee Experience Advantage, writes that “as we shift to the future of work, where organizations are focusing on the reasons why employees want to work versus need to work, it is important to understand employee experience.” Morgan further explains that every employee experience is comprised of three components: cultural, technological, and physical. All three components together need to create an overall environment, “where people want to show up!”

Companies need to take a hard look at the tools and procedures they have in place that support and enhance employee connectivity. This will allow employees to feel connected to their co-workers and their company. Translation: the more this is the case for talent, the smaller the likelihood an employee will attempt to switch jobs.

Human resources professionals must develop a culture of streamlined communications. It must eliminate friction between employees allowing for connectivity, empowerment, and alignment. At the same time, the right technology must be in place to connect and engage employees regardless of where they are and how they collaborate.

To help satisfy the three components Morgan discussed, first make sure employees can seamlessly transition from one form of communication to another. A chat tool may be great for quick conversations where as video conferencing may be better for conversations that would benefit from face-to-face communication.

Employee Experience

cultural



technological



physical





According to Gallup, disengaged workforces are costing companies over \$450 billion in lost productivity per year and 95% of employees say that culture is more important than compensation.

A company's culture can't be seen as a strategy full of perks and happy hours. Companies have to think about creating and sustaining an effective work culture is foundational to unlocking a company's growth.

So, what is culture?

A company's culture is defined as the values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors shared by the employees across all levels. It's impacted by the collective life experiences of each member of the workforce. For instance, members of the C-suite and other leaders heavily influence the organization's culture as they are the individuals making decisions and setting the strategic direction of the company.

According to Courage, University Federal Credit Union ties their culture to the member experience.

"For us, it's how could we as an organization really make that connection for employees about our value proposition or offering to members what the organization's true purpose is," Courage said.

"That way they see the connection with their own values and how they can make a big difference." Ultimately, however, the culture is supported by the commitment of the employee.

"They need to have a broader understanding about the organization in general... just from a business acumen standpoint, who we are what we stand for across organization," Courage said.

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technological.

Charter Communications owns several 24-hour local news stations around the country. Two of their stations are located in Tampa, Florida and Orlando, Florida respectively. Each morning, the two stations hold separate editorial meetings to discuss news of the day and how the station intends to cover it. Not long after, the two stations hold a video conference to brief one another on their respective news days and then discuss the sharing of content. This allows each station, though located nearly 100 miles away from one another, to work as one team and to cover news from both Florida's west and east coasts and the inland portions between.

In the case of University Federal Credit Union, they've addressed technology and communication by completely redoing their company intranet. Courage says the new platform provides, "a more interactive platform for our employees to comment and share and to be able to find information that they need more easily."



physical.

In a recent Gallup survey, 25% of Americans work between 45-59 hours per week. Instead of cubicles and offices, companies should think about infusing relaxing backyards and plush sofas in to a redesign. In addition to creating an environment conducive to innovation, it also helps positively impact the employee experience while attracting and retaining top talent.

The space must be connected to the needs of the workforce. Not everyone enjoys working in a loud office for instance, so there needs to be quiet areas as well. Also create collaborative spaces that are attractive in some way. Learning spaces should lend themselves to visual and audible presentations.

Mobility is also a necessity, especially when you consider technology savvy workers, regardless of generation. Employees should have access to mobile technology that encourages movement from space to space while ensuring collaboration.



1

Provide an exceptional and positive onboarding experience for new employees that imply new hires are welcome, valued, and prepared.

Think about your company. More specifically, think about the overall mentality. Is it a place full of innovation? Are employees free and able to question the status quo? Are the employees described as experts, free thinkers, and collaborators? Is learning embraced? Are employees heard? Are the leaders exhibiting a fervent belief in the company's mission and do they inspire employees? Is the technology and physical environments conducive to communication, collaboration, and productivity?

These are all descriptors of an expertly-crafted employee experience program.

What is employee experience? As indicated previously, the definition of employee experience is really in the eye of the beholder as each employee experiences events differently. Thinking about it in another way, it's a series of experiences that happen during the employee life cycle. With that knowledge in mind, how do HR professionals create their own employee experience program?

