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By Michael Castro

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Properly Managing Generation Z

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I. Generation-Z

Generation Z or Gen Z for short, were individuals born between 1997 and 2012. The ages range from 12 years old to 27 years of age (Investopedia, 2024). The most ethnically diverse generation of all Americans is Generation Z population. According to a study conducted by the Pew Research Center, the results indicated that 52% were white non-Hispanic, 25% were Hispanic, 14% were black, and 5% were Asian. The remaining 5% consists of a different race or two or more races (Warren, 2024).

Gen Z is considered more socially involved with issues regarding healthcare, mental health, higher education, economic security, civic engagement, race equity, and the environment as per the Annie E. Casey Foundation (2024). This generation makes their education a priority with more than 57% of those between the ages of 18-21 years old enrolled in a two- or four-year college. This generation is also more likely to complete high school compared to other past generations (Warren, 2024).

After reviewing the 21st Annual Transamerica Retirement Survey, the results displayed how Gen Z viewed their financial and retirement status compared to other generations; (Millennials, Gen X, and Baby Boomers). After the pandemic, Gen Z employees stated that their employment status had been affected negatively. Roughly 59%, indicated that a reduction in work hours took place. Compared to 51% of the Millennials/Generation Y population, 39% of the Generation X population, and 30% of the Baby Boomers population (Warren, 2024).

Different data has shown that Generation Z does not prioritize saving for retirement compared to the other generations, Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millennials respectively in that order. Baby Boomers are closer to retirement compared to the other groups. About 33% of Gen Zers indicated that saving for retirement was a financial priority (Warren, 2024). A study conducted by Transamerica survey; the results indicated that Gen Z barely has any financial security. According to Warren (2024), a survey stated that 50% of Gen Z workers were just getting by to cover regular living expenses (shelter, food, transportation, and healthcare). About 35% stated that they were trying to finish paying their student loans.

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II. Generation-Z and Technology

A study conducted by the Consumer Technology Association found that 86% of the Generation Z population agreed that technology was an essential component of their daily lives. This was significantly higher compared to older generations (Consumer Technology Association, 2024). Jessica Booth, the Director of Market Research states that Gen Z is an example that the future of technology will be mobile. The smartphone ecosystem is going to be positioned for growth. A survey conducted by the Consumer Technology Association indicated that Gen Z possesses an average of 13 technological devices out of 32 products surveyed within their households. They also reported using about 6 different technological products daily and spending roughly 12 hours using them. Gen Z also prefers to use a smartphone as a source for short forms of entertainment, such as social media, blogs, and YouTube (Consumer Technology Association, 2024).

a) Generation-Z in the Workplace

Every few years, a new generation enters the workforce. These generations provide their own set of qualities, values, and traits. Today, a large percentage of the workforce is occupied by the Baby Boomers (18.6%), Generation X (34.8%), Millennials/Generation Y (38.6), and finally Generation Z (6.1%) by Purdue Global, 2020. Generation Z is the most diverse in history thus far. They are going to be responsible for shaping the workplace of the future (Sathesh Kumar, 2023).

b) Change in the Workplace

Employers will have to know how to effectively manage such a population (e.g. Generation Z). There are different values that this generation possesses compared to past generations. To recruit and retain this population, organizations will have to do the following as per Jeffery-Morrison (2023); promote diversity and inclusion in the workplace. The organization must commit to diversity and inclusion, valuing all of their

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employee's experiences and perspectives. Companies can also offer flexible work schedules. Generation Z will value flexibility compared to other generations. Offering hybrid work schedules or flextime options can be attractive to this population (Jeffery-Morrison, 2023).

Creating a culture of authenticity is another organizational approach to keep in mind. Allowing your employees to be themselves is important. A work environment that allows employees to be themselves and share ideas is appreciated (Castro, 2024). Lastly, paying attention to the organizational values is a top priority. Making sure that the organizational values are clear and put to practice is vital. This population is likely to select an organization whose values match theirs. If organizations follow these steps, they can attract and retain Generation Z talent (Jeffery-Morrison, 2023). Promoting mental health awareness, improved communication, equal pay, environmental and social responsibility accountability, and encouraging career growth is also highly valued by this generation (Sathesh Kumar, 2023).

c) Leadership Method for Generation Z

The first leadership style that best suits Generation Z is Transformational Leadership. This method allows the leader to inspire the team members through a shared vision, encouraging an environment of personal growth, and also challenging the subordinates to push past their areas of comfort (Dwidienawati & Gandasari, 2018). Transformational leadership fosters a culture of employee independence and ownership. This leadership technique allows the leader to demonstrate creativity and innovation and the leader becomes a role model for their subordinates. They inspire the employees to follow in their footsteps. Generation Z seeks inspiration and forward-thinking leaders who encourage enthusiasm and challenge them to exceed their potential, which is what this leadership style supports. This leadership technique was founded by James V. Downton in 1973 (Bass, 1999).

Servant Leadership is the second leadership style that can obtain the best results with Generation Z. In this type of leadership role, the leader is serving his subordinates. The leader's primary focus is the followers, and the organizational concerns are considered marginal (Waddell, 2003). The leader focuses on the ability of the individuals to succeed and then focuses on the success of the mission (Gandolfi & Stone 2018; Van Dierendonck, 2011). Servant leadership primarily focuses on the growth and well-being of the employees, Generation Z is a population that highly desires personal and professional growth. This technique also focuses on the person compared to the task, something that Generation Z values. The employees are viewed as individuals not just subordinates (Castro, 2023).

III. Conclusion

When it comes to managing employees, it is challenging at times. It is the responsibility of the superior to learn how to adapt and manage each employee. This can result in the utilization of multiple management techniques as well as creating change in the workplace. Generation Z is the new generation in the workplace, that has different views on their employers and society. They are the most diverse generation to date and organizations as well as leaders have to understand that. To keep these employees satisfied and fulfill the vision of the organization, leadership has to accept and understand the values that this generation possesses. As a result, the leadership team within the organization will enhance their ability to make the workplace more appealing for the Generation Z population and other employees as well.

Michael Castro is a full-time Miami-Dade College (North Campus) faculty member. He is also an Adjunct at Johnson and Wales University, Herzing University, MIU City University Miami, and Florida National University. He is the Vice-President of Mental Health of Miami, Inc. Mental Health of Miami, Inc. was established in 2015, by Yahaira Castro and Michael Castro. Michael obtained his Doctorate in Business Administration (Organizational Leadership & Management) from Argosy University in 2015. He also holds a Master's in Business Administration (Organizational Leadership & Entrepreneurship) and a Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration from Carlos Albizu University. Michael is a Floridian, born and raised in Miami, Florida.

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