



The Influence of establishing a happy workplace environment on attracting Generation Z

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ABSTRACT

The emergence of Generation Z in the workforce has brought about a shift in workplace dynamics and expectations. To attract and retain this generation of employees, organizations must recognize the unique qualities and preferences that define Generation Z. One crucial aspect is the creation of a happy workplace environment that aligns with their values and fosters their professional growth. This abstract explores strategies for establishing a positive workplace environment that appeals to Generation Z, including promoting work-life balance, emphasizing purpose-driven work, embracing technology, encouraging collaboration and feedback, and prioritizing employee well-being. By implementing these strategies, organizations can position themselves as desirable employers for Generation Z, attracting top talent and driving overall organizational success. With Generation Z entering the workforce in Vietnam, organizations need to understand the specific characteristics and preferences of this demographic to create an attractive workplace environment. This abstract focuses on strategies for cultivating a positive work atmosphere that appeals to Generation Z employees in Vietnam. These strategies include fostering a supportive and inclusive work culture, providing opportunities for professional development and growth, embracing technology and innovation, promoting work-life balance, and prioritizing employee well-being. Additionally, understanding the cultural context of Vietnam and incorporating local values into the workplace can further enhance the appeal to Generation Z. By implementing these strategies, organizations in Vietnam can position themselves as employers of choice, attracting and retaining top talent from Generation Z and contributing to their long-term success.

Keywords: happy workplace, generation Z, environment, student

1. Introduction

Nowadays, a significant portion of our lives is dedicated to work within a company. This period can either be characterized by contentment or misery. Undeniably, our work exerts a substantial influence on our overall well-being and standard of living. The satisfaction and prosperity experienced by employees are directly impacted by various factors such as job design, the work environment, and the organization itself. In the modern era, the workplace has transcended its traditional role as a mere source of income for individuals. It should be transformed into a space that facilitates connection, harnesses our strengths, and reinforces positive values, both physically and mentally. Generation Z, a representative cohort, places considerable importance on mental well-being in the work setting, particularly in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. Numerous individuals now prioritize achieving a healthy work-life balance over wholeheartedly dedicating themselves solely to their professional endeavors. Generation Z is increasingly recognized as the trend-setting generation, with 77% of Gen Z individuals highly valuing workplace flexibility as a determining factor in their company loyalty. Prominent global companies have implemented programs such as "Flex with purpose" (KPMG), "Work Your Way" (3M), and "Amex Flex" (American Express), showcasing the emerging trend of flexible work practices. According to the Global Talent Trends 2022 report, flexible working, specifically hybrid working, is projected to be the future of work worldwide. A "prosperous" workplace is one that encompasses positive social, mental, and physical elements. It is an environment where employees can have

fulfilling experiences, and the working conditions enable them to develop in multiple dimensions, contributing to their ability to achieve their maximum potential in their work, family, and community as defined by the Thriving Workers, Thriving Workplace research study. In her renowned book "Lean In," author Sheryl Sandberg depicts an empowering work environment that allows individuals to fully commit and unleash their potential in their careers, particularly one that addresses inequality issues in the workplace. The book's message is revolutionary, presenting a paradigm shift in the workplace. Essentially, it stems from the pursuit of happiness in one's work. Moreover, in a society where judgments are often based on stereotypes, a woman who prioritizes her career may face more negative perceptions compared to a man in the same situation. There is an expectation for women to be kind and nurturing, while such expectations are rarely imposed on their male counterparts. In the chapter "Success and Likeability," Sandberg shares her experience of learning, from a young age, to downplay her achievements due to the anticipated negative judgment from others. Unfortunately, many women in the workplace tend to diminish their accomplishments in order to be accepted and liked within their professional environments.

2. Literature review

Employee absenteeism can be influenced by a lack of thriving in the workplace. Absenteeism refers to the failure to report to work as planned (Johns, 2002). Employees may choose to be absent when they encounter uncomfortable work situations such as work strain or physical and psychological illness (Sliter et al., 2012; Schaufeli et al., 2009; Darr and Johns, 2008). The exchange theory emphasizes the norm of reciprocity in the relationship between the workforce and the organization (Wayne et al., 1997). According to the reciprocity ideology, when an organization provides learning opportunities to its employees, it enhances the employees' sense of obligation to care for and prioritize the organization's interests, thus strengthening their commitment. Consequently, employees are motivated to continuously acquire new knowledge and contribute to the organization's long-term success and growth.

