DRIVERS OF DIGITAL WORKPLACE CULTURE

COMMITMENT, EFFORT & INSPIRATION

Employee expectations at the workplace have evolved faster than organisations have, during this pandemic. With a significant element of this new expectation being digitisation for engagement and experience, organisations need to incorporate new online tools in every aspect of the work culture. What a modern consumer is, is exactly what an employee is, who expects tools of convenience to manage work and interactions.

Technology at the workplace needs to be implemented seamlessly to boost engagement and productivity while keeping employees physically, mentally, and professionally satisfied. **Amy Stern, Managing Director - Research & Strategy, BI WORLDWIDE, Ajanta Chatterjee, VP-HR, JSW, Rakesh Kumar, VP- Digital HR Transformation, EXL and Gurdit Singh Sachdeva, National Manager - Rewards, HCCB** came together to discuss and debate the pivoting employee experience strategies in the current era of digital transformation.

CREATING COMMENDABLE EXPERIENCES WHILE AFAR

BUILDING A CULTURE OF COMMITMENT, EFFORT, AND INSPIRATION ACROSS THE WORKPLACE

By Amy Stern, Managing Director - Research & Strategy, BI WORLDWIDE

"In the most recent research by BI WORLDWIDE, we noticed that **55% of our office workers are currently working from home full-time, which is 400% more than 2019.** The most interesting fact about this research is half of the people who are working from home, prefer it. This preference is strong in certain demographics- People working in cubicles, a confined workspace; women; individual contributors – executives or people in administration roles, people living alone or with young children. This indicates that even in a post-Covid world people will want to continue working from home. There's another interesting fact, **31% of the people preferred stepping out for work who are currently working from home**, which means offices won't shut down entirely because a large chunk of the employee would still be working from office.

Amy Stern
Managing Director - Research & Strategy,
BI WORLDWIDE

This data shouts out loud for a work structure to make sure the digital tools are used effectively to engage everyone, those working home, also how do those tools translate into an office environment to enhance the employee experience.

Embracing the Moments

Creating an engaging digital employee experience across the employee life cycle, has become more important than ever. Thinking about the life cycle all the way from decision day when an employee decides to work for your organization to referral day when they decide to leave as your brand advocate. Creating those memorable, exciting and motivating moments digitally is of the utmost importance. For all you know, you might not be able to see your peers for a good long time. Utilising digital tools and resources to connect people and work efficiently, appreciating employees for all the good work without them being physically present in front of you is the way to go in this digital era.

> **ACROSS THE EMPLOYEE LIFE CYCLE, WE WANT TO MAKE SURE THAT THE DIGITAL EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE PROMOTES 3 THINGS FOR OUR EMPLOYEE, COMMITMENT, EFFORT AND INSPIRATION.**

We want to make sure at the end of the day they're committed, they are working really hard on behalf of our organization and that's not it, we want to make sure they are inspired. As leaders it's very important to understand what aspects of work will make our employee stay, feel inspired and work hard.

Evaluating the Commitment, Effort and Inspiration factors

BI WORLDWIDE did a research based on our new rules of engagement model, this model measures the 12 aspects of work that we find to be most important to these 3 outcomes. The 12 aspects are related to health & worklife balance, teamwork, sense of accomplishments, belonging, purpose & meaning, manager relationship, leadership,

recognition, future, L&D, empowerment and the last is pay and benefits.

1. Commitment

The aspects that predicts commitment as per the research are health & worklife balance, sense of teamwork followed by accomplishments and belonging. These are the factors that are important for the employee to show commitment.

2. Effort

Purpose is one of the factors that made employees put their hard work, people who felt the sense of purpose in their work and found meaning in their work were willing to put in more efforts. Belonging is also an important aspect for people to put in more efforts at work. Also, learning and development played a role in making people put in more efforts into their work.

3. Inspiration

Again, the sense of belonging is the major factor that make people feel inspired. Apart from that empowerment, purpose and learning & development are the factors that inspire people to work for your organization.

A closer lens at the aspects of belonging, learning & development and empowering as these are most important for inspiration and we know **inspiration is one of the things lacking for the employee working from home.**

Make them feel BELONGED

Your employee should feel belonged throughout their employee lifecycle, starting from the day you decide to onboard them to their first day and all through everyday. Belonging can be measured in three dimensions.

1. Job – Do your employees enjoy the task they do at job, especially during this time when there are a lot of internal shifts to cover the gaps. Do they still like the job they are doing, are they feeling grateful that they still have a job.

2. Team – Make sure employees feel a sense of unity in the team, that the team has unique skills that compliments each other and woks well together. This can be difficult in remote environment; digital collaboration tools are important to make sure people are still together even when afar.

3. Organisation - ways to bring employees together, virtual townhall meeting or a virtual event, bringing people together around a common goal and bring back the feeling of we're all in this together.

