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Nexthink
Special 2nd Edition

Digital Employee Experience

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cost-effective team

Improve productivity
and engagement

Transform IT from
reactive to proactive

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nexthink

Tim Flower

About Nexthink

Through a unique combination of real-time analytics, instant remediation, automation, and employee feedback across endpoints and applications, Nexthink helps IT teams deliver on the promise of the modern digital workplace. Nexthink is the only solution to provide enterprises with a way to visualize, act, and engage across the entire IT ecosystem to lower IT cost and improve digital employee experience.

nexthink.com

Digital Employee Experience

**for
dummies®**
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Nextthink Special 2nd Edition

by Tim Flower

**for
dummies®**
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Development Editor:
Rachael Chilvers

Project Editor:
Tamilmani Varadharaj

Acquisitions Editor: Traci Martin

Editorial Manager: Rev Mengle

**Business Development
Representative:** Molly Daugherty

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Introduction

As consumers, we're used to receiving a high level of satisfaction with our devices and online experience. For example, we can create an online grocery shopping list and have it delivered in an hour. In addition, we can get exotic goods from around the world and FaceTime with friends in remote locations. Therefore, our expectations are high that we'll have the same great service when we log on for work or go to the office.

Unfortunately, those expectations are rarely met. Instead, employees face problems with downed networks and devices that don't respond, and the frustration of having to contact the help desk or figure out their problems alone. When it's time to work, employees want to feel productive, energized, and focused. And IT can help architect those aims.

About This Book

Welcome to *Digital Employee Experience For Dummies*, a Nexthink Special 2nd Edition. This book uncovers the things you need to consider when you want to create a great Digital Employee Experience (DEX) for your employees.

We cover several topics, including the following:

- » Understanding what DEX is all about
- » Creating a DEX score
- » Looking at the IT/employee experience gap
- » Solving problems faster
- » Moving from a service level agreement (SLA) to an experience level agreement (XLA)
- » Learning lessons from the pandemic
- » Finding ten DEX terms you need to know

Icons Used in This Book

Throughout this book, different icons are used to highlight important information. Here's what they mean:



TIP

The Tip icon highlights information that can make doing things easier or faster.



REMEMBER

The Remember icon points out things you need to remember when searching your memory bank.



WARNING

The Warning icon alerts you to things that can be harmful to you or your company.



TECHNICAL
STUFF

Sometimes we give you a few tidbits of research or facts beyond the basics. So if you like to know the technical details, watch out for this icon.

Beyond the Book

This book will help you discover more about the value of improving your employees' digital experience. If you want resources beyond what this short book offers, visit www.nexthink.com.

- » Changing the employee-IT relationship
- » Becoming proactive
- » Energizing the digital employee experience

Chapter 1

Introducing Digital Employee Experience Management to your Organization

We think there's a better way to work. Rather than trying to free ourselves of work, we can feel free in our work. Imagine a world where employees receive the exact hardware and software that fits their unique needs. Where they feel energized and liberated from digital distractions or barriers. Or a world where IT doesn't have to spend all its time managing incidents, but instead it can focus on creative R&D projects. Imagine a world where other departments come to IT to help identify their own excess spending, rather than the other way around. And imagine a world where businesses are more flexible to employee work needs, where they can better impact retention, customer satisfaction, environmental sustainability, and profits. That world doesn't exist in some fiction book — it's real and it starts with your IT department.

It has been said that the best IT incidents are the ones that never happen. The goal of IT is to provide business-enabling technology

that produces revenue, gives the business a competitive advantage, streamlines work, and protects intellectual property. IT operations and support exists because the deployment of that technology never goes without disruption. And while it is aspirational for IT to be proactive about their support models, they struggle to identify issues until they are too widespread.

There are many things that get in the way of a proactive IT support model, or to enabling an employee being able to help themselves. These hurdles are a huge waste of time and money while causing innovation to be put on the back burner.

It's important to realize that much of our work life depends on the performance of our digital tools and the experiences they create. This chapter looks at the elements of Digital Employee Experience (DEX) Management, a subset of Employee Experience (EX), and how with the right management strategy IT can help energize workers and enable them to positively impact the entire company.

Understanding the Status Quo and IT's Challenges

When Covid-19 hit, companies were forced to confront the viability of the status quo in every part of their business. In the case of DEX, the pandemic highlighted an existing problem and accelerated the need for change. IT departments weren't delivering the support employees needed to do their jobs. Instead, they were merely reacting to whatever employees reported.

IT's job isn't easy. They have to balance competing demands from every corner of the company. They have to offer innovative tools and services to employees without perpetuating tool fatigue.



TECHNICAL
STUFF

In most companies, *tool fatigue* is a fact of life. It refers to the reality that most employees are confronted by too many overlapping tools that cause them to jump from one app to another without any regard to the impact this can have on productivity. Businesses are full of software applications that overlap but are never replaced, or are seldom used because of old inactive projects. And then layer on the fact that now employees also need “tools” to do the job: collaboration apps, security malware, VPN, VDI, single sign on — the list can seem endless. It used to be that people just needed a handful of apps in the office, now they require dozens.

During the pandemic, digital transformation, and the ability to function in a remote hybrid environment, became critical concerns. But, unfortunately, many businesses had to build the plane while flying it with no warning or plan in place. This is a situation they don't want to repeat.



TIP

The need to provide remote personalized IT services to workers will continue post-pandemic. According to the World Economic Forum's *Future of Jobs Report*, 44 percent of employees will want to continue to work remotely. This change means that companies will need to continue to evolve to make IT support even more agile.

Reviewing an outdated reactive model

Long before the pandemic, IT departments were in a reactive mode. No sooner did they identify a problem and start to work on it, another issue would pop up. They couldn't see the big picture along with the details of their system or drill down to the root cause. They couldn't answer simple questions like:

- » Is a certain application *version* negatively impacting employees?
- » How comfortable are employees using the application?
- » Is this issue arising because employees need training? Can IT identify any power-users?

