

# Employee Experience

The complete guide



**By Debra Corey**

Author, Speaker, Consultant and  
Chief Pay it Forward Officer



# Table of Contents

---

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>03</b>
<b>What the employee experience is</b>	<b>04</b>
<b>Why the employee experience is important</b>	<b>05</b>
<b>How to drive a positive employee experience</b>	<b>06</b>
1. Why - Meaningful work   Meaningful purpose and values	07
2. What - Onboarding   Learning   Performance Management   Recognition   Rewards   Workspace	09
3. How - Fairness   Transparency   Employee Voice   Wellbeing   Belonging	17
4. Timing	22
<b>How to keep the employee experience going</b>	<b>24</b>
1. Have a person(s) focus on it	25
2. Lead from the top	25
3. Review and assess it	26
4. Communicate it	27
5. Leverage technology	27
<b>Case Studies</b>	<b>28</b>



# Introduction

In today's crowded and competitive marketplace, where organizations are fighting to attract and retain talent, the employee experience has become even more important than ever. It's become a differentiator, something that is like a sign that hangs outside your company that entices people to come in. And once inside, it's what gets your employees 'shopping' time and time again as they engage with your organization. According to Josh Bersin - Why Employee Experience Matters Now

“**Work isn't just work anymore. Winning the war for talent requires becoming an 'irresistible organization' - a place employees clamor to join and that rivals want to become.**”

To win this war for talent, and to become as Josh Bersin says, an **'irresistible organization,'** it's absolutely critical that your employee experience moves on to meet the changing needs and demands of your people, and at the same time, deal with the unprecedented changes to our society, economy and business in general. Going back to the shopping analogy, in the same way that many retailers have had to evolve the customer experience, so too do we need to evolve the employee experience if we expect to compete for talent.

In this paper, I'll explore these changes and provide tips and strategies to reimagine and recreate an employee experience that drives higher employee engagement to ultimately enable greater outcomes for your business.

ⓐ According to a study<sup>1</sup>, 81% of the global firms interviewed reported employee experience as a dominant topic of discussion amongst their leadership team.



### About the Author:

**Debra Corey** is a highly experienced and award-winning HR consultant, four-time author, world-class speaker, and was named one of the top 101 Global Employee Engagement Influencers and HR Most Influential Thinkers. She's had a varied and exciting career over the last 20+ years, working for many well known global companies where she's developed and delivered HR strategies in a rebellious way, pushing the boundaries and challenging the status quo to truly drive employee engagement.



# What the Employee Experience is

The employee experience represents the entire journey an employee takes with an organization, from pre-hire to post-exit interviews, and everything in between. It's what your employees encounter along the way, and what leaves an impression on them, both good and bad.

Think of it like a trip you've gone on through a travel company, with the experience beginning when you first selected them, and continues as you organize the details of the trip, and each step and interaction throughout the holiday. Together, this impacts and leads to your final star rating for the travel company, which impacts your decision to travel with them again as well as influences others who may read your review.

The term and concept of the employee experience is still fairly new. It was first used at Airbnb when Mark Levy joined the company in 2013 and came up with the term and pioneered the function.



**"You have a customer experience team that focuses on the customer, so we came up with the term employee experience to signal that we were going to put this same level of focus on our employees. The headline became that we wanted to do things with and for our employees instead of to them" said Levy.**

The key to their success has been in how they've changed mindsets, moving away from a traditional HR approach to one that centers around the idea of co-creation, human-centered design and an ongoing two-way dialogue.



# Why the Employee Experience is important

As the definition of the employee experience has evolved, so too have the reasons why it is important. From retention, and performance to financial measures, the impact it can make has increased in both depth and breadth. And for this reason, **the employee experience is no longer seen as a fluffy HR term or concept, but as a tried and tested business tool and driver.** The rise of reputable studies has helped to make this business case, with data showing the difference an employee experience can make in a variety of ways. Here are just ten reasons why the employee experience is important:



**Increased assets** - Companies that score in the top 25 percent on the employee experience report nearly **three times the return on assets** (ROA) compared to organizations in the bottom quartile<sup>2</sup>.



**Increased profits** - Companies that scored high in employee experience factors have **four times higher average profits**<sup>4</sup>.



**Higher employee performance** - Companies with scores in the top quartile of the Employee Experience Index are **23 percent more likely to report higher levels of work performance** than those whose in the bottom quartile<sup>6</sup>.



**More innovative** - Companies with scores in the top quartile of the employee experience are **twice as innovative** as those in the bottom quartile<sup>8</sup>.



**Lower turnover** - Companies that scored high in employee experience factors have **40 percent lower turnover**<sup>10</sup>.



**Increased sales** - Companies that score in the top 25 percent on the employee experience report **double the return on sales** compared to organizations in the bottom quartile<sup>3</sup>.



**Increased customer satisfaction** - Companies with scores in the top quartile of the employee experience have **double the customer satisfaction** as those in the bottom quartile<sup>5</sup>.



**Higher discretionary effort** - Companies with scores in the top quartile of the Employee Experience Index are almost **twice more likely to report higher levels of discretionary effort** than those whose in the bottom quartile<sup>7</sup>.



**Greater sense of belonging** - Companies with employee experience strategies are **5.1 times more likely to create a sense of belonging**<sup>9</sup>.



**Lower headcount** - Companies that scored high in employee experience factors have **24 percent lower headcount**<sup>11</sup>.



# How to drive a positive employee experience

When organizations first began to focus on the employee experience, they did this primarily by addressing the physical employee touchpoints, those connections or intersections you have with your workforce throughout the employee journey. However, over time, especially over the last few years, organizations have realized that there is more to the employee experience than just this, with employees wanting and needing more. When describing this concept, I like to compare it to how the retail experience has changed over time. How it's no longer about just the in-store shopping experience, but includes factors such as how a company's website looks and functions, if/how their customer loyalty program works, and even, how they deal with special events and/or problems.

**To drive a positive employee experience, we need to look at it in a more inclusive and holistic way, taking all factors into account.**

These all impact the overall relationship and engagement we have with the company, with customers expecting and demanding more. There are many models that explain the employee experience, all listing slightly different elements that go into what drives a positive employee experience. The model I'd like to share with you puts all of the elements under three headers, making it easy to understand and then implement.





# Why

The first place to start is with the why, focusing on what you need to do to appeal to potential and existing employee's hearts and minds, their '**why.**' I like to think of this as the meaning, which I describe as the '**air that you breathe.**' If there is **no meaning then no air.** Then no matter what else you do with and for your employees, they'll never be able to 'breathe' or be fully engaged. This is broken out in two ways



## Meaningful Work

Meaning you get from the job that you perform.



## Meaningful Purpose & Values

Meaning you get from the Company

## Meaningful work

We all want to have meaning in our work, feeling like we are using our skills and talents, and feeling like we are making a difference. But too often this doesn't happen, with little effort going into how we design jobs to deliver these feelings, leaving employees stuck day after day in an experience filled with frustrations and disengagement. In my book **Build it: The Rebel Playbook for Employee Engagement** we write about designing high engagement jobs by looking at them in 2 ways:

- **Demands:** Creating jobs that have the right level of demands, challenges and excitement so that they do not lead to boredom, frustration and even depression.
- **Control :** Creating jobs that have the right level of control, freedom and autonomy over their work and their goals.

As we say in the book, "These are the magic jobs, the 'sweet spot' - the jobs that people love and that drive high employee engagement."



81%<sup>12</sup> of employees agreeing with the statement that 'their job makes good use of their skills and abilities' reported a positive employee experience.



## Meaningful purpose and values

Employees also want to have meaning by feeling like they're a part of something bigger, making a difference through their company's **'why,'** its purpose and values. But too often our employees don't understand how they fit in and connect to them, thus losing their meaning and impact.

To create this meaning we need to make sure that our employees understand how they can help to deliver on the purpose, and what your values really mean. In my book **Bringing Your Values Out to Play** I talk about helping employees understand your company values in three ways:

- What they mean to the company
- What they mean to your team
- What they mean to them personally

By doing this, the employee experience will have meaning through a defined and engaging purpose and values.



