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Employee journey mapping

CONTENTS

Introduction

Employee experience is getting more critical and complex these days. And that impacts everything from work efficiency and team culture to brand reputation and customer experience. You can either watch the consequences or seize the opportunity and gain from it.

Mapping employee journeys helps to better understand how those are going, find experience flaws, see opportunities for improvement, and develop actionable strategies. Yet, it's not that easy. When it comes to journey mapping, each domain has its specifics, and employee journey mapping is no exception. It concerns both the map creation process and usage.

Seven experts shared with us their experience of employee journey mapping to build this whitepaper upon. We believe this paper will be helpful for everyone, no matter the business, from top managers and HR managers to employees. After all, the successful EX is a shared responsibility and benefit.

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MEET THE EXPERTS

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Melissa Henley,

Senior Director of Customer Experience at Laserfiche

Melissa Henley is Senior Director of Customer Experience at Laserfiche. As a marketer, customers are at the heart of all Melissa does, and her passion is around connecting people to content that can have a genuine positive impact on their lives.

A sought-after speaker for conferences worldwide, Melissa is a subject matter expert on change management, personal branding, presentation techniques, and other leadership skills. Melissa is a graduate of Mills College, where she studied political science and women's studies, and also holds an MBA with a concentration in marketing.

Paul Lopushinsky,

Founder of Playficient

Paul Lopushinsky is the founder of Playficient, a consultancy that helps organizations cut through the bull and focus on what matters in the employee experience. Coming from a user experience and product management background in the tech industry, he spent years working on the user experience for customers and their onboarding process for software products. Paul found that most organizations he worked at spent little to no time investing in their employee onboarding experience and their employee experience. He eventually decided to take these ideas and concepts from his work in user experience and apply those into the world of the employee experience.

Yana Sanko,

Head of Consulting at UXPressia

Yana Sanko is an experienced researcher with a background in anthropology, business strategy, and organizational design.

As UXPressia's Head of Consulting, Yana drives complex transformational projects that help companies become more humane and innovate with people in mind. That includes helping people of different professional backgrounds master skills and get actionable insights to improve customer, employee, and citizen experience.

MEET THE EXPERTS

Elena Rozanova,

Head of Customer Relations, Small business at Rosbank

Elena Rozanova holds the position of Head of Customer relations and service for the small business division at Rosbank. She previously formed the customer experience direction at Colliers International. She is one of the founding members of the Women in CX project that empowers women in customer experience to collaborate, learn, and succeed together. Elena regularly speaks at events, conducts training sessions and consultations in various areas of client experience. Elena is also an active member of CXPA.

Kristin Cobuzzi,

Managing Director at Accenture

Kristin Cobuzzi is a Managing Director at Accenture. She has over 15 years of experience in sourcing and procurement, employee experience, talent and organization, and services marketing. Prior to Accenture, Kristin worked across the marketing and real estate legal industries bringing brands to their customers and within Sourcing and Procurement for Marketing and Advertising at the Walt Disney Company.

Paula Alexandra Clapon,

People Manager at Thinslices

Paula Alexandra Clapon is the People Manager for Thinslices, a software development company working with startups and corporate innovation groups. Over the past 8 years, she has been writing about and experimenting with employee engagement strategies to find out what makes employees happy and productive.

Jacqueline L. Frank,

Instruction & Accessibility Librarian at Montana State University-Bozeman

Jacqueline Frank has been at the Montana State University Library for over 10 years, most recently as the new Instruction & Accessibility librarian. Jacqueline holds a master's degree in Environmental Engineering from Montana State University, and an MLIS from the University of Kentucky, and a BA in Environmental Studies-Physics from Whitman College.

THE ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

THE ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

There are stakeholders in every journey mapping initiative, and there are even more of them in employee journey mapping ones. However, as for the latter initiatives, it's hard to identify the key stakeholders to involve.

Employee journey stakeholders may differ from stage to stage and by their degree of involvement. E.g., some are involved directly at each stage, while others are only indirectly involved at one or two of them. The number of stakeholders and their impact force may differ, too, making it crucial to figure out who and how is engaged at each stage.

> "The real challenge that I see is in identifying exactly who will be involved at every step, how they will contribute, and how each contribution and interaction come together to form a coherent EX that clearly reflects the employer value proposition,"
>
> **Paula Alexandra Clapon, People Manager at Thinslices**

> "An employee journey map (EJM) is not hard to build. However, it's hard to convince the HR department to use it. They treat it as a pretty picture and tend to use existing processes and templates,"
>
> **Elena Rozanova, Head of Customer Relations, Small business at Rosbank**

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Tip 1: Identify the stakeholders

There are many of them: from the HR team and upper management to "buddy" colleagues and brand managers.

Choose those who are essential for your employee experience (EX) project.

Questions to ask yourself:

- What is their role?
- Who are they for my company?
- How are they related to a particular stage?
- What is important to them?
- How often will we communicate?

When determining the key stakeholders, don't forget that indirect ones matter too. They can share valuable feedback and give you useful insights.

"

