



2020

# THE MODERN EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE REPORT



summary

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# Employee experience: the human connection

*All good communication starts with understanding your audience.*

**Sometimes it's tempting to quickly launch into a new project, platform or plan to demonstrate action, but the first step should always be understanding what your people really need.**

In last year's report we considered the employee experience from the perspective of the workplace. This time we're all about the human point of view.

In short, how does a typical employee feel about their life at work today? Based on our research with a range of clients, we're quietly confident that right now many of your people are feeling frustrated. They might be tearing their hair out at the lack of essential digital tools to do their jobs, or the minimal support they get for the tools that have been introduced.

They're probably feeling isolated too, because they're working in different locations and – in the absence of quality line management – are being left to work things out for themselves. And your colleagues may well be dubious about your communication culture, as well as the level of perceived honesty within your messaging.

Employee experience is the meeting point of technology, environment and culture. Communications, HR and IT make the perfect team to work together to get it right, delivering significant impact and change in performance within the workplace.

So this year's report outlines seven common issues – themes that we've identified from our client work in the last 18 months. We hope it gives you practical insight that helps you to create a better employee experience in your own organisation.

## Three reasons why employee experience matters



**89% of employers think people leave for more money, but in reality only 12% do.**  
(Gallup)




**Companies with a strong employee experience see a 40% lower employee turnover than those that are poor in this area.**  
(Morgan)



**But only 22% of business leaders say their organisation is 'excellent' at establishing a differentiated employee experience.**  
(Deloitte)



**Suzanne Peck //**  
Managing Director, Sequel Group  
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This PDF is the summary version. For a copy of the full report which includes recommended tactics and actions, please email [hello@sequelgroup.co.uk](mailto:hello@sequelgroup.co.uk)

Chapter  
1

# The overwhelmed employee

*There are now more ways than ever to connect with colleagues, no matter where in the business – or indeed the world – they are, and more places to create, store and share information.*

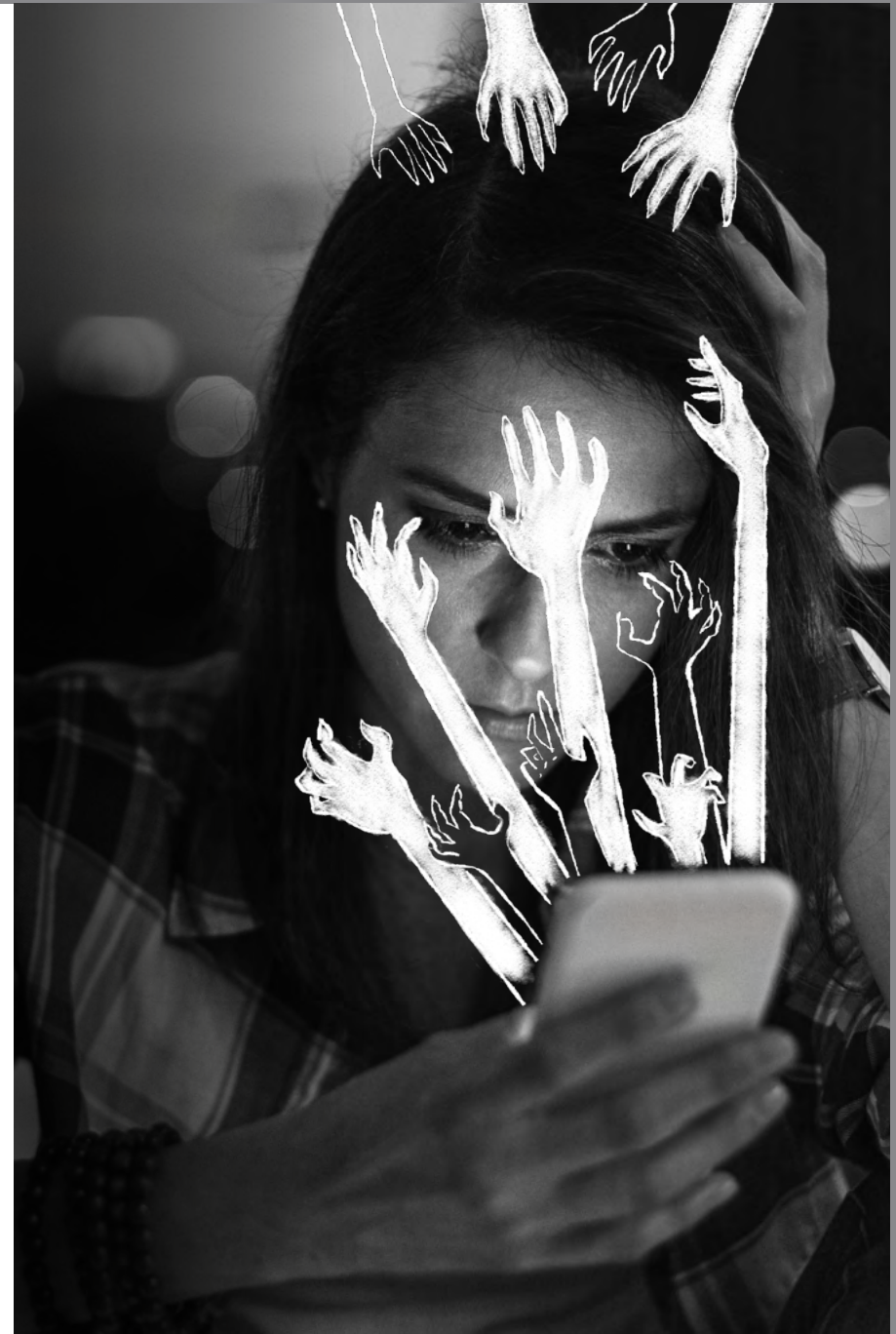
**But at what cost to the employee experience? Increasingly we're hearing that people just don't know where to start when it comes to communication.**

