Quintop
Management Consultants

Who is responsible for Employee Experience?

Is HR overestimating her part?

A vision and approach

Who is responsible for Employee Experience?

Employee Experience (EX) is a concept that the (HR) world cannot stop writing about. However, there is no clear answer to the question who is responsible for EX. When we go over different books, articles and whitepapers, we can do nothing other than conclude that HR is overestimating her part.

Google shows 570.000.000 hits when you search for EX and there are many definitions circulating. In our view EX can be best described as: 'Everything an employee perceives during his/her time within an organisation, from first to final contact'. From an organisations' point of view, Morgan (2017) speaks of an Experiential organisation: 'An Experiential organisation is a place where people 'want' to show up and not where they 'need' to show up.' Besides the various positive effects of Experiential organisations found, below figures support that they are also the most productive, as they have:

1. 40% lower turnover
2. 1.5x the employee growth
3. 4.4x the average profit

Investing in EX has significant positive impact on organisations. It is therefore no surprise that organisations are eager to influence and enhance it. But who is responsible for EX? In this whitepaper we provide you with our answer, as well as our approach and vision to this interesting concept.

Is HR overestimating her part in EX?
Many organisations relate EX to the Employee Life Cycle. Meaning, the moments that matter for an employee from first contact with the company until they leave the company. Certain processes from onboarding to offboarding influence EX. We will address some of these HR-driven processes and the influence HR has on EX.

Research shows that Experiential organisations have **higher customer satisfaction scores** and ranking, **top-notch innovation practices** and are the most **attractive and respective places to work.**

— Morgan (2017)

Onboarding

Why is onboarding important for EX? Research reveals that onboarding efforts have a positive impact on employee retention (Son, 2017). New hires will remember a warm welcome as a moment that matters, a moment that positively influences their experience. Although HR should ensure that there are smooth onboarding processes in place, we see a bigger role for line managers in taking care of the right start of their new joiner.

Compensation & Benefits

Today's rapidly changing workforce demands organisations to modernise their reward strategies. One size does not fit all in EX. Offering an individual experience to each employee is key, and that requires to find out what really motivates and challenges employees (Hays, 2018). Moreover, employees increasingly want purpose and a better work-life balance. They continue to seek that their contributions are financially recognized (salary and benefits), but to a larger extend also non-financially, such as a great place to work, flexibility, vitality and sustainability. For the latter, we believe that responsibility is not solely for HR and is shared throughout the entire organisation.

Learning & Development

'Stay hungry, stay foolish,' a great quote by Steve Jobs which highlights the importance of people's need to inspire themselves with new information and challenges, so that passion can be retained. Learning & Development (L&D) has an encouraging role in the experience of employees. It helps individual employees to grow as professionals. They keep being challenged by both personal and professional experiences and learning processes. The 70:20:10 model of Charles Jennings explains that 70% of learning is achieved through experience on the job, 20% by sharing knowledge and feedback of colleagues and only 10% by formal education. This shows that the moments that matter within L&D are mostly beyond the control of HR.

Onboarding efforts have a positive impact on employee retention

49%

of millennials want a better onboarding process

22%

of staff turnover occurs within the first 45 days

91%

of first-year workers are retained by organizations with an effective onboarding process

— Son (2017)

Offboarding

Organisations spend less attention to employee offboarding as compared to onboarding. First impressions are important, but so are the last ones. Whether it is a voluntary or involuntary resignation, offboarding is often forgotten. Although HR takes care of exit calculations, we believe it is the responsibility of line managers to ensure employees feel recognised for their efforts and leave the company with a positive feeling.

The world beyond HR and its influence on EX

HR has definitely a part to play within EX, which is clearly stated by the above. However, the role of line managers is mentioned to be of great importance to execute HR initiatives and policies. How about other functions within organisations?

Technology

New technologies have changed the way work is organized and even how work gets accomplished. With the digital transformation of the work environment, our reliance on digital technologies has grown and therefore the need to look at the impact of technology on EX.

Morgan (2017) describes the technological environment as one of the main drivers for EX. Software, hardware and helpdesk support, both HR and above all company-wide technologies, should enable employees to do their job more efficiently and straightforward (Boustany, 2017). In return, employees who know how to leverage these technologies, are less frustrated and more engaged.

Workspace

Not only the technological environment impacts EX, so does the physical environment (Morgan, 2018). First and foremost, the workplace should enable employees in doing their job. This means the departments of Facilities and Real Estate need to consider the layout of the workplace, including collaborative spaces, meeting rooms and reception areas.

Research shows that that only **29% of organisations** have a **formal employee offboarding process** in place

— Cushing (2014)

However, today the workplace is not only a place where people come together to collaborate. Today's employees expect the workspace to be comfortable, safe and enjoyable (Johns, 2018). Physical safety remains a critical topic to employees, but trending topics include employee health and well-being (Morgan, 2015). We see a trend that employees prefer their workplace to support their lifestyle, resulting in company gyms, communal areas and healthy lunch options.