Well-being refers to the subjective evaluation of individuals' lives in a positive manner, encompassing their emotional reactions and overall satisfaction in various domains such as life, work, family, and health (Diener et al., 1999; Spreitzer et al., 2005). It represents an overall assessment of a person's desired state of progress. In today's complex and demanding work environment, thriving is crucial as employees need to prioritize their psychological and physical health and well-being (Pfeffer, 2010; Porath et al., 2012; Spreitzer et al., 2005). Thriving is a desirable psychological state that predicts individuals' efforts to enhance their potential for success in the workplace and, consequently, their overall well-being (Kira and Balkin, 2014). Previous research has also demonstrated a connection between energy, a component of thriving, and important organizational outcomes, such as employees' well-being (Collins, 2014; Raes et al., 2013).

3. Research Methodology

Drawing from existing literature, we have identified and emphasized the concept of thriving in the workplace as a novel construct. Furthermore, we have explored its relevance in various relationships and contexts

4. Research result and discussion



Figure 1. People first model
Source: Alexander H Reay (2016)

The "People First" model is an approach to business and management that places a strong emphasis on prioritizing the well-being and needs of employees. This model recognizes that a company's success is closely tied to the satisfaction, engagement, and development of its workforce.

Organizations prioritize the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of their employees. They provide resources and support for maintaining a healthy work-life balance, managing stress, and promoting overall wellness. Companies invest in the growth and development of their employees. They provide training programs, mentorship opportunities, and career advancement options to help employees reach their full potential and achieve their professional goals. Organizations foster a culture of open communication, collaboration, and involvement. They encourage employee participation, seek feedback, and involve employees in decision-making processes to create a sense of ownership and engagement. Companies acknowledge and appreciate the contributions and achievements of their employees. They have systems in place to recognize and reward outstanding performance, fostering a sense of motivation and job satisfaction. The People First model promotes diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Organizations strive to create an inclusive environment where employees from different backgrounds and perspectives feel welcome and valued.



Figure 2. The idea of the employee hierarchy of needs is the same as Maslow
Source: Karlyn Borysenko, Recruiting News & Information (2017)

To assess how well a company meets the needs of its employees, including those of Generation Z, it is helpful to consider the concept of a hierarchy of needs, which is similar to Maslow's hierarchy of needs. While Maslow's hierarchy primarily focuses on individual needs, the idea can be applied to employees in a workplace context. Companies should ensure that basic physiological needs, such as fair compensation, a safe work environment, and access to necessary resources, are met. Providing competitive salaries, appropriate benefits, and a physically safe workplace are vital in addressing these needs. Employees seek job security, stability, and protection from physical and emotional harm. Companies can meet these needs by providing clear employment contracts, offering opportunities for career growth and development, and fostering a supportive and inclusive work environment. [1] Generation Z employees, like others, have a need for social connections and a sense of belonging. Companies can create a supportive and collaborative culture that encourages teamwork, provides opportunities for social interaction, and promotes a sense of community within the organization. Employees desire recognition, respect, and opportunities for personal and professional growth. Companies can fulfill these needs by implementing performance feedback systems, acknowledging achievements, offering opportunities for advancement, and providing training and development programs. Generation Z employees often seek meaningful work, opportunities for creativity, and a sense of purpose in their careers. Companies can support self-actualization by aligning employees' work

with the company's mission, providing autonomy and decision-making responsibility, and offering challenging and fulfilling projects.



Figure 3. Happy workspace

Source: Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (2018)

A happy workspace refers to a work environment that promotes positive emotions, well-being, and satisfaction among employees. It is a place where employees feel valued, supported, and motivated, leading to increased productivity, engagement, and overall job satisfaction. [4] A happy workspace cultivates a culture of respect, collaboration, and positivity. Employees are treated with kindness, fairness, and appreciation, fostering a sense of belonging and camaraderie. Organizations that prioritize work-life balance create policies and practices that allow employees to maintain a healthy equilibrium between their professional and personal lives. This includes flexible work arrangements, time-off policies, and support for personal well-being. A happy workspace provides employees with a sense of purpose and fulfillment. Employees understand how their work contributes to the organization's goals and have opportunities to engage in tasks that align with their interests and strengths. Effective and supportive leaders play a crucial role in creating a happy workspace. They provide clear expectations, constructive feedback, and opportunities for growth and development. [2] They also show genuine care for their employees' well-being and create an atmosphere of trust and open communication. Recognizing and appreciating employees' efforts and achievements is essential for a happy workspace. Regular feedback, acknowledgement of accomplishments, and appropriate rewards and incentives demonstrate that employees' contributions are valued and recognized. Employees in a happy workspace have access to learning and development opportunities. This can include training programs, mentorship, and career advancement prospects. [5] Supporting employees' professional growth shows that the organization is invested in their long-term success. A comfortable and well-equipped physical workspace contributes to employee happiness. Providing ergonomic workspaces, natural lighting, collaborative spaces, and amenities such as relaxation areas or wellness programs can enhance employee satisfaction and well-being.

