

Role of Branding in Attracting and Retaining Millennials and Gen Z in Organisations

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ABSTRACT

The Fourth Industrial Revolution dramatically increased the demand for information and communication technology specialists, globally. According to human resource specialists and industry experts, competition between companies to attract talents in this area has intensified all over the world. Moreover, this is further aggravated by the fact that information and communication technology specialists can work remotely from different locations and place of residence no longer limits their employment in companies in other countries. Moreover, the establishment of remote work was remarkably accelerated during COVID-19 pandemic. Recruitment and retention of talents is related with number of challenges in Georgian information and communication technology companies as well. In addition, the specific characteristics and preferences of the "Millennials" and generation "Z" (which includes most of the information and communication technology specialists) should be considered. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the role and importance of employer's brand in attracting and retaining millennials and gen z. The overall objective was to identify means to attract and retain these talents in the face of fierce global competition.

Keywords: - Employer Branding, Millennials and Gen Z

INTRODUCTION

In the era of extreme transformation, global business faces highly-intensified competition, where customers have become more informed and knowledgeable consumers. These changes impacted not only the way things are perceived by people but also the patterns of reasoning and communication. Nowadays, to satisfy demands of consumers or employees organizations need to focus on continuous research, forecasting and being a step ahead of their competitors. Furthermore, business environment faces many challenges, such as: intense global competition, rapid technological changes, knowledge economy growth and need for expertise and resilience.

Accordingly, these factors influence labour market, as well. Many managers suggest that amount and competences of existing talents are not adequate for dramatically increased demand on the market. For these reasons, attraction of right talents has become even more complicated. Fight for talents, when competitors seek

for candidates of the same profile reflects on the time that companies spend on recruitment processes. Nowadays, candidates assess not only their role in the organization and salary but the company as a whole. At that time, global labor market offers wide variety of choices to highly qualified talents. Consequently, companies should realize strategies for additional value creation to become “top employers”. However, with consideration of specific characteristics of talents working in information and communication sphere, this task is becoming more and more complicated. Furthermore, branding is becoming more significant and important to manage appropriately, in organizational context. Decent strategies to attract and retain talents will grant competitive advantage to organizations in the era of “war of talents”.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

(Khoreva, 2018) The study examines how generational differences in the workplace impact strategies for retaining talent. The paper identifies four generational cohorts and individuals called “tweeners” who share values from multiple generations and require diverse retention approaches. The study emphasizes that understanding these differences aids organizations in increasing staff retention, but it also emphasizes the necessity of conducting thorough research when examining employee attitudes. Further, it concluded that acknowledging cultural background and gender also impacts retention strategies.

(Nguyen Ngoc et al., 2022) A study on Generation Z job seekers in Vietnam highlights their preference for intangible job attributes such as office atmosphere and workplace ethics over physical benefits, reflecting a shift in employment priorities. Gen Z considers both instrumental attributes (e.g., salary and benefits) and symbolic elements like corporate social responsibility when evaluating potential employers. They also place a high value on work life balance and job flexibility, favouring hybrid work models. Notably, low organizational commitment was observed, with many indicating a willingness to change jobs frequently early in their careers. An ethical work environment was seen as essential, underscoring the importance of organizational reputation. While limited by its small, country-specific sample, the study offers valuable insights into Gen Z's evolving job expectations in transition economies, informing recruitment and HR strategies.

(Celestin et al., 2024) The study demonstrates how Generation Z is changing HR procedures by prioritizing workplace values, professional growth, flexibility, digital technologies, and mental health support. They place a high importance on flexible work schedules (74%), expect mental health support (84%), and prefer digital onboarding (88%). Diversity, equality, and inclusion (DEI) policies have a significant impact on their employment decisions, and 72% of them seek mentorship programs, indicating the importance of career progression. Additionally, they favour businesses that uphold moral principles and engage in corporate social responsibility (CSR).

