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The Great Resignation 2.0 is coming – and I salute the European millennials who plan to quit

Adapted from *The Guardian*, by Alexander Hurst, Mon 6 Jan 2025

After Covid, the US saw a wave of younger workers leaving unsatisfying and exploitative jobs. Now I hear it's France's turn

5 Recently I was chatting to an acquaintance in Paris, a senior manager in his mid-50s, who works for a French company in the education sector in France. He was complaining to me about what he viewed as a lack of loyalty and commitment among the younger workers he manages – both millennials and gen Z. I imagine the manager is, himself, a good boss; at least, the person I know is sympathetic, flexible, and has admitted to me that he would give everyone raises if he could. So I held my tongue. But inside, every cell in me was cheering for all of the underlings who were willing to leave a job that wasn't suiting them, or who were demanding more flexibility in their hours and locations.

10 The phrase “quiet quitting” was first referenced in Urban Dictionary in May 2022, but millennials have had a reputation for being “difficult” employees to manage since well before then. And now, after what was termed the “the Great Resignation” – in the US in the period after Covid – the internet is simmering with rumours that a Great Resignation 2.0 may be brewing, perhaps brought on by employers such as Amazon insisting that staff return to the office five days a week from 2025, when many would still prefer hybrid arrangements. This follows a study by LinkedIn and Microsoft which found that even more people want to quit their jobs today than did in 2021. The survey of 31,000
15 individuals across 31 countries found that 46% of employees want to leave their jobs in the year ahead – more than the 40% in 2021. (Of course, there's a big difference between wanting to quit and having the means to go through with it.)

20 Nestled in the discussion of a recent Gallup poll – which once again confirmed that millennials were more likely to look for new jobs, more open to taking them, less engaged at work, and more likely to envision leaving their current employer – is this observation by one of the report's authors: “Millennials are consumers of the workplace.”

25 I'm sure the line was meant to be slightly derogatory. After all, while businesses have come to expect millennial job-hopping, “it's definitely not desired”, says Vanessa Forslev, an HR consultant in Minneapolis and a millennial herself. “It causes disruption, there are high costs to training a new employee, and morale is dashed when a team member leaves.”

30 But if millennials have become “consumers of the workplace”, is it any surprise? Businesses have been consuming *us* for decades. The shift from long-term, quarter-century capitalism to quarterly capitalism, designed to extract short-term profits at all costs, is making us tenser and meaner. It includes shrinkflation, greedflation, endless add-on fees and, as far as airlines are concerned, squeezing every possible morsel of profit by making their basic products and services *worse* so that they can charge extra for being treated with basic human decency.

35 [...] Millennials haven't had it easy. They graduated into the financial crisis, and 10 years later got rocked by Covid. They've been caught between student loans and astronomical housing prices, with almost no way out. What do you do when you can afford artisanal coffee and experiences, but not a mortgage? You want to have a work-life balance that reflects that basic reality. No wonder 76% of millennials and gen Z want to be their own boss.

40 This isn't intended as an anti-business screed, or to fuel the prejudice that millennials are entitled and whiny. Most of us want to do meaningful work, to work in humane environments, without work becoming the be all and end all of our lives – hence so many businesses experimenting with a four-day week and concluding it a success.

“The companies that get it right are introducing more internal moves and more opportunities for their people to progress,” says Nadia Edwards-Dashti, a London-based head hunter. To any millennials (and others) who have found that, bravo. But to those who haven’t, one thing that makes me proud of my generation is that we are exacting of employers – and being willing to put our feet where our mouths are.

Even at some coveted tech jobs, companies have “an incredibly shrewd way of gaming regional differences”, as a project manager at a tech giant put it. In his case, he says that when he moved internally from Europe to the US he got an 80% bump in his salary for the same position – but it was still lower than a local US hire would have been offered, because being on a work visa meant that he lost the leverage inherent in potentially being able to leave for a different job. In addition, he said, stock grants to new hires in the US were on average 10 times higher than for equivalent positions in Europe.

This company may be so big, and have such a large pool of applicants to choose from, that it doesn’t particularly care about employee morale – but I know that if I were working for it in Europe, being subject to that type of geographic discrimination would make me want to quit *à toute vitesse* and hopefully others too. And after all, en masse quitting is what finally helped push US salaries upwards for workers in general, even among blue collar workers, not just tech employees.

Gabrielle, an early-30s product designer for a French infrastructure company, was so fed up with her job and her employer that she made the decision to quit while on her August holiday in South America last year. By mid-October, she had found a new job, where she’s far more content. Maybe Europe is where the Great Resignation 2.0 will kick off this time. To Gabrielle and all the others who are about to quit, I salute you.

1. READING COMPREHENSION

Answer the following questions in your own words (50 words minimum / question).

- **Use your own words:** Any passage including 3 or more words in sequence taken from the source, or paraphrase without citation will be penalized.

1. What are the difficulties that millennials have encountered over the last 15 to 20 years?
2. Why is millennial job-hopping considered as a problem?
3. Why does the author criticize modern businesses?
4. What does the expression "Great Resignation 2.0" mean?

2. ESSAY

Discuss the following statement(l.23):

“Millennials are consumers of the workplace.”

- **Use your own words:** Any passage including 3 or more words in sequence taken from the source, or paraphrase without citation will be penalized.

- **(400 words, +/- 10%; use a / every 50 words).** Please mention the number of words at the end of your essay.