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COMPANY CULTURE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

A RESEARCH EBOOK:
HOW YOUR COMPANY CAN ATTRACT
AND RETAIN GEN Z TALENT

**MELANIE
WERTZBERGER**

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ARE YOU READY TO MODERNIZE WORKPLACE CULTURE?

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INTRODUCTION

There are libraries of data available on millennials and how they behave in the workplace. There are studies and blogs about how to keep them happy at work, how to manage them, and how they communicate. In fact, the millennial generation is very interesting because they were the generation that asked their companies to care about work-life balance, diversity and regular employee recognition.

Just as we have begun to master the millennials, we welcome into the workplace a new generation, Gen Z! We now find ourselves back at square one with little information on what these young, talented individuals value in company culture and benefits. We lack data on how to successfully manage and communicate with Gen Z. In reality, as a business leader who will likely find yourself hiring or working with many Gen Zers going forward in your career, this lack of information should cause a bit of concern for you. But do not fear, this book will provide a lot of valuable information regarding Gen Z and how they operate in a professional setting.

We surveyed over 1000 members of Gen Z (ages 18-25) about their priorities and preferences regarding company culture, programs, benefits, work styles, and more. The results of this survey are included throughout this book.

If you happen to be a Gen Zer, thank you for being here. I hope this book brings you some self-awareness toward the differences between yourself and your older colleagues. It will also educate you about your peers' demographics, tendencies, and preferences. This will allow you to discover where you fit in and what areas you stand out or are different from the other members of Gen Z.

This new generation is entrepreneurial yet appreciates stability. They are virtually connected but they value true face time. They are the ultimate multitaskers; the generation that will work with 5 monitors at their desk. They create and welcome change. We need to be ready for the change they bring and prepare our workplaces to welcome in the next era of business leaders.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

What qualifies me to teach you about Gen Zers? Well, for starters, I am one! I was born in 1996 putting me right on the line between Millennials and Gen Z. This means I have grown up with, gone to school with, and worked with both Millennials and Gen Zers. I have seen their strengths and weaknesses, In fact, I embody their strengths and weaknesses! I hope my age provides a unique and valuable voice for this book. I am excited to share this research about my peers with you in hopes that it will create a workplace that understands the characteristics of their future leaders.

What qualifies me to write about company culture? I have dedicated my career to creating happier, more productive, and more innovative workplaces through company culture. I am the founder of a company culture software, Shaka, and have worked with amazing organizations to help improve their workplaces, boost engagement and see great results! I also have experience working for companies with great cultures and companies with toxic cultures. More recently, I conducted significant research on Gen Z in the workplace, the results of which will be shared throughout this book. These experiences have led me to my current path and to writing this book for you.

Thank you for showing interest in the next generation of talent. Thank you for working to create workplaces that will optimize their abilities.

Throughout the ebook I will share actionable suggestions that you can easily implement. I truly hope this is an enjoyable and informative read for you! If so, please share it with your network and colleagues.

