

Adapt your travel policies to retain Gen Z talent - HR Magazine

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Executive Summary

This article addresses the challenge of retaining Gen Z employees through adapted corporate travel policies. The author, Felicia Williams, VP of People at TravelPerk, argues that traditional travel policies centred on cost minimisation and loyalty programmes are misaligned with Gen Z's values and expectations. Key findings cited from TravelPerk data include: 63% of business travellers report that work trips increase their likelihood of staying with their employer; 76% of Gen Z workers say the ability to travel for work influences retention decisions; 34% would like to expense wellbeing activities during work travel; 26% prioritise carbon-neutral travel solutions; and only 65% of Gen Z travellers enrol in loyalty programmes compared to 80% of Gen X. The article concludes that corporate travel policies have evolved into a strategic retention tool and cultural signal, and that businesses that fail to incorporate flexibility, sustainability, and wellbeing into travel frameworks risk losing Gen Z talent. The implications drawn favour repositioning travel policy as an employee experience and values-alignment mechanism rather than a cost-control instrument.

Key Insights

1. Gen Z business travellers prioritise personal growth, wellbeing, and values expression over transactional incentives such as loyalty points and upgrades, representing a generational shift in what makes work travel motivating.
2. A significant majority of Gen Z workers (76%) report that the ability to travel for work influences their retention decisions, positioning travel policy as a direct lever in talent retention strategy.
3. Gen Z shows lower adoption of traditional loyalty programmes (65%) compared to Gen X (80%) and shows stronger preference for flexible accommodation options, with 41% choosing private apartments over hotels.

Practical Takeaways

- Organisations with significant Gen Z workforces may find value in reviewing travel policies to incorporate flexibility provisions such as work-from-anywhere days and blended leisure-work travel allowances.
- Incorporating sustainability options and wellbeing expense provisions into travel frameworks may be a point of differentiation in talent retention, particularly for Gen Z employees who cite these factors explicitly.

Critical Analysis

The article's primary limitation is its source: all statistics cited originate from TravelPerk, the employer of the article's author, creating a direct commercial conflict of interest. No independent verification, peer-reviewed studies, or third-party sources are referenced. The methodology behind the cited data — sample size, geography, survey design, and date of collection — is entirely undisclosed, making it impossible to assess statistical validity. The generational segmentation (Gen Z vs. Millennials vs. Gen X) is presented as categorical and deterministic, which oversimplifies intra-generational diversity. The framing consistently nudges readers toward policy liberalisation and technology adoption, both of which align with TravelPerk's product offering. On the positive side, the directional observations about generational value shifts in the workplace are broadly consistent with wider academic literature on Gen Z workforce entry, and the article surfaces practically relevant policy dimensions (sustainability, wellbeing expensing, flexibility) that HR practitioners can explore through more rigorous sources.

Organizational Practice

The article describes corporate travel policy design as a retention and values-alignment mechanism, including provisions for blended work-leisure travel, wellbeing expense allowances, sustainable travel options, flexible accommodation choices, and alternatives to traditional loyalty programme incentives. It also references the use of integrated travel management tools to enforce budget guardrails while allowing employee personalisation.

Strategic Implications

The article positions corporate travel policy as an emerging dimension of employer value proposition and talent retention, particularly as Gen Z becomes a larger share of the workforce. If the directional data holds under more rigorous study, organisations may face pressure to treat travel frameworks as cultural and values signals rather than purely logistical or financial instruments. The tension between cost control and flexibility-driven retention represents an ongoing policy design challenge. The emphasis on sustainability integration in travel policy also reflects a broader trend of ESG commitments filtering into operational HR practices.

Validation Status: passed
