

CLOSING THE EXPERIENCE GAP: USING EMPATHY TO UNITE A MULTI-GENERATIONAL WORKFORCE

This article is the third in a three-part series on “Myths & Truths about the Great Resignation in Switzerland: A Longitudinal Study of Generational Differences in Voluntary Turnover”.

Part 3 of 3

BY TANGUY DULAC, BRUNO ALVES DE CARVALHO, LILY UNELL

MARCH 2023





OUR PURPOSE

Our purpose is to create a future-fit world of work.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to help leaders craft and deliver people-centric strategies and experiences to inspire people to be their best and do their best.

We succeed when both leaders and workers enjoy sustainable and mutually beneficial work relationships driven by performance, passion, and purpose.

OUR COMMITMENT

PeopleCentriX is delighted to be a member of the Swiss Triple Impact program. The Swiss Triple Impact is an engagement program that aims to move the Swiss business ecosystem towards a resilient economy. It was started by a non-profit organization, called B Lab Switzerland. This program, unique at the European level, helps Swiss companies measure their contribution to Sustainable Development Goals.

We commit to helping our clients build a world of work where everyone can grow and thrive in a work context of diversity, equity, belonging, and inclusion.



SWISS
triple impact



CONTACT US

Tanguy Dulac, PhD
Founder & CEO

+41 79 655 09 09

tanguy.dulac@peoplecentrix.eu

www.peoplecentrix.eu

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- Companies should understand the dynamics driving their workforce through a targeted analysis of their data, and adopt an empathic approach towards employees' fears, concerns, wants and needs.
- Organisations should also craft a compelling Work Value Proposition by aligning their contributions and behaviours to employees' expectations, needs and desires, as well as fine-tuning the enabling channels through which overall and specific employment experiences are delivered to employees.

SETTING THE SCENE

Our research suggests that **Gen Z workers (born between 1997 and 2012) are driving the «Great Resignation» in Switzerland.**¹ Our key findings are that:

- the number of voluntary departures among Gen Z workers has grown by 10% each year since 2014;
- Gen Z workers were, on average, twice as likely to quit their jobs compared to the combined total of other working generations (Millennials, Gen X, Boomers) from 2014 to 2021.

If your company is experiencing a similar trend, it's crucial to prioritise a talent strategy that focuses on attracting, developing, and retaining Gen Zers. However, it's possible that your organisation may be facing issues with other employee groups. To address these challenges effectively, a data-driven and evidence-based approach is recommended. Start by identifying which groups of employees your organisation is struggling to attract, engage, and retain.

STEP 1 – UNDERSTAND YOUR WORKFORCE

Most organisations manage a multi-generational and multi-cultural workforce. The life and work expectations of such diverse workforces are complex and dynamic. **They will change over time based on individual employees' life and career stages.**²

The Workforce Dynamics Scan identifies trends and patterns—within and between workforce segments—to understand and predict the organisation's ability to attract prospective talent and unleash the success of existing talent

STEP 2 – ASK AND LISTEN TO YOUR WORKFORCE

By conducting a targeted analysis of your workforce data, you can determine the specific employee groups that you are having trouble attracting, engaging, and retaining.

Our research suggests that Gen Z employees may be contributing to the “Great Resignation” in some companies. However, it is crucial to examine your own data to confirm or refute this hypothesis. This analysis will provide valuable insights into the root causes of your talent management issues. To understand their workforce dynamics, leaders should ask themselves the following questions:

STRUCTURING QUESTIONS

- Do we understand why people join our organisation? Why do they stay? Why do they leave?
- What do people expect from their employment relationship working for us? Has the pandemic altered people’s expectations compared to pre-pandemic times?
- Do we know if and why employee expectations change within or between generations, geographies, genders, tenure length, etc.?

If organisations aspire to attract, engage, and retain a future-fit workforce, the second step is to adopt an empathic approach towards employees’ fears, concerns, wants, and needs.

Developing an empathic approach implies moving away from assumptions by asking and listening to what truly matters to your employees.

People Expectations refer to what individuals expect from their work, work relationships, and the organisations they work for. This set of expectations is unique to individuals and will ultimately influence how they perceive, interpret, and react to experiences at work.

The advantages of an empathic approach are twofold. Firstly, we can see people make career decisions and find fulfilment in their jobs by working for organisations that truly understand and respond to their expectations and needs. Empathy enables leaders to develop a genuine understanding of what drives attraction, engagement, and retention. Secondly, adopting empathy allows leaders to ensure that their teams feel heard, and that their feedback helps managers take confident and precise action on what matters, when it matters.