80%<sup>13</sup> of employees agreeing with the statement that 'there is alignment to share core values' reported a positive employee experience.



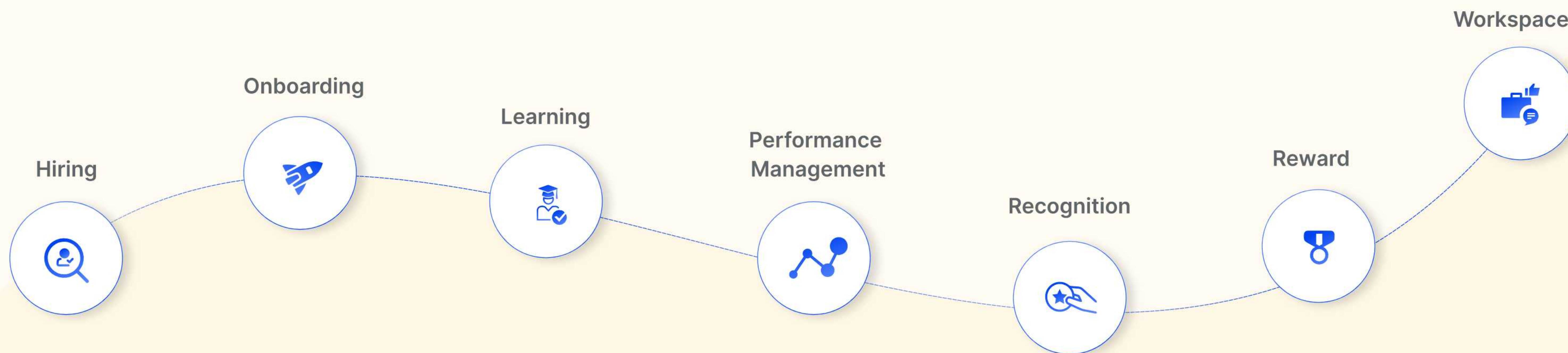


# What

The next section includes our employee **'touchpoints,'** those interactions we have with our potential and existing workforce. Going back to the shopping analogy, these are all of the times that we come into contact with our customers, from beginning to end. Over the past few years, I'd be surprised if these have not changed in a variety of ways. And if they haven't, you need to ask yourself, why not?

Below I've listed some of these touchpoints and shared some of the changes that I've seen along with suggestions on what to do to address them. As you read through them, make a list of where you are for each, and where you need to go next to drive the employee experience required at your organization.

What we do to drive a positive experience at the various touchpoints?





## Hiring

The first employee experience touchpoint is hiring, which for many **candidates starts well before an employee even applies for a job**, before they've even entered the formal hiring process.

According to Katrina Collier, Author of The Robot-Proof Recruiter, **"Your company's reputation can no longer be controlled by the PR department as it could in the past. Because the Internet gives your employees, candidates, clients, and even suppliers a place to share their experiences, people considering working for your company will be looking to see what it is really like to work there and how people are treated. According to research from one study, this can include looking at information from up to 16 different sources."**

Because of this, if companies are going to be able to attract talent, they need to start by taking a few steps backwards and consider all of the pre-touchpoints. For example, what does your website branding say about you? How do you describe yourself on our website, especially on the careers page? What is said, or do you say about yourselves on social media or in the news? Keeping in mind that this contributes to the all-important first impression, make sure that it's an impression that will help attract the right talent to your organization.

Next, companies are making changes in their hiring process to make it more human-centric. Realizing that this is something that candidates expect, they're re-visiting hiring processes to ensure that in this competitive job market they don't lose candidates because of a poor hiring experience. Here are two changes that Collier suggests:

- **Shorten the interview process** - question every step of the process to determine whether it's valued-added or time-sucking. Remember, the longer the process takes, the more time you give your candidates to walk away and join another company.
- **Always give feedback** - Keeping in mind that how you treat candidates is an indication of how you'll treat them as an employee, showcasing your culture and values, and also establishing initial bonds of trust. And for this reason, feedback is something that should always be given. As Collier says, "Feedback is payment for someone's time interviewing with your company, and besides it being the right thing to do, your feedback could change someone's life."



A study<sup>14</sup> found that nearly two-thirds (63%) of organizations have had new recruits quit before they even started because of a poor hiring experience.



# Onboarding

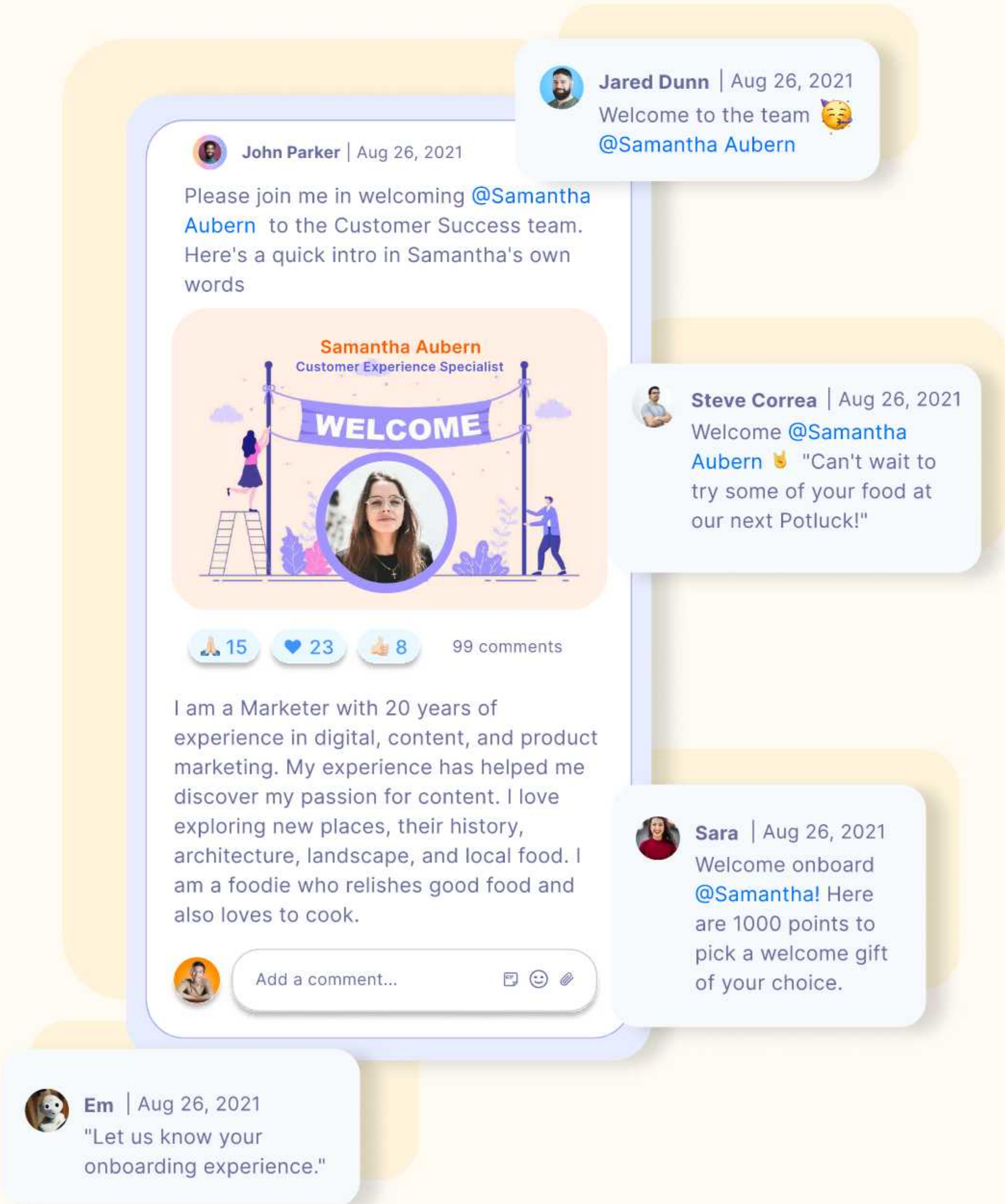
The next touchpoint is onboarding, which is your opportunity to build on from the first impression that was made during the hiring phase. It is here where the employee begins to see and learn the company culture, start building relationships, and learn the tools and processes to get them up and running smoothly. And like hiring, onboarding has changed dramatically over the last few years with respect to when and how it is done.

