

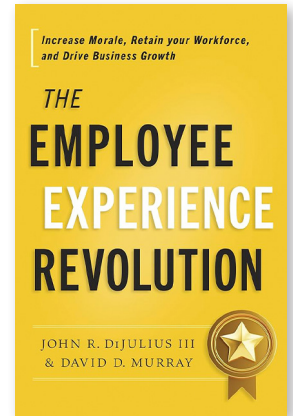


Executive Book Summaries[®]

The Employee Experience Revolution

Increase Morale, Retain your Workforce, and Drive Business Growth

by **John DiJulius and Dave Murray**



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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

What is the best indicator of a company's long-term health? Is it profitability? Is it stability and reputation within the industry? Not necessarily. Consistent profitability is dependent on one main thing – happy employees.

The Employee Experience Revolution: Increase Morale, Retain your Workforce, and Drive Business Growth makes the bold claim that a company's customer will never be happier than its employees. Workers are the ones who create and deliver an experience that makes customers come back to the brand time and time again. Authors John DiJulius and Dave Murray have a combined experience of 70 years in leading organizations. From creating great corporate cultures to molding an outstanding employee experience, they have helped brands like Lexus, Starbucks, Chick-fil-A, and The Ritz-Carlton strengthen their brand and employee involvement simultaneously.

Good pay is only one factor that contributes to employee satisfaction. The Employee Experience Revolution digs deeper and uncovers how job satisfaction is shaped by culture, purpose, recognition, and expectation management. Even details like the importance of working among similar-minded people are touched upon to paint a comprehensive picture.

IN THIS EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARY:

- What is the employee experience revolution?
- Find out how to shape the best recruitment experience.
- Steps that will enable all companies to retain their top talent.
- The secrets of building and developing great leaders.

Introduction

It is often said that our jobs don't define us, but our jobs and careers are a huge part of who we are. Work is a significant amount of the time we spend alive.

Work has to be rewarding. Financial rewards are great, but they're not the only thing that matters.

Leaders need to understand the importance of building the type of company that helps employees be proud of the work they do, allowing them to become their best selves.

Employees who lack motivation and commitment underperform. Those problems are fixable, as long as the leadership is committed to creating a strong culture that puts the employee in the very center.

Through its nine chapters, *The Employee Experience Revolution* outlines the approaches and everyday practices that create happy employees. It also looks deeper into why worker satisfaction has become more important now than it's ever been in the past.

Chapter 1: We Are in a Recession... A Customer Experience Recession

We are in one of the worst customer service recessions ever, and since 2018, this recession has been dropping faster than the Titanic.

Overall customer satisfaction has been spiraling out of control and hitting its lowest score in decades in 2022. The reasons that have contributed to this negative phenomenon are several: the economic slowdowns and societal shifts resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as the rapid growth that occurred prior to lockdowns. Many companies experienced unparalleled development and expansion in the years leading up to 2020. Because of the massive growth, they started paying less attention to both the employee and the customer experiences.

Employee and customer experiences are mentioned together for a reason.

What employees experience is also something that clients face during an interaction with a brand. The best marketing is happy, engaged employees. Your customers will never be happier than your employees. You can build amazing facilities, products, and services. Still, your people are the ones who create and deliver the experience that keeps customers coming back.

For many, the pandemic was a professional awakening. Employees started reevaluating their professional careers, not only in regards to what they wanted, but also what they weren't willing to tolerate anymore.

A significant percentage of the people who quit during and shortly after the pandemic did so because of poor corporate culture. Leaders focusing solely on productivity and bottom-line profits contributed majorly to such trends.

A focus on profit fails to take into account something very important – not all profits are good. Bad profit policies are the ones that exploit customers (through hidden fees, for example) and are indicative of strategic shortsightedness.

Companies relying heavily on bad profits alienate customers and offer opportunities for emerging brands to capitalize.

