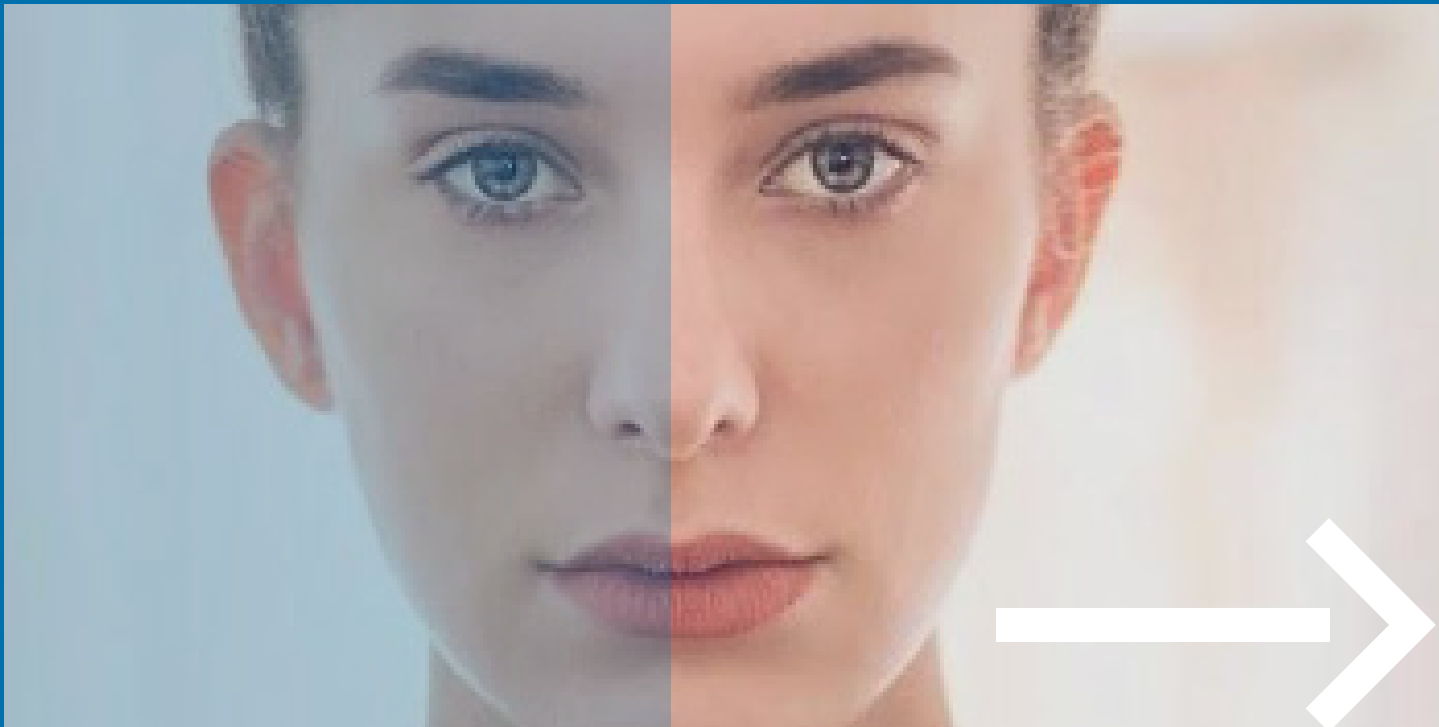


THE TIME IS NOW FOR A RADICAL SHIFT TO A WHOLE PERSON EXPERIENCE



THE FORTUNE 500 SPENDS AN ESTIMATED \$2 TRILLION ON THEIR PEOPLE. Yet, the latest estimates tell us that **only about 20% of employees are highly engaged¹** and **just 13% are fully satisfied with their experience.²** The Employee Experience (EX) movement promised a better work experience, but it has unfortunately failed to deliver and employees are overwhelmed by an amusement park arcade of incongruous programs and technology. One of the reasons for this EX crisis is that the delivery of various experience elements is siloed and inside-out, rather than holistic and outside-in. There must be a better way, but **we are going to have to get radical** to find it.

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People Deserve an Epic Work Experience.

An epic work experience benefits both employee and company and must be based on an understanding of employees as people with emotions, experiences, and motivators both inside and outside their world of work. Mutual trust is at the heart of a better experience - trust

about why, how, when and where work is done and a belief that work will have impact. The research is clear that people need all of these interdependent elements in the RADICL Experience (Rx) below to unlock this trust and to thrive.

