

How to choose a digital employee experience platform that helps people work without disruption

- Define what matters
- Compare the evidence
- Choose with confidence

A practical guide to defining your requirements, aligning your buying group and evaluating DEX with confidence.

riverbed



When Available is Not the Same as Working

Most digital experience problems are not dramatic outages. They are the smaller frustrations that quietly get in the way of work: an application that takes too long to respond, a Teams call with unreliable audio, or a process that requires three attempts when it should take one.

On a dashboard, everything may appear available. For the person trying to get something done, it clearly is not working properly.

These issues create pressure throughout IT. The Service Desk receives a ticket with limited information. An employee is asked to explain or recreate something that happened earlier. The ticket moves between application, endpoint and network teams while everyone tries to piece together what went wrong.

What did the employee actually experience?

Employees do not think about their working day as a collection of separate technology domains. They experience one journey, even when that journey crosses a laptop, a SaaS application, a Wi-Fi connection, a virtual desktop and a collaboration platform.

A modern DEX platform should help IT see that journey more clearly. It should provide enough evidence to understand what happened, identify who was affected and decide what to do next. Just as importantly, it should help the team confirm whether the action taken genuinely improved the experience.

This guide will help your organization define those requirements before becoming distracted by extensive feature lists and polished demonstrations. Use it whether you are exploring DEX, building internal support for an investment or actively comparing vendors.



Aternity 360° is the only DEX solution with true 360° coverage, bringing together experience across every environment, app and device. With one lightweight agent, shared telemetry across IT functions, Aternity DXI and Aternity Replay, it helps teams eliminate blind spots, investigate faster and move from fragmented tools to a single source of truth for every employee's digital experience.

Begin With The Problem Your Team Wants To Solve

It is tempting to start a DEX evaluation by comparing dashboards, integrations, and feature lists. That often creates a great deal of information without making the decision any easier.

Start instead with a problem that people across the organization recognize.

Perhaps Service Desk analysts spend too much time asking employees to reproduce intermittent issues. Maybe digital experience varies significantly between offices and remote locations. You may be preparing for a major device refresh but lack evidence about which devices genuinely need replacing. Or leadership may simply be asking a reasonable question that is difficult to answer:

What value are we getting from our investment in employee technology?

Choose the outcome that matters most



SERVICE DESK EFFICIENCY

Reduce reproduction, strengthen L1/L2 evidence, cut unnecessary escalation, and support appropriate self-service.



EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY

Find friction earlier, show who is affected, and confirm whether an improvement was visible to employees.



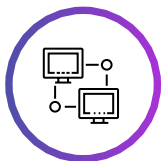
DIGITAL WORKPLACE CONSISTENCY

Compare experience across office, remote, hybrid and virtual environments.



MOBILE AND FRONTLINE EXPERIENCE

Understand supported mobile applications, devices, carriers, and Wi-Fi performance.



PROACTIVE IT OPERATIONS

Detect deterioration, test critical workflows, trigger action, and validate recovery.



BUSINESS VALUE

Connect experience improvement to productivity, support demand and better technology decisions.

Buying-group exercise

This DEX investment will be successful if it helps us to

Compare the answers. A difference of opinion at this stage is useful. Agree one primary outcome and no more than three supporting outcomes before the formal evaluation begins.

Build The Right Buying Group

Digital experience crosses traditional IT boundaries. The buying group should too.

A problem that arrives at the Service Desk might originate in an application, endpoint, network, workflow or third-party service. The buying group should represent the complete employee journey.

Stakeholder	What matters most	Evaluation responsibility
IT Operations	Early detection and fewer recurring issues	Operational visibility and proactive capabilities
Service Desk and ITSM	Faster investigation and fewer escalations	Investigation, Replay, workflows and ticket enrichment
Digital Workplace and EUC	Consistent experience and productivity	Experience measurement, application and device insight
Infrastructure and Network	Cross-domain root-cause clarity	Connectivity, network-path and shared evidence
Application owners	Reliability, workflow performance and adoption	Real-user application and journey visibility
Mobile and Frontline IT	Mobile and specialist device performance	Mobile application, device and connectivity coverage
Security, Risk and Privacy	Data handling and governance	Privacy, access and automated-action controls
Finance and Procurement	Value, commercial clarity and risk	Value assumptions, licensing and terms
Executive sponsor	Productivity, resilience and impact	Outcome alignment and organizational sponsorship

Make the decision manageable

- Assign an owner to each evaluation area.
- Agree which requirements are non-negotiable.
- Separate essential requirements from preferences.
- Give shortlisted vendors the same demonstration scenarios.
- Require evidence for high scores.
- Discuss conflicting stakeholder priorities openly.