Let’s start with the ‘when,’ which for many companies has started earlier, well before the first day the employee joins the company. Realizing that once the offer is accepted, new employees begin to form their impression and relationship with their new company, organizations have kicked it up a notch to build touchpoints so that the manager and the company, in general, can connect with employees and start creating a positive employee experience. Whether it’s an email every few weeks or a video sent to personalize the message, companies are building an employee experience well before the normal experience begins.

According to one study<sup>15</sup>, around 10 percent of people leave within six months of starting a new job.

Following on from this, companies have also revisited how they onboard employees on their first day, first weeks, months and even first year in their job. Knowing the difference and impact this can have on the employee’s desire to stay, their productivity and their engagement, companies are creating more frequent and robust steps and approaches to onboarding. In addition, they’re looking at the impact that hybrid working is having on the onboarding experience, and changing their approaches so that nothing is lost if/when onboarding is happening in a more remote way.

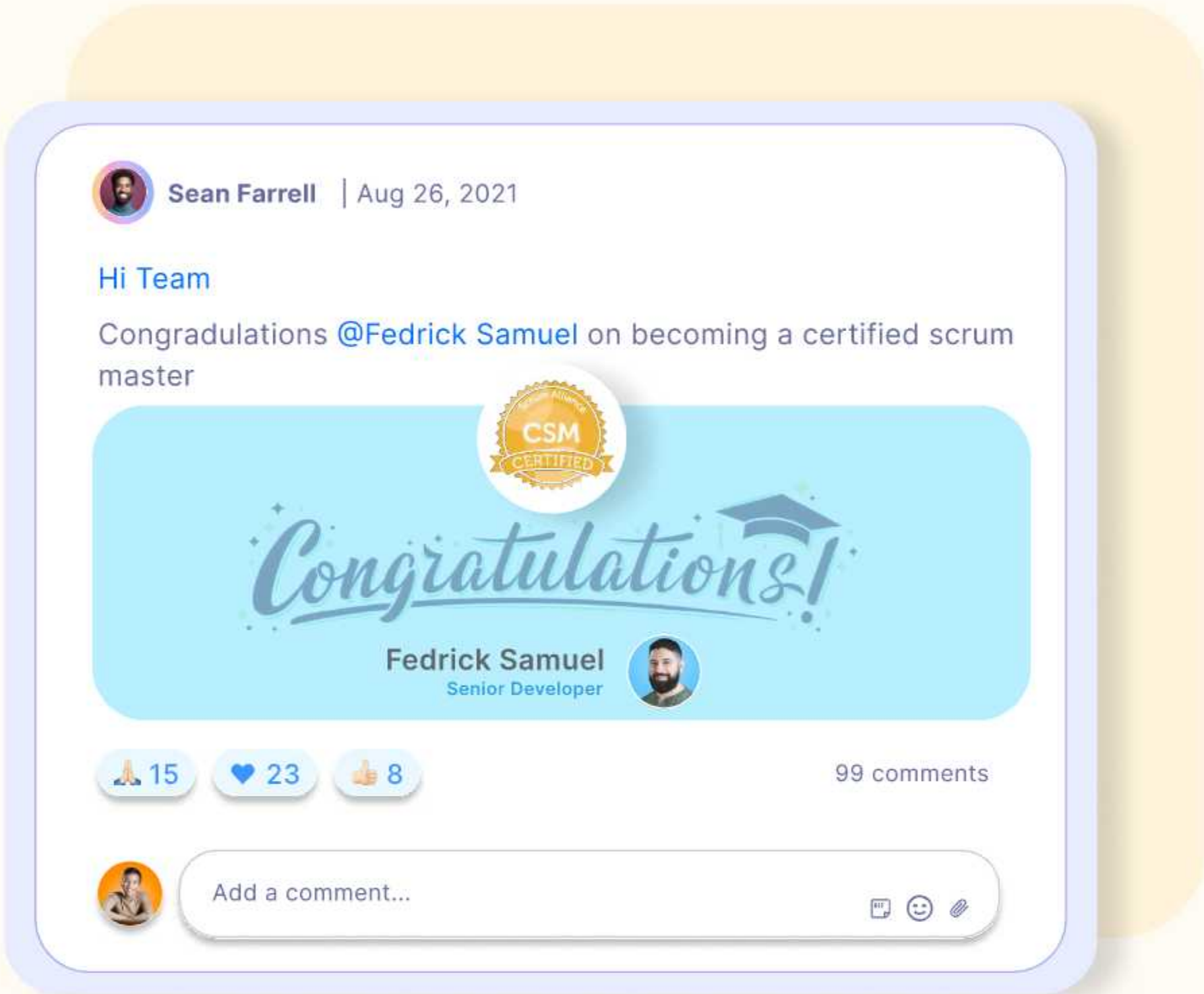
According to one study<sup>16</sup>, organizations with a strong onboarding process improve new hire retention by 82% and productivity by over 70%.






# Learning

Learning and development is another key element of the employee experience, having a significant impact on how the employee performs, how they are set up for career growth, and even how they feel about their company as it signals whether it has a commitment and investment in them. It has changed dramatically over the years with respect to what needs to be learned and how it is done.





### Training Feedback Survey

Measure the effectiveness of your organization's training programs through instant feedback from the training attendees.



According to one study<sup>17</sup>, 68% of employees have changed jobs because of a lack of learning and development opportunities.

Let's start with the '**what**,' so what needs to be learned. With jobs changing as they become automated or obsolete, with new businesses entering the marketplace requiring jobs with different skills, and with how work gets done changing as the workplace changes, many organizations are experiencing a skills gap. And to fill this gap, they're relying on their learning programs, designing ones that address the new, and often quite different, skills that are required. This is something that is not only important to their people so that they feel a sense of accomplishment by being able to perform their job, but to the company too so that work can get done.



According to one study<sup>18</sup>, 9 in 10 employees want their employer to offer more training courses to develop new skills.

Moving on from this, many companies are evaluating and changing how they deliver their learning programs and experiences. Fueled with an understanding that learning is not one-dimensional, they're structuring programs that include all of the different ways that people learn, from experiences, interacting with others, or through training. This approach comes from a theory called the **70-20-10 rule**, which says that 70 percent of what we know comes from hands-on experience, 20 percent from social learning, and 10 percent from formal learning.




# Performance Management

Another way that our employees learn is through performance management, a part of the employee experience that when done well, provides feedback and helps to set clear directions and goals. And, like the other elements, has changed in respect to when and how it is done. Let’s start with the **‘when,’** which for many companies has moved from an annual or biannual process to a continuous process. By doing this it drives engagement, strengthens relationships and drives productivity.

According to one study<sup>19</sup>, companies that provide regular feedback have 14.9% lower turnover and employees are up to three times more engaged.

Moving onto the **‘how’**, again companies are finding ways to make the experience more engaging and more human. Part of this comes from moving to a continuous approach, and part comes from putting the focus as much on the ‘how’ you have achieved your goals as on the ‘what’ you have done, and focusing on outcomes rather than tasks.




Feedback From Manager

Direct feedback from your manager accelerates your learning and growth.

Active

8 users invited

5 responses




Feedback From Peers

Know what your colleagues think about their experience of working with you.

Active

7 users invited

4 responses




Feedback From Direct Reports

Consistent feedback from your direct reports helps you grow in your role as a leader.