This lack of knowledge between what employees experience and what IT knows and can act upon is called the *digital employee experience gap*. (See Chapter 3 for more on this gap.)

As remotely located employees need to interact with different applications, devices, and networks, there's a crucial need to tie everything together. So, what problems did the pandemic exacerbate? People became more dependent than ever on smoothly functioning tech, as they tried to work together across different time-zones, breaking the old relationship to IT. The new circumstances revealed the need for even more tools, and placed additional load on old tools. The pandemic also highlighted that IT departments couldn't:

- » **Break free of responding to incidents on a case-by-case basis:** IT reacts to one incident, and employees become frustrated. Incidents pile up, and the whole cycle starts again. Productivity suffers.

- » **Determine the number of employees experiencing the same issue:** IT needs to determine which employee devices have the same problem to figure out a broader fix across the company.
- » **Evaluate the scope and depth of the problem:** IT needs to determine how widespread the problem is and what resources are needed — all of which take significant time and budget to support.

Reeling from the effects of a poor DEX

Think about how a typical employee might start their day. They reach for their computer, tablet or phone, and expect it to start working immediately. Instead, they're greeted by one or more of the following:

- » A connection issue with the network
- » A slow start time for devices or apps
- » Apps that crash without warning
- » An intrusive notification to upgrade Windows or restart their device

This experience is not that uncommon. But, clearly, it's not a great way to start a productive day. Perhaps that's why Deloitte reports that only 38 percent of employees at major companies are truly satisfied with their work-related tools and tech.

Making problems visible in real-time

IT knows they must act to solve this problem. Can you recognize problems in your organization as they unfold? The solution is to stop being reactive and begin to implement a proactive strategy. This strategy requires that you:

- » Look at the performance of all components of the system
- » Understand the full scope of any environment issues that exist pre-deployment
- » Understand testing and pilot results prior to production deployment
- » Understand the number of devices that are experiencing the problem from the outset

- » Create a baseline so that anomalies and nascent problems are spotted quickly
- » Solve incidents before they become big problems for the organization by taking a proactive problem management approach



Have you heard of the *shift-left* philosophy? It refers to the idea that if you view the progression of a problem as a straight line, you want to look at the problem earlier in the process to get to the root cause. This action will prevent it from recurring on an even larger number of devices.

Energizing Work with a Smart DEX Management Strategy

When employees can get their jobs done effectively and efficiently, many benefits accrue to the whole organization. That's why many executives have invested in DEX. Benefits include:

- » Reduced IT operational costs
- » Reduced cost of software and hardware
- » Better employee engagement
- » Longer tenure
- » Shorter time to market
- » Improved IT and employee productivity
- » Improved carbon footprint awareness and action planning
- » Better ROI (return on investment) from innovation



Attracting technical talent in this marketplace is a significant problem. When employees report to their colleagues that their company prioritizes making their lives easier, they gain a good reputation and become a talent magnet for others.

Seeing what you can accomplish with DEX Management

Consider the capabilities you can establish by monitoring and tracking DEX.

The steps are:

- » **Step 1: Establish a baseline by measuring and quantifying the digital experience.** Determine issues affecting the employee experience by looking at the data. This data will enable you to establish a baseline and benchmark going forward. (See Chapter 2 for more about measuring DEX.)
- » **Step 2: Engage with employees and collect smart feedback.** Figure out what your employee's digital experience is like from their point of view. (Check out Chapter 3 for details about bridging the gap between what employees expect and what IT delivers.)
- » **Step 3: Stabilize your existing environment.** Determine what steps you need to take to remediate the issues and track how you are improving over time. (See Chapter 4 for more details on faster problem-solving.)
- » **Step 4: Develop your roadmap for change and create a dedicated DEX team.** Assemble your team and follow the same rule book. (Check out Chapter 5 for details about assembling your team.)

FINDINGS OF THE EXPERIENCE 2020 REPORT

Nextthink commissioned Vanson Bourne to conduct an independent survey of 1,000 senior IT leaders and 2,000 non-IT employees to determine the strategic cost of a poor digital employee experience. Called *The Experience 2020 Report*, the findings included these:

- The average desk worker suffers around 100 IT disruptions per year, which for a company of 10,000 employees, can cost up to \$25 million.
- Employee respondents say they report only around half (55 percent) of their technical issues to the IT department, and 79 percent of respondents said that when IT issues aren't reported, it always leads to more significant problems.

Disruption and lack of reporting are only two major problems that affect the cost of a poor DEX.

- » **Step 5: Move from an SLA to an XLA.** Revise your outmoded service level agreements (SLAs) to provide for innovative growth. (See Chapter 5 for more details on the evolution of SLAs.)

Understanding the components of a great DEX

A great DEX should connect all the significant parts of an organization to understand the employee experience fully. For example, in Figure 1-1, we see the components that go into calculating a DEX.



FIGURE 1-1: Components of the Digital Employee Experience.

The components of a DEX are:

- » **Devices:** Your employees experience functional remote-ready hardware
- » **Business apps:** Employees can access all of their critical applications without disruption
- » **Productivity and collaboration:** The tools and web browsers your employees depend upon are stable, reliable, and error-free
- » **Employee sentiment:** Feedback directly from employees demonstrates that they're happy with their digital experience

Delivering results

What results are you able to deliver after you develop a DEX score? By connecting all the system metrics with employee sentiment, you will have the following:

- » Increased visibility to reduce your incidents, whether an employee has raised a help desk ticket or not
- » An end-to-end view of the user experience
- » Prioritized recommendations to deliver actionable insights
- » Powerful automation capabilities to allow you to focus on higher-value activities
- » Real-time analytics that let you make high-level decisions
- » Detailed diagnostics for lightning-fast trouble-shooting
- » Employee feedback to provide a reality-based view of what the employee is experiencing day-to-day



WARNING

When employees face an unending supply of problems with no way to get ahead, they're on the road to burnout. Frustrated employees want to do a good job but feel they can never supply the level and quality of support they wish to provide. Preventing this scenario will save employees from leaving.

