

MEET THEM HALFWAY, PART I

STRIKING A NEW BALANCE TO ATTRACT GEN Y IT TALENT



The Boomers are out; Gen Y is in.

And thank goodness, right? Just when your need for IT talent is on the rise, here comes a new slew of tech-savvy workers to save the day. But while it's tempting to think you can simply substitute one generation with another, things are not quite that simple. Diverse, demanding and socially aware, IT millennials are creating a major paradigm shift in the workplace.

So how do you attract the best and brightest, without turning your IT organization upside down? You have to strike a new balance. Prepare for the changes to come by learning more about Gen Y. Stay flexible, and meet millennials halfway by accommodating their needs as much as possible.

To help, here are some great strategies for recruiting the best IT talent the next generation has to offer:

Take a viral approach.

Develop Flash videos and other materials for your organization (think interactive, entertaining and hip) that young people

will want to send on to their friends. For example, Facebook allows you to develop apps that sit on other people's profile pages. They, in turn, can invite friends to include the app on their own pages. A viral approach can enhance awareness, properly position your IT organization with millennials, and increase job referrals.

Leverage industry blogs, forums and social network groups.

The best Gen Y professionals stay on top of their game by constantly seeking out new information. Become a trusted source they turn to. Write and post articles that are ahead of the curve in your area of technical expertise, and you'll attract the IT performers you need.

Put your best foot forward.

Like it or not, millennials judge organizations by their technology acumen and arsenal. In many cases, millennials even research your IT portfolio before agreeing to sit down for a job interview. So if you haven't already, develop or update your IT profile. Outline your

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current platforms, software and hardware; create a review of your company's cutting-edge projects (current or slated); show how your organization incorporates Web 2.0 tools.

Beyond your technology profile, you should also be prepared to demonstrate your company's CSR (corporate social responsibility). Gen Yers place a high importance on an employer's ethical standing – show them how your ethics and beliefs match their own.

Use your current Gen Yers.

Millennials are particularly peer-influenced. As a result, your Gen Y employees may be your best choice for connecting with Gen Y candidates – especially on college campuses. As already devoted members of your IT staff, your current millennial employees can tell potential candidates what life will be like “in the trenches,” and serve as “IT ambassadors” to address individual questions and concerns.

Market your company to parents, too.

Many millennials were raised by hyper-involved parents. Now, these “helicopter” moms and dads hover over every life decision their children make – including career moves. To win over Gen Y, you must win over their parents as well. Consider offering family site tours, hosting a Parent's Day, or including information on your website that parents would find helpful (plain-language overview of your business, review of benefits and extras that emphasize company support, training and/or mentoring programs, etc.).

Consider a virtual job fair.

Some companies have used Second Life to recruit talented millennials for IT slots. By creating avatars to conduct virtual job seminars, these employers have attracted a subset of talent not easily recruited by traditional methods. While the start-up cost is moderate, your organization may want to consider a virtual job fair if you have the internal talent to handle scripting, avatar development and recruiting video creation.

Enlist the help of specialists.

Recruiting millennial IT talent is a daunting task, under the best of circumstances. To help save time and money, while minimizing your frustration, consider working with an IT staffing service.

Because they specialize in your field, and maintain a database of highly qualified candidates, an IT staffing service can quickly deliver the tech-savvy candidates you need. Most offer excellent guarantees to ensure your satisfaction with candidates you hire directly or use for contract positions.

Look for our next issue, where you'll uncover ways to retain Gen Y!

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GETTING TO KNOW GEN Y

- As the largest post-boomer generation, they make up over 20% of today's population.
- They are impatient, skeptical, image-driven and still very young.
- They are highly adaptable, tech-savvy, efficient multi-taskers and tolerant of diversity.
- They value corporate social responsibility.
- They intuitively seek out work they are passionate about.
- They want to start at the top or quickly climb the corporate ladder.
- Their parents are generally quite involved in their lives.
- They constantly desire new technology.
- They are confident, connected and career-minded.
- They question long-established business processes - the “old way of doing things.”