

We need to rethink employee experience

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Now more than ever, we need to attend to employee experience, also known as EX.

Employee engagement has dropped more significantly than any other time in the last 20 years, Gallup recently reported. Only 36% of employees are currently engaged, and 14% are actively disengaged. Given all the changes that have disrupted business in the past six months, it's clear we can't rely on the old ways of engaging employees.

To ensure employees are ready and excited to give their best effort, we need to rethink EX. Check out these three recommendations for cultivating the organizational culture you need.

To learn more from Denise Lee Yohn or to book her to speak to your organization, see her [website](#) and [YouTube channel](#).

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Transcript

It's time to update employee experience.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created workplace safety concerns, operational changes and more virtual work. The social justice movement has increased demands for authentic employee diversity and inclusion. And the economic downturn means companies need employees to do more with less. So it's clear that the old ways of engaging employees are no longer going to work.

And just to make sure we're all on the same page, when I say employee experience, or EX, I mean the sum of everything employees experience throughout their connection to our organizations. From the first moments of recruiting, through onboarding, training, comp and benefits, performance management to the end of employment -- and all the day-to-day experiences along the way, such as communication and access to resources and tools.

In these unprecedented times, we need to rethink EX and ensure our employees are unified, focused and motivated. Here are three recommendations for doing so:

1. Deliberately design and manage EX

Just like great customer experiences, great EX doesn't just happen. We need to infuse our purpose and core values into employees' every day experience and ensure we are cultivating our desired culture.

And this needs to be a priority now. On average, nearly two-thirds of our employees are not engaged, according to [Gallup](#), so the health of our workforce is at risk – and we're not going to be able to get our operations and finances in order without engaged employees.

So make EX a strategic priority and assign the people and resources necessary to develop a concerted renewed effort.

2. Involve employees in EX design

Now more than ever, we need to be listening to our employees and learning their needs and expectations. And we need to ensure we are hearing from different groups within our workforce so we understand the differences between them. For example, parents with

school-aged children face unique challenges, and Black employees may want to be engaged differently.

We should seek to learn from formal and informal conversations with employees. And we can apply customer research and analysis tools, such as listening channels, pulse surveys and sentiment analysis, to further understand employees.

Plus, we should involve them in the development and testing of EX strategies, tactics and programs. They can provide valuable insights about what's working, what not and why.

3. Be sure to make personal connections

This last recommendation is primarily about employees working remotely. There are a lot of benefits of having a virtual workforce but one of the risks is the loss of social cohesion and comradery.

The Gallup organization has found that having a best friend at work is an important foundation that enables employees to thrive. This best friend provides an important support system for an employee and employees with a best friend at work are more connected to the organization.

But without face-to-face interaction and the informal "watercooler" conversations of in-person work, employees may find it harder to develop or maintain close friendships with their co-workers. And we've all experienced the challenge of having a robust dialogue among a group of people over the phone or video call. So people's ability to not only express themselves but also to truly understand others is likely to be compromised.

So we need to work harder to ensure we are connecting with employees on a personal level and facilitating personal connections between employees. We should consider virtual social gatherings, Slack channels for personal/social topics, more one-on-ones or smaller meetings, and group service or volunteer projects that can be done remotely.

EX has definitely been disrupted, but that's not necessarily a bad thing. We can seize the moment to take our employee efforts to the next level and create a healthier, more effective culture.