

Still Not Comfortable with Millennials?

Wait Until You Work With Generation Z!

By Breanna Brown, Creative Marketing Ambassador, APG Cash Drawer, LLC

Many employers are still coming to terms with how to accommodate the work habits of millennials. You know—the generation that reached adulthood around 2000 and brought a fair amount of change to the workplace. They prefer flexible hours, have a strong sense of work/life balance, and want to be rewarded for their work with clear career advancement opportunities. Of course, millennials are far more tech-savvy than are previous generations because in the midst of the Age of Experience, they grew up while smartphones and social media were becoming must-haves.

Today's employers should start thinking about the postmillennial generation and about what changes those workers have already brought and are likely to bring to the workforce. Say hello to Generation Z. Gen Zers were born in the mid-1990s to mid-2000s—so the oldest of them are around 22 and have started entering the workforce. And they are even more technology-focused than millennials are; Gen Zers don't know any other way. Communicating via Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, Tumblr, YouTube, and the like are all essential to how they see themselves, to how they project their image to the world, and to how they digest information.

Gen Zers, according to research, picked up many of the millennials' traits but then are taking them to the next level. If you're a VAR or retailer still struggling with how to absorb millennials into the workplace, wait till Gen Zers start showing up for job interviews.



GEN ZERS HAVE MUCH TO OFFER

Don't panic, though. The generation gap often is blown out of proportion. A little common sense and willingness to learn can go a long way. Gen Zers are doers and have a lot to contribute. "They know the ins and outs of branding because they have been building their own personal brands online since birth," according to a recently published white paper from Oliver Russell, called "Generation Z, Millennials, and You."

Gen Zers are frugal, according to the paper. They watched millennials struggle through a steep economic downturn and saw many who moved back in with their parents because they couldn't afford to be on their own. Not that Gen Zers shy away from spending altogether, it's that they're more likely to spend their money on experiences such as vacations and events than on accumulation of goods.

UNDERSTANDING GEN Z

Understanding Gen Z traits will position your company to make good hires and get the most productivity out of these workers. As Gen Zers are creative and entrepreneurial, consider them for content-creation jobs and assign them to new company projects.

Because they tend to value independent thinking and individualism, consider adjusting your management style to accommodate them. Businesses often focus on teamwork; but that may not play as well with this generation.

IT'S ALL ABOUT CONNECTING

You don't need to turn your business upside down to hire Gen Zers—or millennials, for that matter. You needn't abandon your business values. But to succeed into the future, you'll need a diverse workforce, and Gen Zers will be an essential part of it.

Remember: it's never about one generation or another. We work and live in a multigenerational environment. All of us—baby boomers, Gen Xers, millennials, and Gen Zers—need to find ways to work together harmoniously and to understand and value each other's strengths and contributions. A multigenerational workplace offers diversity in thinking, which contributes to high productivity, and a can foster a great place to learn and grow. **c**