NURTURING THE
future
OF WORK

HOW ORGANIZATIONS EMPOWER TALENT

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FOR TOMORROW

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Recognizing the importance of people in business transformation, Claudia works with clients to reinvent the employee experience through data and technology. She uses her expertise in the people perspective of digital to understand how leadership in the digital age is evolving, how talent and workforce productivity can be transformed through automation and AI, and how to effectively engage employees throughout the transformation process.

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Stephan is recognized as a people levers specialist, enhancing and sustaining transformation effectiveness through various actions on leadership & performance, management innovation, digital HR, culture change, talent & organization performance or change dynamics in complex environments. With strong expertise in many sectors, he has contributed to significant digital transformations.

REIMAGINING THE PEOPLE EXPERIENCE: THE ROLE OF HR

How effective HR strategy can be in building resilience, enhancing workforce engagement, and instilling organizational flexibility?

Work will never be the same again. Pre-pandemic, the mindsets of both employer and employee were often binary, dividing working conditions into **must-haves** and **nice-to-haves.** For employees, the must-have was a role that they could fulfil and that paid the bills. For employers, the must-have was filling most roles with adequately skilled and qualified candidates, with costs under control, to ensure that all required work was being done, to ensure business was delivering on its baseline expectations.

If asked to name their nice-to-haves, employees would have mentioned finding interest and variety in their work; a pleasant work environment in which they enjoy spending time; benefits and perks beyond basic salary (e.g., private healthcare and pension); and exciting potential career-progression opportunities with clear requirements and fair process. For employers, the typical pre-pandemic nice-to-have was the chance to build a work and performance culture that supported the organizational ambitions.

OFFERING A POSITIVE EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE SHOULD BE AS MUCH OF A FOCUS AS PROVIDING A PREMIUM EXPERIENCE FOR CLIENTS.

That world is now gone

Running a business-effective HR function has become harder than ever. The concept of the workplace has been redefined, imposing new pressures not only on existing HR models, but on current work processes and digital workspace environments, with immediate impacts on the workforce lives, mindset and engagement…

Employees have reset their priorities and expectations, as the concept of strictly defined work and 'home' time has blurred, first encouraged by employers for Business continuity! For employees in Europe and North America, relationships with their employers are evolving more radically with the Labor laws landscape into force in the 19th century. Employers have much to do to cope with the growing employee dissatisfaction; the first step is for organizational leaders (HR and Business) to make themselves fully aware of the scale of the problem. Only 28% of employees say they are satisfied at work today, compared to 80% of leaders who believe their employees to be satisfied, according to a Capgemini Research Institute report.[1]

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1 Capgemini Research Institute, "The people experience advantage: how companies can make life better for their most important assets," October 2022.

To re-engage your people, it is critical to design, promise and deliver a positive employee experience; this should be as much of a focus for employers as providing a premium experience for clients. And the advantages are clear; our study states: "Ninety-six percent of employees reporting a positive experience also report feeling engaged, motivated, and energized at work."

• *The HR function at Airbnb aimed to build a welcoming and inclusive culture for the organization's new hires. After listening to the needs of its employees, Airbnb introduced a "live and work anywhere initiative," where employees are given the flexibility to work from anywhere remotely in 2019, well before the pandemic.[2]*

Organizations implementing a frictionless, consumer-grade employee experience can then reap significant benefits, such as: a 35–40% increase in productivity across five years; over 95% resolution of issues on first contact; and 30% fewer HR queries; optimization of resources and human capital; and improved upskilling, loyalty, and engagement among employees.

Yet, the Employee experience ambition cannot be solely dependent on the HR function. Operational Managers along with Marketing, internal communication and IT have a bearing too. A successful Employee experience is made up of numerous granular moving parts and continuous improvements to the daily, weekly, monthly, and annual work cycles of each individual employee.

"**Only 28% of employees say they are satisfied at work today, compared to 80% of leaders who believe their employees to be satisfied, according to a Capgemini Research Institute report.**"

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2 **Livingroom Analytics, "How Airbnb became the world's best place to work," 2019.**

"For employees in Europe and North America, relationships with their employers are evolving more radically with the Labor laws landscape into force in the 19th century."

In it together

Organizations now need to move beyond basic notions of providing their teams with a digital workplace to something more holistic that incorporates the must-haves and nice-to-haves for each employee... In the aftermath of the pandemic, facility management and the IT function must combine to rethink the role of the office – in close alignment with HR and Business needs – to redefine their Employees' experience, reshaping the purpose, layout, and equipment of such facilities, as well as providing the infrastructure required for transition to the metaverse. It's time for a digital workspace!

• *At HSBC, hybrid working model has enabled it to reduce its office real estate footprint by around a third since the start of 2020. In the US, the bank is experimenting with office redesign, by trying various spatial arrangements and furniture designs to facilitate collaborative work. [3]*

As our study confirms, "Only 28% of employees have access to the technology and equipment they need to do their job well." If organizations can address this key issue with flexible, meaningful solutions to organizations, ways of working and various roles, the benefits are immediate, and everybody wins. The needs of the business and its employees are not mutually exclusive but closely intertwined.