Active

8 users invited

5 responses



**“Driving performance is not about ticking off all the things you have on your ‘to do’ list; it’s about thinking about how the world will be different if you achieve them all.”** - Rob Ollander-Krane, from Build it: The Rebel Playbook for Employee Engagement



# Recognition

Another tool that provides both learning and feedback, is recognition. Over the years, employee recognition has evolved from being a nice way to thank employees for their years of service, to something that can have a significant and meaningful impact on your workforce and your business. And because of this, it's no longer seen as a 'nice to do,' but a 'have to do.'

**“Feedback through recognition quiets the negative voices that take up so much of our thoughts and time, helping us know that we’re on the right track, that what we do matters and is truly making a difference.”** - from Appreciate it: The Playbook for Employee Recognition.

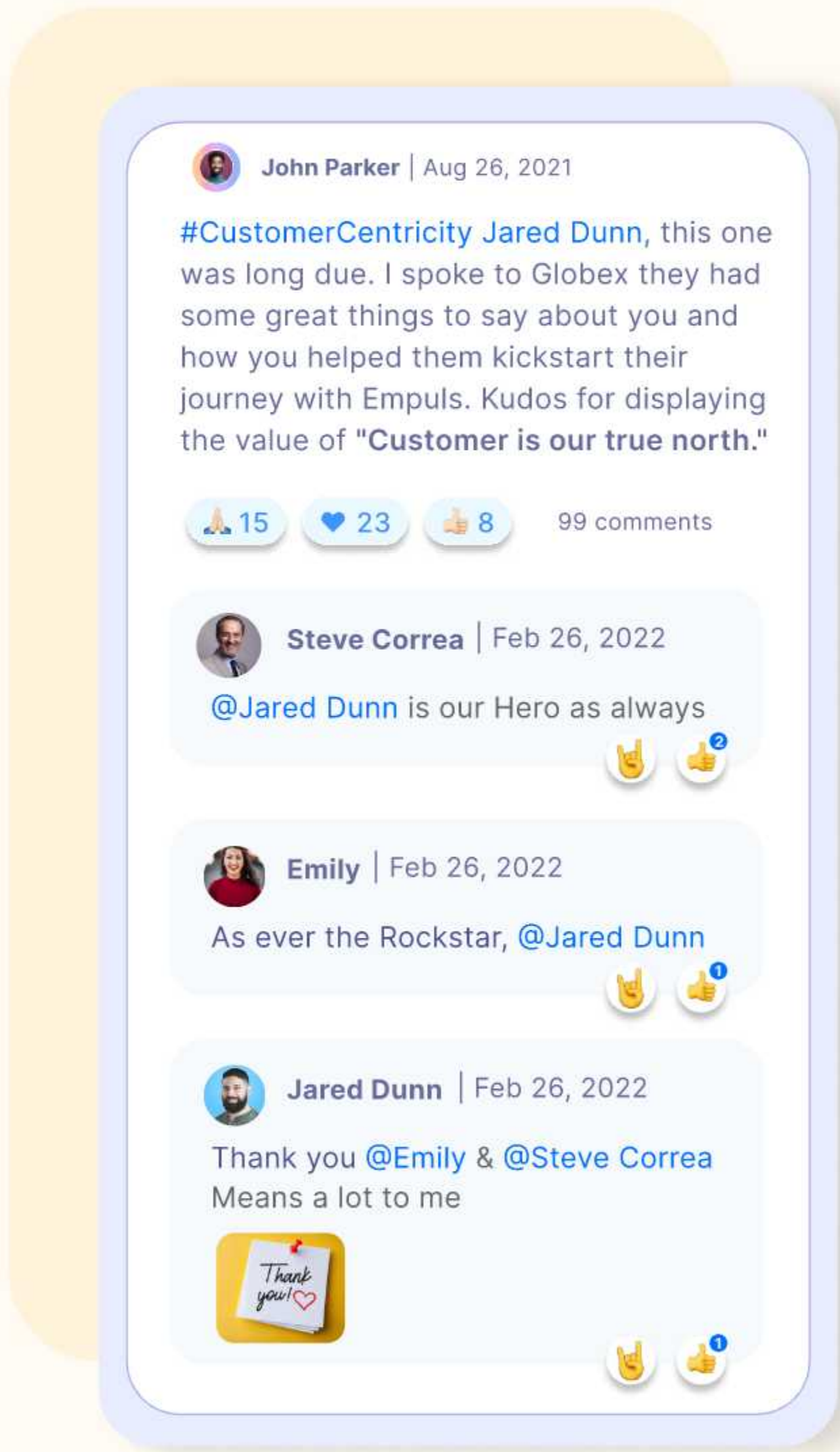


According to one study<sup>20</sup>, 79% of employees would work harder if they felt their efforts were being recognized, and research done by Shawn Achor shows that employee productivity can increase by 30% when employees receive just one piece of praise a day.

As with the others, recognition has changed dramatically over the years in regards to why and when it is delivered. Starting with the 'why,' as companies have come to understand and embrace the power of recognition, they use it in more ways. From using it as a way to improve performance through recognizing the display of company values, to being a driver of employee engagement, to being a tool to reduce turnover, the list goes on and on in respect to the benefits recognition can deliver to employees and the company.



According to one study<sup>21</sup>, employees who do not feel adequately recognized are twice as likely to say they'll quit in the next year.

