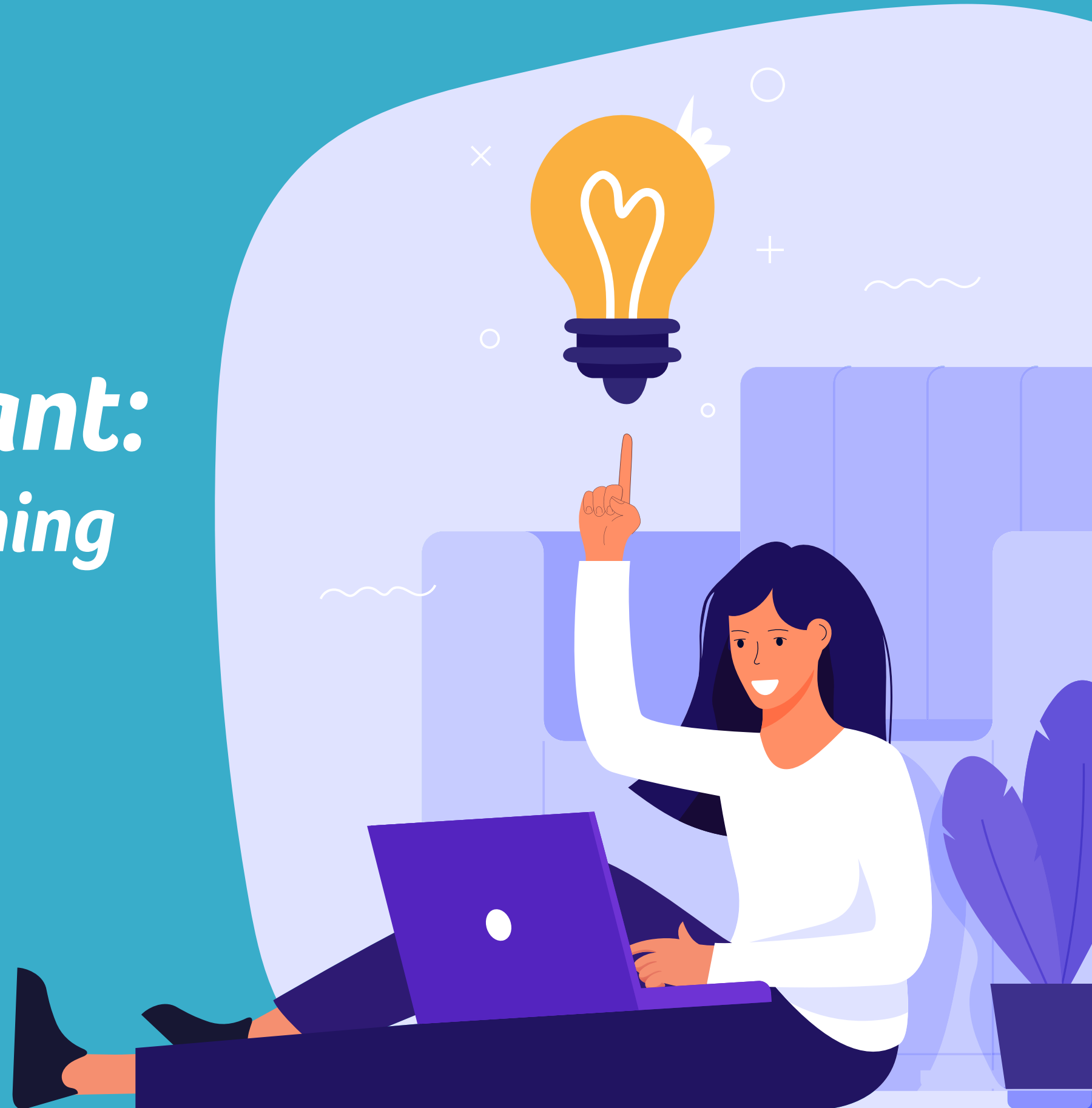




# *What Workers Want: 3 Ways to Create a Winning Employee Experience*



Part of Learning Technologies Group plc *ltg*

  [peoplefluent.com](https://www.peoplefluent.com)

# Table of Contents

- 02. Introduction
- 03. What Is Employee Experience, Exactly?
- 04. Increase Employee Morale and Engagement
- 06. Encourage Open Communication With Managers
- 09. Offer Flexibility for an Improved Work/Life Balance
- 11. Give Your Employees What They Want
- 12. About PeopleFluent

## Introduction

**It's no secret people want more from their work. According to a recent survey by Microsoft, more than 40% of workers are considering leaving their jobs this year<sup>1</sup>. Meanwhile, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports four million Americans quit their jobs in July 2021<sup>2</sup>.**

Sure, employee turnover does happen, but 52% of voluntarily exiting employees say their manager or organization could have done something to prevent them from leaving their job<sup>3</sup>. This is good news! It means there's definitely an opportunity for HR teams to intervene and begin creating winning employee experiences and retain their top talent. Put simply, happy people tend to stay longer.