This is having a real business impact, particularly when it comes to productivity. Research from Teleware suggests that more than a third of employees have wasted significant portions of the day because of difficulties retrieving valuable information.

A clear message from our own Sequel Insight work is that you can't please all of the people all of the time. So that's why it's important to let employees have a say in what information they're receiving, as well as how and when.

Information overload costs the U.S. economy \$900 billion a year.

*Harvard Business Review*





Chapter  
2

# The disconnected employee

*The case for ‘line of sight’ – understanding why you do what you do, and how you fit in to the big picture – is well established. For a start, ‘clarity of purpose’ is the first tenet of our own Four Pillars™ of IC.*

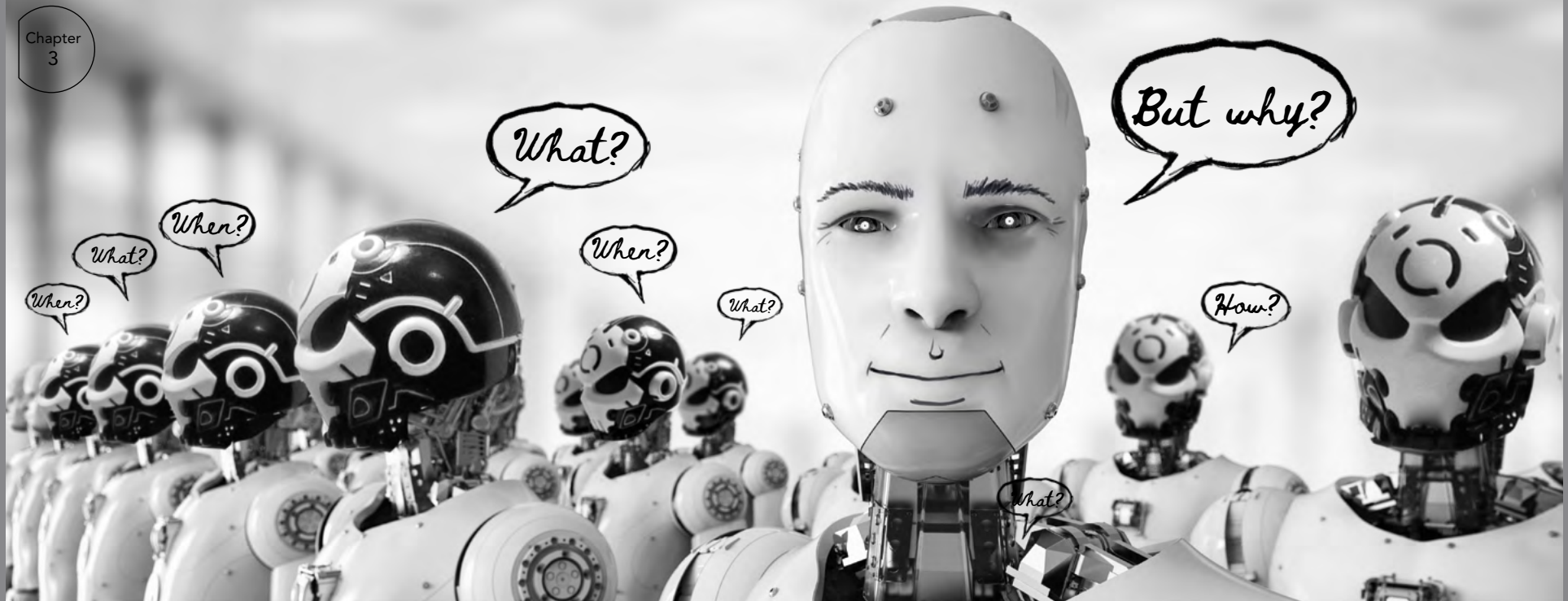
**So it should be of concern to everyone that so many people have a foggy line of sight. A report for Salesforce found that a staggering 86% of employees did not clearly understand their companies’ strategies. This resulted in nearly half of employee time being spent on work that wasn’t helping the company achieve its goals.**

