



How One Company Deploys ‘Experience Data’ to Promote Diversity Initiatives

Software company aims to change corporate culture by gathering, analyzing employee feedback

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Mention “employee experience” to an HR professional and they’ll probably think of how many years on the job qualifies an applicant for a position. But the term also refers to the experience of *being* an employee, something that can be measured and analyzed for purposes other than hiring. That data can guide the development and implementation of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) initiatives in the workplace.

Organizations identify, assess and improve experiences by using experience management, a practice that emerged in the 1990s. Employee experiences—as well as customer, brand and product experiences—have economic value and create a competitive advantage. Organizations that once collected only operational data now also collect experience data. Experience management platforms automate this process.

CultureQuest is one such platform—an online tool for DEI assessment, management and improvement. A product of software company [Tivian Inc.](#) (formerly Questback), CultureQuest came to the attention of SHRM researchers in 2019, when it was successfully deployed in the UK by a large government agency seeking to address persistent gender, ethnic and disability inequalities in its workplaces. The agency used the tool to collect employee experience data in order to measure the behavioral and cultural factors that were influencing organizational and individual decisions, operations and expectations. Tivian’s assessment of this data, when combined with HRIS data, provided the objective evidence that enabled the agency’s HR and DEI departments to make needed changes.

Not Your Standard Employee Survey

Andrew Cocks, the London-based assessment psychologist who designed CultureQuest, said the platform works by gathering employee feedback from across an organization, interpreting this experience data, presenting the findings to leadership and employees, and “actively involving everyone in the improvement process.” The nature of the information that the tool solicits differentiates it from standard workforce surveys. “CultureQuest focuses on collective behaviors and the shared assumptions that drive them, which usually operate at an unconscious level,” Cocks said. “Bringing these behaviors and assumptions into the collective consciousness allows them to be addressed in a purposeful way.”

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Tivian’s platform can “predict real-world outcomes like gender and ethnicity pay gaps and minority group representation,” Cocks said. “Traditional employee survey questions show no such predictive power and in many cases are actually misleading.” The slow pace of progress in changing corporate culture, he said, “is largely due to a failure to go beyond these surface-level employee attitudes.” This failure is compounded, Cocks continued, “by the fact that responsibility for driving change has rested solely with leadership, rather than being devolved to employees at all levels.”

Cocks represents “the voice of the employee” as Tivian’s resident subject matter expert. “What really sets CultureQuest apart,” he said, “are the resources it provides to managers and team members to create an inclusive environment.” This support enables and rewards “behaviors that connote an inclusive culture—such as giving and receiving open feedback, risk-taking to innovate, and being held accountable.” Suggestions for improvement are continuously gathered and evaluated through “always on” online feedback systems and best-practices exchanges. This way, Cocks said, “the process of developing an inclusive culture is by its very nature inclusive and democratized. As it is expressed in terms of tangible behaviors, culture is demystified for all employees.”

Diversity & Inclusion is a functional area described in the SHRM Body of Competency and Knowledge (SHRM BoCK) (part of the *HR Expertise* technical competency), and CultureQuest obviously complements this provision. The Tivian tool also supports the BoCK’s *Employee Engagement & Retention* function, Cocks noted, by “actively involving employees in the process of culture change and continuous improvement,” which builds loyalty. The data that CultureQuest gathers and analyzes “helps identify the key drivers of churn and allows the development of predictive models of employee turnover,” he said, so that those at particular risk of leaving—such as high performers, minority groups or those in specialist roles—can be targeted with specific retention strategies.

Behavioral Competencies Complemented

Cocks explained that several behavioral competencies described in the BoCK are also supported by CultureQuest:

- *Critical Evaluation.* The tool collects qualitative and quantitative data that HR can use to make evidence-based decisions and track the efficacy of their execution. “Data can be merged with existing data sources,” Cocks said. “For example, CultureQuest’s online interactive reporting dashboards can integrate employee feedback, diversity metrics and HRIS data to provide a complete picture of the organization’s culture.”
- *Communication.* The all-way exchange of information promoted by CultureQuest helps develop “a culture of open feedback via online communication channels, focused team conversations, mechanisms for idea generation, best-practices exchanges” and other modes.

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- *Ethical Practice.* “By focusing on behaviors,” Cocks said, “CultureQuest clearly defines in measurable terms what is acceptable or unacceptable within an inclusive culture. As a result, everyone can be held accountable for upholding the highest ethical standards.”
- *Leadership & Navigation.* “Making behaviors tangible provides a consistent and well-defined focus for change across the organization,” Cocks said.

On a Mission to Change the Culture

Tivian is “on a mission” to change corporate culture by providing comprehensive DEI solutions, said CEO Frank Møllerop. Inequalities cannot be addressed and corrected “unless we start changing the company cultures and the unconscious biases that exist in all organizations,” he said. “Target-setting and affirmative action can help, but they do nothing to address the root causes of inequality deeply ingrained in corporate culture. Good intentions and reassuring words are not enough.”

A DEI-based organizational culture “will drive innovation, employee experience, and better integrity, impacting customer experience and financial strength,” Møllerop said. A diverse, equitable, inclusive workplace is “a prerequisite” for corporate effectiveness and high performance. “The financial markets have recognized the importance of DEI,” Møllerop said. Companies risk “increased capital costs unless they get their house in order with a sustainable governance model,” he said, echoing another CEO’s recent statement.

“The business case for a governance-risk-compliance approach based on inclusive corporate cultures has never been clearer,” Møllerop said.

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About Tivian

Through advanced analytics and cutting-edge AI technology, Tivian helps great organizations capture and harness experience data to drive business listening, deeper insights, and better decision making. Tivian’s intelligent experience management platform increases corporate effectiveness and enables a smarter business world, empowered by insight. Built on 20 years of experience in enterprise feedback management, Tivian provides over 400 customers in 35 countries with the ability to take action and achieve their objectives. For more information, please visit www.tivian.com or follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), or [LinkedIn](#).

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