

Tiffani Bova, author, *The Experience Mindset*

are you focused on employee experience?

The pandemic exposed a stark disconnect between leaders' perceptions and the reality faced by employees. Research found that while 70% of leaders report their employees have access to what they need to grow in the company, just 38% of employees agree.



While the early 2000s witnessed a surge in digital transformation to enhance customer interactions, an unintended consequence emerged: heightened employee pressure. The intense focus on consumers' experience inadvertently led to neglecting the needs and experiences of their workforce.

Although we know employee and customer experience are linked, proving the direct causation between specific aspects of employee experience and customer satisfaction is difficult. The research pinpointed core elements of employee experience that significantly influence customer experience and growth. Trust, C-suite accountability, alignment, recognition, and seamless technology emerged as pivotal areas. They are touchpoints where enhancing the employee experience directly impacts customer interactions.

In a world where organizations use over 1000 applications on average, but only 29% are integrated, data silos emerge that lead to rising costs, duplicated work, productivity bottlenecks, and disconnected experiences. The result? Employees become burnt out, frustrated, and struggling to access vital information.

The solution? A 'single source of truth', where data flows seamlessly, tools are integrated, and every employee – from CEO to intern – is on the same page. Empowering employees with the right tools and support is not just a business necessity but a pathway to sustained success.

don't revert to old habits

The danger lies in reverting to old habits – the pre-pandemic norms that led to the "great resignation". C-suite leaders must recognize that the way forward isn't just about implementing more technology or offering a few employee perks. It's about fostering a deep understanding of what employees truly need and want.

Start by asking: Are we putting the same level of rigor into the design and implementation of employee tools as we are with those we deploy for our customers? Do we have KPIs [key performance indicators] for employee experience [EX] like we do for customer experiences [CX]? Do we use Employee Net Promoter Score (eNPS) to gauge satisfaction and loyalty? When we launch something new for customers, do we clearly understand the intended or unintended consequences to our employee day-to-day?

questions over ROI

CFOs in particular, often express concerns about talent investment. What if we invest heavily, and these skilled employees decide to leave? But here's the counterpoint: what if we don't invest, and they stay? What if they continue working without the necessary skills or capabilities, leading to subpar customer interactions and diminished business outcomes?

When resources are limited, choosing between where to make investments creates a crisis of prioritization.

But the reality is there is no 'either/or' choice in this situation, your mindset must shift to an 'and' option when looking to maximize the value from both. When employees lack the skills, knowledge, or motivation to deliver exceptional customer experiences, you risk dissatisfied customers, reduced loyalty, negative reviews, and ultimately, revenue loss.

communicate with your workforce

Bridging the gap requires open, honest, and frequent communication with employees. Ask about their needs, challenges, and support required. Listening to their insights and concerns is the first step, but it doesn't end there. It's about translating these insights into action.

This means actively incorporating employee feedback into decision-making, recognizing the nuanced understanding frontline employees bring. Valuing their input and making changes based on their feedback creates a workplace built on trust where employees feel heard, valued, and integral to the organization's success.

future-proofing your business

Investing in employees is a strategic move for business longevity. By empowering your employees with the right tools, skills, and knowledge, you're not just enhancing their capabilities; you're also nurturing growth and resilience. Employees who feel valued and equipped are more likely to stay, contribute meaningfully, and create positive customer interactions.

This investment demands genuine dialogue and active listening. The key is to avoid creating a disconnect between what employees express and what actions leadership takes. Assuming you know what employees want without engaging in meaningful dialogue can lead to missteps, resulting in decreased morale, productivity, and even retention.

who owns EX?

Questions also linger about ownership: should HR or marketing set the tone for what the company will invest in employee experience. The research revealed that 74% of C-suite executives say that no one at their company truly owns employee experience.

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While CHROs may be genuinely excited about the potential of integrating employee and customer experiences, there's often a hesitancy to relinquish certain traditional HR responsibilities.

I believe the future demands a holistic approach, recognizing the interconnectedness of employee and customer experiences. Instead of viewing them separately, recognize they are both elements of a wider strategy. The research showed that a focus on EX can boost revenue growth by up to 50%.

In today's ever-changing work landscape, business must evolve with employees' needs and expectations. By fostering a culture of genuine dialogue, active listening, and responsive action, you can ensure the post-pandemic era isn't just a return to old habits but a genuine leap forward toward a workplace that values and supports its most valuable asset – employees.

who 'does' EX well?

A positive employee experience is vital for delivering exceptional customer service.

[Best Buy's transformation under former CEO Hubert Joly](#) involved investing in employees. Instead of the typical cost-cutting approach, Joly focused on understanding the business from the employees' perspective. He worked in a store for two weeks and identified the importance of empowering employees to match online prices and specialize in product categories.

The company's employee-centric approach improved customer service, leading to a positive impact on the business. Employees who felt valued and supported were better equipped to provide outstanding service to customers.

[Zurich Insurance](#) faced challenges in their people experience, which impacted customer satisfaction. By doubling down on improving employee experience, they aimed to enhance customer experience indirectly. The company's efforts focused on aligning the well-being and satisfaction of employees with customer service.

Richard Branson emphasized the connection between [happy employees and happy customers](#). The philosophy "happy employee, happy customer" highlighted the interdependence of employee satisfaction and customer experience. By focusing on employee well-being, Virgin aimed to create a positive customer experience.

In contrast, a toxic work culture can lead to poor decision-making and unethical practices. [In the case of Volkswagen \(VW\)](#) a toxic middle management culture contributed to the emissions scandal. The emphasis on metrics and productivity over ethical considerations led to significant consequences for the company.

Companies that foster positive employee experiences tend to create a ripple effect, positively influencing customer satisfaction and overall business success. However, there is a need for sustained efforts and vigilance to prevent a shift away from an employee-centric mindset, which could have detrimental consequences for both employees and customers.