“In competitive markets, firms are rewarded for treating their customers well and punished for treating them badly. Investors in customer satisfaction don't just beat the market, they also contribute to a stronger economy,” American Customer Satisfaction Index chairman and founder Claes Fornell said.

This is why organizations need to focus on being brand experience strong. The term refers to how an organization intentionally interacts and treats every one of its stakeholders. The companies that will dominate their industries for the next decade will be the ones obsessed with evolving the experience at every level. – employee, customer, vendor, and community.

Chapter 2: Welcome to the Employee Experience Revolution

Younger generations are canceling hustle culture. There's a reason why and it's a lot more complex than young workers being lazy.

These generations watched their parents and grandparents work their tails off. For many older family members, all the hard work didn't pay off. Many got laid off, many had to continue working well into their retirement to support their families. Whether financial rewards were reaped or not, the hard work had a detrimental effect on the relationship that many professionals had with their loved ones.

Millennials and Gen Z members are not willing to trade the hope of advancement in their careers for their personal lives and happiness. They are perceiving hustle culture as “burnout culture.” They are challenging workaholism and the supposed benefits it brings to the table.

If an employee is dissatisfied with their job and works in a toxic environment, their overall happiness will be impacted.

The pandemic helped people understand the importance of real social connection. They started understanding the value of free time, especially while they were locked at home and freed from having to worry about their nine to five. All these factors made many workers join the Great Resignation and Quiet Quitting movements.

The Great Resignation (also called the Big Quit) refers to people who voluntarily left their jobs at higher than usual rates during the Covid-19 pandemic. Research suggests that they quit for one of three main reasons – low pay, no opportunities for advancement, and feeling disrespected at work.

The Quiet Quitting refers to a big shift in the way most of America works. Many of those who didn't join The Great Resignation bandwagon became disengaged and reluctant to go beyond their regular work hours and responsibilities. A switch to work from home has largely been blamed for the emergence of the Quiet Quitting.

At the same time, research has established that the overwhelming majority of Americans see job satisfaction as the key to a successful life. Surprisingly, marriage and being a parent happen to be much less prioritized.

These findings lead to an important conclusion – it's impossible to separate one's professional life from their personal life. If an employee is dissatisfied with their job and works in a toxic environment, their overall happiness will be impacted.

The Great Resignation, Quiet Quitting, and today's Cancel Culture are not indictments on employees, but rather business leaders' lack of focus on truly caring for the people who are under their command. Today, employees are more selective than ever regarding who they will work for; they are insisting that companies and their leaders help them live the right life.

“As employers, we have a golden opportunity to transform The Great Resignation into The Great Inspiration,” Self Esteem Brands' cofounder Chuck Runyon said. “Especially after the two years [of the pandemic], people don't just want to be paid – they want to be inspired.”

This employee experience revolution is tied to a customer

service revolution. Customer service revolution refers to a radical overthrow of conventional business mentality designed to transform what employees and customers experience. This shift produces a culture that permeates into people's personal lives, at home, and in the community, which in turn provides the business with higher sales, morale, and brand loyalty.

Chapter 3: The Power of Purpose

Millennials and Gen Z members pose unique challenges for businesses. Companies have to do a better job understanding what motivates these younger employees.

Studies shed some light on what makes these people tick. In a Bentley University survey, 84 percent of millennials said that making a positive difference in the world is more important than professional recognition.

Younger generations aren't interested in trading hours for dollars. They want to be part of something big, part of a purpose. The businesses that tie job responsibilities to an overall purpose and a bigger vision get incredible results from these generations – and also from the rest of their employees.

World-class experience brands do something different from everyone else. They build, encourage, recognize, and give the resources that allow their employees to constantly go above and beyond, which is why they end up having significantly higher employee fulfillment.

