8-10-2020

Reciprocal Relationship between Employee Experience Management and Digital Transformation

Kaveh Abhari
San Diego State University, kabhari@sdsu.edu

Zachary Solomon
San Diego State University, zsolomon8348@sdsu.edu

Reciprocal Relationship between Employee Experience Management and Digital Transformation

TREO Talk Paper

Kaveh Abhari
San Diego State University
kabhari@sdsu.edu

Zachary Solomon
San Diego State University
zsolomon8348@sdsu.edu

Abstract

Employees are the implementers and immediate beneficiaries of almost all digital transformation (DT) initiative. Employees are in the first line of executing these initiatives, from redefining business strategies and organizational structure to transforming internal processes and external services. Hence, employees' experiences with DT initiatives should be understood, invested in, and managed foremost at both strategic and tactical levels. Without such attention, DT initiatives would fail to fulfill their promises or even cause more harm than benefit. We argue that DT initiatives can be a source of positive employee experiences if they can address the employees' experiential desires in support of DT. Managing employee experience by the mean of digital tools and technologies can be achieved through several strategies. In this presentation, we discuss five strategies that can be adopted by different organizations regardless of their size or industry. We believe the implementation of these digitally enabled strategies has the potential to facilitate DT and encourage employees' participation across their organizations.

First, organizations can employ the use of enterprise social networks (ESN) to connect employees across functional units, promote their achievements, brand internally, and boost intradepartmental collaboration. The introduction of ESN as part of DT initiatives may encourage employees to experience the value of digital tools in an organic and personalized way before committing to formally use the new tools. ESNs can be also implemented to create internal learning networks to support employees with the applications of new tools and implementation of new processes. Moreover, ESNs can encourage employees to share their preferences and needs before the management teams decide about implementing new digital strategies, adopting new processes, or utilizing new technologies. ESNs also encourage employees to participate in evaluating DT initiatives and provide honest feedback throughout the implementation process. Second, DT initiatives can open up the R&D process to all employees. Digital tools allow employees to co-create the future of their organization by participating in the innovation process. Likewise, DT can directly connect employees who are interested in new product or service development to the customer base to learn about their expectations and concerns. DT initiatives that mobilize employees to innovate have a higher chance of success as the employees creatively utilize new tools and processes to address the inevitable challenges that organizations face during DT. Third, DT initiatives can democratize the access to and use of organizational data. Using digital platforms to make data available and accessible across organizations may enhance employee experience by promoting not only transparency but also trust in DT initiatives. Widely available business intelligence tools to employees can help them make informed decisions around DT related topics such as talent management, job crafting, training, sourcing, and so on. Fourth, DT can enhance how organizations train their employees in order to prepare them for upcoming changes. Using digital tools to enhance employees' knowledge and skills not only supports employees in adopting new tools and processes but also establish trust and confidence among them in actively using and benefiting from DT initiatives. Lastly, DT initiatives can support employee empowerment programs. DT initiatives can grant employees autonomy to craft their work process and power to make autonomous decisions. This sense of empowerment may lead to an increase in employee job satisfaction as well as motivation to participate in DT initiatives. The proposed strategies can help employees take ownership of DT plans as well as their results, which is crucial to the success of DT initiatives. Therefore, understanding and acting upon the reciprocal relationship between Employee Experience Management programs and using digital technologies–for example for networking, ideation, knowledge-management, training, and empowerment–is a promising approach to facilitate achieve DT promises such as enhanced collaboration, innovation, and productivity.