

SHRM Notebook: How to engage Gen Y

Posted by Joe Caruso, *publisher of SmartBrief's health care group, who is attended the Society for Human Resource Management's Staffing Management Conference in April 2009.*

The second day of SHRM's recruitment conference was up to the challenge posed by its venue, the world's largest Hilton. The agenda included 32 detailed sessions ranging from recruiting Gen X and Gen Y, to HR analytics, to California employment law. About two-thirds of the 600 recruiters were first-time attendees, making the information both timely and critical to their daily activities.

My informal poll of about 50 people found the most popular reasons for attending were to learn:

- The fundamentals of recruiting.
- The impact on online and social media on human resources.
- Best practices from industry experts, and how to train and ramp up new recruiters.

Journalist Nadira Hira educated the general session on the Gen Y mindset. To effectively attract and manage the "why" generation (my term not hers), managers must understand the high expectations Gen Yers have of themselves and those with whom they interact, she told the group.

How she says they can do that:

- First, managers must articulate the mission of the company in a way that recruits can relate to and feel a part of.
- Second, managers need to provide a clear opportunity for them to meaningfully contribute to the company (not copying and stapling).
- Finally, managers need to regularly communicate with the new hires and provide a dialogue about expectations and actual performance. This generation can be onboarded with money, but won't stay very long unless there's a strong relationship established with supervisors and a bond made with the company and its purpose.