More you TRAIN, more you gain

It is imperative for employees to have the necessary skills to do their job well. This is followed by individualisation wherein employees are inspired to learn and grow. There are plenty of digital tools that can be used to achieve this. This also extends to training where you can make sure that the training session is actually useful to the employee. We discovered that those who received a training that wasn't helpful were even less inspired and engaged than those who received no training.

EMPOWER the employee

Listen to employees often by asking them to fill in surveys and feedback forms, so you can respond effectively to solve their issues. Use listening tools even for matters like idea generation, where an employee feels heard when he/she gives great ideas that can be incorporated into the work environment. To empower them, make sure you trust them and give them the autonomy to work dedicatedly.

DURING OUR RESEARCH WE ALSO DISCOVERED THAT PEOPLE FEEL LESS SUPPORTED WHEN THEY MAKE MISTAKES.

Make sure you're making your workplace more equitable so employees feel a sense of belonging that culminates into inspiration and efforts towards goal achievement.

BUILDING EMPLOYEE-CENTRIC STRATEGIES

FOCUSING ON A HOLISTIC EMPLOYEE LIFECYCLE

By Ajanta Chatterjee, Vice President-HR, JSW

"JSW being one of the largest manufacturing companies in India, the entire concept of work from home is very new to us. Therefore, to enable belongingness and promote commitment, we kicked off digital campaigns to share tips with employees on coping mechanisms, streamed app training and we gradually saw team engagement pick up along the way. We also share tips with managers on how to manage virtual teams and connect with them to build trust. To achieve belongingness, we have to focus on every aspect of the employee lifecycle. I think the answer to this is to make employees the central focus of every decision we take.

Learning and developing our way through it

There is always a tug of war when you encourage classroom learning, regarding whether you should pull in people or push employees. But what we noticed was that when we opened up sessions to our employees and asked them to nominate themselves, **at least 200-250 of them, sometimes even 500, registered for the session** and in a month we conducted at least 30-35 such 90-minute sessions.

> **ONE OF THE UNIQUE THINGS WE INCORPORATED WAS TO RUN A LOT OF VIRTUAL DEVELOPMENT JOURNEYS WITH MANAGEMENT INSTITUTES.**

We currently run programs with Indian as well as international management schools, all of which are virtual. We are keen on enabling employees to make sure the learning agenda continues.

Make mental health a priority

To reach out better to employees we are also conducting online counselling services and running micro-services on mental wellness, to gather information on stress levels and overall wellbeing and then activate engagement initiatives. We are equipping line managers with all kinds of tools to keep motivation levels high, running webinars on emotional wellness, how to cope, and even encouraging their families to come and learn together and send in photos. The surveys on mental wellness and how they react to stress and anxiety has been a major insight for us on better employee development.

Ajanta Chatterjee
Vice President - HR, JSW

Safety First

Work safety continues to be our top priority, whether our employees are working at the plant or from home. We currently have a employee management comprising of permanent employees working from home and then some who have the flexibility to travel. Those using public transport have been prevented entirely from coming to office, which is currently 90% of our employee, and we are doing it for their safety. Even at the plant we make sure there is enough social distancing, wearing masks, and not too much crowding. **We even have house hospitals in colonies attached to our plant locations and our doctors there are trained to meet the need of the hour** and are easily accessible to our employees too.

We are looking at more innovative ways of recognising efforts, and when physical movement begins, we'll reward them in person. We have a concept called JSW Heroes which began virtually and we will now ride the wave and have the whole recognition gala when the situation stabilises.

TAKE DIGITALISATION ONE STEP AT A TIME
GO DIGITAL AND BEYOND TO UP YOUR EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCES
By Gurdit Singh Sachdeva, National Manager - Rewards, HCCB

"Most of our personnel works out of factories and even more in sales, owing to which working from home has been a huge challenge. We're taking it one step at a time because one of our core values at HCCB is agility and we've invested largely in digital tools since the pandemic began.

The three pillars of Digital Transformation

From a job perspective, we have invested in communication. We want to convey to employees that there needs to be a personal and professional balance because otherwise we'd all go insane. From a team and organisational standpoint, we are investing heavily in training our leaders and at the same time making interventions based on three pillars.

Gurdit Singh Sachdeva
National Manager - Rewards, HCCB

The first is health, wherein we **promote safe practices** to ensure everyone stays healthy during this pandemic. Basic precautions like social distancing and regular check-ups for the manufacturing teams who have no option but to visit the site.

Secondly, we've **reworked our organisational goals** based on the new situation. As individual employees, we put down goals at the beginning of the year, but this year we've let our associates redesign those goals, to ensure they are in line with what we want to achieve for the rest of the year.

Lastly, we want to foster a **sense of togetherness** which largely depends on how we communicate. We are training our managers to begin meetings with a personal interaction, because that's something everyone yearns for while working away from each other.