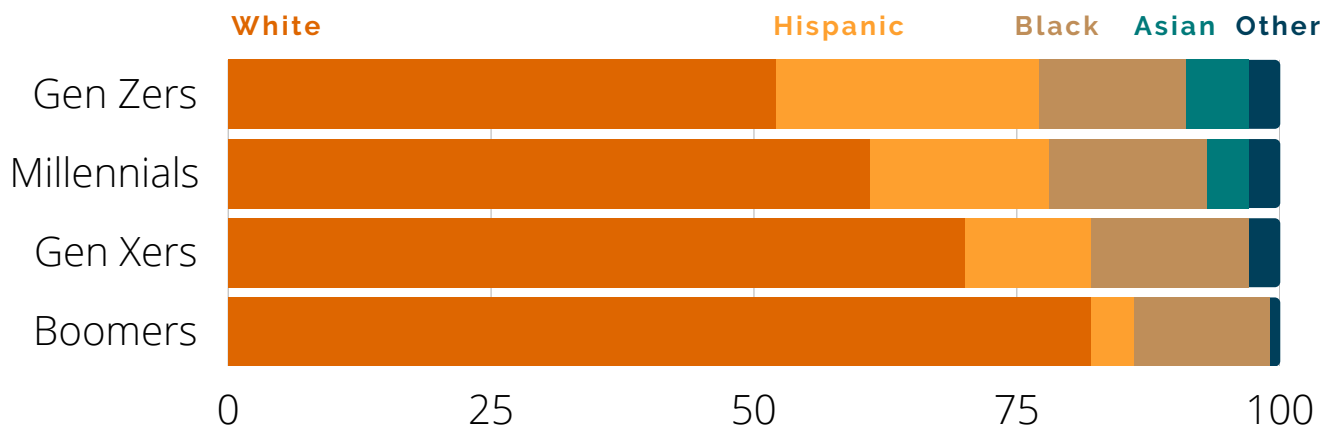
Sincerely,

Melanie Wertzberger

WHO IS GENERATION Z?

Let's start by taking a minute to get to know our new pals. Gen Z was born between 1996 and 2015 which means the eldest of the bunch is currently reaching 26 years old (2022). A 26 year-old is certainly an adult. They are independent, working men and women who are in the real world. I emphasize this because some of the older readers might think that Gen Z is still playing with Bratz Dolls or reading Diary of a Wimpy Kid. No, Gen Z is here. Their resumes are on your desk and our workplaces are soon to see a shift as the applicant pools begin to flood with Gen Zers.

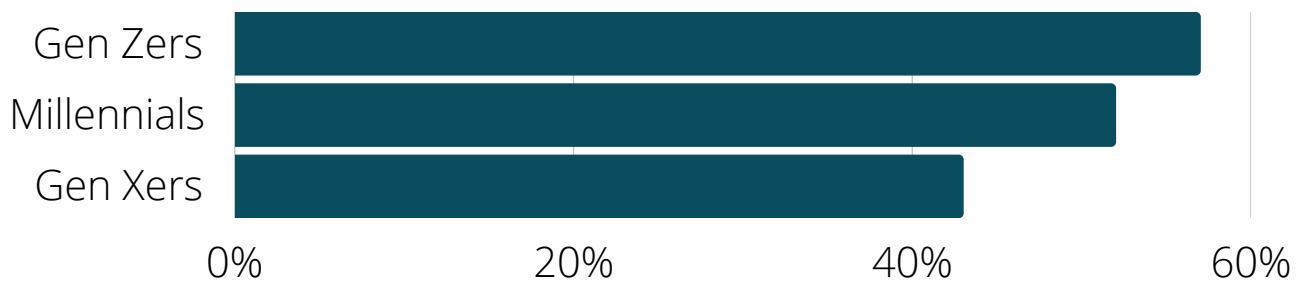
Gen Z makes up about 25% of the population (Gomez). They are an incredibly diverse generation, both racially and ethnically speaking.



17% of Generation Z adults identify as LGBT, a significant rise from the 9.5% of Millennials who identify as LGBT (Jones). They are on the forefront of the changes we have observed in gender identity, with 59% saying that online profiles and documentation should include gender options beyond "male" and "female" (Parker).

Gen Z is a highly educated generation with 57% of 18-21 year olds attending a 2-4 year college (5% higher than Millennial college enrollment rates) (Parker). Additionally, 70% of Gen Zers think that to maintain a comfortable life, they will need at least a bachelor's degree and 60% are interested in pursuing management-level roles (Friedman). This makes them highly qualified candidates to be the future leaders of your organization.

Approximate % of Generation that Enrolled (or will enroll) in College



Gen Zers were under the age of 5 when the horrible attacks on 9/11 occurred. This may be the first historical event some of them remember but for many, it actually begins after that. Their childhood was certainly impacted by the financial decline of the early 2000s and the 2008 real estate crash, however, they likely didn't know the details or severity of the issues. Additionally, we can now all add COVID-19 to the list of challenges Gen Z has endured. The 2016 election of Donald Trump was the first election in which this generation could vote and it will be a notable one for them in history. Gen Zers are very comfortable speaking about their political positions and opinions with friends and even at work.

Some world events that have had a more dramatic impact on the identity of Gen Z include the release of the first iPhone in 2007 and the launch of Facebook in 2008. Generation Z is the first generation that doesn't really remember life without a cell phone. They have been able to connect with others via technology for the entirety of their lives. This doesn't mean they are a less-social generation but it does have a significant impact on how they interact and communicate.

