

Employee experience is (still) trending - are you doing it right?

 By [Sally Acton](#)

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Let's talk about EX, shall we? And if you're still giving out coffee vouchers as the sum of your rewards strategy, you're doing it wrong. Even with the accelerated attention in the employee experience (EX) space over the last three years, there's still a surprising amount of misunderstanding about our industry. So, let's start by talking about what EX is not.



Sally Acton, CEO of Torque Solutions

Myth busting

It's not about doing a single voice of the employee (VOE) survey once a year and then ticking your employee engagement box. It's also not about asking your frontline worker to fill out that annual survey and not providing data and other basic needs for people to access your tech. If you're excluding a large part of your workforce, and if you haven't given your people access to devices when they need it, you're definitely lagging behind.

It's a feeling

Some will say that EX is just another way for companies to sugar-coat their employee retention strategies. Or that it's limited to office-based employees and doesn't apply to remote workers – but nothing could be further from the truth. EX strategies should be inclusive of all workers.

At the heart of it, EX is a genuine effort to improve the lives of employees, acknowledging that they are also people, not only workers, and that work is a subset of life – not separate from it. It's about creating a culture where people feel seen, valued, respected, and empowered to do their best. And it's about meeting them where they're at along every step of their employee (and life) journey.

Trend spotting

So, what can companies do to improve their EX in 2024? Start by considering how you might apply these 10 EX trends in your work environment to appeal to the unique and diverse tastes in your organisation.

Unsurprisingly, last year we witnessed significant transformation, driven by technology, remote work, and a heightened focus on well-being – creating a new paradigm for workplace engagement and employee resilience. However, there were some emerging trends too.



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Trend #1: Attract top talent with a strong EVP and employer brand

- Be bold about what employees can expect in terms of benefits and company culture as it stands right now, not an aspirational statement
- Reinforce the value and purpose of your remuneration and benefits, tying it back to the broader employee experience and company culture
- Be transparent about salary offers and include perks like flexible hours, and continued education opportunities
- Live up to the promises that you make your people at this stage to involve and retain top talent
- Regularly review reward and benefit offerings to remain competitive and keep up with industry-specific trends and expectations
- Refine and update employment contracts to include considerations associated with the gig economy, ensuring that your language is inclusive and plain

Trend #2: AI, automation, and digital transformation in EX

- Use AI-driven HR analytics (like matching top talent with high-value roles), chatbots, and digital onboarding to streamline processes
- Include AR and VR technology to take onboarding and skills development (especially in high-risk professions) to the next level
- Harness the power of AI-powered learning experience platforms (LXPs) to deliver curated content for onboarding, reskilling, upskilling, and internal mobility
- Verify employment history, credentials and more using blockchain technology
- Implement an integrated HR tech stack to automate routine tasks, and provide data-driven insights
- Recognise and mitigate potential AI-angst among employees worrying about job loss

Trend #3: Ways to support remote and hybrid work

- Be intentional about aligning and connecting your people to the company culture
- Focus on improving the virtual work experience through technology investments, flexible work arrangements (FWA) and policies, and employee well-being support
- Ensure seamless integration of HR technology platforms like mobile apps, self-service portals, and data analytics tools for friction-free digital experiences
- Use digital tools and platforms with data-free connection options to build inclusive remote and hybrid communities
- Consider innovative workspace options to adapt to changing needs
- Invest in training, development, and coaching to enhance communication skills and active listening for both managers and employees
- Ensure that transparency is a focus in your communication – trust is the new currency of EX



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Trend #4: Holistic well-being and mental health initiatives

- Be mindful of the stress and isolation associated with remote and hybrid work by improving collaboration, and respecting boundaries to maintain work-life balance
- Relook mental health leave to offset 'toxic resilience' and working to the point of burnout
- Align CSR initiatives with employee interests to combine a sense of community involvement and engagement with purpose
- Develop the role of managers to enhance team performance and support their people in serving as coaches to help reduce problems like change fatigue
- Take care not to make well-being mandatory; there is growing backlash against 'mandatory fun,' with people preferring to spend their time with loved ones or engaging in personal hobbies

Trend #5: Strengthening diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts

- Promote a culture of openness to destigmatise mental health issues
- Invest in facilitated DEI conversations/workshops to drive cultural Intelligence with EQ and IQ
- Improve your employees' cultural quotient (CQ) to address bias, racism, and discrimination
- Go beyond hiring quotas to build authentic inclusivity
- Consider differing intergenerational ways of working and the benefits of reverse mentoring
- Invest time in setting up employee resource groups (ERGs)
- Include neurodivergent individuals
- Provide equitable access to digital resources considering connectivity and power constraints
- Consider fair and equitable rewards catering to diverse needs and preferences, and varying socio-economic disparities
- Align with labour laws and regulations, especially regarding anti-discrimination and privacy practices, to implement policies that make a difference

Trend #6: Continuous learning and development

- Create a culture of learning, rather than a culture of training
- Harness your people's potential as influencers, subject matter experts, and content creators for your business.
- Encourage the building of skills passports during your employees' tenure
- Use real-time platforms or continuous feedback loops to spur continuous development and replace annual (outdated) performance reviews
- Invest in learning experience platforms (LXPs) that offer a variety of courses and skills enhancement opportunities
- Empower your employees to be autonomous decision makers at lower levels, especially in agile organisations
- Create mentorship programmes, and establish clear paths for career advancement, especially with underrepresented groups
- Encourage reverse mentoring for younger generations to bring new perspectives and lessons in a 5-generation workforce – creating a shadow board is an excellent idea

Trend #7: Employee voice and feedback loops

- Develop a comprehensive VOE strategy that includes surveys, sentiment analysis tools, feedback channels, and mechanisms to build a listening culture and act on employee input
- Provide training on giving and receiving feedback to improve communication and encourage constructive conversations
- Include employee voices in company policy, particularly regarding social and environmental issues



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Trend #8: Data-driven EX solutions

- Meet individual needs and preferences by leveraging data analytics and AI to understand employee sentiments, identify pain points, tailor benefits, and design development plans
- Invest in EX tools that promote personalisation, real-time recognition, and data analytics
- Prioritise data security and privacy compliance as you collect more employee data

Trend #9: Personalised employee journeys

- Break down each step to really understand the moments that matter
- Leverage data and AI to tailor experiences to individual needs and preferences
- Create flexible professional pathways that provide career option experience
- Resource up your EX division and create a cross-functional team to own and drive the EX journey

Trend #10: Enhanced use of people analytics

- Get to know and understand what matters most to your people using persona mapping, data analytics, and AI to tailor the EX
- Use metrics and KPIs to assess the impact of community-building initiatives on employee satisfaction, productivity, and retention
- People are change-fatigued – consider appointing a dedicated change management resource in the EX team to manage the people side of large organisational change and embed the EX

Keen to know how these trends can become opportunities to galvanise your People strategy? Read Torque's full [2023/24 EX Trends Report](#) now. It's time to tear up those coffee vouchers and reinvent your EX!

ABOUT SALLY ACTON

Sally Acton, the CEO - Chief Empathy Officer - of an award-winning Employee Experience Consultancy, Torque Solutions, champions a new era of work-life harmony. Her reputation rests on more than just words; Sally embodies her beliefs with a 'walk the talk' approach. Esteemed clients such as Massmart, PepsiCo, Pioneer Foods, Builders Warehouse, and Woolworths seek her counsel, trusting her to redefine workplaces and enhance experiences for all involved.

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