

# Understanding and Engaging Gen Z in the Workplace: Insights from a Panel Discussion

By Hanif Hemani, President, Hemani Management Group Inc.

Generation Z -this term describes those born between the mid-to-late 1990s and early 2010. Gen Z are reshaping the workforce with fresh expectations and values. For industries like tourism and hospitality, understanding what motivates this generation is essential for attracting, retaining, and engaging young talent.

This resource outlines key insights into what Gen Z looks for in an employer and provides actionable strategies to help businesses align with their expectations and create a thriving, multigenerational workplace.

## Top Three Factors Gen Z Considers When Choosing an Employer

According to a Deloitte survey, Gen Z values:

- Work-life balance (47%)
- Opportunities for career advancement (44%)
- A positive workplace culture (42%)

In Canada, similar patterns are evident, with work-life balance and career growth being key priorities.

Other important factors include:

- Work location, with convenience and accessibility playing a role in decision-making.

## How Employers Can Foster Loyalty and Long-Term Engagement

LinkedIn reports that loyalty among Gen Z employees increases when employers provide:

- Clear career progression paths.
- Continuous learning opportunities.
- A sense of purpose.

In Saskatchewan, mentorship programs and professional development initiatives have shown promise in retaining young talent.

Additionally, fostering an environment that encourages:

- Creativity and innovation
- Trust and autonomy

These can go a long way in deepening employee commitment.

## Supporting a Healthy Work-Life Balance

The World Economic Forum identifies the following as critical supports for work-life balance:

- Flexible working hours.
- Remote work options.
- Mental health support.

Additionally, implementing wellness programs and encouraging the use of sick time to prevent burnout and support overall well-being is highly recommended.

## Strategies to Attract Gen Z Talent to the Tourism and Hospitality Industry

Effective approaches include:

- Emphasizing career development opportunities.
- Highlighting the dynamic and diverse nature of the industry.
- Utilizing social media and online platforms to connect with potential candidates.

Other effective approaches include:

- Being transparent about the company's culture, values, compensation, benefits, and advancement opportunities are crucial selling points for Gen Z.
- Encouraging referrals from current or former employees as trusted endorsements is also valuable.

### Declining Gen Z Participation in the Hospitality Sector

A Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council survey revealed:

- 52% of Gen Z workers cited low wages, long hours, and lack of career growth as reasons for leaving the industry.

These factors represent a disconnect between Gen Z expectations and current industry offerings. Improving conditions in these areas is key to retaining younger workers and maintaining a strong workforce pipeline.

### Beyond Flexibility: Other Important Workplace Values for Gen Z

While flexibility and work-life balance are priorities, Gen Z also highly values:

- Diversity and inclusion
- Corporate social responsibility
- Ethical business practices

A study by McKinsey found that 70% of Gen Z considers a company's commitment to social and environmental issues when choosing an employer.

Gen Z want to align themselves with employers who demonstrate a commitment to Reconciliation and community engagement. These values influence not only where they work, but how long they stay.

### Advice for Employers in the Tourism and Hospitality Industry

To build stronger relationships with Gen Z employees, organizations should:

- Foster an inclusive and supportive workplace.
- Offer competitive pay and professional development.
- Engage employees through regular feedback and recognition.

Above all, it's essential to be transparent, genuine, and open to feedback. Instead of assuming what matters to Gen Z, ask them. Incorporate their perspectives into workplace practices and make sure your culture reflects your stated values.



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

#### Hanif Hemani

Is the President of Hemani Management Group Inc., a management consulting firm, specializing in Performance Management, Human Capital Planning, Sales Management and Engagement. He has over 25 years of sales, marketing, and management expertise in diverse industries. He has held positions in Sales & Marketing Management, Learning & Development Management, Regional Marketing Management, and National Brand Management to name a few.

Under his leadership, Express Employment Professionals is currently top ranked on Google, and also #1 ranked on both YELP and ThreeBestRated.ca. He is on the board of Directors for Discover Saskatoon, Autism Services Saskatoon, and the Saskatoon Club.

When he isn't networking or involved in assisting community and charitable organizations, you can likely find him at the golf course or out and about discussing politics, business and sports, usually over a nice Cabernet.