

6 pillars of an effective employee experience



Building a digital workplace is no easy task. Building an effective one that directly improves employee experience requires help from the experts. When you're embarking on the digital workplace transformation journey, there are a few challenges that you'll want to look out for, and a few features that you'll want to be sure to implement.

4 challenges

Challenge 1: Unengaging user experience

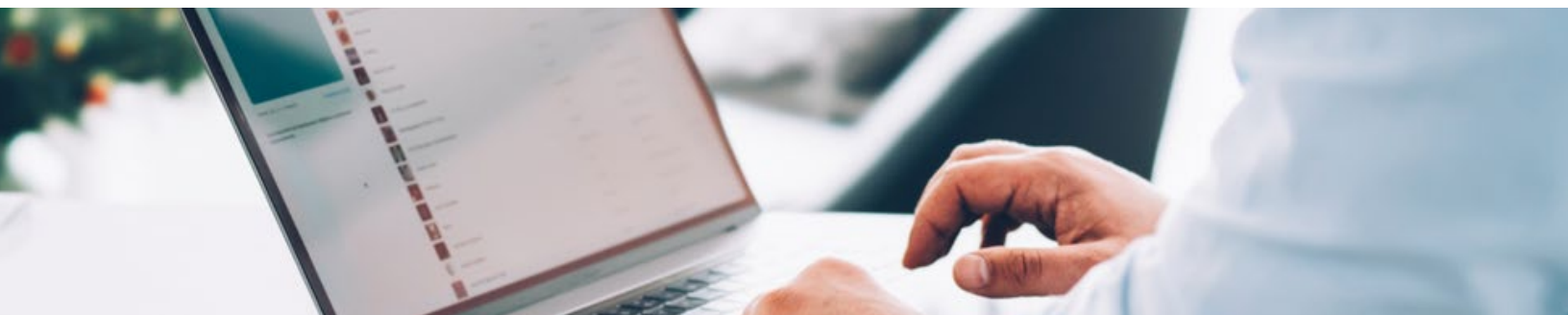
The quickest way to get people to disengage is to force them to sift through content and messaging that isn't relevant to them. When you have employees across your organization from C-level executives to corporate knowledge workers to employees on the sales floor who connect through their individual mobile devices, you can't just throw generic content at them.

The way to overcome this challenge is to create a personalized and targeted experience so that everyone feels that it was built just for them.

Challenge 2: Disconnected technology

Your organization likely has a number of technology systems inside of its corporate ecosystem, and becoming an expert on each of them is almost impossible. I recently read a report by an analyst who said that if you give a traditional knowledge working employee more than four enterprise cloud user experience interfaces to do their day job with, their productivity plummets.

To overcome this challenge, an employee experience platform like Akumina provides single-pane-of-glass access to all of the applications that your users need. It's about connection and it's about integration.



Challenge 3: Collaboration hurdles

No matter who I'm working with - a CIO, a marketer, or an HR professional - if I ask what collaboration means to them, everybody has a different answer. But regardless of what individuals think about collaboration, the fact is that everyone needs to work within a team in some capacity.

A great employee experience platform can facilitate communication in both team-based and entity-based collaboration systems.

Challenge 4: Disengagement across the user base

I spoke at the Gartner Digital Workplace conference in London about the growing gap that exists between personal lives and our work lives. Outside of the workplace, your employees have incredibly innovative personal lives. They have smart phones, they have tablets, they can see who's ringing the doorbell and talk to them through their phone. They can change the temperature in their house, they can watch their children at daycare. These are incredibly innovative and powerful technology elements that have been put in the palm of their hand to make their life easier.

But for many corporations around the globe, a traditional knowledge working employee shows up to work and that enterprise gives them a three-year-old laptop and an email address and tells them to go be productive. This innovation gap is big, and it is growing bigger every day.

To increase engagement, organizations need to minimize that innovation gap that exists between personal and workplace innovation, and make sure employees are armed with the right tools to do their jobs.



The path to success

Before you begin making changes to build out your employee experience, you'll want to identify your end goal, and build a path to reach that point. We call that path the employee journey.

One of the problems that I've seen that plagues the employee experience market is the perception that just building a basic intranet is enough. The organizations that I've worked with who have used this approach quickly realize that those "intranet-in-a-box" technologies levy significant limitations on them. They reach out to Akumina and other competitors like us looking for an employee experience platform; a piece of software that will allow them to start down a path to better engage their employees and drive that efficient, productive workforce that they're looking for.

When we at Akumina begin working with a customer, we start by understanding a few things:

1. What is the outset goal?

Most customers come to us because there's a line item in their annual budget that says something vague about improving employee experience. Maybe it says they need to focus on employee experience; maybe it says they need to refresh the intranet or the portal or the employee hub. These are the things that are the out stated goal. But simply meeting the "table stakes" of that goal is not good enough for today's workforce, especially in a world where unemployment is at an all-time low and finding and retaining good talent is very difficult. So, we begin by identifying the outset goal, and then we build on it.

