

Generation Y: high maintenance, high productivity

"Generation Y, experts claim, is the most high maintenance workforce in the history of the world, but they are also the most productive," says Kay Vittee, CEO of Quest Staffing Solutions - South Africa's leading staffing solutions company.



Kay Vittee, CEO of Quest Staffing Solutions

Due to their competitive nature, this growing generation of workers wants to produce great results that will prove that they are a cut above their peers. "If managed correctly, these employees can be a company's greatest asset and drive a higher output," explains Vittee.

Work smart, not hard

"Generation Y's mentality is to work smart not hard. They believe in a strong work-life balance where work is a way to maintain expensive lifestyles," says the CEO. "This means that employees don't want work to encroach on their social lives, but at the same time, want to be contactable and sociable during working hours." Although many companies have restrictive policies, especially with regards to social media usage, to eliminate distraction, it can in fact be a motivator as 1 in 3* of this generation prioritises social media freedom over salary.

Immediate gratification

This strong focus on their social lives means that Generation Y is motivated by rewards that benefit their lifestyles such as time-off, incentive programmes or better cell phone contracts. Vittee explains, "Long term rewards, like a good retirement package, has little meaning for them as they live in the 'now' and intend to lead a great lifestyle throughout their working years." Therefore, Generation Y wants to work for companies that look after them and those that don't, will quickly lose them as 43%* are confident that they can easily find a job elsewhere.

Variety is key

Vittee continues, "Another factor that causes Generation Y to move companies is that they have a personality that is easily bored. This, coupled with the fact that their loyalty is to their skills and not their company means that employers wishing to maintain their best workers need to provide them with new challenges and up-skilling prospects as 65%* of this generation are motivated, retained and influenced by career development opportunities." However, while considering this, it is important to keep in mind that while older generations specialised in one field, Generation Y believes that being multi-skilled will make them more employable and give them the variety they seek.

Change is the only constant

Many in Generation Y are beginning their careers with high qualifications behind their names with the intention to move quickly up the corporate ladder. Therefore, they are prepared to move between corporations to accelerate this growth and

that of their earning potential. "Their ability to job hop shows that Generation Y are risk takers and have strong entrepreneurial instincts. Companies willing to tap into these capabilities will be able to grow a robust and innovative workforce," she encourages.

Furthermore, their job hopping reveals this generation's ability to be flexible and easily adapt to a changing environment. This, coupled with the fact that they are tech-savvy and global minded means that Generation Y can be a great advantage to companies wanting to keep on par with ever-changing international trends.

Equality comes easily

While older generations have had to deal with the changes in race, gender and generational equality in the workplace (and may still have reservations in this regard), Generation Y is less hindered by these factors, allowing them to work more harmoniously with their colleagues.

"Generation Y has been highly criticised for their self-entitlement and lack of loyalty in the workplace, but employers who understand that they are wired differently and are willing to harness their traits will derive the benefits that this emerging generation has to offer," concludes Vittee.

**Statistics from UNC, Kenan-Flagler Business School*

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