Employee experience:
A methodology for success

People Insight

Building an employee-centric culture

Many organisations are adopting an employee-centric approach, but what does this actually mean? Put simply, it means your strategy is designed with your employees at the heart. It's a step on from traditional employee engagement practices, and vital to success in today's workplace.

Competition for talent is increasing; new generations of employees expect flexible working patterns and candidates have more access than ever to insights about your company culture. When it comes to attracting, supporting and retaining staff, business as usual won't cut it.

To be successful, you need to create a culture that supports employees to succeed and design an employee experience which reflects your target culture at every stage. If you don't, there's a very real risk of a gap developing between your target culture and what your employees see day to day. This can be devastating; 71%[1] of employees say they would jump ship if their culture deteriorates.

Our guide will explain the principles that underpin employee experience (EX), show you how to create a culture for success and share practical steps you can take to improve your employee experience.

Before you design your employee experience, you need to define a target culture with your employees at the heart.

Your target culture is the way you need to do things in order to deliver on strategy. This encompasses the values, behaviours, routines, technologies and workspaces that will be required to deliver the strategic outcomes you are seeking.

Look at your target culture as the anchor against which you design and assess your employee experience. It should run through all the processes, practices and beliefs you have in place, and be apparent at every stage of the employee journey. Otherwise there's a risk of creating contradictory and conflicting employee experiences.

Strategy
- Purpose - why
- Strategy - how
- Goals - measures
- Line of sight

Target culture
- Values & Behaviours
- Employers brand
- Rituals & beliefs
- Tools, space, tech

Employee experience
- Candidacy
- Onboarding
- Performing
- Growth
- Exit

Keep employees at the heart of your strategy, your purpose and culture.
These inform the design of your employee experience.

Need a hand?

Our organisation scientists are experts at understanding your organisation and designing a culture that helps meet your business goals.

> Learn more about our culture workshops

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Terms to get your head around

Let's break down the key phrases to do with employee experience:

Employee experience (EX) is how your current culture and employer brand is experienced by employees before, during and after their employment.

Employee engagement (EE) is a measurable output of how employees feel across their employee journey. Employee engagement can be seen as the end goal of improving your employee experience.

The employee journey refers to the 5 key stages (candidacy; onboarding; performance; growth and exit) and moments of truth within these that influence employee experience.

Employee experience programmes adopt a design-led approach to ensuring that the reality of employee's experiences matches the target culture throughout the employee journey.

Plotting your EX journey

Taking an employee experience approach means using exciting new ways to design, measure and manage the realities on the ground for candidates, employees and alumni.

Before you start to plan your EX journey, take time to assess if your target organisation culture is in place. This is the 'anchor' of your EX programme and vital to its success.

When you're ready to start, use these steps to plot your employee journey:

1 **Map each of the 5 employee stages** - look at the processes, procedures and tools at each stage. These could include job application forms; induction processes; team welcomes; goal setting and performance management procedures; learning and development platforms; core tools and technologies; exit processes and alumni networks.

2 **Identify who is involved at each stage** - this might involve several personas at each stage, for example at candidacy consider the experience of the candidate, the recruiter and the hiring manager.

3 **Identify the outcomes you are seeking at each stage** - describe what 'good' looks like from each of the persona perspectives.

4 **Review your data** - check what feedback you currently get from the key people at each stage, and consider whether this provides you with sufficient, actionable insight to ensure a great employee experience.

5 **Identify culture stabilisers and destabilisers** - agree how well each stage reflects your target culture: what elements support your target culture (culture stabilisers), what elements detract from your target culture (culture destabilisers).

6 **Identify any new actions or approaches for each stage** - identify what needs to change, and associated objectives and measurement tools.

