



Fellows Broadsheet

The Institute of Hospitality Fellows Broadsheet is a thought-leadership article written by a member of our esteemed College of Fellows. Celebrating the wealth of professionalism, knowledge and expertise within our diverse, worldwide hospitality family. The Fellows Broadsheet is published exclusively for members.

Generation Game – Is hospitality ready for the next wave of talent

Sam Coulstock FIH MIEP is Head of Professional Development at the Institute of Hospitality and has been a member of the Institute for over 15 years, initially joining as a hospitality apprentice. He was an active member of the Institute's London region and is also a member of the Institute of Employability Professionals.

In the latest Fellows Broadsheet, Sam looks at **'Generation Game – Is hospitality ready for the next wave of talent?'**





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Who are iGen'ers?

Meet iGen; The new age group of employees who are almost everything that millennials aren't. Just as hospitality managers have become used to managing their millennial team members, there's a new generation pounding on the doors of employers known as iGen.

iGen refers to those born between 1995 and 2012, the first of whom graduated from education in spring 2023. iGen, also sometimes called 'GenZ', although based on past performance of generational labels 'GenZ' is unlikely to stick.

The challenge for businesses and managers is that the techniques that worked to recruit, retain, and manage millennials won't always work with iGen.

Work focused

First, the good news. Analyses found that iGen is more focused on work than millennials were at the same age.

In an extensive national annual survey conducted in the USA, 55% of high school seniors in 2016 said they were willing to work overtime to do a good job, in comparison to 44% of millennials in 2004. iGen'ers are also more likely to say that they would work even if they had plenty of money and say they expect work to be a central part of their lives.

Looking further into who iGen'ers are, it is clear they grew up more gradually as teens, taking longer to work, drive, and date than previous groups.



Change of approach

Although those trends have many positives, more young people now arrive in the workplace with less experience of making independent decisions. So, give them careful instructions for tasks, but expect they will need more guidance. For managers who learned to support millennials, they will now find they are more like therapists, life coaches, or parents for the new iGen'ers.

Another big difference is that iGen'ers are not as bold and confident as their millennial predecessors.

According to research by Roberta Katz PhD, a senior research scholar at Stanford University's Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, iGen'ers feel less optimistic about their career prospects and is less self-confident than millennials at the same age.

Consequently, their mindset suggests they might be less likely to expect to be a company CEO within 5 years and less likely to express feelings of entitlement, than millennials.

As iGen begins to dominate the pool of entry-level talent, businesses should expect to see more young employees eager to do a good job but in fear of making mistakes. Whereas millennials demanded praise, iGen'ers want reassurance.

Safety first

iGen'ers put safety as a priority. They are safer drivers and are less likely to binge drink than previous generational 'teens'. Plus, they are less likely to say they want to take risks.

iGen are also concerned about what they call 'emotional safety'. They want to be protected from offensive comments and emotional upset, alongside protection from physical harm. In the workplace this translates to more young employees asking about how a company creates a safe environment and what steps are taken toward creating a more nurturing atmosphere, all while the employer needs to educate iGen'ers about business realities.

This generation also 'mingles' differently, using their phones instead of meeting in person. The number of school leavers who say it's important to have a job where you can have 'a chance to make friends', or that allows 'contact with a lot of people' has also reached all-time lows with the new iGen'ers.





Social 'phobia'?

Focused on connecting with others on social media, iGen'ers see the social aspects of working holds less appeal. So, don't expect social outings and get-togethers to be much of a selling point for this generation.

In addition, some iGen'ers may have more trouble with social skills, given that they have spent less time socializing in person than any previous generation.

However, contrary to popular belief, managers shouldn't worry that young iGen'ers will be itching to become entrepreneurs rather than remain as employees. Due to their risk aversion, iGen is less likely to want to own their own business than previous generations; only 30% of high school leavers in 2016 believed that being self-employed was desirable. That's down from 48% in 1987.

Stability

Instead, iGen want stable jobs in enduring industries. Fantastic news and a great opportunity for managers within established companies who can now look to recruit a generation actively looking for steady work.

Practical, career-focused, and cautious, but with less experience of being independent, iGen'ers are willing to work hard for the managers who understand them. If you do, their potential is limitless?

Bleak future

According to new research from UK children's charity Barnardo's, 1,001 teenagers aged 14-17-years-olds were questioned and many consider their future is bleak, citing money, jobs and climate worries at the fore. With British teenagers believing their generation will have a worse life than their parents.

The Barnardo's report published in March 2024 - Changing Childhoods, Changing Lives also looks at the impacts of issues including the cost of living, the Covid pandemic and environmental concerns.

The findings reveal that when the teenagers were asked to imagine their lives at the age of 30 years, 55% of teenagers said they believed their lives would be worse than the previous generation. While another 34% thought the next generation of children's lives would not be any better.

Of those surveyed, 9% said they felt 'hopeless' about their future.

Lynn Perry, Barnardo's chief executive said that children believing their lives would be more complex than their parents': "is a sign the social contract is broken and we're at risk of failing the next generation."



Conclusion

Hospitality employers, hiring managers, colleagues and professionals need to understand the iGen'ers that will be flowing into the workforce; the vast challenges they faced during COVID-19, their disturbed and fragmented education and the social and wellbeing impact it has had.

However, with understanding, in the right environment, and with the right people and support network their future will be bright.

Inspiring them about the world of work, and helping them become the best version of themselves, is the responsibility of us all.





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About the author

Sam Coulstock FIH MIEP has been Head of Professional Development at the Institute of Hospitality since August 2021 and began his hospitality career in 1996 as an apprentice chef.

He later became F&B Director for an independent hotel, before moving into Charity and Apprenticeships roles within the hospitality sector.

Sam's hospitality experience and passion means he is actively involved in the IoH's CPD strategy, supporting its global members with lifelong learning opportunities to raise standards. He leads the IoH's Education Membership Scheme (EMS) which offers the Hospitality, Leisure and Tourism (HLT) departments of universities and colleges the opportunity to sponsor individual Institute memberships to their students and leads the IoH Company Sponsored Membership (CSM) strategy, which helps allow businesses to retain and develop their leadership talent.

Sam is a member of the IoH College of Fellows and a Member of the Institute of Employability Professionals.



Sam Coulstock FIH MIEP



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SAM COULSTOCK



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