

BRINGING YOUR PEOPLE'S IT EXPERIENCE TO LIFE

HOW IT'S DONE, AND THE DIFFERENCE IT MAKES

INTRODUCTION

As we explained in our previous paper, there's a growing awareness in our industry about the importance of the employee experience. As well as shaping day-to-day IT operations and support, it's increasingly recognised as a vital element in longer-term strategic and investment decision-making.

At Acora, we believe that while the traditional service level agreement (SLA) still has its place, it's no longer the sole performance metric we should be relying on.

Having looked at the 'why' of improving your people's IT experience, this follow-up paper gets into the 'how'. It sets out how we've introduced new technology, metrics, people and thinking to create our Experience 360™ service, and how this can help you deliver a step change in the experience for all your people.




THE HUMAN DIMENSION

As we saw in our previous paper, SLAs deal strictly in percentages: 70% first-time fix, for example. But what about the 30% who don't get their issue fixed first time? Under the SLA, they're not people, merely a number. And as long as that number isn't exceeded, there's no problem. Hence the 'watermelon effect': the all-too-common disconnect between an all-green dashboard and users who are seeing red, because they're still receiving (and complaining about) a less-than-perfect service.

The aim of Experience 360™ is to give every user a great experience. And because it treats them as people, nothing less than 100% will do. So rather than just accepting mediocrity, the service provider and customer work together to fix it, which in turn improves the experience for everyone, with all the benefits that it brings.

Which highlights another, perhaps even more fundamental distinction.



 With Acora's Experience 360™ service, together we will smash the 'watermelon effect'

IT'S BETTER TO TRAVEL

Put simply, the SLA is a destination. As long as the service provider meets the agreed thresholds, you've arrived, and these are generally fixed for the term of the contract.

Crucially, as we explained in the previous paper, if the threshold is 85% and the supplier achieves it, there's no incentive for them to go the extra mile and actually deliver a better service.

Improving experience is a journey. The objective is to give every user a great experience, so you abandon all idea of thresholds and aim for 100%. It might take a while to get there; but when the customer and provider are of one mind, they can work together to achieve it, adding and investing in tech, training, services and support as required.

The power of Experience 360™ lies in correlating three data domains to produce actionable data and insights to improve your employee experience over time. It also updates the traditional reactive approach to IT support with proactive prevention and outreach, helping users maintain their 'flow state' and improving productivity and satisfaction levels.



 **The SLA is a destination.
Improving experience is a journey**

THE PATHWAY

Acora's Experience 360™ is designed to provide an outstanding experience through our service delivery. Under its terms, we make three specific, board-reportable commitments:

- 1** To protect end users' time so they can be more productive, by proactively reducing IT issues and providing fast and effective support when things do go wrong.
- 2** To consistently improve end users' experience of working with IT, by always ensuring they have the right tools to do the job, implemented with minimal disruption, and by helping end users make best use of them.
- 3** Correlating technical and sentiment data and presenting the resulting score in a clear bespoke BI dashboard, enabling improvement of the overall experience.

Experience 360™ delivers on these commitments through two components that sit above your existing managed IT services.



DEX

The Digital Experience (DEX) score is the foundation for improving experience, and a big step up from a traditional managed service agreement. It measures people's overall experience of the digital services they consume, focusing on delays or frustrations caused by underlying technical issues within an application, device or service.

DEX is calculated from device telemetry data generated by our Acora Experience Platform across more than 1,000 different data points. Performance is categorised on an RAG-type scale, from 'frustrating and annoying' to 'all good', and rolled up into daily user performance scores, which we can track over time. Initial baselining helps to identify and eliminate false negatives – a low score arising from a piece of software the platform simply doesn't recognise, for example.



SENTIMENT CAPTURE

Sentiment data is generated directly from users via in-the moment, interactive and personalised surveys delivered through the Experience Platform. Working with the IT team, we develop questions that focus on key aspects of the overall experience from the user's perspective, and provide insights that feed into the wider IT and business agenda. Unlike conventional CSAT, we can explore more nuanced issues, such as how much time (if any) an event may have cost them, and whether and how they would like to be contacted by IT.

This data is aggregated and extrapolated to calculate both actual time lost (including the impact of negative flow), and how much has been saved through incident prevention across the whole user population. The Platform can also proactively contact users where telemetry indicates a potential underlying problem (recent device or application crashes, persistent high memory or CPU usage, for example) but where the user has not yet logged a fault.



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In the next development phase, we plan to introduce heuristic analysis across all our Experience Desk interactions. This technology analyses conversations in real time, generating data on the dynamic range of the caller's voice, how quickly or slowly they're speaking and other factors, all of which provide vital insights into a user's emotional state, and truly bringing sentiment capture to life.



EXPERIENCE 360™

Experience 360™ brings together DEX and Sentiment Capture with the traditional 'how did we do'— type operational data from SLAs and KPIs (which is still useful, even if no longer sufficient as the sole measure of IT success).