WHAT DO BUSINESSES ACHIEVE THROUGH DEX?

There are many ways that being able to facilitate IT's proactivity can save your organization time and money, and the statistics are in to prove it. A 2021 Forrester report on the ROI of improving DEX showed the following:

- Net present value of \$14.7M
- 294% ROI over three years
- Payback in less than 6 months
- +\$9.2M from increased employee productivity

Read the report here: <https://www.nexthink.com/resource/forrester-total-economic-impact-study/>

- » Obtaining meaningful employee feedback
- » Examining the digital employee experience score
- » Practicing Green IT

Chapter 2

Measuring Digital Employee Experience

A variety of events have sharpened the focus on the importance of the employee experience to the bottom line. The Covid-19 pandemic made remote work and collaboration across the globe a necessity. This means that not only technology is affected, but also the employee experience, as they deal with their new work environment. In fact, with remote work, EX becomes DEX to a large extent.

This chapter looks at the components of what goes into measuring DEX, and the value it offers to have your finger on the pulse of your organization.

Reviewing Key DEX Components

The DEX score measures the satisfaction and efficiency of an employee in relation to their interaction with their IT environment. Each workday experience is different from the next. The only constant is that employees are frustrated when technical things don't work.

Nexthink developed the DEX score to:

- » Understand where, what, and how to improve based on factual non-arguable data
- » Listen to the voice of employees (VoE) while monitoring hard metrics at the same time
- » Use multiple benchmarks for comparative analysis across different teams and departments (for example, USA versus EMEA, Sales versus Marketing)
- » Set the basis for experience level agreements (XLA)

Observing the universe of DEX

Although each organization's DEX might be unique, there are a few elements that are paramount for any index or score:

- » **Resources:** These refer to the technological resources employees use. These include devices, hardware, operating systems, applications, packages, networks, remote destinations, and ports.
- » **Actions:** The resources above perform user-driven actions such as login and installations, or device-driven actions such as executions and connections.
- » **Events:** These are the output of actions performed by resources. These include such things as device warnings, errors, and execution alerts.
- » **User Sentiment:** Feedback from employees that is contextual is called user sentiment, and its measurement is one of the most critical components of a DEX score.

Calculating the DEX score

You calculate the DEX score by being able to capture and use a variety of data types. For example, you can measure availability, usage, risk, and performance across the workplace environment. You can also capture the employees' subjective views.

Then you can collect, collate, and relate all these parameters in *real-time* across entire IT infrastructures and ecosystems. Once you establish the baseline score, you can track improvement.



TIP

Combining employee sentiment with the right technical data can unlock entire worlds of insights for IT. IT employees can get an accurate look at the user experience from analytical data and honest user feedback and then agree with the user on the quality of the user experience.

In Chapter 1, we look at the difference between the status quo and a DEX Management approach. Then, in Figure 2-1, you see the actual items that make up the score and the data types used to calculate it.

- » **Device score:** Hard metrics and sentiment data. This combined data tells you how well the device is performing and reveals how the employee feels about using the device. For example, you want to know that the employee feels they can use the device to perform the functions they need to do their job. There's no way to determine that by merely looking at hard data on performance. You need a subjective view from the employee.
- » **Business apps score:** Hard metrics and sentiment data are collected for business apps. You want to understand their performance.
- » **Productivity and collaboration score:** Hard metrics and sentiment data are collected for the productivity and collaboration score. Hard metrics alone could never tell you whether the employee feels productive and can work with their colleagues across the company.
- » **Employee satisfaction score:** Sentiment data is crucial to collect when determining an employee's job satisfaction.

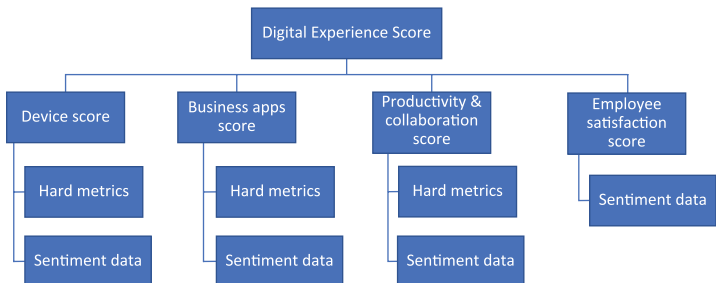


FIGURE 2-1: Data that makes up the DEX score.

Indexing this data into one score allows you to see the overall experience of your employees and interpret detailed performance data. (As a manager, you can view information from an executive dashboard.) IT can:

- » See specific operational details that drive continuous improvement
- » Drill down to an individual user's device to see what's wrong
- » Determine the level of optimization that exists in a specific area of the company



REMEMBER

One of the benefits of this multi-layered approach is that executives can focus on continuous improvement in key business areas.

DRIVING EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE FORWARD

Toyota's goal is to become the world's most successful and respected car company. To this end, Toyota Motor Europe (TME) partnered with Nexthink in 2017 to help them positively impact their employee's digital experience and understand what was happening daily. Previously, their understanding of their DEX was based on incomplete and anecdotal data.

After restructuring their IT department to consolidate their 14,000 devices and 10,000 software licenses under one support hub and rolling out several essential technology business apps, they were ready to use Nexthink's solutions platform to meet some of their primary goals. After partnering with Nexthink, TME reported that the difference was like night and day. They experienced major success, and among other major accomplishments, they were able to boost their DEX score from 6.29 to 7.14.

- » Understanding the Digital Employee Experience
- » Collecting meaningful employee feedback
- » Designing a successful employee engagement campaign

Chapter 3

Bridging the IT/ Employee Divide

What if, instead of waiting for IT to respond to your support ticket, they could proactively prescribe and fix the problem, all in one fell swoop? That would change the employee's experience entirely. They would rightly feel that IT is working to make their job easier.

