



Workgrid

EBOOK

The Definitive Guide to Employee Experience



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A letter from the Workgrid CEO

Create the employee experience your workers deserve and the business value will follow.

It goes without saying that as business leaders, we want our employees to be happy. In addition to just a human aspiration, it's also makes good business sense – employees are the foundation of our success and the fuel that will propel us to achieve our future goals.

But what, exactly, do employees need to be successful in the modern digital workplace?

Given the rate of technological advancement over the past few decades, not to mention the bombardment of “employee experience” solutions that are currently available, that's not a question that's easily answered.

In 2013, Liberty Mutual Insurance embarked on a journey of digital transformation (long before the term even became part of the common lexicon). They decided that the time had come to deliver an exceptional experience for their global workforce of more than 50,000 — one that simplified employees' days, helped them become more productive and engaged, and empowered them to focus on the high value work that impacted business goals.

That multi-year process taught Liberty some very valuable lessons. They learned how important it is to listen to employees' needs and involve them in the process of digital transformation, as well as how challenging it can be to create a solution that works for such a diverse group of expectations. They also learned that many other companies shared their vision of improving the employee experience and so they launched Workgrid Software, to help those organizations realize their own goals.

Liberty's efforts have been widely applauded by some of the biggest visionaries in the employee experience industry – and yours can too. That's why we've put together this guide, to give you everything you need to know to create an award-winning employee experience that helps you meet your business objectives.

Good luck!



Brett Caldon
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CHAPTER ONE

Why is Employee Experience Important Now?



WHY IS EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE IMPORTANT NOW?

What's driving the need to prioritize employee experience?

There's a convergence of unique circumstances underway that's driving the need for organizations to make employee experience a high priority:

Increasingly disengaged employees – According to Gallup, 51% of employees are not engaged and a surprising 16% are actively not engaged. As if that weren't bad enough, those actively disengaged employees cost the U.S. between \$450-\$550 billion annually. Meanwhile, companies with highly engaged workers outperform their peers by 147% in earnings per share. A negative employee experience is simply too expensive to ignore any longer.

Hot labor market – With unemployment at historical lows, people now have more flexibility to choose where they work. Companies will have to work hard if they want to attract and retain the best talent. Providing a superior employee experience is without question the best place to start.

Digital transformation – As organizations consider the foundational changes they need to make in order to deliver value to their customers, it's the perfect opportunity to also consider the impact technology is having on the employee experience.

Generational mashup in the workplace – Due to factors such as the 2008 recession and the tendency towards longer, healthier lifestyles, the workplace of today is often an eclectic mix of up to 5 different generations. The diversity of a workforce that can range from those born before 1946 to those born after 1997 may provide lots of benefits, but it also highlights the critical importance of creating an employee experience that works for everyone.

Consumer-led expectations – Services like Amazon and Netflix have had an undeniable impact on the lives of consumers. But their impact is also now being widely felt in the workplace as employees are increasingly demanding technology resources that are as simple and intuitive as their consumer counterparts. The standard has been set and it's up to businesses to either rise to the challenge or suffer the consequences.

WHY IS EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE IMPORTANT NOW?

It's also important to note that employee experience ranked **as one of the top 3 key HR initiatives for 2019**.



That alone is significant but take a look at the other priorities on the list. Not only do nearly half of them underscore the importance of employee experience, but a superior employee experience will be required if organizations hope to achieve these objectives.

The reasons for making employee experience a priority don't stop there, either. Take, for example, the impact of employee experience on competitive advantage, both from a revenue and a recruitment perspective:

As organizations battle to differentiate themselves, the smallest things often stand out the most. Companies can gain a big advantage by improving processes in areas where other business never bother to try. And let's not forget — happy employees = happy customers, so providing a streamlined and engaging employee experience goes a long way in helping companies achieve the differentiation (and success) they're looking for.

It's a similar effect in terms of attracting and retaining top talent. More than anything, workers really want to be able to do their jobs easily and effectively. They want less frustration. Smart organizations that can make that happen will stand out to prospective employees who are looking for their next career opportunity.

CHAPTER TWO

Understanding the Terminology



UNDERSTANDING THE TERMINOLOGY

Employee Experience Terms You Need to Know

Given how relatively new the whole digital workplace/employee experience industry is, there is a lot of different terminology floating around, with new definitions coming out all the time. That can be confusing to say the least, and it's especially problematic when different departments across an organization use the same term to mean different things.

We can help ease that challenge. Here's a glossary of the key terms you need to know for a successful employee experience initiative.

DIGITAL DEXTERITY

According to Gartner, digital dexterity is "the ability and desire to exploit existing and emerging technologies for better business outcomes."

There's no shortage of guidance on [how to develop digital dexterity](#) in organizations, and that's for good reason. Having a workforce that's digitally dexterous, i.e. both willing and able to use technology to meet business goals, will be critical to achieving the digital transformation organizations need to be competitive. Digital dexterity is both an attitude and a skills game and it needs to be a foundational part of every organization going forward.



According to Deloitte's [2019 Human Capital Trends Report](#), only 38% of HR leaders believe their employees are satisfied with current work-related tools and technology.

UNDERSTANDING THE TERMINOLOGY

DIGITAL WORKPLACE

Since the beginning of the digital workplace evolution when [Paul Miller](#), CEO of The [Digital Workplace Group](#), described the digital workplace as the counterpoint to the physical workplace, scores of experts and organizations have added their personal spin to the term.

While that's helpful in highlighting the importance of the topic in the world of business today, it can get confusing for organizations trying to gain an understanding of the basics before they start their employee experience initiative.

Wonder no more – here's a definitive definition (along with some [bonus trends](#), if you're interested), compiled from all of the various definitions written by the experts:

The digital workplace is the natural, ongoing evolution of the physical workplace. It includes all devices, software and platforms that workers use to complete their jobs and is comprised of such technology as core enterprise applications, communication and collaboration platforms, enterprise social media and virtual meeting tools.

The ideal digital workplace meets several important criteria. It should:

- Be more than just a portal into a collection of individual systems
- Be seamlessly connected so that it's intuitive for employees to navigate, reducing their cognitive load and giving them more time to focus on high-value work
- Make it easier for employees to find the information they need, modeling the simplicity of the consumer experiences that employees have become accustomed to
- Deliver personalized, contextual information that stands out from the information overload employees typically experience
- Be intelligent, adapting to the way people work to increase employee engagement and satisfaction
- Eliminate communication barriers, enabling organizations to transform the employee experience by fostering efficiency, innovation and growth



UNDERSTANDING THE TERMINOLOGY

DIGITAL EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE (DEX)

While the importance of the *customer* experience has always been understood as paramount to an organization's success, it's only in recent years that the *employee* experience has begun to garner equal attention — and that's only due to the much-needed recognition (finally) that employee experience has a direct and significant impact on customer experience and revenue.