In return, employees that are satisfied with their physical surroundings, are more likely to improve their performance, feel more creative, engaged and connected to their employer (Morgan, 2018).

Employer Branding
The effect of a good EX has huge impact on the well-known 'pull' factor used in marketing. When the employer brand is strong, positive employees will act as authentic brand ambassadors and recommend the brand. This will not only benefit recruitment efforts but will boost the overall pull factor of the company as customers will often pick up the effects of a positive employer brand as well.

Diversity & Inclusion
'Diversity is being invited to the party, whereas inclusion is being asked to dance'. A modern organisation is more than just a place to work: it is about developing connections, engaging with colleagues and feeling part of a community. For a positive EX, employees should have a sense of belonging and authenticity, the belief not to be punished or humiliated when speaking up ideas, concerns or mistakes and have access to the information and decision-making needed (Rasberry, 2018). These components contribute to a sense of inclusiveness and enhance EX.

Research by Gartner (2018) reveals that the most memorable moment at work is 'being discriminated'. Interesting to consider is the role of HR, given that HR tends to focus on moments that are within their control. This moment is not in control of HR, although it appears to have the largest impact on employees. The added value of HR actually lies in how the organisation prevents and handles these moments after they occur (i.e. support and guidance) and hence minimize the negative impact on EX.

Workspace efforts have a positive impact on employee performance

79%

of employees say innovation is encouraged by innovative workplace design

22%

of professionals agree that flexible workplace design leads to better ideas

80%

of employees say changing work situations increase productivity

— Morgan (2018)

Now what?

The examples above clearly illustrate that EX goes way beyond HR's remit and influence. Creating, improving and maintaining an EX that meets your (future) workforce expectations requires a more holistic approach. As an HR consultancy organisation, Quintop has seen organisations struggling with this. **Quintop's approach to Employee Experience is a cross functional one, where HR is best equipped to drive and orchestrate the employee experience strategy and initiatives, but where the outcome is co-owned by multiple functions and ultimately by an organisation's top management.**

EX is not a one-off intervention, but a continuous process. To underline this and stress the importance of designing and adjusting EX based on measurements and feedback, Quintop has adopted a proven and structured approach. This approach originates from the Lean Management tradition, applying a Plan, Do, Check, Act (PDCA) cycle to achieve sustainable results:

1   Plan: Defining your EX ambitions.
   - A.   Measuring the gap: creating insight in the gaps between the perceived and expected EX.
   - B.   Setting the objectives: providing focus and direction to EX initiatives to ensure resources and energy are channeled to the right priorities and most impactful interventions.
   - C.   Design EX roadmap: creating an actionable plan to outline policy, process, technology, workspace and cultural changes.

2   Do: Deliver on your EX roadmap.
   - A.   Communicate and mobilize: rally the entire organization around the EX aspirations and initiatives to get buy in and traction.
   - B.   Deliver against plan: execute the planned activities, preferably using an agile/iterative approach to ensure quick results.

3   Check: Measure progress against plan.
   - A.   Measure if the EX initiatives have the right effect, is it positively impacted 'through the eyes of the beholder'?
   - B.   Evaluate efforts and outcome, revisit ambitions if needed and plan for changes if applicable.

4   Act: Apply Learnings on the fly.
   - A.   Based on the measurements and evaluation, apply the changes and improvements accordingly to keep the EX journey on track.

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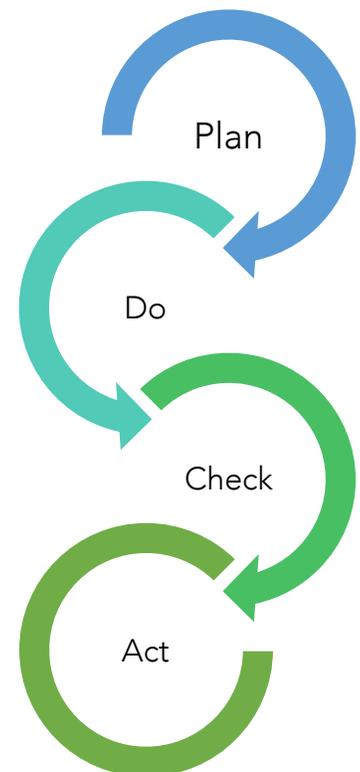
Quintop's approach is iterative, interactive and pragmatic. We work closely with our customers and although HR is our natural habitat, we will make sure cross functional collaboration happens in each phase of the project. Your employees are at the heart of everything we do and technology is seen as an enabler, not as an objective in itself. As with every project we run, we are very passionate about achieving results together. We are looking forward to helping you with your employee experience journey.

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