

MEET THEM HALFWAY, PART II

STRIKING A NEW BALANCE TO ATTRACT GEN Y IT TALENT



In Part I of our “Meet Them Halfway” series, we shared seven ways to attract the best and brightest Gen Y talent. But recruiting is only half the battle. Now you have to make sure that they don’t take your training and jump ship to a competitor. And just like in recruiting Gen Y, methods to help you retain Gen Y are also a little unconventional. So how do you keep the “cream of the crop” working for you?

The following are some tactical ways to retain your top Gen Y talent:

Give them what they want.

Millennials, especially tech-savvy ones, have a strong desire to learn new skills and use bleeding-edge technology. So meet them halfway. Conduct periodic focus groups to keep tabs on your millennials’ technology needs. Then whenever fiscally appropriate, allow your Gen Y employees to spread their wings by testing and integrating new tools or languages as soon as they are available.

If you have trouble getting budgetary approval for the expensive technology your

Gen Yers demand, keep track of whether a lack of such technology is prompting talented people to leave—or preventing you from recruiting them in the first place. Armed with this information, you can help justify IT spending requests by comparing job turnover and recruiting costs to the price of new technologies.

Embrace Web 2.0 technologies.

Instead of making it against company policy for your employees to visit “non-work related sites”, embrace Web 2.0 as a tool that can help you keep the best on board.

According to You 2.0, “To retain an employee it is important to provide him the right tools to be productive, and that includes providing the ability to quickly establish the social connections that he needs to be successful in a job. We all know that work is really done through informal networks and with the tacit or unstructured type of work these days, structured tools and systems that exist in organizations today do not help.”

So how do you keep the “cream of the crop” working for you?

Here are a few ideas on how to embrace Web 2.0 for your retention efforts:

1. Encourage your employees to create his/her own profile on social networking platforms.
2. Encourage employees to connect with past classmates, colleagues, professors, etc.
3. Provide your employees with the ability to search and join online groups.
4. Allow your employees to post personal blogs, wikis, and the ability to tag employee-generated content.

Provide mentors and career counseling services.

While a 20-something millennial may have more up-to-date programming skills than some of your veteran employees, he's still just getting started in his career. Give him the help he needs by providing training, coaching and counseling. Help make your Gen Y employees fulfilled and successful, and you'll keep them working for you.

Offer flexible work schedules.

Gen Y IT workers want to control their own schedules and work from home. If you don't provide this generation with these core benefits, one of your competitors surely will.

Understand their needs.

Instead of trying to change Gen Y, bend to their needs. If necessary, educate your leaders about what makes Gen Y tick. Explain their need for job control, desire for more flexibility, craving for reassurance and hunger for new technology. The more willing your staff is to accommodate millennials' needs, the higher your rate of retention will be.

Why do all this?

Following the above advice will help you:

- Retain talent and knowledge
- Lower management costs
- Attract the next generation of top IT talent
- Foster innovation
- Lower your hiring and labor costs, long-term"

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