Future Ready Voices: Gen Z

"Gen Z Are Looking for Progressive Workplaces"

By Sasha Parrish

As Generation Z continues to enter the workforce, their expectations are not just shaping company culture—they are redefining it. Unlike previous generations, Gen Z is placing a strong emphasis on inclusion, flexibility, and overall well-being when evaluating potential employers. For organizations hoping to attract and retain top talent, adapting to these expectations is no longer optional.

Recent findings from a Globe Newswire report highlight just how influential these priorities have become. According to a survey of more than 2,000 students and graduates, one in three respondents has reconsidered their career path or location due to anti-DEI pushback and shifting political climates. Additionally, 84% said that visible LGBTQ+ representation in senior leadership would influence their decision to accept a job. Nearly half of respondents (48%) identified hybrid work as a baseline expectation rather than a perk. These insights point to a clear trend: Gen Z is seeking workplaces that not only promote inclusivity but actively demonstrate it.

The reasoning behind these preferences is deeply rooted in how Gen Z views work itself. For this generation, a job is not solely a source of income; it is an extension of personal values and identity. From a generation deeply concerned with public perception, one's values have to be represented at every outward facing level. Additionally, mental health, plays a central role in how they assess workplace environments. This is a generation that has entered the workforce amidst a growing burnout crisis that disproportionately affects younger workers.

Many Gen Z employees report feeling overworked, undervalued, and disconnected from meaningful growth opportunities. Research from VICE and CNBC shows that nearly half of workers feel their jobs offer little to no room for advancement, and 42% have already left a position due to this lack of growth. An additional 34% say they are likely to leave within the next year. This pattern reveals a workforce that is not only dissatisfied but willing to act on that dissatisfaction.

Compounding the issue is a gap between what employers promise and what they deliver. While many organizations emphasize professional development in mission statements, only 32% actively support continued education through tangible means such as tuition assistance, stipends, or flexible scheduling. This disconnect creates an environment where employees feel unsupported, contributing further to burnout and disengagement. Data also shows that burnout is especially prevalent among workers under 30, with nearly half reporting frequent exhaustion. The result? A generation that is geared towards self-care and seeking a workplace environment that supports them. Gen Z is more interested in working to live and live well, rather than living to work.

Ultimately, Gen Z is not asking for radical change, they are demanding alignment. Progressive workplaces that prioritize diversity, equity, inclusion, flexibility, and employee well-being are no longer aspirational; they are expected. Organizations that rise to meet these expectations will

position themselves as employers of choice for the next generation. Those that fail to do so risk losing not only talent, but relevance in an evolving workforce.