Also, the ability to go above and beyond for customers and coworkers allows employees to put their fingerprints on the experience. This fosters creative autonomy, allowing employees to come up with their own ideas, to think creatively, to exercise their brains in a new way, giving them a sense of ownership in the experience they provide. Employees are more connected to the experience they are providing when they feel they have a hand in creating it. That is how the power of purpose benefits employees and in turn also benefits customers.

It is time to create businesses with purpose, businesses that drive humanity-centric innovation. It's time that we stop working for business and business starts working for us. The

coming chapters take a deeper look at how great leaders incorporate the power of purpose in their managerial style.

Chapter 4: Creating a Recruitment Experience.

So many businesses appear desperate when they are understaffed, making them less attractive to top talent. Most companies hire reactively, racing to fill openings caused by either turnover or growth. This means that hiring occurs after the company experiences the need to fill a certain position and not strategically before. As a result, hiring standards could become compromised or lowered.

Too many companies are pushed by a need to fill positions quickly. They keep employees who have bad attitudes or who aren't a good fit simply because the organization is dealing with a staff shortage. That can be a tremendous strategic problem, bound to have long-term consequences. The age-old proverb "one bad apple spoils the barrel" serves as a perfect metaphor for workplace culture and how it's impacted by bad employees.

Instead of trying to fill gaps quickly, companies should shift their recruitment practices. The new focus will have to be on keeping top talent by improving business culture.

Building a world-class culture, however, isn't just about finding the best performers. Removing poor ones will also play a major role. A great workplace for high performers is one in which they're surrounded by other high performers.

When looking for new employees, it's essential to not only look for people who fit your corporate culture. New employees should also enhance it. To achieve those goals, you have to create a world-class recruiting experience (RX).

A great RX isn't solely focused on a great offer and the best compensation a potential employee will ever get. Pay is important but other factors are also at play here:

- The provision of career growth opportunities
- Work flexibility
- Workplace culture
- Availability of both hard and soft benefits
- Autonomy
- Mission and purpose
- Effective leadership

How do you present all these benefits during the RX? The key here is starting the recruiting experience long before the interview itself. What people see on your website, on your social media, and throughout reviews written by former employees matters. Everything a potential employee sees and hears before an interview should make overwhelmingly obvious what your brand stands for.

Also, the number one thing that will increase a candidate's interest in your career opportunity is educating them on how hard it is to get hired. The top employee experience brands articulate that they are not for everyone, nor do they want to be.

So, the things you should be doing when shaping the perfect RX include:

- Don't offer a job, offer a career
- Help them see your vision of what their short-term and long-term future could look like within the organization
- Articulate your culture and mission in a way that narrows down the talent pool
- Make sure candidates go through multiple interviews
- Choose questions that can't be rehearsed for
- Get candidates talking openly and honestly (your demeanor and the line of questions will matter)
- Once people feel at ease, start asking the real challenging questions
- Schedule an observation day for candidates as a part of the RX

Finally, remember to "hire for the soul, train for the role." When great brands look for great employees, they place a higher value on their will versus their skill. If they have the will, they can teach them the skill. If you want happy employees, only hire happy people. Be picky; hold out for people who ooze enthusiasm and positivity. Negative people are like a virus that spreads quickly.

What happens when you hire amazing people is that they are disappointed when they have to work with mediocre people. Remember that every time you hire someone, your culture gets either better or worse.

Chapter 5: Creating an Employee Onboarding Experience

The onboarding process should be a celebration. Its main focus: how to have an amazing career within an amazing company.

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Studies suggest that 88 percent of new employees are disappointed in their organization's onboarding process. This can lead to a phenomenon called hire's remorse.

Transitions are key. This is why you have to start onboarding before the new hire begins. Begin at least a week before your new hire's start date. Provide a functioning work station along with login credentials and all the tools needed to do the job. Being prepared this way makes a great first impression and also ensures a seamless transition.

Making new employees feel welcome could be as easy as sending a before-the-start-date email. Mention specific information you recall from the interview and share your enthusiasm about them starting the job. This kind of quick note will get new employees focused and looking forward to what they're about to experience in the new company.

