

Beware the two-year itch with Gen Y staff: Survey

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Over half of employees who have been in their current position for two years are thinking about moving, or have already started looking for another job, a new survey from recruitment group OfficeTeam has revealed.

The survey argues the effect of a workplace filled with Generation Y employees is that workers are more likely to search for new work after two years, chasing career development opportunities and higher pay.

About 56% of employees who have been in the current job for less than two years are thinking of leaving, or have already started looking for new work, while 53% of those say they are moving for higher pay, a better workplace culture and more responsibility.

The survey confirmed it is the newest employees who are feeling the most eager to move on, with only 12% of workers who have been in their current job for over two years thinking about moving.

Those workers moving on are confident of success, with 22% of employers expecting to hire administration professionals in the next six months. Additionally, 39% of employers stated they will need more staff in the future.

Sophie McDonald, co-founder of recruitment firm Skye Recruitment, says Generation Y workers often feel restless after joining a new firm and take some time to settle in. But after awhile, they feel pushed to move on if they are not being challenged or don't have enough to do.

"I think an important hazard with Generation Y is that you're taking on people who very often don't know what they want to do and are trying different hats on. We're experienced with this, we often take people straight out of university without much work experience."

McDonald says it is crucial for employers with Generation Y workers to communicate with them regularly about what they want from their role.

"Most people would think that Gen Y would be most motivated by money, or a commission, but actually that's not the case. The most common themes we see are that Gen Y wants to make a difference, do a good job, and learn more about their particular role. Financial rewards were more important to my generation than Gen Y."

As a result, McDonald says it is important employers offer a good work-life balance, advancement opportunities and regular consultations with Gen Y workers to keep them challenged and motivated.

This will only become more crucial as the skills shortage becomes worse over the next year, she says, so businesses need to ensure they are communicating with Gen Y staff to discuss career prospects and their overall place within the company.

"I think the most important thing is communication, especially throughout all stages of the employment process. You can't cover every single point everyone wants, but if you work closely with your team, you will have a situation where they feel comfortable talking to you about this stuff. If you aren't available, then they are more likely to wander and aren't happy."

"We try to foster a very open workplace and have an approachable manner. The way we do that is by having regular reviews for all staff, and we talk with them about what they're looking for."

Stephen Langhammer, senior manager at OfficeTeam, said in a statement that as Generation Y

becomes more used to the workforce, long-term employment seems longer than it actually is and younger personalities are keener to keep moving.

"In today's dynamic Gen Y workplace, two years in one position may as well be an eternity. Therefore, employers should be on the lookout for valuable staff seeking out new challenges, especially given the current upswing in the economy, where they are in a prime position to move."

"From the statistics, we can see that it's the young guns who are feeling restless. This is often because they have hit a ceiling of growth and are not receiving the support they need to go to the next level."

Langhammer said that as employees become impatient with "tough times", businesses are going to find it even harder to keep on to good talent.

"Which is why employers need to ensure that they are meeting their employee's needs, challenging them and helping them get to where they want to be."

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