BREEDON
consulting

EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

Creating a standout employee experience: a practical guide for employers

Creating a standout employee experience: a practical guide for employers

As the modern workplace evolves, employers are being called upon to do more than just engage employees. They must create experiences that support, inspire, and empower people at every stage of their journey.

A strong employee experience strategy can dramatically boost retention, productivity, and morale, making it a critical priority for any organisation aiming for sustainable success.

This guide explores how businesses can go beyond engagement to build a workplace where every employee feels valued and supported. It includes key principles, practical approaches, and tools to shape a thriving culture and workforce.

What is the Employee Experience?

Employee experience refers to the full spectrum of an employee's interactions with an organisation, from recruitment through to exit. It's not just about isolated perks or engagement scores; it's about how employees perceive their work environment, how empowered they feel, and how much purpose they derive from their role.

Why It Matters

- People with a strong employee experience are far more engaged, up to 16 times more than those with poor experiences.
- They're also more likely to stay and go the extra mile. 40% higher discretionary effort and 8 times more likely to stay long-term.
- Companies with great Employee Experience report significantly better customer satisfaction and financial performance.

Moving Beyond Engagement Metrics

Traditional methods, such as annual engagement surveys, offer only a momentary view of sentiment. While helpful, they often fail to explain why people feel the way they do, or how to fix it.

Forward-thinking companies are shifting towards an experience-led approach, gathering richer insights through continuous listening, lifecycle surveys, and real-time feedback.

Core Pillars of a Positive Employee Experience

Every organisation is different, but the following 12 factors consistently shape how employees experience work.

1. Meaningful Work Design

Roles should:

- Make the most of individual strengths.
- Offer autonomy and decision-making.
- Provide purpose and visibility of impact.

2. Empowering Line Managers

Managers play a huge role in how employees feel. Organisations should:

- Train managers in leadership.
- Encourage open, trusting relationships.
- Focus on coaching over command-and-control.

3. Effective Communication

- Ensure clear, consistent updates from leadership and across teams.
- Use multiple channels for inclusive communication.
- Provide platforms for open dialogue and feedback.

4. Listening to Employee Voice

- Collect feedback regularly via surveys, focus groups, and one-on-ones.
- Create a safe environment where people feel heard.
- Act visibly on input to show it matters.

5. Trust and Transparency

- Employees must trust their managers and the company's direction.
- Leaders should model honesty, purpose, and integrity.
- Foster psychological safety where ideas and concerns can be shared freely.

6. Connection and Belonging

- Foster team collaboration and relationships - especially important in hybrid or remote environments.
- Celebrate successes together.
- Encourage cross-functional bonds and a sense of community.

7. Recognition and Appreciation

- Regularly thank and acknowledge contributions.
- Use a mix of informal (thank-you notes) and formal (awards, bonuses) approaches.
- Make recognition timely, personal, and authentic.

8. Learning and Development

- Provide tools and time for growth.
- Offer clear paths to advancement and mastery.
- Embrace mistakes as opportunities to learn.

9. Purpose and Mission Alignment

- Communicate the organisation's purpose clearly.
- Show how each role connects to the broader vision.
- Especially post-pandemic, employees seek meaningful work with social value.

10. Inclusion and Fairness

- Ensure everyone feels seen and valued.
- Embed equity and inclusion into daily culture—not just policy.
- Consider fairness in remote work, promotions, and pay.

11. Resources and Support

- Provide the tools, systems, and environment to do great work.
- Quickly resolve IT and equipment issues to avoid frustration.

12. Wellbeing

- Embed wellbeing into the culture - not just as a benefit, but a mindset.
- Support physical, emotional, and financial wellbeing.
- Discourage burnout through flexible work and positive norms.

Employee Lifecycle Touchpoints

To create a seamless employee experience, organisations must focus on key stages of the employee journey:

Stage	Objective	Sample Feedback Questions
Attraction	Appeal to jobseekers	What drew you to our brand?
Application	Ensure smooth candidate experience	Was the recruitment process clear and respectful?
Onboarding	Set clear expectations and integrate	Did induction match expectations? Were you supported?
Development	Enable growth and learning	Do you have access to the right training and mentorship?
Exit	Leave a lasting positive impression	Why did you leave? Would you return or recommend us?
Alumni	Turn ex-employees into brand advocates	Are you proud to have worked here?

Designing Personalised Experiences

Not all employees need the same things. Personalisation is key.

- Recognise "moments that matter" (e.g., promotions, anniversaries, challenges).
- Use employee personas to tailor experiences - just like marketers do with customers.
- Avoid one-size-fits-all solutions and instead map needs by role, team, and career stage.

Feedback as a Driver for Action

Types of Feedback Tools:
- **Annual Survey**s: Offer broad data but may be too infrequent.
- **Pulse Surveys**: Short, targeted, and ideal for tracking sentiment over time.
- **Lifecycle Surveys**: Triggered at key milestones (e.g., onboarding, exit).
- **Continuous Listening**: Regular, low-effort feedback loops via digital tools.
- **360-Degree Feedback**: Especially useful for leadership development.
- **Focus Groups & One-on-Ones**: Explore deeper insights behind the data.

Best Practices:

- Prioritise a few key actions that are realistic and visible.
- Communicate what's been heard and what's being done.
- Support managers in sharing and acting on team feedback.

Creating a Culture of Action:

- Lead from the top – Senior leaders must champion employee experience visibly.
- Empower line managers – Equip them to take ownership and drive local action.
- Involve employees – Co-create solutions and make feedback a two-way street.
- Track progress – Regularly review initiatives and adjust as needed.
- Share successes – Celebrate improvements to reinforce commitment.

Conclusion: A Business-Critical Priority

The landscape of work has changed, and employees are more discerning, mobile, and values-driven than ever. By committing to a strategy that puts people first, organisations can unlock the full potential of their workforce. A thriving employee experience leads to higher engagement and retention, better customer service, greater innovation and adaptability and enhanced employer brand reputation

Investing in the employee experience isn't just a "nice to have"—it's a business imperative.

Ready to Transform Your Employee Experience?

At Breedon, we help organisations create workplaces where people thrive.

Whether you're just beginning to shape your employee experience strategy or looking to elevate what you already have in place, we offer expert support every step of the way.

Get in touch

www.breedonconsulting.co.uk

01530 447441

info@breedonconsulting.co.uk