IBM India/South Asia Blog

Six new 'excitement features' for the next generation IT Developer

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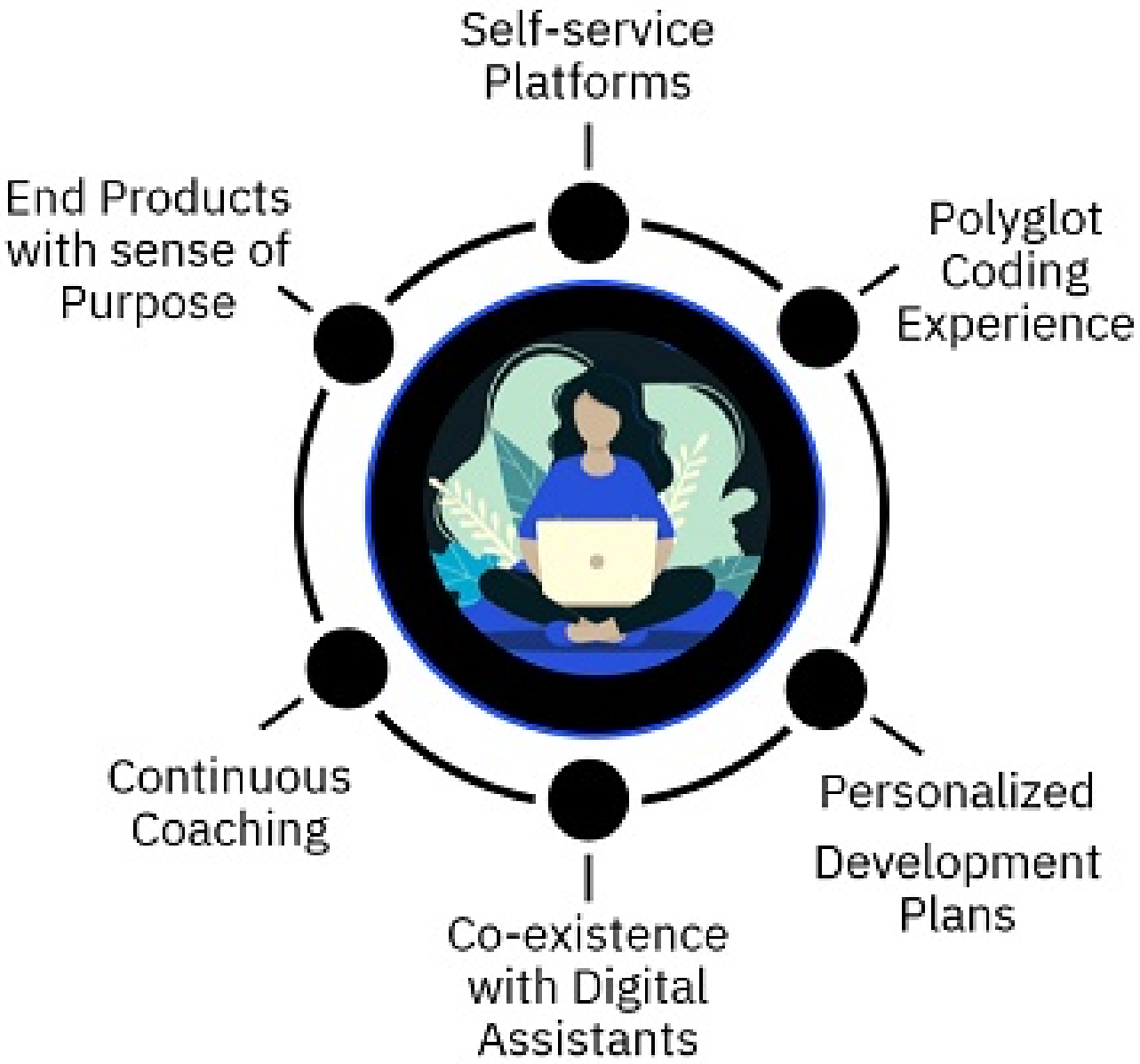

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As per Nasscom, India's cloud talent pool is expected to grow 2.4X to nearly 1.5mn by 2025. However, there is an urgent need to scale talent further and, also, retain this crucial talent.