This chapter looks at how to bridge the IT/employee divide so that both entities can perform their work more effectively.

Recognizing the Gap

Traditionally, IT focused on only collecting hard metrics about digital performance and gave very little attention to how employees felt about their technology experiences.

And employees, who come to the workplace with their high expectations for fast, reliable digital services, rarely feel like those expectations are met.

This situation is known as the *digital employee experience gap*. It is the divide between what employees experience each day and what

IT knows and understands about their experience. Often, when users detail their daily experience, their perceptions don't match that of IT.

IT has blind spots. They can't answer questions like, "Do you know what happened to your employees today?" or "Were employees productive or even engaged?"

As analytics became more sophisticated and the definition of the workplace changed, there was a need to find new solutions. Because of the pandemic, many workers were remote and isolated. They were experiencing new distractions in their home environment. Submitting a ticket to get help couldn't be the only means of communication for a frustrated employee.

There was a recognition that IT needed to prove that what they were doing was making the daily employee experience better. Therefore, they need to be able to measure and improve it. So the question became, "Can IT change its focus to concentrate more on employees than devices and employee collaboration than technical issues?"

Demonstrating How Employee Feedback Changes the Game

Companies now agree that being able to get direct feedback from employees is crucial. And being able to smartly corroborate that feedback with device-level details is game-changing. Having access to the best of both worlds enables IT to stop incidents before they become significant problems.

Recognizing the limits of surveys

Traditionally, in the average company, feedback from employee surveys has been limited. The 2019 Gartner research *HR: Moments that Matter*, identifies four critical limits of employee surveys. They:

- » **Can contain the biases of the HR department:** It's often the case that HR only focuses on what they care about, and their questions reflect that. If an employee's issue isn't on their radar, it gets ignored. These biases aren't recognized so that no one acts to mitigate them.

- » **Are infrequent and static:** You can't obtain meaningful feedback if it doesn't reflect the employee's true feelings on an ongoing basis. Surveys that go out infrequently and don't reflect a continuous assessment of how employees feel about their day-to-day experience aren't very accurate or useful.
- » **Aren't actionable:** Typically, employee surveys don't prompt action. The results are collected, but the organization doesn't do anything with them. As a result, employees who share their thoughts feel ignored, and management doesn't see the value of using surveys.
- » **Are delivered in the wrong employee context and circumstances:** Employees are more likely to respond when the questions are relevant to them. Why ask someone for feedback on the benefits website unless they have visited that page three times? Why remind someone to reboot their device if they show a regular behavior of rebooting daily?

Benefiting from feedback

Getting feedback produces several benefits for the employees and the company as a whole. It allows IT to:

- » Prioritize the correct issues that are important to employees and not IT
- » Get higher response rates from campaigns rather than relying on email surveys that very few employees respond to
- » Proactively solve problems before they create more significant problems
- » Only send the employee the campaigns that are related to them and when the time is convenient for them to respond
- » Not get bogged down with a wave of seemingly unrelated tickets

Creating an employee engagement campaign

By communicating directly with your employees, you'll get a holistic view of their technical environment and their feelings about it. The key to collecting quality feedback is to set up an

engagement campaign that elicits actionable information. As you design your campaign, ask yourself:

- » **What is the goal of the campaign?** By collaborating with all stakeholders, determine what you want to achieve. Make sure to define the actions you want to take once the campaign has ended.
- » **Who is your target audience?** Define the group of users you want to target for this campaign. Make sure that you're sending the campaign in the language of the recipients.
- » **What is the planned length and duration?** Decide how many questions you want to ask (keep it short) and the duration of the campaign. Make sure to control the time for collecting answers so that you have the required time needed to take action on the feedback.
- » **What type of campaign do you want to deliver?** Determine whether it will be a one-off, recurring, or continuous campaign.
- » **Is the campaign urgent?** Decide whether the campaign needs to be delivered immediately. Non-urgent campaigns must respect a "Do not disturb" period between them.



REMEMBER

When you publish a campaign, you want to make sure that you minimize the burden on users. This will ensure that you maximize the number of targeted users who answer your questions and the quality of their answers.

Identifying Disengaged Employees

Collecting employee sentiment hasn't traditionally been a primary focus of concern for executives. If IT was reporting good performance, they were assumed to be doing a good job. However, as technology became more sophisticated and we could track device-level metrics, we learned that this picture wasn't accurate.

Employees continually bogged down with issues they can't resolve become disengaged. As a result, they don't report new problems and may simply learn to live with them. This behavior is detrimental for both the employee and the organization.

Unless you know how your employees feel about their work experience, you have no idea whether they're making an effort to do a good job or planning to leave. The disengaged employee is a problem that is recognized worldwide. According to a 2020 Gallup report on employee engagement, 51 percent of the workforce is disengaged. This is a staggering number.



WARNING

A disengaged employee is disruptive to the company culture. They don't enjoy being at work, report more absenteeism, and are less likely to take ownership of problems. It's also likely that they interfere with the productivity of other colleagues. This situation is also concerning for management because a 2018 Gallup report says that an engaged workforce increases profitability by 21 percent!

Uncovering Shadow IT

One benefit of developing an ongoing dialogue between IT and employees is that you can solve problems more quickly because trust exists between the groups. For example, this can help with the issue of Shadow IT.



TIP

Shadow IT exists because employees use their own unsanctioned applications to work smarter and more comfortably. However, their decision poses a big risk to the company.

Understanding the problem of Shadow IT

Do your employees use unsanctioned applications while working?



WARNING

The answer is likely yes. This action poses a threat for IT because they can't monitor or control their impact on the network. For example, there's no way to know how anti-virus and firewalls are performing at the endpoint, and you can't investigate breaches. Multiply this problem over many locations, and you challenge the safety and security of the network.

