

Who is  
responsible  
for  
Employee  
Experience?

Is HR overestimating its part? A vision  
and approach.

Employee Experience (EX) is a concept the HR world keeps writing about. However, there is no clear answer as to who is responsible for EX. Looking through various books, articles and white papers, we can only conclude that HR overestimates its part.

Google shows 570,000,000 hits when searching for EX and many definitions circulate. In our view, EX is best described as: *"Everything an employee perceives during his or her time within an organisation, from the first to the last contact."* From an organisation's point of view, Morgan (2017) speaks of an experiential organisation: *"An experiential organisation is a place where people want to come and not where they are needed."* Besides the various positive effects of experiential organisations experienced, the figures below indicate that they are also the most productive, as they:

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

Investing in EX has a significant positive impact on organisations. It is therefore no surprise that organisations are keen to influence and strengthen it. But who is responsible for EX? In this white paper, we provide the answer to this question, as well as our approach and vision for this interesting concept.

### Is HR overestimating its part in EX?

Many organisations relate EX to the Employee Life Cycle. These are the moments that are important to an employee from their first contact with the company to the moment they leave the company. Certain processes from onboarding to offboarding influence EX. We look at some of these HR-driven processes and the influence HR has on EX.

#### Onboarding

Why is onboarding important for EX? Research shows that onboarding efforts have a positive impact on employee retention (Son, 2017). New employees will remember a warm welcome as a moment that matters, a moment that positively influences their experience. While HR should ensure onboarding processes run smoothly, we see a greater role for line managers in ensuring their new employee gets off to the right start.

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

Source: Morgan (2017).

## Compensation & Benefits

Today's rapidly changing workforce requires organisations to modernise their reward strategies. One size does not fit all in EX. Providing each employee with an individual experience is the key, and for that you need to discover what really motivates and challenges employees (Hays, 2018). Moreover, employees increasingly want a certain sense of meaning in their work and a better work-life balance. They want their contributions to be recognised financially (salary and fringe benefits), but to a greater extent also non-financially, such as a nice workplace, flexibility, vitality and sustainability. For the latter, we believe the responsibility lies not only with HR, but is shared throughout the organisation.

## Learning & Development

"Stay hungry, stay foolish". A great quote by Steve Jobs highlighting the importance of people's need to inspire themselves with new information and challenges in order to maintain that passion. Learning & Development (L&D) has a stimulating role in employee perception. It helps individual employees grow as professionals. They are constantly challenged by both personal and professional experiences and learning. Charles Jennings' 70:20:10 model explains that 70% of learning is achieved through on-the-job experience, 20% through sharing knowledge and feedback from colleagues and only 10% through formal education. This shows that the moments that matter within L&D are largely outside HR's control.

## Offboarding

Organisations pay less attention to offboarding employees than to onboarding. The first impression is important, but so is the last. Whether voluntary or involuntary, offboarding is often forgotten. While HR takes care of exit calculations, we believe it is the responsibility of line managers to ensure that employees feel recognised for their efforts and leave the company feeling positive.

## The world outside HR and its influence on EX

HR certainly has a role to play within EX, which is clear from the above. However, the role of line managers is said to be of great importance in implementing HR initiatives and policies. What about other functions within organisations?

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Efforts for the **onboarding process** have a **positive impact on employee retention**:

**49%**

Of millennials would like a better onboarding process.

**22%**

Of staff turnover takes place in the first 45 days.

**91%**

Of first-year employees are retained by organisations with an effective onboarding process.

Source: Son (2017).

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Research shows that only **29% of organisations** have a formal **offboarding process** for their employees.

Source: Cushing (2014).

## **Technology**

New technologies have changed the way work is organised and even the way work is performed. With the digital transformation of the workplace, our reliance on digital technologies has increased and with it the need to look at the impact of technology on EX. Morgan (2017) describes the technological environment as one of the key drivers for EX. Software, hardware and helpdesk support, both HR and especially enterprise-wide technologies, should enable employees to do their jobs more efficiently and easily (Boustany, 2017). In return, employees who know how to use these technologies are less frustrated and more engaged.

