Why High–Performance Enterprises Are Moving Beyond Employee Experience

*Introducing "Employee Journey Analytics"
for HR, Talent, and L&D Leaders*

explorance.

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Executive Summary

Many successful organizations embrace the value of employee experience management, as shown by countless industry reports and expert insights that support the practice.

But in today's competitive, disrupted business environment, the war for talent is putting pressure on organizations to do more.

Employee experience touches on important moments in the employee lifecycle.

Unfortunately, today's typical approach to employee experience suffers from three troubling shortfalls:

- Employees are typically tracked in disparate solutions without coordination, creating multiple data silos
- Feedback is only gathered once or twice a year, which leaves huge gaps and makes it impossible to take proactive measures
- Data can be analyzed to some extent, but not enough to provide nuanced, granular detail

This white paper explores the framework of Employee Journey Analytics as the next generation of employee experience management.

And it highlights how a more comprehensive and holistic view of your employee lifecycle can help HR deliver a competitive edge for your enterprise.

Today's Workforce is Changing

You'd have to look hard and long to find an organization that doesn't believe employee experience is a critical factor in developing a competitive workforce today.

One Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends study reports that 80% of executives rank employee experience as very important or important[1], and McKinsey & Company considers the topic a top people initiative for any organization that wants to win the war for talent.[2]

It's such an important HR initiative that some companies have replaced the Chief Human Resources Officer moniker with a new title: Chief Employee Experience Officer.[3]

One reason why employee experience is such a huge priority is because today's workforce is changing.

Millennials are now the largest generation at work in the U.S. workforce[4] and around the world.[5] And with the employee-first mentality that now accompanies a job seeker's market,[6] organizations must do everything they can to attract, engage, and retain potential candidates.

In fact, a consortium of 181 of the most successful companies in the United States recently expanded the key duties of a corporation from serving stockholders to serving customers and employees, too.[7]

"In a job seeker's market—especially when the population is increasingly made up of Millennials and Gen Z individuals with high expectations for their work life—companies have to create a compelling case for why anyone should accept an offer when they have so many other options," says Dr. Karlyn Borysenko, Chief Science Officer at RallyBright.

"For in-demand talent to feel comfortable accepting a job, they not only need to find an acceptable job description and salary, but they need to know they're joining a company that will give them a good experience every day."

If you want to successfully recruit and retain top talent today, you need more than a fancy benefits package. You must create an environment and a career path that prospective employees want to be a part of.

"Most organizations pour resources into measuring employee experience because they realize if they don't optimize it, someone else will—and that someone else is probably a competitor."

Dr. Justin Taylor, Chief Customer Officer at Explorance

Three Troubling Shortfalls in Employee Experience Management

Most organizations think of employee experience management as a linear process where an employee moves through different phases of their lifecycle. The reality is a lot more convoluted.

To truly help you decrease turnover and improve engagement,[8] your employee experience needs to account for all of the ups and downs and transitions that can occur during an employee's experience with your organization.

While traditional efforts to deploy employee experience management are valuable, three troubling shortfalls are evident across the board.

Shortfall #1: Multiple vendors with multiple data silos

Capturing information about your employee lifecycle from recruiting through exit is a major accomplishment.

But to set up systems to capture all this data, many HR teams had to pull together several point solutions from separate vendors. Perhaps they sourced competency assessments from one vendor, continuous listening from another, and so on.

The result is a wealth of data being gathered, but being stored in separate silos by different vendors. And no vendor is willing to share with any of the rest.

"When looked at separately, employee experience data tell many 'microstories' about engagement, productivity, training and development, and more," says Lisa Barrington, Founder & Principal at Barrington Coaching.

"These microstories use many data points to paint a picture that is not accurate of the overall employee experience by itself. Any one data point shows only one perspective, and you need all the data points to see the whole picture accurately."

The point of collecting your employee experience data is to see the big picture. So the current way of doing things falls short here.

Shortfall #2: Major gaps in feedback that prevent proactive response

Most organizations are moving in a positive direction by attempting to capture the Voice of the Employee (VOE) in survey form. But the traditional approach—long, formal surveys sent once or twice a year—doesn't surface issues in a timely manner.

Instead, these surveys provide occasional snapshots of what's going on within your organization, followed by long periods of no feedback.

"Everyone wants employee feedback when a big problem blows up," says Dr. Borysenko. "But if you only capture feedback once or twice a year, you won't be able to get in front of those big issues. Any information you have will be months out of date."

And with outdated feedback and long gaps between surveys, you will likely miss small issues that can grow into much larger problems during those intervals.

Shortfall #3: Superficial analysis without granular detail

Research from AON estimates that by 2020, more than 3 out of 4 organizations will measure all employee lifecycle stages except alumni.[9] This is impressive progress in supporting the HR function with hard data.