So, what do you need to do to prevent this? You need a system that can do things such as (1) monitor and report on all security breaches, (2) detect abnormal web activity, and (3) take an inventory of applications and operating systems and be able to act on

that list (4) intelligently by asking the business why they have a certain function and determine the right solution based on their needs. Without these functions, you're risking safety and data breaches that can cost your organization millions.

Building on your employee relationship

The direct relationship you forge with your users in getting feedback can go a long way to help with the problem of Shadow IT. Consider these tips:

- » **Amnesty:** Start with an amnesty and find out what programs employees are using and why.
- » **Support:** Offer proactive IT support and look to secure end-user experiences.
- » **Engagement:** Engage employees to discover why they're using these tools and how you can either add them or replace them with sanctioned apps.

- » Solving problems faster
- » Using automated self-healing
- » Providing for employee self-help

Chapter 4

Kickstarting Faster Problem Solving

It's clear that everyday IT problems get in the way of digital work. It also interferes with the employee experience. This frustrates both the IT department and employees trying to do their jobs effectively. In some cases, employees don't even report these problems and just learn to live with it. Unfortunately, that's not a satisfactory long-term solution.

You need to figure out how to respond quickly and keep employees productive. This chapter looks at how IT can resolve problems more rapidly and leverage automated self-healing and self-help solutions for employees to avoid the need for IT intervention.

Understanding Key Capabilities Needed to React Faster

So, what is the best way to tackle employees' technical problems and react faster? Attempting to get more out of the same systems management platforms we've all been using for decades won't do the trick. You need a digital employee experience (DEX) platform to provide you with the capabilities discussed in the following sections.

Seeing the issues that matter

When incidents arise, quickly accessing case-specific data from on-demand analytics gives IT staff the ability to make informed decisions. You must have real-time, event-level visibility and analytics to identify the source of the experience degradation, as well as a place to prioritize which issues are impacting your users.

Without viewing details at the employee's device, you can't understand what they're experiencing and under what conditions. Your response can't be quick because you need to investigate, which could take days to weeks and additional support tickets can mount up as more employees experience the same situation.

Establishing a targeted engagement channel

You also need a hyper-targeted employee engagement channel to reach out to the right people, at the right time, with the right message. Establishing this channel is a critical element for a responsive IT department. Communicating directly with an employee and building a relationship goes a long way toward resolving problems faster. Here's an example: Why ask everyone in the company to remember to reboot their PC once a week, when many of them are already complying with this policy? All that serves is to drive up frustrations in the employee population. Instead, use this new targeted comms channel to remind only those who are out of compliance.



REMEMBER

Creating context-specific communications with the employees you support will help reduce "IT noise" and improve overall sentiment of IT, in addition to improving results.

Bringing visibility into your project management and release management disciplines

Technology impacts employees because something unanticipated caused a breakage. Leveraging enhanced end-user analytics during the test and release management phases of any project will help IT have a clearer sense of what they can expect to see. From large-scale transformation projects down to standard recurring deployments for patches, understanding the impact to test and pilot devices before a deployment goes to all employees greatly reduces the risk of large-scale problems. This visibility also allows for the real-time tracking of production releases to make

sure that production results match what was found during their test period. And changes that are made by employees or vendors outside of IT control can be identified and remediated as soon as they are seen in the environment.

Deploying automated self-healing remediation

Continuously tracking your enterprise-wide metrics allows you to unlock insights into your critical services and provide a wealth of information when problems are detected. One use of this data is that it provides you with the ability to deploy automated self-healing.

Automated self-healing allows you to solve problems in just a few clicks and eliminates recurring issues or the need for one-to-one IT intervention. Here's how it works: The desired state of computing is maintained by continuous monitoring. If a problem is detected, it is resolved by automating a solution in real-time without disturbing the user. Providing IT with customizable scripts can trigger no-touch or one-click fixes to prevent or resolve issues quickly. (These remediation scripts automate work that used to be manually conducted by IT.)

For example, if an app crashes, a self-healing app would automatically detect the program's crash, apply the known fix, and restart the app. Automating the process reduces the number of reported incidents and increases end-user productivity.



TIP

One great benefit of automated remediation is that you have a quieter call center. Instant remediation means fewer call center tickets. For the tickets that do get submitted, you'll have a quicker resolution without escalating the issue. Without spending time on call center tickets, IT is freed up to focus on strategy and not put out fires.

Troubleshooting at scale with AI-powered analytics

Troubleshooting at scale is key to a better employee experience for everyone. You want to be able to retrieve detailed diagnostics from all the devices connected to the system. With AI-powered root cause analytics, you can understand the depth of the problem (how many employees are affected), speed up troubleshooting, and choose the best course of action.

AUTOMATED REMEDIATIONS SAVE \$150K PER MONTH

One example of automating remediation is related to the issue of password resets. This is a known problem that's exacerbated by remote work. Employees need to reset their passwords and IT Support relies on a manual process of politely nudging and sometimes deliberately taking over employee devices to help them. And when employees encounter an issue accessing their tools, they put in a ticket. The tickets mount up across the company, and troubleshooting becomes time-consuming.

Mondelez International was aware of this problem and set up a single-click automated resolution with Nexthink to help more than 21,000 users reset their passwords without contacting IT. This action alone enabled Mondelez to save more than \$150,000 in one month!

Providing employee self-help

You can empower employees to more easily resolve certain issues themselves if you can identify that the problem is of lower-priority and requires a simple fix from the employee's side. This automated response can save IT time and money. Rather than asking them to read a knowledge base article and take manual actions on their own, you can detect the issue and apply automation to solve the problem. This is what takes "shift left" to the next level.



REMEMBER

Another problem that interferes with the employee experience is the use of too many tools. According to Deloitte's 2019 *Global Human Capital Trends* survey, companies use, on average, seven different tools for messaging, communication, file sharing, and scheduling. We recommend you simplify the number of tools needed for employees and ensure each one meets their expectations. Detecting tool usage down to the department- and employee-level helps IT determine where they can consolidate, and who to communicate and plan migration activities with.