Now *digital* employee experience (DEX) is even further down the chain in terms of understanding, but that doesn't lessen the critical role it plays.

Whether you follow [Jacob Morgan's explanation](#) of the employee experience as “the combination of the cultural environment, the physical environment and the technological environment of the workplace,” or [Josh Bersin's definition](#), which is that it's “the sum total of all the touchpoints an employee has with his or her employer, from the time of being a candidate to becoming an alumnus or alumna” – it stands to reason that you could just kind of tack on the word “digital” and call it good, right?

Not so fast. You won't do your organization any favors if you try to shortcut your interpretation of what DEX truly is.

At the keynote session of Gartner's “Digital Workplace Summit,” speakers Leigh McMullen and Helen Poitevin made one point very clearly: the only safe bet about the future of work is that it will become more digital. The digital world is changing on a nearly minute-by-minute basis – that truth must be factored in to any experience transformation initiative.

How?

To be truly effective, you need to consider your digital employee experience needs in a more forward-thinking way that goes beyond the reality of how your employees *currently* interact digitally with their environment, to the vision of how they *could* interact with it.

How much better and easier could you make the lives of your employees if you cast aside the notions of “possible” and “expected” and instead [innovated to create the best experience imaginable](#)?

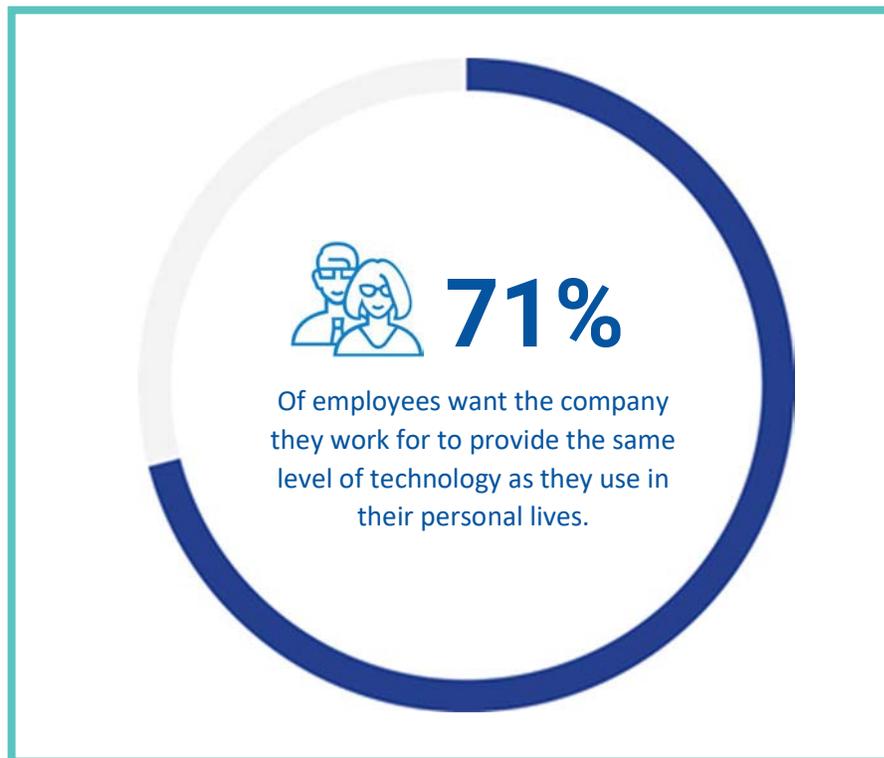
With that understanding, here's the definition for digital employee experience:

UNDERSTANDING THE TERMINOLOGY

What is a Digital Employee Experience?

The digital employee experience is the direct reflection of every single interaction employees have with technology as they go about their work day. It encompasses everything from quick clicks to full business processes, whether it's the badge scanner at the front door and ad-hoc communications with coworkers or making healthcare elections in core HR systems and accessing payslip information.

So that sounds pretty straightforward, but let's not forget that whether you like it or not, you're already creating a digital employee experience — good, bad or ugly — by default. Is your organization a reflection of experiences that were designed on purpose or rather ones that were an accidental consequence of unrelated IT decisions and software purchases?



Source: [Salesforce](#)

Consumerization is real, with companies like Amazon and Netflix having a huge impact on what people expect from their workplace technology.

UNDERSTANDING THE TERMINOLOGY

DIGITAL EXPERIENCE LAYER

As organizations strive to deliver the ideal digital employee experience, they typically do so in silos, creating individually world-class experiences that are optimally designed for each functional group of their organization. Finance chooses the best solution for their group, HR buys a solution that meets their needs, etc.

While that seems like exactly the right thing to do — after all, each business function has its own unique needs and interests to look out for — it's an approach that unfortunately creates a series of good but disconnected experiences for employees. The result is an unmanageable number of systems to log into with no clear pathway to find information, making it impossible for employees to perform their work efficiently.

Creating a digital experience layer helps organizations avoid that issue. Here's how:

A digital experience layer creates a single unified and contextual experience that exists above the technological complexity of an organization. It reduces the cognitive load on employees by orchestrating across all important systems on the employees' behalf, seamlessly abstracting only the critical information they need to know or act on. It then presents that information in a streamlined experience that mimics the consumer experiences that employees now expect.

Organizations universally agree that the end goal of any digital workplace initiative is a simpler employee experience – eliminating unnecessary technological complexities, particularly the need for employees to understand the intricacies of multiple complex systems. That's exactly what a digital experience layer does. It acts as an operating system that enables simple, intuitive interactions with complex back-end systems and eliminates the need for specialized institutional knowledge.

UNDERSTANDING THE TERMINOLOGY

Siloed method leads to disjointed experience...

The Complexity of Today's Workplace

Digitizing processes and transactions has led to enormous complexity

Today's Workplace

Unified layer creates streamlined experience...

Experience Layers Manage Complexity

So your employees don't have to

Digital Experience Layer

UNDERSTANDING THE TERMINOLOGY

OUTCOME-DRIVEN DESIGN

Outcome-driven design simplifies the work day by marrying communications with action, based on intent.

All too often technology solutions are designed with features in mind rather than the needs of the users. It's a huge missed opportunity with employee experience because the reality is that software solutions are generally used according to **Pareto's principle**, with 80% of the users only using 20% of the functionality.

