

Always on the move

Generation Y employees only stay in a job for two years on average, which can pose problems for employers



Penny Spencer



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Generation Ys are making their mark in the workforce. They have no intention of staying in the same company for 30 years, and so can take advantage of an Australia-wide skills shortage.

This is highlighted even further in the travel industry, with rival agencies poaching good consultants on a regular basis, and young agents being lured from their jobs with the promise of more money, more benefits and more travel.

But how many times can a young consultant change jobs without a prospective employer raising their eyebrows?

Travel People director Sandra Chiles said employers should expect at least a couple of years of loyalty from their Generation Y employee.

"If they left two jobs in two years then I wouldn't have a problem because the average stay today is two years," she said. "But four times would be too much, and I would be questioning the stability and fit of the person, even if they have all the skills."

However, a number of job changes on the resume doesn't necessarily mean the person has a problem with holding down a position.

Chiles said employers need to consider other reasons for the person having numerous short-term jobs.

"If it was contract or temporary work, I wouldn't necessarily view that as a negative," she said.

"There could be a reason they only did a job for three months: they might have gone

overseas or moved interstate. That type of thing is different."

Managing director for Spencer Travel, Penny Spencer, said she carefully considered how many positions a prospective employee has had before taking them on.

She said lots of changes on a resume can be a warning sign.

"I don't think 'that's just Generation Y and that's the way they are'. A lot of the time that's probably not the case."

Spencer said she has a number of Generation Y consultants working in her Surry Hills agency who have been with her for at least three years.

"It comes down to managing personalities and what turns them on, and open lines of communication," she said.

"But there is still that element where they are looking [for opportunities] and the grass is always greener."

With so many jobs available in the industry at the moment, no one can blame the Generation Y consultants for scanning the classifieds for something more attractive. However, Chiles said this was not good practice for employers, who bear the financial burden of having to rehire when another agent walks out the door.

"If companies they have joined don't meet their immediate needs, employees have no hesitancy in changing because it's a candidate short market," she said.

"I also believe that when people join a company, it takes them three months to settle in and to be productive. By chopping and changing, there's a cost factor to the employer."