



Benefits and Risk Consulting

How employers are keeping up with the ever-changing strategy to recruit and retain Millennial workers

Thursday, April 13, 2017 - Bret McKitrick, JD

What will it take for you to leave your job? So we can eliminate fantasies of winning the lottery or tying up your boss for ransom, let's refocus the question: what will it take for you to leave your job for another one? Obvious answers include salary, location, opportunity, challenge and reputation of employer. There are a host of others, based on individual and industry, for sure. What about benefits? Typically, when considering employee benefits and other "perks," many don't think of those parts of a compensation package or employment experience as the catalyst for change. But that mindset is shifting along with the employee population.



Survey says: Millennials will leave their jobs for better benefits

Among the various generations making up the American workforce, we see a contrast in attitudes of what employees seek in a work environment. And from there, we are seeing notable differences in why employees will either leave their jobs or remain. A recent Gallup survey, "How Millennials Want to Work and Live," shows that the Millennial generation of workers is more likely to change jobs for a particular employee benefit, as compared to Generation X or Baby Boomers. For example, 45% of Millennials surveyed will change jobs if a new employer offered student loan reimbursement — compared to only 19% of other working generations. That's an easy one, as Generation Y is the most academically leveraged in our country's history. Most of the benefits popular among Millennials are intuitively so, but the importance placed on such benefits by younger workers is what is most revealing.

Many employees value health insurance to the point where they may change employers to seek a better benefit. However, Millennials are nearly fifty percent more likely to change jobs for other types of insurance coverage. The most common "other" type? Pet insurance! Another example: Baby Boomer and Generation X employees heavily utilize the dependent care assistance program that many employers offer. That is the ability for employees to set aside money in a pre-tax fashion under a cafeteria plan to be used for child care expenses. But that program is funded with money that would otherwise be included in an employee's taxable salary. Millennials are seeking more, as 30% indicated that they would change jobs for employers offering child care reimbursement. In other words, a child care assistance program that is completely employer-funded. Finally, nearly half of Millennials surveyed will change jobs for paid maternity and paternity leave, as compared to just over fifteen percent of Generation X and Baby Boomers.

Now, with that last one, our thumb was on the scale. Obviously, Millennials are more likely to birth or adopt children, given their age, so they are naturally the ones who would appreciate paid leave benefits. But the point in mentioning the contrast in attitude, just like pet insurance and employer-funded child care benefits, is that those older generation of workers may not have thought to even ask about such benefits — much less be in a position to evaluate them or compare them to perks offered between prospective employers. The changing focus on benefits is directly linked to the things that impact the lives of Millennials and the lives of their family members, as opposed to the life of the career. The bottom line is that the Millennial employee is more willing to switch jobs to secure some of these perks, which speaks to the changing attitude toward what many employers still categorize as "loyalty" to a job or organization. Without a doubt, this convolutes the already difficult challenge of maintaining a relevant and impactful recruitment and retention strategy.

Develop a targeted benefits strategy

The question for employers boils down to this: How do you stay hip enough with your benefit offerings to attract and retain

top Millennial talent without alienating prior generations of valuable employees? Please check out our eBook, "[Recruit and retain Millennials with the right benefit strategy](#)," for more information about the characteristics of the Millennial workforce and ideas for developing a targeted benefits strategy. To also learn strategies for managing and getting the most out of your Millennial employees, we are offering an event, "[Managing Millennials in the workplace](#)," in Waukesha on Wednesday, May 24.

For more information about employee benefits and related issues, please [contact us](#).