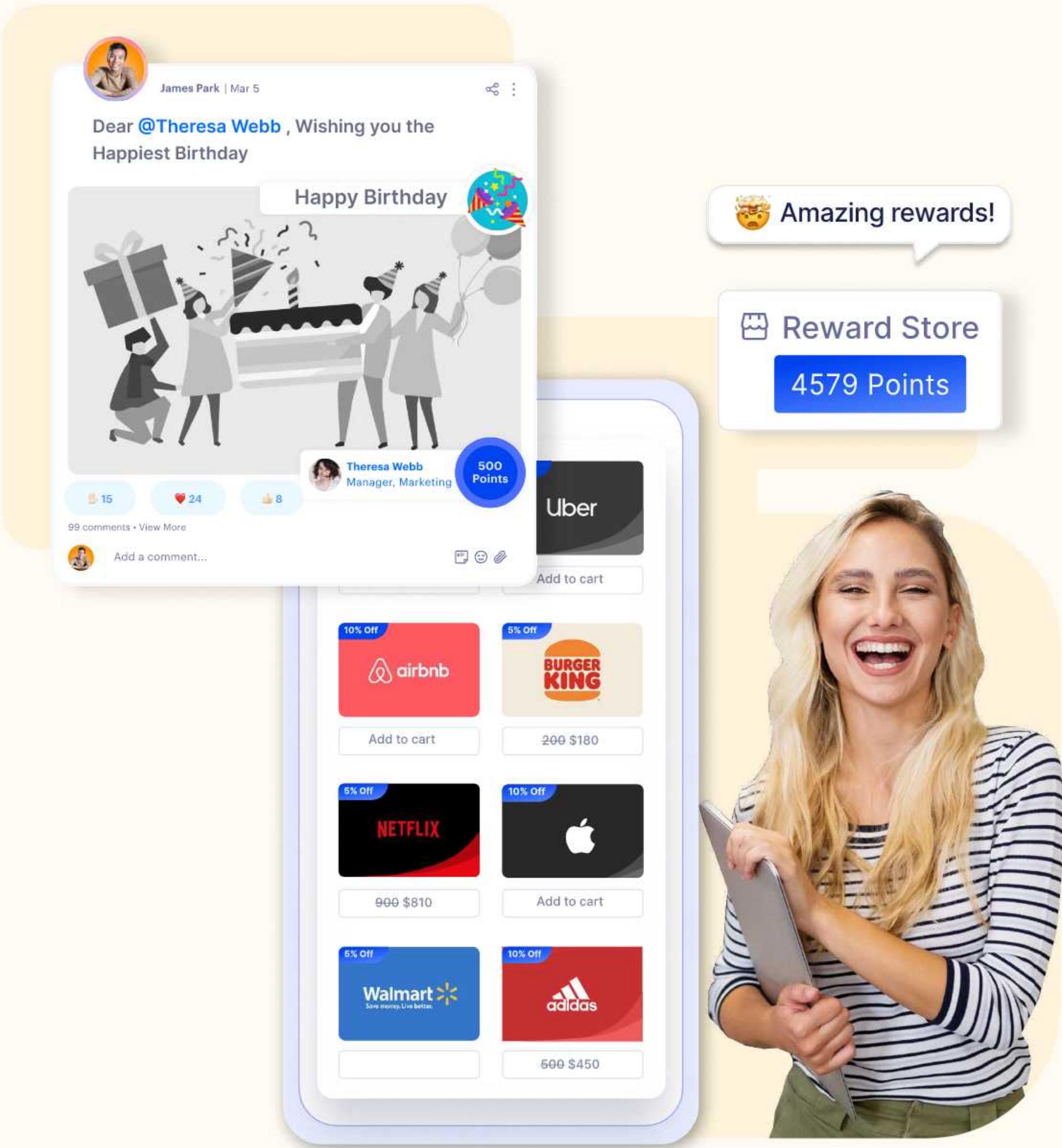


Moving onto the 'when,' as with other elements of the employee experience, recognition is done more frequently, on a continuous basis. With employees and companies anxious to reap the benefits of recognition, they're 'keeping it on' by leveraging technology to help them do this. In addition, technology is helping recognition be more seamless and flexible, making it a more engaging experience for employees and reacting and responding to what the business needs to succeed.



# Rewards

The next contributor to the employee experience is rewards, which are the pay and benefit programs you provide to your people. This is an area that’s changed as our workforce has gotten more diverse, and as businesses have woven fairness, balance and choice into elements of their reward programs.



In respect to pay, companies are faced with no choice but to look at pay through a fairness lens, addressing inequities regarding gender, age, etc. With governments around the world passing legislation to ensure equal pay treatments, and the voice of employees being louder through social media avenues, there is no hiding from what needs to be done to combat inequities.

In respect to benefits, this too has changed significantly, especially over the last few years. Employees are asking for a new range of benefits, ones that meet their diverse needs, and support them in the moment, helping them deal with the challenges they face at work and in their personal lives.

According to one study<sup>22</sup>, 51 percent of employees say they want benefits that are more aligned with their needs.



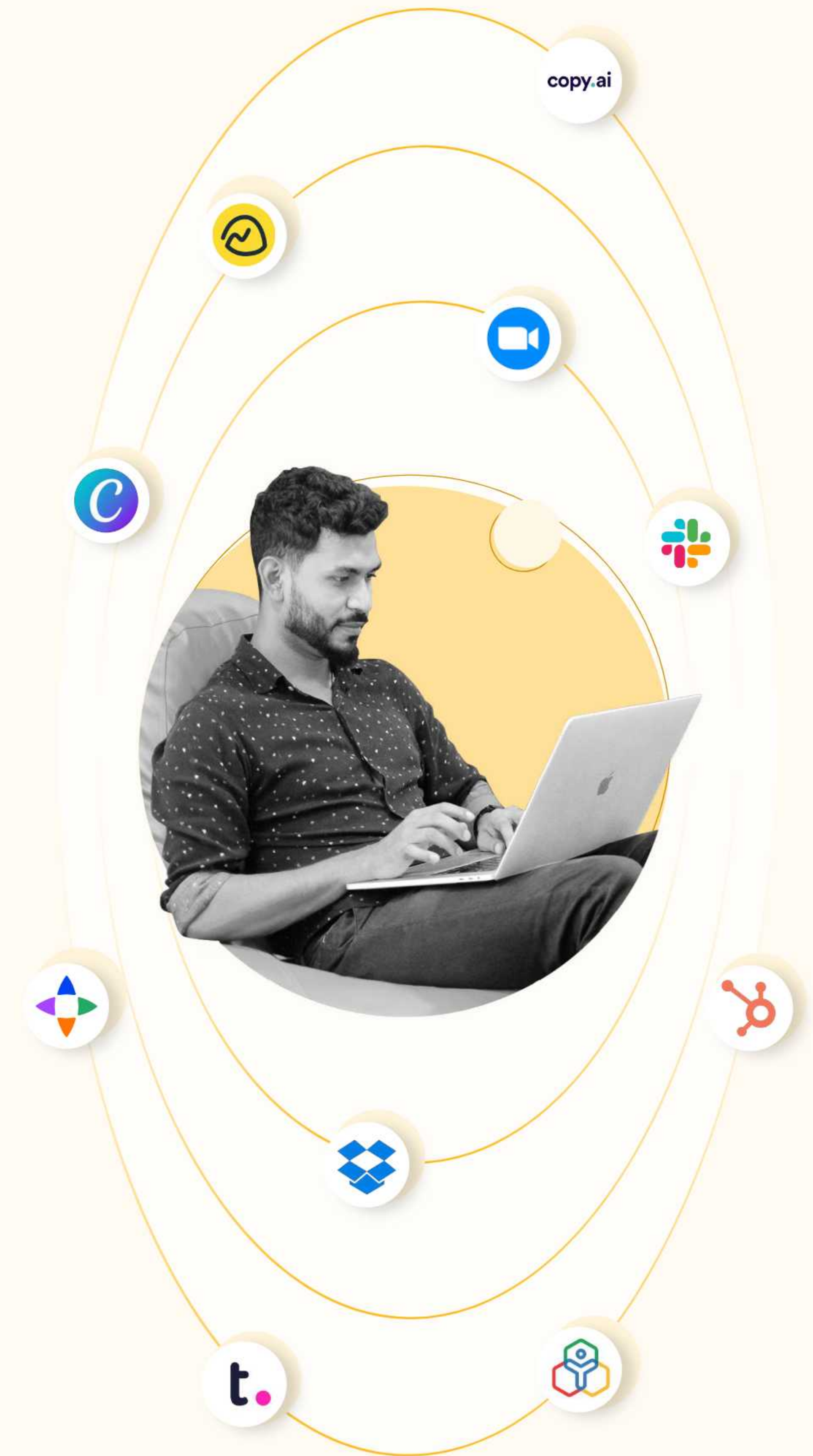
# Workspace

Last, but certainly not least, is the important role that workspace has to play when it comes to the employee experience. This is an area that has changed dramatically over the years, with the focus moving away from the physical workspace to a more holistic view and approach, adding to it the virtual workspace along with working practices that underpin how and when work gets done. The biggest change to the workspace has been technology, with it being an important enabler and contributor to the overall employee experience.

“As said in a paper<sup>23</sup> titled **The experience of work. The role of technology in productivity and engagement**, “A positive employee experience requires removing friction from work, and technology has a big part to play in that. Can I collaborate with people faster? Can I assess information more rapidly? Can I engage in the work that I have to do and get it done faster?”

An equally important change has to do with working practices, which like technology, can drive a positive (or negative) employee experience. Companies who have embraced hybrid working and woven a flexible working mindset and approach into their ways of working are set up to succeed, whilst those that have gone back to what was done pre-COVID are setting their people and company up for failure.

⌚ According to one survey<sup>24</sup>, 87% of people want to work from home at least one day of the week, and 68% of American workers say the ability to work remotely and on-site is the perfect work model.





# How

This final section is what I cluster together into the **‘how,’** more specifically how we make our employees feel throughout the employee experience. It comes from how we treat our people, how we work together, and ultimately the culture that we create and maintain.



**“The cultural environment isn’t the one that you can see, touch, taste or breathe in. This is the environment that you feel. That feeling in the pit of your stomach when you don’t want to go to work or the excitement and butterflies you get from wanting to go to work. Simply put, the cultural environment is the vibe of your organization and the actions that are taken to create that vibe or feeling.”** Jacob Morgan, ‘The Employee Experience Advantage’

Here are examples of feelings that are critical to consider and handle in your own way to deliver and drive a positive employee experience. How we make our employees feel throughout the employee experience?



