

Professional growth, work-life balance top class of 2019's desires

By Sean McCabe

As graduation approaches for the class of 2019, young people say they value professional growth and work-life balance more than compensation, according to staffing agency LaSalle Network.

LaSalle's report, What the Class of 2019 Wants, polled more than 3,000 recent or soon-to-be college graduates in February 2019 to determine students' professional expectations and desires as they enter the workforce. A majority of those polled were graduating with business degrees, followed by social sciences, marketing and STEM-based degrees.

Belonging to Generation Z — namely, those born after 1996 — the class of 2019 is seen as "financially driven, socially cautious and pragmatic about their futures," according to the report. Twenty-four percent of students LaSalle polled have already accepted employment opportunities before graduating, while the majority of students polled have also had one to two internships in their collegiate careers.

When evaluating a job, the class of 2019 cited "opportunity for growth" as the most important factor to them. (The classes of 2016, 2017 and 2018 also ranked this factor first.) The class of 2019 then ranked "work-life balance" and "compensation" as the second and third most important aspects of their future roles, respectively, making them the first class since 2016 to rank work-life balance so high. Previously, the class of 2018 ranked "team culture" as their third most important professional factor, with the class of 2016 ranking "training/development" third as well.

Generation Z has already proven to have different values than the millennials before them. For example, 76 percent of Gen Z respondents expect a raise one to two years after their start dates; comparatively, only 40 percent of millennials expected the same. Fifty-nine percent of Gen Z respondents also ranked benefits as a top factor when evaluating a future employer, compared to just 37 percent of millennials.

Other notable findings from the report include:

- Sixty percent of graduating seniors are willing to take a temporary or temp-to-perm position.
- Sixty-nine percent of Gen Z respondents are more likely to apply to a job if the employer actively manages its brand online.
- "Medical coverage" and "401(k) match" were cited as the two most-desired benefits in a first position.
- Twenty-eight percent of respondents considered student loan reimbursement "very to extremely important" when considering an employer. Forty-one percent of respondents considered it slightly important, while 31 percent deemed it "not at all important."

For the full report, head to www.lasallenetwork.com.