It correlates and analyses these three data domains, then shows the results in a bespoke business intelligence (BI) dashboard created and built by Acora. This user-friendly, human-centric interface is the antithesis of the conventional SLA-based report. In place of reams of figures about technical problems raised and solved (or not) it provides empirical, actionable data about people and the IT landscape on which business leaders can make informed decisions.

Bringing your People's IT Experience to Life

BY PEOPLE, FOR PEOPLE

It's common knowledge that for every issue that gets raised with the service desk, there are probably four or five that don't. Yet these minor IT problems and disruptions still detract from the user experience.

To ensure they're identified and dealt with, we've established a dedicated Experience Team. Unique to Acora, this is a specialist group of analysts and problem-solvers, handpicked for their expertise, insatiable curiosity, entrepreneurial mindset and excellent bedside manner with users.

 **We've established a dedicated experience team, unique to Acora**

 **acora**
Led by Experience



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OUR EXPERIENCE TEAM

As full-time problem-hunters, their job is to proactively interrogate the Experience Platform looking for actual or potential impacts on user experience. They create a prioritised list of 'Problem' cases and make decisions on how to address them.

Alongside them, we have a separate team of Experience Fixers, who carry out root-cause analysis and identify appropriate resolutions or mitigation activities. Depending on the problem, they may manage the fix themselves, or enlist resolver groups or third parties. If the solution requires customer investment, business change or a larger project, our account management teams will work with the customer to develop an Experience Improvement Plan.



ON THE CASE

The key point about these hunters and fixers is that they're proactive: they find and solve problems before they arise, often without the user even being aware of it. When they identify an issue, they can reach out to a user with precisely targeted requests for further information, suggested timeslots to apply a fix, or advice on actions the user can take for themselves.

This approach creates a far more sophisticated level of engagement between support and users. It's a 180-degree shift from the traditional model, in which something has to go wrong and a ticket has to be raised before any action is taken – by which time the user has been interrupted and their experience has suffered accordingly



**Our proactivity
removes distractions**



MAINTAINING THE FLOW STATE

As we identified in our first paper, these interruptions carry significant cost when they affect high-value users of time, such as fee-earners. But for all users, minimising disruption brings huge benefits in terms of helping to maintain 'flow state'. Originally identified by psychologists in high-performing people like mountain climbers, chess players, surgeons and ballet dancers, it's something we all experience when we're doing work that's important to us, whatever that might be. It's the state of being totally immersed in what you're doing: there's an intense focus and sense of clarity in which you know exactly what you want to do from one moment to the next; the mind is operating at full capacity; and you feel motivated, fulfilled – even ecstatic.

This state of 'effortless attention' is when we're at our most effective – and, needless to say, it's easily broken and near-impossible to sustain if you're having IT problems. Equally obviously, a seamless, 'invisible' IT experience enables users to maintain a prolonged state of optimised flow. Research and experience show this can lead to further innovation, problem solving and creativity, adding huge value to the business: it's estimated that just a 5% improvement in flow state across the organisation can boost revenues by 20%. Plus, people who can reliably attain and maintain their flow state are invariably happier, healthier and more likely to stay with you long-term, producing significant savings in recruitment, training and other employment costs.



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ASSESSING ADOPTION


It's generally recognised that where new IT is introduced and adopted effectively, the user experience is positive; poor rollout and uptake usually produces a negative effect.

Some organisations deploy new technology, then wonder why it's failing to deliver the expected benefits. Many more end up with technology they're paying for but simply isn't being used. In both cases, the result is the same: disgruntled and underperforming people, investment that shows a poor ROI and increased operational costs.

DEX maps the number of devices where a new app is installed against those where it's actually being used. Fine-grained telemetry also shows who's using what systems and how long they've used them for (it has no access to content, though, so there's no risk to data protection or individual confidentiality). Correlating this with sentiment capture gives an accurate picture of how new applications and digital experiences are being adopted.

Where there's an adoption gap, we can then advise on remedial action. This could be to simply reduce the number of licences, thereby recouping costs. Or, it might require further investigation into why the new technology isn't being used and considering issues around training, project management, HR involvement and other non-IT factors.



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ABOUT ACORA

Acora is a progressive technology services provider, leading the industry with our **Experience Led Approach™**.

Our mission is to unleash the potential of people, through outstanding IT experiences, striking the right balance between frictionless user experience and best-in-class security. Acora continually invests in the right people, processes and technology, that enable businesses to excel and reach their full potential.

FIND OUT MORE

To discuss Experience 360™ and any of its specific components further, including a full presentation and business case, please contact us.

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**THE JOURNEY CONTINUES...
THROUGH NEW TOOLS,
PROCESSES, DATA AND
PEOPLE, EXPERIENCE 360™
EMPOWERS YOU TO MAKE
INFORMED DECISIONS,
PROVIDE A GREAT DIGITAL
EXPERIENCE FOR YOUR
PEOPLE, AND TRULY ADD
VALUE TO YOUR BUSINESS.**

Experience 360™ allows us to deliver on our vision, which is to give time back to our customers, so they can focus on other issues and challenges. In our third and final paper, we'll look at how you go about deploying it, and what it means for your employees, IT team and senior leaders.