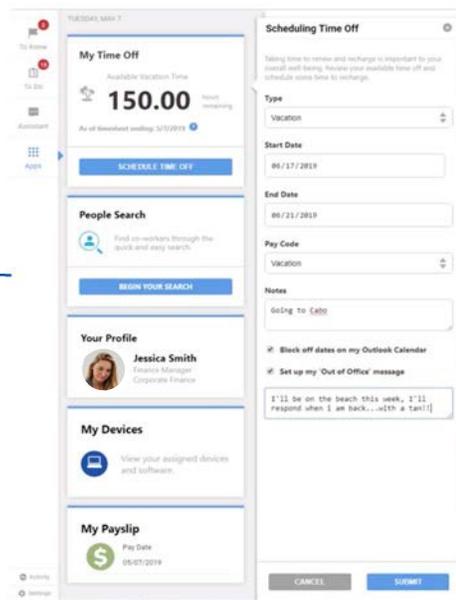
Outcome-driven design turns that old method of thinking on its head. By focusing on the intent of a user and what they're really trying to accomplish, a solution built with outcome-driven design can manage all the busy work, helping users accomplish their task-oriented intents more quickly so they can get back to their high-value work.

Think about scheduling a vacation. When an employee sits down to book time off, they just want to take a vacation, not become embroiled in a multi-step process that involves navigating a complex HR system, notifying coworkers, setting up an out of office auto reply, etc.

An employee experience layer built using outcome-driven design helps workers cut to the chase by managing all the interim steps in that process. With just a few clicks, the vacation time is booked, everything else is taken care of on the back end and the work day can continue with minimal interruption.



Step 1: Decide to take vacation time.



Step 2: Quickly complete the entire process from a single centralized interface.



Step 3: Relax.

CHAPTER THREE

Employee Experience: What it is, what it isn't, and why it matters.



Employee Experience vs. Employee Engagement

As organizations feverishly try to figure out how to attract and retain the best talent in a labor market that's fiercely competitive, there's an increasing use of the terms "experience" and "engagement" in relation to employee satisfaction.

While it may seem that the two terms are similar enough to be used interchangeably, the reality is that there's a significant difference between them, and that distinction needs to be understood for an employee experience initiative to be effective.

Here's the difference in a nutshell:

Employee experience relates to the journey an employee takes within your organization and the quality of their interactions at various touchpoints. Think of it as something you could rate on Yelp or an app store.



Employee experience is a sum total of all the various "moments that matter" for employees.

EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE: WHAT IT IS, WHAT IT ISN'T & WHY IT MATTERS

Employee engagement, on the other hand, refers to the **basic psychological needs that have to be met in order for an employee to perform well**. Engagement is a state that's built largely from relationships and it's created on a daily basis. Imagine that when engagement is good, it's like the employee is "into" your org enough to swipe right.

Employee engagement includes emotional and social needs, like doing work that you're good at and connecting your work with a higher purpose.

Both employee experience and engagement are foundational to the success of your organization, with engagement influencing experience significantly since the mindset of employees as they come to work each day has a huge impact on their experience.

So, what makes employee experience so important? Here are just a few of the top reasons:

Employee experience is critical for attracting and retaining top talent

With unemployment rates at historic lows, prospective employees are in the driver's seat when it comes to deciding where they want to work. The means companies must be on top of their games if they want to get a second glance, offering something most other companies can't, like a unified work experience.

Employees expect an environment that supports them in being effective and they have high expectations when it comes to technology. They're accustomed to services like Netflix, Amazon and Google making their lives easier. Employers who can deliver that kind of seamless experience stand a much better chance of attracting the best candidates.

An effective employee experience will save your business time and money

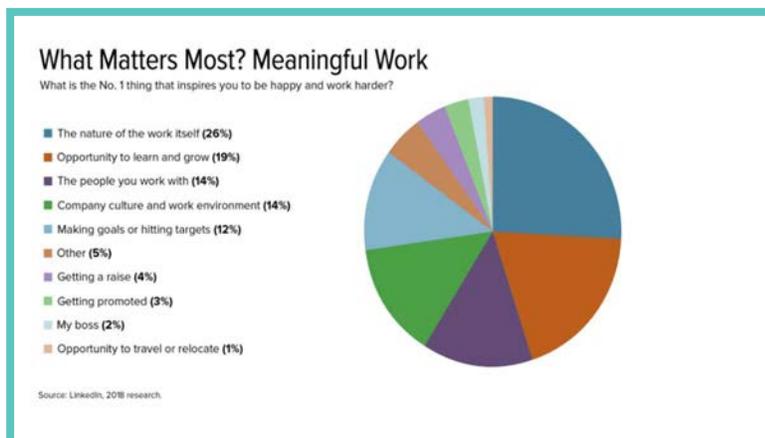
Like a lot. Take Liberty Mutual Insurance, for instance. When the company implemented a digital employee experience platform to provide a more effective digital experience for its global workforce of more than 50,000, the results were significant:

- 93% reduction in costs for each helpdesk transaction
- Reduction in the average handling time for helpdesk inquiries from 15 minutes to 2 minutes
- Reduction in the average speed of answering time from 142 seconds to instantaneous
- eNPS increase of 10%

EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE: WHAT IT IS, WHAT IT ISN'T & WHY IT MATTERS

- Increase in internal communication click-through rates by 40%
- Reduction in the number of clicks needed to access key employee information by 70%

Imagine what your organization could do with time and cost savings like that...



Employees want to focus on their jobs, not waste time on common, unnecessarily complicated tasks.

EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE: WHAT IT IS, WHAT IT ISN'T & WHY IT MATTERS

HAPPY EMPLOYEES = HAPPY CUSTOMERS

Customer experience futurist [Blake Morgan](#) wrote on Forbes.com about "[The Unignorable Link between Employee Experience and Customer Experience.](#)"

It's a simple fact that companies with leading customer experiences have 60% more engaged employees. It's exemplified by companies like Marriot, whose founder is known for saying "take care of associates and they'll take care of your customers," and Jet Blue, a company that gives employees the power to solve customer problems themselves rather than tying their hands with bureaucracy.

