How to Continuously Improve the Employee Digital Experience

Quality Management Principles Is a Critical Component of Successful Digital Experience Management

Meeting Expectations by Improving Digital Experiences

The digital experience is now the primary way employees interact with their employers. The pervasive shift to remote work has placed more pressure than ever on enterprise IT teams to deliver a positive digital experience to employees. However, many IT teams struggle to define and execute an action plan that improves employee experiences. In fact, Forrester Research reported that 29% of information workers are unsatisfied with how their devices and connections enable them to perform.

The technology landscape is constantly evolving which has historically led to dissatisfaction among employees who expect enterprise IT teams to keep up with the rapid pace of digital services and devices available to consumers. This can seem like a herculean task, but with the right tools and the right model, meeting employee expectations and keeping up with innovation is not as challenging as it once was. In the following pages, you'll learn how to apply one of project management's leading improvement models, the Deming Cycle, to continuously improve your employee digital experience.

What is the Deming Cycle?

The Deming Cycle is a quality improvement model that offers a logical sequence of four repetitive steps: Plan, Do, Check and Act. Also known as the PDCA Cycle, this systematic process helps individuals and teams improve products, processes, or services.
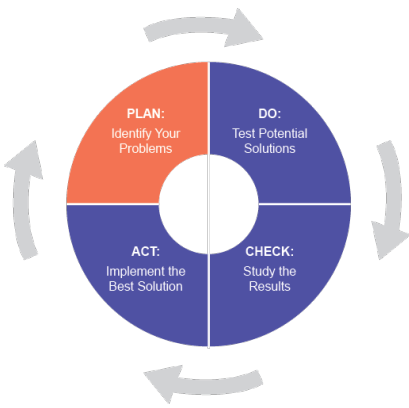
The Deming Cycle was introduced by Dr. W Edwards Deming, an engineer and physicist known as the "father of quality control" in 1950. IT teams and other project-focused professionals often employ the Deming Cycle because it's one of the simplest quality management models available. Each of the four steps (illustrated below) deliver a wealth of vital information to drive successful change.

PLAN: Identify Your Problems

DO: Test Potential Solutions

CHECK: Study the Results

ACT: Implement the Best Solution

Because these four steps can be repeated as part of a never-ending cycle of continual learning for improvement, they provide a terrific model for technology teams focused on ensuring quality experiences in rapidly changing environments. The Deming Cycle helps IT teams adapt their solutions to continually meet employee expectations.

With the simple steps of the Deming Cycle and effective monitoring tools in place, improving digital experience for employees and customers becomes a matter of engineering. The Deming Cycle enables enterprises to effectively plan improvements based on existing user experiences and test changes in small, pilot improvements. Leveraging monitoring tools throughout each pilot improvement phase provides effective measures to determine the success or failure of the pilot. If it succeeds, your monitoring tools can equip you with the information you need for a full rollout.

Prioritize Your Improvements = Plan

Knowing where to focus technology improvement efforts can be overwhelming for any enterprise. Most monitoring tools flood IT teams with telemetry data that is disconnected from employee experiences or business outcomes. Without clear insight into how device performance or slow latency impacts employees and the enterprise's bottom line, it's difficult to determine which issue is the most pressing.

So, in Step 1, you **PLAN** improvement goals by defining your digital experience priorities. This is done by monitoring end-user experiences in five primary areas: mission critical applications, devices, collaboration tools, productivity tools and any other applications. If critical applications are crashing, for example, you should know about it.
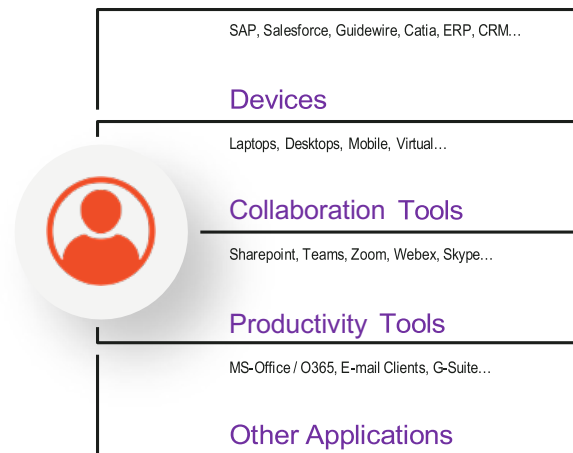
Within each of these areas, the end-user experience monitor should track response time, latency and availability, as well as conventional data, such as processor and memory consumption, storage performance and running processes. By capturing and collating this data into a single experience score, you can gain a deeper understanding of what employees are actually experiencing every day. This also provides greater insight into identifying any performance gaps that need improvement.

Beyond internal performance gaps, it's also helpful to know what is considered "good" within your enterprise's specific industry.

Knowing how industry peers perform, as shown below, is another way to help plan improvements. If there's a performance gap in your employees' connectivity compared to the industry baseline, prioritizing an improvement in that area can help your business remain competitive.

