

How a Generation Shaped a Nation's Work Design and Culture

For a long time, the image of the working class in Japan was synonymous with long commutes in overcrowded trains, submission to superiors at work, and compensation which had little to do with individual performance.

In recent years, many Japanese companies are moving towards an entirely different, flexible and collaborative atmosphere. Company policies now include flexible working hours, onsite gyms, provision of yoga classes, and even themed offices without traditional work cubicles. Employers agree that collaboration between employees fosters creativity.

The reason for this? Generation Y.

Generation Y is described to have grown up surrounded by technology. They have a reputation for being creative, but also narcissistic, unrealistic, and also less loyal to companies in pursuit of a more satisfying career. Generation Y accounts for 21% of the population, and is expected to make up 75% of the working force in less than a decade. However, Generation Y only constitutes 14% of the Japanese population.

Combined with the decline in birth rate and the ticking demographic time bomb, the need to cater to the needs of the future generation of the work force drives Japan toward change, indicating an interesting future for other growing economies in Asia.

References

Moriyasu, K. (2015). *We lucky few: Japan's millennials reshape their country's drab workplaces*. Retrieved from <https://asia.nikkei.com/magazine/20150702-ASIA-S-STARTUPS-SWITCHED-ON/Business/We-lucky-few-Japan-s-millennials-reshape-their-country-s-drab-workplaces>