

RE-DEFINING
HR & BEYOND

A Newsletter By


RethinkHR
India's Most Widely Read HR Newsletter





At RethinkHR, our mission is to empower HR professionals and leaders with the insights, tools, and strategies needed to excel in the ever-evolving world of human resources. We are committed to building a vibrant community where HR leaders can share knowledge, exchange ideas, and drive meaningful change within their organizations.

Each month, we bring you curated insights, compelling conversations, and exciting developments from across India's HR ecosystem. Our newsletter is your essential gateway to understanding workplace shifts, decoding new people practices, and navigating future-of-work conversations with confidence. From expert perspectives to real-world case studies, every edition is designed to help you rethink, reshape, and reimagine your HR strategy.

This month, we shine the spotlight on a generational force reshaping the workplace - Gen Z. Born into a digital-first world, Gen Z professionals are entering India's workforce in record numbers. Their influence is rewriting HR playbooks across industries, from performance management to workplace culture. They're not just employees, they are catalysts demanding purpose, autonomy, and authenticity at work.

It's not just about perks or pay anymore. It's about values, recognition, flexibility, and growth. The theme "Gen Z Rewriting the Workplace Playbook" explores how organizations in India are adapting their strategies to engage, retain, and empower this new wave of talent.

Whether you're struggling to attract Gen Z candidates, rethinking policies for multigenerational teams, or redesigning employee experience, this issue brings you the voices, data, and frameworks you need to lead with clarity.

Let's rethink the workplace through the lens of Gen Z!

Trusted by leading enterprises across IT, BFSI, Pharma, and Consulting



Purpose over perks:

70% say they won't work for companies that don't align with their values (LinkedIn India Talent Trends, Aug 2025).

Flexibility first:

Gen Z professionals are 2x more likely to reject job offers requiring fixed office days, especially in creative, design, and tech roles.

Continuous recognition:

Annual appraisals don't cut it anymore—they want real-time feedback and transparent career paths.







Wellbeing as a priority:

Financial wellness, mental health support, and eldercare leave rank high on their list of must-haves.

For HR leaders, the challenge isn't just accommodating these needs, it's designing systems that balance intergenerational expectations without diluting organizational culture.



India at a Crossroads: How Companies Are Responding

Company	Strategy	What's Unique?
	Gamified learning modules	Upskilling programs tailored for younger tech employees through AI-driven simulations.
	"FlexiFlex" hybrid + Gen Z councils	Quarterly policy reviews co-created with young employee representatives.
	"Recognition-first" approach	Digital recognition platform where peers reward micro-achievements instantly.
	Full WFH for select teams	Remote-first culture appeals to younger digital talent resisting office mandates.
	Purpose-driven programs	Gen Z employees engaged in ESG projects linked to company goals.
	Async-first + writing culture	Gen Z thrives in trust-based systems that emphasize outcomes, not hours.

Gen Z isn't asking for special treatment. They're asking for workplaces to be human. If leaders resist, they'll resist right back, with their feet."

— CHRO, Bengaluru-based fintech

Emerging Patterns

Recognition Over Rewards

Real-time recognition platforms are replacing “employee of the month” boards.

Peer-to-peer rewards are boosting engagement in startups and IT firms.



Flexibility Without Fear

Gen Z equates flexibility with trust.

Structured hybrid policies that enforce “anchor days” are clashing with their desire for autonomy.



Wellbeing as a Culture, Not a Benefit

Companies offering eldercare leave, therapy stipends, and wellness days are seeing higher retention rates among younger employees.



Digital-First Career Journeys

AI-driven career planning tools and cross-functional project exposure are the new currency of engagement.

Learning is becoming bite-sized, gamified, and personalized.



Who's Rewriting the Playbook?



- Introduced “Gen Z Councils” where young employees co-design HR policies.
- Early feedback shows higher satisfaction scores and lower attrition in under-30 employees.



- Asynchronous-first collaboration using Slack, Loom, and Notion.
- Emphasis on written culture helps reduce meeting fatigue—a big Gen Z complaint.



- Launched a “Spotlight” recognition app for instant micro-rewards.
- Engagement rates rose by 28% in pilot teams.



- Links employee volunteering projects directly to business sustainability goals.
- Gen Z employees report feeling more connected to company purpose.