For the purposes of this report, it is assumed companies are not currently pursuing an employee experience strategy.

Before addressing the first challenge that titles this section of the report, the mindset of HR professionals seeking to embark on this process must be addressed. Companies that have created their own employee experience program or have been successful at deploying their programs usually begin with a start-up mentality. Some come to it easy, while others struggle.

Kelly Kuras is the Senior Manager of Global Talent for one of the United States' largest automakers. She says her company was forced to adopt the mindset after the automotive industry crisis struck between 2008 and 2010.

“We were given the grace of this period of time where it was obvious nothing we were doing was working. So, how do we do it differently and that really started to give us an innovative startup mentality of 'Why not? What do you have to lose? You already lost, so what do you got to lose?' We lost our fear of being perfect.”

Kelly Kuras
Senior Manager Global
Talent



Kuras' company isn't the only company that's had to embrace the start-up mentality. General Electric has done the same. At first, it was not an easy concept to embrace because, historically, change hasn't been seen as a good thing. However, the company is now experimenting, taking more risks, and quickly recovering from their failures when they happen.

At the heart of this is the workforce.

One of the first experiences an employee has within a company is the onboarding experience. Keep in mind, a company never gets a second chance to make a first impression. The key to addressing Challenge 1 is making sure new hires feel welcomed, valued, and prepared to take on the onboarding process.

To do this, adjust the onboarding experience to focus on familiarity, simplicity, and culture, while making it personal for each new hire.

Only
12%
of employees
agree that their
organization does
a great job of
onboarding new
employees

2017 Gallup State of the
Workplace

familiarity.

The first order of business for a new hire must be creating an environment of familiarity. Do this by having new hires greeted by the person(s) the individual interviewed with during the candidate phase. Consider creating a 'who's who' area on your company intranet. Include photos, names, and titles. A similar offline approach is functional as well. Some like a simple bulletin board with staff pictures, names, and positions.

These all sound rather elementary, but it could help avert an embarrassing situation such as a new hire asking a stranger to help with a employer-issued mobile device, only to learn later that person was the CEO.

Cinemark, uses employees to keep each other engaged and to positively impact the employee experience. Supriya Bahri, the VP Global Head of Total Rewards and HRIS for Cinemark, says it's a concept we've heard before: the buddy system.

"When you assign somebody as a buddy, they develop a relationship so that when the new employee has a question they have someone to ask," Bahri said. "It's really important to get your employees comfortable."

The reality is these strategies help new hires feel a familial connection to their new company right out of the gate.

simplicity.

Onboarding can be an uncertain time for a new hire. Add to that the complexity of the process and a new employee can be overwhelmed on their first day.

The process should be fun, interesting, painless, and simple.

One way to do this would be to post schedules, materials, benefit forms, and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about the company on the company intranet. Provide new hires with a direct link to these items.

By providing these to the new hire before the individual's first day, you eliminate a portion of their "new job jitters" and prepare the employee to start employment in a strong way.



**Onboarding should
be fun, interesting,
painless, and simple.**



Onboarding can easily be one of the best experiences or worst experiences of your new employee's life cycle with the company. When reviewing the strategy, the internet can be the most powerful tool an HR professional can use.

A web-based strategy allows professionals to coordinate and monitor every step of the process while addressing the challenge of making new hires feel welcome, valued, and prepared.

culture.

When starting a new job with a different employer, the culture learning curve is huge. Not knowing the rules, benefits, nuances, and traditions can leave a new hire feeling out of place. Don't make that person learn these important items the hard way.

For instance, if your company observes a 'Casual Friday' rule, let the new hire know before they show up to work dressed in a suit.

Make sure the new employee knows what benefits and perks the company offers. Again provide links to these documents via email and post them in visible locations. Verbal mentions are a good thing, but remember, it can easily be forgotten as the new employee will be experiencing information overload during the onboarding process.

Likewise, physical copies of this information are helpful, but it can be lost in the shuffle documents a new hire procures during the first week. It's important to make sure the new hire feels prepared and included as a member of the company culture.

personal.

