

# UNDERSTANDING EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

*A guide to creating the best experiences for your company's greatest assets.*



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# Introduction to employee experience

Employees are your most important asset. They are the people who create your products and services, the people who speak to your customers, and the guardians of your brand and company culture. They are also the largest expense for many companies. Understanding how to improve employee experience is therefore crucial for maximizing the value-add of this asset.

Employee experience is all about how your employees feel while working for your company. When you focus on their experience, it means paying attention to their feelings and needs. This affects everything related to your employees, and it leads to happier employees who perform better. This is not a new concept. Motivational theory from the likes of Maslow and Herzberg have been around since the 1950's and 1980's respectively.

Employee experience covers all the interactions employees have with your company, starting from when they apply for a job until they leave. To create a great employee experience, you should aim to make your workplace a pleasant and welcoming environment where people want to work, rather than just a place they have to work.

This ebook will help you understand what employee experience is all about and how you can improve it. It provides ideas and inspiration, and it shows how your company can benefit from making employee experience a priority. By making these positive changes, you can create a workplace where your employees truly enjoy being and contributing their best.



# History of employee experience

Employee experience theory has been evolving for quite some time. What started as giving out bare-bone tools to the employees has transformed into a holistic HR approach over the years. The evolution can be explained in the following four phases:

## Utility

### 1. Utility

Initially, employees were provided with the basic tools they needed to perform their jobs.

### 2. Productivity

In the second phase of this evolution, improved tools were provided to employees to enhance their efficiency and speed.

## Productivity

## Engagement

### 3. Engagement

This phase involves companies making extra efforts to ensure employee happiness, thereby enhancing performance.

### 4. Experience

The fourth and current phase centres around cultivating a culture where people are motivated to show up, not just for the paycheck, but for the experience.

## Experience

The latest advancements in employee experience have given rise to Employee Experience Platforms, commonly referred to as EXPs. [Jared Spataro](#) from Microsoft notes an escalating demand for these platforms, driven by the global pandemic's push towards remote work. Microsoft Viva, a recently introduced platform, exemplifies this trend by amalgamating communication, knowledge, resources, and insights, thereby facilitating optimal performance for individuals and teams.

This transformation resonates deeply with the concept of New Work, also known as the "New Work Movement" or "Work 4.0." This paradigm shift holds particular significance for emerging organizations. For further insights into the New Work concept click [here](#).

# What employee experience is not about

In this field, there are a lot of terms, often used concurrently with each other. Here are five misunderstandings about employee experience and what it truly doesn't entail:

## **Sole Focus on HR Enhancement**

Although the HR department contributes significantly to enhancing the employee experience, it encompasses more than that. It also involves facilities management, corporate communications, and IT involvement.

## **Perks and Parties Alone**

While perks and celebrations are important components of employee experience, they don't encompass it entirely. These elements are just actions, not strategies. Employee experience is a strategically aligned initiative that resonates with the desired company culture.

## **Not Just Employer Branding**

Employer branding is vital for standing out in the talent market, but it differs from employee experience. Employer branding targets external stakeholders, whereas the employee experience focuses on the experience the company provides to their existing employees on a day-to-day basis.

## **Beyond Treating Employees as Customers**

While the employee experience initiative draws from the original idea of customer experience, the relationships between employer and employee versus brand and customer are very different. Thinking about your employees as customers is an incomplete way of approaching the issues at hand.

## **Distinguishing Employee Engagement**

Employee experience should not be mixed up with employee engagement, as employee engagement is a part of the whole employee experience. Employee engagement focuses on the actions taken during employment to retain a great workforce but does not take into consideration issues in recruitment for example.

Misplaced emphasis on employee engagement can result in short-term morale boosts that lack sustainability. Nurturing a comprehensive employee experience fosters engagement, as employees prefer an environment where they consistently feel valued and essential.

To explore the topic further, our Content Marketing Manager, Anniina Kaisanlahti, delves into enhancing employee engagement and the underlying success factors in [this article](#).

# What is employee experience?

Employee Experience (EX) encompasses the entire employee journey within a company. It's a concept that can be defined in various ways, but at its core, it refers to everything an employee learns, does, sees, and feels throughout their employment.

