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ARLYN RECRUITING

Quarterly Trends and Updates

The New Normal: Changing Workforce Expectations

This topic has been making its rounds, hasn't it? "**Gen Z, millennials ditch their jobs**" or "**Employees Are Quitting Instead of Giving Up Working From Home**" (or our personal favourite: "**The Great Resignation**"). These headlines are a tell-tale sign of the inevitable shift in what was once simply "future workplace trends," now an accelerated reality (in-part, thanks to the pandemic) for real-time current working trends. We believe that there is a lot to be said after all that's happened this past while, and with the introduction of Gen Z into the workplace, increased interest in working from home, shortage of qualified candidates, and increased number entering early retirement, it's an interesting time, one that will require much forethought and planning as we move back to the office necessitates.

Attracting Generation Z

Gen Z, also known as "zoomers" are commonly defined as those born in the years from 1997 – 2012. A hot topic amongst HR professionals at the moment is hiring geared towards this demographic. We're currently in an interesting position at the moment where you have senior members of the team looking at early retirement and Gen Z slowly, but surely, entering the workforce.

The hiring game may be the same, but the candidates are getting more and more selective. With so many options, and more organizations coming into our Canadian cities to set up shop, competition is fierce and the pool for candidates is not deep, especially in legal.

Prior to the pandemic, we had heard much talk about firms focusing more on diversity and inclusion within their organizations. A myriad of incidents last year sent an enormous wave throughout the world and opened up dialogue about how companies can take steps to address topics surrounding diversity and inclusion. A survey conducted by Glassdoor found that $\frac{3}{4}$ of all job seekers rank diversity as a top criterion and $\frac{1}{3}$ do not feel engaged if they don't work within a diverse environment. The Washington Post found that diversity and inclusion in the workplace isn't a preference for Gen Z and millennials, but **rather is a requirement when it comes to evaluating prospective employers**. As HR Leaders, it is our job to ensure that our organizations are "walking the talk" so-to-speak when it comes to ensuring a safe and inclusive environment for new, existing and prospective employees. Reflection on diversity means "everything for HR," as it is our key role in management and leadership that creates and empowers a diverse culture.



The Work-From-Home (WFH) Dilemma

One of the biggest topics of debate within the community is the practice of WFH. A large concern held by critics of WFH has been that there would be a significant decline in productivity and collaboration. These fears were determined to be largely unfounded. In one such study by Stanford University, which established that WFH actually **increased productivity by over 2%**. The pandemic, like a huge social experiment, has at a minimum given organizations a chance to rethink what flexibility can mean for your workplace and how WFH may benefit an organization.

Personally, we are fans of the **Hybrid Approach**, where employees are allotted 2 days each week to work from home and the remainder in-office. As an employer it may be unsettling to implement this type of almost rogue-esque scheduling, but whilst it's a difficult call, there are many recorded benefits to allowing this adaptation:

- Expanding your organization's reach into the candidate marketplace
- Reduced organizational and saved overhead cost due to the decrease in amount of office space
- Opportunity to expand your talent pool. (Your hiring managers can spend more time hiring based on talent versus location)
- Employee acquisition, as we predict many will be more willing to make a move to a firm that offers flexibility
- Employee retention, as these seem to be a large demand by workers for WFH opportunities
- Improved employee engagement, as many workers enjoy the convenience of WFH and find they are more efficient with fewer workplace distractions

Of course, not every worker or employer has the same preference, but that's the beauty about having these flexible working options. It caters to both types of employees and who knows? Giving them those optional 2 days may just make them feel more inclined to spend their time in-office vs at home.

With this shift in approach comes more room and flexibility for work life balance, which studies have shown to increase productivity. More emphasis on impact vs hours worked could do wonders for non-billable employees and provide your organization with more of an edge when it comes to hiring and retaining talent.

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Investing In Technology

Say goodbye to paper files!— Alright, not really, but ensuring your firm is up-to-date and streamlined where it can be by using the latest technologies will do wonders not only for attracting Gen Z, but also to help current employees stay productive, connected and improve overall end-to-end customer value and experience. Just recently, E-Discovery's provider DISCO, **made its debut onto the NYSE**, a testament to the growing demand and changes in adapting new and emerging legal technologies.

A recent study conducted by Thomson Reuters found that the number of attorneys who want to work remotely at least one to two days a week has doubled since the start of the pandemic, going from **37% to 76%**. With more and more employees looking to go hybrid or remote, comes the issue of documentation, security, and issues related to accessing information. Moreover, when handling information remotely, certain problems may arise including; having multiple platforms, and increasing chances of errors and the risk of loss of information. Case Management Softwares such as Clio are a great, cost friendly solution to helping you increase productivity and upgrade your business' efficiency (this isn't an ad, we swear!) If employees would like help with organization, applications such as Basecamp are a great way for everyone to stay on track and monitor the work that needs to be done. Studies have shown that by 2025, legal departments will "increase their spend on legal technology software's, threefold," as implementation and appropriate use of these software's will inevitably improve ROI. With millennials slowly coming into Partner roles and Gen Z-er's getting hired as associates, there will be a noticeable shift in the way things work, and if your firm is prepped for success, you will attract new talent to your organization and a greater interest in your firm.

There are 3 types of businesses that have existed throughout this pandemic: Those that took advantage of it, those who saw it as an opportunity for growth, and those who prayed and hoped the boat wouldn't sink.

A survey conducted by Indeed found that only 6% of managers think that the way in which we work since the onset of the pandemic remains unchanged. This is a very exciting time and a chance for your organization to rethink its brand, image and how it will fare moving forward. In order to stay competitive amongst prospective candidates, employers need to align their plans moving forward with the expectations of the new workforce.

The great news is that a part of the work has already been done for us during this pandemic. By focusing on organization wide change, focusing on our employee's well-being, creating inclusive workplaces and rethinking where and how we work, you are setting your organization up for success. We've always been a big believer in taking a forward-thinking approach. Like all new things, setbacks and challenges are bound to occur but it is precisely those challenges and your involvement that will help you and your organization stay competitive, relevant, and successful.

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