

Q. What do supervisors and managers need to know about the “Generation Z”? I have been hearing more about them recently.

A. You will hear a lot more about Generation Z as these employees enter the workforce. Gen Z are those born between approximately 1995-96 and 2010-14. (Sociologists disagree on the dates.) This is the group following the millennials. Generation Z is more influenced by concepts like “finding my true purpose” and “making an impact.” They want to be independent and are highly attracted to learning new things. They are confident and respond positively to companies that are engaged in resolving social problems. They are entrepreneurial, realistic, hungry for experiences and want to see the world. Gen Z employees want to be experts and may accept challenges more readily than prior generations. When writing the essential functions of job descriptions, consider the above values and employee traits to help you maximize productivity and employee job satisfaction. Gen Z employees are less put off by the idea of getting counseling and more likely to use supports like an EAP to improve their lives. Learn more from the book “Meet Generation Z” (2017).



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Q. I want to do everything I can to help my employees perform well. What is the most important task to accomplish in order to make this possible?

A. Form good working relationships. Supervisors can learn many different skills and tactics, but few will be effective without positive relationships. Understand the concept of “essential attitudes” for a supervisor. Essential attitudes for success exist in every profession, whether you are a teacher, scientist, minister, pilot, or supervisor. Here’s one: Assume your employees are doing the best job they can from their point of view. This attitude will affect the way you speak, act, nurture, and support them. It might even help you remember to use the EAP more often as a resource to improve performance. Another: Spell out for employees what they need to do in order to succeed and then give them the ability to do it. Imagine how these essential attitudes influence a positive relationship, and how lacking they are with many managers. Can you think of more essential attitudes critical to relationship success?

Q. Why can’t employees monitor themselves and use peer influence to ensure a respectful workplace? It seems as though supervisors or managers must still take the lead and play a large role in supporting a positive workplace and discouraging disrespect.

A. Employees are certainly capable of exerting peer pressure on fellow workers and helping maintain a respectful workplace, but they need your help. When management (supervisors) don’t act or step in when witnessing bad behavior, this is tantamount to excusing it. This then undermines employee peer pressure dynamics and group influence. Managers represent “punitive authority” within the employment setting. This doesn’t mean punishment. Instead, this means the ability or potential of the employer to impose penalties for fault, offence, or violation of rules. All employment settings possess this natural dynamic. When undermined, employees toss self-discipline to the wind and experience far less urgency to respond to positive peer pressure.