Josh Plaskoff defines it as “the employee’s holistic perception of the relationship with their employing organisation derived from all the encounters at touch points along the employee’s journey”.

To create a successful employee experience strategy, it's essential to consider all the touch points along the way, not only during employment but also before and after.

Randstad talks about this on a deeper level, and the touch points are divided as follows:

- **Attraction and recruitment**
- **Onboarding**
- **Engagement**
- **Development**
- **Performing**
- **Exit**
- **Alumni and referencing**

Jacob Morgan, an author and keynote speaker, breaks down employee experience into three main categories of touch points: physical space, technology, and culture. These elements play a significant role in shaping the overall experience for employees. A positive employee experience results in happier, more engaged, and productive employees, contributing to the success of the organization.



Moreover, these touchpoints are present across three distinct dimensions of the overall experience: Technology, Culture, and Physical Space. Now, let's delve deeper into each of these dimensions:

## Technology

Technology encompasses all devices and tools utilized by your employees to accomplish their tasks. This comprises items like laptops, mobile phones, and other equipment, as well as the software employed for remote work and team communication. Technology serves as the central nervous system of the organization, and many concepts and trends concerning the future of work hinge on its integration.

For companies to excel, they must ACE technology:

### ACE

A = Accessibility for all

C = Consumer-grade technology, which aligns with the tools employees are familiar with outside the workplace.

E = Employee-centric focus, addressing individual needs rather than solely business demands.

Utilizing accessible and easy to use technology is now more important than ever as teams are more distributed due to hybrid and remote working practices. In offices, it is also useful to employ technology that enables desk sharing to ensure that when teams do come together in the office they have the resources and space they need to be productive.





## Culture

Culture plays a pivotal role in shaping the employee experience, as the entirety of this journey depends on employees perceiving their workplace as somewhere they want to be, not just where they need to be. Establishing such an environment holds immense importance, and it should be initiated by the CEO and executives, and from there be trickle down to the entire organization.

For companies to truly excel in cultivating a remarkable employee experience, they must embrace the CELEBRATED culture:

### **CELEBRATED**

C = Company is viewed positively

E = Everyone feels valued

L = Legitimate sense of purpose

E = Employees feel like they're part of the team

B = Believes in diversity and inclusion

R = Referrals come from employees

A = Ability to learn new things and employees are given resources to do so and advance

T = Treats employees fairly

E = Executives and managers are coaches and mentors

D = Dedicated to employee health and wellness

## Physical space

The concept of physical space refers to the location in which your employees are working. Nowadays, this encompasses not only the traditional company office but also the home office, which has become a popular choice for many workers.

To establish an appealing physical environment, the company should focus on creating a COOL atmosphere:

### COOL

C = Chooses to bring in friends or visitors

O = Offering flexibility

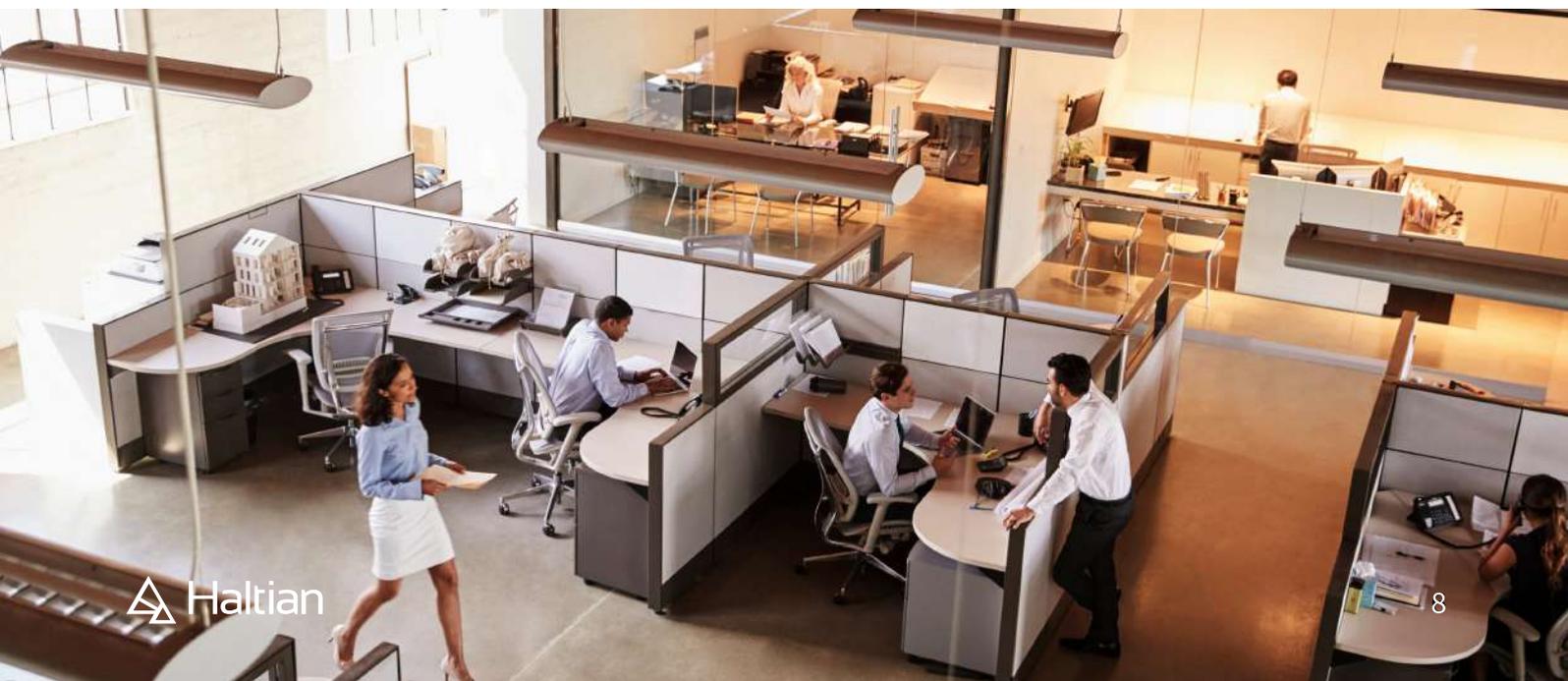
O = Organisation's values are reflected

L = Leverages multiple workspace options

This holistic framework behind the New Work movement strives to work in environments that transcend traditional norms, fostering sustainability, purposeful undertakings, and a fostering sense of value within every facet of professional engagement.

Strategic workspace design and the establishment of task-specific work zones are pivotal factors in crafting an exceptional physical workspace for your employees. Learn more about how Haltian can facilitate workplace experience optimization.

In today's evolving landscape of work, key aspects such as flexibility, autonomy, ongoing skill development, interdisciplinary collaboration, and the fulfilment of engaging tasks are emerging as fundamental components.



# What are the benefits of employee experience?

Investing in your employees is one of the best investments you can make. Good managers enable their employees to perform better by removing obstacles that prevent them from doing their jobs and employee experience thinking allows them to do that.

Organizations that invest the most in the whole experience, are finding great results, such as:

Employee experience thrives on the foundation of empathy, much like the bedrock of design thinking it rests upon. This ethos revolves around delving into the organization's core challenges, sourced directly from within. By addressing these challenges transparently, a logical consequence emerges: the enhanced job performance of your employees, ultimately bolstering your bottom line.

Read more about it why you should focus on employee experience [here](#).

**5x** more likely to appear in Glassdoor's Best Places to Work list

**4.4x** more often listed as Most In-Demand Employers by LinkedIn

**5x** more revenue compared to competitors who invest less in employee engagement

“Companies that invest heavily in employee experience are 4x more profitable than those that do not”

Jacob Morgan, Author, keynote speaker



The benefits of employee experience for companies are vast. Employee experience will improve employee engagement. Engaged employees feel an emotional connection to their jobs, are willing to go the extra mile and will uphold and promote your company brand. Companies with good employee experience perform better, attract the best talents, offer higher possibilities for innovation and have better customer experiences.

### 1 Increased engagement

Engaged employees feel a connection to their jobs, are willing to go the extra mile, and will uphold and promote your company brand.