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- REASON • Unleash people’s “why” and connect to the purpose of the company
- ACCOMPLISHMENT • Help people make meaningful progress and impact
- DIRECTION • Motivate and reduce wasteful ambiguity with clear priorities and guiding principles
- IDENTITY • See and value the whole person, both in and out of work
- CONNECTION • Facilitate trusted connections across levels, teams and geographies
- LEARNING • Elevate people with growth, development and advancement



REASON. 60% of Gen Z want their job to impact the world.³ Ask yourself, Why do I do this job? Why should I share my skills, energy and passion with my employer? Without clear answers people are just doing a job and the company won’t get the best of what people have to offer.

ACCOMPLISHMENT. The #1 work motivator is making progress on meaningful work.⁴ There are several leading and lagging indicators of accomplishment including removing friction/barriers, facilitating work and team effectiveness. Without accomplishment, frustration sets in and motivation fades.

DIRECTION. In order to accomplish anything, people need clarity on objectives. Too much bottoms-up autonomy and empowerment without a destination doesn’t work - especially at scale. Employees with clear work priorities are actually 4.5X happier.⁵ This doesn’t mean shifting to top-down work prescription, but 1,000 flowers blooming is chaos and turns into a field of weeds.

IDENTITY. “I am more than my experience, skills and productivity” (but most Talent management systems place an asymmetric level of focus on these aspects of “Talent”). Increasingly, people want to be valued with understanding and empathy as a whole person both in and out of work. This likely means bringing one’s authentic self to work and not necessarily sharing everything. The average person may work **90,000 hours** in their career - that’s a lot of time to be faking it or worse to be repressing a part of you that undermines your sense of connection with others.

CONNECTION. There is a **1% chance you will be fulfilled** in life if you lack meaningful relationships at work.⁶ We are social creatures. The pandemic shined a bright light on the importance of trusted, personal connection for learning, collaboration, and innovation, as well as for navigating crisis and change. Very little human or business value happens without trusted connection.

LEARNING. Growth is typically a top engagement driver. More younger workers want growth, development and advancement or they will leave you. Contrary to many beliefs, they *will* stay if you provide this growth and advancement for them. Great experiences are typically marked by a sense of elevation and personal improvement.⁷

What would it feel like to you if you had ALL of these critical, inter-related elements in your experience with work? What does it feel like when you don’t? Or if you have most, but one or two are missing? Based on the trillions of dollars being spent on people at work, it’s clear what this RADICL experience is worth to a company. Consider these opportunities:

- **Business Value:** Purpose-driven companies averaged **1,681% growth** over a 17 year period (compared to the S&P average of 118%). And **77%** of consumers feel a stronger connection to purpose-driven companies.⁸
- **HR Tech ROI:** There is an **\$8.5B** annual productivity opportunity with fewer, better and more integrated HR solutions that support accomplishments.⁹
- **Recruiting Efficiency:** **4X** the number of candidates are interested in Remote listings.¹⁰ **56%** will consider coming to work for you if they can work from home 2-3 days a week.¹¹
- **People-first Cultures:** **106%** higher energy, **50%** higher productivity, **40%** lower burnout, **76%** higher engagement for high-trust companies.¹²

The Employee Experience for most is chaotic, confusing and disconnected. EX efforts are failing...this is HR’s last chance

What have we gotten for our **\$2 trillion** spend on people? Unfortunately, not what we hoped for. Here are some troubling realities:

- **Disengagement.** As mentioned above, current levels of engagement and employee experience satisfaction are unacceptably low.
- **Burnout.** Microsoft’s CHRO declared that we are experiencing a human energy crisis and that half of employees are burned out.¹³ **90%** of employees say work/life is getting worse.¹⁴
- **Working but Drifting.** **82%** say they would like more purpose from work.¹⁵
- **Remote Productivity Disconnect.** We seem to have flipped to a focus on efficiency and performance with post-pandemic remote work. A Microsoft Study exposed the productivity paradox where **87%** of

employees think they are productive, yet just **12%** of leaders are confident their teams are fully productive.¹⁶

- **Remote Mistrust.** Isolation from remote work is an issue, but getting people back in the office as a single strategy to “repairing” culture and productivity is misguided, communicates mistrust and fails to address the need of a majority of employees for flexibility. Was engagement, connection, distributed team effectiveness, culture and productivity working great before when people were in the office? **40%** of employees would look for another job or quit if full return to the office is required.¹⁷

- **Team Collaboration Failure.** The vast majority say collaboration could be better (**86%**).¹⁸ Most HRIS, organization structure and Team management efforts focus on manager-led teams and management of individual performers. Yet, cross-functional (XFN) teams are increasingly where and how real value is created - and **75%** of the time XFN is not working so well!¹⁹

- **People Tech Avalanche.** HR Tech, Programs and Systems are fragmented. There has been a **40%** increase to a whopping **80+ employee facing systems** for the average company.²⁰ Do these apps make employees’ lives easier, remove work, improve skills, tell a cohesive story across the lifecycle? Not surprisingly, **70%** of employees want fewer HR apps.²¹

Why has it gotten so bad?