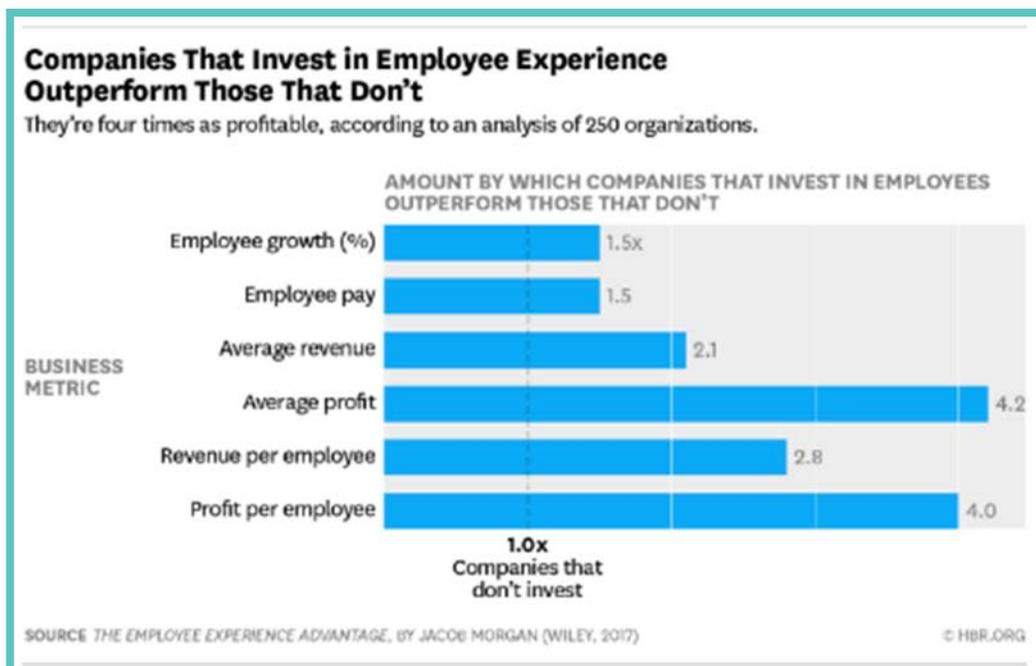
It's as simple as this: if employees want to work for your organization (and employee experience is a big factor in that decision), they'll give you their best work, and that has a direct impact on the quality of customer care.

Organizations with a good employee experience outperform those that don't

Hard to argue with 4 times more profitability...

79% of employees at companies with above-average customer experience are **highly engaged** in their jobs, compared to 49% of companies with average of below-average customer experience scores.

[Click to view infographic](#)



Investing in employee experience will more than pay for itself in the long-term.



CASE STUDY

Award-Winning Digital Employee Experiences

So, it's one thing for everyone to agree that employee experience is a critical component of an organization's success. But what does a "good" experience even look like?

There are organizations that are setting a very high bar, getting their experience right on all the most important levels. There are also plenty of organizations who are struggling. Many of them are documented in Jacob Morgan's "Employee Experience Index," a ranking of 252 organizations around the world based on seventeen variables across the three environments of culture, technology, and the physical workspace.

American Express, a company that ranked 16th on the index with a score of 94.9, is a great example of a company that's getting it right. As the [2019 winner](#) of the Digital Workplace Group's "Digital Workplace of the Year" award, American Express is clearly committed to the ongoing improvement of their employees' experience. Their 2019 award came on the heels of a 2018 win in the category of "user engagement" where judges lauded the company's "great user engagement," which includes multiple methods of feedback, usability, research and an early adopter community."

Their success can be attributed to a number of factors, such as a robust strategy and strong governance. Their approach, cited in their winning submission, included all the hallmarks of a strong employee experience program, including:

- Focus on improving people's working lives
- Clear outcomes in terms of organizational goals
- Robust operational mechanisms in place, along with scorecards to track progress
- C-Suite involvement, including a multi-functional steering group of senior stakeholders



CASE STUDY

Liberty Mutual Creates an Intelligent Employee Experience

To dig deeper into what makes a great employee experience, check out another award winner — Liberty Mutual Insurance, [winner of the 2018 Digital Workplace of the Year](#).

LIBERTY MUTUAL INSURANCE: AN EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE CASE STUDY

In the early 2000s, Liberty Mutual's "digital workplace" functioned much like that of any other large organization. Email was the primary method of communication, Novell and Windows NT file shares were the main collaboration tools and the entire organization was supported by monolithic enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems that chugged along behind the scenes and kept the whole enterprise running.

Fast-forward to the 2010s, however, and the modern concept of a digital workplace was really starting to take hold. Liberty Mutual was very focused on creating a cutting-edge work environment, which involved digitizing employee tools and information and bringing in new capabilities around mobile, social and collaboration.

Ultimately, the organization was transitioning from the massive ERP solutions they had historically relied on to a more agile conglomeration of pointed solutions. It was an evolution that was being undertaken by many organizations at the time, but unfortunately, it was also one that was creating unforeseen challenges for the Liberty Mutual workforce.

IDENTIFYING AND UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM

As Liberty Mutual rolled out the typical systems you'd see in an organization – travel, procurement, IT service management, even systems to manage systems – they were inadvertently creating a very splintered experience for employees that involved toggling back and forth between various systems throughout the work day.

LIBERTY MUTUAL CASE STUDY

Clearly that was not ideal, so the company began the journey of delivering a modern, integrated view into enterprise applications to simplify employees' day-to-day experience. They started by talking with employees.

What Liberty Mutual learned was understandable. Employees were feeling as though they were missing important information because they were being flooded with so many communications. They also found it frustrating to have to log into multiple systems to complete simple, yet necessary tasks.

SOLVING THE PROBLEM

Having identified the challenges employees were facing, Liberty Mutual's goals became clear. They needed to create a simple, intuitive and contextual experience – one that would help employees complete necessary tasks and easily consume relevant communications from across the organization.

This realization came in part from an insight voiced by [NYU professor Clay Shirky](#):

“
It's not information overload, it's filter failure.
”



Clay Shirky
NYU Professor/ Media Consultant

Since there was nothing Liberty Mutual could do to minimize the amount of information employees had to process, they chose to create a solution that would intelligently filter that information and make it easy for staff to tell at a glance what required their immediate attention.

As they focused on the aspiration of consolidating dozens of separate sources of information into a single digital hub, there were a few issues they knew would be of critical importance:

- 1.) Maximize high-value return early, identifying big pain points that could be addressed quickly and easily and focusing on those first to demonstrate the benefits of the initiative as soon as possible.