### 2 Better performance

Employee experience will show directly in your performance rates, as happier employees are more motivated and productive.

### 3 Attract and keep best talent

A good employee experience will improve your company brand and employer image, making you a preferred option in the competitive job market.

### 4 Increased innovation

A happy brain works at a higher level. Good employee experience and high engagement will set the stage for innovation, as your employees trust you and feel empowered.

### 5 Better customer experience

Practice what you preach! Employees need the same amount of focus as customer relations as higher employee engagement leads to better customer service and experience.

# Why does the employee experience matter in a "work-from-home" world?

The employee experience is not just formulated at the physical location you might work in. The shift into a remote working mode has forced a change in our working lives, as up to 88% of companies have encouraged or enforced working from home during the pandemic. This means that many of the great benefits and perks we were used to at the office are no longer available.

This is why companies have to innovate and create new ways of onboarding new employees, creating the feeling of belonging and enabling the employees with all the support they need remotely.

There are three main drawbacks in this current climate for the workforce: increased working hours, pandemic tiredness and the loss of emotional connections.

This is precisely where the creation of an exceptional employee experience comes into play. [Learn more about why employee experience matters.](#)

It is no surprise the the COVID-19 pandemic forced many organizations to re-evaluate employee and office dynamics. With the subsequent shift to remote work, those casual coffee machine chats and one-on-ones became less frequent.

The pandemic enlightened us to the reality that for many companies, employee engagement is often only loosely held together by virtue of being in close proximity in the office.

The shift to remote work represents a unique opportunity for your company to develop more personalized approaches to workplace-related concerns, further nurturing the sense of goodwill and belonging established in prior phases. Fostering trust while working in a more distributed manner serves as a means to assist your employees in managing and feeling secure.

Explore how the pandemic influenced the employee experience and discover strategies for maximizing its potential [here](#).



# How to create a better workplace?

We have created a video on how you can create a better workplace. In the video, our Senior Marketing Manager, Paulo Lopes, gives some insights and tips on what you should consider when thinking about how to create a better workplace.

[Watch the video here](#) and also check out our article to learn [how to create a better workplace with desk sharing](#).



# Designing a great employee experience

Creating a great employee experience starts with your company culture. As the employee experience is shown on all touch points with your company, it is important to consider all the factors from high-level company mission all the way to daily communications.

Read our article on how to design a great employee experience [here](#).