Transforming with Digital Learning Experiences

We have invested largely in digital training and IT infrastructure to facilitate sessions across locations. We divide our employees basis their demographics: age group, job roles, level of hierarchy etc., and we've customised courses accordingly to benefit them to the maximum. This also makes it easier for them to chase specific skills or topics they want to develop.

Bringing in the bots to work

We've introduced two bots, technically fused. One bot is for continuous engagement, check on employees periodically, and based on the employee feedback, we action necessary changes in the organisation. The second bot initially started off as a daily health check-up initiative, but it grew way more than we'd expected, and we now use it to communicate critical information, conduct smaller training sessions, send videos, raise tickets etc. On the other hand, we also **look out for our onsite employees who don't have access to this technology.** So, while we continue to call them and check up on them regularly, we are figuring out how to bring them all on a digital platform and even incorporate different dialects, so everyone can understand and respond appropriately.

Mental health matters

We've implemented some ways to ensure their mental and physical wellbeing.

- Checking on WFH employees regularly so that they don't feel distant
- Tracing when people come to the plants and tracking who isn't there on a particular day. The smaller employee rule has facilitated this, better
- Hygiene and health are of utmost importance, so we are trying to reduce touch points as much as possible. We are looking for ways other than fingerprint attendance, for contactless working
- Invested in insurance policies to ensure their safety
- Invested in telemedicine so employees can connect instantly with a doctor. This has been extended to our employees' families, as well

OVERALL, WE'VE FOCUSED ON GIVING PEOPLE PEACE OF MIND WHEN THEY COME INTO WORK.

Recognise the need for recognition

There is now a greater emphasis on recognition, therefore we've increased budgets for our frontline leaders so they can recognise team members and subordinates across our portal. This recognition is in the form of points that they can redeem for rewards. Right now, what the union wants most is the support we can provide to the employees which is why we are focusing so much on keeping our workplace safe.

BUILDING A DIGITALLY DIVERSE WORKPLACE

FOSTERING A SENSE OF BELONGING EVEN WHEN DISTANT

By Rakesh Kumar, Vice President - Digital HR Transformation, EXL

At EXL, we encourage proactive communication to engage with our employees that lets them feel a sense of belonging. Every employee has a different problem and we can't possibly provide a blanket solution, therefore communication plays an important role as we take an interest in lives and make them feel wanted in the organisation. Secondly, culture and diversity both play important roles in fostering a sense of belonging. People from different walks of life, embracing this very diversity, makes the organisation a better place to work at. It also helps build an innovative company where everyone comes together and shares different ideas, because they are inherently different.

Driving digital creativity

Companies are highly engaged when their people are trained and their skill sets are great. One of the core principles of designing custom e-learning programs is the user experience. Earlier the learning models were controlled by the organisation, but now with new learning methods, the control lies in the hands of the learner.

> **WHEN WE EMPOWER LEARNERS AND DRIVE CREATIVITY BY EXPANDING ACCESS TO FOCUS-RELATED CONTENT, THEY CAN ABSORB EXACTLY WHAT THEY NEED TO.**

Businesses have now begun understanding the importance of investing in learning technologies, be it collaborative or otherwise.

Re-imagine the employee experience

Today's employees are global and more diverse not just in terms of demographics, but also in terms of behavioural insight, psychographic, segmentation. Organisations need to find a balancing act to attract, retain and engage employees.

When we think of digital transformation, organisations must have three key priorities, which are digital mindsets, digital strategy and digital platform, which obviously calls for digital investment.

Employee onboarding was simple where employees would just come to office and be onboarded. Today, with remote working, we need to re-imagine the entire onboarding process.

From the joining date to the settling time period of the employer, it is important to know the need and experience of the new hire, so as to define what we can do to make it better, digitally. We too remapped and reimagined the entire journey, and that's how we were able to solve this issue.

Rakesh Kumar
Vice President - Digital HR Transformation, EXL

The digital future and flexibility

Digital technology is changing the concept of work and everybody needs to upskill themselves with multiple certification programs. Every digital worker now wants to get the best out of his productivity using different applications and softwares. In case any businesses prefer working solely from office, we are working on making that possible too. But we've also enabled our technologies and processes so that people can work from home. Productivity is at its best when people have the flexibility to work from anywhere they want. Digital transformation is taking a huge leap and we are seeing plenty of modes of communication which we have incorporated at the organisational level as well as the managerial level. We conduct a lot of health and wellness programs and even then, if employees need any further assistance, they can connect with health experts or even connect with HR over a chatbot, a contact center, or a video call.

When your employees witness technology that makes their job easier, efficient, and interesting, they are gradually on the path to building a positive workforce. This digitisation experience improves commitment, effort and keeps them inspired and productive. Factors like learning, rewards and recognition, bots, wellness programs, are all that need to be encouraged to drive engagement and provide the best experience to reap the best business benefits.