

Creating indispensable employees means getting recruitment right the first time



In a candidate-driven market, it's tempting for employees to think that they're indispensable, while it's equally tempting for employers to undervalue workers and consider them replaceable in light of high unemployment rates in South Africa. Realistically, neither of these views is productive. Rarely is an individual truly indispensable, however, companies must offset market conditions with their need to attract and retain experienced, skilled resources that can improve and benefit the business.

A new workplace dynamic

The employer-employee relationship is no longer as straightforward as it once was. The balance of power has shifted, particularly with individuals who hold scarce skills. Where individuals know that their skills are in high demand, this gives them leverage to demand more of prospective employers or for current employers to make it worthwhile not to take their skills elsewhere. The workplace dynamic has also changed and there is a new focus on valuing staff for who they are and not just for what they contribute. People are no longer interested in just a job; they are looking for a company that offers them a place to belong and the opportunity to make a difference. This requires employers to add value to their employees beyond a pay cheque, in the form of workplace recognition, reward opportunities and career growth. In return, employees must take accountability for their job functions and add to the success of the business in a positive manner, which requires individuals to think beyond "what's in it for me?".

Introducing Gen Z

As Gen Z enters the job market with bosses who are likely Millennials or Gen X, there is the potential for

a misalignment in expectations from both sides, and that is where partnering with the right recruitment agency could assist. Born between 1997 and 2012, Gen Z workers belong to the first generation to have grown up with Internet access and mobile digital technology from a young age. This generation is more concerned than older generations with academic performance and job prospects, and they are better at delaying gratification than their older counterparts. Whereas previous generations were happy to get a job and an income, Gen Zs are looking for the right job and will wait for it. Radically different from Millennials, this generation has a unique outlook on careers and how to define success in life and at work. Generation Z does not prioritise salary the same as other generations, preferring to seek out work that is meaningful or personally rewarding. To win the hearts of Generation Z, companies and employers will have to up their game and highlight their endeavours to be good global citizens. Actions speak louder than words: companies will need to clearly demonstrate commitment to addressing societal challenges such as sustainability, climate change, and world hunger.

Not indispensable, just hard to replace

Gen Z will leverage this to demand greater personalisation in how they progress in their career journey, and in order for organisations to attract and retain the best and brightest of this generation, it will require a mindset shift. Although employees are theoretically replaceable to an employer, this is not the correct mindset. Given Gen Z's unique characteristics as well as a severe worldwide skills shortage, particularly in emerging industries, this has created a candidate-driven market. In this market, it's a lot harder to replace certain skill sets, and the time ratio to replace is much longer.

Realigning the employment relationship

Bearing in mind that Gen Z is seeking wellness, flexibility, and a meaningful opportunity to contribute to a larger purpose, it will be necessary for employers to acknowledge the shift in power. A recruitment partner can ensure that neither party in the employment relationship has expectations that are unreasonable or misaligned to experience or job description. This takes place through a recruitment process that is based on open, honest, and transparent conversations with potential candidates and with prospective employers. It will also be necessary to assess the seriousness of the candidate and their reasons for moving jobs. Recruiters will have to be candid with their clients, pointing out the competitiveness of the current market. If companies want certain skills and candidates of a certain calibre, they'll need to be prepared to pay and to create the right working environment to attract and retain what they require.

A dynamic employment relationship

Honest and clear communication is necessary from all sides, and recruiters need to represent their clients to the best of their ability. This includes understanding exactly what the client needs, and finding the right candidate fit, instead of trying to force a placement that is mismatched. If the recruitment process is undertaken with the correct intentions, and the right candidate is placed it will ultimately

culminate in a placement where the individual is in the right position to make themselves indispensable to the business. If they have all the right skills and they are the right fit for the company that hires them, and the company in turn ticks all the candidate's boxes, it is possible to create an employment relationship in which both parties are indispensable to each other, and expectations are clearly aligned.

Getting recruitment right

It's important to remember that the employer/employee relationship is a two-way street. Attracting the right talent is important, but companies need to be looking at how they're retaining the talent they've onboarded, which comes down to culture. They also need to look at their purpose beyond profit and create a workplace in which people can feel that they are indispensable, without the need to look elsewhere. By making their people feel indispensable, companies can ensure that the good people don't leave and that employers are not put in the position of having to replace them. This means recruiting right the first time.