7 Questions with Bright Horse

Do you want to learn more about Experience and Experience Management from the experts? In these monthly volumes we will be speaking with exciting people who want to share their journey to XLAs . We will learn about their personal journey to experience management, the real-time business insights and advantages of measuring experience and hints and tips about how to succeed in this revolutionary movement. So, sit back and enjoy !

November's Guest:
Jeremy Baker

Do 20 years in and around IT service management mean I'm experienced, wise and worth listening to? Maybe...

My bona fides... way back, I worked for HP (remember Prolin and OpenView?), as part of that, the acquisition of Mercury Interactive, Opsware amongst others.

Followed by a stint at the 'analytics on an industrial scale' SAS; a Customer Journey start-up; ServiceNow and now with Nexthink.

My job for Nexthink is to help the sales team, sell more, for more, more quickly. Otherwise, known as Sales Productivity/ Enablement.

I've been with them since 2017 and have seen the Digital Experience Management market go from not understanding and sometimes ridiculing it; to being violently opposed (we can do this with existing tools, SLAs and midset); to now, where it is being widely accepted as being self-evident.

Let's talk!

Tell us about your journey to implementing improved Experience Management and XLAs. How? When? Why?

I haven't. But I work for a market-maker and leader in the technology space that has the keys to understanding, baselining, managing and continually improving the digital experience component of an XLA.

That technology is the Digital Experience Score, which is very simple, but far from simplistic, as it's made up of the real-time operational analytics of every employee's digital experience and includes how they feel about it (contextual sentiment).

If the XLA is 'the what', then what I briefly describe above is 'the how'.

In your opinion what has caused organisations to focus on Experience Management?

At the 2018 itSMF panel interview that concluded the event, I asked the question, when will IT professionals begin to understand the importance of emotional intelligence in the interaction they have with businesses, enterprises and the people they serve and partner with?

For the past 40 years, IT professionals have almost exclusively used logic and IQ to solve problems, develop services, measure and manage the support and improvement of them. Much like playing a round of golf with just one club.

I feel the past decade and certainly the last 5 years, with the proliferation of SaaS based services, where IT no longer control the service or its quality, combined with the decreasing lack of relevance of 'better, cheaper, faster, safer' when it comes to IT and its services, is causing the enlightened to look at the situation in a different way.

Don't you think, if there were an answer involving the technology, processes and measures used to date, we would have found it already?

Where is the employees' experience in the way things are currently done?

How has the implementation of Experience Management improved your business?

I can only speak of the customers of the company I work for and they come from across the globe, cross-industry, including both commercial and government services.

"In 2021 so far, they we have saved 45,000 hours in ticket automation/resolution - put another way, that's around 23 woman/ man years." All coming from operationalising "the how" I described above. For context, that was lower than 2020, which was 60,000 hours.

57k incidents averted, over two years.

"We save, on average, 10 minutes of troubleshooting time per service ticket with automation."

Millions of Stirling, Euros, Dollars in cost avoidance for hardware refresh and license right-sizing.

The less tangible results, but dare I say more important, are the willingness of the business to partner with IT, as IT now communicates and shares improvements, they've made in terms the business actually understands – e.g. NPS score improvement, having IT just work, creating flow in the business amongst employees, increasing adoption of collaboration platforms and critical applications, all whilst being able to show and prove that.

The by-product of this in all cases is a willingness in the business to work more closely with IT – we see IT partnering with both profit centres and HR, too, as employee experience has become a boardroom topic, with multiple functions playing their part to improve it.

How would you define Experience/Digital Experience Management?

The Digital Experience Score I mentioned above is both a definition and meaning of management of IT, and incrementally improving it is critical - as current tools, tech and structures can't, won't or don't do it.

Employee Experience is a broad boardroom topic, brought into sharper focus by the recent pandemic.

Digital experience management is a subset and a key component.

For example, how you are reading this, right now, is likely the same as 90%+ of your working day – it's your day-to-day digital environment - and specifically the quality you are experiencing and how you feel about it cannot be ignored, but also, cannot be easily identified, measured, managed and improved on with current tools and the associated mindset.

Therefore, IT must take on its increasingly important role in being responsible for the employees' digital experience, and thereby 'responsible to' playing their part in the broader Employee Experience.

What advice would you give companies who are starting out on their Experience Management Journey?

Assuming there is an accepted view that it is important and the requisite sponsorship and commitment is in place. Because, if it is not, then my advice is don't start, as it will fail.

Get comfortable with being uncomfortable –
As once you get an accurate view of the quality and sentiment of the consumed services by employees, it may look ugly and an uphill battle. But, rest assured you are not alone, and you will get there.
Most of your current measures and reports may need to be abandoned, as they are irrelevant to what's being experienced by employees and will only make things worse by feeding the confirmation bias of how things have been done to date.

A centre of excellence –
Build one, and you can start small – digital experience management is now a profession (it's well paid, too!); it is not a do once or set and forget approach. It is about continual improvement and marginal gains.

Find partners that not only talk a good race but have evidence of whom they have helped on this digital experience management journey.

Share with us a time in your life where experience affected your decision

It does, every single day.

Believe me or not, information and data drive analysis, whereas emotion drives all decisions and actions. As an example, choosing the house or flat you bought, is a decision that is more often made within minutes of seeing the property. That isn't data, that is an experience.

You choose to work with vendors and partners in the same way, and it all happens below your consciousness. Yes, price might play a part, but so does trust, feeling and confidence in them, which I'd argue isn't found in data and information.

And finally, what is something that recently made you smile?

My dog, running with a stick its mouth – every day is Christmas Day for a dog.

Tommy Cooper – he makes me smile.

"In a world where money is no longer the primary motivating factor for employees, focusing on the employee experience is the most promising competitive advantage that organizations can create."

–Jacob Morgan