

4 Tips to Elevate the Employee Experience



Understanding new workforce needs

Employee experience (EX) has taken on a whole new meaning

Since March 2020, people have been re-evaluating how, where, and why they want to work—and, more importantly, they're taking action. The most startling proof: The Great Resignation, which began in April 2021—a movement of employees across the globe leaving their jobs for ones that better meet their personal and professional needs.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, nearly:

4.2 million people quit their jobs in January 2022.¹

That's almost

3% of the nation's workforce.

¹ Quits levels and rates by industry and region, seasonally adjusted—December 2021, Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, March 10, 2022.





How employees perceive their relationship with work has radically changed, and organizations should take note. The unique circumstances of working during a pandemic—and the upheaval as companies shifted to remote, hybrid, and flexible working arrangements and dispersed teams—have brought employee needs and expectations to the fore. The very definition of “success” itself has evolved. The 2021 Oracle AI@Work Global Study found that **88%** of workers now define success as having better work-life balance, being in good mental health, and having flexibility at work.² Around **30%** of employees say that they’d be likely to switch jobs if they were asked to return to working onsite full-time. More than **50%** said that they’d like to work from home for three days or more every week.³

Organizations need to take action to evolve from simply managing their workforce to truly supporting it. To do so, the employee experience can no longer be a *byproduct* of their talent strategy—it must *drive* talent strategy.

The key to shaping a strong EX—with efficiency, at scale, and across a potentially distributed workforce—is technology. For example, using self-service tools to onboard employees, develop their skills, help them seek out other positions within the company, or provide a way for them to give feedback to leadership can boost engagement, not just moment to moment, but long term, giving your employees reasons to stay and grow with your organization.

When organizations leverage technology to provide a positive, connected, and inspiring employee experience from the get-go, it directly impacts engagement and retention. As organizations seek the most effective strategies for retaining employees, it’s also crucial that they review the candidate experience as well to ensure they’re not chasing people away during the interview process.

As your organization strives to build a workplace culture that prioritizes a great employee experience, let’s dive deeper into four different tactics you can use to reach your goals.

² “Back in the Driver’s Seat: Employees Use Tech to Regain Control, AI@Work: 2021 Global Study,” Oracle + Workplace Intelligence, October 2021.

³ Andrea Alexander, Aaron De Smet, Meredith Langstaff, and Dan Ravid, “What employees are saying about the future of remote work,” McKinsey & Company, April 1, 2021.



Start the employee journey on a positive note

In the world of human resources, we often talk about supporting employees across the talent lifecycle. It sounds great in theory, but in truth, it falls short of supporting the full employee experience, which begins before an employee even accepts an offer. Facilitating and conveying an EX-driven culture begins when attracting and engaging prospective employees.

32% of North American candidates said that they wanted more information about company culture.



16% withdrew from the recruitment process because the culture was a poor fit.⁴

It's crucial to view the EX as essential at every stage of the employee journey: candidate attraction, hiring, onboarding, development, and growth. And it's even more critical to leverage technology at every step to optimize the EX. Technologies that are supportive and make applying for a job easy and intuitive will give candidates that all-important positive first impression while making their lives (and yours) far simpler.

⁴ "2020 North American Candidate Experience Research Report," Talent Board, February 2021.



Human capital management (HCM) technologies can greatly benefit your organization in several ways, including automating and simplifying processes to free up valuable resources and allow HR professionals to focus on tasks where human interaction is truly needed. For example, recruiting tools can rapidly shortlist applicants based on defined criteria while helping to reduce or eliminate hiring biases.

Post-hire, technology can also play a role in driving ongoing growth, professional development, and wellness. People crave technology for just these reasons, according to recent research.

Employees can also benefit from on-demand access to online wellness resources and support to prevent burnout and stem attrition factors before they become problematic.



85% of employees want technology to help define their futures, and

32% believe it could provide them with clear next steps to progress toward their career goals.²



Rethink your leadership strategy

A lack of training can lead to critical skills gaps for managers. **57%** of US employees say that their managers could benefit from additional training, so it's not surprising to learn that **84%** blame poorly trained managers for unnecessary work and stress.⁵

76% of employees report that there's a skills gap at their organization, yet only **42%** say their company is successfully upskilling their employees.² To help create a positive, supportive employee experience, leaders and managers must be trained and empowered—in addition to being empathetic and having a people-first mindset.