The employee experience is an important aspect of retention, yet many companies remain unsure of how to address it. A winning employee experience isn't something that happens by chance. It takes intentional planning, corporate buy-in, and constant attention.

In order to create an experience that works for your company, and its employees, you need to keep a pulse on how your people feel throughout their journey with your organization. This gives you an opportunity to fix any issues before they become deal-breakers.

After all, as an HR and business leader, you have a responsibility to make sure your people feel valued and appreciated for all they do. But how? We have a few suggestions, so keep reading.

**In this ebook, we'll expand on three ways you can do just that by:**

- 1 Keeping morale high**
- 2 Encouraging open communication with managers**
- 3 Offering flexible working options to help balance life outside of work**

**Before we get started, let's take a look at what employee experience means and what it includes.**

<sup>1</sup> WorkLab. (Mar 2021). 'The Next Great Disruption Is Hybrid Work—Are We Ready?'. Microsoft. [Available online.](#)

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (Oct 2021). 'Job Openings and Labor Turnover Summary'. U.S. Department of Labor. [Available online.](#)

<sup>3</sup> McFeely, S. and Wigert, B. (Mar 2019). 'This Fixable Problem Costs U.S. Businesses \$1 Trillion'. Gallup Workplace. [Available online.](#)

## What Is Employee Experience, Exactly?

Simply put, employee experience is everything a person goes through at work—and even how they think about work during non-working hours. Most people want to be immersed in a culture that keeps them engaged and is meaningful, rather than simply punching the clock day in and day out. A good employee experience encompasses the way your employees learn, how they feel, if they're valued, and what they go through at work.

It's time to focus on global work conditions and understand that remote working has put new expectations on how HR, line managers, and executives support their people. That means HR and line managers need to account for the differences in how people want to be managed. Providing a personal experience starts with understanding and appreciating the unique skills and qualities each individual brings to the table.

### Why Should You Focus on Employee Experience?

With the world of work changing fast, several factors are forcing us to put more focus on how employees perceive their careers and their overall experience.

One factor is the changing workforce demographics and their expectations, as we outlined earlier. To expand on that, Gen-Zers and Millennials are generally both attracted to employers that have ethical leadership as well as those that care about their wellbeing and mental health<sup>4</sup>. People may be productive even when they're exhausted, or worse, on the brink of burnout.

It's also important to remember that flexible work is here to stay. Over 70% of workers want to continue seeing flexible work options and over 65% are ready for more in-person time with their teammates<sup>5</sup>. Because of this, decision-makers are beginning to redesign physical workspaces in order to accommodate for the hybrid work environments their employees crave.

Follow these trends and meeting the needs of a changing workforce will ultimately pay off in the long run. That is, when your organization can address individual worker needs, it can anticipate future programs that will help attract and retain top talent.

**In the following chapters, we'll show you how to get the ball rolling.**

<sup>4</sup> O'Boyle, E. (Mar 2021). '4 Things Gen Z and Millennials Expect From Their Workplace'. Gallup. [Available online.](#)

<sup>5</sup> WorkLab. (Mar 2021). 'The Next Great Disruption Is Hybrid Work—Are We Ready?'. Microsoft. [Available online.](#)

# 1) Increase Employee Morale and Engagement

When you think about the journey people go through to build a career, there are many hurdles that aren't always easy to overcome. Naturally, that gives way to the normal human emotions that we all feel when we experience wins or losses. And, as organizations reimagine today's talent journey, they should be focused on creating a better employee experience.

First and foremost, employees need to feel supported and valued. Without this focus, employers will experience turnover and be less attractive to top talent—not a good look while we learn to navigate a tighter, more competitive labor market<sup>6</sup>.

A lot of these challenges can be solved by recognizing when employee morale may be low, across the whole organization. It's always a good time to think about how your team is experiencing the work environment. It takes more than just day-to-day tasks and responsibilities to create an employee experience that people are happy with. It requires a close look at every aspect of what they do on the job, including:

- Organizational culture
- Communication style and frequency
- Compensation structure
- Total rewards package
- Onboarding process and ongoing feedback
- Professional development opportunities

If one or more of these factors is contributing to low employee engagement or morale, it's time to start looking into solutions. When employees genuinely enjoy coming to work (or logging into work remotely!), they're more motivated to be productive and efficient. High morale also means a higher quality of work and your employees will feel fulfilled by their contributions to the company.

