

Executives' Commitment to XM: Assessment

Original Report: *Activating Executive Commitment*

SUMMARY

Organizations that want to drive sustainable Experience Management (XM) improvements need to have senior executives who are committed to propelling change throughout the entire journey. Successful transformation efforts require senior executives to set the direction, lead communication efforts, model desired behaviors, align resources, and hold the rest of the organization accountable. However, XM leaders and their teams often struggle to obtain the commitment and involvement necessary from senior executives to ensure these change efforts succeed. Use this tool to determine the commitment stage of your senior executives and strategies for engaging those executives.

SIX LEVERS FOR ACTIVATING SENIOR EXECUTIVES

The success of any significant change efforts within an organization almost always requires very active support from senior executives. To marshal executives' support and involvement, there are six levers XM leaders and their teams can use to engage senior executives:

- 1. Create Vision Clarity.** Many senior executives are enamored with the idea of Experience Management (XM), yet lack a clear picture of what XM really means for their organization. As a result, they aren't able to persuasively advocate for the required changes. Therefore, XM teams should provide leaders with a clear understanding of where the XM efforts are heading.
- 2. Share Compelling Opportunities.** Senior leaders will only stay committed to a XM effort for as long as they remain convinced that it will help the organization succeed. That's why XM leaders must continue to make and reinforce the XM business case to senior executives, while setting realistic expectations for the upside of action and the downside of inaction.
- 3. Amplify Emotional Empathy.** An executive who is emotionally committed to XM efforts provides a different level of support than one who is only intellectually bought-in. To gain this emotional commitment, the XM team should enhance executives' natural empathy by bringing customers' experiences to life for them.
- 4. Feed Intrinsic Motivations.** Executives are motivated by a myriad of different objectives, such as being seen as successful or reaching some self-defined goals. Intrinsic motivators can be particularly powerful levers for activating commitment. XM leaders should connect efforts to executives' personal goals and make them feel good about the efforts underway.
- 5. Enable First Steps.** Even executives who are fully committed to the XM agenda may not know exactly what they can do to help propel the XM efforts forward, especially since they are often juggling many different priorities. It's up to the XM leader to make it easy for the senior leaders to participate in the efforts by recommending specific, doable steps that they can take.
- 6. Fuel Ongoing Confidence.** XM teams need ongoing support from their executives; however, senior leaders are prone to distraction and doubt. To keep them on track, XM leaders need to keep executives informed of the progress and success of XM efforts and need to demonstrate that resources and risks are being managed well.

HOW TO USE

To help you identify the commitment level of your executives and strengthen their engagement in your XM efforts, you can use this tool in a number of ways:

- + **Self-assessment.** Take this assessment yourself and identify the strengths and weaknesses of your executive engagement efforts as well as which engagement strategies to pursue based on their commitment level.
- + **Group discussion.** Use the assessment in a group exercise. After each individual completes it, discuss the strengths and weaknesses identified, areas of agreement and disagreement, and strategies to pursue.
- + **Action planning.** Develop plans for raising your executive engagement. Be sure to look at the individual questions to spot potential areas for improvement tapping into the six levers of activation listed above. For inspiration and examples of how to engage executives, look at the strategies on page 3 and read the original report, *Activating Executive Commitment*.

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To what degree do the following statements describe your organization?

1 = Not at all **2** = Minimally **3** = Moderately **4** = Considerably **5** = Completely

1. Senior executives understand why Experience Management (XM) is important to the business and regularly communicate that to the rest of the company.	
2. Experience Management is explicitly included within the company's strategic plan.	
3. Internal communications from the company's CEO/President and other senior executives regularly include discussions of XM goals and progress.	
4. Senior executives have agreed upon a clear set of XM objectives and goals for the company.	
5. Senior executives participate in defining solutions to customer and employee issues and leading change inside their individual areas.	
6. Senior executive staff meetings have a recurring agenda item on Experience Management.	
7. The CEO/President holds self and direct reports accountable for changing behaviors and supporting XM in their individual areas.	
8. Senior executives recognize employees and teams who are demonstrating desired XM behaviors.	
9. Senior executives help remove obstacles impeding the progress of XM efforts.	
10. Senior executives regularly make trade-offs between short-term financial results for longer-term XM gains.	