This is another opportunity for technology to help improve the EX, delivering much-needed learning and development opportunities at scale across the organization while using fewer resources.

Transparency from leadership—at the top, in the middle, and everywhere in between—also drives a high-performing culture. Employees look to their leaders for clear and candid communications, especially in times of crisis, uncertainty, and change. They want to know their key goals and how to reach them. They want to believe that commitments to diversity, inclusion, and pay equity aren't just lip service.

Employees also want to see accountability for mistakes, and they want to share in the glory of company wins. Weekly one-on-one meetings with line managers, regular skip-level meetings with directors and executives, and monthly or quarterly all-hands meetings are great opportunities for leaders to be transparent and establish trust—both of which positively impact engagement and the EX.

⁵ Dana Wilkie, "SHRM Survey: Workers Think Managers Need More Training," SHRM, August 18, 2020.

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Create feedback loops that nurture a culture of high performance

With attrition levels at all-time highs, forward-thinking employers should first take the time to understand why their employees are seeking (and taking) work elsewhere. And unsurprisingly, it's not just about compensation. Today's employees are often more interested in inclusion, connection, and engagement than a purely transactional relationship with their company. Research suggests that while employees want pay, benefits, and perks, more than that, they want to feel valued by their organizations and managers. They want meaningful interactions.⁶

Two-way communication between employers and their people is vital to creating a healthy employee experience. But the sad reality is that these conversations aren't happening often enough, if at all. According to Oracle's 2021 AI@Work Global Study, **87%** of respondents believe their company should be doing more to listen to the needs of their workforce.²

So why aren't employers taking more time to listen to their employees to uncover causes of attrition? Many may worry that these conversations could uncover flaws that, if shared broadly, would push more people to seek work elsewhere. Some may feel that having these discussions is futile if their employees have already decided to leave. Others may simply lack the means to effectively and easily facilitate these conversations with their teams at scale.



⁶ Aaron De Smet, Bonnie Dowling, Marino Mugayar-Baldocchi, and Bill Schaninger, "Great Attrition' or 'Great Attraction? The choice is yours," McKinsey Quarterly, September 8, 2021.

However, it's imperative for organizations to proactively seek regular feedback from employees to inform their EX strategy—especially now, with so much of the workforce still working remotely or in a hybrid work arrangement, without daily, in-person connections with managers and colleagues. Technology can make a difference.

A technology platform can provide effective ways to seek regular feedback and connect employee sentiment with action, helping you to

- Field regular “pulse” surveys to gauge employee satisfaction and engagement.
- Uncover root causes of attrition and surface trends.
- Facilitate goal setting and professional development.
- Create an “open door” to HR leaders for sharing input.



Platforms that also enable ongoing communication, feedback, community building, and employee recognition can keep employees connected to managers at all levels and help ensure their managers are leaders who motivate and inspire their people.

The impact can be dramatic: Companies that create a culture where the employee experience is the number one priority are **5.1 times** more likely to engage and retain their employees⁷—and highly engaged employees perform better.⁸

⁷ Josh Bersin, “Secrets to Employee Experience: The Definitive Guide,” Josh Bersin, July 16, 2021.

⁸ Daniel Stein, Nick Hobson, Jon M. Jachimowicz, and Ashley Whillans, “How Companies Can Improve Employee Engagement Right Now,” Harvard Business Review, October 13, 2021.

