

KOLJIT SINGH

(AJIT)

VP | CHRO-track

**Culture & Enterprise
Transformation**

25+ Years | APAC

FGV Holdings · Flexsys · BASF PETRONAS · TNT Express · JTI

THE FUTURE OF

Employee Experience & Engagement

A keynote by Ajit · 30–45 mins · HR Professionals

EX is not HR fluff.

It is your business strategy.



STAND UP IF YOUR ANSWER IS YES!

Opening Quiz — Stay standing as long as you can!



You ran an engagement survey in the last 12 months



Your employees would call your culture 'authentic'



Your engagement scores actually improved after the survey



You have a structured onboarding experience beyond week 1



You know what your top 3 EX pain points are — right now



EX has its own budget line in your HR plan








Managers in your org received training this year on EX



You personally feel excited to come to work most days

YES ✓ or NO ✗ — Be honest! 😊

25 Years. One Obsession: People.

1993–96	1997–04	2007–15	2015–21	2022–23	2024→
FOLDALINE	JTI 	TNT EXPRESS 	BASF PETRONAS 	FLEXSYS APAC 	FGV HOLDINGS 
Personnel & Admin	HR, C&B & Training	L&D Mgr / HRBP	Head HRM / OD	HR Director APAC	VP Culture Transformation

25+

Years in HR & Transformation

+30pts

Engagement lift (40% → 70%)

~50%

HR cost savings via HRIS redesign

80-90%

Internal fill rate succession pipelines

RM 42

BILLION

The cost of disengaged employees
to Malaysia's economy every year.

You've run the surveys.

Approved the apps.

Hosted the town halls.

The needle barely moved. Why?

The rules just changed.

EX is no longer a nice-to-have HR initiative.

It's a business survival strategy.

*I've spent 25 years inside organizations, from TNT
warehouses to BASF chemical plants to FGV boardrooms —
and I've seen this truth play out again and again:*

***"When employees thrive,
business performance follows.***

Always."

— Ajit, VP Culture Transformation, FGV Holdings

Five Truths That Will Change How You Lead EX

01

Engagement isn't broken

→ *It's being measured wrong*

02

AI isn't the threat

→ *Your AI blindspot is*

03

No hybrid work problem

→ *You have a manager problem*

04

Gen Z won't break culture

→ *But they will expose it*

05

Purpose ≠ values poster

→ *It's a performance driver*

Engagement isn't broken — it's being measured wrong

26%

Engaged in SEA
(Gallup 2024)

67%

Not engaged —
drifting silently

8%

Actively
disengaged

The Real Problem

We focus on the 8% who are loud and disruptive. The 67% in the middle are waiting to be activated. They are not disengaged — they are drifting.

Mercer: 1 in 4 Malaysian employees feel disengaged — among the highest in APAC.

Ajit's experience at BASF PETRONAS

*"When I took over culture at BASF PETRONAS, we were at 40% engagement. Not through a new app or wellbeing platform — but by fixing the leadership signals, making people feel seen, and building a culture people believed in. 24 months later: **70%**."*

AI isn't the threat – your AI blindspot is

52%

Workers worried
about AI (Pew 2025)

56%

Wage premium
for AI skills (PwC)

78%

Bring AI tools
without approval

92%

CHROs expect more
AI by 2026 (SHRM)

The anxiety gap no one is addressing

52% worried. 33% overwhelmed. Most orgs **have zero AI-anxiety communication strategy**. In mid-market Malaysia, this silence shows up as disengagement and quiet attrition.

Your EX strategy and your AI strategy are the same conversation.

Ajit's view from the boardroom

"At Flexsys APAC — 5 countries, 3 cultures, post-COVID — the biggest EX disruption wasn't hybrid work. It was the anxiety of 'will I be replaced?' HR professionals who address this head-on, openly, with empathy and a clear upskilling path, win the engagement battle."

You don't have a hybrid work problem — you have a manager problem

-5 pts

Young manager engagement
drop (under 35)

-7 pts

Female manager engagement
drop globally

\$438B

Lost to declining manager
engagement in 2024

The hybrid debate is a distraction. Every hybrid conversation is a proxy for: 'Do our managers actually know how to lead in uncertainty?'

Malaysia context

In Malaysia's high-hierarchy culture, managers built influence through physical presence. Hybrid didn't create this gap — it exposed it. Your manager capability is your EX infrastructure.

What Ajit did at BASF PETRONAS

"We invested in managers as humans first. Launched LEAP and SLD leadership programs — 80%+ of participants ready for critical roles within 2 years. When managers thrived, teams thrived."

Gen Z won't break your culture – but they will expose it

1.1yr

Gen Z avg tenure
vs 2.8yr Gen X

77%

Gen Z/Millennial
burnout symptoms

61%

Would leave for better
mental health benefits

92%

New grads want to discuss
mental wellness at work

Gen Z is not difficult — they are an organizational X-ray. Their short tenure and burnout rates are a signal about your culture's health.

Purpose = mental health

67% of Gen Z with positive wellbeing feel their job contributes meaningfully. Only 44% with poor wellbeing do. (Deloitte 2025)

26% of Malaysia's workforce is now gig/contract — the definition of 'employee' is dissolving.