The final decision should reflect one connected employee experience, not an average of disconnected departmental preferences.

Five Things a Modern DEX Platform Must Do Well

1



See the full experience to be useful

Cover the applications, devices, networks, locations and employee populations that matter to your organization.

2



Provide evidence, not another alert

Show the context behind a score, alert or recommendation so teams can begin a useful investigation.

3



Connect technology performance with human impact

Show who is affected, what work has been disrupted and why the issue matters.

4



Support action without creating unnecessary risk

Provide a sensible path from insight to guided investigation, self-service, remediation and validation.

5



Demonstrate improvement in terms people understand

Measure fewer escalations, shorter investigations, less disruption, better decisions and time returned.

Can the platform move your team from “something appears wrong” to “we know what happened, who was affected, what to do and whether the action worked”?

Few platforms will be equally strong in every area. The important point is to understand where the compromises are and whether they affect the outcomes your organization has prioritized.



Can the Platform See Work as Employees Experience It?

Employees move between technologies throughout the day. Strong endpoint coverage with limited application, network, collaboration, or mobile context may still leave important parts of the journey invisible.

Look for relevant coverage across



Physical and virtual endpoints



Business and SaaS applications



Application transactions and workflows



LAN, WAN, Wi-Fi, VPN and relevant internet paths



Collaboration and unified communications



Remote and hybrid environments



Supported corporate-owned mobile devices



Relevant rugged, kiosk and point-of-sale environments



Employee feedback and sentiment

Coverage is only the starting point

The platform also needs enough depth to explain what changed, when it changed, who was affected, whether the issue was isolated or widespread, which technology domains contributed, and whether the experience recovered.

Useful questions

- Which environments are covered natively?
- Can desktop, VDI and mobile experience be viewed through one platform?
- Can the platform follow a journey across applications and technology layers?
- Which employee populations remain outside the experience view?
- Can teams investigate an issue after the problem has disappeared?
- What additional products or integrations are required?
- Can the vendor prove coverage using one of your real employee journeys?

WATCH FOR

A demonstration that shows every technology domain but relies on a different interface, dataset, or operating process for each one.

ATERNITY 360°

Aternity 360° delivers true 360° coverage across applications, devices, networks, desktop, VDI, cloud, mobile and frontline environments – including supported rugged, kiosk and POS use cases – using one lightweight agent and shared telemetry across IT functions.

ATERNITY MOBILE

Aternity Mobile extends digital-experience visibility to corporate-owned mobile devices and frontline environments, helping IT understand mobile application, device and connectivity performance.

Can Support Teams Move From Symptoms to Evidence?

“Can you show us what happened?”

For many employees, the problem has already disappeared by the time IT begins investigating. The employee may not remember every action, and asking someone to recreate an intermittent issue causes more disruption.

A DEX platform should help support teams understand the original experience without making the employee part of the diagnostic process.

Look for the ability to



Identify where the experience deteriorated



Connect user interaction with device, application and network context



Investigate intermittent problems retrospectively



Identify the employees or populations affected



Distinguish symptoms from probable cause



Give L1 and L2 teams usable evidence



Reduce ticket reassignment between technical teams



Protect sensitive information appropriately

Useful questions

- Can the platform show what the employee experienced?
- Can it investigate an issue that is no longer occurring?
- Does retrospective evidence require prior application instrumentation?
- What application, device and network context accompanies the experience?
- Can L1 and L2 use the capability without specialist assistance?
- Can several technical teams collaborate around the same evidence?
- How is sensitive information protected?

WATCH FOR

A platform that describes correlated metrics as root-cause evidence without showing the employee's actual experience.

ATERNITY REPLAY

Aternity Replay shows exactly what employees experienced, allowing IT to investigate issues after they've occurred without requiring employees to reproduce the problem. Combined with application, device, and network context, Replay helps teams quickly understand what happened, determine probable cause, and resolve issues faster.

HUMAN OUTCOME

Fewer employees asked to stop work, repeat steps, capture screenshots or explain a technical problem they should never have needed to understand.

Can It Act Before Disruption Spreads?

Employees should not have to become IT's monitoring system.

If a rise in ticket volume is the first indication of a problem, productivity has already been affected.