LIBERTY MUTUAL CASE STUDY

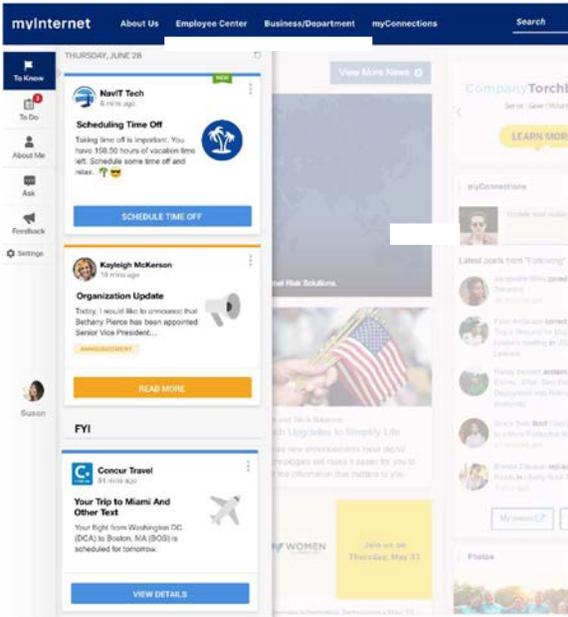
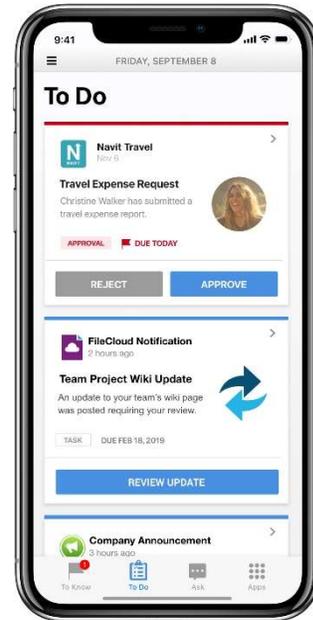
- 2.) Understand who owned the employee experience and work with them to bring on other stakeholders who could also benefit from the project.
- 3.) Approach the venture holistically, without the historical constraints of siloed thinking.
- 4.) Focus on users' needs and intents as a way of simplifying the work day.
- 5.) Accept that the initiative would be a significant undertaking that would require heavy investments of time, money and human capital.

Keeping all of this in mind, Liberty Mutual set to work creating the ultimate experience for employees that would be a help and not a hindrance. It was by no means an overnight process, but over time the Workgrid Assistant was built, a solution that revolutionized the work day for Liberty Mutual employees, saving time and reducing costs dramatically.



LIBERTY MUTUAL CASE STUDY

Comprised of an Intranet toolbar and a mobile app, the Workgrid Assistant acts as an individualized personal assistant for each employee, seamlessly abstracting important data from foundational systems and presenting it in a single location.


Intranet Toolbar

Mobile

At its core, the Workgrid Assistant works by detecting events and then, based on context and preferences, adding relevant information to “To-Do” and “To-Know” tabs on the toolbar. Information is also available on an “ask” basis where employees ask questions of an easy-to-use chatbot (For a complete run down of the development process and functionality that was built, check out the [session Liberty Mutual software engineer Troy Campano delivered](#) at Gartner Digital Workplace Summit.).

Ultimately, the Workgrid Assistant accomplished all of Liberty Mutual’s goals. From a strategy perspective, it eliminated complexity by removing the need for institutional knowledge and created a central hub of information, so employees didn’t have to log into multiple back-end tools to complete necessary administrative tasks. It also elevated communications outside of email so things couldn’t be overlooked.

The bigger impact of the system was the most important, however. Employees and their time are a company’s most precious assets. By building a solution that saves them time – while providing a user experience they have come to expect as consumers – Liberty Mutual was able

LIBERTY MUTUAL CASE STUDY

to drive significant efficiencies and cost savings while increasing employee engagement and improving retention.

The overall benefits realized after implementing the Workgrid Assistant were significant.

BENEFITS

Once the Workgrid Assistant went live, employees responded in ways that are not typically associated with enterprise software applications:

“Love it! Makes it so easy to see FTO hours :)”

Lindsay, Business Analyst

“I just want to say I love this!!!! I can't wait to see how it grows!”

Deborah, Med Specialist

“This is beautiful. Quick access to time management, and team information with just a click of the mouse. Thank you for doing a fantastic job.”

Adam, Administrative Assistant

“The new Payslip feature is fabulous [...] So much nicer for when you want to take a quick look at your pay information!”

Lorie, Vice President

“This is fantastic... one of the most useful new Liberty tools I've seen in a long time!”

Jordan, Business Analyst

“This is ALL kinds of awesome. Thank you!”

Gayle, Sr. Training Specialist

LIBERTY MUTUAL CASE STUDY

And it wasn't all just love and roses either. There were data-driven reasons for why people were so enthusiastic about Workgrid, such as this feedback from James Hagan, VP & Sr. Director, Customer Relationships, Liberty Mutual:

“

The Workgrid Chatbot is providing value on two strategic dimensions of our operation.

First – we aspire to make our internal help desk experience world class. The Chatbot brings a lower cost solution with high potential NPS to our support services. We expect to see high conversion from in-person calls, to digital exchanges which will drive ROIs of 12-15% consistently. This technology also provides the opportunity to leverage robotic process automation to further improve our capabilities and speed of delivery, transitioning us from solely a knowledge-base to an interactive help hub.

Second – the data we are capturing through this exchange, given it's more granular and exists at a specific customer journey point, provides critical insight and prioritization for our emerging agile product owners and practitioners. This will allow us to connect and transform our customer assistance data to customer-driven development data, allowing us to close the loop and addressing the true root cause for customer issues in a timely fashion. It also creates connection points between our development community and end users, capturing their experiential feedback. This drives innovation over time and creates improved collaboration across our services and products teams through data.”

James Hagan

VP & Sr. Director, Customer Relationships

People's enthusiasm for the platform was great validation of all the work Liberty Mutual had done to incorporate design thinking and create the kind of consumer-like experience employees had grown accustomed to in their personal lives.

Aside from some main benefits Liberty Mutual had expected to see, like a drastically simplified user experience and a significant reduction in clicks needed to complete tasks, there were also a few that couldn't have been predicted.

For example, internal communications saw a significant boost as employees clicked through messages 40% more than they had previously (internal comms is now a heavy stakeholder in the project). The Workgrid Assistant also reduced the impact of system modernizations because the platform is an experience layer that abstracts employees away from the complexity of native systems. As back-end systems are upgraded, the experience of the employee stays the same because it's entirely driven through the Workgrid Assistant.

LIBERTY MUTUAL CASE STUDY

Benefits

Workgrid at Liberty Mutual

 <p>Simplified Consumer-Like Employee Experience Less systems to deal with. Less logins. Less steps to complete tasks and access key information, employees loved it – a system employees actually enjoy using.</p>	 <p>70% Fewer Clicks 70% fewer clicks to obtain key employee information, allowing employees to be more productive.</p>
 <p>40% Internal Comms Increase 40% increase in internal communications click-through rates, employees no longer miss important communications.</p>	 <p>90% Adoption Rate 90% adoption by managers, seeing 80% of transactions being approved in Workgrid instead of the actual source systems.</p>
 <p>Reduced Impact of System Migrations New apps are built on this platform, removing employee impact of switching to new systems behind the scenes.</p>	 <p>Millions in Savings Each Year Saving hours and hours of employee and manager time, and reducing costs at internal help desk.</p>

Ultimately, the benefits of the Workgrid Assistant added up to an [award-winning](#) employee experience, the value of which cannot be understated. Employee experience is tied directly to customer experience, and that has a significant impact on bottom line revenue.