It's easy to make the first day all about paperwork. In fact, it's normal to do so. Don't be normal. The filling out of some paperwork is necessary on the first day, but consider having the new hire fill it out before arriving for Day 1. If you have to fill out paperwork on Day 1, keep it to a minimum, and allow the person to fill out the remaining documents online after they've settled into their new job.

Make Day 1 about building relationships and making that personal connection with co-workers and the company. As stated earlier, first impressions will have an enormous impact on the employee's experience.

2

Continuously measure and analyze the employee experience.

Employee engagement and employee experience are related but different. They're related in the sense they are both employee-focused strategies that are based on the employee activity within the company. The two differ in what activity is measured and when it is measured.

Employee engagement provides a snapshot in time of employees' moods and feelings about the company and that is often measured after a specific event.

Employee experience, however, is measured over time and often enough to see trends in the data received. In fact, it is something that is measured continuously.

HR analytics can be used to help measure employee experience as ongoing measurements of satisfaction are logged. That data, if there is enough, can relate to employee experience. However, it is not built on a continuous chain of events. How is this solved?

Companies must move the focus away from traditional employee engagement surveys, and place it on the pulse survey model, which provides, in essence, an indicator of the company's health.

HRDictionary.com defines it this way: As a pulse rate in a human is an indicator of health, the pulse survey model provides an indicator of the company's health. It allows a company to measure their operating climate and overall performance of the workplace.

Pulse surveys are often conducted in regular or periodic intervals. It's up to the company to set the time table. Those surveys are usually conducted online with results available instantly at the end of the survey runtime.

HRDictionary.com provides this roadmap to the conducting of a pulse survey.

Pulse Survey process - Step wise



best practices of pulse surveys.

1. Define goals - Define both short-term and long-term goals employees are asked to meet.
2. Short surveys - Surveys do not have to be long. The longer it is, the less likely it will be that employees complete it. Keep it to 5-10 questions in length.
3. Be redundant - Pulse surveys are designed to track trends, so repeat questions and topics often. This will help track improvements.
4. Share the results - Sharing the results can help increase engagement. Plus, it allows employees transparent access to the results.
5. Results should predict decisions - The results are useless if they don't impact future outcomes. Use what you learn to adjust policies and processes. This can shape the future of your business.

A good example of this would be the strategy Nestle has taken in their onboarding process. The company asks all new hires during the onboarding phase to complete a brief survey. It identifies baseline behaviors, engagement, and personality strengths. Over time, the company continues to gauge the pulse of their employees asking questions about health, engagement, and satisfaction of team and other employees.

This information translates to Nestle's ability to support and track their bottom line and progress as well as direct and enhance their employee experience.

**7 out of 10 HR Professionals are already
using surveys to engage employees**

HR Tech Global Report, HR Exchange Network

Parkland Health and Hospital System also uses pulse surveys to measure their employee experience.

“Our annual engagement survey also provides a variety of demographic data so that we’re able to discern trends by age, tenure, job discipline and other filters. This helps pinpoint needs in specific areas, thereby giving us the ability to further customize solutions and support needs in those areas as needed.”

Vishal Bhalla, Chief Experience Officer, Parkland Health & Hospital System

One subject Parkland focuses on is the team aspect of the employee experience. Bhalla says it can be a difficult one to measure.

“We may find that ‘working well together’ has different definitions for different teams based on factors such as a team’s sub-culture, the demographic profile of a team, etc. For areas showing demonstrably lower ratings for specific questions compared to the rest of the system, our Talent Management Business Partners and Experience Leaders support the areas to further define what ‘my team works well together’ means for them,” Bhalla said.

“They then discuss what actions they could take to resolve the identified opportunities. Since the solution is formed by the team, they have greater buy-in. In a recent pulse survey asking our teams if they believed in the action plans established for their areas, 96% of the teams participating in these more in-depth, facilitated sessions responded with a resounding yes.”



3

Create a high impact learning culture with continuous investment in people.