Fairness



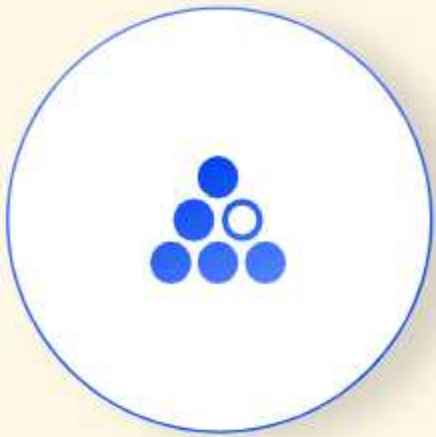
Transparency



Employee Voice



Wellbeing




Belonging




# Fairness





Fairness is something that is a key influencer of how we feel. And for this reason, if throughout the employee experience there is not a sense of fairness, whether that is in how we are paid, in the learning and recognition that we receive, or in the job opportunities that we are presented with, then we are left demotivated and disengaged. For organizations to drive a sense of fairness, it's important to take a step back and review everything you do, making sure that fairness is intentionally built in throughout.



 **Jared Dunn** | Aug 26, 2021


Last month, we asked for feedback on our employee perks & benefits. Most of you asked for better perks to beat the rising costs. We heard you. **Happy to announce the launch of exclusive discounts, a food allowance, and a wellness reimbursement.** We'll walk you through how you can start utilizing these benefits, during our next virtual townhall.



 Add a comment...   


# Transparency


Transparency goes hand in hand with fairness, because if an organization is not transparent with their people, then they do not feel like they are being treated fairly. Organizations need to continually challenge themselves to be transparent in how and when they communicate, how they design and deliver policies and programs, and how their leaders and managers treat their people if they want to build trust and engagement throughout the employee experience. Again, make it intentional and in the forefront of everything that you do.

 **Sean Farrell** | Aug 26, 2021


Congradulations Team @Joe Harris (Product Marketing), Sam Dewitt (Product Manager), Sally Hines (Market Research Intern)

Just signed the **GlobeX account for \$20,000 SaaS and \$300K Rewards.** Thanks team, for helping me close this deal.





 **James klay** | Aug 26, 2021

Congradulations!!!  
Way to go Team 🎉

 **Jared Dunn** | Aug 26, 2021

Great Job Guys 👍

 15  24  8




# Employee Voice

Giving your employees a voice also has an important part to play in impacting how your employees feel. And for this reason, over the years more companies have ramped up both when they give their employees a voice, making it more frequent, and how they do so, finding ways to make it easier and more accessible throughout their workforce. Just as important, companies have found that acting on the feedback is critical to driving a feeling of being heard, being valued and being engaged.



According to one study<sup>25</sup>, 99 percent of employees said they were more likely to stay at a company that takes and acts on feedback.



Samuel Dunn

Aug 26, 2021


Hi Team

It's been a quarter since our new **R&R program** launched. We asked for feedback on what's working and what's not. We got many suggestions and now we need your help in zeroing in on the top two changes to the program. Go ahead and cast your vote.


☒ I want to give reward points when recognizing peers

☐ I want to have a complimentary off on my birthday

☐ I want to give reward points to peers welcoming a baby



Add a comment...

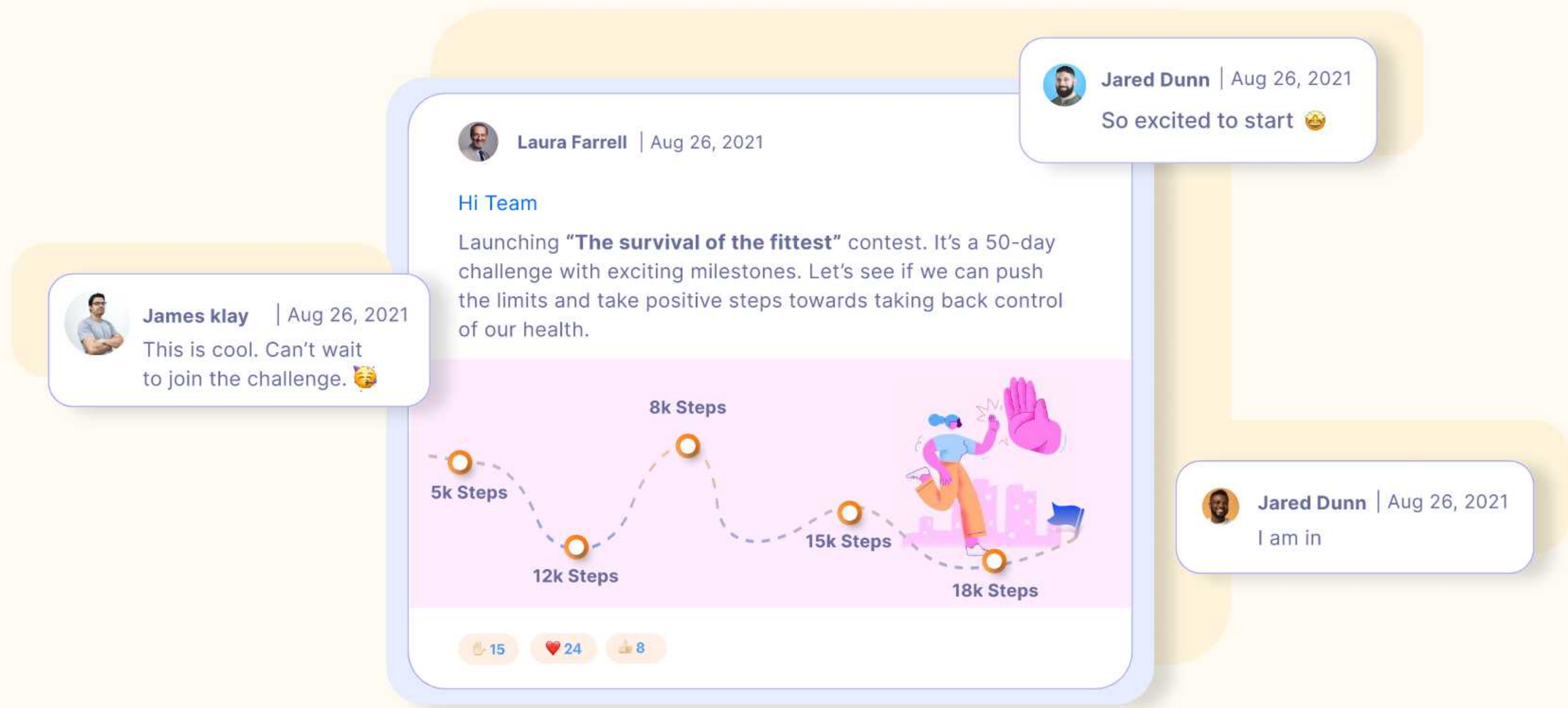




# Wellbeing

Wellbeing is another area that companies have been focusing on as they’ve come to understand the impact it has on how their employees perform as well as how they feel about their company. And for this reason, they’ve changed their mindset towards wellbeing, taking more of a proactive, integrated and holistic approach towards it. Whether it’s making strides in flexible working, supporting employee’s physical, mental and financial wellbeing, or addressing family needs, companies are finding ways to make life easier and better for their people at every stage of the employee experience, both inside and outside of work.

