How a better EX can [*improve*] your CX

[CLARASYS]

It is crucial for organizations to consider their Employee Experience (EX) as a whole - to not only have happy employees and improve retention but to also ensure they build a culture where people feel empowered to make decisions that will lead to improved Customer Experience (CX). Unlike Employee Engagement (EE), which focuses on the relationship between an employee and their organization, EX goes beyond this and emphasizes the employee's importance at different points of their journey with the company: from recruitment to becoming company alumni.

Clarasys believes so much in the impact that Employee Experience has on the quality of client interactions, that we practice what we preach. For example, everyone at Clarasys is supported by a coach who helps look after their professional development. We also have a strong feedback culture; this system ensures our employees feel appreciated and valued, whilst also supporting them to learn and celebrate the improvements that come from mistakes. In turn, this enables our employees to better serve our clients.

Based on both research and our experience, we recommend companies consider the following three steps to assess their EX and how it can positively affect their customers.

Step 1: [*Establish*] your EX journey

Most of us spend the majority of our lives working. It is important for each employee to spend that time in an environment where they can be themselves, receive the right level of support, and grow in their role. However, this can be hindered by a gap between the organization's high-level goal and employee sentiment on the ground.

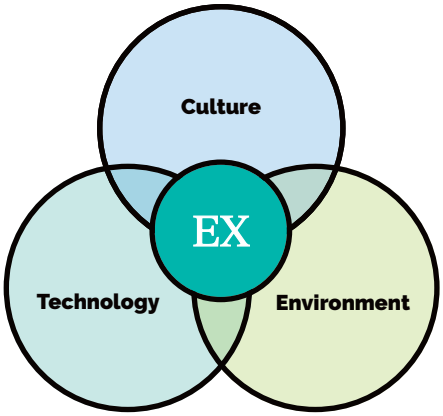
- **Identify what your current end-to-end employee journey looks like.** What are its pain points, and what key employee touch-points actually matter? Does your culture shine through during the recruitment process? Do you encourage your employees to continuously develop in their roles? What is the employee experience like when leaving?
- **Establish what the Voice of the Employee (VoE) means at your company.** Understand what your employees consider important and what makes them feel supported and motivated. VoE will also help you drive improvements across the company because when employees know they will be listened to - they are more likely to share new ideas.
- **Incorporate internal feedback in your culture.** Ensure that your employees, and front-line staff, in particular, have the right forums in place to relay customer insight to the right teams. Consider how you will continuously improve on the back of feedback given.
- **Consider appropriate reward schemes for your employees.**

This is important because: Your organization is only as good as the people in it. Supported employees will be able to work more effectively and creatively, helping you create a culture of collaboration and trust across all levels of the company. Employees will feel empowered to contribute to change in a proactive manner - change will happen organically with the help of your employees rather than change 'happening to them'. A great employee experience will also lead to higher retention rates, enabling you to hold onto your best talent.

Step 2: Consider how technology can help [*empower*] your employees

Technology and online tools can help people share ideas, collaborate on their day-to-day work, and do all this in real-time. This can speed up employees' tasks, particularly if some tasks can be automated, allowing them more time to focus on their customers, and on value-add activities within their role.

- **Identify how your employees currently use the technology available to them and whether their environment sets them up for success, particularly in relation to remote working.** Assess the gap between the current state and your end goal for how technology can resolve your identified pain points across the employee journey.
- **Consider how technology can enable different employees to focus on value-add work.** Does it enable them to fulfill the purpose of their role? Technology should be an enabler, not a blocker, at every step of the employee journey. This is especially key as Millenials and Gen Z-ers become a majority workforce over the coming years and expect your technology to be on par with the latest advancements. According to Zapier, 16% of Millenials and Gen Z-ers have quit their job as a result of poor technology provided to do their role.
- **Use feedback and the VoE to guide technology improvements in your organization.** According to a CIPD report, 70% of employees who are consulted about the introduction of new technology are positive about its impact, while this number is only 20% for those who are not consulted. Employees work with the technology you implement every day, and so are best positioned to recommend how to make improvements, as well as drive adoption across the organization.
- **Provide sufficient training and BAU support for the use of new technology and establish governance.** This will enable you and your employees to effectively use new tools and software to their advantage while ensuring best practices are ingrained in their day-to-day activities.