As part of user centricity, while user experience and customer experience have dominated the development of new features in

software products, experience is now casting its net wider to bring all the stakeholders in its ambit. Gartner calls it Total Experience, a strategy that creates superior shared experiences by interlinking the user experience (UX), customer experience (CX), multi-experience (MX), and employee experience (EX) disciplines. Modern and transformative business models built on platforms and underpinned by cloud technology are now challenging organizations to bring the IT developer experience in the centre of a new circle.

Using the framework of Kano's model, organizations need to implement six Excitement Features to achieve the following:

- To keep developers loyal and be engaged, one must create Developer Delight.
- Developer Delight extends beyond employee satisfaction. It's those exciting things that wow the employees and provide frictionless employee experience.
- Developers who are delighted with the new Excitement Features will not only be loyal, but also become the organization's brand ambassadors

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1. **Self-Service Platforms:**
   Today, IT has to keep pace with the speed of business. Launch of new products and services are getting compressed from months to weeks and the holy grail for IT is getting from PoC to production in flat 6 weeks. Given the need for driving innovation at speed, the Next-Gen Developer expects all his/her tools of trade from the word go. A central, cloud-enabled, self-service platform with all the tools related to collaboration, SDLC/DevSecOps toolsets and project management tools/ scrum boards is a great excitement feature for the developers to self-provision the tools that are necessary for work.

2. **Polyglot Coding Experience:**
   With more and more applications being developed with microservices and API architecture, and the flexibility that containers now provide, The Next-Gen Developer is quite comfortable mixing programming languages, databases, webservers etc. The future being all about software-defined-everything, large parts of application code will be generated by AI-enabled software. Every developer is now expected to code not just the business logic in the application but also use DevOps & SRE principles to set up end-to-end automation for infra-provisioning, build, release and deployment. An organization which doesn't provide such opportunity as fuel to the developer is likely to stare at rising dissatisfaction from the developer community.

3. **Personalized Development Plans:**
   This is the age of OTT (over-the-top) streaming where the control is in the hands of the viewer. Black Mirror: Bandersnatch takes it to a new level where even the outcomes are controlled by the viewer. A developer expects an experience no less than a consumer-grade experience of streaming media where every learning is personalized, modularized and AI-enabled to optimize the developer's time. The learning system needs to know all the life-events of the developers (certifications, past trainings, project experience, peer reviews, business posts, appearances in technical forums, etc) to draw out a time-optimized plan for the next level of skill-development. An organization with such integrated learning system will draw the developers into a virtuous cycle of skilling and growth.

4. **Co-existence with Digital Assistants:**
   The teams of future will be a mix of human developers and digital assistants. The Next-Gen Developer is looking forward to work seamlessly with an AI-enabled Digital Assistant as a buddy to whom mundane and repetitive tasks can be offloaded.

The Next-Gen Developer will be a super-hero no less than Iron Man working in tandem with J.A.R.V.I.S. An organization that brings such an exciting feature in Digital Assistant Farms is more likely to get double thumbs-up from the developers.

5. **Continuous Coaching:**
   While new features in form of platforms and tools will surely lead to Develop Delight, a conducive culture is a non-negotiable item. As per Gartner, by 2024, 30% of corporate teams will be without a boss due to the agile and hybrid nature of work. Since the management layer will not be indulging in operational oversight, the developers working as part of self-directed teams will need continuous coaching to enable compressed progression. An organization that digitally brings the manager and the developer together in a hyper feedback loop of coaching, development and re-coaching is likely to be a delighter.

6. **End products with sense of Purpose:**
   Today, the product-owner from the business, the developers from the IT community and the whole user-community come together to co-create the end-product. Much of their effort and focus is driven by the purpose that the product aims to meet. It is important for the organization to translate the vision of the product and the impact of the developers' work in meeting that vision. Would you want to develop an IT product that is used for selling firearms? Organizations must choose their IT projects that excite the developer into feeling that their work is making a difference to the world.

By introducing the Excitement Features, organizations can be better positioned to recover from the pandemic and move into the digital world where there is war for talent. As organizations introduce these experiential disruptors, they can gain sustainable competitive advantage.

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