

JOB-HOPPING PHENOMENON

A MULTIGENERATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

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DID you know that 91% of Gen-Y employees leave their jobs in less than three years? (*Multiple Generations @ Work* survey by the Future Workplace®).

If you speak to some friends (or Google) about this, most of them would attribute these – one to two years' work stint to the same reason – the "disloyal" Gen-Y!

While many stated reasons are undoubtedly true, let's explore other factors that have also contributed to this phenomenon, and see if we can minimise this culture and effects of job-hopping in the coming years before we welcome in the Gen-Z graduates.

What's commonly read of job-hopping is that it is done for career growth, quick salary increments and a lack of company loyalty.

While that may be true in some cases, many fail to see that Gen-Y consists of key groups with distinct differences in their mindsets and motivations.

These are some key groups of Gen-Y in the current business world:

● The driven Gen-Y

These are the Gen-Ys who probably have *Travis McCoy's Billionaire* as their life's theme song. Their vision board is flooded with dreams of retiring by 35, fancy cars, and dream holidays.

They will likely be the ones who will move from one job to another if the "price is right". They work and play hard, but their underlying motivation is to be a high-income earner in the shortest time possible.

● The life-loving Gen-Y

These are the Gen-Ys who believe in having meaning in what they do and who they do it with. Hence, company values and team dynamics are important to them.

According to Johnson Controls' *Gen-Y and the Workplace Annual Report*, Gen-Ys look for a professional community place that they can emotionally engage in and that positively supports their wellbeing.

Their underlying motivation is happiness, work-life balance and being able to contribute to society at large.

● The learning Gen-Y

These Gen-Y executives believe in lifelong learning experiences. In the same research, Controls found that the top deciding factor for choosing a company for them is the opportunity for learning.

They look forward to continuous opportunities to learn as well as periodical challenges to their job so that it does not become monotonous.

The underlying motivation of this group of Gen-Ys is to avoid monotony and a lack of growth. They believe that if you stop growing, you wither.

With these motivations driving the Gen-Y, job-hopping can sometimes bring a lot of short- to middle-term fulfilment and results.

LET'S look at how different groups of people can help minimise job-hopping.

1 GEN-Y EMPLOYEE

The buck stops with the Gen-Ys as far as their decision to stay or leave is concerned.

Asking the right questions during an interview related to their underlying motivation will help ensure a better culture fit in the company and among employees.

For the driven Gen-Ys, having a good understanding of their compensation, reward and career growth will help them decide if the company's career advancement and remuneration package is aligned with their expectations.

For the life-loving Gen-Y, asking the right questions on the culture of the company can be beneficial.

And for those who are eager to learn, ask about the interviewers about learning/mentoring programmes and opportunities for additional projects outside the job scope.

While pursuing their dream jobs, it will help to ensure that each step they take is aligned with their dreams otherwise there will be disappointment and leave the company in less than two years.

2 THE EMPLOYER (USUALLY THE GEN-X)

As many reports have shown, Gen-Ys look for fair and justified compensation, work-life balance, continuous growth and flexible work arrangements.

While many companies in Malaysia have extensive training programmes, more can be done.

In line with the three groups of Gen-Ys that we are addressing in this article, companies can do more:

- Stretched goal setting with justified rewards for the driven Gen-Y. If they are looking for rewards, then help set them up for success. Managers of these employees can set stretched goals with a clear definition of deliverables and rewards that follow.
- Know your company culture and represent it well in interviews, websites and other communication channels. This will help the life-loving Gen-Y decide if this is the work culture they wish to be a part of.
- Individualised learning opportunities for the learning Gen-Y. Allow them to look for opportunities to grow their scope of work or be involved in cross-functional projects to ensure continuous learning. Provide developmental feedback for these employees to help them see their blind spots. They are usually very open to receiving feedback if it helps them grow as a person.

3 THE EVER SUPPORTIVE PARENTS (USUALLY THE BABY BOOMERS)

Parents who cast a safety net over the Gen-Ys should stop! They will have to mature and be responsible for the decisions they make.

Some Gen-Ys have the luxury of leaving a company before securing another job because they have a "piggy bank" that never goes empty at home.

The Gen-Xs have been loyal to their companies in the previous years as they fear the loss of income that may affect their livelihood.

This commitment to providing for their children's education, needs, and eventually marriage, is sometimes detrimental to the Gen-Yers.

As parents, teaching them to be responsible adults who bear the burdens of their decisions is more crucial than casting a safety net for a wishy-washy employee.

Once this "fortunate" group of Gen-Ys know that they can no longer land safely, then the decision to take on a job and stay with it becomes a deliberated one.

Regardless of which stakeholder of this job-hopping phenomenon you fall in – the Gen-Y employee, employer or the parents – we all have a role to play.

■ Elisa Dass is a borderline Gen-Y. She believes job-hopping is a phenomenon that can be minimised through a better understanding of motivations, deliberate career planning and knowing who you hire. She heads the learning and acceleration division in Leaderonomics to help companies better understand the motivations of the Gen-Ys they are hiring or have hired! For more insights, visit www.leaderonomics.com

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