The employee experience data captured by various vendors can be analyzed to some extent. But because that data is siloed, you can't see as much as you could if that data was captured holistically in one place. You can only act on the superficial analysis of separate data sets.

"When you're unable to join the data sets you capture, you're analyzing and acting on data in disjointed, non-coordinated ways," says Dr. Justin Taylor, Chief Customer Officer at Explorance.

"Even if you can connect all your tools with an API, there's still something lacking until you can pour all your data into one robust tool that contains everything."

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"Any time your company collects data from employees, your employees are looking to see that you're doing something with that data. If your data is locked in different platforms, if it is outdated and irrelevant, or if it's not nuanced enough, you won't be able to use it effectively."

Dr. Karlyn Borysenko, Chief Science Officer at RallyBright

With multiple vendors, multiple silos, long gaps between surveys, outdated data, and superficial analysis, the typical employee experience system has many shortfalls. You could even say it's a good start, but it's a long way from being finished.

The Next Generation in Employee Experience

The limitations of today's employee experience management are no excuse to discard the whole concept.

Instead, forward-thinking companies need to bridge these challenging shortfalls and capture a more comprehensive and holistic view of their organization.

After all, any employee's journey includes all the ups and downs of their experience with your organization, from onboarding and team-building to career growth and engagement. These things are all connected for your employees, so they should be connected in your analytics platform as well.

What HR teams really need is an integrated end-to-end system that reduces the multiplicity of data stored with disparate vendors and captures all employee data in a single repository.

This kind of system would include continuous listening to fill in the missing gaps in feedback. And it would enable HR to analyze data in a more granular way to detect nuances and take effective proactive measures.

This approach to the employee lifecycle would reorganize data away from vendors and reorient it towards your employees. This would enable you to tell one start-to-finish story that captures real, actionable insights about your workforce.

There's a name for this type of system: **Employee Journey Analytics**. You can think of this as next-generation employee experience management. And Employee Journey Analytics is not just some sketch on a whiteboard. Some form of it is already being deployed globally by more than 300 organizations, including one-third of the Fortune 100.

These leading-edge enterprises are using Employee Journey Analytics to realign and consolidate employee data according to each organization's unique requirements.

The expanded breadth and depth of Employee Journey Analytics is an updated approach to employee experience management that solves HR's most pressing talent challenges.

And it makes up for all three shortfalls in existing employee experience systems, as described below.

"One of the challenges in building a positive employee experience is that most organizations take an HR approach to these problems, not an employee approach."

Dr. Justin Taylor, Chief Customer Officer at Explorance

Overcoming the Shortfalls and Delivering Significant Benefits

Moving to a new approach with Employee Journey Analytics can overcome the three shortfalls of employee experience and deliver three significant new benefits.

Benefit #1: A single platform merges data across all touchpoints

Most organizations scramble to gather all their employee experience data together. And no matter how much they measure, and how much they tinker, they can never quite capture the full picture.

Centralizing your existing data and collecting additional new kinds of data through one platform creates a single system for all your employee experience data.

Combining all those disparate silos together will allow the whole to be greater than the sum of its parts.

As shown in Figure 1, imagine the insights your organization could derive from studying all the following employee experience data sets once these are all merged together:

- Employee brand management
- Attraction and recruiting
- Onboarding
- Talent planning
- Succession planning
- Retention management
- Total rewards

One of the most powerful examples of Employee Journey Analytics at work is your organization's onboarding program.

You may have a program in place to deliver and measure the immediate results of your onboarding process. But connecting that data to the whole picture lets you see how that process impacts the rest of an employee's lifecycle.

CONSIDERING OR INTERVIEWING

Employer Brand Survey

Candidate Surveys

ONBOARDING

30-day Onboarding
60-day Onboarding
90-day Onboarding

ONGOING

Engagement Survey
Quartely, 6 months, Annual

Assessments

Training Evaluation
Diversity/Inclusion Surveys

EXITING

Exit Surveys

Alumni Surveys

SINGLE SYSTEM OF RECORD

Employer Brand Management	Attraction & Recruiting	Onboarding Process	Talent Planning	Succession Planning	Retention Management	Total Rewards
Awareness and positive perception	Right candidates for the right jobs at right time	Accelerate time to productivity	Understand talent gaps to meet business requirements	Develop and sustain a leadership pipeline	Retain the right talent for today and the future	Provide competitive compensation and benefits

Figure 1. Sources of Employee Experience Data in Employee Journey Analytics

Over time, you can study long-term correlations between onboarding performance and employee attributes like performance, engagement, advocacy, and loyalty.

Benefit #2: Continuous listening and pulse surveys track employee sentiment in real-time

You can't capture an accurate view of employee experience, engagement, and sentiment if you're only monitoring these factors once in a while using traditional HR processes, programs, and milestones.

As shown in Table 1, the typical employee experience system draws on only one quarter as many touchpoints as the next generation system.

