

SIX WAYS TO ATTRACT AND RE-ATTRACT

the next generation
of employees

implementconsultinggroup.com

By Cæcilie Orloff Sjøemod,
caso@implement.dk
and Maria Wommelsdorff,
mawo@implement.dk,
Implement Consulting Group

Being able to attract the next generation of talent is crucial to the future success of your company. In this article, we'll provide you with six principles for how to increase your company's attractiveness.

To an increasing extent, human resources are an important source of lasting competitive advantages. Currently, the next generation of employees – a relevant and important group of potential employees – is entering the job market. This is a generation of self-confident and ambitious individuals with high expectations of their workplace, which is reflected in their focused job search that's characterised by frequent career changes and a strong degree of self-orientation. This has created a so-called war for talent, which forces companies to adapt their branding and management style to the needs of the next generation. They are commonly referred to as Generation

Y, and in 2015 they became the largest generation in the workforce. Born around the years 1982-2001, this generation ranges from graduates to employees who, within the next few years, will achieve top management positions.

Studies show that Generation Y has a radically different approach to work life than previous generations. The changes that Generation Y makes in the world will be far greater and more innovative than anything we've ever seen before. Therefore, companies' ability to attract and retain this particular group of employees is crucial to being able to keep up with the development.

**“A STUDY SHOWS
THAT 48% OF
GENERATION Y
EXPECTS TO
STAY IN THEIR
CURRENT JOB FOR
A MAXIMUM OF
TWO YEARS”**

Thus, companies' attractiveness is a key factor in the recruitment of this group of restless individuals who demand constant stimulation. Below are six principles for how to increase your company's attractiveness.

1. Aligning internal and external branding

Members of Generation Y are experts in being a target group, which means that they are fundamentally critical to brands and ads. If a product doesn't live up to their expectations, they immediately return it. Similarly, **Generation Y expects a certain level of consistency between a company's brand and the experience they get from the company after being hired.** Consistency between internal and external branding means e.g. that the company conducts the activities they have used to brand themselves such as development programmes, training days etc. If Generation Y experiences inconsistency between internal and external branding, they quickly move on to other companies. Thus, honest branding and balancing of expectations are part of ensuring successful attraction of employees.

2. Living the brand

Traditionally, brand strategies used to focus on developing a strong external brand that could be promoted at job fairs and large events. However, this strategy is no longer sufficient. Today, promotion and raising customer awareness of a brand primarily take place during the employees' spare time rather than while they are at work. Thus, it's when employees tell positive stories to their network that attraction of potential employees occurs. Thereby, an ideal way of attracting talent is by applying the "living the brand" approach. In that connection, the main focus is on strong internal branding, leading to the employees identifying themselves with the brand to such an extent that they are "living the brand" and consequently share their positive opinion of it. By selecting brand ambassadors to brand the company to their network

in their spare time, the living the brand approach may develop into an actual attraction strategy. At the same time, an increased focus on internal branding is a way to get rid of an outdated view on employee attraction and retention. This way, employees are regarded as customers who must be attracted and re-attracted, which is a modern and effective way of retaining a generation who puts their own interests ahead of company loyalty and job security.

3. Matching purpose and values

Members of Generation Y are both self-aware and socially aware. They are attracted by companies with a purpose and set of values which they can identify themselves with. The better the match between the vision and values of a company and a potential employee, the more likely the company is to attract the person. Collaboration, flexibility and development are key words that appeal to Generation Y. At the same time, Generation Y wants to be part of a greater purpose. Socially and environmentally responsible companies are getting more and more popular, and studies indicate that only half as many employees leave their current job, if they have participated in a CSR project during the previous year. CSR projects can be incorporated into start-up programmes or training and development programmes.

4. Providing new and fast career paths

Generation Y is used to constant changes, and they often handle them with efficiency and ease. At the same time, they have been raised to believe that they are masters of their own fate. If the work becomes too tedious, too monotonous or too slow, they quickly move on to a new, more interesting job. Generation Y wants speed and new opportunities, and they value professional competences and personal development highly – even higher than being offered a better position. Therefore, courses as well as development and training programmes are important initiatives. A new method is to hire

employees in business tracks instead of inflexible or fixed positions to enable employees to rotate between different jobs and departments, thus creating new career paths within the same company.

5. Work-life blending

Formal structures and non-valueadding time are killing the motivation of Generation Y. They want flexible working hours and digital solutions. They want to be able to do their job when and where it makes sense. This is part of a shift in the mentality and approach to work from work-life balance to what we call worklife blending. The ideal workplace for Generation Y employees is a company that integrates work with an employee's spare time. Football tournaments, running clubs, flexible working hours, Friday bars and company dinner programmes are all examples of how work life can be combined with informal leisure time activities.

6. Providing management feedback and recognition

Generation Y is used to being heard and receiving recognition from parents, pedagogues and teachers. They see

authorities as role models and have high demands for their superiors in terms of them acting as front figures who inspire confidence and who see and show recognition to the individual employee. Mentor programmes and being able to choose your own personal manager are factors that can enhance personal feedback and recognition. It's important to stress that Generation Y isn't necessarily interested in working late to "build a kingdom" for a high-ranking manager, but they are prepared to work hard for a cause or a vision that they identify themselves with. Thus, **feedback and recognition should focus on engagement, vision and results.**

When discussing how to attract Generation Y, we need to ask ourselves whether it's possible to talk about one united generation, and if it's possible to develop overall methods for attracting a generation of self-oriented individuals who have been raised to feel unique?

However, while employees – across all generations – should be treated as individuals, we believe that following the six principles should allow companies to successfully attract and re-attract the next generation of employees.

FAST FACTS ABOUT IMPLEMENT

Founded: 1996

Number of employees: 800

Headquarters: Copenhagen

Offices: Aarhus, Stockholm, Malmo, Oslo, Zurich and Munich
implementconsultinggroup.com