

# 躍動

卓越領航 共建企業健康

## LEAP



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## Grasp the Workplace Fresher's Heart

Back in April this year, a video titled "Diva-ish Resignation" went viral across various social platforms and forums. The video involved an employer who received a Whatsapp message from a Gen Z-er (born in the 1990's) employee who had passed probationary period. This employee requested immediate termination of her employment and demanded the company pay up her salary for the second half of the month and threatened to report to the Labour Department if her demands are not met. While this had caused a bit of a stir for some in the general public, some of the negative stereotypes of Gen Z were unfortunately further reinforced, for example: self-centeredness, lack of communication skills, high turnover, high absenteeism, lots of "personal commitments"... etc.

In early 2013, Hong Kong Ideas Centre released a report from interviewing a group of Gen Z-ers. In their bosses' eyes, an average Gen Z-er is "lazy, likes to relax, and dreads hardship"; whereas in their own point of view, they are "seeking work-life balance, and value personal space". They pointed out that they preferred not to work themselves up into a lather like their previous generations. Even though they hold a different attitude towards their work, they perceive themselves to be capable. If they had the chance to have their hands on a task that both enable them to let their colors shine and work independently, they tend to do it exceptionally well and may even work overtime and/ or overnight to complete it. Gen Z-ers' bosses, on the other hand, think that it is not a matter of working overnight or not, but rather their self-regulation that sometimes poses a problem in the workplace – for instance, some Gen Z-ers appear to have difficulty getting up in the morning and going to work on time.

As a supervisory or managerial staff, before jumping into conclusions or complain, it is worth slowing down and considering the following points to get along with your Gen Z coworkers:

**Understand their lifestyle and attitude:** Genuinely get to know their lifestyle and values, and respect their workplace attitude, e.g. "Work is only part of life", "Satisfaction does not only come from salary but more importantly, self-accomplishment", "There is nothing wrong with browsing the internet" and their various ways of pursuing "personal uniqueness".

**Designate clear and specific job duties:** Job content and goals should be clear. As for the means to execute these, as long as the company's regulations are not violated and no harm is done, do reserve some room and flexibility for them to utilize their skills to the fullest. Gen Z-ers may not yet have a great deal of work experience, but they are creative and could provide innovative inputs.

**Refrain from adapting a top-down, "boss"-like stance:** Gen Z-ers do not believe in the so-called authority. The more you assert yourself as the authority, the less likely Gen Z-ers would take your words seriously. They do not like hierarchical culture in the workplace, and wish to work with their bosses or supervisors in a more egalitarian manner.

Rather than attempting to ride on Gen Z-ers' backs, it may be more constructive to think of ways to inspire and motivate them to play out their potential to the fullest, thereby rewarding them with a sense of accomplishment.

Even more importantly, the whole team may be uplifted and more energized if we can utilize this younger generation's energy and drive effectively.

## LEAP 是指：

**L** eading Personal Effectiveness  
發展人才

**E** nhancing Family Cohesiveness  
凝聚家庭

**A** chieving Team Success  
卓越團隊

**P** romoting Corporate Wellness  
促進企業健康

## Is it Unnatural to Enjoy Work?

Hayden, a fresh university graduate, joined the workplace last year as a sale manager trainee. However, after only a few months at the job, he began thinking of resigning. Through a colleague's recommendation, he called the EAP hotline for advice.

The first impression Hayden gave the counsellor was a lively, energetic, and driven young man, but he was appeared to be bothered by a million things that he could not figure out. Upon some exploration on the counsellor's part, he gradually realized the reason behind his contemplation to resign – it was not because he could not handle the work, not because there was no prospect down the line, not because he did not get long with his colleagues – it was because of the pressure coming from his family.

He shared that he was the single child in his family, and has always had a close relationship with his parents – until he started working after university. The company he was currently working for placed a great deal of emphasis on nurturing talents, so when Hayden was selected to become a sales manager trainee, his supervisors spent hours and hours providing him with guidance. Hayden had learned a lot from the past few months, and was delighted by the challenges and sense of accomplishment the job was able to offer. However, part of the problem was that as he was new to the job and very keen to learn, it often took him long periods of time to grasp different aspects of his work. This translated to working overtime until late hours of the day. Furthermore, because he was still a trainee, he had a low base salary, not to mention even lower commission. After deducting daily expenses he usually hardly had much income left by the end of the month. Seeing him working late every night and sometimes even on weekends, his family was worried about his health. They also could not understand why he would spend so much time on a low paying job, and therefore suggested him to look elsewhere. This has been a source of conflict between Hayden and his parents.

The counsellor analyzed with Hayden the varying attitudes that different generations hold towards work. He recognized that in his parents' perspective, a job should guarantee stable income and work hours. On the other hand, what he yearned for was beyond these – he wanted to pursue a stimulating, challenging job and enjoy the satisfaction that it brings. He also hoped to be valued and respected. He knew that his job may not be the most comfortable one, but he felt that there was meaning in what he does while he worked hard with his colleagues.

To improve the relationship with his family, the counsellor recommended him to share his thoughts and hopes regarding work with his parents, in order for them to get a better picture of what he is striving for in the workplace, as well as his short-term and long-term goals.

It is apparent that Hayden placed a lot of emphasis on the relationship with his family. After meeting with the counsellor, he initiated a "family meeting" to let his parents know more about his hopes and dreams, and direction on his career path. Once his parents gained a better idea, they showed appreciation for his motivation and enthusiasm. Not only had there been less conflict at home since they have been able to communicate honestly, their relationship as a family was also enhanced as a result.



## Story of the Piglets

Two stubborn pigs fight over whose building materials are the best.

Pig A says, "The straw house that I build can defend against wind and rain. Not only is straw cheap, easy to collect, and it keeps the house warm in the water, cool in the summer – isn't it the best house ever?"

Pig B unyieldingly says, "Straw isn't sustainable. My earth house is so much more durable and sturdy! There are several colors of earth – yellow, red, and black, and can be built into house of different colors, unlike your straw house which only has one boring color!"

Sitting next to them is an old man who has been listening to their conversation and he discreetly laughs at their ignorance. He says to them, "Stop being stubborn you two! The two kinds of materials that you talked about have both their strengths and weaknesses. But if you complement them with one another, add water to the earth, turn it into mud, mix it well with straw, and lay the product to dry, you get alumina in a few days. Houses made with alumina bricks have all the good properties of your two materials: warm in the winter, cool in the summer, sturdy, and it even absorbs moisture the air, keeping the house dry."

In office, can we also practice what this old man does – appreciate individual qualities, complement them with each other, and bring out the best in everyone?