(Moulik & Giri, 2024) A study examining the link between proactive job crafting and workplace happiness among 310 millennial employees in India's service sector (IT, telecom, and banking) found that job crafting significantly enhances job satisfaction, engagement, and organizational commitment. Using structural equation

modelling, six of nine hypotheses were supported, showing that seeking structural and social job resources positively influences satisfaction and engagement, while seeking challenging demands did not significantly impact job satisfaction—likely due to stress and burnout in the sector. The study underscores the value of promoting job crafting behaviours to boost employee well-being and retention, especially in the context of heightened workplace stress during the COVID-19 pandemic.

(Terrell, 2024) The paper highlights that Millennials and Gen Z employees want their organisations to support their long-term career development and reflect their values. Young talent retention presents both opportunities and challenges, and organisations must modify themselves to satisfy their changing demands. Aligning workplace support with their expectations helps create a motivated workforce. To attract and retain young employees, employers need to provide career development programs, competitive pay, and clear growth pathways. Companies that implement these adjustments will develop a more productive and engaged workforce.

(Monika & Israel, 2024) The study highlights that Gen Z employees have higher attrition rates and are more likely to leave their jobs than their predecessors, which poses challenges for organisations. They look for career advancement, work-life balance, meaningful jobs, and a technologically advanced, collaborative work environment. The findings state that 53% of them may quit their positions within two years, proving that traditional management techniques are inadequate at retaining them, and they feel undervalued, especially regarding salary and opportunities for career advancement. In order to lower turnover, businesses need to create sustained plans that meet Gen Z's demands, like fostering a welcoming, stimulating, and growth-oriented work environment, as long-term success and retention depend on comprehending and meeting their requirements.

RESEARCH GAP

Literature review suggests that despite the growing literature on employee attraction and retention, there still remains a significant gap in understanding the distinct needs and expectations of Millennials and Generation Z in the workplace. Existing research has mainly focused on traditional employee retention strategies, which might not be entirely aligned with the preferences and values of these younger generations. Furthermore, while some studies examine how attitudes towards work vary by generation, there is little empirical data on how businesses can successfully customise their workplace culture, employer branding, and career development opportunities to draw in and keep Millennials and Gen Z workers. Furthermore, the significance of new workplace trends like diversity and inclusion, work-life balance, and remote work is still not well understood in the context of these generations. Addressing these gaps is important for organizations seeking to develop competitive talent management strategies in a dynamic workforce landscape.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To analyse the employment preferences and workplace expectations of Millennials and Generation Z in the current workforce.

- To identify the top reasons influencing Millennials and Gen Z professionals' decisions to join and leave specific organizations.
- To assess the preferred work models (remote, hybrid, onsite) among Millennials and Gen Z.
- To suggest actionable strategies for organizations to attract and retain Generation Z and Millennial employees.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopts a descriptive research design. The research methodology for this study is based on secondary data analysis, drawing from existing studies, reports, and surveys on talent management practices and generational preferences. Sources include peer-reviewed academic journals, industry reports, case studies of successful companies, and surveys conducted by HR consulting firms and institutions like Gallup, Deloitte, and McKinsey.

DISCUSSION

The literature review reveals that employer branding plays a substantial role in shaping Generation Z's intention to pursue job opportunities. This section highlights key insights from multiple studies that examine how employer branding affects Generation Z's interest in entering the workforce.

Employer Branding Increases Generation Z's Intention to Apply

Jordan and Desiana (2023) found that employer branding has a notable positive impact on Generation Z's intention to seek employment with a company. A strong and consistent corporate image is vital in fostering a favourable perception, particularly among younger generations who value transparency and ethical corporate practices. The study emphasizes that organizational reputation and alignment between personal and organizational values (person organization fit) serve as key mediating factors in this relationship. Generation Z tends to be more attracted to companies that project a solid image and uphold values such as social justice, diversity, and work-life balance.

As noted by Jordan and Desiana (2023), "Employer branding significantly influences the intention to apply, mediated by organizational reputation and person-organization fit."