What HR Leaders Need to Rethink Right Now

Here are five guiding questions for leaders designing Gen Z-ready strategies:

- ❓ Are we designing for purpose, or just perks?
- ❓ Does our recognition system match Gen Z's need for immediacy?
- ❓ Are our hybrid models flexible enough to avoid alienating young talent?
- ❓ Have we embedded wellbeing into culture, or just into policy handbooks?
- ❓ Are managers equipped to coach, not just supervise?

Tip of the Month: Build an Employee Listening Loop. Create forums where Gen Z voices are heard quarterly not just in exit interviews.

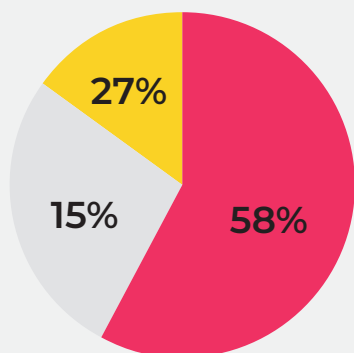
News India HR Roundup | Aug-Sep 2025

- ✓ **Microsoft Work Trend Index:** 93% of Indian leaders plan to deploy AI agents in HR operations within 18 months.
- ✓ **Hiring slowdown in IT:** Recruitment fell 10% in August, but AI/ML roles surged by 54%.
- ✓ **Festive hiring boom:** Retail and shop floor hiring of women up 60%, aligned with DEI goals.
- ✓ **TCS salary hikes:** 4.5–7% delayed increments spark employee dissatisfaction amid 12,000 layoffs.
- ✓ **AI Fatigue rising:** HR leaders at Deloitte and LTI caution that constant AI adoption is stressing younger staff.

Visual SnapIndia's Gen Z Workforce in Numbers (2025)

Survey Highlights:

Workplace preferences:



58% prefer hybrid with full autonomy; 27% remote-first; only 15% want WFO

Attrition risk:

49%

of Gen Z employees would consider quitting if forced into fixed office mandates.

Engagement drivers:

Recognition (65%)



Meaningful work (61%),



flexibility (59%)



wellbeing support (54%).

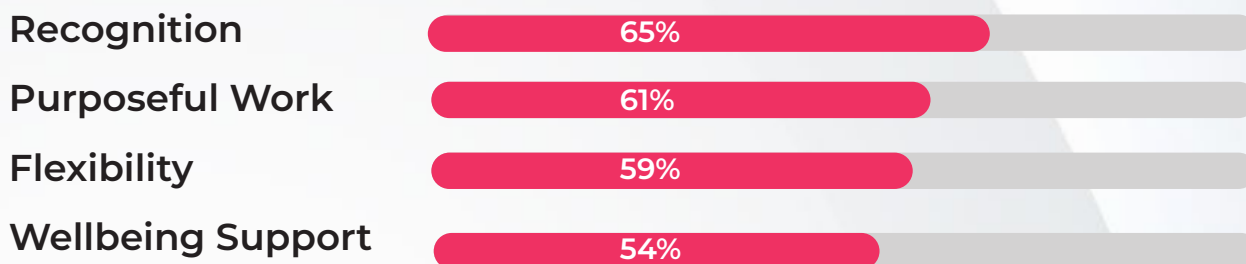


Digital adoption:

72%

of Indian firms now use AI features in HR platforms vs global average of 55%.

Visual Snapshot



The Gen Z Playbook

Managing Gen Z isn't about reinventing the wheel, it's about reshaping it for speed, agility, and purpose. For HR leaders, the real challenge is balancing generational needs without diluting culture. Here are actionable strategies backed by real company examples from India's HR landscape:

Managing Gen Z isn't about reinventing the wheel, it's about reshaping it for speed, agility, and purpose. For HR leaders, the real challenge is balancing generational needs without diluting culture. Here are actionable strategies backed by real company examples from India's HR landscape:

1. Move From Annual Appraisals to Continuous Feedback

Gen Z thrives on real-time recognition. Annual appraisals feel too rigid and disconnected.

Tip: Introduce digital recognition platforms and quarterly "micro-appraisals."

Example: Razorpay's "Spotlight" app enables instant peer-to-peer recognition. Engagement rose 28% among younger employees.

2. Link Roles to Purpose, Not Just Tasks

This generation seeks work that matters. They want their contributions tied to larger missions be it sustainability, social impact, or innovation.

Tip: Embed ESG, DEI, or CSR projects into roles for younger employees.

Example: Godrej Group links Gen Z employees to sustainability projects in green manufacturing. Loyalty scores rose across under-30 teams.