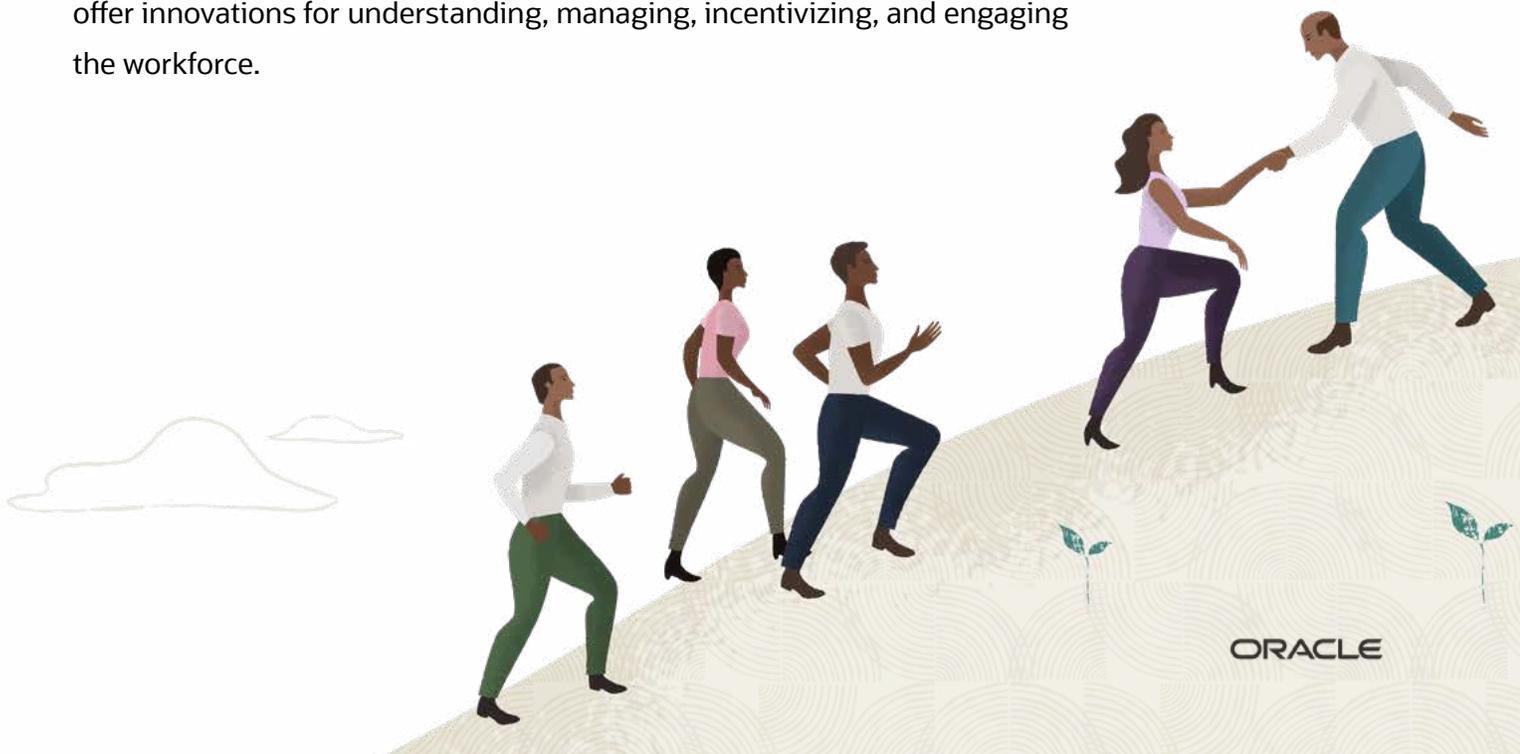


Unify your efforts with a single HCM platform

If you didn't have a digital transformation strategy before the pandemic, you should certainly have one now. The pace of digitalization has accelerated out of necessity, both at work and at home—we've moved online for family meetings and conference calls alike.

For a growing majority of organizations, the answer to digitizing HR and improving the EX is a holistic HCM solution. HCM technology can transform the traditional administrative functions of HR departments, such as recruiting, training, payroll, compensation, and performance management, into opportunities to drive engagement, productivity, and business value. It can also bring together data from other areas of the business—such as finance and operations—to strengthen recommendations and decisions and provide a connected and consistent experience across the organization.

Integrated HCM solutions that draw from a single, comprehensive source of people data can enable HR leaders to provide a more engaging and personalized employee experience. At the same time, emerging technologies, such as automation, predictive analytics, and artificial intelligence, offer innovations for understanding, managing, incentivizing, and engaging the workforce.



With tools like these, you can

- Anticipate workforce attrition with data-driven insights, and adjust the workforce quickly to respond to organizational changes.
- Automate manual processes globally and locally, and accelerate HR processes with self-service.
- Improve time to hire and talent pool quality by quickly sourcing and recruiting the right candidates.
- Increase bench strength by proactively planning for succession in leadership and other key roles.
- Increase engagement with work-life solutions that help motivate employees and deliver a superior employee experience.
- Retain and nurture talent by providing professional learning and growth opportunities.



Automating processes across your organization supports a positive EX by providing greater autonomy and convenience for employees, enabling them to access knowledge and information and complete important tasks for both their lives and careers, whenever and wherever they need to. It's much more empowering when they can quickly and easily access things on their own, such as onboarding tasks, benefits information, career development and learning opportunities, performance management tools, and payroll, rather than having to request this information from their supervisor or HR.