You have your employer branding and recruitment marketing specialists who will be the key people involved in acquiring new talent. Then you'll be looking at your recruiters and onboarding specialists for the onboarding process. But even in these initial steps of the funnel, oftentimes you have other employees involved as well, someone assigned to be a buddy, colleagues working on the same project, colleagues involved in team interviews, and so on. Once we move deeper into the EX map, we have top management involved, as well as middle management,"
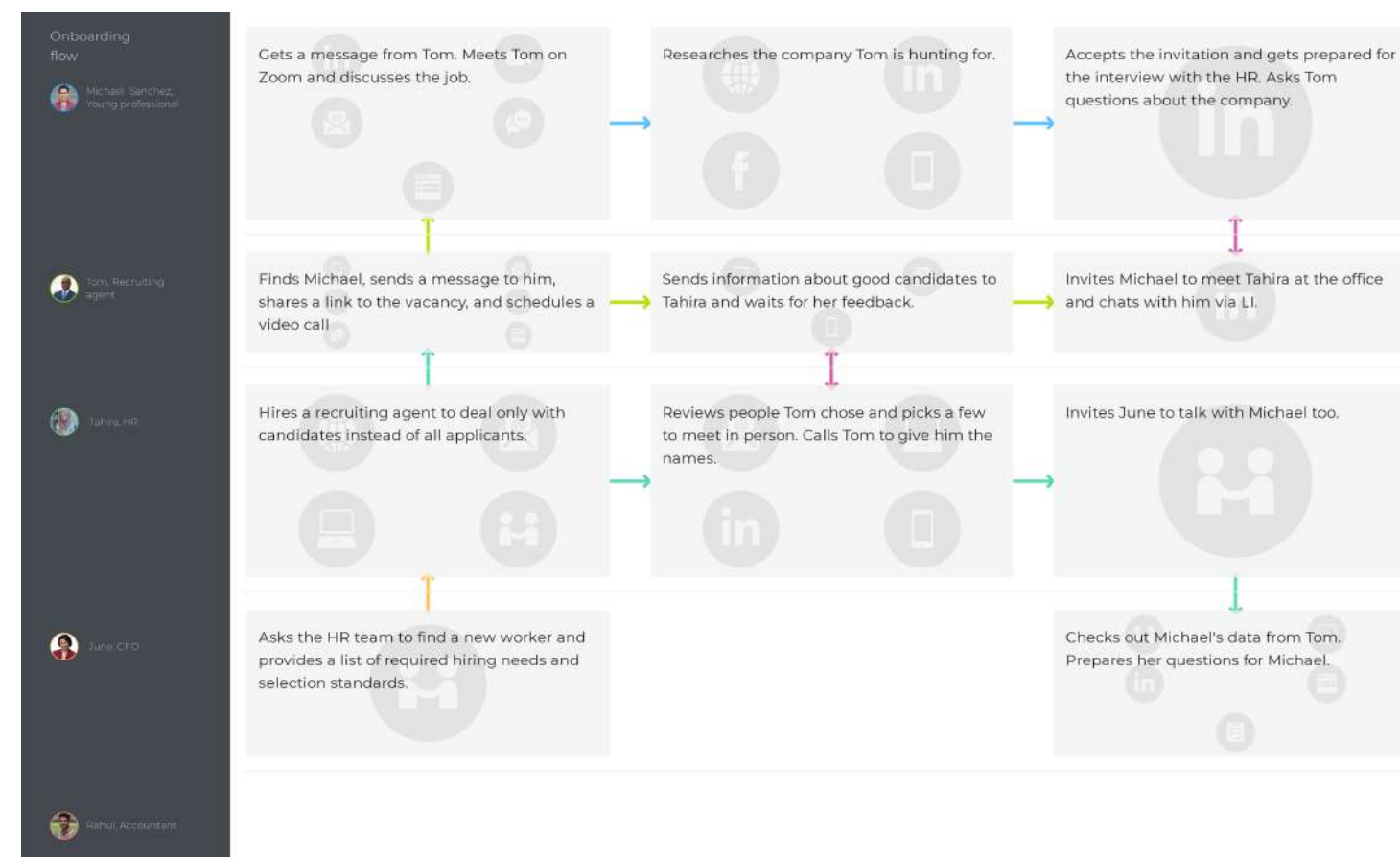
Paula Alexandra Clapon, People Manager at Thinslices

THE ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

Tip 2: Map the key stakeholders

The key stakeholders are essential because they either directly affect your employee journey or are responsible for the EX initiative implementation.

You can also **add them to your map** and design their interactions with the employee persona, from the work processes to the consequences.

> " *To design the EX for your company, you first have to identify the main stakeholders participating in this experience,"*
>
> **Paula Alexandra Clapon, People Manager at Thinslices**

Tip 3: Invest time in engaging people

Create and share with your stakeholders a checklist with every step they will be involved in, from collecting data and strategy development to initiative implementation.

Find the time and place to facilitate a proper conversation with them.

"

However great a journey you design, it will fail spectacularly if not supported by leaders who have a crucial impact on the everyday work experience. So I would suggest allocating extra time to have quality conversations with all your stakeholders and make sure you know what matters to them and how to engage them along the way. It's important to understand the power dynamics and be prepared that leaders (like any person) won't be ready to share what they really think,"

Yana Sanko, Head of Consulting at UXPressia

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"CUSTOMERS" ARE CLOSER

"CUSTOMERS" ARE CLOSER

In employee journey mapping projects, accessing people and engaging them in research activities is much easier to arrange than in a typical CX project.

Employees are literally a word or a few steps away. But be aware that, unlike customers, people you work with might have trouble sharing the "bitter truth" regarding their experience.

Some people might accumulate negative emotions for years before eventually quitting the company, which can't be undone.

> *The major difference between employee journey mapping and customer journey mapping is the ease of getting information. But also the truth. Customers are much more upfront when they have issues or think that your product or service isn't up to par. Employees may be a bit more hesitant, for they may fear that this negative feedback can be used against them,"*

Paul Lopushinsky, Founder of Playficient

> *Employee journey mapping can be easier validated and more focused on sentiments, feelings, and challenges. It can be a great marriage of people, processes, and technology. The ability to see all the pieces together through detailed mapping is one of the greatest advantages,"*

Kristin Cobuzzi, Managing Director at Accenture

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"CUSTOMERS" ARE CLOSER

Tip 1: Simplify feedback collection

Research doesn't have to be too formal, complex, or take much time. Break it up into short everyday activities that better reflect the current situation and let you improve the employee journey right away.

Those can be team meetings, a suggestion box, daily sharing of one positive and one negative thing that everyone faced, etc.

> *It can take a lot of time and many hours to gather and distill detailed information into actionable improvements, and the time it takes is one of the biggest challenges. To help overcome this, one method is to give detailed reflection prompts to the employee to respond to each day. This will help to quickly review the information to identify actionable improvements to implement in the future,"*
>
> *Jacqueline L. Frank, Instruction & Accessibility Librarian at Montana State University-Bozeman*

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"CUSTOMERS" ARE CLOSER

Tip 2: Take a systematic approach

There are three directions to collect employee feedback:

1. Annual/periodic surveys;
2. Ongoing feedback collection via specialized software like 15Five, TinyPulse, RoundPegg, etc.;
3. By creating a reliable and respectful work environment between employees and management.

Combine all three to get the most complete and relevant data.

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"CUSTOMERS" ARE CLOSER

Tip 3: Learn even more

- Reach out to your former employees. They will be more forthright than the current ones.
- Gather anonymous feedback.
- Ask a person from another department to help with gathering or reviewing employee feedback.
- Show genuine interest and pay attention to nonverbals.
- Be the first to share the truth.