SELF-HELP REMINDERS

Automatic device diagnostics highlight such issues as network misconfigurations, unoptimized device settings, or hard disks that need a clean-up. For example, 7,000 devices in a mining company were experiencing high memory usage, creating performance issues. Data showed that 50 percent of the devices had not been rebooted in the past week.

Using Nexthink's platform, an automated self-help campaign was established to pinpoint users who had memory issues and had not rebooted. This highly targeted campaign that sent specific users the message to reboot saved 360 hours of IT overhead, while also improving the experience of the employees.

Benefiting from Responding to Problems Faster

The benefits of responding to problems using the capabilities above mean that your employee experience is greatly enhanced. For example, consider the three significant benefits of responding quickly in the following sections.

Creating a proactive help desk

Quick remediation means fewer support tickets. When you provide IT with enterprise-wide visibility to what's going on straight from their desktop and give them the ability to act on the issues faster, you can resolve some problems without involving the end-user. Think of this as the Genius Bar in reverse — why ask employees to come to IT, when IT can go to them?

Developing a better-informed support team

IT operations staff often can solve problems quicker than it takes users to realize the issue and contact support. By giving them the ability to solve problems with one click automatically, they make issues disappear quickly. True data gathered across the enterprise also informs IT of the real issues occurring on a regular

basis, and where to focus their automation efforts for the biggest impact.

Helping employees to resolve their issues

Sentiment towards IT from empowered employees will improve when IT provides them with the ability to resolve their issues quickly or even fully automate the remediation process, so neither employees nor IT staff are interrupted.



TIP

You can use automation in many situations. Here are three examples. You can:

- » Schedule an automatic recurring investigation based on custom criteria
- » Send a two-way communication campaign to trigger employee action or automation
- » Schedule a personalized follow up survey to gauge the satisfaction of the most recent campaign

Solving Tomorrow's Problems

The goal of every IT department is to fix problems before they impact service. Employees should rely on a seamless digital experience to collaborate with colleagues and remain productive now that a hybrid work environment has become the norm.

Does that mean that we can look forward to a zero-touch IT employee experience? Does pairing IT remote actions and automation bring this type of experience to fruition? Certain factors point in that direction. By upgrading your platform to combine the collection of employee feedback and monitoring data at the device level, you can have:

- » **Less involvement of employees in solving IT issues.**
Automated self-healing and employee self-help are available now. Also, IT departments can use chatbots to handle routine issues.

» **IT teams can automatically apply fixes with remote actions for employees.** Real-time analytics that rely on targeted alerts enables intelligent focus on the issues that occur the most. Leveraging smart alerts means that no employee engagement is necessary.

THE HUMAN FACTOR

ABN AMRO is one of the Netherlands' most successful banks and employee experience is a central part of their mission.

When the pandemic hit, ABN's IT services turned to XLAs to protect their business philosophy. They started to measure and corroborate hard, technical metrics with subjective, end-user feedback data. Working off XLAs helped ABN's IT department better understand how employees value their work tools and IT services. Their efforts quickly paid off — employees responded in record numbers and the IT team was able to collect meaningful feedback on their colleagues' computing experiences and wellbeing. The company's executive board soon took an interest in this unique ability and the IT team found themselves briefing the company's directors and working alongside Human Resources to support employee wellness initiatives.

- » Creating a dedicated change management team
- » Understanding what an ops team can provide
- » Combining the best of both worlds: SLAs and XLAs

Chapter 5

Building a DEX Center of Excellence and Leveraging Experience Level Agreements (XLAs)

The changing demands of digital work have forced IT to create new roles that cater to Digital Employee Experience. What's needed is a digital experience team that can pull the IT department together and affect change across the entire organization.

This chapter looks at how IT roles are evolving and how service level agreements (SLAs) and experience level agreements (XLAs) can help companies be more agile in the short term and drive innovation in the long term.

Organizing an IT Experience Ops Team

The corporate focus has shifted from looking solely at the performance of technology to include how that technology truly impacts the employee experience. In order to affect wholesale change, we

recommend creating a digital experience ops team. Rather than relying on previously defined job descriptions, it's more effective to create new roles to handle new tactics.

Establishing a dedicated IT experience ops team

To accommodate this data (the combination of employee sentiment and hard metrics), some companies are setting up in-house IT experience ops teams (or DEX teams) to solve performance problems as they impact the employee experience. This team helps both the IT department and employees get to root causes quicker, saving companies both time and money.



TIP

The DEX team needs to communicate up and down the company hierarchy in order to identify trends and fix incidents before they become big problems. They also need to present their findings effectively to management so that they are heard and understood.

If you're wondering where the new team would fit in the organization, refer to Figure 5-1.

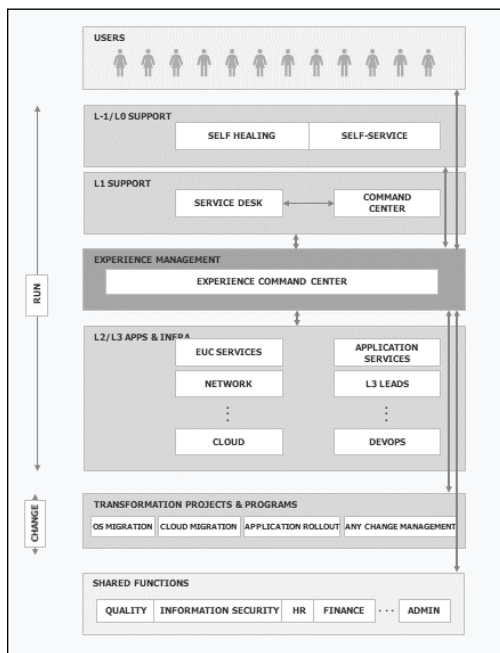


FIGURE 5-1: Where the DEX team fits in the organization.

