

What's next



Life at Nuance

3 Things Companies Can Learn from “Love It or List It” to Create a Better Employee Experience

The million-dollar question remains: how do you actually create that gold standard employee experience? Turns out, the “Love It or List It” approach can be applied by employers who are looking to make their company an even greater place for their employees to work.

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I'll admit, I'm a big fan of HGTV's “Love It or List It.” It's got something for everyone: drama, architecture, design, interpersonal conflict, suspense... what's not to love?! But more than that, it explores the various considerations at play when people make important decisions.

If you're unfamiliar with the show, the premise is that two homeowners are trying to decide whether they should invest money into renovating their current home to make it into the one of their dreams, or to throw in the towel and buy a new house. Aside from watching the dramatic transformation of homes, the reason I like the show is because it takes you through the homeowners' decision-making process and, ultimately, the factors that cause them to either “love it” or “list it.” What I've come to realize, however, is that the exploration and decision-making process these homeowners go through is not unlike the journey we all take when we think about our own career and professional aspirations.

Big decisions require careful thought

The average person will spend approximately 45 years working, so career development and growth opportunities are important decisions. Good companies understand this. They also know their employees are *the* single most important asset they have and work hard to retain them. I've worked in the HR field for more than 20 years, and I can honestly say that attracting, developing, and retaining talent is something I'm *ALWAYS* thinking about. I want our employees to be happy, feel supported, and have opportunities to grow and stretch themselves professionally. However, to do this well, requires a deep understanding of what it is that people are looking for in their daily employee experience.

Turns out, the “Love It or List It” approach can be applied by employers who want to make their company an even greater place for their employees to work.

Lesson 1: If you want to your employees to “love it,” ask them what’s on their “must have” list

There is no shortage of articles, podcasts, and books that provide in depth discussions and formulas for creating a great culture where employees are happy, feel valued, rewarded, and are proud to come to work each day. However, just like on “Love It or List It,” it all starts with asking what is working and what is not. Employees are the real experts in what they are looking for in an employer and what type of company they want to work for every day. So, go straight to the source and ask them!

Use employee insights and input to develop plans and prioritize initiatives that address key areas. This could be anything and everything: from providing time off to volunteer, enhancing benefits, and more frequent and transparent communication, to driving accountability and greater responsibility throughout organization. Nothing is off limit. The key is asking for input, listening to understand, and following through on what is possible. Above all, make sure to be transparent about what is and is not possible.

Lesson 2: Find out if the grass is *actually* greener in someone else’s yard

Concurrent to renovating their current house, homeowners on “Love It or List It” work with real estate guru David Visentin, touring other properties on the market so they can make an informed decision about whether to keep or list their soon-to-be remodeled house. At the end

of the show, he presents them the listing price for their newly-updated home and then they get to make their choice. Similarly, candidates are weighing their options: they’re doing their homework on the different career opportunities available, assessing benefits offerings, and reviewing employer reputation data. Employers need to understand their markets deeply to ensure they are making investments in the right types of programs and resources that are most important to the people working for them. Additionally, encouraging managers and their employees to have ongoing dialogues about career goals, stretch assignments, other opportunities across the company that provide professional growth are critical elements in fostering a great employee experience and factors into an employee’s “love it” or “list it” decision making process.

Lesson 3: Focus on high-value and high-impact changes

As Hilary Farr and the “Love It or List It” design team will tell you: You don’t have to take a house down to its studs to transform it into someone’s dream home. Similar to creating a thoughtfully designed floor plan, creating a culture and environment with programs that support employees in meaningful ways is essential. Everything from simple changes, such as the addition of maternity parking spaces or serving up the brand of coffee that people actually like to drink to aligning behind a shared purpose, creating simpler processes, establishing a formal internal mobility program, and modernizing benefits and policies that support employees at every stage of their lives, can have a profound effect.

This is something we have experienced first-hand at Nuance. Over the last few years, we have made a series of changes, enhancements, and investments based on survey feedback we’ve received from our employees that have led to higher satisfaction scores. They’ve also earned us numerous accolades and awards, such as the [Wellness Excellence Award](#) from the New England Employee Benefits Council, the [Best Places to Work for Young People](#) in Canada, the [Built in Boston’s Best Places to Work](#), the [Best Places for Dads to Work](#) award from Fatherly, as well as a perfect score on our Corporate Equality Index (CEI), making us a [“Best Places to Work for LGBTQ Equality”](#).

While we are very proud of our progress, we are just getting started and know that the process is never ending. We will continue to hold ourselves to the highest standards for our employees, customers, and shareholders. We want to be the absolute best we can be, so we’re participating in industry benchmarking surveys, such as McKinsey Women In the Workforce and Bloomberg Gender Equality Index, to understand what else we can be doing to make our company an even better place to work and do business with for our customers.

The world of work is ever-evolving and what was a best and standard practice three years ago, does not necessarily mean that remains the case today. After all, just because harvest gold and brown kitchen décor was *the* most modern and luxurious look at once point, doesn’t mean that holds true today. Expectations change— And they should!

Tags:



About Beth Conway

As Nuance’s Chief People Officer, Beth is passionate about creating the best employee experience in order to support customers and drive key business outcomes. She is relentlessly focused on finding new and innovative ways to attract, develop, and retain talented people, so that Nuance continues to stay on the cutting-edge of Conversational AI technology. Prior to joining Nuance in 2018, Beth served as SVP of People at CA Technologies. She holds a BA from Siena College, as well as professional certifications from the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) and the HR Certification Institute (HRCI).

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