" *Another challenge is getting honest feedback from new employees who, understandably, want to make a good impression. To help overcome this, having someone from a different department review the new employee feedback and act as the project manager can help the new employee feel comfortable sharing less-than-positive information,"*

Jacqueline L. Frank, Instruction & Accessibility Librarian at Montana State University-Bozeman

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"CUSTOMERS" ARE CLOSER

Tip 4: Differentiate the feedback

The feedback from employees at different stages of their journey will vary, including their view of their own past experiences. So it's important not to mix the gathered information.

Look for patterns, don't map specific cases, and focus on what will truly benefit most employees.

"

Different employees can give widely different feedback. Therefore, differentiating feedback between the preference of the new employee vs. improvements that would likely help all new employees can be difficult at times. After ensuring accessibility and using frameworks like inclusive design (if needed), ultimately you might just have to use your best judgment,"

Jacqueline L. Frank, Instruction & Accessibility Librarian at Montana State University-Bozeman

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"CUSTOMERS" ARE CLOSER

Tip 5: Build accurate personas

Create personas for your employee journey map. To do them right, check out our **Personas creation guide.**

It will help you to:

• Gather the most relevant information.
• Reshape it into insightful personas.
• Present them in the best manner.
• Figure out what to do next.

CONTENTS

HOW TO DEFINE PERSONAS

What are personas?

Personas are fictional characters that represent the different customer or user types that act in a similar way when using your product or service. There can be different criteria for grouping customers into personas, of which the most common are demographics and behavior.

HOW TO DEFINE PERSONAS

In some cases, like targeted advertising on social media, personas based on demographics work best. But having behavior-based personas is much more beneficial in most cases. Such personas offer you valuable insights into how to improve customer experience and your product or service in general.

• **Behavior-based grouping**

Questions to start with:

   ○ What do your customers want?
   ○ Why are they doing particular things?
   ○ What motivates them?
   ○ What frustrates them?

HOW TO DEFINE PERSONAS

Step 1: Conduct research

The first thing that needs to be done is learning from your customers or users. The goal is to gain a clear understanding of their goals, tasks, needs, and pains. And one of the best ways to get to know your customers or users is to interview them.

Each case is unique, but you can use the template at the end of this guide as a starting point when preparing for interviews.

The number of interviews you should carry out to gather the information you need can vary.

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Tip 6: Encourage cooperation

Invite your "personas" to design with you. Usually, the mapping session is open for the stakeholders, but, in this case, employees are stakeholders too. So ask them to validate the data you gathered.

" *Participative design and cooperation are way more accessible than doing the same with customers. It helps to validate the data and the mapping process, as well as to engage people,"*

Yana Sanko, Head of Consulting at UXPressia

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Tip 7: Mind the communication gaps

Although employees are closer than customers, the wrong channels can spoil your communication. The map will help you to identify which channels are better for a specific employee persona.
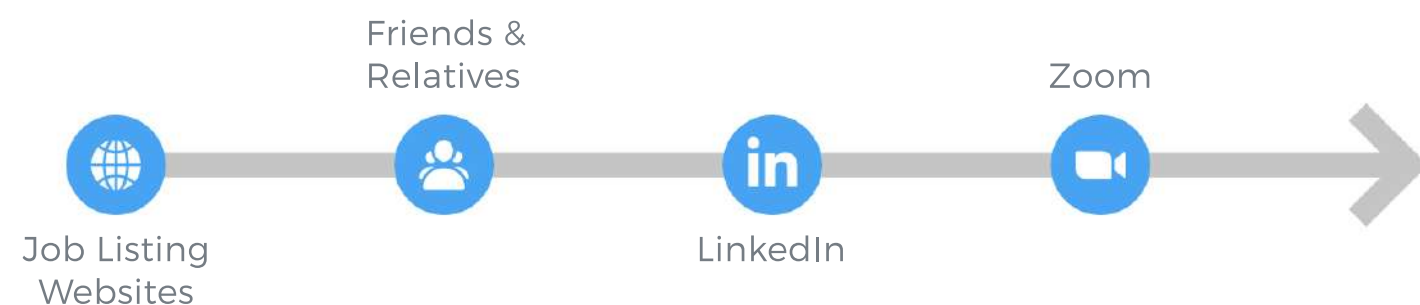
Also, the internal technology your company uses for communication should benefit those who deal with it every day. Sometimes software works against employees but fits top management. And that is the gap too.

" *Communication gaps are one of the main issues in an employee journey. Make sure you deliver needed info at particular stages via the most appropriate channels. E.g., even if you "talked all through" during the meeting, ensure to send a follow-up email so that the employee is not left without attention,"*

Elena Rozanova, Head of Customer Relations, Small business at Rosbank

THE END-TO-END JOURNEY

IS DEMANDING

END-TO-END JOURNEY IS DEMANDING

The journey of an employee can last for many years or take a few weeks only.

Plus, all of your employees might be at different stages of their journeys at the same moment in time. Some of them have only got the job, others have successfully passed the onboarding stage. Some haven't adapted yet, others have been working in the same position for years. Some have got a promotion, others are on vacation.

Besides, there are retirees and past employees who had their own experience with the company.

You can't directly compare these people's journeys, as each group has a unique set of goals, pain points, and motivations.

"

The 'experience' will likely be captured over a much longer period when mapping an employee experience vs. the experience from a non-EX journey map. For many non-EX journey maps, the experience might be captured in one day, or over the course of a few discrete interactions, for example. To capture the experience of a new employee, however, the timeframe might be extended over a couple of weeks, months, or longer, if possible,"

Jacqueline L. Frank, Instruction & Accessibility Librarian at Montana State University-Bozeman

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END-TO-END JOURNEY IS DEMANDING

Tip 1: Segment and scope

Mapping an end-to-end journey can be difficult and not always a necessary way to go. There are multiple ways to scope such a journey. You can stick to the one which fits your company better or come up with another:

1. Stage-based (e.g., onboarding or performance evaluation);

2. Job-based (e.g., an engineering team and marketing team might have a very different journey within the same company);

3. Location-based (e.g., journeys of office staff and people working from home will differ too);

4. Event-based (e.g., a specific project or business trip).

> *It's really important to pick the right employee segment and the right process to redesign, especially if it's the first mapping exercise for your company,"*
>
> **Yana Sanko, Head of Consulting at UXPressia**

> *Some key experiences to consider are the ones that tend to make people annoyed and disengaged, like onboarding and offboarding, internal job changes, the birth of a child (including managing benefits, navigating parental leave, and returning to work), relocation, and just about anything related to payroll,"*
>
> **Melissa Henley, Senior Director of Customer Experience at Laserfiche**

Onboarding

Offboarding

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END-TO-END JOURNEY IS DEMANDING

Tip 2: Go iteratively

Build an employee journey piece by piece, then combine everything into the end-to-end map.

