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Creating an Exceptional Employee Experience

By Corey Pinkham, CEO, The Jacobson Group

The professional landscape looks much different than it did a decade ago. AI is redefining roles and workflows, interactions often seem more transactional than personal, and burnout is prominent. Yet, when it comes to employee experience, many insurers' strategies have failed to evolve at the same pace. It's important for organizations to rethink how they're creating and maintaining a workplace that has a positive impact on professionals of all levels, tenures and locations.

Prioritizing employee experience not only leads to a more enjoyable work atmosphere, it also contributes to engagement, retention and overall productivity. As leaders prepare and develop their workforces for the future, reassessing the elements that comprise employee experience and how they are reflected at all employment stages is essential for achieving the greatest business outcomes.

Evaluate elements of employee experience in your organization.

All interactions, milestones and moments – big and small – play a role in developing and reinforcing how employees perceive their employer. As leaders evaluate the current employee experience being cultivated within their organizations, there are several key elements that contribute.

Culture

Company culture can be defined in many ways, but at its core consists of the shared values, attitudes and behaviors that shape employee experience. Employees who feel connected to their organization's culture are [4.3 times more likely](#) to be engaged at work. Additionally, just [15% of employees](#) who consider their organization's culture good or

excellent are likely to look for a job in the near future, compared to 57% of employees who rate their organization's culture as poor.

Regularly review your corporate values to ensure they remain aligned with current company practices and expectations. These grounding principles carry much greater weight than words published on the corporate website, and should drive all actions and decisions throughout the company. This provides a solid compass for conducting business both internally and externally, at all organizational levels.

Understand how aspects of your culture are being outwardly reflected and demonstrated through daily interactions and decisions – starting at the top. Employees pay close attention to how leaders behave, how they treat others and what they reward. Ensure your leadership team is authentically living your company's values and setting the tone for the overall organization.

Communication

Transparency and ongoing communication are highly valued among professionals, especially in times of change and uncertainty. How leadership talks about topics such as new technology and AI affects employees' sense of job security and organizational trust. Ongoing dialogue also provides the opportunity to better understand how individuals are accepting and embracing a change. According to a recent survey, while [76% of executives](#) think employees are enthusiastic about AI, just 31% of individuals contributors say this is true. Be open about how AI fits into your organization's strategy while also acknowledging employee concerns, being empathetic about their hesitations and accepting there may be a divide. Ask for feedback as new processes, protocols and tools are rolled out, leveraging employees' input to ensure they feel seen and heard. This could include pulse surveys, informal conversations or set time in weekly one-on-ones.

Growth and Development

Regardless of where employees are within their professional paths, demonstrating a commitment to their future is essential and key to retention and career satisfaction. Determine how you can continue to give them new challenges and exposure to keep them engaged and energized, while priming them for growth.

Career roadmaps with short- and long-term goals help demonstrate a tangible commitment to helping individuals achieve their career aspirations. Keep conversations about growth and next steps within the organization ongoing throughout an employee's tenure. New hires should be able to visualize what their next several years will look like. Veteran employees should be able to recognize the ways in which they've developed and have a clear path for continuing to grow, while being rewarded for their successes. Those who are nearing retirement have a great capacity for giving back to the organization and can mentor newer team members and share their depths of historical knowledge.

At the same time, plan for future needs and how you will ensure individuals are successful as AI and technology reshape processes and responsibilities. A substantial investment in learning and upskilling will be essential – according to [a recent study](#), the average job's skills have changed by 33% since 2022. Focusing on future roles and needs positions your organization to adapt along with the industry, while also providing employees with new challenges and a sense of security.

Individual Preferences

There's no one-size-fits-all standard for a positive and engaging employee experience. Assess your organization and situation, as well as your team members and leaders. Everyone has different priorities, personal values and preferences, and it's more important than ever to understand and embrace different communication styles, work preferences and personality traits.

Within reason, aim to recognize and accommodate these unique needs as much as possible. Ask each employee about their preferred communication methods, how they want to receive feedback and their comfort with new technologies. Encourage individuals to also share this information with one another to further promote an environment that is conducive to and respectful of individual needs.

Strong Managers

Managers have a large influence on the overall employee experience, while also contributing to your organization's overall productivity and retention rate. Don't assume everyone has the same level of competency leading and engaging employees in today's environment – navigating remote work, new technologies and shifting business priorities can be challenging even for experienced individuals. However, managers are employees' closest connection to the organization and play a large role in their overall experience, accounting for [70% of the variance](#) in team-level engagement. Ensure they are authentically championing your values and reflecting your culture, while effectively communicating and engaging their team members. Think through what tools and resources may be helpful and where their skills may need to be further developed to best support and empower their teams. Additionally, encourage those who are growing their teams to keep your organization's culture and values at the forefront when interviewing potential new employees.

Acknowledge the full employment lifecycle.

An individual's experience with your company includes more than their first to last working day. Strive to create a positive experience at all interactions, even following their departure. This will look different depending on where an employee is within their lifecycle at your company. Address the following questions to help evaluate and create a holistic, desirable and consistent experience.

Recruiting and Hiring Process

The employee experience starts with an individual's first interaction with your organization. This may be during their recruiting and interview process, or even before they decide to apply for a role. Your organization's image, presence and reputation all contribute to brand awareness and candidates' first impressions, laying an initial foundation.

- How are prospective employees interacting with your organization?
- What is your employer brand?
- How are current employees talking about your organization to others?
- What is the recruiting and interviewing experience?
- Are interactions and communication providing a positive experience?

Onboarding

During an employee's first few weeks and months on the job, making them feel a part of the organization and creating a sense of connection to their role and team is essential. Especially in today's more transient professional climate, it's important to keep new hires engaged and help them visualize their futures with your organization.

- Is your onboarding experience positive, welcoming and comprehensive?
- Are you creating a sense of belonging in your organization?
- Have you shared the company's mission, vision and values, as well as how they relate to the role?
- How are managers initiating communication and setting expectations?
- In what ways are you asking for and receiving feedback from new employees?

Engagement and Development

Following initial onboarding, creating a culture and environment that retains your employees should be a priority. This will look different for every individual based on their unique needs and preferences. Employees want to feel valued, invested in and excited for their future within the organization.

- How are you continuing to understand what is important to each individual and uncover their "why"?
- In what ways are you keeping them fulfilled and connected?
- What professional challenges and career growth can you provide?
- Where do they aspire to be in the future and how can you help them get there?
- How are you training and upskilling individuals to be successful in future roles?

Offboarding

No matter how much you invest in creating a positive employee experience, some turnover is unavoidable. This is the final stage of the employee lifecycle and creates valuable opportunities to gain feedback and continue to engage individuals as company advocates. Remain respectful and positive throughout the offboarding process – it's not uncommon for individuals to eventually come back to employers in new capacities or refer others to your company.

- What information can they provide about their experience and why they are leaving?
- How can you apply this new information to better your organization for the future?
- How are you engaging them as alumni?
- How may their exit impact others at your organization?

Your organization's culture and the employee experience it creates should not be left to chance. Ensure you're proactively working to engage and develop employees, while recognizing future needs and skill sets. As the business landscape continues to evolve, creating a positive employee experience will lead to more productive and fulfilled employees who can make the greatest impact on your organization.