Employee Journey Analytics installs a flexible and personalized feedback loop into your HR system, expanding the breadth of the data you collect and how frequently you collect it. That enables you to monitor and address shifts in employee sentiment instantly, before any small problem has a chance to escalate.

The typical employee experience system draws on only one-quarter as many touchpoints as the next generation system.

TYPICAL EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE TOUCHPOINTS	EMPLOYEE JOURNEY ANALYTICS TOUCHPOINTS	
• Ad-hoc internal surveys • Exit Surveys	• Recruiting and pre-hiring • Onboarding • Training and assessment • Employee engagement	• Multi-rater assessments • Pulse surveys • Ad-hoc internal surveys • Exit surveys
TOTAL: 2 TOUCHPOINTS	TOTAL: 8 TOUCHPOINTS (4X)	

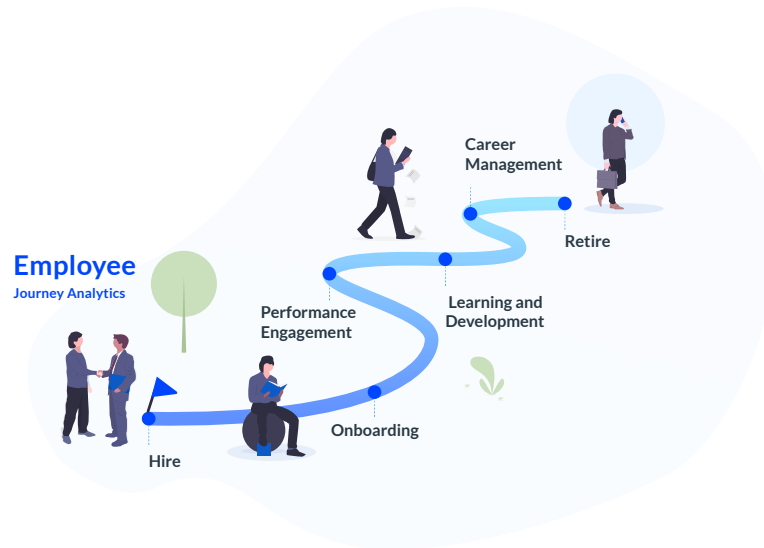**Table 1. Employee Experience vs Employee Journey Analytics**

Figure 2. A More Holistic View of the Employee Lifecycle

For example, one Fortune 100 enterprise healthcare organization uses Employee Journey Analytics to uncover hidden connections from continuous listening, quarterly surveys, and event-based surveys.

Capturing this holistic view enables the organization's HR team to understand critical employee sentiment markers in real-time and make better-informed decisions.

Benefit #3: Deep analysis of comprehensive data reveals granular nuances

When you bring all your farflung employee experience data into one platform and increase the amount of data you're collecting, this exponentially improves the accuracy and usefulness of your data.

Instead of making decisions about one topic with the limited data available from each individual vendor, you can now view your employee lifecycle holistically and see how one stage of the lifecycle affects another.

As shown in Figure 2, revealing the connections between different kinds of employee data can have powerful applications.

For example, most organizations focus on capturing direct feedback (survey data) and indirect feedback (non-verbal observations of behavior). More nuanced employee monitoring data unlocks inferred feedback, which looks at metadata and behavioral insights to help you make the best possible decision in any given scenario.

"Relying on employee engagement management is like working blindfolded with one hand on the elephant. Embracing the next generation with Employee Journey Analytics removes that blindfold so you can see the whole elephant. "

Dr. Justin Taylor, Chief Customer Officer
at Explorance

Conclusions

Across numerous industries, many organizations rely on employee experience to play a critical role in maintaining a competitive workforce.

But as the workforce matures and technology advances, it's becoming clear that today's employee experience management tools are not enough to meet all the HR challenges of today and tomorrow.

To keep your organization moving forward at the furious pace of innovation and disruption, you must harness your data and capture holistic Employee Journey Analytics.

Only then will you have a total and actionable picture of your talent, empowering you to make confident decisions and drive excellent results.

Are you ready to move beyond employee experience?

To hear how Employee Journey Analytics helps companies like Anthem, Clarkson Consulting, and more make their talent a competitive advantage, request a demo today.

About Explorance

Explorance is a Journey Analytics provider that empowers organizations in making the right decisions with fact-based feedback data. Through its main offerings Blue and Metrics That Matter (MTM), Explorance is at the heart of the learning organization's continuous improvement strategy.

Founded in 2003, Explorance is headquartered in Montreal with business units in Chicago, Chennai, Melbourne, Amman and London. Since 2014, Explorance has been consecutively ranked as a top employer by the Great Places to Work Institute®. Explorance's clients include a wide variety of learning organizations from various segments including academia, enterprise, consulting, and government across the globe.

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