

Employee Experience



eXperience
Design

Definition & Clarification



Employee Experience – A need for a pragmatic taxonomy

The topic of “Employee Experience” (EX) is becoming more and more referenced and talked about, both in the media and in various networks. The role Employee Experience Manager is now a thing, and initiatives are taking place in many companies. The problem is that there can be found many different views on what it is and numerous definitions and viewpoints, so how do we know we are talking about the same things, the same problems, and solutions?

It is from a pragmatic and solution-oriented point of view, this article is striving to define a taxonomy around Employee Experience, in order to address some of the many issues which can be related to a bad Employee Experience.

When defining Employee Experience, it is tempting to look at the definition for Customer Experience (CX) and exchange Customer with Employee.

The definition, however, is defined in a context, where the consumer does not have to care about all the activities and dependencies leading up to a purchase.

An example could be, that you order an upgrade to your Internet connection. As a consumer, you have very little interest in knowing about the whole delivery mechanism behind a change to your Internet subscription.

The same could be said about an employee, but if you want to make changes and improvements to the Employee Experience, you must know all the moving parts, which are part of the total Employee Experience.

That's why a more pragmatic definition is required.



The focus on the customer response and the feelings and emotions a consumer event generates is more relevant than ever, but often ignored in an Employee Experience context.

Examples, which all falls under the umbrella of bad Employee Experiences are:

- Employees feel they are wasting time, when reaching out to internal departments for assistance
- Status and updates on existing support requests are not given so employees are spending valuable time getting the information
- Internal systems are difficult and not intuitive to use
- Internal processes take away time, which could be better used with the customers
- Too many hours during a week are allocated for unproductive admin tasks
- Young talents do not have the patience for unproductive applications and procedures and tend to choose companies with focus on a workday filled with value generating tasks

The examples all lead to employees which are unsatisfied, unproductive, and losing their motivation.



Defining a Taxonomy for Employee Experience

So, it is relevant to look at a more pragmatic concept of Employee Experience, if you want to change an unfavorable situation, namely employees not being happy or productive in relation to the products and services they use on a day-to-day basis.



We can compare an Employee with a customer or consumer in the sense, that an employee is requesting something as part of their work life, to fulfill a task, solve a problem or acquire some sort of resource. We can call this a **Product or Service**¹.

So, from the employees' point of view, the delivery is something you need as part of your work life. It can be questions to your salary statement, a new laptop, an application provided to register your vacation or assistance with hiring a new colleague. Tangible, intangible, or a combination. The concept of assisting colleagues and employees during their workday is often referred to as Enterprise Service Management, or in a more modern lingo, Employee Service Management.

An employee will engage through some sort of engagement channel to acquire this product, whether it is through a mobile application, personal encounter or through a portal. The way the employee is experiencing all the **Touch Points** before, during and after the product is delivered, is what can be referred to as **Interaction or Friction**.

In the context of a service, the consumption will take place as part of the interaction if you receive an answer or use an application for time registration. But you may have to engage several times, before the Service is available, and that is the reason why it is important to look at the whole delivery mechanism behind a **Product/Service**.

The most useful way to explain the delivery mechanism is found in the **Operating Model Canvas**, written by Andrew Campbell et al ².

This leads us to a taxonomy of Employee Experience.

- **Product/Service** - What you receive or acquire, being knowledge or something tangible
- **Operating Model** - The whole delivery mechanism required to provide a Product/Service assisted by people and technologies
- **Interaction/Friction** - How the employee experiences the engagement through touch points throughout the delivery, whether it is technologies or human interactions.

¹ Product & Service will be used interchangeable throughout the article

² <https://operatingmodelcanvas.com/>



Definition of Employee Experience



“The way **employees perceive** a supporting **product** or **services**, and how it **feels** to **interact** with the **delivery practice** through **human** and **digital interfaces**”

A great Employee Experience requires the expectation of the employee is met or exceeded.

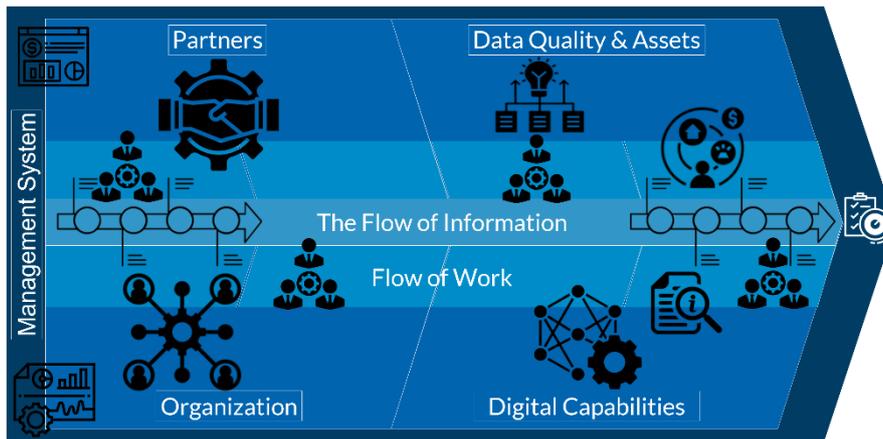


EX Design Model

Let us dive a bit deeper into each of the elements in a great Employee Experience, starting with the Operating Model.

