

Post-COVID-19 Employee Experience Vision Board Activity

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Masks, hand sanitizer and socially distanced workspaces are on everyone's checklist, as companies carefully prepare to reopen their workplaces. However, many have yet to truly consider the equally important topic of what the employee experience will be like after COVID-19.



Now is the time to thoughtfully design elements of the post-COVID-19 employee experience and plan the journey from initial re-entry to the "new normal." As an internal communication strategist, a good place to start is to bring together fellow leaders in your organization to envision the employee experience and consider questions such as:

How have we traditionally described our employee experience?

What do we want our employee experience to be in the future?

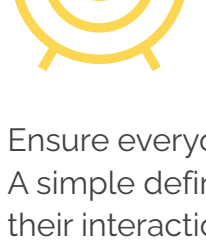
What is our go-forward philosophy on remote work?

What will help employees feel comfortable about returning to the workplace?

What impact will initial restrictions and social-distancing protocols have on the employee experience?

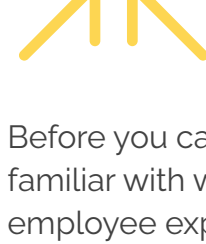
How can we include employees in validating or redefining the employee experience?

A vision board activity is an excellent way to begin approaching these questions. Use the steps listed here to host a series of conversations. Be sure to get the right people in the room — invite anyone who touches the employee experience and has the authority to make decisions. This may include the heads of Human Resources, Information Technology, Workplace Services, Security, Brand, Corporate Strategy and others.



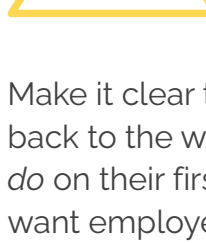
Step One: Define what you mean by the "employee experience"

Ensure everyone is aligned on what the term "employee experience" means. A simple definition is "the sum of perceptions that employees have about their interactions with the organization." Think of it as the culmination of many moments and experiences, from being inspired by the company purpose to carrying out day-to-day responsibilities to feeling the campus vibe to collaborating with others. If you have a stated Employee Value Proposition, that can be a good starting point for the discussion.



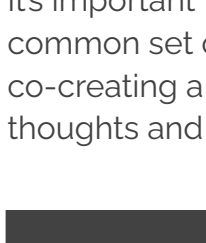
Step Two: Gather info on the current employee experience

Before you can design the future, you need to know the starting point. Be familiar with what your organization currently promises in terms of the unique employee experience and how employees view the experience. Pull together existing messaging on the employee experience, collateral used in recruiting and onboarding activities, and insights from recent COVID-19 pulse survey results and past engagement survey data.



Step Three: Set the stage for the vision board activity

Make it clear that the vision board activity is not about how to get people safely back to the workplace. Rather than asking, "What do we need employees to do on their first day back in the office?", the goal is to explore "What do we want employees to experience as they return to the office?" The return to the workplace will consist of phases, with the immediate reopening potentially feeling stark and jarring, as opposed to subsequent phases that may be a year or more away. Thus, a secondary question to explore is, "What do we want employees to experience two years from now, in a post-COVID world?"



Step Four: Co-create a vision board that depicts the future employee experience

It's important for leaders to work from a shared vision of the future and a common set of assumptions. Schedule a series of conversations focused on co-creating a vision board, whether digital or physical, to capture the group's thoughts and agreements on the following questions:

How have we traditionally described our employee experience?

Consider elements such as company purpose, leadership philosophy, engagement with leaders, interaction with peers, relationships with customers, the work itself, degree of autonomy, company culture, diversity and inclusion, career development and growth opportunities, collaboration and innovation, decision making, total rewards, corporate social responsibility and environmental factors, including physical work environment, café, gym and other amenities.

What do we want our employee experience to be in the future?

Given our business strategy and people strategy, what must stay the same? What is open to change? What will it be like in the short term? What will it be like in the long term, post-COVID-19? How can we bring some of the positives that we've experienced over the last few months back to the workplace?

What is our go-forward philosophy on remote work?

What impact will this philosophy have on the employee experience? If we have a blended workforce, with some working from home and others on-site, how will we ensure that "out of sight" is not "out of mind"? How might we need to adjust talent programs? What is our stance on employees relocating far away from company locations?

What will help employees feel comfortable about returning to the workplace?

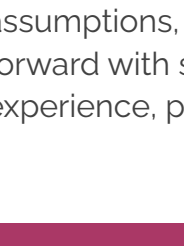
What restrictions and social distancing protocols will we need? What communication needs to be in place? What certifications or incentives should we introduce? Should we use a pilot approach for the return to the workplace?

What impact will initial restrictions and social-distancing protocols have on the employee experience?

How can we offset what might be seen as a stark or lonely environment? How can we help early returners feel connected to each other and to the broader group that is still at home? Will certain populations feel excluded?

How can we include employees in validating or redefining the employee experience?

How do we ensure diverse and representative input? What existing mechanisms for feedback can we leverage? How can we make this a visible exercise?

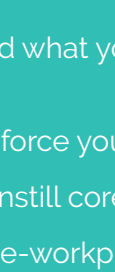


Step Five: Use the vision board to move forward

Once decision makers are working from a shared vision and a common set of assumptions, keep the vision board front and center so everyone can move forward with speed and confidence to deliver on the promised employee experience, post-COVID-19.

Where to turn for help

Know that the ROI team is here to help you create your post-COVID-19 employee experience. Here are just a few examples of how we can support you:



- Design and facilitate an executive strategy session to gain alignment on your post-COVID-19 employee experience
- Design surveys and focus groups to understand what your employees value most in their future employee experience
- Develop communications to articulate and reinforce your unique employee experience
- Create change and engagement strategies to instill core elements of the experience
- Develop tools and deliverables for return-to-the-workplace communications

Contributors

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About ROI Communication

We believe people should feel inspired at work. Because inspired people deliver extraordinary results.

We know what it takes to turn a company into a community. With 18 years of employee engagement expertise, we craft innovative, purpose-driven strategies that connect cultures and create brand champions.

And we do it all — from planning and creative development, to execution and measuring results — with joy in our hearts and a commitment to doing the right thing.