## **Workplace**

It is not only the technological environment that affects EX, but also the physical environment (Morgan, 2018). Above all, the workplace should enable employees to do their work well. This means that Facilities Management and Real Estate departments need to consider the layout of the workplace, including shared spaces.

Nowadays, however, the workplace is not just a place where people gather to work together. Today's workers expect the workspace to be comfortable, safe and enjoyable (Johns, 2018). Physical safety remains a crucial issue for workers, but popular topics include employee health and well-being (Morgan, 2015). We see a trend of employees wanting a workplace that supports their lifestyle, resulting in corporate fitness areas, communal areas and healthy lunch options.

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

## **Employer Branding**

The effect of a good EX has a huge impact on the well-known pull factor used in marketing. If the employer brand is strong, positive employees will act as authentic brand ambassadors and recommend the brand. This will not only benefit recruitment, but also increase the company's overall appeal, as customers will often pick up on 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 a place to work: it is also about developing connections, interacting with colleagues and feeling part of a community. For a positive EX, employees need a sense of belonging and authenticity, the belief that they will not be punished or humiliated if they express ideas, concerns or mistakes and have access to information and decision-making that is needed (Rasberry, 2018). These components contribute to a sense of inclusiveness and reinforce EX.

Research by Gartner (2018) shows that being discriminated against is the most memorable moment at work. HR tends to focus on moments they have control over. Right now, HR has no control, even though it seems to have the greatest impact on employees. HR's added value lies in how the organisation prevents and addresses these moments after they occur, thereby minimising the negative impact on EX.

### And now?

The above examples clearly illustrate that EX goes far beyond HR's influence. Creating, improving and maintaining an EX that meets employee expectations requires a more holistic approach.

Quintop's approach to EX is cross-functional, where HR is best equipped to drive employee experience strategy and initiatives, but where the outcome is co-owned by multiple functions and ultimately an organisation's top management.

EX is not a one-off intervention, but an ongoing process. To emphasise the importance of designing and adapting EX based on measurement and feedback, Quintop has adopted a proven and structured approach.

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**Workplace** efforts have a **positive effect 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.

Source: Morgan (2018)

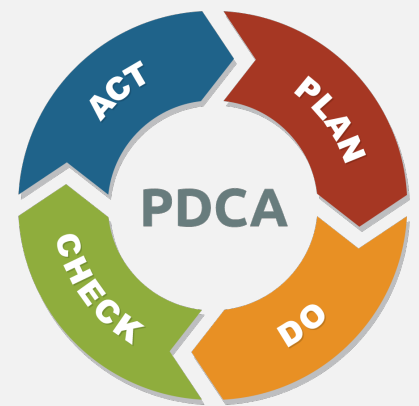
This approach originates from Lean Management, which applies a Plan, Do, Check, Act (PDCA) cycle to achieve results:

- 1) **Plan: Define your EX ambitions.**
  - a) Measuring the difference: creating an understanding of the gap the perceived and expected EX.
  - b) Set objectives: provide focus and direction for EX initiatives to ensure that resources and energy are directed to the right priorities and most impactful interventions.
  - c) Design EX roadmap: create an executable plan to outline policy, process, technology, workspace and cultural changes.
- 2) **Do: Deliver the EX roadmap.**
  - a) Communicate and mobilise: rally the entire organisation around EX's ambitions and initiatives to get 'buy-in' and grip.
  - b) Deliver as planned: implement planned activities, preferably using an Agile/iterative approach to ensure quick results.
- 3) **Check: Measure the progress of the plan.**
  - a) Measure whether EX initiatives are having the right effect: is it having a positive impact through the eyes of the beholder?
  - b) Evaluate efforts and results: review ambitions if necessary and plan any changes.
- 4) **Act: Apply lessons learned.**
  - a) Based on measurement and evaluation apply changes and improvements: to keep the EX on track.

Quintop's approach is iterative, interactive and pragmatic. We work closely with our clients and although HR is our natural habitat, we will ensure cross-functional collaboration at every stage of the project. Employees are at the heart of everything we do, and technology is seen as an 'enabler', not an end in itself. As with every project we undertake, we are very passionate about achieving results together. We look forward to helping you with your EX journey

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PDCA or plan-do-check-act is an iterative design and management method **used in business for the control and continuous improvement of processes and products.**



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