



Generational Engagement

Gen Y Checklist: How to Engage Gen Y Employees!

- ✓ **Recruiting**-Be straightforward and honest. Don't over promise and under deliver. Gen Y expects to be challenged and perform the type of work they have an interest in and want to perform. If an organization can provide these opportunities it is likely Gen Y employees will stay engaged. If as an organization you can't provide them with what they think is a fit, then tell them so on day one. If you over promise and under deliver and they sense incongruence or feel stuck doing work they didn't sign up for and don't enjoy, they are likely to leave the organization.
 - To engage Gen Y set clear expectations, clearly define goals, implement management development programs, and share organizational values and beliefs from day one.

- ✓ **Meritocracy Not Hierarchy**- Gen Y has a low tolerance for political bureaucracy. They don't buy the "tenure" or "chain of command" approach. Gen Y believes in open and honest communication and feedback in all directions. They believe results, not years of service or level in the organization, drive team success. Traditional role and job progression is seen as too slow and outdated.
 - To engage Gen Y employees, consider changing the structure of your organization to a more flat model with less hierarchy and rewards based on merit and performance, not tenure and title.

- ✓ **Corporate Citizenship**- A sense of purpose is important to Gen Y. More and more Gen Y are seeking employment with organizations that have a strong civic mindedness. They seek careers that allow opportunity for social significance. To help Gen Y to be engaged with the organization, they need to know the organization will support them in engaging in working toward the greater good outside of work. Connectedness and sense of purpose are important.
 - To engage Gen Y go "green", offer charity matching programs, allow them time to volunteer during work hours, and work on ways to connect the mission and values of the organization to the greater good.

- ✓ **Outside the Box Benefits**- Gen Y enjoy flexibility, this includes flexibility in benefits. Having various programs and options in place and allowing Gen Y employees to choose where and how their benefit dollars will be spent is helpful in keeping them engaged.

- To engage Gen Y Adopt a variety of wellness programs such as flexible spending, paternity leave, adoption assistance, health club discounts etc. Add some atypical offerings to your benefits mix such as iTunes gift cards, a rewards points program (based on performance) or an employee to employee leave/vacation balance exchange program.
- ✓ **Work Life Balance-** Gen Y wants, almost demands, something beyond an all consuming career. To keep them engaged, motivated, and committed it is necessary to provide true work life balance. Achieving this can be done through a combination of *outside the box benefits* and creating opportunities that allow for building relationships and taking part in social groups. If they can get their work done in six hours instead of eight then don't keep them in an office for an extra two hours. If work can be done at home, or a conference call can be had while at a soccer game for their children, allow that flexibility.
 - To engage Gen Y, create team building or social events, pulse employees for what they would enjoy most (a golf outing, a child/parent baseball game etc.) Happy Hours and Pizza Parties are not always the best means of creating team cohesion. Gen Y have an "I can have it all" mentality: raise my children, spend time with my family and social networks and still meet challenges to achieve goals at both home and at work. This doesn't make them any less committed. If Gen Y sees that the organization is committed to their success both inside and outside of work, they tend to remain engaged. The key is balance!
- ✓ **Coaching and Communication-** Gen Y are not afraid to speak up or call the boss by his first name. They believe that communication is key in all directions, up, down, and lateral. Create an environment where they are encouraged and rewarded for speaking up regarding ideas and concerns, regardless of level in the organization. Gen Y considers experience to have little value in a world of constant change. Don't view this as disrespect; harness this view of communication, which often leads to innovation. Gen Y prefers coaches not bosses.
 - To engage Gen Y, add a structured coaching or mentoring program to your organization. Build in quarterly or monthly development check-ins and create a space for discussion. Helping to guide open communication, career progression, and build trust leads to engagement.
- ✓ **Tap Into Technology-** GenY'ers are used to technology, some were even born with it at their fingertips. They aren't scared of new technologies and adapt fast to new innovations. Don't shy away from new technologies that enable telecommuting or virtual work environments, or that help contribute to work life balance. Utilize video teleconferencing, Webinars, and laptops with wireless access. Technology can be used to encourage group and project based work. Use technology to build in collaboration, create informal team building exercises, and as a communication tool for positive public relations for your organization.
 - To engage Gen Y, utilize social media and new technology as a communication and feedback tool and for telecommuting and enhancing collaboration. Creating public forums for

employees to pose insights, questions and concerns, and for the organization to have a place to respond real time to address issues, and share information. This helps everyone feel heard and can increase engagement and productivity. Technology is also a great way to keep the door open for alumni to return. Alumni websites can keep former employees connected and up to date with status of the organization.

- ✓ **Connectedness-** Gen Y need to feel connected to the organization to remain engaged. They expect a seat at the table, want questions answered directly, often challenge the status quo, and have a need to understand the big picture. Don't just provide access and input to your corporate strategy, mission, and vision to senior leaders. Allow access to and input from your Gen Y non executive employees as well. They tend to feel more connected and engaged when they *know their own values and beliefs align to those of the organization*.
 - To engage Gen Y, provide the opportunity to give and receive feedback, not just regarding their own careers but on the overall direction and vision of the organization, is important to Gen Y and helps them feel connected and remain engaged.

- ✓ **Comfort with Diversity-** The days of the "good old boys club" is long since passed for those organizations that wish to remain successful and competitive in today's global marketplace. Gen Y have a comfort with diversity; to keep them engaged, it is important that they see the organization does as well. Take a look at your organization chart. For example, if you see that most managerial or leadership roles are filled by white baby boomer males then most likely this was already noticed as a negative by your Gen Y employees. If they see that only one 'type' of person tends to move up the ladder and they don't fit that description, then it becomes easy for them to take on a 'so why bother' mentality, and this has a negative impact on engagement and retention.
 - To engage Gen Y recognize and embrace all facets of diversity, gender, race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. Implement Affinity Groups, put forth diversity initiatives, change up the organization chart and add diversity to your leadership mix, sponsor events or corporate matching programs and give back to communities. When Gen Y employees can see the organization values them for who they are, and not just the work they can do, engagement, commitment, and retention will increase.

- ✓ **Make it Fun-** Gen Y expects to bring their full selves to work. For them, work is not just about completing tasks, they want to be able to have some fun while doing so. Create a fun "bring your full self and be who you are" culture. Not every organization can be Google, and Gen Y understands that.
 - To engage Gen Y you can do some simple things, bring in a massage therapist for chair massages, install a TV in the break room, relax the dress code with themed attire events, mix up work assignments and if you have multiple offices mix up work venues for a change of scenery. Sponsor video game playoffs and sporting events. Creating a work hard play hard fun culture is an easy way to increase engagement among Gen Y employees.

***You may also be interested in our workshop:**

[Bridging the Generation Gap: What Are “They” Thinking?](#)

This can be found on our website at:

<http://tolerosolutions.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Tolero-Solutions-Workshop-Bridging-the-Generation-Gap.pdf>



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