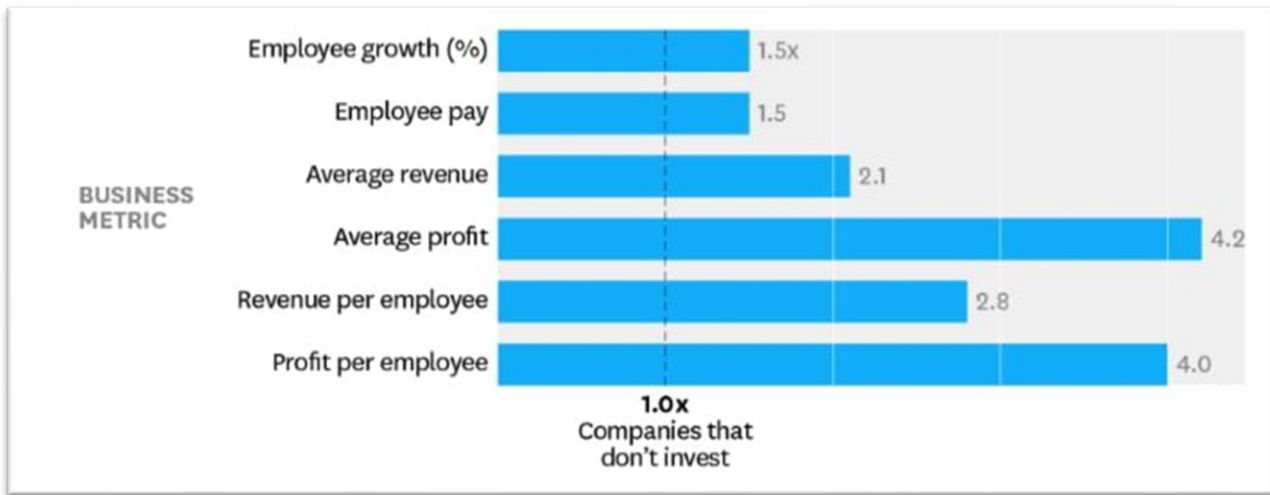


Figure 4. Companies that invest in employee experience outperform those that don't
Source: The employee experience advantage, by Jacob Morgan (2017)

When companies prioritize employee experience, it leads to higher levels of employee engagement. Engaged employees are more committed to their work, go the extra mile, and are motivated to contribute to the company's success. This heightened engagement translates into improved productivity and performance. A positive employee experience plays a crucial role in attracting top talent and retaining valuable employees. Companies that prioritize employee well-being, growth opportunities, and a supportive work environment are more likely to attract skilled candidates. Additionally, satisfied and engaged employees are less likely to leave the organization, reducing turnover and associated costs. [3] Happy employees create happy customers. When employees have a positive experience and feel valued, they are more likely to provide excellent customer service and go above and beyond to meet customer needs. This, in turn, leads to higher customer satisfaction, loyalty, and ultimately, increased profitability. Companies that invest in employee experience foster a culture of innovation and creativity. When employees feel supported, empowered, and encouraged to share their ideas and perspectives, they are more likely to contribute innovative solutions and drive continuous improvement within the organization. Prioritizing employee experience contributes to the development of a positive company culture. [6] A culture that values and supports its employees creates a sense of belonging, camaraderie, and shared purpose. This fosters teamwork, collaboration, and a supportive work environment, leading to increased employee morale and a stronger sense of loyalty to the organization. Companies that invest in employee experience develop a workforce that is more adaptable and resilient in the face of change and challenges. Employees who feel supported and empowered are more likely to embrace change, contribute to problem-solving, and navigate uncertainties with a positive mindset.

