

DESIGNING THE EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

Good, bad or indifferent, **Brett Minchington** and **Lisa G Morris** outline why experience is everything when it comes to employer branding



PEOPLE ARE exposed to brand experiences continuously throughout their day, either as consumers, employees or job candidates. The reality is that these experiences are rarely distinctive or consistent, and often don't deliver what is expected based on perceptions of the brand. At its worst, the impact can be loss of business (customers), accepting another job offer (candidates), resignation (employees), or damage to a company's reputation (potential employees and/or potential customers).

There are many examples of great brands around us, such as Virgin, Apple, Starbucks and Chanel. One consistent characteristic among them is how they make us feel because of the experience we have when we interact with their products, services and/or people.

"Happy employees perform at their best," says Michael Holm, a Danish HR senior manager at Lego. "If they are passionate about what they do, work in a trusting environment with highly skilled colleagues and in a company they can be proud of, then they will provide stellar performance. They are telling a story every day to friends, relatives, networks about work, and if that story is positive they will attract other like-minded individuals to the

company. That is the best and most relevant sourcing platform any company can build on – a positive employee experience is key."

The only true source of competitive advantage for any company is its people and the value they create for their customers. Having high-performing employees who are committed to their work and company and able to innovate and create valued experiences for customers is a critical factor for the sustainability of organisations.

consequent business performance.

Great employee experiences, just like great customer experiences, don't just happen by chance. In leading brands they are supported by an integrated strategy across people, customers and systems. When employees have positive experiences with employers they are more engaged in creating positive experiences for customers, which results in increased sales. This approach is what makes the Apple stores a retailing

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The concept of employee experience

Employee experience can be defined as the sum of all experiences an employee has with their employer, co-workers, supervisors, leadership, work environment, customers and other key stakeholders during their tenure. Experiences influence an employee's cognition and affection and lead to particular behaviours that positively or negatively impact on an employee's engagement and

success story at a time when bricks and mortar retailing has been on the decline.

The Minchington & Morris Brand Experience Model™ highlights an integrated approach to delivering differentiated experiences by focusing on the Employer Brand Moments of Truth (EBMOTs) in the employee life cycle while being agile enough to adapt to the challenges in the macro environment (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Minchington & Morris Brand Experience Model™

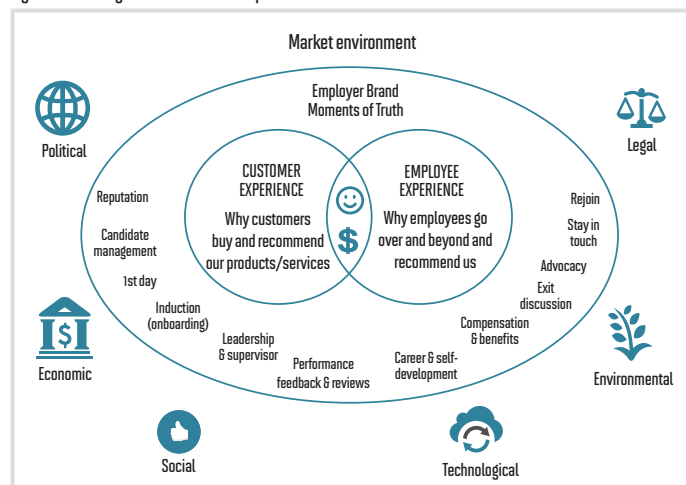
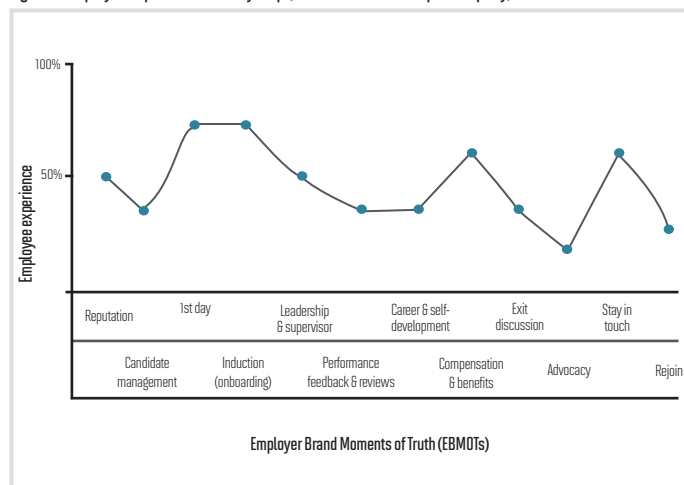


