

November 2010

Seasonal / Temporary Employees: How to Make Them Part of the Team

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Congratulations!

Congratulations to **Seema Iyer**! She won our draw for an iPod Nano 6 at the 2010 Top Employer Summit.

GAC Results

Some highlights from this month's GAC survey on Holiday Shopping:

On average, 73% of our GAC have curbed their discretionary spending.

On average, 64% of our GAC have a holiday budget of over \$500

60% of Gen Ys plan on doing at least half of their holiday shopping online.

Comments:

"My family has curbed discretionary spending significantly this year, in order to increase our savings."
(Gen Y)

"Trying to focus my holiday spending on function over fashion, like buying from a local artist, or purchasing the gift of life from World Wildlife Foundation - something that somehow gives back."
(Gen X)

"Today most people purchase what they want and do not wait for special occasions to receive these items as gifts."
(Boomer)

Seasonal / Temporary Employees: How to Make Them Part of the Team

As we approach the holiday season, we thought it would be interesting to discuss how organizations should engage seasonal workers. For many retailers, the holiday season is the make or break quarter for the year. 'Seasonal' is a term we use to refer to employees in particular sectors (agriculture, retail), but every company hires employees on a temporary basis, whether from a temp agency or as a contractor. So our discussion below applies to all types of temporary, seasonal employees you may have in your organization.

Recruiting

Given our national unemployment rate of 7.9% (important to note that the western provinces Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta are below 6%), many organizations believe that they can select from a large pool of potential employees. However, the statistics may give recruiters and leaders the wrong impression of the labour market. Just because Canada has high unemployment rates, it doesn't mean that the people available for employment are able to demonstrate the desired level of skills and behaviours needed to succeed in your environment. Employees must be able to represent your brand well, for example in customer service and sales. That means that your recruiting approach and process must be as robust as when unemployment is lower. Firstly, we suggest that employers approach the employment relationship, even in times when there is an apparent ample supply of labour, as a partnership, not as a one-way street where employees are lucky to have a job at your organization, including a temporary one. While interviewing candidates, recruiters still need to understand what makes this temporary job a 'win' for the employee; perhaps it is a flexible schedule, perhaps it is a resume boost, perhaps it is a new field of work into which the candidate is looking to enter, or, perhaps this is secondary job to help supplement income. The attitude toward and the process of recruiting a temporary employee should be no different than hiring a permanent one.

This counsel is particularly important when recruiting Gen Xers and Gen Ys who believe that they should be treated fairly, even if they are only temporary employees. The cost of not taking the right approach could be rapid turnover, as employees jump ship to another temporary assignment. Even if they stay with your organization, they may have lower levels of productivity, as these employees might do their jobs, but do not give you any discretionary effort.

Congratulations!

Congratulations to **Olivier Dressler**! He won our monthly GAC Survey draw for a \$50 gift certificate!

Visit our [Facebook](#) page to view full survey results.

[Find us on Facebook](#) 

Join Our GAC

Click [here](#) to learn about our **Generational Advisory Council**. GAC members are entered into a monthly draw to win a \$50 gift card!

E-Learning

n-gen's e-learning course, **Four Generations**, is now available for individual purchase.

Click [here](#) to visit the n-gen store.

What are we up to?

Check out n-gen's [online calendar](#) for upcoming speaking engagements, webinars, and other events.

Engaging Seasonal / Temporary Employees

After discovering, during the interview process, what makes seasonal / temporary employment a win for the employee, organizations need to make sure the win becomes a reality. More importantly, leaders and managers must engage employees during their entire employment period. It doesn't matter if the employment period is for a month, a quarter or for a year, the employee should be treated as a full member of the team. Seasonal/temporary employees should have access to most, if not all, of the perks that full-time employees do. For example, they should be able to access discounts (in store or with business partners like fitness centres), staff lunches and parties, performance rewards, incentives etc. Temporary employees should have access to as many of your total rewards as is legally possible. It's important that seasonal/temporary employees not feel like second-class citizens. Full-time colleagues should be encouraged to collaborate with temporary ones as effectively as with other full-time employees. Temporary employees should receive all corporate communications, should attend team meetings, and should be aware of departmental goals and objectives.

By treating temporary employees as part of the team, you will achieve two goals. First, you will create a greater emotional connection with employees. The result will be that they will be more likely to speak highly of your organization, to represent your brand well and to encourage friends and family to buy your products and services. They are also more likely to accept accountability in their role. Rather than having indifferent attitude towards their work as 'just a job', they are more likely to want to succeed in their tasks and accept greater accountability. Secondly, by treating employees as part of the team, they become a potential pool of candidates for permanent employment. Many organizations assess whether or not a seasonal/temporary employee would be a great full-time hire, and thus try harder to retain employees who show promise.

For all generations of employees, but in particular for Gen Xers and Gen Ys, seasonal/temporary employment is a test drive. So the temporary assignment is a trial period for both parties; employees are evaluating your organization just as much as you are evaluating them. Out of expediency, it may be the case that temporary employees will accept full-time, permanent employment with you, even though they were not thrilled by the idea and/or are not fully engaged with your organization. However, you can be guaranteed that while they are working as a full-time employee with you that they will either continue to look for other opportunities or will already have determined how many months they need to stay in order to make the position legitimate.

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Final Thoughts

Once upon a time, people who worked seasonally or temporarily in your organization may have been perceived negatively. For managers and colleagues, employees who were not full-time were often viewed as 'lesser than'. Perhaps there was an assumption that their performance was poor and that's why they could not obtain full-time employment. In today's work environment, there are many legitimate business reasons for why organizations offer seasonal or temporary employment, and why employees choose this type of employment relationship, regardless of the unemployment rate. What is most important for organizations to recognize is that hiring any employee is a cost, so it is imperative to ensure you get a return on your investment. By treating seasonal/temporary employees like full-time employees your organization will have more engaged employees and a more collaborative team environment. Moreover, from a generational perspective, your Gen X and Gen Y employees view themselves as equal partners in the employment relationship, regardless of employment status, so they expect a win-win outcome.



n-gen's 5 new training categories:

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Leadership
Gen Y
Team Building
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