Adding next-level skill sets

Depending on their skills, it's likely that some employees already have the skill sets they need to function effectively on the team. The suggested skills for the DEX team include:

- » A basic understanding of infrastructure
- » An understanding of IT service management (ITSM) practices
- » Data analytics and survey skills
- » Excellent business communication skills
- » A desire to work across the organization and not get locked in silos
- » A desire to take ownership of a problem and get to the root of it



TIP

One critical thing that makes this team effective is that they will be responsible for establishing a baseline and tracking changes using a digital experience (DEX) score. (See Chapter 2 for details about how to construct a DEX score.) The team will rely on the DEX score to help them zero in on the exact problem area to devise a plan to fix it. They can also set goals for future improvements and continuously track them. When there are no designated employees to track the score, a valuable resource is often wasted.

Performing Experience Level Agreements

The conventional service level agreement (SLA) is a commitment to a client that sets standards that the service provider must maintain concerning production, uptime, speed, volume, and so on. They provide a client with the assurance that they can depend on a specified level of service.

The problem with SLAs today is that meeting the requirements has become the minimum level of service needed to fulfill the agreement. Top on the list of needs is an agreement that will consider the quality of the employee experience. Analyzing the employee experience requires that the provider be able to combine hard metrics with user sentiment. Management wants to know how the employee feels about their day-to-day work experience and how to improve it. Enter *experience level agreements* (XLAs).

Going beyond an SLA to an XLA

XLAs focus on more than the technical aspects of a company's network. Instead, they address human-level concerns, such as how a user feels and how satisfied they are.

Management understands that the employee experience plays a crucial role in performance. Employees want to feel that they're working with purpose. They want to be productive and make a valuable contribution to the organization. However, this experience can only happen if they aren't hampered by ineffective IT support and poorly utilized resources.



REMEMBER

If you're wondering why the marketplace has shifted so dramatically to focus on the employee experience, it's an easy answer. Employees want the same experience that they're used to as consumers. The bar has been raised, and there's no going back. They want companies to demonstrate a commitment to making their jobs easier. They also know it will save time and money for the overall business.

Focusing on delivering experience management

To deliver an effective employee experience, your ops team needs to do the following:

- » Continuously collect and measure employee feedback
- » Take a shift left approach to detect problems earlier in the incident (see Chapter 1 for more about the shift left concept)
- » Use automated artificial intelligence (AI) to catch problems without IT intervention



TIP

So how does the team measure and track XLAs? First, they need to have the ability to use a dashboard to track progress. Second, this dashboard needs to provide prioritized recommendations to solve high priority issues and utilize real-time two-way communication with employees.

Communicate the Experience Management program far and wide

Give it a name that resonates with employees. Tell everyone that IT is in their corner. Make commitments to delivering the best employee experience possible. Make sure every employee understands that you have a focus on their ability to do a great job at work. Then and only then do you get into the “how” discussion.

- » Learning from the pandemic
- » Making IT more human-centric
- » Discovering new roles for IT

Chapter 6

Envisioning the Future of Digital Work

Most companies won't need to re-learn the lesson of being prepared for an unforeseen crisis. The pandemic will serve as a reminder for decades to come. Yet, even the most complacent leader will feel the pressure to make the right decisions to solve tomorrow's problems. So, the dilemma becomes what to focus on.

The key universal takeaway in all this that can't be understated is that hybrid work has changed the focus from a location-based model to a human-centric one. This requires you to put processes and systems in place that can view problems from your employees' perspective. But what are the smartest investments you can make? This chapter looks at planning for the future of a digital hybrid workplace.

Reflecting on the Lessons from Covid

For IT, the pandemic highlighted that companies that didn't have an ongoing dialogue with employees and an engagement channel to capture employee sentiment couldn't effectively survey their employees about technical issues or how they were coping with remote work problems.

IDENTIFYING IT EXPERIENCE CHALLENGES

In November 2022, Nexthink conducted a research project surveying 1,000 in-office, remote, and hybrid employees across North America and Europe to better understand their technology challenges.

Ninety-three percent of respondents said their tech setup impedes productivity, and only half felt it was a strong enough asset for more efficiency.

The top challenges reported included Applications (quality, age, usability); Connectivity (internet, WiFi), and Devices. Again, this highlights how, despite our cultural acceptance of a more hybrid and remote work world, many companies still struggle to provide the type of quality technology experience that their employees expect.

This meant that companies didn't have a baseline from which to compare the wellbeing of their workforce before and during the pandemic. This missing piece became a vital metric as companies had to transition to work from anywhere (WFA) overnight. Suddenly this data became even more critical to executives who worried about the emotional state and productivity of their employees.

Delivering Human-centric Experiences

In the past, IT has perhaps received a deserved rap for focusing on the technical aspects and ignoring the human ones. As a result, employees who requested help from IT were sometimes made to feel inadequate for not knowing the finer details of their operating systems. Those days are long gone.

Now that almost every consumer has a smartphone and multiple other gadgets, expectations about technology have changed. That includes the workplace. Employees get frustrated and don't want to tolerate poorly performing devices. Also, when they do experience a problem, half the time they don't even report it. This gives IT a false sense of security about how well their systems are operating and the level of employee satisfaction.

Understanding how a human-centric approach impacts the organization

To solve the problem of tech-centered service, IT is moving toward delivering *human-centric IT*. Human-centric IT focuses on the needs and skills of the employee. This focus requires managers to view each person as an individual and be more empathetic to their staff. This approach helps managers benefit from the diverse backgrounds and experiences of their employees.

However, it also requires them to work with and leverage a hybrid group that can work from anywhere. As a result, they need to change their focus from when employees show up to work to evaluating outcomes. For some managers, this is a difficult but entirely necessary shift.



TIP

Improve your employee engagement to improve business results. Does a human-centric approach matter to the organization as a whole? A 2020 Gallup study found that those companies who scored in the top half on employee engagement more than doubled their odds for success. They experienced such things as higher profitability, shareholder value, productivity, and employee retention.