Figure 2: Employee Experience Journey Map (assessment of a sample company)



EMPLOYER BRANDING

EBMOTs are the interactions in the employee journey in which employees invest a high level of emotion in the outcome, such as company reputation and/or their relationship with their leader/supervisor.

Employee experience assessment and strategy

To design the ideal employee experience journey and evaluate its reality, an employee experience journey map can be a very effective tool. Designed from the employee's point of view, the map details each interaction or touchpoint at each stage of the employee's relationship with the organisation.

A survey tool is used to rate the employee's experience at each EBMOT. Simplistically, it's a way to walk in the employee's, candidate's or alumni's shoes – to describe and understand what each is doing, thinking and feeling at each stage.

These employee life cycle stages can be categorised as:

- Explore and apply
- Join and onboard
- Perform, get recognised, learn and grow
- Separate
- Reconnect and rejoin

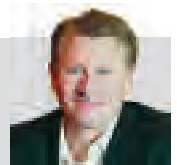
As candidates and employees evolve their relationship with an employer, they have distinct objectives with different needs and motivators at each stage. Mapping out the overall journey and the touchpoints at each stage aids in identifying any disparity between the ideals and the practical realities of the experience (see Figure 2). It will also highlight the stages or touchpoints that require closer attention in order to create a consistent employment experience that adds value to the customer experience. For example, if the company is poor at developing or rewarding people, most of the hard work and investment in recruiting the best talent is wasted as people cycle through the organisation looking for better opportunities elsewhere. **HRD**

KEY FOCUS AREAS

To optimise the employee experience across the employment life cycle we encourage you to focus your efforts on the following areas:

-  1. Be clear on the brand experience you want to create for customers and align the employee experience journey.
-  2. Train leaders and employees in how to deliver the brand experience and align with your EVPs through supporting systems, processes and policies.
-  3. Engage leaders across functions at the outset to ensure a consistent approach to managing the employee experience journey.
-  4. Identify which cultural behaviours need to change to support the employee experience and align systems, processes and policies to support the change.
-  5. Conduct an employee experience mapping exercise to understand where the company delivers the most impactful experiences and those areas that need improvement, redesign and/or discarding altogether.
-  6. Develop an integrated communications plan with cross-functional support and training to ensure employee behaviours and attitudes are reflective of the desired brand experience.
-  7. Identify and appoint ambassadors to role-model the 'on brand' behaviours expected from employees.
-  8. Reward attitudes, behaviours and actions that reflect the delivery of outstanding employee experience.
-  9. Review the performance of the leadership to deliver an 'on brand' experience through quantitative and qualitative feedback provided by employees, and to address any gaps.
-  10. Remember the workplace is a key part of an employee's lifestyle so approach the employee experience holistically and manage accordingly.
-  11. Learn, train and encourage leaders to use technology to enable and support the creation and delivery of signature employee experiences. **HRD**

Brett Minchington, MBA, is chairman/CEO of Employer Brand International and an international strategist, corporate adviser and educator who has trained leaders in more than 50 cities in 30 countries in person and through the global online Certificate in Employer Brand Leadership course. Connect with Brett at brett@employerbrandinternational.com and on Twitter: @brettminch



Lisa G Morris is a principal and a people and change practice leader at North Highland Worldwide Consulting. She develops and implements innovative solutions at the intersection of HR/OD, marketing, and communications across a variety of industries. She specialises in employer brand strategy, employee experience design, employee engagement, and organisational development. Connect with Lisa on Twitter: @LeeseMorris