> " In most cases, I would advise against mapping an end-to-end employee journey at the beginning and encourage you to go iteratively. Then summarize the output in a single map,"

Yana Sanko, Head of Consulting at UXPressia

Tip 3: Build an EJM template to design upon

When mapping an employee journey for medium and large businesses, think about building a generalized employee journey map as such a map will allow flexibility.

Thus different teams and departments would be able to tweak this map according to their goals and cases.

"

I like to use a food menu as an analogy here. You determine what the main course is - what everyone experiences during the journey. It doesn't matter which department they are joining, what level of seniority, etc. For example, values are one of them. From there, you can have your side dishes for people in various departments that only they need to be aware of, or if someone comes in at a VP role or a junior role. As well, this map isn't set in stone. It's something that builds a foundation and can always be tweaked,"

Paul Lopushinsky, Founder of Playficient

ONBOARDING IS
THE MOST POPULAR STAGE

ONBOARDING IS THE MOST POPULAR STAGE

The way an employee is onboarded affects their further journey and attitude toward the company and colleagues.

You will find there lots of essential insights, so many mappers tend to focus on these parts first.

" The first week is critical to making the new employees feel they are needed and accepted. The three following months are enough to predict how things will unfold with a new employee: whether they will stick around for a long time or not able to blend in,"

Elena Rozanova, Head of Customer Relations, Small business at Rosbank

" While our project stretched over six months total, we found that the most useful data was uncovered within the first month. This timeframe may differ in other organizations depending on how quickly employees are onboarded and receive new training, or if the journey map is looking at the experience of an existing employee,"

Jacqueline L. Frank, Instruction & Accessibility Librarian at Montana State University-Bozeman

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ONBOARDING IS THE MOST POPULAR STAGE

Tip 1: Ask long-term employees for feedback

Onboarding is a part of the employee honeymoon. It's the time when everything's new, exciting, and engaging by itself. When hirees close their eyes on many issues that might poison their further experience.

But all honeymoons end with hangovers — the period when your employee is the most critical. People who have been working with you for a while can shed more light on the onboarding (and other stages) than newbies.

"

Employees start seeing flaws once their honeymoon is over. Before, they are rather soft on the flaws they face,"

Yana Sanko, Head of Consulting at UXPressia

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Tip 2: Use onboarding insights for instant improvements

Use things you learn at the onboarding stage to help the HR team better understand how to attract candidates and what to highlight in vacancies and during interviews. They will also help you improve the onboarding process itself.

The best part is that the changes and their consequences are fast to put in place and see. The next call with a potential hiree will go differently. The next newbie will receive a different welcome email. Thus the EX will evolve for the better.

Make sure the HR knows how to pitch a particular position, what company features they should focus on so that you won't lose the candidate during the initial interview,"

Elena Rozanova, Head of Customer Relations, Small business at Rosbank

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CX AND EX ARE ENTWINED

CX AND EX ARE ENTWINED

It's a lot easier to get approval for a CX initiative than for the one focusing on EX.

Meanwhile, a customer experience doesn't exist in a vacuum; it heavily depends on employees. Their happiness, engagement, and comfort affect all the processes in the company, its product and service quality, and customers, too.

The positive experience motivates employees to deliver a better customer experience and vice versa.

All in all, improving customer experience begins with improving your employees' journey.

"

A lot of organizations love to sacrifice the employee experience all in the name of the customer, which leads to issues with churn. Because employee journey mapping makes use of storytelling, it's at an advantage, for storytelling is arguably or most powerful tool for communication and getting our point across,"

Paul Lopushinsky, Founder of Playficient

"

Many teams go into mapping a client journey out of the understanding that poor CX costs the company. That really motivates the team to change. In EX, the cost of leaving the company is pretty high for your persona. Depending on the job market conditions, they might decide to tolerate even pretty terrible experiences along their journey,"

Yana Sanko, Head of Consulting at UXPressia

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CX AND EX ARE ENTWINED

Tip 1: Put employees first

Don't try to improve the customer experience at the expense of your employees. Even if it worked, it wouldn't last for long.

When implementing this or that CX initiative, monitor how it affects your employees.

Create a friendly and comfortable environment; see your human resources as marathon runners, not sprinters that can be changed each "50 yards".

When mapping an employee journey, make sure you come to it with the right mindset and put the happiness and engagement of people before desired results. Of course, those are related things, but to achieve the latter you need to focus on the former.

"

Integrity and responsibility come with the understanding of power dynamics. Not much advice can be given here except be aware and ensure that you act ethically and humanly, trying to change the company for the best, and protecting people who might have shared some concerns or issues with you,"

Yana Sanko, Head of Consulting at UXPressia

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CX AND EX ARE ENTWINED

Tip 2: Invite CX-related teams to map the employee journey

Ask customer support managers, marketers, or salespeople to help you with mapping an employee journey.

The CX perspective will help approach an employee as a customer in an internal system and identify moments that matter to (or annoy) them.

"

To truly improve employee experience, HR, IT, operations, and customer experience must work together. One way to start aligning your employee experience with a customer experience mindset is to identify the personas — and experiences — that matter most to your employees. Some key experiences to consider are the ones that tend to make people annoyed and disengaged,"

Melissa Henley, Senior Director of Customer Experience at Laserfiche

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Tip 3: Sell your EJM intiative to the management

Map a specific part of the employee life cycle — the one that's the most problematic and it's evident to the upper management.

If many people leave during their first weeks, you might have problems with the previous stage. So try to map the candidacy stage. If not many newbies pass their probation, map the onboarding process. If your management launches a new innovative project, build a map for it.

Solving burning issues with mapping will show the management how useful this tool is. It will also engage and convince them to continue.