SAP, Salesforce, Guidewire, Catia, ERP, CRM…

Devices

Laptops, Desktops, Mobile, Virtual…

Collaboration Tools

Sharepoint, Teams, Zoom, Webex, Skype…

Productivity Tools

MS-Office / O365, E-mail Clients, G-Suite…

Other Applications

Monitoring every user's experience in these critical IT areas
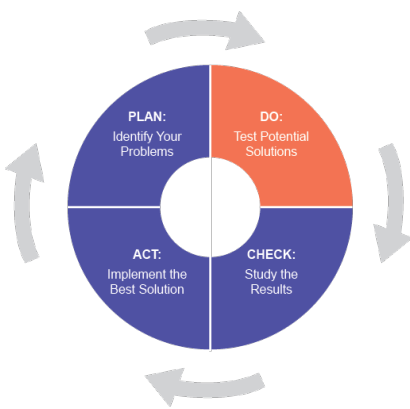
Proper Planning in Action

The applications manager at a leading consumer goods company received numerous complaints from the professional services team regarding issues with MS Outlook and Excel. But complaints alone weren't enough to justify the budget and time to address the issue. End-user experience monitoring with peer benchmarking revealed the company's Outlook and Excel crashes were 2.5X and 2.47X worse than industry averages. Armed with comparison data, the application manager helped the CIO justify the budget for resolving the issue. With management support, the applications manager set a goal for improving the performance of the applications by 200%. The professional services team's needs were met within a month, and within a year, the company achieved its goal of increased performance in Outlook and Excel.

APPLICATIONS

Comparing your digital experience scores to your peers and competition helps you see performance gaps.

Identify What to Improve to Achieve Your Goals = Do

PLAN: Identify Your Problems

DO: Test Potential Solutions

ACT: Implement the Best Solution

CHECK: Study the Results

The IT environment is inherently complex and ever changing. Your employee's experience can be impacted by various applications or IT factors. For example, digital experience challenges can be caused by everything from hosting environment, public clouds, Wi-Fi connections, or end devices. Determining which area should be improved first requires effective analytics. This is about **DOING**: determining your next steps to achieve the defined goals.

Establishing targets for improvement with intelligently powered analytics give enterprises the ability to drill down into critical applications, devices, collaboration tools, and productivity applications to pinpoint the root cause of the performance gaps prioritized in the PLAN step. Armed with this data, launch a small, pilot program. This approach helps maintain focus and prevents overwhelming IT teams.

Testing in Action

A Fortune 50 financial services company used an AI-powered analytics solution to help troubleshoot the cause of poor performance of the CRM applications used by their retail branch staff. Though the poor performance was initially believed to be caused by infrastructure, the IT operations team isolated the source of delay to the client devices. By pinpointing the source of the problem, the IT team ran a pilot improvement by upgrading the client devices. These upgrades improved performance by over 50%, which became the new baseline for the business.

Report Your Improvements = Check
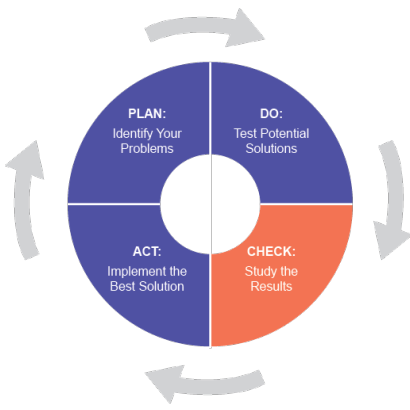
The second step (DO) is all about implementing a pilot test improvement. The third step is about **CHECKING** the results and reporting them.

Verifying the results of the pilot program can be done quickly with efficient end-user experience monitoring tools in place. These outcomes will prove or disprove the validity of the improvement plan. Regardless of the pilot test improvement− whether it is adding more resources to a client device, updatingan application, migrating to virtual desktop infrastructure, or rolling out new devices−it's critical to verify the impact of the change implemented by comparing the employee digital experience before and after the change was made.

This is a critical point in the continuous improvement process. If the data illustrates the improvement efforts were unsuccessful, the team revisits step two (DO) and reevaluates their strategy for achieving the desired outcome identified in step one (PLAN).

If the data illustrates the improvement efforts were successful, however, the team must be prepared to justify the expense of implementing an enterprise-wide improvement to the business and IT stakeholders. This means delivering reports that clearly communicate the improvements in a way that quantifies the benefits in business terms (i.e. worker productivity or budget savings).

Effective end-user experience analytics tools offer experience scores that easily display improvements (shown below on the left). Additionally, these analytics tools help quantify the value of the improvements relative to business goals (shown below).

SAP CRM – Complete Order

5.3

Dec 24   Jan 21   Feb 18

$10,850 in Staff Time Saving Since December 24.

Clearly communicate improvement benefits in business terms.