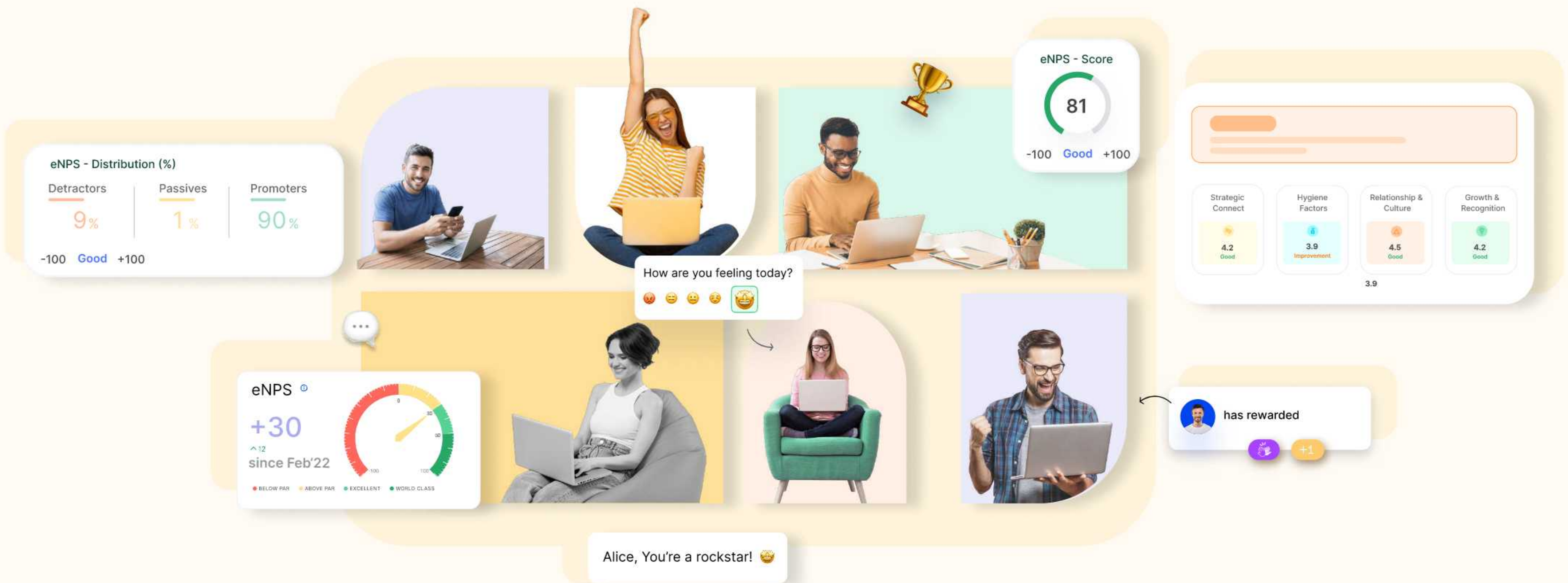
According to one study<sup>26</sup>, 50 percent of participants named flexible working as the most sought after factor when it comes to picking an employer.





# Belonging

Last, but certainly not least, are feelings derived from a sense of belonging, which is having a sense of community and connection to colleagues and the company. It comes from having a common purpose, feeling fully accepted, and working in an environment where employees genuinely care about one another and have a willingness to invest emotional energy for the benefit of each other.



Belonging is something that more and more companies are addressing as they've come to understand the critical impact it has on their people and the business. Here are a few statistics showing the scope of it's impact:

- One study<sup>27</sup> found that **employees who felt early on that they didn't belong** were three times more likely to leave within the first six months.
- One study<sup>28</sup> found that **employees with a strong sense of belonging** are over six times more likely to be engaged than those who don't, and 12% happier.
- One study<sup>29</sup> found that if **employees feel like they belong**, companies reap substantial bottom-line benefits such as a 56% increase in job performance, a 50% drop in turnover, and a 75% reduction in sick days.



# Timing

Now that we've explored the various elements that make up the employee experience, let me end this section by addressing the timing of them, answering the question of **when is the right time to start planning and initiating them?** The answer is that it depends - it depends on where you are now and where you want to be, it depends on what challenges you're facing and what need to be overcome, and it depends on what else is going on in your business. Put simply, there is no magic time. However, here are five things to consider as you determine the timing and your plans:

- **There is no fixed starting point**

The goal is to have something in place for each of the elements covered in this section. However, you'll notice that I haven't numbered them, which was done intentionally as one does not come before the other. Instead, it's important to start with what is the most critical to your business and where you can act fastest. For example, if you're a start-up and your priority is to quickly hire your first 20 employees, you may want to focus your attention on building out the 'why' and the 'how' and informally address the 'what.' If you're an established company that is having challenges with retention, you may want to focus on the 'how' and the 'what,' as the 'why' is most likely already in place.

- **Understand your priorities**

Following on from the previous point, the key to determining what to do first, is by understanding your priorities. This includes understanding what is needed most by your business (e.g. mass hiring requires a robust hiring process, driving a performance culture requires robust pay, performance management and recognition programs) and by your people (e.g. a desire to develop requires a robust learning program, a desire to feel appreciated requires a strong recognition culture and program). Use this to determine the timings of when you will launch or re-launch initiatives for each of the employee experience elements.





- **Understand your priorities**

Following on from the previous point, the key to determining what to do first, is by understanding your priorities. This includes understanding what is needed most by your business (e.g. mass hiring requires a robust hiring process, driving a performance culture requires robust pay, performance management and recognition programs) and by your people (e.g. a desire to develop requires a robust learning program, a desire to feel appreciated requires a strong recognition culture and program). Use this to determine the timings of when you will launch or re-launch initiatives for each of the employee experience elements.

- **Don't worry about perfection**

Over the years I've learned the hard way that spending too much time on perfection can slow down and impair the results. This is especially true when it comes to the employee experience, and the elements that make it up, for if we spend too much time getting things absolutely perfect, we risk not being able to deliver in a timely and meaningful way. For this reason, have a bias for action and on making positive change, and don't let it get slowed down by an unnecessary focus on perfection.

- **Don't do too much at once**

Another lesson I've learned the hard way has to do with taking on and delivering too much at once. This not only slows you down, but from an employee perspective it can be confusing to them (e.g. trying to learn and understand multiple initiatives at once), and from your perspective, it can take away the impact and value of them as they're viewed together as one. Instead, try staggering the delivery, giving each individual employee experience element the opportunity to shine and succeed.

- **Link them all together**

Following on from the previous point, although I'm suggesting launching or re-launching each element separately, it's critical to link them all together. For example, if you're rolling out a new recognition program, link it back to other performance initiatives. If you're rolling out a new learning program, link it back to others you have in place and your overall career planning process. By creating this connection, your employees will see how they all work together to create the employee experience at your organization.



# How to keep the employee experience going

Let me end this paper by addressing how to keep the employee experience going, for as we all know, keeping the employee experience going and working properly can be just as difficult as building it to begin with. And for this reason, it's important to constantly and continually review and refresh what you do. Since I've used the analogy of a retailer a few times already, let's think of it this way - if a retailer is not refreshing their merchandise, their marketing, etc., the shopper will become bored and disengaged with them, and go to another retailer. The same is absolutely true of our 'shoppers', our employees, who we likewise need to engage over and over again throughout the employee experience.

There are a variety of ways to do this, depending on how you build your employee experience to begin with. To help you get started, in this section I've shared some of the key ways to do this.

- 1 Have a person(s) focus on it
- 2 Lead from the top
- 3 Review and assess it
- 4 Communicate it
- 5 Leverage technology





## Have a person(s) focus on it

Let's start with the concept of having a person or a team focus specifically on the employee experience. This is something that has become more common as companies have seen the value of doing this based on the impact it can have, as well as the complexity of what makes up the employee experience. By doing this, it ensures that you have someone with the knowledge and expertise to design strategies and initiatives, and just as important, the time to concentrate and commit to seeing them through. No longer is this seen as a fluffy job, but going back to the data presented at the start, it's seen as a job that has tangible and measurable impacts that it can deliver to a business and its workforce.

- As you determine and shape this role(s), here are some of the activities you'd expect them to be involved in:
- Design your employee experience framework and individual elements
- Design approaches to communicate your employee engagement programs
- Determine ways to measure and assess engagement
- Review impact of engagement practices and make changes accordingly

## Lead from the top

But as we know, you need more than one or two people to own something as important as the employee experience to keep it going effectively. And for this reason, it's important to enlist the help and support of your leaders and managers, the people who have more interaction throughout the experience with your workforce than anyone else. Their role is absolutely critical, with them influencing and driving the experience over and over again, and for this reason it's important to have the employee experience led from the top.