"

It would be a good idea to map a part of the journey your management is interested in. Or spend extra time persuading the leaders that the problem you're inviting them to solve is extremely important,"

Yana Sanko, Head of Consulting at UXPressia

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EMPLOYEE JOURNEY MAPPING IN UXPRESSIA

EMPLOYEE JOURNEY MAPPING IN UXPRESSIA

UXPressia is packed with everything you need to map your employee experience:

- Education & Career **journey map templates** for inspiration

EMPLOYEE JOURNEY MAPPING IN UXPRESSIA

- Description section to store general information about your map or persona. Use it to add some context and align your team vision
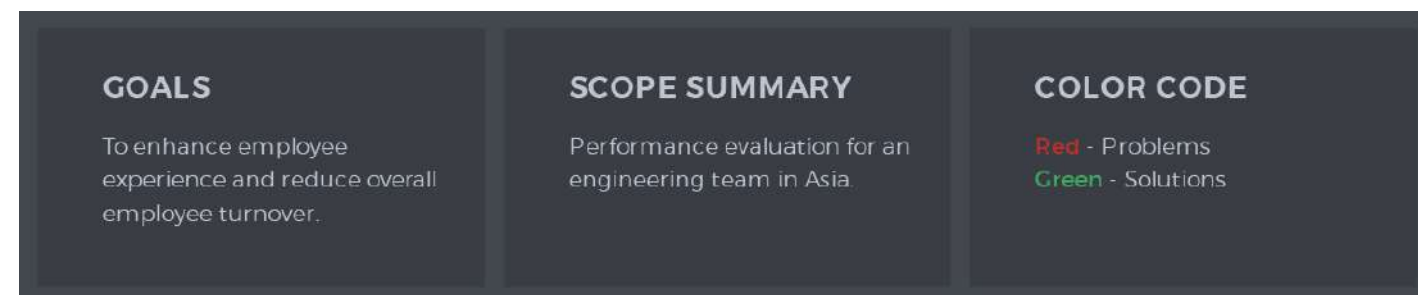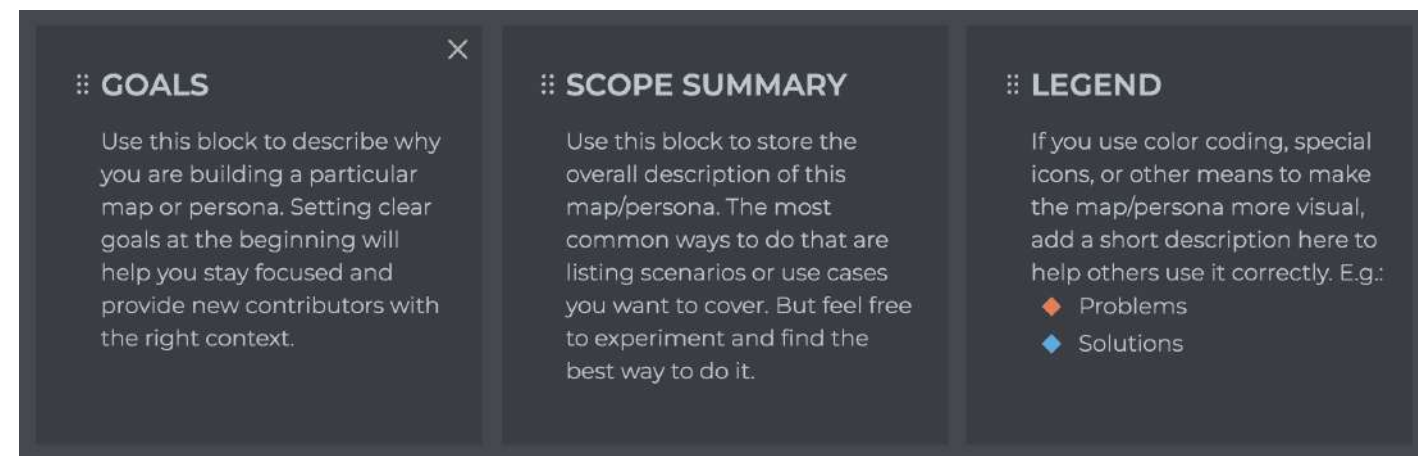
- Multipersonas functionality to compare journeys of different employee personas
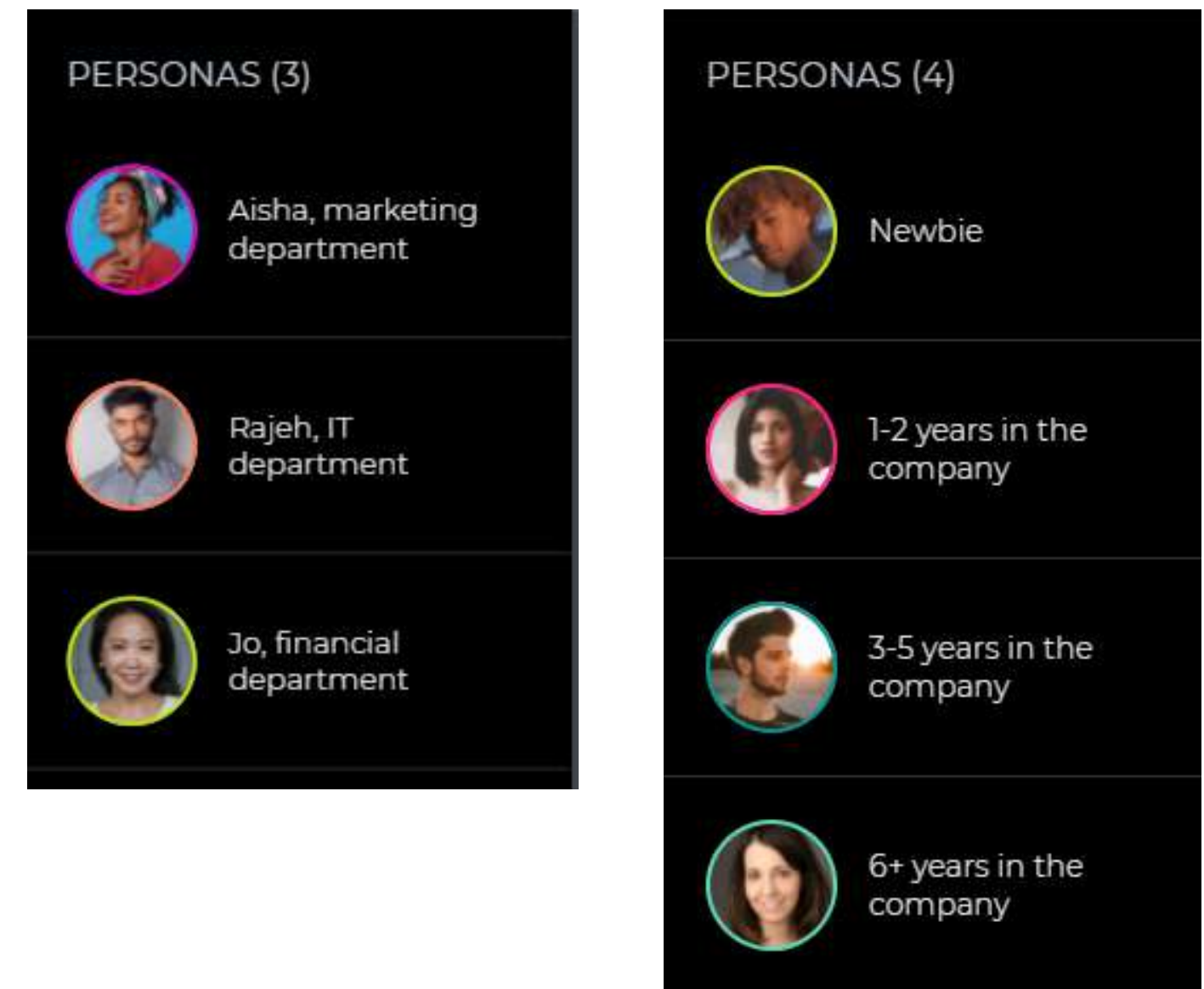
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- Experience graphs to capture the emotional state and sentiment
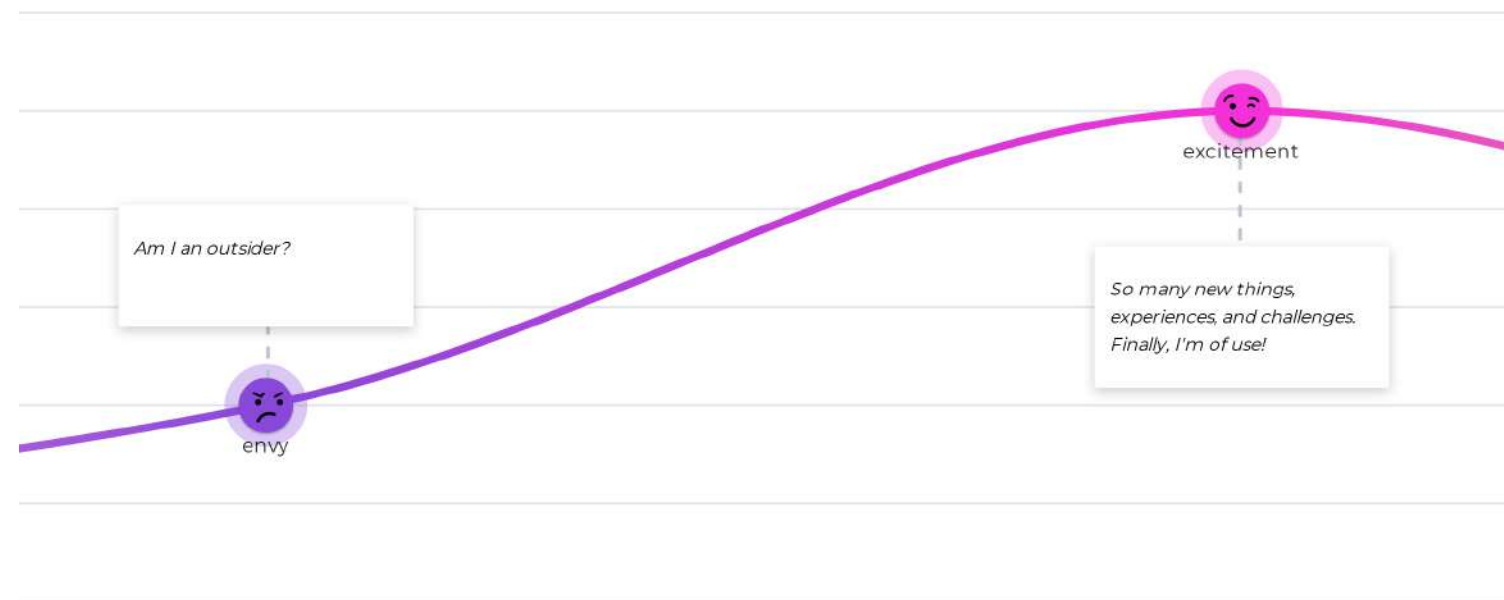
- Employee experience icons to illustrate channels
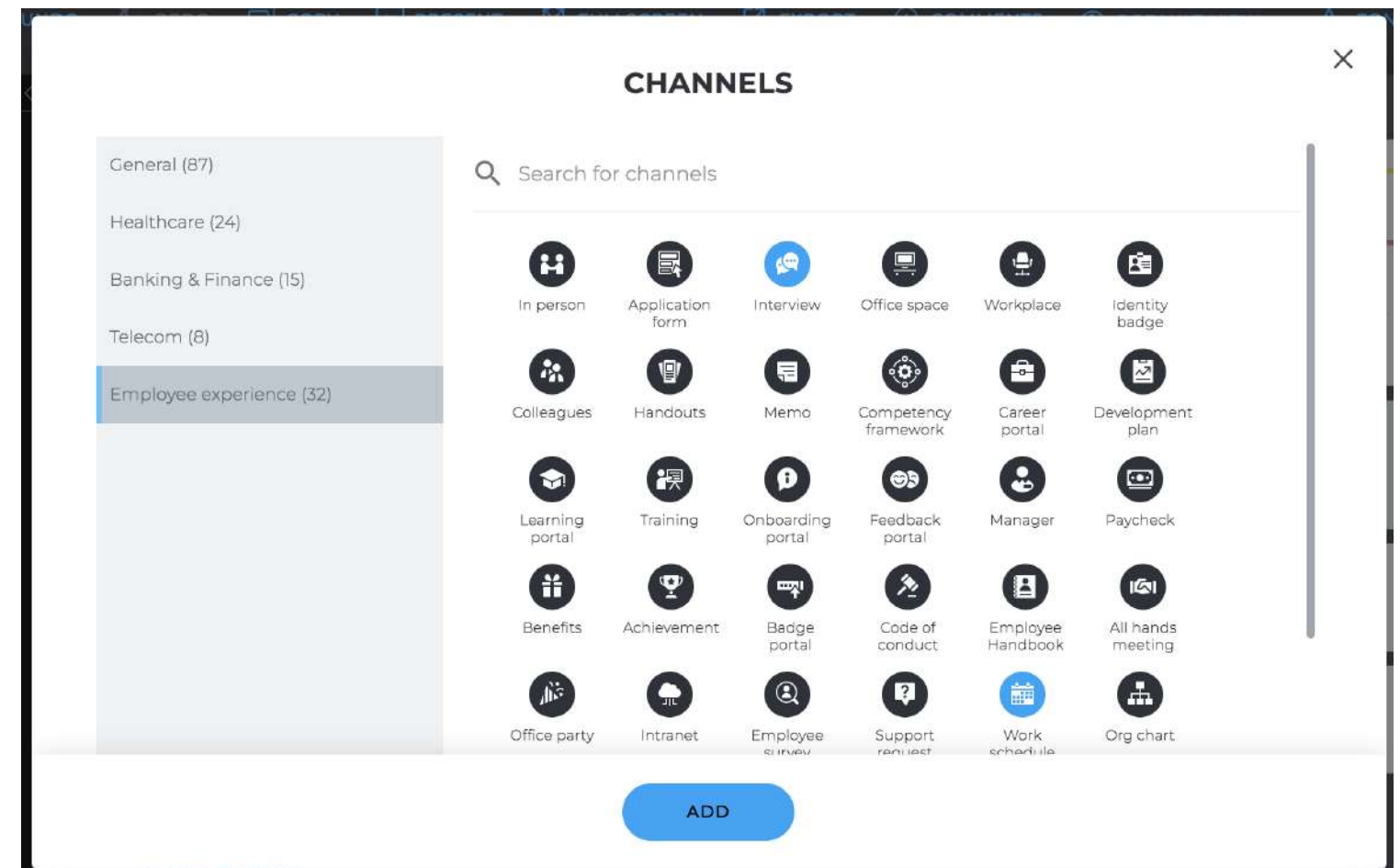
EMPLOYEE JOURNEY MAPPING IN UXPRESSIA