Adjust Performance for Additional Improvements = Act

When measurements from step three (CHECK) justify full implementation of changes, the team can **ACT** on the planned improvements. In this final step, the change is formally implemented across the enterprise, cascading the improvement to all users.

The implementation of this planned improvement is just the completion of one cycle. After standardizing the planned improvements, return to the PLAN step and begin to monitor the new normal for other areas of improvement.

This journey revolves around continuous improvement. In an era where the consumerization of IT constantly changes expectations, adjusting the benchmark for normal digital experiences creates the opportunity for your team to continually adapt and offer market leading support and competitive user experiences.

Checking Improvements in Action

A global insurance provider isolated the source of delay on their benefits application to the WAN optimization devices in their infrastructure. Normal performance showed a consistent five-second latency. The provider's monitoring and analysis tool demonstrated that a modest improvement would lead to a 0.5% increase in worker productivity, estimated at $500,000 annual savings. Equipped with this additional insight, the change was approved and implemented. Following the change, latency improved to 0.15 seconds, which equaled $750,000 in savings. This validated a positive impact of the change and created a new benchmark for normal performance.

Simplify Digital Experience Optimization

The key to achieving success in continuous improvement is establishing a user-centric lens through which experience data can be collected. Because new technology innovations can often drive business transformation, changes to the IT environment must be evaluated based on the ability to improve customer service, revenue, and workforce productivity. This requires comprehensive visibility into end user experiences. The Deming Cycle provides that user-centric lens and enables the prioritization of IT changes that will most effectively impact employee experience and increase your bottom line.

About Alluvio Aternity's Digital Experience Index

Many enterprises struggle with visibility into the environmental elements that impact employee and customer digital experiences. Without this visibility, it's difficult to prioritize the IT elements that will improve these experiences.

The Alluvio Aternity Digital Experience Index helps enterprises gain visibility into digital user experiences and gain a better understanding of the impact of any changes.

Alluvio Aternity's DXI enables your IT team to identify, prioritize, and measure continuous improvement efforts. Only Alluvio Aternity DXI enables you to tailor your goals based on industry benchmarks, instantly associate performance gaps to lost productivity or revenue, and drill into the worst performing areas for root cause analysis and rapid remediation.

Alluvio Aternity DXI provides clear, actionable insights to help you make incremental changes that help you drive continuous service improvements while supporting, delivering, and optimizing your end- user technology.

Acting on Continuous Improvement

One of the largest financial services companies in the world implemented continuous improvement into its change management processes by leveraging user experience monitoring with AI-driven insights. This strategy enabled their CIO to justify any change by quantifying the impact on workforce productivity. By formalizing the analysis of change on end user experience, the enterprise has improved contact center and branch staff productivity by 20% over a three-year period.

Prioritize Your Objectives: PLAN

DXI defines improvement priorities with comparisons of your colleagues' experiences in IT with industry standards or your own objectives to demonstrate the most pressing needs of your busines

Identify What to Improve: DO

DXI automatically identifies digital experience hot spots across your enterprise impacting employees and customers, then sets you on a path for action and improvement.
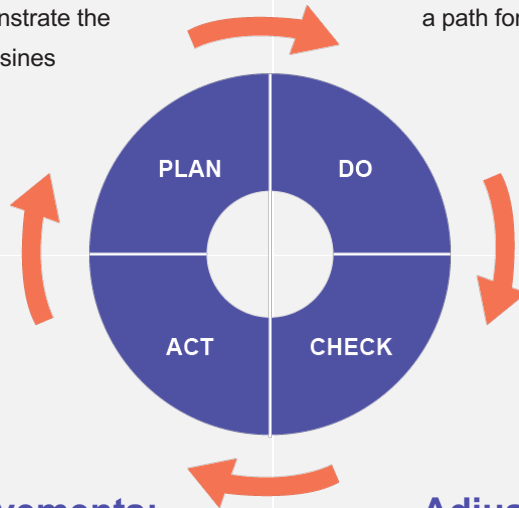
Report Your Improvements: CHECK

DXI offers multiple tools to monitor and analyze the results of your modifications and communicate them with clear and measurable score sheets and trend charts

Adjust Your Enterprise: ACT

DXI continues to offer actionable insights throughout the life of your digital environment, monitoring for any anomalies and providing suggestions to drive improvements.

Aternity DXI offers continuous improvement of the digital user experience.

riverbed

Riverbed is the only company with the collective richness of telemetry from network to app to end user, that illuminates and then accelerates every interaction, so organizations can deliver a seamless digital experience and drive enterprise performance. Riverbed offers two industry-leading portfolios: Alluvio by Riverbed, a differentiated Unified Observability portfolio that unifies data, insights, and actions across IT, so customers can deliver seamless, secure digital experiences; and Riverbed Acceleration, providing fast, agile, secure acceleration of any app, over any network, to users anywhere. Together with our thousands of partners, and market-leading customers globally – including 95% of the FORTUNE 100 –, we empower every click, every digital experience. Riverbed. Empower the Experience. Learn more at riverbed.com.