

From travel to talent, Gen Z transforms hospitality landscape

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Dhaka: A generational shift is redefining global tourism and hospitality as Generation Z emerges as both the industry's fastest-growing customer base and a major source of talent. Born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, Gen Z is challenging long-held norms and accelerating change across travel, lodging, and service operations.

Industry observers say Gen Z travelers prioritize meaning over luxury. Travel is viewed as an essential part of well-being and self-expression rather than an occasional indulgence. Experiences centered on cultural immersion, sustainability, and transparency now rank above traditional markers of status.

Digital convenience remains critical for this cohort, with expectations for seamless app-based bookings, mobile payments, and personalized

services. However, Gen Z also values authentic human interaction, prompting hospitality brands to balance advanced technology with warm, genuine service on the ground.

As employees, Gen Z is also reshaping workplace culture. Rigid hierarchies and inflexible schedules are increasingly rejected in favor of collaborative environments where individual voices are heard. Employers that emphasize diversity, ethical practices, and social impact are better positioned to attract and retain this generation.

Work-life balance and trust-based leadership are seen as central to long-term engagement. Analysts note that Gen Z workers are more likely to stay with organizations that align with their values and offer flexibility, creativity, and opportunities for growth.

Hospitality education is evolving in response. Training programs now focus on practical experience, digital skills, and cross-cultural collaboration to prepare students to serve Gen Z travelers and work alongside Gen Z colleagues. Courses increasingly emphasize real-world problem-solving and purpose-driven management.

Industry experts say the shift is already underway. Gen Z is not a future market but a present force, raising expectations and pushing the hospitality sector toward a more digital, inclusive, and human-centered model.

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