- Personas section to show interactions between employees and other journey participants
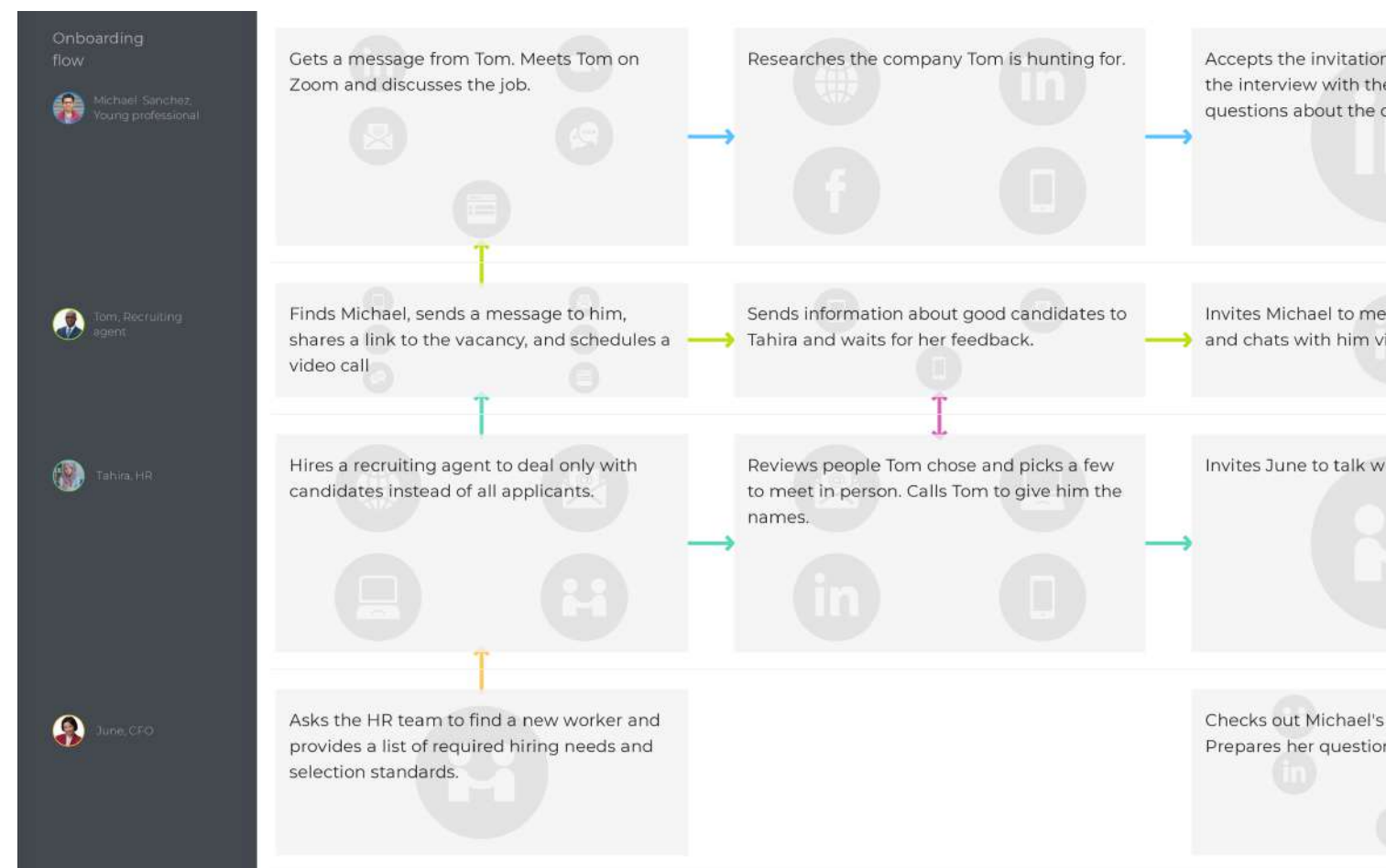
- Images in the Storyboard Gallery to tell your employee's story with just a few images
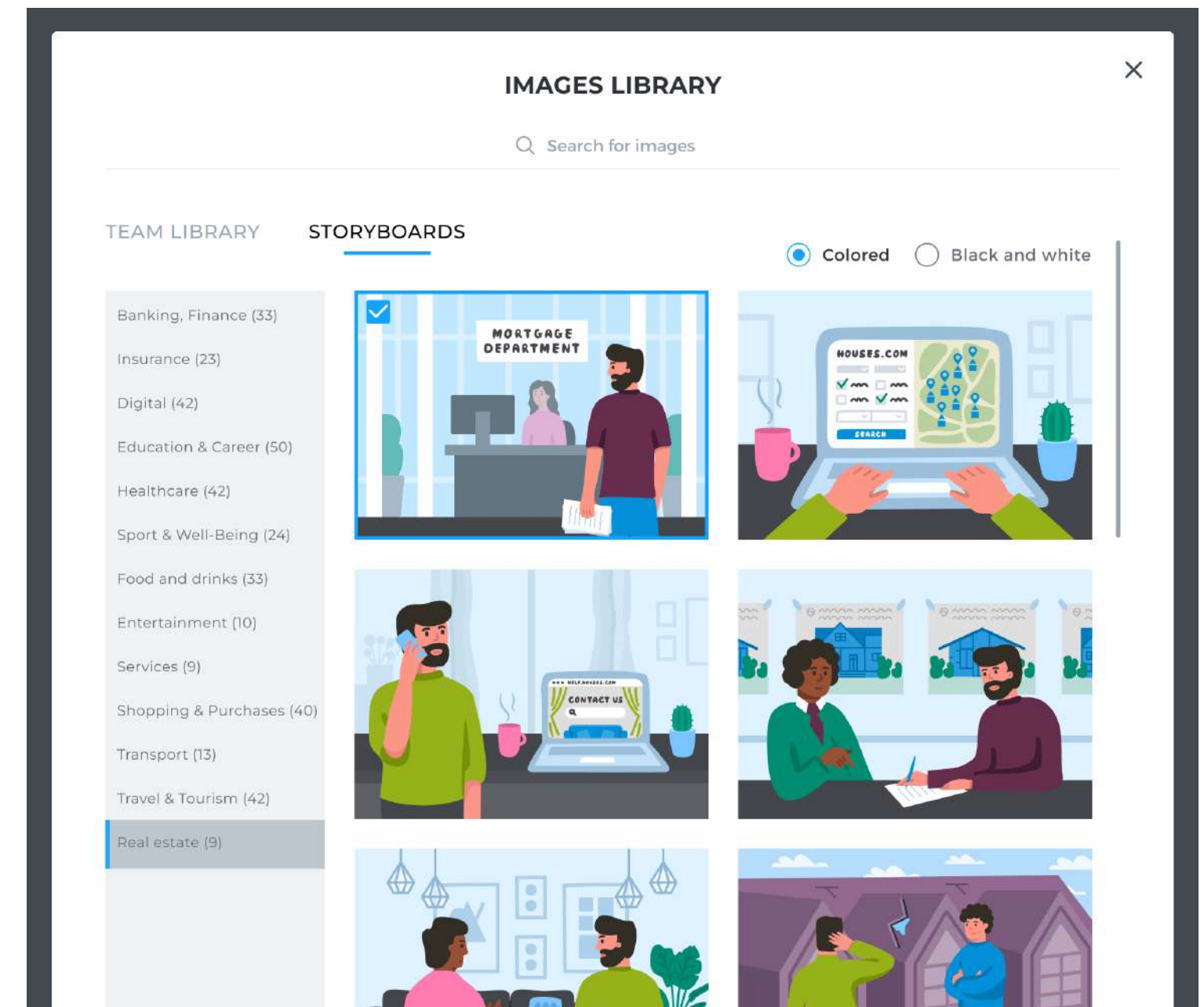
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EMPLOYEE JOURNEY MAPPING IN UXPRESSIA

