

How to manage and motivate young workers

With the passage of time, more and more young workers between the ages of 18-35, are tending to enter workforce. Employers are now challenged to cope with bridging the generation gap between the old and young workers. They are also required to understand and cope with outlook, dispositions and attitudes to work that these young workers present.

In the United States of America, it is estimated that there are 80 million young Americans between the ages of 18 and 35. It is projected that in the year 2020, that one half of the American workforce will be made up of young workers, who are products of the the so-called millennial generation. Based on the current practices in the recruitment and hiring of young workers, employers in the United States of America and elsewhere, are expected to place attention on attracting innovative and creative persons.

With this being the case, it means that the world is moving towards the creation of a workforce which comprises of well-educated and trained young persons. There is seemingly little room for those who have no formal education and certification, as well as those who are semiskilled.

It is perceived that those who are well-educated and trained may be more inclined to be enthusiastic, energetic and creative. The presumption is that they have the potential to be movers and shakers, as they are generally keen to introduce and implement new ideas, and to use new well-educated and trained technologies in advancing elements of work life wherever possible. Employers are also inclined to believe that the young workers have the ability to multitask, and to easily adapt to change. Despite these positive views which many employers shared of young workers, they are now faced with the challenge of how best to utilize their innovative, creative talents and skills.

Apart from the positive expectations of young workers, both government as the employer of public sector employees, and private sector employers remain conscious of the need to effect changes. There is however remains a level of

hesitancy, and in some cases, an obvious resistance. The shooting down of ideas, and the failure to provide young workers with the opportunity to lead on projects and other initiatives, serve to demotivate them. This approach does not only fail to inspire young workers, but goes further in creating a sense of dissolument.

The perception that young persons can be aggressive, demanding, rebellious, confrontational and are willing to question and challenge anything which is of concern to them, is generally viewed in a negative light by employers and managers. It is for management and senior administrators to understand that the days of 'do as I say', and 'to be seen and not heard' and no longer with us. Young persons are trained to be career professionals who are expected to use their knowledge, skills and expertise in a decisive and prudent manner, if there are to be innovative and creative, so as to influence the introduction of positive changes.

Employers should be guarded against stifling the engagement and empowering of young workers, refrain from offering harsh, negative and unnecessary criticisms, and in failing to established effective means of communication. By paying careful attention to these, employers can effectively reduce any semblance of a rebellious and defeatist attitude on the part of young workers. On top of this there ought to be recognition of the need to ensure that there is a work life balance, and to treat sensibly to this, so as to ensure that there can be a sustained level of productivity, loyalty and commitment to the organization.

The template for the good management and motivation of young workers would dictate that employers understand the importance of being supportive, providing a conducive working environment, providing constant coaching, guidance and feedback. Where these are observed, the guarantee results will be loyalty to the organization, less restlessness, dissatisfaction and confrontation, and an eagerness of young workers to take on new challenges.