But automation has its limits. Employees still need someone to talk to. The *human* in human resources is still essential to creating a safe, inclusive, and responsive employee experience. That said, some HCM solutions even offer conversational technologies to support more-functional questions. HR chatbots can't replace an HR specialist in many instances. But in others, both could be just as effective in providing answers to time-sensitive questions.

Conclusion

After more than two years of adapting, pivoting, reflecting, and forecasting, we find ourselves in a working paradigm unlike anything we might have predicted.

As workplaces become more dynamic to suit the needs of a remote workforce, businesses must keep their EX personal. By truly understanding employees' wants and needs in this new era of work, employers can build a solid workforce of engaged, ambitious, and loyal people.

Pre-pandemic, most organizations wouldn't consider working from home or flexible work arrangements as viable options. Now they don't have a choice. Employees are still working remotely—some for now, others maybe forever. Their resilience and mental well-being have been drained by the ongoing pandemic. The battle rages on for top talent, with people leaving their jobs in droves and employees holding a marked advantage in the supply and demand equation. And through it all, skills gaps, leadership vacuums, and talent shortages abound.

The pandemic has forced employers to a necessary inflection point. It's time for every organization, of every kind, to examine (or re-examine) their employee experience to create, scale, and sustain a culture of personal well-being and business performance.

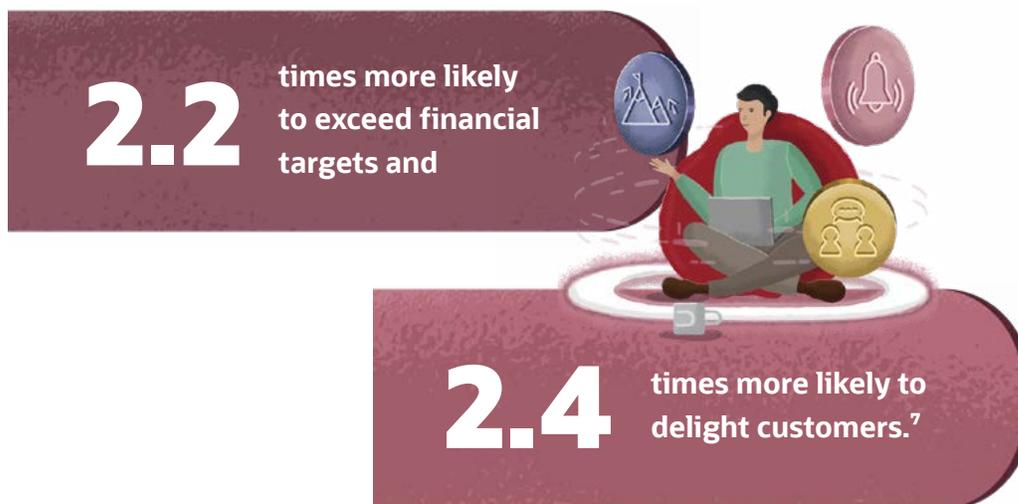


The call to action for a stellar EX is loud, and the priorities for leaders are clear.

- Communicate and listen; the covenant of employer and employee goes both ways.
- Create and maintain real transparency and accountability from the top down.
- Empower individuals and managers to take ownership of their professional development and that of their teams.
- Enable processes and feedback loops that drive continuous improvement.
- Foster and promote a culture of inclusivity and belonging.

The advantages of a successful EX extend far beyond internal cultural and operational benefits—they extend to the business and the bottom line. EX-driven companies with engaged employees are shown to outperform companies without an EX focus in terms of both customer satisfaction and revenue.

Companies who use well-considered EX strategies are:



And the key that unlocks a great EX? Technology.

A single source of truth that integrates both company and employee data; the flexibility to meet employees where they are and help them get where they want to be; two-way communication that supports relationships and encourages engagement at scale; automation that frees up employees and HR professionals alike to get more accomplished and focus on more meaningful work; analytics and predictive reporting that mitigate risk and reward successes—these are the hallmarks of the HCM systems at the heart of companies with winning employee (and customer) experiences.

Looking ahead through 2022 and beyond, even as uncertainty and complexity cloud the horizon, one thing remains clear: The employee experience will be critical to developing a sustainable competitive advantage, and technology will be the lynchpin that connects the people and processes that make it all possible.

To learn about how Oracle Fusion Cloud HCM can help you improve your organization's employee experience, visit oracle.com/hcm.

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