Looking at what gets in the way of a human-centric approach

As companies strive to change the attitudes of those who don't see the value of a human-centric approach, not all of them have been successful. It's not easy to revise attitudes that have long been the cornerstone of IT departments. Here are some of the things that get in the way of instituting a human-centered approach. Companies:

- » **Don't have a channel and processes to collect relevant and timely user sentiment:** Without a way to collect valid employee sentiment, IT departments can only guess what their employees think and feel about their workplace.
- » **Don't determine which metrics they'll rely on to give them insight:** If IT doesn't designate upfront how they measure experiences, they set themselves up for failure.
- » **Don't collect metrics at the device level:** IT can't really see what the employee is experiencing and how widespread the problem is without having the data to analyze it.

- » **Don't value the employee's experience:** If management doesn't support the idea that the employee experience matters, then nothing will change.
- » **Don't have a way to use the data they have across the company:** If you don't break silos down, IT won't have the information they need to make improvements or innovate. Instead, they'll just continue putting out fires.

Developing Green IT Initiatives

Companies today are well aware that technology has a significant detrimental impact on the environment. Previously, a suggestion to cut down on printing was the best they could offer. However, with environmental issues continuing to worsen, organizations need to look for more creative ways to make a difference.



TECHNICAL
STUFF

Green IT refers to the attempt by companies to reduce their carbon footprint and drive sustainable IT practices that will have a real impact.

Three key objectives to deploy Green IT include being able to:

- » Understand where your actions will have the most impact
- » Educate and include your employees in best practices based on data
- » Reduce unnecessary energy consumption (and their related costs)

NEXTHINK'S SUSTAINABLE IT SOLUTION

One of the many benefits of having DEX capabilities is being able to foster environmental change at the hardware, infrastructure, and employee behavior level. To this end, the Nextthink Library includes a Green IT content pack that can accomplish the following:

- Identify sources of unnecessary energy consumption across devices, hardware components, and IT infrastructure

- Drive best practices using remote actions or targeted employee engagement
- Monitor the carbon footprint in terms of estimated CO2 emitted by the device landscape
- Avoid hardware waste by extending device refresh cycles based on actual device performance, employee usage requirements, and sentiment
- Educate your workforce about Green IT best practices with targeted engagement campaigns and quizzes to influence employee behavior toward impactful change

Welcoming New Roles For IT

As workplace conditions continue to evolve and change, IT departments must innovate. As a result, they need to revise their approach to roles and responsibilities. Companies are starting to add roles like chief DEX officer, chief people officer, chief innovation officer, and VP of workplace experience to their roster of job titles. This brings a fresh perspective to jobs that have become stagnant.

ACCOMMODATING A HYBRID FUTURE

In Gartner's 2021 report *Redesigning Work for a Hybrid Future*, they suggest that going back to the way things were before the pandemic is a step backward. Instead, they say the future of work will rely on finding new ways to accommodate a hybrid workforce.

They recommend taking the focus off location and putting it on the employee experience. Being more flexible and enabling employees to work the way they want to can make a huge difference to your company's success. They recommend that you let employees operate the way they want without regard to location — think about the workplace as a tool, not a location. They also recommend that you look at your employees' skills and retrain them for a hybrid future.

- » Getting to know tech terms
- » Putting the employee first

Chapter 7

Ten Terms You Need to Know in DEX

There are several terms you need to familiarize yourself with as you focus on the digital employee experience. The following are the top ten.

- » **Device performance monitoring (DPM)** solutions address part of what's required for end user experience monitoring (EUEM). DPM products use lightweight agents to monitor the health and performance of end users' PCs, laptops, and virtual desktops. They track operating system metrics like resource utilization and health.
- » **Digital employee experience (DEX)** is an employee's holistic experience with the digital workplace that IT provides, allowing them to be productive and engaged.
- » **Digital experience monitoring (DEM)** is a technology discipline for gathering intelligence about the health of IT services from the perspective of the end-user and in the context of an organization's business objectives.
- » **Digital transformation (DX)** is the reworking of the products, processes, and strategies within an organization by leveraging current technologies.

- » **End-user computing (EUC)** is a term that refers to the technologies that IT professionals use to deploy, manage, and secure the devices, applications, and data that workers require to perform their jobs.
- » **Employee sentiment** refers to gathering feedback and opinions from staff to discover how they feel about their work (see Chapter 3 for more).
- » **Experience level agreements (XLAs)** address how a user feels and how satisfied they are with their IT experiences (see Chapter 5 for more).
- » **Mean time to resolve (MTTR)** is a service level metric for desktop support that measures the average elapsed time from when an incident is reported until the incident is resolved. It's typically measured in hours, and refers to business hours, not clock hours.
- » **State of flow** is where employees feel motivated and productive, with no IT problems interrupting their work.
- » **User experience management (UEM)** is a subcategory that emerged from the EUE (end-user experience) dimension to monitor the behavioral context of the user. UEM goes beyond availability to capture latencies and inconsistencies as human beings interact with applications and other services. UEM is usually agent-based and may include JavaScript injection to monitor at the end-user device.

Digital Employee Experience is Everything

Discover what your employees need, see what they experience, know how they feel. Deliver IT that delights.

Your employees expect a great technology experience, regardless of when or where they work. So what's the key to making it happen? Having a deep, continuous understanding of each digital worker's needs across the entire enterprise.

NEXTHINK EXPERIENCE

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Embark on a new era of managing modern work

What employees expect from their digital work environment is drastically different from what they receive. *Digital Employee Experience For Dummies* provides practical guidance for solving computing problems and positively impacting the modern digital work experience. Dive in to discover plenty of actionable advice to demonstrate how any company, with the right approach, can keep their employees productive, engaged, and happy at work.

Inside...

- Measure and manage the digital experience
- Understand a DEX score and how it collects meaningful feedback
- Bridge the divide between IT and employees
- Kickstart faster problem-solving
- Resolve problems before they surface
- Get to grips with DEX management terminology

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