LESSONS LEARNED

Fueled with little more than a vision (and the tremendously appreciated support of the senior leadership team at Liberty Mutual, which is critical to an initiative like this), a solution was created that solved major pain points for more than 50,000 global employees. It was a process that left the team a lot wiser than when they started. Here are just five of the key lessons they learned:

1. For a digital employee experience to be superior, it must be:
 - a. Omni-channel
 - b. Personalized
 - c. Contextual
 - d. Intuitive
2. The key to success is implementing the solution as a “digital experience layer.” It’s a layer that abstracts info from the best-of-breed systems the organization needs without forcing employees to deal with all the complexity that entails, such as multiple logins, numerous clicks and screens, a reliance on institutional knowledge, etc.

LIBERTY MUTUAL CASE STUDY

3. Be diligent about keeping the employee experience independent from systems of record. It's an important step that ensures the employee experience won't be disrupted as back-end solutions are upgraded or changed.
4. Having a digital experience layer that's 100% API-focused will future-proof organizations for whatever technology might be integrated next, such as voice.
5. The Intranet is a great place to centralize the employee experience. While Liberty Mutual could have integrated the Workgrid Assistant with any commonly used application, the Intranet was ultimately the best "front door" for the experience.

For one thing, it means employees don't have an additional place to go to get information. Plus, Intranets are typically a high traffic location. Given the number of employees already visiting the page, it's an ideal spot to help maximize adoption, which is key to the success of the initiative.

(It's also important to note that while the tool looks and acts like an integrated part of the Intranet, it isn't. That's important for two reasons –one, keeping the Workgrid Assistant separate from the Intranet meant that no changes needed to be made to the Intranet; secondly, the Workgrid Assistant would never be impacted if Liberty Mutual decided to change the Intranet down the road.)

Armed with these lessons and a platform that continuously compounds the value proposition of simplifying the work day, Liberty Mutual is now ideally positioned for the future of work.



The Intranet is a great place to integrate a digital assistant. It's the cornerstone of the digital workplace and an ideal "front-door" to the employee experience.

CHAPTER FOUR

Cost/Benefit analysis – making the case to senior business leaders



COST/BENEFIT ANALYSIS – MAKING THE CASE TO SENIOR BUSINESS LEADERS

It goes without saying that before an employee experience initiative can even begin, there must be some kind of understanding of what the return on investment (ROI) will be. Aside from being just good business practice, some prediction of success will certainly be necessary to convince stakeholders to support the project.

WHERE TO START

Unfortunately, the ROI of employee experience isn't as straightforward as you'd expect, as Gartner's Jeffrey Mann explored in his session from the 2019 Digital Workplace Summit, "How to Win Support for and Measure the Value of a Digital Workplace Initiative."

He humorously sums up the challenges of quantifying ROI by pointing out that it feels weird to even have to justify something that's so universally agreed upon as a good idea – like providing restrooms for employees. No one ever had to make a business case for installing a toilet or provide post-implementation statistics to prove that it was a worthy investment, yet bathrooms are a ubiquitous fixture in every office building.

All joking aside, understanding what return you can expect to get from your employee experience investment is an important step in the planning process.

COST/BENEFIT ANALYSIS – MAKING THE CASE TO SENIOR BUSINESS LEADERS

Do's and Don'ts of Measuring Employee Experience Value

AVOID

- **Forgetting the impact employee experience has on customer experience**
Happy employees = happy customers, so any improvements you make to the employee experience are likely to directly impact the bottom line.
- **Overinflating your promises**
The prospects of transforming the employee experience is exciting but don't let that create a frenzy of unsubstantiated expectations. Understand your goals, have a plan to achieve them and document your results.

DO

- **Benchmark the statistics you want to track**
Focus on high volume, high impact initiatives first in order to demonstrate value quickly.
- **Listen to your employees and conduct sentiment analysis**
It will help you gain a clear understanding of what's working and what isn't.
- **Leverage existing priorities**
For maximum results, link your employee experience project to an existing priority and demonstrate how improved experience could help achieve that goal. It's an easy way to make a "squishy" concept like experience seem more tangible – and therefore important – to senior business leaders.
- **Use anecdotal storytelling to make your case**
Since the first cave painters were discovered thousands of years ago, storytelling has been used as a foundation of effective communication. Take advantage of the power of stories, especially in the form of user stories, like managers who want to submit approvals via mobile, to strengthen your own argument about the importance of improving the employee experience.

COST/BENEFIT ANALYSIS – MAKING THE CASE TO SENIOR BUSINESS LEADERS

Consider the cost of not improving the employee experience. It would be easy to think about improving the employee experience as similar to getting regularly scheduled maintenance for your car. On the surface everything seems to be working fine, so why spend money for nothing?

Because it's not nothing – it's important preventative care. And while there might be a small cost associated with that service visit, it's nominal compared to what you'll pay if you skip it. Sooner or later the check engine light will come on (or your employees will start leaving in droves) and the depth of your troubles will be out of your control.

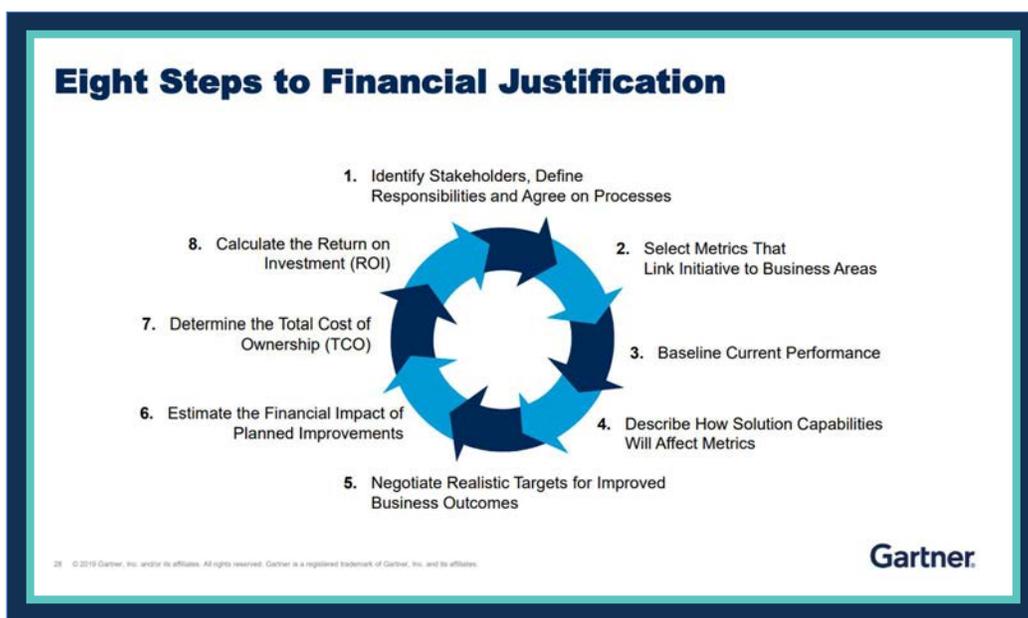
Here are the costs you'll face if you make the dangerous decision to skimp on employee experience:

UNENGAGED EMPLOYEES

Unhappy workers are bad news for the bottom line and **can cost up to \$3,400 for every \$10,000 in an employee's salary.** This is made even worse by the fact that according to Gallup's "**State of the American Workplace**" report, only 33% of U.S. workers are actively engaged.

