



INTERVIEW WITH THE CHAIR ANGELA GARINGER DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SOLUTIONS, THOUGHTEXCHANGE

Angela is a dynamic leader responsible for supporting the client-focused culture of Thoughtexchange by understanding the needs of corporate partners to determine what success means for them. She leads the corporate sales team to ensure that corporate partners are able to cultivate a culture of courageous and collaborative leadership to promote transparency and buy-in leading to increased employee engagement and higher productivity. Prior to joining Thoughtexchange, Angela successfully led a cross-functional team of researchers, analysts, account managers, and technology specialists to support transformation and innovation efforts in the private and public sector. Her background in communication and analytics makes her passionate about Thoughtexchange's ability to partner with corporations to prioritize insights in order to create actionable, data-driven decisions.



Angela Garinger
Director of Corporate Solutions,
Thoughtexchange

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How do you think operational excellence will evolve in 2019 and beyond?

Operational excellence is increasingly defined by organizations with strong cultures that drive innovation and change. Communicating with employees, customers, and communities in real time and being able to quickly access insights and innovative ideas is key to growing a healthy and agile organizational culture.

What are some of the key trends that companies need to consider for the future?

This is an exciting time for leaders. They need to be as agile and quick thinking as a point guard, but as transparent as glass. The best companies are transforming their cultures by embracing the participation economy. Employees are after much more than a paycheck. They want to connect, help support, and drive company culture. They want to be partners in change and innovation. At the same time, consumers want to be associated with brands that make a positive impact in the world and embody values that they can relate to. This means companies need to adopt a next level approach to engagement that is more conversation than survey if they want to build rich employee and customer experiences.

What considerations should OPEX Leaders make before looking to implement change management and behavioral/cultural change?

Without putting the right tools in place and making a genuine commitment to transparency, courage, and empowerment, behavioral and cultural change will be a tough sell for leaders. They need buy-in at all levels of their organizations and that means a lot more than ticking boxes in a poll or survey. They need to engage in a way that promotes open and honest dialogue about challenging topics. Only then will they be able to find the common ground and sense of common purpose needed to drive change and make it stick.

What differentiates Thoughtexchange from other software solutions in this space?

Conventional engagement tools, such as polls, surveys and town halls, tend to polarize rather than unite. Today's leaders need to mobilize and empower their teams around common goals of excellence and innovation, and they need actionable data in real time. Thoughtexchange was founded on the premise that one-way, consultant-driven techniques were failing to build the kind of agile and innovative cultures that companies need to thrive in a modern economy that is constantly changing. Our platform combines the best of human and artificial intelligence. On the human side, Thoughtexchange enables participants to confidentially express ideas and opinions with built-in social media-like interactivity that ensures they learn from one another. On the AI side, leaders can harness the power of algorithmic machine learning and analysis tools to quickly uncover the best and brightest ideas. That way they can identify critical points of disagreement and common ground among their employees and/or customers that can be key for change management.

What are Thoughtexchange's short term and long term visions?

Our vision at Thoughtexchange is to democratize communication and engagement and support better decision-making at all levels of an organization. We do this by giving people a way to contribute their voices, be acknowledged by others in the conversation and see how community thoughts influence the resulting leadership decisions. Our long term goal is to ensure that everyone--regardless of social or institutional biases and constraints--has a voice in the discussions and decisions that impact them, and thereby make the world a more collaborative and inclusive place. In the short term, this means working closely with influential, courageous leaders in large organizations to make transformative change on an iterative basis: in teams, then departments, in regional offices, and finally across the entire organization. Scaling change from the ground up is how we will translate our vision into reality.



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