As the need to provide people with meaningful, purposeful work in pursuit of organizational goals has become increasingly clear, high-performing organizations are looking beyond the limitations of employee engagement to workforce experience (WX). By including all workers—not just on-payroll employees—workforce experience moves the performance needle and considers all connections between individuals and the organization, not just one-off motivators like perks and benefits, in the design of work. High-performing organizations recognize that a compelling WX not only fosters engagement but also offers leaders a way to manage the evolving workforce, meet the fast-changing needs and preferences of workers, and unlock unrealized productivity promised by new technologies. Nevertheless, while 84 percent of organizations consider WX a priority, only 9 percent feel they are ready to address the issue.1

This article summarizes select workforce experience principles that can help predict business and talent outcomes as well as the factors that distinguish the organizations with the most mature WX.
High-Impact Workforce Experience: In Brief

What Leaders Need to Know

The experience of work should excite and challenge the workforce. It should elevate the role of the worker, hold leaders accountable, and support the achievement of both organizational and individual goals. But the reality is that few organizations provide such a workforce experience. That’s why, when we asked how likely survey respondents are to recommend their organization’s WX, the overall Net Promoter Score (NPS®)² was a lacklustre −5.³

High-performing organizations, however, are working to create a new workforce reality by being intentional about workforce experience. We define workforce experience as: All of the connections between individuals and their colleagues, leaders, and employer—encompassing personal, physical, digital, and organizational elements.⁴

Our High-Impact Workforce Experience study reveals the following insights:⁵

• A holistic approach to workforce experience delivers huge premiums in NPS and enhanced organizational performance. High-performing organizations are nearly twice as likely as low-performing organizations to clearly define WX in a holistic manner, rethinking how, where, and when work is done. They also are more likely to establish a connection between day-to-day processes and WX. Moreover, the NPS of WX is +42 in high-performing organizations, while it is −39 in low-performing organizations.

• High-performing organizations enhance workforce experience by creating dynamic experiences, not rigid processes. High-performing organizations leverage their ability to respond to change and enhance WX by enlisting individuals in the...
design of work and workplaces, as well as reinforce daily moments with trust and inclusivity. When individuals are given a voice in designing work and can connect that work with the goals and values of the organization, they are more engaged and motivated, which, in turn, positively impacts the organizational culture.

- **Leaders in high-performing organizations are accountable for the manifestation of workforce experience.** In fact, in high-performing organizations, leaders are nearly 6 times more likely to be held accountable for WX. From line managers to CEOs, leaders demonstrate this accountability in their everyday interactions with individuals by fostering authenticity, establishing trust, and building a culture of inclusivity and transparency.

### Workforce Experience Maturity

The individual worker resides at the central hub of workforce experience, surrounded by the various elements that create it. As WX becomes more mature, these elements contribute more to the production of employee engagement and organizational results. But only 10 percent of organizations are delivering a fully mature WX (see Figure 1).

#### Figure 1: The Workforce Experience Maturity Model

*Note: The white circles to the right of each maturity level indicate the percentage of surveyed companies at that level.*


### Characteristics of a Highly Mature Workforce Experience

Organizations at the highest level of workforce experience maturity—Level 4—are intentionally managing and refining WX in a comprehensive manner and integrating it with the customer experience. Responsibility and accountability for WX is vested in a formal network of WX leaders and distributed across the organization. Workforce experience is fully aligned to the values and goals of the organization, with leaders building a strong connection between WX and the meaning and purpose of work through authentic conversations, trust, and accountability. Individuals not only own their work but also drive the design of their work and offerings such as rewards and flexibility. Digital strategies support productivity and provide access to knowledge. And, the organization exemplifies a “colleague-for-life” mindset, recognizing that the worker’s experience with their organization doesn’t end just because their job ends.⁶
High-performing organizations are . . .

- 2.2X more likely to **enhance worker experience** by removing roadblocks and enabling productivity
- 3.2X more likely to use **design thinking approaches**
- 2X more likely to align **day-to-day experiences** with the core values of the organization
- 6.3X more likely to leverage customer-facing **business insights** across HR Teams

. . . than low-performing organizations.


Looking Ahead

The current talent environment brings new urgency to the need to create a compelling, holistic, human-centered workforce experience. Moreover, our High-Impact Workforce Experience research reveals a strong correlation between the proactive management of WX and an organization’s performance. When will you begin elevating the workforce experience within your organization?
Key Takeaways

- Workforce experience includes all of the connections between individuals and their colleagues, leaders, and employer—encompassing personal, physical, digital, and organizational elements.
- High-performing organizations enlist the workforce in the design of work and workplaces.
- Leaders who embrace the importance of workforce experience ownership and construct trust through communication are more likely to successfully create positive workforce experiences.
- Bersin’s High-Impact Workforce Experience research reveals that higher levels of workforce experience maturity are positively correlated with above-average organizational performance.
- Nearly 74 percent of organizations are at Levels 1 or 2 maturity (the least mature levels of WX), while only 26 percent of organizations have achieved Levels 3 or 4 maturity.
Endnotes


2. The “Net Promoter Score” (NPS®) is based on the fundamental perspective that every company’s customers can be divided into three categories: promoters, passives and detractors. Net Promoter, Net Promoter System, Net Promoter Score, NPS and the NPS-related emoticons are registered trademarks of Bain & Company, Inc., Fred Reichheld and Satmetrix Systems, Inc.


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