<sup>6</sup> Principal. (Jul 2021). 'How to attract and retain employees in a shifting job market'. Washington Post. [Available online.](#)

According to Gallup, here are some ways you can increase employee engagement:<sup>7</sup>

## 1: Measure what matters most for employees' performance.

Leaders often focus on metrics that don't tie strongly to employees' psychological needs and ultimate performance.

## 3: Make it an ongoing process.

One of the most common mistakes that leaders make is to approach engagement as a sporadic exercise in making their employees feel happy. Employees need ongoing purpose and development, not biannual perks, to achieve more for your organization.

## 2: Act quickly.

Employees who strongly agree that their organization acts on survey results are 1.9 times more likely to be engaged<sup>8</sup>. If you're not using a survey that provides a framework for taking action, now is the time to switch.

## 4: Empower managers to drive engagement.

Engagement isn't just an "HR thing." Managers account for 70% of the variance in team engagement. There are no quick fixes when it comes to human relationships. It is essential that managers effectively interact with and develop each team member over time.

<sup>7</sup> Gallup. 'Create a Proven Employee Engagement Strategy'. [Available online.](#)

<sup>8</sup> Gallup Access. 'Action planning'. [Available online.](#)

## 2) Encourage Open Communication With Managers

So, what should be at the heart of every talent strategy? For starters, the ability to connect top performers to opportunities that build their skills and put them in the best position to energize and challenge them. But how can employers make that journey a smoother experience?

While technology can be a big part of helping you and your people, it's not a catch-all. The right HR tech can, however, help you fill gaps that might lead to a poor employee experience. All of this begins with open communication between individuals and their managers.

When discussions happen often, and at the right time, managers can address issues like burnout or decreased productivity. Plus, when given an outlet to talk about their work life, employees will feel secure and valued. This same concept can be applied to opening lines of communication between work peers, even if they're not on the same teams.

Cross-collaboration can enhance business outcomes and lead to career growth by way of mentorship—a great strategy for helping remote workers connect with peers and share knowledge across the business.

**Bosses staying in contact with their employees might seem like a no-brainer, but that doesn't mean it always happens. Only 20% of organizations say their managers consistently provide helpful feedback and coaching to their employees, but those that do are 85% more likely to see a year-over-year increase in talent retention<sup>9</sup>.**

<sup>9</sup> Based on an internal report from Brandon Hall Group.

## Lead With Transparency

A great way to retain talent—rather than see them leave for other roles outside of the business—is by providing employee feedback and coaching. Companies that regularly provide this level of communication are 3x more likely to see a year-over-year increase in employee engagement and 40% more likely to see a strong correlation between the highest performance ratings and the strongest performers<sup>10</sup>.

Open and often communication is just as important as having performance-related discussions. Often, negative feedback (or even constructive criticism) may stick in people’s minds. This doesn’t mean managers should avoid tough conversations—rather, they should give employees a candid and safe space to express themselves. In fact, data shows that 25% of people don’t know how to request feedback from managers<sup>11</sup>.

Remember, each individual on your team will prefer a unique style of communication. That’s why we recommend you hash out your communication strategy beforehand as you plan a way forward to keep conversations happening often.

Finally, it never feels good to hear something secondhand that might affect you at work. That’s how employees might feel when they learn of company news—or even changes to team dynamics—from someone other than their boss. If and where possible, managers should share pertinent information with their employees. Of course, there may be “need-to-know” information (like mergers or acquisitions that only top-level folks are privy to), but where possible, a culture of open, honest communication can boost both morale and productivity.



<sup>10</sup> Based on an internal report from Brandon Hall Group.

<sup>11</sup> Reflektive. (2020). 'The State of Performance Management Benchmark Report'. [Available online.](#)