**A study<sup>30</sup> found that there is a 70 percent variance in employee engagement scores based on their leader or manager.**

It starts with leaders and managers understanding their role, and then giving them the tools and support to set them up for success. Help them clearly see their responsibilities and part to play at each and every touchpoint, understanding how they can positively or negatively impact how employees feel and act, and how best to get it right. Finish by holding them accountable, making it an integral part of their job and their overall performance requirements.



## Review and assess it

If you want to make sure that your ‘shoppers’ stay with you, you need to continually review and assess how you’re doing against their needs and requirements.



**“It’s important to focus on a two-way dialogue with your people, co-creating with them. When you think you have all the answers, you’re never going to be right.”** Mark Levy, former Global Head of Employee Experience at Airbnb, currently leading global EX Advisor.

One way to do this is by conducting employee pulse surveys through products like Xoxoday’s Empuls, that provides continuous employee feedback to help you measure, analyze and improve the various factors that affect your engagement, productivity, and turnover. Other ways are to conduct informal focus groups, or to review external reviews such as those posted on Glassdoor. By measuring and tracking the health of your employee experience in these ways you are better able to have important insights to help you understand your strengths, weaknesses and opportunities, and then do something about them. Regardless of the approach(s) you select, here are three things to keep in mind as you review and assess your employee experience programs:

- **Determine your measurements upfront**

It’s important to determine upfront what measurements are important to your organization, and thus which ones you will review and assess. Are they financial (e.g. increase in revenue, sales, profit, etc.), service-related (e.g. increase in customer service scores), people-related (e.g. increase in employee engagement scores, turnover, retention, etc), or a combination of these or other measures?

- **Determine what success looks like**

Just as important as determining the actual measurements, it’s equally important to determine if/how your programs will be considered successful. This is where you’ll be assessing and quantifying the return on the program investment. For example, is a 1% increase in your employee engagement scores a success or is it more? When determining these goals, make sure that you balance having something that pushes and challenges you and something that is realistic. I’m a fan of the ‘SMART’ methodology, which stands for making goals specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely, but use whatever works best for you.

- **Determine the timing and approach to be used**

And finally, it’s important to determine upfront how often you will review and assess your measurements, and just as important, what approach you will use to do this. For example, do you review the data weekly during the first month of a new program launch, and then every quarter afterwards? Do you share data and findings in your quarterly people update that is presented at your all-company meeting or do you share it with managers to then discuss with their teams.

Whatever you decide, put it in your calendar and plan for it so that it happens as planned.



## Communicate it

Next, a key part of keeping your employee experience going strong is through communications. This is critical because if you ever want your employees to embrace and appreciate all that you do for them, you need to constantly communicate and remind them of this. Never assume that once you tell them something that they will remember it, trust me, it just doesn't happen.

My suggestion is to develop a communications plan to map out each of the touchpoints, coming up with ways to remind your employees why each of them are important and what it means to them. Going back to the retailer analogy, it's like developing your annual marketing plan where you highlight your offering and why they just have to buy from you over and over again.

## Leverage technology

The final point should be of no surprise, which is to have a focus on and to leverage technology. With it being such a big part of how we live our lives, it's critical to bring technology into how we design and deliver our various employee experience programs.

The benefits of leveraging technology throughout the employee experience are as follows:

- **Easier to use** - research by the Harvard Business Review shows that one of the biggest roadblocks to employees using wellbeing and benefits programs is the difficulty they have in navigating them. By leveraging technology, employees have everything at their fingertips to easily navigate and engage with the various programs.
- **More timely** - with the pace of change and the demands of our businesses and people, time is something we have little of. But with technology, we can implement and make changes to programs quicker, and at the same time, manage them quicker to free up our valuable time for additional meaningful work.
- **Can be more creative** - we all want and need ways to reach our people, with creativity being key to capturing their hearts and minds throughout the employee experience. Technology can help us with this, making it easy to leverage a variety of techniques that can lead to higher employee satisfaction and engagement.
- **Can measure** - and finally, with it being critical to understand the impact our programs are making, technology can make it easier to track and measure the effectiveness of our programs.



# Case Studies



At Intelliswift Software, a global digital engineering organization, their mission is to create a long lasting impact for their customers and stakeholders through innovation. And when it comes to their people, the same is absolutely true, as they use innovation and what Amit Chilka, Sr Director Human Resources, calls “wow” to create meaningful and long lasting impact and experiences for them.

Key to achieving this is understanding the needs of their people, doing so by conducting biannual employee engagement surveys as well as holding leadership focus group sessions. Together, this gives Chilka and his team what’s required to develop comprehensive and “wow” approaches in areas that will make the most difference to their people and the business.

Another way they do this is by not relying on one approach or one person to deliver the wow, instead creating multiple steps within a process and having shared responsibility throughout. An example of this is seen with their new approach to onboarding, which has moved to one that now has multiple check-ins and check points done by a variety of people. Whether it’s before the employee joins the company, or at the 30, 60 or 90 day check-in, at each step the employee receives what they need to help them understand and connect with the organization. And with the shared responsibility of HR, leaders, managers, buddies and mentors, new employees have the support and guidance required to help them settle in quickly and effectively.

Another example is with recognition, which recently changed from a quarterly program that had managers recognizing employees, to one that can be given at any point in time by anyone. By doing this, again there is shared responsibility, with recognition being owned and influenced by all employees across the organization. And by using the Empuls platform, a wow is created as employees recognize one another with value cards and reward points that can be redeemed through a comprehensive online catalog of perks, experiences, offers, and vouchers. These changes have resulted in a 50% increase in recognition being given, and a 18% increase in employee engagement.



**“The wow factor is what helps us attract and retain our talent, doing so at different touchpoints across the employee experience”** says Amit Chilka, Sr Director Human Resources.





Discover how **xoxoday** empuls can help you design the best employee experience that meets the expectations of your people and reflects the unique culture of your organization.

## Connect with our Engagement Expert

Deep dive into how you can build an engaged and happy workforce

✉ [cs@xoxoday.com](mailto:cs@xoxoday.com)

🌐 [www.empuls.io](http://www.empuls.io)

### References:

<sup>1</sup>2019 Economist Intelligence Unit study

<sup>2</sup>2017 IBM and UNLEASH HR professional survey

<sup>3</sup>2017 IBM and UNLEASH HR professional survey

<sup>4</sup>Study conducted by Jacob Morgan for his book titled 'The Employee Experience Advantage'

<sup>5</sup>2016 MIT Management study

<sup>6</sup>2016 IBM/Globoforce study

<sup>7</sup>2016 IBM/Globoforce study

<sup>8</sup>2016 MIT Management study

<sup>9</sup>2021 study by The Josh Bersin Company

<sup>10</sup>Study conducted by Jacob Morgan for his book titled 'The Employee Experience Advantage'

<sup>11</sup>Study conducted by Jacob Morgan for his book titled 'The Employee Experience Advantage'

<sup>12</sup>2016 IBM/Globoforce study

<sup>13</sup>2016 IBM/Globoforce study

<sup>14</sup>Study conducted by Cezanne HR in the UK.

<sup>15</sup>Study conducted by Culture Amp

<sup>16</sup>2015 Brandon Hall Group study

<sup>17</sup>2018 UK Totaljobs study

<sup>18</sup>2018 UK Totaljobs study

<sup>19</sup>Study done by Officevibe

<sup>20</sup>2019 Reward Gateway study

<sup>21</sup>2016 article by Gallup titled "Employee Recognition: Low Cost, High Impact"

<sup>22</sup>2020 Reward Gateway study

<sup>23</sup>Paper written by The Economist Intelligence Unit in 2019

<sup>24</sup>2021 Pulse of the American Worker survey

<sup>25</sup>2020 study done by Achievers

<sup>26</sup>2022 study done by OnBuy

<sup>27</sup>2020 Insights Report by Glint

<sup>28</sup>Study done by Better Up

<sup>29</sup>Study done by CultureAmp

<sup>30</sup>2018 study done by Gallup