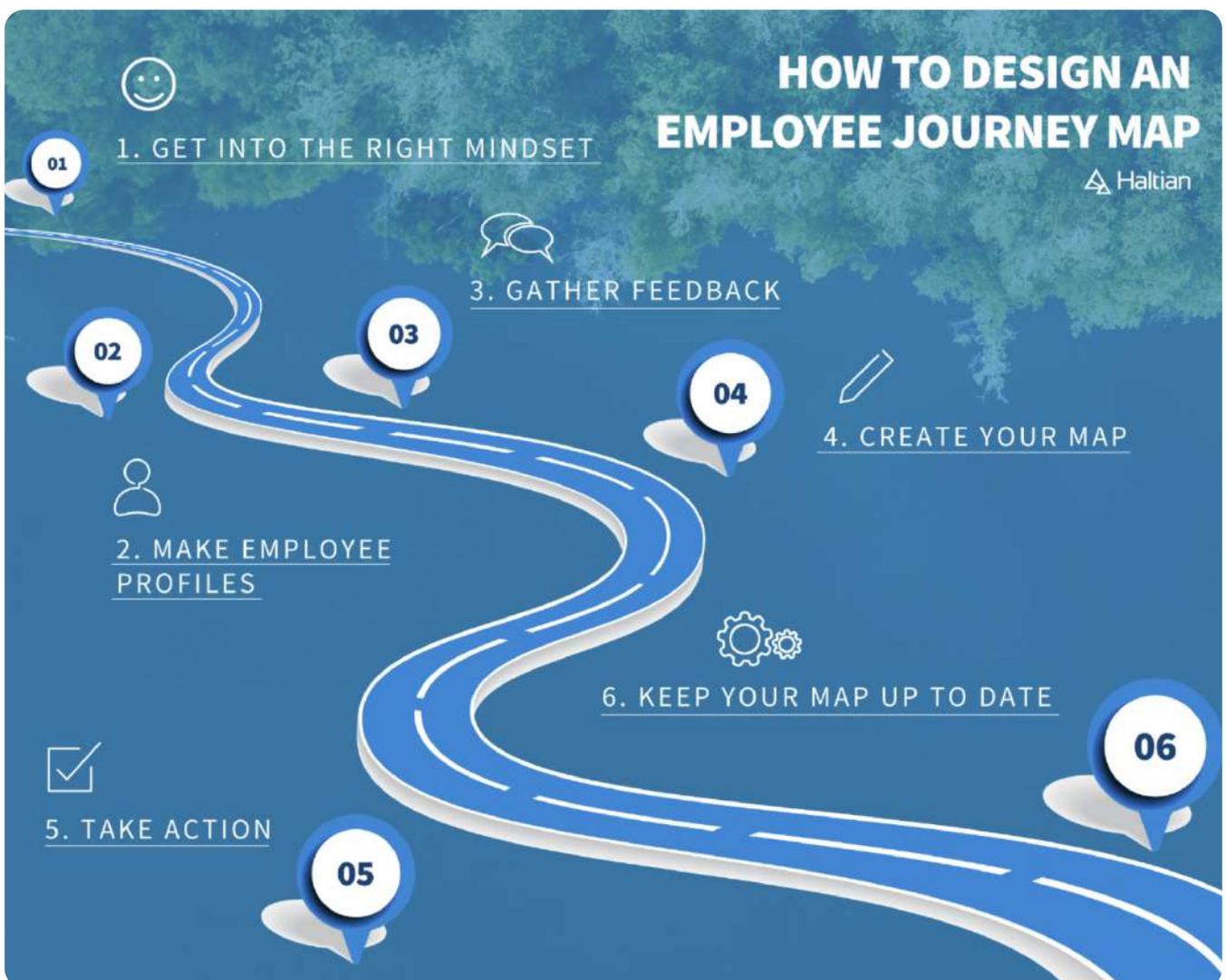
# Creating an employee journey map

The employee journey map provides a visual representation of the steps and action plans that might appear challenging as you embark on your quest for an enhanced employee experience.

Explore our infographic and learn how to craft your own employee journey map.

Want to know more about how to design an employee journey map? Check our [article](#).

Want a few examples? Get some inspiration and read how other companies have focused on creating great employee experiences and what benefits they have found [here](#).



# Final thoughts

Making employee experience a priority should be at the forefront of your company's goals for achieving greater success. Being a great place to work not only improves productivity, it also enables you attract the exceptional talent to help your company stand out from your competition. All things that improve your bottom line.

As we've highlighted earlier, this approach hinges on the collaboration between your company and its employees, leading to enhanced work-life experiences. This approach empowers individuals to uncover their purpose, thereby fortifying the entire organization.

In relation to the New Work concept popularized by German social philosopher Frithjof Bergmann, improving employee experiences contribute to the core principles of adaptability, autonomy, continuous skill improvement, cross-disciplinary collaboration, and pursuing tasks that hold personal significance.

Embark on this journey by taking small but meaningful steps. Address each point of interaction where both potential and existing employees engage with your company. As you do this, you'll naturally expand the concept of cultivating a workplace that truly resonates, yielding considerable advantages.

At Haltian, we specialize in providing solutions that elevate the employee experience. Explore how our innovative smart office solution, the Empathic Building, not only transformed VR Group's office layout but also profoundly enhanced their employee experience, aligning with the principles of New Work and creating a more fulfilling work environment.

Interested to know how Haltian can help you optimize your employees' experience?

 **Contact us today**

# About Haltian

Founded in 2012 Haltian is a global IoT company offering world-class IoT services. Haltian IoT services include the Empathic Building digital twin service for smart buildings, and Thingsee, the proven IoT technology platform that enables faster IoT launches for mass-scale deployments. Haltian also provides world-class New Product Development Services to help companies get their product from an idea to a ready product. Headquartered in Oulu, Northern Finland, Haltian currently employs 145 people globally.

Visit us on [www.haltian.com](http://www.haltian.com)

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