Furthermore, research by Wardani and Ikhrum (2023) supports these findings by showing that employer branding, organizational reputation, and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) all play a role in influencing Generation Z's job application intentions. Their study reinforces the idea that Generation Z seeks more than just financial compensation, placing high value on companies that demonstrate social and environmental responsibility. According to Wardani and

Ikhrum (2023), "Employer branding, company reputation, and CSR partially influence Generation Z's intention to apply for jobs."

Dimensions of Employer Branding That Attract Generation Z

Fadilah and Putranto (2023) found that there are Several aspects of employer branding appeal strongly to Generation Z, especially in terms of development opportunities, financial benefits, practical job applications, and personal interests. These four components are seen as crucial in shaping Generation Z women's willingness to apply for jobs. Career advancement and financial security are top priorities for this generation, leading them to prefer companies that provide growth prospects and attractive compensation packages.

According to Fadilah and Putranto (2023), "Four out of five dimensions of employer branding significantly influence the intention to apply among Generation Z women."

Similarly, Nguyen (2023) emphasizes the significance of competitive pay, a company's reputation, a healthy work environment, and stimulating job roles in attracting Gen Z applicants. In Vietnam's hospitality sector, Generation Z values fair pay and a workplace culture that supports their well-being. They are more likely to apply to employers who offer both strong financial incentives and a nurturing, positive atmosphere. As Nguyen (2023) notes, "Attractive compensation, company reputation, work environment, and engaging tasks positively influence Generation Z's intention to apply for jobs."

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to effectively attract and retain Millennials and Generation Z employees, Organisations must adopt tailored strategies that align with their career expectations, values, and workplace preferences. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are being proposed:

- **Enhance Workplace Flexibility:** To meet the worklife balance preferences of Millennials and Gen Z employees, organisations should provide flexible work arrangements, such as remote work alternatives, flexible hours, and hybrid schedules.
- **Foster a Positive and Inclusive Workplace Culture:** It is important to have an organisational culture that values open communication, diversity, inclusion, and teamwork. Younger generations value working in environments where they feel heard, respected and included.
- **Provide Career Growth and Development Opportunities:** Employers must invest in clear career progression pathways, continuous learning, and mentorship programs to keep younger employees engaged and motivated. Upskilling and professional development opportunities ought to be given top attention.
- **Leverage Technology and Innovation:** Millennials and Gen Z employees, As digital natives prefer workplaces that integrate modern technologies, digital collaboration tools, and innovative work processes. Tech-driven solutions should be implemented by organisations to increase engagement and productivity.

- **Strengthen Employer Branding and Purpose-Driven Work:** To draw in younger workers who are looking for fulfilling work, companies should highlight their mission, values, and social responsibility programs. This will help to strengthen employer branding and purpose-driven employment. Businesses that support corporate social responsibility (CSR), sustainability, and moral business conduct will be at a competitive edge.
- **Recognize and Reward Contributions:** Employee retention and morale can be increased by implementing performance-based incentives, structured recognition programs, and customised rewards. Non-cash incentives like public recognition and opportunities for career advancement can also be helpful.
- **Improve Leadership and Management Approaches:** Organizations should adopt leadership styles that prioritize transparent communication, employee empowerment, and mentorship. Managers should be trained to provide regular feedback, encourage innovation, and create a supportive work environment.

CONCLUSION

Attracting and retaining Millennials and the Generation Z workforce is essential for organisations to stay competitive in the changing job market. These younger generations bring new perspectives, technological know-how, and a desire for meaningful work, making them valuable assets to any business. Their expectations, however, are very different from those of preceding generations, necessitating a shift in traditional talent management strategies. This study highlights the importance of career development opportunities, inclusive work culture, workplace flexibility, and technological integration in fostering employee satisfaction and commitment. By aligning organizational policies with the values and motivations of Millennials and Gen Z, organisations may improve employee engagement, lower turnover rates, and create a highly resilient workforce. Ultimately, organisations that adopt employee-centric methods and adjust to the shifting dynamics of the workforce will not only attract top talent but also establish an engaging workplace where younger workers are inspired, engaged, and committed to long-term success.

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