Look for proactive capabilities that can



Establish useful performance baselines



Identify unusual experience behavior



Test critical applications and workflows



Reflect real devices, locations and network conditions



Support office, network or onboarding readiness



Validate experience following a change



Confirm whether remediation restored the intended outcome

Insight should lead somewhere

Visibility has limited value if every finding simply creates another manual investigation. Consider whether the platform can initiate repeatable workflows, recommend targeted actions, integrate with ITSM, enable appropriate self-service, control automated actions, and confirm whether the action improved the experience.

Useful questions

- Can the platform identify an issue before employees report it?
- Can it test whether an employee can complete a workflow, not simply whether a service responds?
- Which actions are available out of the box?
- Can actions use complete experience context?
- How are automated actions approved and audited?
- When does the platform remediate and when does it escalate?
- Can it prove that the action restored the experience?
- What skills are required to manage workflows?

WATCH FOR

Automation triggered by isolated technical events without enough evidence of employee impact or validation of the outcome.

Can the Platform Prove That the Experience is Improving?

Tickets closed and systems available remain important operational measures. They do not show how much employee time was returned, how much disruption was avoided, whether fewer issues required escalation, or whether an application or device investment delivered value.

Potential value measures



Investigation time and resolution cycles



Ticket reassignment and escalation volume



Recurring incidents



Employee time spent reproducing issues



Ticket deflection



Productivity restored



Workflow success



Application adoption



Device-refresh decisions



Experience consistency by location or persona

Check the enterprise fit

- What is required to deploy and maintain the platform?
- Which capabilities require separate modules or licenses?
- How will it integrate with existing ITSM and observability tools?
- Can relevant data be exported through supported APIs?
- How are access, privacy and sensitive experience data controlled?
- How will the platform scale across users, geographies, and use cases?
- What administration or specialist skills are required?
- How will a proof of value be structured and measured?

WATCH FOR

A compelling product demonstration followed by unclear answers about deployment, integrations, ownership, licensing or measurable outcomes.

Your DEX Evaluation Scorecard

Prioritize the capabilities that support your chosen outcome.

Score each area from 1 to 5: 1 does not meet the requirement; 3 meets the core requirement; 5 demonstrates depth, operational usability and supporting evidence.

Evaluation area	Weight	Vendor A	Vendor B	Vendor C
Complete experience coverage	15%			
Data depth and fidelity	15%			
Employee and business context	10%			
Investigation and experience evidence	15%			
Proactive detection and workflow assurance	10%			
Action, automation and self-service	15%			
Measurement and business value	10%			
Enterprise fit and scalability	10%			
TOTAL	100%			

Require evidence, not promises

- Live product demonstration
- Proof-of-value result
- Technical documentation
- Customer reference
- Integration validation
- Security or privacy documentation
- Contractual capability
- Clearly identified roadmap item

A polished demonstration should not receive the same evidential weight as a capability proven against your data, workflows or operating environment.



Do Not Let the Demonstration Become Theatre

Most product demonstrations are polished because they use scenarios that have been carefully prepared. That is understandable, but it does not show how the platform will respond to the problems your teams encounter.

Give shortlisted vendors the same scenario. Ideally, use one based on an issue from your environment, with sensitive details removed where appropriate.

Scenario 1: The issue that disappeared

- What the employee experienced
- How the issue can be investigated afterwards
- How application, device and network evidence is connected
- How other affected employees are identified
- How probable cause is established
- How recovery is validated

Scenario 2: The recurring Service Desk issue

- How the pattern is identified
- How employee impact is prioritized
- What evidence is provided to L1 and L2
- How a workflow is created
- How self-service could be applied
- How ticket deflection and recovery are measured

Scenario 3: The critical employee journey

- How the complete workflow is measured
- Where delays or failures are identified
- How experience varies by population or location
- Whether the response is technical, process-led or behavioral
- How an improvement is tested
- How the outcome is reported

OPTIONAL MOBILE VARIATION

Where frontline or mobile experience is a priority, apply the third scenario to corporate-owned mobile, rugged, kiosk or POS environments.

Your Service Desk and Operations teams should have a strong voice. They will quickly recognize whether the workflow resembles real operational work

Build the Business Case Around Your Own Baseline

The strongest business case starts with your organization’s data, not a generic industry-average ROI claim.