Operating Model for EX

If you do not have a well-functioning Operating Model behind each of the **Services**, **Technologies**, and **Products** you as a company provide, there is a great risk your employees will not have a good Employee Experience. So, each delivery to the employee, starts by looking at your Operating Model:



Operating Model for Digital EX (Modified from Operating Model Canvas)

The Flow of Work & Flow of Information

This is basically all the activities and related information required to provide a service to your employee. Have you removed nonvalue adding activities, bottlenecks, and redundant work? This require that all the stakeholders/partners in the process know their role and what can be expected from them, otherwise the process will not work.

Time spent on defining and mapping out the delivery process is well spent and necessary.



Data Quality & Assets

You have to know and control the assets of your employees, products and services to meet the employee expectation. The data quality must be high, or you may provide the wrong answer and service which is not fit for context. You need to know the services and products they already subscribe to and the related entitlements to provide the right solution for context and use.

Digital Capabilities

This is the technologies used to deliver products/services and how the employee engagement is made easy. This is where the interaction will be felt by the employees. Make sure you provide information to align delivery expectations and ongoing updates. Providing intuitive applications (User Experience - UX) and portals for the employees to provide the best opportunity for a great Employee Experience.

Organization

The organization refers to the internal organization delivering a service/product. Make sure the organization is both capable, skilled and structured with aligned roles, responsibility and authority to deliver a great Employee Experience.

Partners

Often, there are multiple people, departments, and companies behind the delivery of a product/service. Hiring a new colleague, requires many departments, like IT, Facility, and HR. But external recruitment agencies may also play a part. As a hiring manager, you will only receive a great experience, if all these stakeholders play together.

Management System

The Management System is the system overlooking the entire Operating Model and status of deliverables. The Management Systems will allow you to see how well you are delivering on the communicated expectations, realized bottlenecks and areas for improving the Employee Experience. Things like the Value Proposition definition and the overall governance of the Operating Model is considered part of the Management System.

Interactions & Friction

The engagement you as an employee encounter in terms of touchpoint and interfaces between Employee = Consumer & the Provider is the core of experience. It is helpful to think of Interaction in terms of the **People** you meet during your request for a product/service or the **Technologies** you are in contact with.

Even more importantly is the quality, nature, and content of the interaction. Is it pleasant, maybe even entertaining, is it easy to understand and to the point, in the sense, that you get the right information and not too much? Reporting your weekly timesheet may be quite a headache, if you are presented with more input boxes than you need, and the sequence of your interactions is unclear. It is both too much, and not enough.

A great Employee Experience requires that you have everything at your fingertips, that it is intuitive when to enter what and where and maybe most of all, when you want it. There are several studies suggesting, millennials and generation Z are used to many choices and options and have less patience than the older workforce. It may not be possible to provide more than one time sheet solution, but it



can be provided as a mobile solution, so you can engage anywhere, from any device, in the bus, canteen, with or without WI-FI. This is where you as a responsible company, can provide a multitude of options and accommodate a younger workforce.³

As an employer, you need to reduce the experienced **Friction**, which is the unnecessary time and effort required to get what you want, when you want it. Friction can be seen as the waste time or frustration you experience when a technology/service is simply slow or difficult to operate, or friction can be the unpleasant time you encounter when a person is unfit to fulfill your request/question.

Expectations

Inspired by traditional Service Management theory, good service is often perceived as getting what you expect or more. The same notion is helpful, when providing great Employee Experience. You must master the area of employee expectations. First step is to be clear on your Services, when can they be expected, in which quality and how will they be delivered.

This needs to be clear at the first interaction the employee has with the delivering part. If the time slips, and delays occur, the employee must be notified and updated. We all know the importance of being kept in the loop. If your flight or train is delayed, it is nice to know why, even if it doesn't change a thing. Also, when the scheduled delivery time is followed, it feels good to know, where in the process your request is, if pending approval, being shipped, etc., like you are used to from Internet shopping. The employee will need this type of interaction to be smooth, and always present, favorably as a mobile app. Any trouble getting the right information at the right time is friction and unnecessary waste of time and insecurity.

Summary

So, to summarize, a great Employee Experience is clearly dependent on how well a product or service is delivered, but for companies to consciously improve, it is also important to analyze, design and master all the moving parts leading up to a great experience. And the touch points between the employee and the delivering organization or technology need to be easy, clear, and frictionless.

³ E.g. LinkedIn Global Talent Trends 2020 | Multigenerational workforce