5. Recommendation

Generation Z employees often seek career development and advancement opportunities. If companies in Vietnam do not provide clear career paths, training programs, or opportunities for guidance from management, it can lead to dissatisfaction and a lack of motivation. Work-life balance is an important aspect for Generation Z. Long working hours, high job demands, and limited flexibility can impact their ability to maintain a healthy work-life balance, affecting overall happiness. Generation Z employees value meaningful work and a sense of purpose. If they feel disconnected from the company's mission or do not have opportunities to contribute their ideas and opinions, it can lead to a lack of engagement and reduced job satisfaction. Mental health and personal development are crucial issues for Generation Z. [7] If companies do not prioritize supporting employees' mental well-being or provide resources to reduce stress, it can have a negative impact on overall happiness and job satisfaction. To effectively attract and retain Generation Z employees, organizations must prioritize the creation of a positive and happy workplace environment. This rising generation values more than just a paycheck; they seek fulfillment, purpose, and a sense of well-being in their professional lives. First and foremost, instill a strong sense of purpose throughout the organization. Clearly communicate the company's mission and how each employee's work contributes to achieving it. Generation Z craves meaningful work that makes a tangible impact on society, so highlighting the organization's larger purpose will resonate with their values. Furthermore, prioritize work-life balance. Offer flexible work arrangements and support employees in managing their personal lives effectively. Encourage time off, vacations, and self-care to prevent burnout and promote overall well-being. Generation Z values harmony between their work and personal lives, and organizations that recognize and support this balance will be more attractive to them. Cultivate a collaborative and inclusive culture. Generation Z thrives in environments that foster teamwork, open communication, and diverse perspectives. Create opportunities for cross-functional projects and mentorship programs to encourage collaboration and knowledge sharing. By

embracing diversity and promoting inclusivity, organizations can create an environment where every employee feels valued and respected. Embrace technology and innovation. Generation Z is the first fully digital generation, and they appreciate organizations that leverage technology to drive efficiency and innovation. Provide access to cutting-edge tools and platforms that enhance productivity and offer opportunities for employees to contribute their ideas for process improvement and innovation. Support professional growth and development. Generation Z is eager to learn and grow in their careers. Offer training programs, mentorship opportunities, and clear pathways for advancement. Regularly provide feedback and create a culture that encourages continuous learning and improvement. Investing in their professional development will not only attract Generation Z employees but also contribute to their long-term engagement and loyalty. Lastly, celebrate achievements and foster a positive feedback culture. Recognize and reward employees' accomplishments and milestones. Establish a culture of regular feedback and appreciation, where managers and peers acknowledge and affirm each other's contributions. This fosters a sense of recognition and fulfillment, which aligns with Generation Z's desire for a positive work environment. Develop Capacities, and Inspire the Workforce In particular, for young employees, the need for employment goes beyond just job opportunities, career advancement, and salary and benefits. They also require inspiration, joy, and care to maintain a healthy work-life balance, especially during significant life events such as marriage, parenthood, or the loss of loved ones. This implies that companies must demonstrate a clear commitment to investing in their employees and building values associated with the work environment. Furthermore, an unreliable work environment can have various detrimental factors. For example, if a company fails to fulfill promises, commitments, or the agreed-upon terms of a transaction, employees may feel betrayed and lose trust. Additionally, if a company does not adhere to rules and regulations regarding employee treatment, such as labor laws, timely salary payments, or ensuring employee rights, it can lead to anxiety and stress among the workforce. When employees cannot trust the leadership and the company's system, they lack confidence and do not know how they will be treated in difficult situations or when facing challenges. A work environment that does not encourage relaxation can also contribute to stress. When there is no space or time for employees to relax and recharge, the work environment becomes tense and suffocating. To reduce stress in the workplace, companies can implement measures such as creating comfortable and convenient working conditions, ensuring rest and relaxation time for employees, providing opportunities and space for employees to showcase creativity and innovation in their work, and ensuring a balance between work and personal life for employees.

6. Conclusion

Establishing a happy workplace environment is crucial for attracting and retaining Generation Z employees. This rising generation seeks more than just material benefits; they desire fulfillment, purpose, and a balanced work-life integration. To meet their expectations, organizations must invest in their employees, create a positive work culture, and prioritize their well-being. By fostering a sense of purpose, offering work-life balance initiatives, promoting collaboration and inclusivity, embracing technology and innovation, supporting professional growth and development, celebrating achievements, and creating a positive feedback culture, organizations can create a workplace environment that appeals to Generation Z. Furthermore, companies must be reliable and trustworthy, fulfilling their promises and commitments to build employee trust. They should also provide opportunities for relaxation and rejuvenation, ensuring a stress-free work environment.

Conflict of interests

None

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