

5 Workplace Predictions and How These Redefine the Employee Experience

Written by: Arden Harper

Based on attendance at Philly SHRM's August 5, 2020 Virtual Discussion and Debate between Founder and Principal Analyst at HRWins, George LaRocque, and Culture Evangelist at Culture Amp, Damon Klotz

“[An] HR Analyst’s job really is keeping up with everything,” presenter George LaRocque pointed out, when asked about what HR Analysts really do in their job.

COVID-19 has shown that employee experience is everything. Amidst the upheaval of the workplace, LaRocque tuts that he’s seen “a great disconnect in many areas,” as companies explore the uncertain world of trusting employees to get work done at home, often without support they’re accustomed to. This has led to an evolution of HR departments to adjust.

George LaRocque and Damon Klotz offer five hopeful predictions about how employee experience will change in 2020 and beyond.

Prediction #1: Increased Focus on Employee Safety and Physical Employee Experience

Between February and April, most office jobs sent workers home.

Emphasis is on remote working experience, and employee safety on the job, including a shift from focusing on efficiency and virtual safety to physical safety. Paraphrased from LaRocque; “Places like Google used to map out how to get employees to run into each other, in hopes of generating conversation. Nowadays, we see companies worrying about how to keep employees apart.”

From their slides, 49% of employers say that employee safety is top priority. 40% of employees don’t feel safe returning to work yet. These numbers likely vary depending on profession.

Prediction #2: Supporting Employees Through Stress of the Return to Work

Work from home has forced employers and employees to come up with new routines, habits, and expectations; including flexibility for caregivers who suddenly have a second full time job thrust upon them, running concurrently with their 9-to-5.

“We need to remember humanity,” Klotz interjects. Humanity, in this case, alluding to employers’ empathetic understanding of a change in the home-workplace.

A study found that 86% of employers are offering flexible hours, while 71% of employers are offering full time work from home. “No one size fits all here,” LaRocque adds, in regards to how differing companies adopt different policies around work from home.

Prediction #3: Wellbeing’s Increased Role in Employee Experience

95% of employers are offering some emotional and mental health program, according to [businesswire](#). The article does not indicate what industries, but rather that they surveyed mid-to-jumbo sized companies, without specifying how many employees are full/part time, salaried/hourly, or where the companies are located. There’s no link to the survey study itself.

Leaders in companies must buy into programs. It’s not enough to just offer programs; the precedent needs to be set that it’s acceptable in the community to access wellbeing supports offered by the company without stigma.

Prediction #4: Societal Movements’ Impact On Employee Experience

Companies who have a healthy culture allow space for leaders and employees alike to voice concerns and ideas related to societal movements.

These movements affect many employees’ day-to-day life directly, while others care as an ally. POC* employees have always been disadvantaged, intentionally or not, by being paid less, having more strict rules to follow (including hairstyles and clothing), and

having less upward mobility. Women, especially WOC**, have dealt with similar issues that can present in the work environment differently. Gender-diverse employees can be ostracized for the way they choose to present and refer to themselves. The movements attached to every issue affects employees, regardless of if the employer is explicitly aware.

An environment that allows open communication about societal issues breeds a workplace culture of open-mindedness.

*POC is “people of color”

**WOC is “women of color”

Prediction #5: People Leaders Must Demonstrate the Value of Employee Experience

To sustain success, leaders must have a clear vision of the definition of success for any employee. Both qualitative and quantitative goals or KPI's must be established. Success is difficult to measure, because productivity itself is difficult to measure.

Companies must decide for themselves what is most important. The metrics that are important, and that employees are judged by, will make or break trust and either stave off, or actively feed, workplace toxicity.

The Takeaway

COVID-19 put a microscope on problems that HR departments have always had, amplified them, and exposed weaknesses unlike anything else seen in recent memory. The ways that companies have handled sending their employees home, or not, have made a lasting impact on their company culture and branding. If a company does their best to cover Maslow before Bloom (safety superseding development), their employees have stable footing to do better work, produce better results, and have higher job satisfaction.

The silver lining is that there's so much room to grow when it comes to company environments, now that priorities are clearer.

Damon Klotz works for [CultureAmp](#), who is a leading people and culture platform that helps companies take action to improve employee engagement, retention, and

performance. He has a [podcast](#) on the website that covers HR topics such as what he presented from this webinar.

George LaRocque works for [HRWins](#), an organization who provides research-based insights and advisory services to HR and talent leaders globally. HRWins is focused on the intersection of technology and the future workforce.

About the author:

Arden has a bachelor's degree in music education, with a minor in linguistics from West Chester University of Pennsylvania. She's always liked to write (starting with many abandoned chapter stories as a preteen), play instruments (and sometimes gets paid to do so, if you need a singer, pianist, conductor, or horn player!), and has become a good home cook in recent years.

Arden currently works at [Boxplot](#), a data analytics consulting firm that helps organizations to confidently make accurate, data-driven decisions. She can be reached at arden@boxplotanalytics.com.