If large numbers of your people are effectively walking in the wrong direction, you’ve got next to no chance of achieving your goals. As executive consultant Ken Perlman has said: “Clarity = speed”.

“When people see the connection between individual roles and the goals of the organisation, they get a lot of energy out of work. They feel the importance, dignity and meaning in their job.”

**Ken Blanchard and Scott Blanchard, co-authors of *The One Minute Manager***





# The changing employee

*In a Harvard experiment, researchers asked a queue of people waiting to use a photocopier if they could go first. They found that that when they used the word 'because', people let them do it – even if the reason that followed was as feeble as “I need to make copies”. That’s because our brains respond to reason.*

**With our minds in mind, it’s no wonder that employees say they need more ‘why’ – particularly when it comes to change.**

But, while recognising the need to share the ‘whys’ behind change is important, it’s also only half the battle. For change to stick, organisations also need to make sure these central reasons are communicated as meaningful and relevant statements that connect with their different employee audiences.



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# The dubious employee



*In the surveys we carry out for client organisations, we've seen scores around trust drop by 30% in the last two years.*

**There are typically three complaints: 1) that bad news is ignored; 2) or that it's spun to make it look like good news; and 3) that people don't understand why decisions have been made.**

On paper, the approach to tackling these three issues seems rooted in practical, common-sense communication: tackle bad news in a direct, open way; and explain the rationale for decisions. Of course that's easier said than done.

But as successful investor Keith Rabois says: "If you want people to make the same decisions that you would make, but in a more scalable way, you have to give them the same information you have."

"What you are seeing and what you are reading is not what is happening."

**Donald Trump, 25 July 2018**



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# The frustrated employee

*There's often an assumption from organisations that employees – particularly the younger ones – will 'just know' how to use new online tools. But that assumption doesn't hold up: just because you use Instagram at home, it doesn't automatically follow that you'll know how to use Microsoft Teams at work.*

**There's an opportunity here, though, to make a real and significant impact. Digital transformation risk is the top concern of senior leaders, according to research conducted by North Carolina State University's Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) Initiative and management consultants Protiviti Inc.**

Of course there are many moving parts to these kinds of projects, but in our experience the key is effective planning.

70p in every pound spent on digital transformation is wasted.

*Harvard Business Review*





Managers account for up to 70% of the way we feel about our jobs.

Gallup

## The isolated employee

*It can be surprising to learn that so many of us are 'deskless' workers. Several studies, from the likes of Emergence Capital, place the figure at about 80% of the workforce. Clearly, that's a significant audience that IC, HR and IT need to understand and support.*

**Many remote employees tell us that they feel isolated. Often that's down to two things: poor line manager communication; and poor communication channels.**

There's a key question that we think organisations need to ask when they're considering the needs of their deskless colleagues – what do those colleagues actually want? Again, planning – and listening – are the crucial first steps in making any channel a success.



Chapter  
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# The silent employee

*Front-line employees usually have the clearest idea of what's working and what isn't.*