At FGV Holdings today

"Across FGV's diversified businesses, I see this daily. Young talent doesn't lack ambition — they lack clarity on their future inside the organization. When we show them a path, they stay. When we don't, they scroll LinkedIn."

Purpose is not a values poster — it's a performance driver

10/13

APAC markets: 'Proud of org impact'
= top engagement driver

12/13

APAC countries: career goal alignment = #1 engagement driver

+10.5

pts — Biggest KPI shift in APAC since 2021 (EX gap)

26%

Malaysian workforce now in gig economy

When Malaysian employees say 'I'm proud of where I work', it's tied to family, community, and social identity. No perks package can replicate that depth.

Professional dev = retention weapon

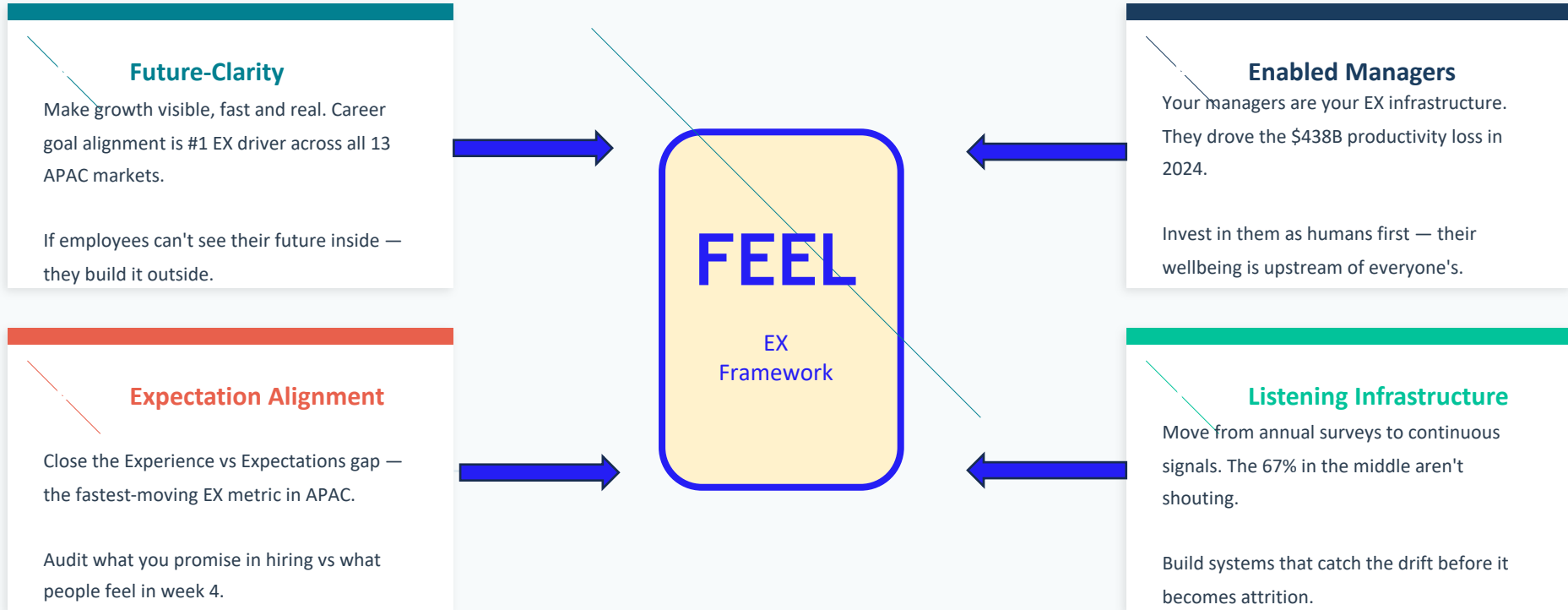
Number one retention driver in every single APAC market studied. Not a perk — an infrastructure decision. Mid-market companies can move faster on culture than any enterprise.

What Ajit built at TNT Express

*"We launched a Management Trainee program and internal leadership pipeline. Result: ~90% retention and internal promotion rates over 8 years. **Purpose and growth aren't soft — they are your most powerful retention tools.**"*

Ajit's EX Model

(Built From 25 Years of Real Transformation)



Anticipating Your Questions

Q
: **Isn't EX a luxury under cost pressure?**

Disengagement is already on your P&L. Malaysia lost RM42B in 2019. You're not deciding whether to pay for it — you're deciding whether to account for it.

Q
: **We've done all of this. What's next?**

You've treated the symptoms. The next frontier is the architecture: psychological safety, manager capability as infrastructure, expectation alignment from day one.

Q
: **Why link AI to EX?**

Because your employees already have. 52% are worried right now. Silence on AI strategy becomes anxiety, then disengagement, then attrition.

Q
: **How do you engage 5 generations at once?**

Stop designing for the average employee. Growth and purpose drive all generations — the expression differs. One wants a mentor, one wants rapid-cycle feedback.

One thing to do tomorrow → Run an expectation audit. Interview 10 employees who joined in the last 6 months. The gap you find is your starting point.

The future of employee experience

will be decided not by HR budgets —
but by whether leaders decide to

FEEL it from the inside.

F

Future-clarity

E

Enabled managers

E

Expectation
alignment

L

Listening
infrastructure

Thank you. Let's build better workplaces.

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