



# Employees: The linchpin of agency success

Improving customer satisfaction and mission outcomes starts by focusing on the employee experience



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**T**HERE IS AN inextricable connection between the employee experience and an agency's ability to deliver on its mission. Federal employees are so central to mission delivery that agencies must always consider the employee experience when considering the experience of other constituents.

By understanding and improving the employee experience, agencies can positively affect important workforce metrics, such as talent retention, while also having a material impact on agency operations.

To monitor and improve the employee experience, agencies should begin by measuring that experience in a meaningful way. An annual survey is simply not enough. Instead, agencies should tie that exploration to the moments that matter in the employee life cycle.

In addition, they should link employee feedback to constituent feedback because of the way the two experiences are woven together. For example, if a constituent has a poor experience, the answer to resolving the issue may lie with the organization's employees. Building a meaningful engagement with employees helps improve processes while also creating a virtuous cycle for constituents — or a chain of positive events that reinforces itself.

## How to engage with employees

There are four simple activities that agencies should undertake to improve the employee experience (if they aren't already doing them):

### 1. Analyze feedback and take action.

Information without action is fruitless. In

fact, it degrades the employee experience. When you ask employees for input and feedback, have a plan for using that information and, most importantly, showing employees the action you took.

**2. Make employee experience part of the agency's operational rhythm.** An employee feedback cycle should not stand alone but instead should be incorporated into the agency's larger goals for improving processes, creating new services or responding to policy changes.

**3. Engage with employees often.** There

are many opportunities to engage with and learn from employees. Again, agencies should go beyond an annual survey by identifying meaningful moments in the employee life cycle or the agency's mission delivery and then check in with employees at those points.

**4. Be bold.** We often fear feedback from customers and employees, and some of us have the perception that we only hear from those who have had negative experiences. That can be a self-fulfilling prophecy if engagement is not tied to the employee life





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cycle, if you do not incorporate employee feedback in your operational rhythm and if you do not take action on that input in a visible way.

#### Blending qualitative and quantitative insights

Experience management relies on finding the right mix of technology tools and human involvement, and it should be a natural

process. Technology allows agencies to blend qualitative observations with quantitative data, and it offers visibility into trends that individual managers could never observe on their own. It also allows agencies to choose the most impactful actions, measure the manner in which changes are implemented and track the results of those changes. In addition, it allows the organization to amplify its strengths and take advantage of

opportunities for improvement.

Most importantly, technology should provide insights in a clear and understandable manner and suggest appropriate actions. It is then up to agency leaders to determine the ultimate path forward. ■

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