



Hiring and Managing Gen Y's in the Workplace

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Once upon a time, employees were managed and promoted based on a very strong work ethic and endless hours of work. Whether, viewed as positive or negative, those days are now changing as the Gen Y's are entering the workforce and changing the future of business. Currently, we have an estimated number of 80 million Gen-Y's in the workplace, so it is critical that employers must stay competitive in this environment and adapt themselves to the Gen-Y philosophies or risk being left behind in the change.

In order for employers to stay competitive in today's employment market and attract the best and the brightest Gen Y candidates, it is a necessity for employers to gain an understanding of Gen-Y's expectations and their willingness to stray from the norm in the workplace. But before doing so, it is also important to understand that Gen Y's have been through the highest highs and lowest lows from both personal and economic levels in their short lifetime. With that being said, Gen-Y's have a strong desire to establish themselves as leaders, influencers and role models who will be remembered for generations to come. Gen Y's have an enormous amount to offer to employers after growing up in the technology age and understanding how this works from both a personal and business level.

I, myself, have been approached by several clients with their struggles in hiring and managing the Gen-Y's and have been attending seminars and studying this subject intensely, so that I can gain a strong understanding to assist my clients with their issues. After this, and without going into hundreds of pages of details, I will summarize by findings with 3 suggestions that I hope are worth some time and consideration. Here they are:

- 1) **Flexibility:** Gen-Y's demand flexibility in their careers. They are not interested in a steady job working 9 to 5 with 2 week's vacation. Gen-Y's seek flexibility and variation in the workplace. Gen-Y's want to shape their jobs to fit their lives rather than adapt their lives to fit the workplace. Don't be fooled by this desire though, because Gen-Y's are obsessed with productivity and really have no problem working longer hours as long as it fits into their schedule (and this includes working into the wee hours of the morning). My recommendation is to consider flexible hours or provide a choice in the role where and when this can be done. If an employer will not provide this to the Gen-Y, they will have no issue with searching for a new position that will fulfill this desire.
- 2) **Feedback:** Gen-Y's without a doubt require additional attention and guidance from employers. They have grown up in an environment of "helicopter parents" and have been given constant feedback throughout their lives and they now need that constant feedback to know where they stand with their employer. Gen-Y's have grown up in the technology age in every facet of their lives and this has created their need for immediacy which includes constant feedback. My recommendation is to have a strong mentor for each Gen-Y who is a person that they can turn to



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for advice or bounce ideas off and provide very simple feedback to them at least once a week which can be as simple as a “Good Job” statement. This will increase their productivity and improve their moral.

- 3) **Creating Value:** Gen-Y’s have a whole lot to offer to employers beyond their daily work. They want to create value and work that will be recognized, but it’s very difficult for employers to see that. Salary and benefits are number 1 and 2 on their list of importance, but their opportunity for advancement ranks a very close 3rd. Gen-Y’s want to be shown how their work makes a difference and why. Remember that their strengths that they are offering to their employers are something that Baby Boomers and Gen-X’s lack and that is technology skills, social networking and multi-tasking skills. My recommendation is to develop a plan for development and advancement, because retention of Gen-Y’s will be influenced by their level of opportunity.

Conclusion: Communication with Gen-Y’s is critical to managing the new top talent in the marketplace. When hiring the Gen-Y, set expectations, then provide constant feedback on their daily and weekly work and on a semi-annual basis, summarize their opportunity for advancement. These items are what I believe will ultimately be the key drivers to managing the Gen-Y employee.

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