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Gen Z Faces Backlash Over Work Ethic Concerns

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Australian employers are increasingly cautious about hiring Generation Z (Gen Z) workers, citing concerns over professionalism and work ethic. Recruitment expert Tammie Christofis Ballis from Realistic Careers highlighted in a recent TikTok video that many hiring managers prefer candidates over 30, believing they show greater reliability and commitment. While Ballis acknowledged that not all young workers fit this

negative stereotype, the growing frustration among employers points to challenges in managing younger employees, particularly regarding punctuality, training responsiveness, and acceptance of feedback.

Several hiring managers report difficulties training Gen Z employees, who often struggle with time management and can be sensitive to constructive criticism. Ballis told news.com.au that employers feel older staff members tend to be more adaptable and resilient in professional environments. This hesitancy to recruit younger workers raises important questions about workplace culture and whether these generational generalizations are justified or unfair. The issue underscores broader tensions in adapting traditional workplace expectations to a new generation's attitudes and priorities.



Much of the debate around Gen Z's approach to work reflects shifting workplace values. Younger workers increasingly prioritise flexibility, mental health, and work-life balance—priorities that may conflict with more conventional corporate norms. Critics argue that these values are sometimes wrongly perceived as laziness rather than a genuine redefinition of professionalism. Without addressing these differences, Australian businesses risk alienating a vital talent pool, particularly amid ongoing skills shortages and a competitive job market.

Finding a way to bridge the gap between generations will be key to future workforce success. Experts suggest that better communication and tailored management approaches could help employers harness the strengths of younger workers without compromising productivity. Ballis emphasises that broad generalizations do little to solve the problem, and that ignoring legitimate employer concerns could prove costly for companies and the next generation of professionals alike. Adaptation and

mentorship will likely be essential for fostering a productive, engaged workforce as generational differences continue to evolve.