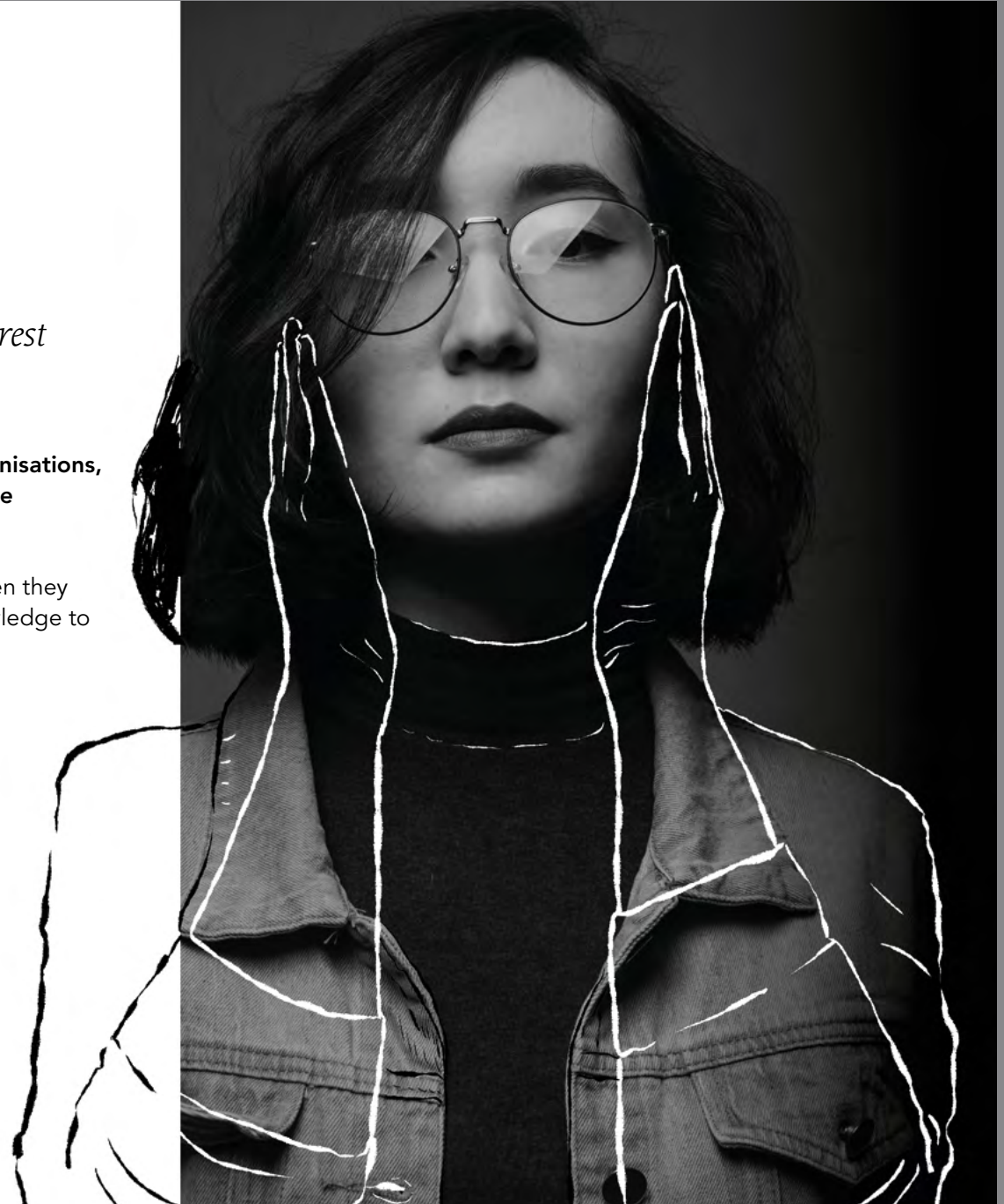
**There's often an 'iceberg of ignorance' within organisations, where executives are aware of around 1 in 25 of the problems known by front-line colleagues.**

So it's easy to see why employees get frustrated when they feel that they're unable to share their extensive knowledge to help tackle common issues.

As leadership coach Kirstin Lynde says: "If you don't cultivate the art of collecting sentiments that can be hard to hear, you'll pay a price. You'll miss out on good ideas, you'll slow your pace of leadership skill development, and good employees may leave."

"It's better to be punched in the face on Yammer than stabbed in the back on GlassDoor."

**Executive consultant  
Laurie Hibbs**





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## What else can we help you with?

We are Sequel Group, the employee experience agency that's connecting and inspiring people to deliver brilliant business performance.

We simplify communications, helping you to engage and empower your audiences wherever they are.

We do that by blending brilliant content, insight and technology that changes behaviour and delivers meaningful results.

Office 365 // intranets // apps // websites // strategy // measurement // campaigns // social // film // animation // publications



30  
people



100+  
awards



98  
Net Promoter Score



ISO  
certified

Ask for Suzanne Peck, Nick Andrews or Claudi Schneider.

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