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EX mapping: An example

Stage	Candidacy	Onboarding	Performance	Growth	Exit
What processes / procedures are in place?	▸ Job application forms ▸ Interview procedures ▸ Assessments and tests	▸ Induction ▸ Team welcomes ▸ Probationary reviews	▸ Goal setting ▸ Performance management procedures ▸ Bonus and salary reviews	▸ Learning & development ▸ Management training	▸ Exit interview ▸ Informal alumni network
Who is involved?	▸ Candidate ▸ Recruiter ▸ Hiring manager	▸ Employee ▸ Manager ▸ Team	▸ Employee ▸ Performance manager ▸ Team	▸ Employee ▸ Manager ▸ L&D co-ordinator	▸ Employee/alumni ▸ HR
What outcomes are we looking for?	▸ Positive candidate experience ▸ Positive recruiter experience ▸ Positive hiring manager experience ▸ 'Right' time to hire	▸ Role clarity ▸ Expectations fit ▸ Initial engagement ▸ Likelihood of retention ▸ Fast ramp to productivity	▸ High levels of performance and engagement ▸ Values being lived ▸ Inclusion ▸ Wellbeing	▸ Management capability ▸ Learning & development in line with personal and company goals ▸ Talent retention	▸ Positive exit experience ▸ Alumni retained as positive advocates
What data do we have?	▸ Candidate survey ▸ Recruiter/agency feedback	▸ Joiners survey ▸ Probationary interview	▸ Census surveys ▸ Pulse surveys ▸ Performance review data ▸ Listening posts	▸ 360 feedback ▸ Competency assessment data ▸ Talent management data	▸ Leaver surveys ▸ Exit interviews
What are our culture stabilisers and destabilisers?	▸ In-house recruiter team ▸ Values based job advertisements	▸ CEO induction day ▸ Probationary reviews are inconsistent	▸ Performance metrics don't align with value, some measures are contradictory ▸ Some issues relating to peak workloads	▸ Learning portal content is good, but visibility is low ▸ Time is not routinely scheduled for L&D	▸ Loss of contact with alumni ▸ Exit interviews often not informed by other data
Key action areas	▸ Culture fit assessments ▸ Revised candidate communications	▸ Updated role guides ▸ Manager's onboarding checklist	▸ Resilience workshops ▸ Hard bake values within performance review	▸ Lunch and learns ▸ E-learning portal relaunched	▸ Alumni social network group to be established ▸ Exit survey data to feed exit interviews

Measuring your employee experience

Once you've mapped the stages of your employee journey, consider how to gather employee feedback at each stage.

This is likely to require a range of listening methods. Integrated listening models combine different approaches to help organisations understand how well their employee experience aligns with their target culture.

Cadence is key; the flow of feedback needs to match your ability to intelligently analyse and act upon it. People don't get sick of surveys, but of the lack of meaningful change. Combat survey fatigue by demonstrating the actions you've taken as a result of feedback you've received.

Need help defining your listening strategy?
> Read our full guide

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While your listening strategy will be tailored to your organisation's needs, typical components might include:

Surveys

- Candidates, new joiner and leaver surveys – for insight at key moments of the employee lifecycle
- Census surveys to track employee engagement in depth
- Regular pulse surveys for quick feedback on progress and hot topics
- 360 feedback for leaders and managers to hone their people management skills

Listening groups

- In person or virtual focus groups to:
    - *a.) Give qualitative feedback on important issues*
    - *b.) Crowdsource solutions to problems raised in surveys*

Online platforms

- Online discussions & polls for quick responses
- Ideation platforms – taking ideas and suggestions into further detail
- Organisation network analysis – identifying connections and silos
- Scraping social media and review data – e.g. Glassdoor

In person listening

- Stand up Q&As ran by leaders
- Team meetings and 1:1s for more local discussion and to generate feedback

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Employee experience in organisations like yours

EX at work: Attracting new talent

With competition for talent on the rise and up to 5 generations entering the workforce, many employers are looking to expand their talent pool. When looking to attract employees from different demographics, ensure that your culture is set up to enable what you're pitching. For example, if you're offering flexible working and control of their working pattern, have the tools and tech in place to deliver this. Consider the cultural changes it might require too, such as developing manager behaviours that demonstrate people are trusted and valued whatever their choice of working pattern or location.

This could also require you to overhaul existing processes to ensure a consistent experience at every stage. Consider whether your recruitment campaigns are targeting the right demographic; if careers pages reflect a diverse workforce; the demographic make-up of your interview panel and what you can learn from the feedback of under-represented groups.