ATTRITION

Setting aside the fact that the historically low unemployment rate is creating an incredibly competitive labor market, the total cost of losing (and having to replace) an employee **can range from tens of thousands of dollars to 1.5-2X annual salary.** That will add up fast as you try to plug the holes created by unhappy employees moving on to new opportunities.



COST/BENEFIT ANALYSIS – MAKING THE CASE TO SENIOR BUSINESS LEADERS

LOSS OF COMPETITIVE DIFFERENTIATION

In an age where technology enables businesses to be more competitive than ever before, organizations need every advantage they can get. An easy way to stand out is to make improvements in areas other companies never even think of, like employee experience. Ignoring that opportunity could cost your organization an untold fortune in lost business.

LESS THAN PERFECT CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES

The happiness of your employees has a direct impact on how well they treat customers. It's the difference between customer service and customer delight. **Leaders from some of the most successful companies take this issue very seriously:**



“Clients do not come first. Employees come first. If you take care of your employees, they will take care of the clients.”

-Richard Branson, Virgin



“Businesses often forget about the culture, and ultimately, they suffer for it because you can’t deliver good service from unhappy employees.”

-Tony Hsieh, Zappos

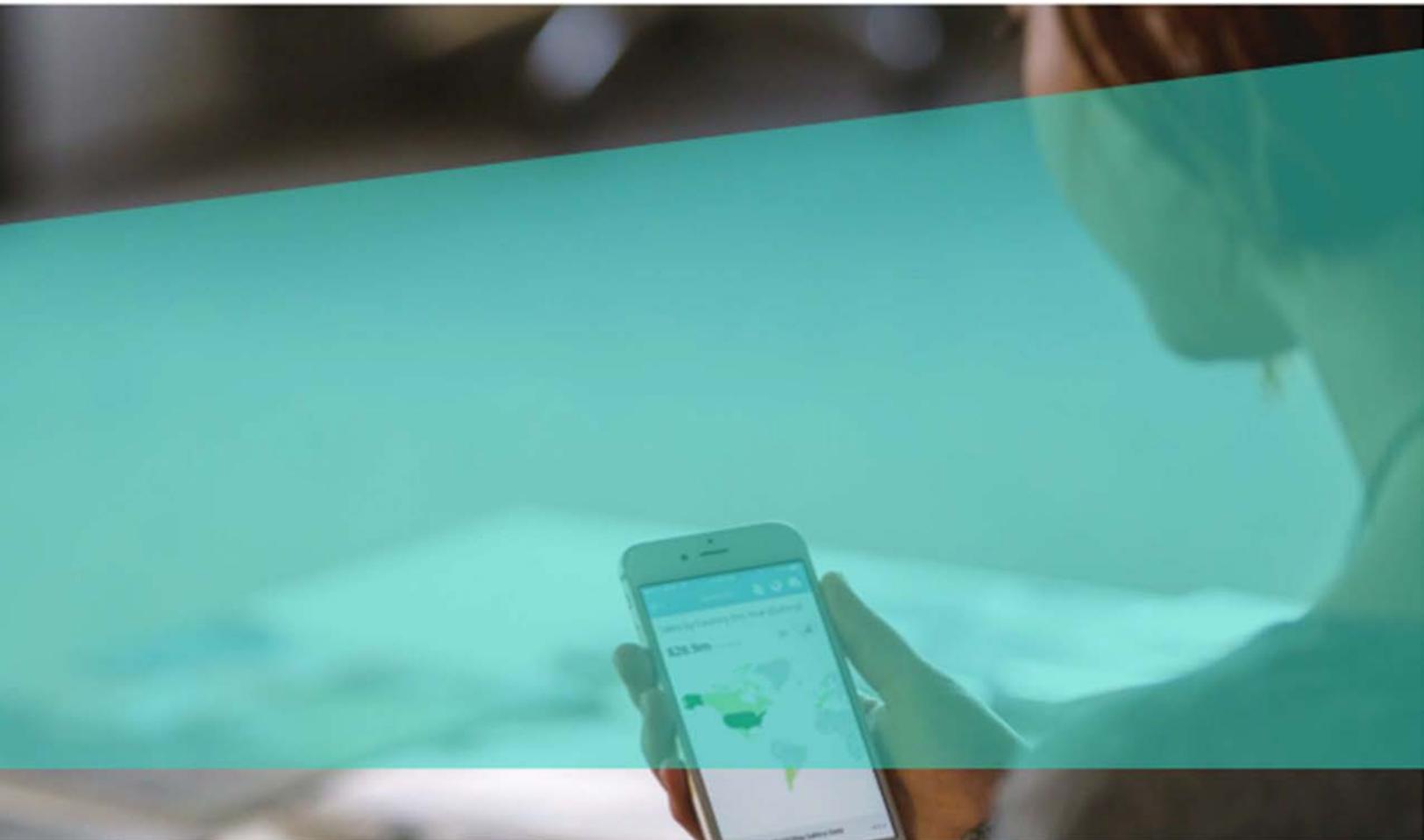


“To win in the marketplace you must first win in the workplace.”

-Doug Conant, Campbell's Soup

CHAPTER FIVE

How a digital experience layer solves digital workplace challenges



HOW A DIGITAL EXPERIENCE LAYER SOLVES DIGITAL WORKPLACE CHALLENGES

In case you weren't aware, there are two threats lurking in your organization that are robbing your business of success.

The first issue stems from a simple overload of information and resources.