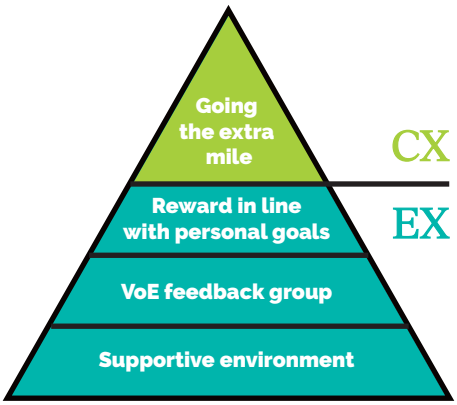
This is important because: Technology, and choosing the right kind of tools for your employees, is an integral part of EX. It will help your employees to work faster and more efficiently while allowing them to be flexible in the way they can best achieve desired outcomes. In fact, according to research carried out by IWG, increased flexibility has improved employee productivity for 85% of surveyed companies, with 73% of companies believing that flexible working will enable them to better attract talent.

Step 3: Think long-term: happier employees will [*go the extra mile*] for their customers

Why is employee experience important for CX? Repurposing Maslow's hierarchy of needs to the employee journey, employees first need their basic needs fulfilled, such as feeling safe, supported, and rewarded before they are able to productively focus on the 'nice-to-have' activities within their day-to-day, such as going the extra mile in their role. This is where CX comes in. Similar to what Simon Sinek pointed out in his book 'Leaders Eat Last', if employees' basic needs are met and their energy is not spent on their immediate environment and potential dangers outside it, they will begin to look outwards their organization and focus on the customer.

- **"The employee is king".** No business exists without its employees and they are often at the forefront of customer interaction. It is essential to keep your employees satisfied because their attitude will translate to customer experience. This will in turn help nurture a culture where employees feel that customer-centricity is part of the culture rather than 'just another task'.
- **Understand the voice of the customer through the voice of the employee (VoCE).** Employees who are at the forefront of customer interaction are best positioned to relay how customers are feeling, help you tap into both customers' experiences, and enable your employees to recommend improvements. In fact, according to a paper published by Confirmit, employees who feel engaged in their roles show a 50% better understanding of the needs of their customers compared to their unengaged colleagues.
- **Consider how your EX and CX teams currently operate, and how these teams can better communicate together moving forward, and work towards the same goal.** If these teams do not exist, create one team that looks at both types of experiences and journeys. Having a combined EX and CX function will enable employees to simultaneously improve their employee journey while putting customer-centricity at the heart of every decision.

This is important because: EX and CX should, and must, go hand in hand to reach success. For example, front-line staff can provide deeper insight into your customers' wants and needs but it is not possible without employees feeling empowered and supported throughout their employee journey. Combining EX and CX will further create a collaborative culture throughout your company and a 'go the extra mile' mindset in all people who work for you.



In fact, according to a report by Gallup that assessed 230 organizations in 73 countries, teams that were identified as engaged, in comparison to those that were not, had "10% higher customer ratings, and achieved 20% higher sales and 21% higher profitability".

Whether you're just starting to explore what your employee or customer experience journeys may look like, or whether you've got the journeys defined to fine detail, the above 3 steps can help you in assessing where your organization currently sits, including what pain points you may have missed and how to tackle them.

For more information or for help with your Employee Experience, please contact: info@clarays.com

Gallup: https://www.gallup.com/workplace/285674/improve-employee-engagement-workplace.aspx
Aberdeen group research: https://www.verint.com/Assets/resources/resource-types/white-papers/aberdeen-employee-engagement-paving-the-way-to-happy-customers.pdf