There are several contextual pressures like economic downswings, rapid advancements, developments and uncertainty from AI, societal and generational changes, etc. But the primary culprits are inertia of old programs, inside-out thinking and siloed decision-making.

Consider how each of these functions tends to approach employee experience:

- HR Operations defines experience as the operational and service delivery efficiency to employees. Interventions are process-oriented.
- HR Organizational Development (OD) defines experience through more frequent pulses and lifecycle surveys with a loose connection to culture and engagement. Interventions are program-oriented.
- HR Rewards approaches experience through pay and wellness benefits. Interventions are program-oriented but rarely connected to OD.
- HR Tech (which may or may not sit in HR) defines experience through targeted user needs and product usage. Interventions are technology infrastructure and people-facing apps.
- Business Operations approaches experience through efficiency of workflows. Interventions are typically process and technology.
- Real Estate, which is now in high-focus, defines experience through office layout, squarefoot usage and attendance. The home office competes with company real estate now with more remote workers. Interventions are about places and products.

What’s missing?

For one, People - meaning an obsession with people and their jobs to be done at the center of all of this design that breaks through the inside-out intervention. And second, integrated effort toward a common definition of the intentional work experience. Without true understanding of employee needs and aligned functional design plans, is it any wonder the experience is messy? **Let’s rethink this!**



TOWARDS AN EPIC EXPERIENCE JOURNEY!

It's time to defy the gravitational inertia of inside-out, siloed thinking toward a more creative, truth-based, **human-centric design**. We have to start with the business objectives *and* ask “what must be true to create an experience that is connected and fulfilling, and serves the needs of the business?” This is an EPIC Experience journey to deliver an Rx:

Energize

What do we know about the return we get in terms of current Experience and Performance for the Investments in People? Data and People Analytics are not just for dashboards and research. Data-based truth is a powerful change lever to create discomfort with the current state and inspire a new way forward. C-suite leaders must align around the prescribed RADICL Experience (Rx) - Reason, Accomplishment, Direction, Identity, Connection, Learning - in the context of the business, the culture and mutual value creation for people and the business.

Personalize

Assuming the Rx has been defined, how might we create an elegant, integrated design across 5Ps?: People, Places, Products, Processes and Programs that create this experience in service of people, their needs and their jobs to be done (to stop)? It takes a quick examination of a cross-functional team meeting to see why integrated design is critical - People with motivations and skills, work across Places (home, office, geographic distribution), using video conference, shared docs, virtual white boards, AI Products, using team Process methods, supported by learning Programs. For team members, these elements converge into a holistic experience for people. What if all these things came together more seamlessly with the objective of creating an intentional experience co-created with people?



Ignite

Early implementations have to earn the belief in a better way. There is an optimization opportunity across the 5Ps that reduces resources on low-use or low-satisfaction areas and reinvests in the highest ROI areas that will maximize the intended Rx for people. Igniting change will also require readying leaders, people, functions toward a more integrated, iterative agile approach. The change in mindset, planning, governance, even culture are not to be underestimated. The Rx is also for the people at the center of delivering this change too! It's best to start small with what is minimally lovable rather than to design for complete perfection.

Calibrate

People's needs will evolve and delivering the Rx can be thought of as an agile process with updates and ongoing releases. This requires listening and adapting feedback loops to understand what's working, or not, and adjust, speed up, or slow down with the resources available. If done in constant dialogue and co-creation with people, organizations will be able to more quickly scale through a more human, and ultimately more effective, process.

THE TIME IS NOW!

The EPIC journey is not just a business imperative, but also a moral one. By asking powerful questions, we can uncover what our people need to do their best work and deliver on what the business needs in a way that energizes leaders and inspires change:

- What is the work and how does it need to get done?
- Do our people have what they need to get this done and to thrive? What's in the way?
- What culture do we need and how should it show up for people in various experiences?
- What are the most important people experiences? For which people?
- If we were starting over would we design our people, places, products, processes and programs as they are now?
- What is the cost/risk if we don't remove friction and frustration and create an experience that unlocks people's best? What's the opportunity?
- And finally, if not now, when? If not you, who? What's stopping you?

LET'S DO THIS!



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¹¹Barerro, Bloom, & Davis (2021). Let me work from home or I will find another Job.

¹²Zak (2017) The Neuroscience of Trust. Harvard Business Review.

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