Other parts of a great onboarding experience include:

- A welcome gift: making it personalized will score you bonus points and demonstrate your knowledge of someone new who's about to become a part of the team.
- Provide orientation opportunities: during periods of orientation, people are particularly susceptible to adopting new roles, goals, and values. Make the orientation process emotionally compelling and emphasize the mission and the company values.
- Deliver ongoing support during the first 90 days: this is the most critical period for a new employee. It will dictate their level of satisfaction within the organization and help them determine whether the right employment choice has been made. Check-ins on the 15th, 30th, 60th and 90th day to assess both performance and satisfaction.
- Get other employees involved: something as simple as a buddy program gives new recruits "veteran" assistance and a one-on-one chance to understand the organization and its culture better.
- Create a positive and warm environment: establish a world-class company culture through communication, education, and complete transparency.

Chapter 6: Creating an Employee Experience That Retains Them

Let's revisit one of the most important theories the book is based on: Great companies help people live extraordinary lives. Their leaders inspire employees to build lives of meaning and purpose.

So, how do organizations become not only the best professional decision employees have ever made, but one of the best decisions they ever made in their entire life, personally and professionally?

The perfect employee experience that keeps top talent committed to a company depends on:

- Making sure employees are always learning and evolving in their craft
- Recognize accomplishments: 63 percent of employees who are recognized regularly wouldn't consider looking for a new job
- Make sure recognition is available to everyone, regardless of their position, title, or time with the company
- Maintain a positive attitude and gratefulness as a leader
- Encourage others to outperform themselves consistently
- Invests in relationships and building emotional connections
- Know about your employees' FORD (family, occupation, recreation, and dreams)
- Harness all opportunities and platforms (including digital ones) to encourage positive and meaningful conversations
- Maintain all communication and messaging authentic
- Invest in employee well-being

Also don't forget the importance of fun in the workplace. It can foster more positive attitudes, help teams become more cohesive, and assist people in dealing with or recovering from stressful work experiences, while also developing stronger relationships.

Fun isn't just for employees. Workers are more likely to partake in festivities if they see their leaders involved. This helps humanize the leader and allows for a connection away from the boss/employee scenario. Now more than ever we need to find reasons to get together – little outings, celebrations, potluck lunches, holiday parties, happy hour get-togethers, a night at the ball game, or a community fundraiser.

For your team members to be at their best, it goes without saying that you, the leader, need to be at your best. Help employees reach their full potential. Demonstrating that as a leader you care about team members as human beings is what will separate you and make your company legendary in their mind.

Chapter 7: Tearing Down Silos by Building Collaboration Across Departments

Any time a client goes from dealing with one team member or department to another is when things can go wrong. A prospect usually bonds with the team member they initially start communicating with. Once they become a client, they'll be transferred to another team member. The communication will start from scratch and any issue or misunderstanding could lead to a loss of trust.

When focusing on creating an internal experience between team members across departments, our six goals are to:

- Remove silos, and train compassion and empathy
- Clarify handoffs between departments
- Identify customer segments, and define how your work impacts others
- Understand all your internal customers
- Improve communication within departments, locations, and other teams
- Create and improve training

Chapter 8: Building and Developing Great Leaders

New research suggests that an incredible 82 percent of bosses are “accidental managers.” This means many of the people promoted to managerial positions are all title and no training. The scariest finding is that 25 percent of those managers are in senior leadership roles.

Employees who say their manager is ineffective feel less satisfied, valued, and motivated in their job than those who describe their manager as effective. Not surprisingly, 50 percent of surveyed employees who are unhappy with their manager say they are planning to quit within the next year.

Building and developing great leaders is one of the keys to happy, fulfilled employees. Establishing a great culture and leading the employee experience revolution starts with developing great leaders, making your existing ones better, and creating a pipeline of emerging talent who can be the next generation of leaders within the company.

