

A Four-Day Workweek Is Gen Z's New Must-Have from Employers

HR Brew | Mikaela Cohen | May 10, 2024

Some say Gen Z wants it all. But what they might really want is flexibility in how they work and live, experts say.

If you're looking to attract Gen Z workers, there are apparently a few perks that'll do the trick, including hybrid work, wellness benefits, and career development. And rising in importance seems to be a four-day workweek.

Eight in 10 Gen Z workers think the workweek should be shorter, according to a report from freelance talent platform A.Team.

Gen Z wants more flexibility from employers, said Eric Solomon, former chief marketing officer at Bonobos, during a virtual roundtable hosted by A.Team on May 6.

"We're starting to see just this general trend towards wanting to be much more flexible and fluid in the way that people live, and this starts with young people," Solomon said. "[Gen Z] wants to have flexibility in how [they] approach work."

Here's what HR should consider, according to experts at the A.Team event.

Self-care day. Gen Z workers not only want this extra day of flexibility, but they need it, said Jenny Dearborn, former chief learning officer at SAP and a partner at SemperVirens Venture Capital.

This day is for "mental health...self-care...[and] learning how to interact with other humans," Dearborn said, noting how this generation came of age amid pandemic-era lockdowns. "They have fewer friends, there's more loneliness...that's their day to be human [and] have human connections and human interactions, which is good. It's very healthy."

Work is different. Gen Z workers don't feel as though they need to work in the office, or five days a week, to get their jobs done, said Wagner Denuzzo, former VP of future of work at Prudential Financial and author of *Leading to Succeed: Essential Skills for the New Workplace*.

"Before you had to go to an office or an organization to get access to tools to do your work, now they can do it at home, at their leisure time," Denuzzo said. "I think [this] is what they're saying...I have the tools. I have the capability, and I can do it...They're feeling much more empowered in terms of what their capabilities are."

Six-day workweek. While Gen Z advocates for a shorter workweek, some companies are calling for a longer one. Samsung, for example, announced last month a six-day workweek policy for

executives, and a recent Resume Builder survey found 9% of business leaders plan to do the same for their full-time employees by 2025.

Prior to putting such a policy into effect, companies should consider what they're trying to achieve, said AJ Thomas, a managing director at A.Team and former head of people at Google-owned tech research firm X. It comes down to business strategy, and how employees fit into it.

"It is one thing to know that that is what the younger generation is looking for, but also, what is your organization looking for to have the six-day-a-week thing for their leaders and executives, and maybe is that swinging too much?"