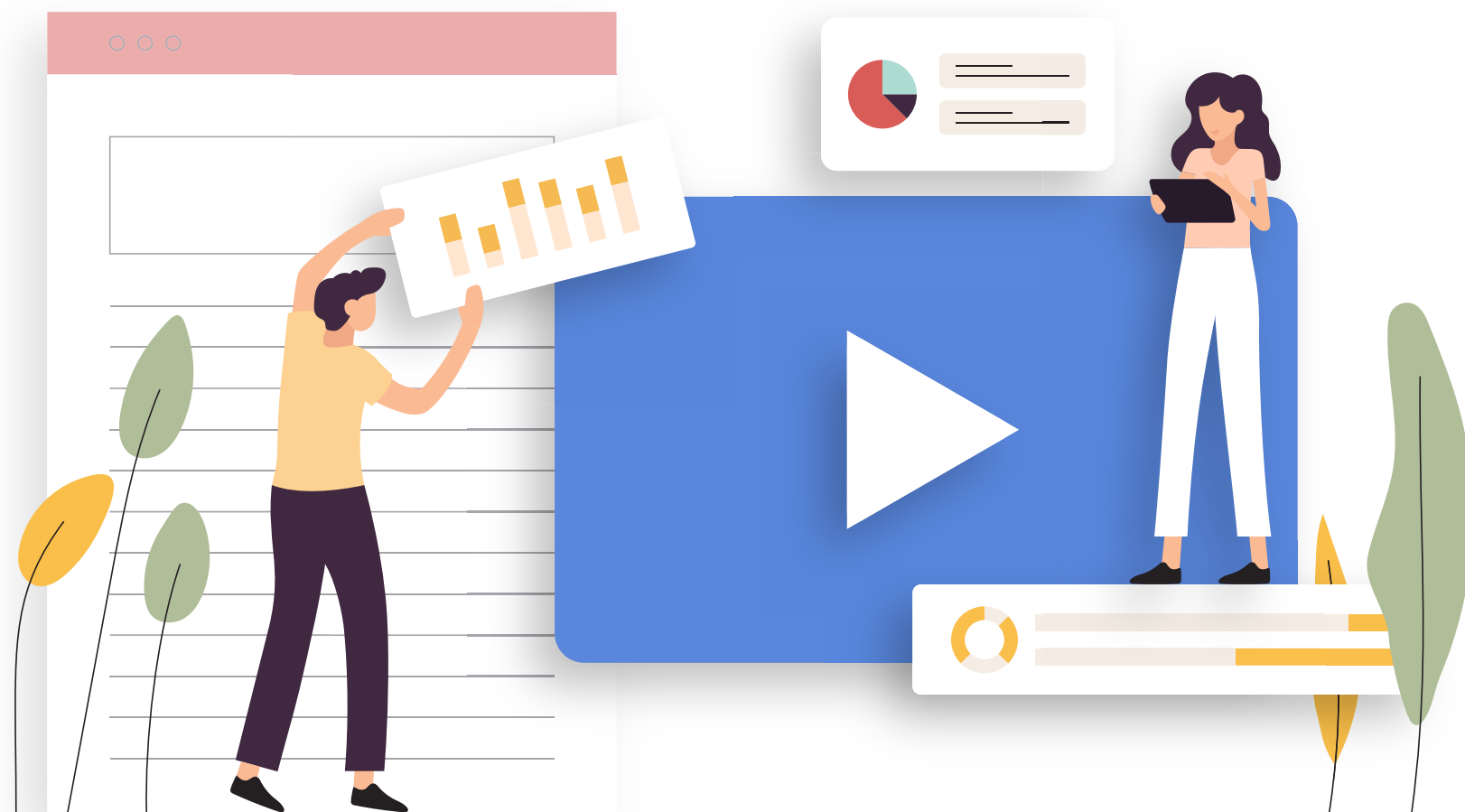
## Mentorship's Role in Employee Experience

Peer-to-peer mentorship can increase agility in the recruitment and onboarding processes (which ultimately help fill empty roles quicker) by getting new hires up to speed quicker. This is a huge help as L&D teams have undoubtedly been stretched thin since the pandemic—and even before that, in many cases. Mentorship can help provide more resources to increase productivity, alleviating some bandwidth issues as a mentee can learn new skills and assist with stretch projects or other tasks.

Consider this: line and department managers are people like the rest of us. While they've become integral to keeping teams functioning (and also providing timely feedback to higher-ups in the business), they're not available 24/7. When employees have other points of contact, such as a mentor, they don't feel as isolated or without answers to pressing questions.

In the case of global teams working across timezones, a mentor may be local and able to respond quicker in times of need. Just because we're mostly working hybrid schedules or from home—and are spread across multiple locations—doesn't mean we can't create feedback loops that provide more than operational support. Being able to run an idea by someone, or simply stop in for a virtual "coffee talk", goes a long way when someone's feeling isolated.

For more on mentoring, read our blog post, ['Growing Skills & Retaining People: How to Successfully Mentor in the Workplace'](#)



### 3) Offer Flexibility for an Improved Work/Life Balance

Your employees are the backbone of your business. They're responsible for everything from customer service to production and distribution, so it's important that they're happy in their role—both individually and as a team. One way you can help create an environment where people want to work is giving the flexibility needed to create a good work/life balance.