Establish the baseline

Service Desk	Employee experience	Technology estate
Ticket volume; investigation effort; resolution cycles; reassignment; repeat incidents; reproduction effort	Populations affected; disruption duration; critical workflows; location or persona variation; sentiment; productivity time at risk	Existing tools; duplicated capability; manual reporting; refresh assumptions; application adoption; planned changes

Connect the problem with the capability

Current challenge	Required capability	Intended outcome
Employees must recreate issues	Retrospective experience evidence	Less interruption and faster investigation
Tickets bounce between teams	Connected cross-domain context	Fewer escalations and clearer ownership
Issues are discovered through tickets	Real-user insight and proactive testing	Earlier detection and reduced impact
Repeated manual resolution	Guided workflows and automation	Reduced repetitive effort
Replacement based mainly on age	Experience-led device evidence	Better-informed refresh decisions
Investment lacks usage context	Adoption and experience insight	Better-informed rationalization
IT reports activity, not outcomes	Experience benchmarking	Clearer executive reporting

Business-case template

Today, [employee population] experiences [problem] across [environment or workflow]. This creates [employee, operational and business impact].
A DEX platform must provide [required capabilities] so that we can improve [chosen measures].

Where Aternity 360° Fits

Once the buying group has agreed its requirements, Aternity 360° can be evaluated against them as the only DEX solution with true 360° coverage across every environment, app and device.

COMPLETE EXPERIENCE VISIBILITY	Aternity 360° provides complete digital experience across every environment, app and device, with coverage spanning desktop, VDI, cloud, mobile and frontline environments, including supported rugged, kiosk and POS use cases. One lightweight agent and shared telemetry help reduce tool fragmentation while giving IT teams a common evidence base.
EXPERIENCE INTELLIGENCE	Aternity DXI transforms experience data into actionable insight, helping IT benchmark performance, prioritize investments, and demonstrate measurable business value.
ATERNITY REPLAY	Aternity Replay provides retrospective evidence of the employee journey, including clicks, slowdowns and failures, together with relevant system context.
PROACTIVE OPERATIONS	Aternity helps organizations move from reactive troubleshooting to proactive experience management with real-user monitoring, workflow testing, early issue detection, and remediation validation.
ACTION AND SELF-SERVICE	Powered by the Riverbed Platform, Aternity helps IT move from insight to action with AI-driven recommendations, guided investigations, automation, and self-service capabilities. Teams can reduce manual effort, accelerate resolution, and restore employee productivity faster.
ATERNITY MOBILE	Aternity Mobile provides visibility into the digital experiences of frontline and mobile workers, helping organizations identify performance issues, reduce disruption, and support critical business workflows beyond the traditional desktop.
ANALYST VALIDATION	Recognized by leading industry analysts including Gartner and IDC, Riverbed Aternity is widely recognized as a leader in Digital Employee Experience, validating its ability to support enterprise-scale DEX initiatives.

Few organizations will need every capability at once. The appropriate starting point depends on the employee population, operational pressure, and business outcome selected at the beginning of the evaluation.

Bring one real operational priority and ask Riverbed to demonstrate how Aternity would help your team understand, investigate and improve that experience.

Move from comparison to evidence

A feature checklist can narrow the field. A relevant demonstration shows whether a platform can address the problems your employees and IT teams experience every day.

Bring Riverbed one real priority

- A recurring Service Desk issue
- A difficult-to-reproduce employee problem
- A critical employee workflow
- A hybrid-work challenge
- A mobile or frontline experience
- An upcoming device or operating-system refresh
- A business outcome that IT needs to demonstrate

Riverbed can use that priority to focus the Aternity 360° demonstration on the evidence, action and outcomes that matter to your organization – showing how one lightweight agent, shared telemetry, Aternity Replay, DXI, IQ Assist and Agentic AI-powered self-service help teams resolve issues faster, lower costs, boost productivity, improve satisfaction and prove ROI.

Explore how connected experience intelligence can help your team:

- See the complete employee experience
- Investigate with stronger evidence
- Act before disruption spreads
- Reduce avoidable operational effort
- Keep employees focused on their work
- Connect DEX improvement to measurable value

Request an Aternity 360° demo >

**Speak to Riverbed about your
DEX evaluation priorities**



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Riverbed – Empower the Experience

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 that users get the flawless digital experience they expect across the entire digital ecosystem. Riverbed provides two industry-leading solutions: the Riverbed Unified Observability portfolio, which integrates data, insights, and actions across IT to enable customers to deliver seamless digital experiences; and Riverbed Acceleration, which offers fast, agile, and secure acceleration of any application over any network to users, whether they are mobile, remote, or on-premises. Together with our thousands of partners, and market-leading customers across the world, we empower every click, every digital experience. Learn more at riverbed.com.

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