EVALUATE THE RESULTS:

OVERALL total

TOTAL LEVELS OF EXECUTIVE ENGAGEMENT

<20: **1. Opposers:** Do not believe in XM. These executives generally won't support XM efforts no matter what data they see.

21 to 30: **2. Passives:** XM is not a priority for these executives. They could become Explorers if they see strong support/results from their peers.

31 to 37: **3. Explorers:** Willing to offer some time and resources for XM. These executives will increase their engagement and shift to supporters as they see strong results.

38 to 44: **4. Supporters:** Inherently understand the value of XM. These executives willingly give their time and resources to XM and encourage their peers to do the same.

45 to 50: **5. Advocates:** XM is their top priority. These executives will fight any battle to see that CX efforts are supported and funded. They understand the long-term impact XM has on company competitiveness even without project-based ROI data.

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FIVE LEVELS OF EXECUTIVE COMMITMENT

We classify executive commitment across five levels, each of which requires a different strategy to engage:

- 1. Level 1: Opposers.** These executives do not believe in XM and generally will not support efforts no matter what data they see. When trying to get any movement from executives at this level of commitment, XM leaders should start by crafting a vision that is written in executives' language and shows how a stronger commitment to XM supports the business (and professional) objectives that personally matter to them.
- 2. Level 2: Passives.** XM is not a priority for executives falling into this category – although they could become more committed if they see strong results and engagement in their peers. To help them along, XM leaders can tap those peers to share the opportunities that they have pursued and how these efforts impacted XM results. XM leaders can also present these reluctant executives with easy ways to get started working on XM.
- 3. Level 3: Explorers.** These executives are not only willing to offer some time and resources for XM, they are likely to increase their commitment as they continue to see results. XM leaders can strengthen this inclination by getting and keeping these executives close to customers and continuing to make it easy for them to take the right steps.
- 4. Level 4: Supporters.** Executives who are supporters inherently understand the value of XM, willingly give their time and resources to XM, and actively encourage their peers to do the same. To keep these executives on track and confident, XM leaders should get them involved in XM governance and collaborate with them to identify opportunities that will carry their results forward.
- 5. Level 5: Advocates.** The most committed executives make XM their top priority and fight to keep XM fully supported because they understand the long-term impact XM has on company competitiveness. To sustain their commitment, XM leaders should continue to strengthen their empathy for customers and fuel their confidence with a strong long-term vision.

LEVEL TOP TWO LEVERS LIKELY TO HAVE MOST IMPACT

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|----------------------|--|
| 1. Opposers | <ul style="list-style-type: none">+ Create Vision Clarity: Link XM to the executive's individual business objectives, showing how a commitment to improving XM will also positively impact his/her goals.+ Feed Intrinsic Motivations: Use external or internal benchmarking to show how the Opposer lags behind his/her competition or peers. |
| 2. Passives | <ul style="list-style-type: none">+ Create Vision Clarity: Identify projects or initiatives Passives or their organization are already doing that support XM objectives to highlight progress underway.+ Share Compelling Opportunities: Focus on sharing data from trusted sources or completed pilots to highlight results that come from making commitment. |
| 3. Explorers | <ul style="list-style-type: none">+ Amplify Emotional Empathy: Introduce specific activities designed to get execs interacting directly with customers and employees to better understand needs and gain feedback.+ Enable First Steps: Offer guidance and tools for executives to take ownership of XM communications and evangelization in their organizations. |
| 4. Supporters | <ul style="list-style-type: none">+ Share Compelling Opportunities: Keep executive commitment steady by using the continuous flow of insights to monitor changes to customers needs and expectations.+ Fuel Ongoing Confidence: Get involved in centralized or federated XM governance to maintain visibility of and input to the XM strategy, priorities, and resource allocation. |
| 5. Advocates | <ul style="list-style-type: none">+ Amplify Emotional Empathy: Advance XM maturity and sustain executive commitment by involving them in developing personas and leading journey mapping.+ Fuel Ongoing Confidence: Keep commitment high by supplementing near-term goals and plans with well-grounded long-term XM vision. |