3 QZ.com, "How Salesforce, IBM, and HSBC are approaching return to work now," January 2022

"Only 28% of employees have access to the technology and equipment they need to do their job well."

• *Automotive group Volkswagen adopted a refreshed HR strategy which looks at employees and their needs throughout the entire work experience: "Me" (what motivates me to do my job and how do I sustain my fitness to work?), "My team" (what helps us to achieve the best team performance?), "All of us at Volkswagen" (what makes Volkswagen unique and why do we love to work here?) and "Volkswagen in society" (how do we convince our customers and stakeholders that Volkswagen is corporately responsible?).[4]*

And organizations have now to treat employees and contingent workers as equally valuable members of their broader talent ecosystem. The People experience must now serve the needs of all talent involved within an organization's ambit.

To build the foundations of such an engaging People Experience, Organizations can set four key objectives:

• **A clearly articulated 'people promise'** – mirroring the aspiration for customer experience, this should incorporate company purpose and values, up to flexible ways of working translated concretely in a way that answers all employee expectations.

• **A seamless, personalized employee experience** – remodeling traditional inter-employee interactions over the entire talent lifecycle (from recruitment to off-boarding), developing globalized and seamless HR operations (standardize, digitize, and automate HR processes wherever possible), and using high-quality people data that provides reliable analytics to allow leaders to treat their workforces – real-time – in a manner that is both standardized and personalized.

• **A holistic and user-friendly technology architecture** – connecting core HR solutions and core work/digital workplace systems through an intuitive front-end interface, giving the employee experience greater agility through the use of more nimble applications that serve specific people needs and make work life simple and easy.

• **A supportive, inclusive work culture** – built on collaboration, engagement, mutual support, and care, and empowered by continuous monitoring of employee engagement, and matched by swift and appropriate actions that are part of a concerted effort to meet evolving employee expectations.

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4   Volkswagen website, "People in the transformation"

Integrating stakeholder views – what do CXOs need from their people?

The key to a resilient, talent-centric organization is having the right person in each role. However, for those around the boardroom table, the emphasis is likely to overlap in some areas, and diverge in others.

Figure 1: Questions asked from the different corners of the C-suite on the future of work

CEOs	• How do we design an organization fit for the future? • How do we attract talent we require, withoout incurring excessive cost or overstreching resources?
CFOs	• How do we determine what the right workforce size, quality, and cost should be? What are must-haves and what are nice-to-haves? • How do we mobilize our insights into profit-generation and customer satisfaction and apply them to imporving our employee-satisfaction rate? • How should we define and measure the ROI in our people?
CMOs	• How do we adapt the learnings from our customer experience to improve our employee experience? • How do we apply insights derived from interactions with our customers to our employees?
CIOs/CTOs	• How do we adapt our technologies to the new ways of working without disrupting business models and our services to clients? Which investments should we prioritize? • How do we harness our people data for effective insights?
CHROs	• How do we meet the current requriements of the business while living up to the employees' rising expectations? • How do we monitor the organization's direction of travel, so we can continue to upskill our workforce and hire/engage the right people?

1.1   The founding principles for an amazing People Experience

An amazing People Experience starts with the following foundational principles, 1) put your **people first and customize the HR services accordingly;** 2) design a **customer-grade employee experience** – user-interfaces design; virtual agents; personalization of services to the needs of individual employees; and prioritized first-contact resolution; 3) leverage an **outsourcing approach** to fill in any gaps in capabilities such as data analytics or AI or Services-at-scale; 4) **transform while transitioning** – start by building in **small efficiencies** and use those as a base to gain momentum, demonstrate it works and build scale; 5) implement **continuous innovation** – refreshing your HR and learning solutions portfolio regularly (at least annually) will ensure regulatory and technological relevance.

To bring the above principles in effect, organizations need to move away from a process-centric approach to one that designs a **holistic and digital experience** you need. Its key components must include:

- new ways to **collaborate, interact and manage,** fitting your new hybrid work environment;

- an adapted, future-ready **HR technology stack** to support both the processes with which the workforce engages day to day and the workforce-management processes at the HR function;

- a **digital employee helpdesk** – to provide an intelligent, multi-channel helpdesk which can effectively and efficiently interact with the workforce;

- **frictionless HR operations** – enabling innovation and automation to come together and deliver an inclusive HR experience that visibly puts the employee at the center;

- **Digital learning and knowledge services** – featuring learning platform services, machine learning, and a learning content factory to upskill and inform the workforce at scale and groom the Talent you need.

In the current talent market, the People experience is key to securing both engagement and loyalty of your Talents. Your brand as an employer can reflect your aspirations for your business and your industry – but it does start with taking the best care of your people.