In order to understand their workers’ expectations and needs, leaders should ask the following questions:

STRUCTURING QUESTIONS

- Do we understand which groups of employees we are having difficulties attracting, engaging, and retaining ?
- Do we know if significant differences exist within or between generations, geographies, genders, tenure lengths, etc.?
- What is driving negative behaviours in the workplace? How much is it costing us?

“

People Expectations refer to what individuals expect from their work, work relationships, and the organisations they work for.

This set of expectations is unique to individuals and will ultimately influence how they perceive, interpret, and react to experiences at work.

”

STEP 3 – CRAFT A COMPELLING WORK VALUE PROPOSITION

By better understanding what workers want and need—from their work, work relationship, and organisation—employers can stay aligned with their employees' changing needs at scale. A deep understanding of peoples' needs also means that businesses can craft a fit-for-purpose Work Value Proposition that attracts prospective talent and (re)engages existing talent.

The **Work Value Proposition** is the promise you make as an employer to your employees in return for their expertise and experience. This promise includes the sum of all the benefits and rewards—contractual, experiential, and transformational—that employees receive from the organization they work for.

To craft a compelling Work Value Proposition, leaders should consider the following questions:

STRUCTURING QUESTIONS

- Does our Work Value Proposition align with workers' expectations and needs?
- What is our current Work Value Proposition for prospective talent? How do we communicate our Work Value Proposition to the outside world? How do we integrate it into our talent acquisition process?
- What is our current Work Value Proposition for existing talent? How well are we integrating our Work Value Proposition into our overall work experience lifecycle and moments that matter for our talent?

STEP 4 – DELIVER FULFILLING WORK EXPERIENCES

Once the organisation has crafted a Work Value Proposition which is aligned with workers' needs and expectations, it is now time to deliver the promised work experience.

People Experience refers to individuals' overall perception of their work experience with an organisation. This overall perception is the sum of all experiential touchpoints formed during their daily work experience and during moments that matter throughout their journey with an organisation—from hire to re-hire.³

Organisations that successfully address employee experience see significant benefits in business, people, and innovation. However, delivering fulfilling work experiences is easier said than done. It requires your business to rethink organisational contributions, behaviours, and enabling channels.³

“*People Experience refers to individuals' perceptions of all experiential touchpoints formed during their daily work experience and during moments that matter throughout their journey with an organisation—from hire to re-hire.*”

Organisational contributions are what an organisation delivers to its talent for their expertise and experience. To properly address organisational contributions, leaders should ask themselves the following questions:

STRUCTURING QUESTIONS

- Do we provide a work experience that fulfils the contractual, experiential, and transformational needs and expectations of our workers?
- Where do we fail to meet employees' expectations? Is it compensation? Lack of work flexibility? Lack of career opportunities?
- Do we provide a fulfilling work experience throughout the employee's lifecycle at our organisation? When do we fail to meet workers' expectations? Is it during onboarding? Bonus communications? Career conversations?

Organizational behaviours refer to how the organisation behaves — through their leaders and people managers — in delivering contributions to their talent. If organisational contributions refer to the “what”, organisational behaviours refer to the “how”. To properly address organisational behaviours, leaders should consider the following questions:

STRUCTURING QUESTIONS (ORGANISATIONAL BEHAVIOURS)

- Do we understand what our talent expects from our organisation in terms of leadership behaviours and values?
- How well do we communicate our leadership behaviours, principles, and values inside our organisation, and to the outside world?
- How well do our leaders and people managers embody the expected behaviours and values of the organisation in their daily work and the moments that matter for our talent?

Organisational enablers refer to which enabling channels are being used by the organisation to deliver overall and specific employment experiences. These channels refer to the organisations’ occupational (i.e., work design), organisational (i.e., organisational design), digital (e.g., technological design), and physical (i.e., work setting design) experiential enablers. To properly address these enablers, leaders should consider the following questions:

STRUCTURING QUESTIONS (ORGANISATIONAL ENABLERS)

- What channels do we use to deliver work experiences? Do we properly blend our occupational, organisational, digital, and physical enablers when crafting and delivering work experiences?
- To what extent do our experiential channels improve the experience, engagement, efficiency, and effectiveness of our workforce?

TAKEAWAYS

Gen Z employees seem to be driving the “Great Resignation” in Switzerland – but are they driving it in your organisation?

It’s crucial that you **understand which group of employees your organisation is having trouble attracting, engaging, and retaining** so you can focus your time and resources where it matters. You can do this by conducting a Workforce Dynamics Scan.

Once you’ve identified the root cause of your difficulties, you should **adopt an empathic approach and craft a fit-for-purpose Work Value Proposition** that aligns with your employees’ expectations, needs, and wants.

Prioritising the delivery of fulfilling work experiences to your employees will help your organisation **prepare for the future workforce and avoid the financial losses** that our research suggests companies may face if they do not curb growing attrition levels.