3. Redefine Flexibility Beyond Hybrid

To Gen Z, flexibility equals trust. Strict “anchor days” or rigid hybrid models often clash with their expectations.

Tip: Build flexibility charters with team-level autonomy instead of top-down mandates.

Example: Infosys’s “FlexiFlex” model lets teams decide quarterly how many days to be in office, co-created with Gen Z councils.

4. Make Wellbeing Holistic

Wellbeing goes beyond gym memberships or EAPs. Gen Z expects support for mental health, financial stability, and family responsibilities.

Tip: Expand benefits to include eldercare leave, therapy stipends, and financial wellness coaching.

Example: Swiggy extended counseling services and wellness leaves for remote tech teams boosting retention in digital roles.

5. Accelerate Career Journeys

Gen Z doesn’t want to wait a decade for leadership roles. They value growth and skill-building over stability.

Tip: Offer rotational programs, short-term “gig” projects, and gamified learning tools.

Example: TCS is piloting AI-driven simulations to design personalized upskilling paths, making learning fast and engaging.

6. Give Them a Voice in Policy

This is the most participative generation yet. They want to be heard and involved in shaping company policies.

Tip: Establish Gen Z councils, focus groups, or “shadow boards.”

Example: Infosys’s Gen Z councils co-create HR strategies, leading to lower attrition in the under-30 workforce.

Spotlight: India's Gen Z-Friendly Workplaces



Zoho

Built rural campuses with housing, enabling young employees to work closer to their roots while boosting productivity by 20%.



CRED

Async-first, location-agnostic model removes meeting fatigue, favoring outcome-driven work—highly attractive to Gen Z.



Mahindra Group

Introduced a reverse mentoring program where Gen Z employees mentor senior leaders on digital trends, building cross-generational respect.



Byju's

Introduced structured mentorship and career pathing after losing young talent to attrition in 2023–24.

Takeaway for HR Leaders:

Gen Z isn't asking for "**special treatment**"! They're asking for workplaces that are human, flexible, and purpose-driven. Organizations that respond proactively will not only retain this generation but also unleash their innovation, creativity, and digital fluency to drive the next wave of growth.

The Future of HR Is Gen Z-First



As India's workplace evolves, Gen Z is no longer the future, they are the present. Their voice is strong, their choices are clear, and their influence is undeniable. For HR leaders, the opportunity lies in embracing this shift, not resisting it.

By designing for purpose, embedding recognition, offering genuine flexibility, and reimagining wellbeing, organizations can unlock loyalty and performance in ways older playbooks never could.

At RethinkHR, we remain committed to supporting India's HR community in navigating this generational transformation. We hope this edition of the newsletter sparks new ideas in your teams and equips you with insights to lead with clarity.

We'd love to hear from you. How is your organization adapting to Gen Z's influence? Write to us and let's continue the conversation.

Next Stop: RethinkHR Conclave | Bangalore Edition



The graphic features a background image of a conference hall with people seated at round tables. Overlaid on this is a dark blue rectangular box containing the event details. At the top of the box is the RethinkHR logo, which consists of the word 'Rethink' in white and 'HR' in red, with a small orange icon above the 'H'. Below the logo, it says '6th Annual Conclave' and 'DELHI - BENGALURU - MUMBAI'. The main title '6th Annual RethinkHR Conclave Bangalore' is prominently displayed in white and blue. Below this, the tagline 'People. Purpose. Progress.' is in a smaller white font. The central text 'BLOCK YOUR DATE' is in large, bold, white capital letters. At the bottom of the box, there are two blue buttons: one with a clock icon and the text '26th Sept '25 9am - 5pm', and another with a location pin icon and the text 'The Den, Whitefield Bengaluru'. A large blue button with the text 'Register Now' is positioned at the very bottom of the graphic.

RethinkHR
6th Annual Conclave
DELHI - BENGALURU - MUMBAI

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Bangaluru**

People. Purpose. Progress.

**BLOCK YOUR
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26th Sept '25
⌚ 9am - 5pm

📍 **The Den, Whitefield
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Register Now to secure your seat and be part of the future of HR. For speaker inquiries, partnership opportunities, or general information, write to us at: info@sapphireconnect.in

Thank You for Being Part of the RethinkHR Community

We're proud to grow this platform with you: a vibrant, forward-thinking network of HR leaders who are reimagining the workplace not just for today, but for the future. We look forward to seeing you at our upcoming events and continuing this important dialogue on flexibility, equity, wellbeing, and innovation.