Emerging leaders are team members who not only perform their jobs well, but also demonstrate potential for growth and leadership beyond their current roles. Qualities for identifying emerging leaders include:

- Overall job performance
- Showing leadership tendencies
- A commitment to innovation
- Adaptability
- Great communication
- Collaboration
- Taking ownership of roles and responsibilities

Once an emerging leader has been identified, you will have to find ways to get them active within the organization outside of just their current role. One good way is to invite them to join a project steering committee where they can interact with leaders, oversee timeliness, and communicate progress. In other words, do not go out looking for great talent; become a great talent magnet.

When you establish a world-class brand, you wouldn't have to work hard at finding great talent and outstanding leaders. Great talent will find you. Quality attracts quality, and quality has a community impact. Those who wouldn't want to be held to a higher standard will simply refrain from seeking opportunities within a world-class brand.

Chick-fil-A is one example of a brand that places tremendous importance on selecting amazing leaders. One of their primary decision filters for making informed decisions when selecting the best leaders is asking the following: “Is this someone who cares about others and will pour genuine love and care into the team? And is this someone I would want my child to work for?”

When the core team of leaders consists of these kinds of people, great talent gets interested. So many companies view recruiting and talent as if it's just "throw out the line and drag in the fish;" however, better yet, what if that fish wants to jump into the boat? Magnets attract, and when you start with a quality core of leaders, quality is reeled in.

Chapter 9: Leaving a Leadership Legacy

Great leaders are great visionaries. They never accept the status quo. They are contrarians by nature. They are constantly trying to reimagine a better way.

Emerging leaders need to be taught what success looks like. It starts with having great leaders modeling the behavior. But it's also important to remember that leadership is easy when the wind is out back, but much harder when we are facing into the headwinds. In other words, crises define leadership. Tough times don't build character; they reveal it. Some of the best leaders work really well when they're facing hardship, when they're being challenged.

Tough times create tougher teams, as long as a leader is willing to step up. Excellent communication, bringing good answers to bad circumstances will be vital. Pull out your mission, purpose, core values, and customer experience action statements. Talk about what they mean during challenging times. Great leaders have the ability to communicate with a purpose, rallying and building a community around a clear vision.

Passing down knowledge will also be the key to creating a next generation of leaders who share the same vision.

Be mindful of your energy levels and what you bring to the workspace every day. It is about how you show up, what kind of energy you bring to others. Ask yourself if you're an energy giver or an energy sucker. Just because you high-fived someone this week doesn't make you a full-time energy giver. You have to do it consistently. It has to be a conscious decision and an intentional choice.

A few other great tips to help you inspire and model the leadership style that inspires others include:

- Set the right kinds of expectations for team members
- Always encourage and pat people on the back
- Don't be afraid of showing vulnerability

- Focus on having an extraordinary life – amazingness will have an immense impact on others
- Go where no other team has gone before – always choose greatness
- Be fascinated by the future and always seek change

Conclusion

Passion is the emotional fuel that drives your vision. It's what you hold on to when your ideas are challenged and people turn you down, when you are rejected by so-called "experts" and the people closest to you.

It's the fuel that keeps you going when there is no outside validation for your dreams.

First, you need to believe in yourself. Don't waiver. There will be people who don't think like you do, don't have your vision, who cannot comprehend the future you see.

You are a revolutionary if you're restless for change, impatient for progress, and deeply dissatisfied with the status quo. As a revolutionary, you are never satisfied with the present, because in your head you can see a better future and the friction between what is and what could be burns you, stirs you, propels you forward.

Welcome to the employee experience revolution!

To sum it all up – great companies help people live extraordinary lives. Their leaders inspire employees to build lives of meaning and purpose.



John DiJulius III is the founder and chief revolution officer of The DiJulius Group and has worked with companies helping them make the experience they deliver their single biggest competitive advantage.

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