Generation Z: we demand maximum freedom and leisure!

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As of 2020 the last members of the baby boomer generation will bid farewell to working life. High time for recruiters and human resources departments to come to grips with the new working generations. Generation Y, already the subject of much discussion, is becoming more and more prominent on the job market. Generation Z, however, calls for another complete rethink.

The job should become a vocation.

Generation Y is not known as “Generation Why?” for nothing. It constantly asks after the meaning of its work so as to remain motivated – the job should become a vocation.

The 20- to mid-30-year-olds now stand in the middle of working life, having already gathered some years of experience. They demand flexible working hours, but in exchange are willing to do overtime if the work is in line with their strengths, if they can see the sense of it and, most importantly, if they enjoy performing it. They live by the concept of “work-life blending”, seeing no problem in blending working and leisure time – totally unlike the members of Generation Z …

Generation Z have minds of their own.

Anyone under the age of 20 belongs to Generation Z. Today, most of them are still stuck in the midst of education and training. And in the near future when large numbers of them storm onto the job market, one thing is clear: they too have high demands, although these differ greatly from those of Generation Y.

Members of Generation Z focus on values like health and quality of life. They follow the motto “YOLO – you only live once” and strive for freedom and leisure in equal measure. A blending of work and private life is almost out of the question for this generation. Instead they demand regulated working hours with clearly defined starting and finishing times. These new candidates for work have grown up in a world of internet, smartphones and tablets, are constantly online, have a “mobile” lifestyle and can be reached around the clock. It is precisely for this reason that they put such emphasis on a strict line between work and leisure. As digital natives of the 2nd generation they are exceptionally quick-witted and capable of multitasking, but also find it difficult to concentrate for long periods of time and to demonstrate long-term staying power.

Y + Z: earnings not the first priority!

What is really surprising is that the level of earnings does not play the most important role for either generation. Both are willing to forego higher earnings in favour of a higher level of satisfaction. For the “Whys” the meaningfulness of their activities, self-determination and enjoyment of work are of greater significance, while members of Generation Z take the utmost care to ensure that their job leaves sufficient time for hobbies, family and friends.

Future for Human Resources?

The extent to which these characteristics can really be applied to the generations is questionable, as each human being is different despite belonging to the same age group and having the same developmental background. However, the trends certainly apply:

Generation Y wishes to work autonomously and expects the company to offer them trust, creative space and more personal responsibility; they see work as an integral part of life and are therefore open to flexible time models which allow them to work in the evenings or at weekends, leaving them more free time during the week. For Generation Z work and life are strictly separate. To meet their requirements, clear agreements are needed, guaranteeing a punctual finishing time. In future, customised working models will pose the greatest challenge to companies and recruiters in their “struggle for the best brains”, as this, at least, is clear: regardless of whether they belong to Generation Y or Z, young people have high expectations together with the self-confidence to plead their case and claim them; at the same time, for companies they represent the future and precisely

that spirit of innovation which guarantees long-term competitiveness.

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