In Deloitte's Global Human Capital Trends report release in 2017, the research organization found 80% of executives feel staff experience as being important or very important. That said, however, only 22% feel their respective companies are good at building a unique experience for everyone. Worse still, nearly 60% say their companies aren't ready to address the challenge.

How does a company start to change these perceptions? One sector to focus on would be learning. In fact, companies should focus their respective learning strategies on training and support, manager development, self-directed and dynamic learning.

Training and Support

The nature of work continues to change, and it's happening at a pace that makes it rather difficult to for HR professionals to keep up. Take job descriptions for instance. They are evolving into living documents meaning they are always changing with necessity of the working universe. They evolve into new roles, tasks, and responsibilities. And if the change doesn't happen, the job may seem to be less relevant.

As a result, employees want and need continuous training and support. This allows them to feel constantly equipped to do their jobs and do them well.

eLearning, and advancements in that space such as microlearning and on-demand training, allows the employee the ability to access the information whenever they need it. This makes learning personal and convenient to the employee experience.

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Deloitte Global Human Capital
Trend

Case Studies: Walmart and Thomson Reuters

Walmart is one of the largest distribution networks in the world. It makes millions of products globally. That brings up some hefty safety challenges. To put this in perspective, just a 5% decrease in incidents translates to millions of dollars in savings.

Walmart created a microlearning program that not only kept safety on top of employees' minds, but it also improved employee knowledge and retention regarding safety practices.

Walmart's program took the form of a game. It was made available to 150+ distribution centers and more than 75,000 employees had access to it. At any time during a work shift, an employee could log on to the platform and spend 3-5 minutes playing a game that involves answering safety questions.

The system tracks their answers and gives them feedback. As such, it gives employees the knowledge of where they need improvement and reinforces the knowledge they've already mastered.

Walmart saw a voluntary participation rate averaging about 91%. They saw a 54% reduction in safety incidents and a 15% increase in employee knowledge about safety.

Learning management systems can help develop and curate accessible and relevant content employees can use to direct their own learning and personal experience. This is a far more agile, convenient, dynamic, and relatable tool for employees who are already functioning in a digital world. Thomson Reuters is a company made up of 60,000 employees in 100 different countries.

With so many employees located in different countries and time zones, with each having different training needs, it becomes an extremely complex training challenge.

The news organization turned to a learning management system that allowed them to customize the content in different languages. It was also made sure that employees could access learning materials through a variety of mobile devices.

putting together all the pieces

When all of these pieces are in place and working in concert with one another, companies will see a positive impact on the employee experience and an increase in productivity. How so? This strategy enhances and promotes enthusiasm, involvement, retention, and employer brand commitment.

And it can be measured. Going back to Jacob Morgan's research, organizations that invest heavily in employee experience saw it pay dividends:

- Glassdoor's Best Places to work – Listed 11.5 times more often
- LinkedIn's list of North America's Most In-Demand Employers – Listed 4.4 times as often
- Fast Company's Most Innovative Companies – Listed 28 times more often
- Forbes list of the World's Most Innovative Companies – Listed 2.1 times more often
- American Customer Satisfaction Index – Listed twice as often

This report closes with a final thought from Virgin Group founder, Sir Richard Branson; 14 words that sum up the whole of this report:

“If you take care of your
employees, they will
take care of your
clients.”



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We have a global research base with offices in Berlin, Dubai, London, New York, Singapore, Sydney, and Tampa. Our network has grown to 18 core communities reaching more than 1.1 million opt-in members and a wider database of more than 9.6 million.



Mason Stevenson is the Editor at HR Exchange Network, overseeing content and engagement across all digital platforms, as well as coordinating research for monthly and quarterly research projects.

Mason worked at radio and television stations in Kentucky, Tennessee, and Florida - most notably WBKO in Bowling Green, Kentucky, NewsChannel 5 in Nashville, and News 13 in Orlando. He has worked with elected officials at all levels of government, produced political debates, traveled to Cuba, and produced half hour specials and town hall meetings on a variety of topics.

Mason graduated from Western Kentucky University in 2006 where he earned a Bachelor's Degree, double majoring in Political Science and Broadcasting.

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