Employees now get the same kind of friction-less service that we provide to our customers.

Todd Reeves, Senior Vice President of People Experience and Insights, Expedia Group

Powering global travel for everyone, everywhere

Expedia Group believes travel is a force for good, unleashing more opportunities to strengthen connections, broaden horizons, and bridge divides. Working across multiple time zones, hemispheres, cultures, and languages, the company has a continuous approach to innovation, to build great products and facilitate global travel for everyone, everywhere.

Expedia Group is an online travel platform comprising more than 200 specialty websites and 20 globally recognized travel brands.
Its platform links to hundreds of airlines, cruise operators, hotels, and car rental businesses, making it easier for travelers and partners to navigate endless possibilities to reach the best travel outcome.

Unsurprisingly, technology forms the linchpin of Expedia Group's operations, ensuring a world-class service experience for users. The company is committed to being an exceptional place to work. At the heart of that is creating a unified and seamless employee experience. In reality, the company’s legacy tech operation was delivering a less than ideal service experience for its employees.

"We had an IT SharePoint site, an IT portal, an HR portal, and a facilities portal and all these different engagement points," explains Todd Reeves, Senior Vice President of People Experience and Insights, Expedia Group. "But we put the burden on employees and managers to figure out how to connect with us, how to get their questions answered, and how to access service."

"We want to create an intuitive, consumer-grade shopping experience for our products that makes it quick and easy for employees to get what they need," says Staci Nakayama, VP, Employee Technology and Services, Expedia Group.

A disparate array of options faced staff who wanted simple answers from the system - and a quick route to those answers.

"Users would wonder how they were supposed to open a ticket," says Houston Chatham-Wright, Principal Product Manager of People Technology, Expedia Group. "If it's an IT thing, the buttons were over here. If it's an HR thing, they were elsewhere, and so on. Access to information was just too complicated."

Creating a unified employee experience

With system confusion posing a problem, the team decided a unified employee experience was the way forward. The goal was to create a single platform capable of supporting the entire employee journey, from hire to retire and all points in between.

"We want to create an intuitive, consumer-grade shopping experience for our products that makes it quick and easy for employees to get what they need," says Staci Nakayama, VP, Employee Technology and Services, Expedia Group.

The challenge was in developing a destination where employees could search information, irrespective of the subject matter or department in question, and leave with the necessary answers or action.
“We launched the askEG portal,” says Todd. “It’s a very simple experience: employees just go to one place. One location for employees to ask whatever question they have.”

“Today, employees need know only one thing: I just need to askEG,” says Houston. “That is incredibly liberating. The background might operate separately, but the user interface we’re presenting to the employee is simple with no barrier to use. A live chat with IT or HR is in the exact same location, although they’re going into two totally different spaces. It’s a unified and friction-free experience.”

Building a user-centric, consumer-grade design

The company’s insight was helped by a strong rapport with its in-house teams. Open exchanges of what employees wanted and needed led to the solution. Exhaustive research methods tracked how users navigated for information.

“Out of five people, I can tell you we got five different results of how they tried to navigate the same place,” explains Houston. “Then it was really about taking this information back and putting it directly into our development.”

Employee empowerment means technology works behind the scenes to deliver the same simplicity Expedia Group delivers to its customers. A decluttering process followed to strip down department branding, and the IT function broadened their focus to become an internal platform-as-a-service provider that allowed for a unified employee experience.

“We really looked at how to make it agnostic,” explains Houston. “The employee shouldn’t feel as if they’ve arrived at the HR space, for example. This meant that we went through lots of content and removed a lot of branding from articles.”

Branding and even color schemes were systematically removed for a new, simpler employee viewing interface. “We’re still removing branding from some attributes,” says Houston. “The point is that an employee doesn’t care what your badge says. They just want the answer or the support. So that’s how we tried to really position the portal, to be unified and agnostic across teams.”

ServiceNow took our travel passion in-house to our employee experience.

Todd Reeves, Senior Vice President of Employee Experience and Insights, Expedia Group
Not least, the unified portal also enables the company to increase awareness of how the ServiceNow platform can be utilized for other services. This allows Expedia Group to manage the number of duplicative tools, reducing cost.

**Seamless multi-department service experiences**

For employees, there is no longer the frustration or wasted time figuring out where to find help and support. From a support perspective, Expedia Group is better able to move workloads across teams.

“We have many service and support scenarios that require hand off between teams and this now provides a holistic view of the transaction allowing multiple teams to collaborate seamlessly,” says Jamie Terry, Sr. Director Corp IT Services, Expedia Group.

The unified portal also provides comprehensive, multi-department services accessible to employees from onboarding to offboarding. A compendium of staff assistance supports the entire employee journey: access to benefits, ID credentials, payroll queries, system support, passwords and software, annual leave requests, goal setting, and performance progress. And the experience is consistent from HR to IT to workplace and even legal services.

“I might want to be sure that my badge works,” Houston explains. “An employee might think that is a facilities’ matter when it's really a security query. Relocations, hybrid work, moving across the country or globally; this all brings a host of questions from payroll updates to getting local phone chargers. And the questions have to be addressed in the context of a migrating employee, not from the lens of who provides the answers.”

Employee response to the ServiceNow portal was “tremendous” says Todd. “Staff believed there was much more information available. But it was the same information, made more accessible by ServiceNow. In fact, we sunsetted all our other tools.”

Staci Nakayama says the next step is to broaden support services across all departments and functions: “We’re looking beyond HR and IT to expand scope. We see a lot of potential to expand this capability to other internal teams, specifically to improve the experience for our developers who are key to delivering amazing products for our travelers.”

Expedia Group’s real journeys have become a metaphor for the pathways of its own employees.

“We put our travelers at the center of everything we do. ServiceNow enables us to do the same thing for our employees,” says Staci. “When you improve the experience for both employees and agents serving them, it creates a virtuous cycle that benefits everyone in the company and the bottom line.”