A EX perspective might prompt you to consider:

- *Do our recruitment processes present us as a tech-forward, flexible employer? For example, can job application forms be started and finished on a phone?*

- *Do our core technologies and workspaces support secure, mobile working?*

- *Does our engagement survey measure people's perceptions around work flexibility and work life balance?*

Client example

Southampton Football Club

A change of leadership and vision prompted a culture refresh at Southampton Football Club, with five new values developed in collaboration with employees. Getting to the values was easy; the next part was embedding them into the business and measuring their impact. We helped SFC plot their employee journey and identify moments of culture clash, which included their recruitment and induction processes. Value based questions were introduced, along with a two-day induction programme which shares how the values apply to individual roles and helps colleagues incorporate the values from the start. People Insight's annual engagement survey helps measure progress, assess work life balance and evaluate how well the values are embedded; with an impressive engagement score of 90% maintained three years in a row.

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EX at work: Enabling customer success

Similarly, if your aim in a competitive consumer marketplace is to win by delivering outstanding, personalised customer experiences, then you need to create a culture where front-line employees are empowered to respond to any issues and delight the customer in the moment.

'Computer says no' won't cut it and neither will micro-management or elevated and slow decision-making processes. Employees need to have the freedom to respond to customer needs and have some meaningful options immediately to hand when it comes to resolving problems or delighting customers.

An EX perspective might lead you to consider:

- *Do our values translate into management and supervisory behaviours that emphasise delegation and empowerment?*

- *Do our 360 tools and management development programme cover the same values-based behaviours?*

- *What do leavers say about supervisory leadership? Do we ask them the question?*

Client example
The Nottingham

When Nottingham Building Society launched a multi-million pound digital change programme, their ambition was for members to have more control over how they access their services and colleagues empowered to deliver exceptional experiences. Changes for customers included in-branch video calls with advisors, a new e-savings portal and flexibility over how they contact their branch.

The transformation involved significant changes and retraining for colleagues, and a culture shift to help leaders share the vision for change and enable colleagues to wow customers in their new roles. The Nottingham developed a new 'Doing the Right Thing' culture framework, with values which are communicated and reflected across the organisation. People Insight designed a cultural assessment to help The Nottingham measure where they stood at the start of the process, measure progress and listen to colleague feedback.

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EX at work: Transforming industries

If your goal is to disrupt a traditional industry with impressive new technologies, then your culture needs to foster experimentation and permit, even thrive on, mistakes as something to learn from. You also need to ensure that a full range of perspectives and experiences are valued and incorporated in decision making. Provide opportunities for different personality types to contribute to increase the chances of breakthrough ideas surfacing and gaining traction. Every team member needs to feel that their perspective is welcomed and included.

An EX perspective might lead you to consider:

- *Do leaders openly talk about the mistakes they have made and lessons they have personally learnt?*

- *Do our core competencies include experimentation and knowledge-sharing?*

- *Do our pulse surveys measure people's perceptions around risk tolerance and inclusion?*

- *Are learning and development activities designed to reflect the full range of thinking and personality styles? Are managers trained to recognise how thinking styles impact inclusion?*

Ready to get started?

Implementing an EX programme will mean viewing your current activity through a new lens.

Use these questions to prompt your review:

- **Is our organisation's target culture described in measurable and behavioural terms?** For example, is your culture the right one to achieve your objectives? Are values defined and in place (particularly for leaders and managers)?

- **What HR silos or legacy systems exist that might result in conflicting employee experiences?**

- **Are candidates, employees and leavers able to meaningfully feedback on their experiences at each stage?**

- **Are measurement tools customised to consistently track our target culture?**

Need a hand?

People Insight's Employee Experience Journey Mapping workshop helps align your employee experience with your target culture. Led by an organisation scientist, this one-day event will produce a long-term vision for your employee experience and identify the actions to achieve it.

> Find out more

Solve your employee engagement challenges

People Insight design and deliver highly successful programmes that improve the experience, performance and retention of tens of thousands of employees like yours across the public, private and not for profit sectors.

Partner with us and feel confident knowing that you have the plan, the data, the personal support and latest thinking to achieve your business objectives.

Talk to us about:

- **Employee experience (EX) journey mapping**
- **Values and behavioural framework development**
- **Candidate, joiners and leavers surveys**
- **Census and pulse surveys**

- **Design and facilitation of listening posts**
- **360 feedback design, implementation and coaching**
- **Executive insight and action planning workshops**

We'd love to talk

To find out how People Insight can help you evaluate and improve your employee experience and culture, contact us at:

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Surveys

People Analytics

Consultancy