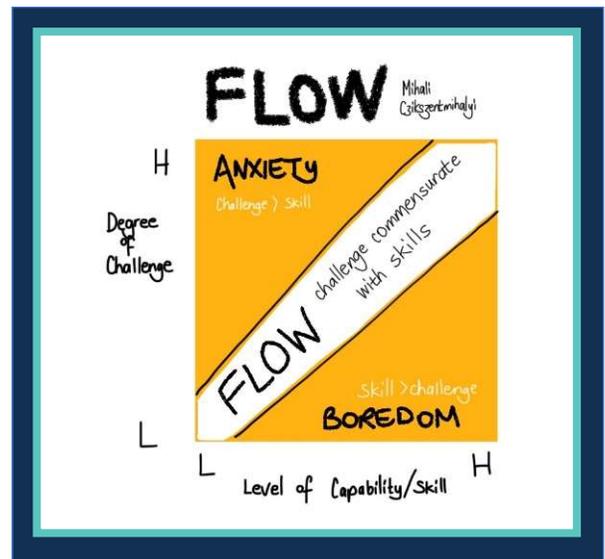
Employees at a typical organization are often expected to navigate a digital environment that [supports more than 900 different applications](#). [72% of employees struggle to find information they need](#) (It's no wonder they can't find anything given the size of the cognitive load they're carrying.).

The second issue relates to the [context switching](#) that comes along with the first issue. The problem is best summarized by cognitive psychologist Herbert Simon's quote: "A wealth of information creates a poverty of attention."

Because employees are so busy toggling back and forth between all the different applications and resources they need, they have little time to focus on high-value [work \(like up to 80% less time\)](#). That makes it almost impossible for workers to achieve the [flow state](#) necessary to produce really great work – the state where they're not only doing a good job for the company but where they also feel engaged and fulfilled enough by their work to want to keep doing it.

An employee experience layer solves these issues by creating a single unified experience that exists above the technological complexity of an organization.

Think about computers before the Windows operating system existed. To make the computer do anything, you had to know a programming language like DOS to get any of the benefits the computer could provide.



Achieving a state of flow doesn't just make employees more effective, it also makes them happier in their work.

HOW A DIGITAL EXPERIENCE LAYER SOLVES DIGITAL WORKPLACE CHALLENGES

That's the same corner we've painted the workers of today into. Yes, we've given them all the high-tech tools they need to get their jobs done, but we've made the digital workplace so complicated that it's next to impossible to get anything done unless you're an expert in all the systems you have to deal with.

An employee experience layer reduces the cognitive load on employees by simplifying the workflow to find information and complete tasks.

Everything an employee could need is right at their fingertips because the experience layer orchestrates across all important systems on the employees' behalf, seamlessly abstracting only the critical information each employee needs to know or act on. It then presents that information in a streamlined experience that mimics the consumer experiences employees have become accustomed to. No more switching back and forth between complex systems. No more hunting for information. Just a simple, effective experience that enables employees to focus on what's most important.



“ While technology should make our lives easier, the information it provides can negatively impact our mental function by overwhelming us with too much input. ”

Scott Matteson, [15 ways to combat cognitive overload](#)

CHAPTER SIX

Guidance for Creating a Consumer-Like Experience



CREATING A CONSUMER-LIKE EXPERIENCE FOR EMPLOYEES IN TWO EASY STEPS

There are two main considerations when it comes to building a consumer-like experience in the modern workplace.

STEP 1: DO AWAY WITH SILOED THINKING

When it comes to technology, organizations operate far too often under an unspoken “every person for themselves” mentality.

It’s an approach that has all the right intentions behind it – everyone wants to implement the best tools for their teams and make the right decisions for the overall success of the company. But thinking about technology as a siloed decision creates a fragmented and often frustrating experience for employees.

Not only is that nothing like the Amazon-esque consumer experience organizations should emulate, it’s exactly how problems with employees’ digital experiences compound.

Groups like HR, Finance, IT, Communications, etc. need to start thinking about how their individual solutions will impact the overall technology experience for employees and working together to create a streamlined experience. It will take a tremendous mind shift, no doubt, but it’s effort that will pay huge dividends in increased productivity and decreased employee stress.


STEP 2: IMPLEMENT A DIGITAL EXPERIENCE LAYER

No one will argue that having a consumer-like experience in the workplace is a great idea. And creating a digital experience layer that eliminates complexity by abstracting important information out of core systems sounds like the ideal way to do it.

But it’s getting to that point that’s the challenge. Or is it ...?

An employee experience platform easily turns the myth of a unified, contextual employee experience into a reality. It does so by providing all the tools organizations need to create, build, manage and optimize a superior digital experience across the entire cross-functional employee journey.

When implemented correctly, an employee experience platform is completely customizable, allowing organizations to build their own apps and create tailored experiences using APIs.

If that sounds like a good idea but a challenging one, you can rest easy. There are technical partners that specialize in delivering employee experience layer technology, so there’s no need to agonize over how to build it yourself. In fact, it’s recommended that you leave this project to the experts. Here’s why...

BUILD VS. BUY

5 considerations before your start

Tackling an employee experience initiative is no easy endeavor. Unless you know what you're doing, there are lots of ways the project can go wrong, costing your organization precious time and money – not to mention the trust of your employees.

If you're thinking about building your own custom employee experience platform, here are some considerations to get you started...

You need the value of a unified employee experience NOW. If you think that building your own custom employee experience platform is the best path for your organization, consider this: it will be at least five years before you see any value. Can you afford to wait that long when you could be up and running with an existing (and proven) solution in just a few months?

The scale of this project will be massive. It's like the old saying "go big or go home," but in a bad way. The staff, the budget, the planning, the communication, the ongoing maintenance... everything about implementing an employee experience initiative takes much more than most organizations could imagine. It's draining (and distracting) to an organization's primary business focus. It's also unnecessary when there are vendors that can handle all the heavy lifting with far more effectiveness and efficiency.

Making a complex employee experience simple is...well, complex. Abstracting employees away from the complexity of underlying corporate systems is a complicated and time-consuming process. It's also never ending, with necessary modifications being made all the time to accommodate changes and replacements of core systems.

It's expensive. Between upfront costs, maintenance costs and the cost to staff the project, expect to spend in the millions for a large organization.

Not all solutions are created equal. If you do decide to buy, remember that that isn't a decision to be made lightly either. The industry is flooded with solutions that all claim to deliver an improved employee experience, but there's a lot of marketing hype you'll have to wade through before you find one that can truly deliver value to your employees (and therefore your customers and your bottom line). Be prepared to do your homework and evaluate all your options. It's particularly important to make sure you choose a solution that's not only customizable enough to meet your organization's unique needs, but one that can adapt and grow with your business over time. Taking the time to make the right decision up front will pay off in the long run.

Want to learn more about how to create an intelligent employee experience?

There are a few ways you can easily stay in the know:

1. Check out our [on-demand webinar](#) for a demo of the Workgrid Assistant, the tool Liberty Mutual used to deliver an award-winning experience to their global workforce of more than 50,000.
2. Visit www.workgrid.com and sign up to get weekly news and insights delivered right to your inbox.
3. Keep an eye out for Book 2 of the Definitive Guide to the Employee Experience – “Building the Foundation.”

www.workgrid.com