- Custom Views to switch between various perspectives. E.g., to highlight the onboarding stage or optimize your map to present it to top management

Visit **UXPressia** to discover more useful features or start building your map.

Since 2015, UXPressia has been helping businesses, individuals, educational and nonprofit organizations move from product centricity to customer centricity by providing tools, consulting, training, and learning solutions.

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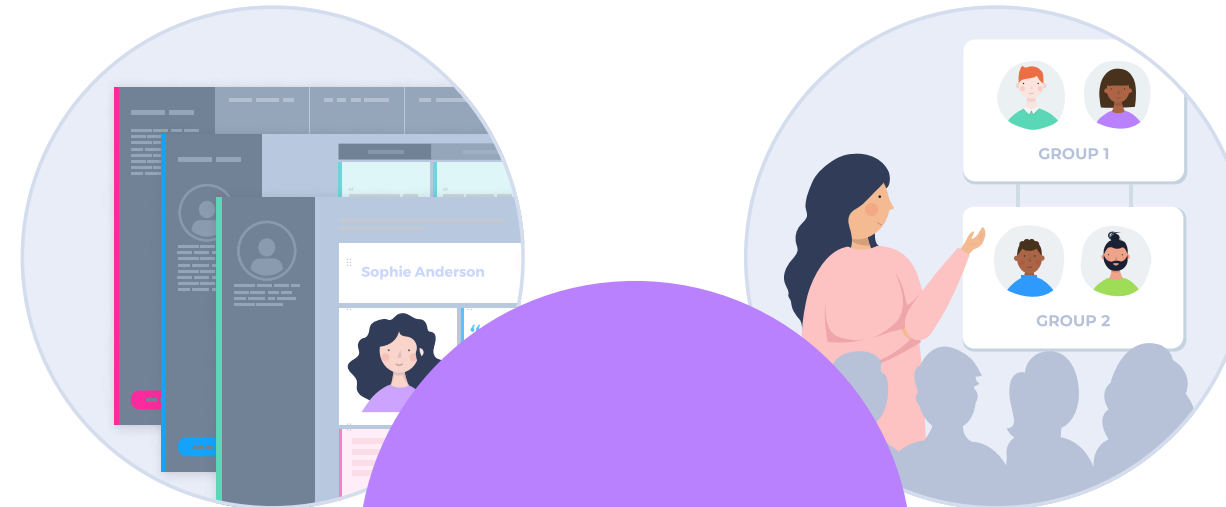
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EVENTS

Community meetups & events for HCD-minded people

Internal and external experts share their knowledge with the community

uxpressia.eventbrite.com

Instagram   Facebook   Twitter   Linkedin   Pinterest   E-mail

APPENDIX:
FRAMING QUESTIONS

APPENDIX: FRAMING QUESTIONS

Ready to build your own EJM? Follow these questions and check the boxes once you know the answer.

- [ ] How will you scope your employee journey?

- [ ] Do you need to build a generalized map first?

- [ ] Who are your stakeholders?

- [ ] What is their role?

- [ ] How do they affect the employee experience?

- [ ] Will you map them?

- [ ] How will you engage them?

- [ ] Who are your personas and how many of them are there?

- [ ] Will you design only one segment or a few to combine into a bigger map?

- [ ] How will you collect the data and feedback?

- [ ] How will you differentiate and validate it?

- [ ] Who will you invite to take part in the mapping process?

- [ ] How will you bridge the communications gaps?

- [ ] Will you approach EX from the CX perspective?

- [ ] How will you sell your EX initiative to the management?

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