

# Assessment: XM Ambition

Original Resource: *Do Your Executives Have the Ambition Necessary For XM Success? Assess It.*

## SUMMARY

Experience Management (XM) success requires organizations to maintain a systematic focus on driving change over multiple years. This level of change is not possible without strong, persistent commitment from executives, who play an instrumental role in helping XM programs overcome the obstacles and inertia that inevitably set in during any large-scale transformation. While many executives **say** they are committed to XM efforts, they often lack the deep belief that XM is critical to their organization's long-term success. Without this high level of support and ambition, executive commitment often wanes in the face of time and shifts in the operating environment. Use the Ambition Assessment on page 2 to evaluate whether your senior leaders have the XM ambition necessary to support your XM program's goals and activities.

## THE FOUR DRIVERS OF XM AMBITION

Since XM ambition ensures ongoing senior leadership support, it represents a necessary ingredient for achieving long-term XM success. This ambition must be combined with a systematic approach for embedding XM-centric capabilities across the business, which XM Institute calls the [XM Operating Framework](#). To help XM professionals facilitate the leadership discussions they need to evaluate – and hopefully secure – the resources and support required to build a sustainable XM program, we have identified four drivers of XM ambition:

- 1. Business Need.** Senior leaders believe that the organization needs to adapt how it operates to succeed in a changing and uncertain environment. Because XM embeds the capability to continuously learn, propagate insights, and rapidly adapt throughout all operational processes, it enables organizations to sense and respond to changes more quickly than their competitors can. While the exact opportunities presented by XM will vary depending on a number of factors – like industry, region, and regulatory environments – the ability to better understand and adapt to an ever-evolving business landscape is always crucial for long-term success. Executives will demonstrate stronger ambition when they recognize this link between XM and their organization's ability to stay competitive. To evaluate Business Need, we examine *Improvements, Agility, and Innovation*.
- 2. Value Clarity.** Senior leaders can clearly articulate where and how XM can transform their organization. Even if executives recognize the potential business value of XM efforts, they may lack ambition if they don't have a good sense of *how* these efforts will translate into success. Leaders need to have and communicate a compelling vision of the desired future state, explaining how exactly XM will help different processes, teams, and business operations perform better going forward. To evaluate Value Clarity, we examine *Impact, Narrative, and ROI*.
- 3. Strategic Fit.** The organization embraces XM within its core operating model. Since XM success requires organizations to maintain a systematic focus on driving change over multiple years, leadership ambition needs to last for an extended period of time. This sustained focus will only persist if executives – and people across the business – see XM as integral to the organization's critical efforts and **not** as a standalone set of activities. To evaluate Strategic Fit, we examine *Vision, Values, and Strategy*.
- 4. Executive Advocacy.** Senior leaders actively support the organization's strong focus on XM. Even if leaders believe that XM is important, their endorsement is meaningless unless it consistently shows up in their own decisions and actions. Because people naturally gravitate toward the status quo, if executives don't demonstrate XM behaviors themselves – if they don't highlight, encourage, and reward XM adoption – the rest of the organization won't change the way it operates either. To evaluate Executive Advocacy, we examine *Mindset, Evangelism, and Ownership*.

## HOW TO USE

You can use this assessment in a number of different ways to align leaders' XM ambition levels with their tangible support:

- + **Self-assessments.** Take the test yourself and identify the strengths and weaknesses of your senior executives' ambitions. You can also use the evaluation to assess leaders from different departments or business units.
- + **Group discussions.** Have multiple people complete the self-assessment and then review the results as a group. Discuss the strong and weak elements you've identified as well as which areas you agree and disagree on.
- + **Action planning.** In an executive working session, have leaders identify whether their level of ambition matches their XM plans. If it's not, have them identify explicit steps they can take to strengthen their ambition or support.
- + **Progress tracking.** Repeat the assessment every 12 to 18 months to track your progress and identify key areas of focus. The goal is to drive an ongoing discussion and sustain the executive ambition required to support your XM efforts.

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To what extent do you agree with these statements about your organization?

- 1:** Disagree      **2:** Neither Agree nor Disagree      **3:** Slightly Agree      **4:** Moderately Agree      **5:** Strongly Agree

1. Senior leaders recognize a business need to improve broken experiences because they are costly or competitively problematic	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Senior leaders recognize a business need to improve the organization's ability to adapt to changing environments that it is currently facing or will be facing in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Senior leaders recognize a business need to accelerate the pace and success of its innovations to meet its growth and market share objectives	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>BUSINESS NEED</b> total	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Efforts that improve XM are viewed as a requirement for the organization to succeed in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. There is a compelling story about how an improvement in XM will change how the organization operates in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. There is an accepted model for estimating the value of improving XM	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>VALUE CLARITY</b> total	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. The organization's vision statement includes a clear connection to XM	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. The organization has well-defined values that can clearly be connected to XM	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. The organization's strategic plans include specific areas that focus on XM	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>STRATEGIC FIT</b> total	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Senior leaders view XM as a multi-year cross-functional transformational program	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Senior leaders actively evangelize the importance of XM	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Senior leaders allocate resources and promote XM-related activities within their organizations	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>EXECUTIVE ADVOCACY</b> total	<input type="checkbox"/>

**OVERALL** total

## EVALUATE THE RESULTS:

### Category Results (total scores):

Less than **5**: **Very Low**  
**5** to **7**: **Low**  
**8** to **10**: **Moderate**  
**11** to **13**: **High**  
**14** or **15**: **Very High**

### Ambition Level (overall total):

Less than **24**: **Very Low**  
**24** to **32**: **Low**  
**33** to **41**: **Moderate**  
**42** to **50**: **High**  
**51** or higher: **Very High**