At the beginning of 2020, it was clear that employees both abroad and domestically would need to shift their working habits (and locations). Workforces have completely reinvented themselves with the help of L&D and HR departments across global organizations. If this taught us anything, it's that we can all be a bit more flexible when the occasion calls for it. And, it may just benefit us all to make that practice a habit.

According to a study on the importance of work flexibility for wellbeing, the U.S. National Library of Medicine found that<sup>12</sup>:

- **Working from home increased the likelihood of job satisfaction by 65%**
- **Taking time off decreased the likelihood of job stress by 56% and more than doubled the likelihood of job satisfaction**
- **Changing one's schedule decreased the likelihood of job stress by 20% and increased the likelihood of job satisfaction by 62%**

<sup>12</sup> Ray, T. and Pana-Cryan, R. (Mar 2021). 'Work Flexibility and Work-Related Well-Being'. NCBI. [Available online.](#)

They may be onto something, too, as another recent publication noted that our brains simply aren't built for the unprecedented levels of uncertainty we've been exposed to<sup>13</sup>—for an indeterminate amount of time. After all, not knowing what the world may look like next month means many of us need to stay agile and on our toes, ready to pivot if need be. This level of uncertainty can lead to increased anxiety, decreased productivity and worker engagement, and diminished mental health. All components of a poor employee experience.

How can businesses expect workers to plan for the next quarter, much less a few weeks in advance, when the global workforce is in flux as this is being written? With that, the flexibility HR and business leaders extend to their people should focus on a few core things. Those are, in no order of importance:

- Leadership's willingness to adapt to how and when work gets done, with discretion to the project's urgency in mind
- A culture of open communication that fosters employee feedback and puts people in charge of creating their work/life balance
- A focus on bandwidth and coverage to ensure teams across the business have the necessary resources to meet deadlines and goals

It's quite a feat to encourage a flexible work environment that fosters a healthy work-life balance. It may seem easy in theory but, in practice, it will require transparent and frequent communication with managers and their teams, as well as individual employees.

We recommend having goal and performance-driven discussions on 1:1 calls, for instance. This gives employees a chance to take ownership of their work while also finding time to do things like going for a walk or engaging with a new piece of online learning. And, it also gives managers the opportunity to reprioritize items or get important project status updates.



<sup>13</sup> Grant, H. & Goldhamer T. (Sep 2021). 'Our Brains Were Not Built for This Much Uncertainty'. Harvard Business Review. [Available online.](#)

## Give Your Employees What They Want

Technology influences so much of a worker's experience with your company. Especially nowadays, as a majority of our time is spent in front of screens. But it usually isn't the tech that makes for a memorable experience. Your employees will recall the skills and growth they developed at your organization just as much as they'll remember the relationships they foster with clients, coworkers, and leadership.

As early and often as possible, create opportunities for meaningful conversations about where your employees see themselves in the organization. The sooner you help people feel connected to the work they do at your company, the more they'll want to contribute and engage.

### When Does HR Tech Matter for Employee Experience?

HR technologies, like a [talent mobility solution](#), let employers offer and manage an enjoyable employee journey supported by AI-driven career pathing—one that removes the frustrations of broken technology or platforms that don't 'talk' to each other. Removing these gaps in information will allow you to develop a strategy through tech. The right solutions, when used together, will help you start guiding employees from day one.

With the right HR tech and a solid strategy for talent management, you can make sure your people feel appreciated and valued at work.

GET A DEMO

CONTACT SALES

## About PeopleFluent

As a market leader in integrated talent management and learning solutions, PeopleFluent helps companies hire, develop, reward, and advance a skilled and motivated workforce. Deployed separately or as a suite, our software spans [recruitment](#), [talent mobility](#), [performance](#), [compensation](#), [succession](#), [org charting](#), and [learning](#)—tailored for either large or mid-enterprise organizations. We deliver unmatched functionality and flexibility, recognized by leading analysts, to develop people, drive performance and deliver results.

Our talent solutions unify talent processes within a collaborative experience that enables HR and L&D teams to guide managers and employees with contextual learning—right in the flow of work.

A part of [Learning Technologies Group plc \(LTG\)](#), PeopleFluent provides world-class service and an unparalleled ecosystem of partners to optimize employee experience, employer brand, and business results.

For more, visit [peoplefluent.com](https://peoplefluent.com)

Part of Learning Technologies Group plc 

