

## *The Employee Experience*

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### SYNOPSIS

Employee engagement are words you hear in the halls of most any organization in the country these days. The authors of *The Employee Experience* contend that while organizations understand the importance and value of employee engagement, many do not know specifically how to achieve it. The authors offer a focus on the Employee Experience (EX) as the best solution. They define the EX as the sum of perceptions the employee has about the interactions they have with the organization with which they work.

Their research, with more than 24,000 survey responses, also shows that you cannot achieve a superior Customer Experience (CX) without first focusing on the employee experience. They have coined the term Law of Congruent Experiences, which says that employees will give customers an experience that reflects their own. Employees are your brand. The authors recommend that to develop the EX, you create a contract to establish, understand, manage, and align employee expectations. The following describes the three parts to this contract:

**The Brand Contract** is an organizational weather vane created by your reputation, how your organization communicates, the values it claims to follow, the personas of your leaders, your culture, the firm's authenticity and its level of openness. This brand contract shapes the EX by providing a sense of consistency, predictability and safety in the face of continued organizational change. You have a strong brand contract when employees invest in your culture, defend your organization against detractors, feel comfortable challenging authority, and feel free to take risks.

**The Transaction Contract** is the mutually accepted, reciprocal, and explicit agreement between the employee and the employer that defines the basic operating terms of the relationship. Think of the offer letter as the beginning of this contract. This contract can result in satisfaction, but not engagement.

**The Psychological Contract** is the unwritten, implicit set of expectations and obligations that define the terms of exchange in a relationship. This contract is powered by expectations and is created, maintained and acted upon in the brain, and is implied and often illogical. If the Brand and Transactional contracts are not clearly defined, the psychological contract will take over and this often leads to misaligned expectations and disengaged employees.

Some aspects of the EX approach outlined in the book seem more complex than might be necessary. However, many of the concepts, along with the stories of organizations like Starbucks and Zappos and their successes and challenges with an EX, still make it a helpful resource for any organization considering the development of an EX.

Review by Chris Gay, Bridge Consulting

### Design Through Three Lenses

Lenses allow leaders to view the EX from multiple points of view and design through whichever lens is most critical to organizational success.

Below are the lenses and some questions you might ask for each as you develop your EX:

**Organization Lens** – Through this lens, you view the EX as it would affect sales, market share, competition, and customer satisfaction.

- Is the EX consistent with our mission, culture, values, and strategy?
- How would a particular change to be more consistent then impact the EX and employee engagement?

**Employee Lens** – Using this lens, leaders ask, "How will employees see this EX?"

- What will their perception be as it relates to things such as culture, work/life balance, compensation, and beliefs?
- How does the EX affect trust and the belief that the organization is keeping its promises?
- Should employees have a voice in this?

**Leadership Lens** – This involves looking through the organizational and employee lenses at the same time and giving both their appropriate consideration.

- How do the organizational and employee views sync with the overall vision and mission of the organization?