2. What is the ultimate vision?

When we take our customers on this employee experience journey, we build a roadmap from their outset goal to their ultimate vision, or "north star," as I call it. Beginning with those basic requirements or MVP one, we focus on constant iteration and innovation, to get you where you really want to be.



6 pillars of an effective employee experience

The fundamental underlying thought process behind the Akumina employee experience platform, and I would argue any employee experience platform, is that it needs to be easy to implement, easy to operate, easy to manage. We talk to organizations on a daily basis that deployed SharePoint or Huddle or Confluence or Jive or some sort of homegrown portal technology and were disappointed to find that it wasn't easy to implement or operate, and no one can manage it. Based on these conversations, we developed these six core pillars that sit under the umbrella of a powerful employee experience platform.

Pillar 1: Modern intranet

Legacy intranets are what I refer to as "content graveyards." They're one size fits all, they're static, and they're not targeted or personalized. If you implement a basic intranet, you're limited by the underlying technology, and it's nearly impossible to build outside the scope of the system's capabilities.

The modern intranet is an enhanced version of the basic content graveyard intranet, with the key difference being personalization. The modern intranet is built to deliver to each individual user, while focusing on the business. It delivers the right content, the right news, and the right information into the hands of each employee. As a result, every person in the organization receives a targeted productivity window that enables them to do their job better, to produce more product, to service more customers, to take part in more meetings.

Pillar 2: Communications platform

The most critical element of a communications platform is multidirectionality. Communications, a communications platform, and a communication strategy is not simply about the business communicating with the employees. It needs to give a voice to every single employee; it has to be operationalized in real time; it has to be multilingual; and it has to be relevant.

One of our customers who benefits from the Akumina communications platform is Church's Chicken. As an organization, they have several different constituents who need to communicate with each other, and with the business as a whole. The company includes corporate workers, manufacturing workers, distributors, and hourly workers and franchisees out in their stores in the market, whether that's in the United States or in the Middle East. Being able to communicate and make Church's one corporation versus several siloed individual corporations is the difference between having a communication strategy and simply having an intranet portal that people can go to.

Pillar 3: Collaboration engine

As I mentioned before, there are two elements that are critical to collaboration. The first is team-based collaboration. Team-based collaboration doesn't have a start and an end. It is an ever-present and ongoing persistent collaboration that, in many cases, outlasts the team members themselves. Each team in your organization might use a tool like Microsoft Teams, Yammer, or Slack.

The second critical element of collaboration (which I would argue is potentially more important than team-based collaboration) is entity-based collaboration. In entity-based collaboration, the real focus is on day-to-day teamwork, driving a better experience around getting work done, making quick work of teamwork, being a pro at process, and bringing together components like milestones or timelines or documents or tasks into a single pane of glass at global scale.

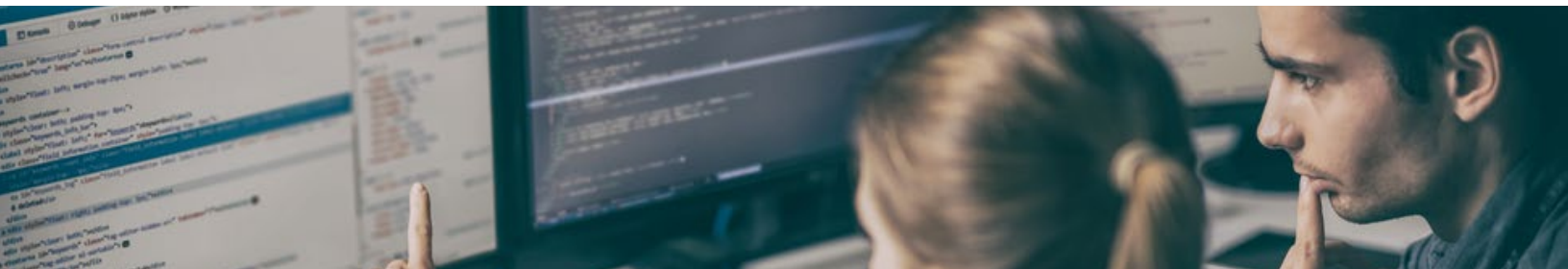
Being cognizant of these two pieces of the puzzle help enable really strong team collaboration across the business, in addition to more effective productivity and project management.

One of the customers we work with who make efficient use of our collaboration engine is the Boston Red Sox. The sheer number of events and promotions that they kick off make entity-based collaboration critical to empower their employees to collaborate in small groups to get things done.

Pillar 4: Content management

Content management is typically the first major consideration for organizations when creating a public facing website or extranet. But for some reason over the last 20 years, creating and managing content is often forgotten when organizations create employee facing experiences.

From our perspective, content reuse is key, and the ability to create content once and distribute to several places using an app-driven interface is incredibly important. Our goal is to enable you to create sustainable and reusable content as easily as you could post to Facebook or Twitter from your mobile device, and to do it in any language. In essence, we help you deliver the right targeted content-based experiences to any employee at any time.



Pillar 5: Enterprise native mobility

More and more, we're working with distributed organizations who have no mechanism to give a voice to or actually interact with their remote or deskless teams.

When we create a true enterprise native mobile app, we ensure that it works across both the iOS and Android platforms, it's branded and cultivated for your enterprise, and it leverages existing technology in each mobile device including push notifications, GPS, and camera and biometric authentication. The more distributed a user base, the more important native mobility is to centralized content management, regardless of the device it's consumed on.

Pillar 6: Integration layer

Integration without limitation is incredibly significant in an employee experience platform. Many intranet providers in the market are good at integrating with Microsoft Office 365, which is fantastic and would be perfect for you if Office 365 was the only technology that you had in your stack.

In reality, medium and large enterprises need to integrate with several different systems, whether it's HR technology like Workday, self-help and ticketing technologies like Service Now, back office technologies like Oracle and SAP, or Salesforce, CRM, or Kronos for timekeeping. The goal of a great employee experience platform like Akumina's is to provide a seamless and flexible integration with each of these technologies to allow every user to do their job without needing to be an expert in the applications they're using.

From our point of view, the integration layer is the tunnel that leads to the single pane of glass experience that we want. It allows us to focus on driving a more robust and more reactive experience for every employee that's built for them, not necessarily just built for the business.



Extras: Search and identity management

The six core pillars that make up an effective employee experience really require two add-ons in order to be top-of-the-line.

Search and identity management are crucial to deploying a new experience for your employees and enabling them and their lines of business. Without a clear search strategy and a well-thought-out identity strategy, you cannot create the personalized, immersive, and targeted experience that will drastically improve the way your employees do their jobs and the way you interact with your workforce. Search and information architecture are essential, not just to locate content, but to allow content to find the right user. A good employee experience platform uses search in concert with identity management tools such as user attributes from Active Directory, Octor, or Ping, HR systems like Workday, and any third-party proprietary systems to create personalized data that allows you to deliver the right experience to each employee or group of employees. It allows you to segment your workforce not by division or department or geographical location, but by the information that they need in order to be a more productive and efficient employee.

It's important to note that an employee experience platform like Akumina is not in and of itself an identity management system. One of the key features of Akumina that sets us apart from everyone else in the industry is that we do not store any of your data, enabling you to control your organization's security and data management.

Conclusion

Whether it's driving personalized or transformative experiences, connected or mobile first experiences, or innovative experiences that allow your employees to do work like they've never done it before, the right deployment of the right employee experience platform is what will separate you from where you are today to where you want to go with your entire workforce tomorrow.

Akumina provides an incredibly powerful experience wrapper with a robust enterprise content management system on the backend that empowers users to create the right experience and deliver it to every employee so they feel like they're the most important person inside your organization. To learn more, visit our site and request a demo today.

Interested in learning more? Visit [Akumina.com](https://akumina.com) to learn more today and [schedule a demo](#).

About Akumina

Akumina is the employee experience platform that empowers global enterprises to quickly create personalized digital experiences that help every employee in every role work smarter, not harder. By offering a customizable, brandable and multilingual platform that seamlessly integrates with leading enterprise cloud applications, Akumina delivers a contextual, collaborative and engaging workplace experience to every user on any device. Akumina's customers include Whole Foods Market, GlaxoSmithKline, Vodafone, the Boston Red Sox and the United States Department of Defense. To learn more visit www.akumina.com and follow us on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), and [Twitter](#).

About the Author

David Maffei is a successful technology veteran with deep ties to Web Content Management, Business Continuity, Enterprise ECommerce and Award-Winning Professional Services teams. At Akumina, and previously at Carbonite (NASDAQ: CARB), Bridgeline (NASDAQ: BLIN) & Ektron (now EpiServer), Maffei is directly responsible for the company's global revenue as well as the plans and strategies for developing business and achieving the company's sales goals.



With a decade of success and deep market, technology and industry knowledge, Maffei is able to position trends ahead of the curve to promote thought leadership and differentiation within digital market segments that are highly saturated.

His charter is to manage the sales teams, operations and resources to deliver profitable growth, define and coordinate sales training programs that enable staff to achieve their potential and support company sales objectives while exceeding customer expectations and contributing to a high level of customer satisfaction.