On a lighter note, they enjoyed Justin Bieber, the Jonas Brothers and Hannah Montana on their iPods. They have a great respect for Crocs and fond memories of gauchos. A lot of their most "cringe-worthy" outfits were purchased from Aeropostale. Their first business endeavor was likely selling duct tape wallets or silly bands. They successfully raised Webkinz and would beg their parents to eat off of Zoo Pals paper plates. These are just a few of the brands, people and experiences that define the childhood of the Gen Z population.

I give you a glimpse into this history of their childhood so that, for a moment, you can place yourselves in the shoes of a Gen Zer. Imagine how different your life would be if your childhood friends competed in "poke wars" on Facebook. What if your parents were expected to have their work Blackberry on them 24/7 during your childhood? How would COVID-19 have affected you mentally if you didn't remember other major political and economic crises? What would your life look like if you were born in the year 2000? Being able to empathize with someone of another background, gender or generation is an ability we constantly have to exercise and train. This practice will make us better colleagues, friends, mentors and parents!

STRENGTHS

It is important to focus on the strengths of younger generations if you would like to create a welcoming environment for them at your company. The following section highlights the top strengths most commonly exhibited by this generation.

Entrepreneurial

Gen Z has surpassed Millennials as the "Most Entrepreneurial Generation" with 53% of Gen Zers indicating that they would like to run their own business according to Fast Company (Lindzon). Gen Z is getting into entrepreneurship at a very early age. Many K-12 education programs now offer an entrepreneurship class. College campuses are also featuring startup incubators to support young entrepreneurs. This 'DIY Generation' may be so comfortable with the idea of running their own business because so many of their parents are entrepreneurs, the costs are lower than ever before therefore it has become a more viable option during their life. **It is important to know that Generation Z is more skeptical of the traditional career path that was viewed as successful by prior generations.**

Pragmatic (Practical and Focused)

Generation Z dreams with their eyes open, this is the best way to understand their pragmatism, This pragmatism is often reflected in their personal finance decisions, such as contributing to their 401K. This Generation feels a strong need for security and stability despite having huge dreams and aspirations.

Independent

This generation prefers to be independent but not isolated. Gen Z grew up with a wealth of knowledge available at their fingertips. Any questions they had could be answered on Google and anything they wanted to learn could be taught to them via a YouTube video. Financial independence is very important to Gen Zers and they are often willing to sacrifice short-term wants for long-term independence. When working with Gen Zers, their independence doesn't mean that they do not want direction. They appreciate having clear goals, objectives and milestones laid out for them and then to be trusted to achieve those goals independently.

Ethical

Gen Zers do not form opinions solely on price or quality. When making a decision, they take into consideration other characteristics that they value, such as environmental impact and brand reputation. This generation is willing to spend more on products that align with their values and ethics. For businesses, this means deeply rooting your company values in your workplace and employees. It also means that bad publicity can really kill your ability to attract Gen Z employees or customers. **55% of Gen Zers indicated that working for a company that gives back to the community is important to them.**

Individualistic

Gen Z deeply wants to know and understand themselves as individuals. They do not like to be placed in boxes or be required to conform to fit into a group or role. They enjoy personalized experiences that allow

them to be their true selves. Being individualistic does not mean that Gen Zers are selfish. Actually, they tend to be less selfish than the generations preceding them.

Their individualism will impact their expectations at work. To make Gen Zers happy, companies will be required to tailor career paths and roles to meet Gen Zers as individuals rather than expecting them to match the profile of a job description. Customization of job duties and responsibilities could actually create positive business and financial impacts for companies because individuals will likely be more passionate and excited about their work.

WEAKNESSES

Society tends to focus more on the weaknesses that each generation brings rather than their strengths. While I don't believe this is a good practice, it is helpful to be aware of some of the common challenges you will face when working with Gen Zers which I will highlight in this section.

Short Attention Span

Studies have found that Generation Z has the shortest attention span of any generation in the workforce. **Their attention span is just 8 seconds** long (compared to millennial's 12 second attention span) (Uche).

Mindfulness practices can help Gen Z employees improve their focus. Leadership should understand the necessity of capturing this young audience in the first 8 seconds. Long lectures are a losing method.

Technology Dependent

Gen Zers can be incredibly resourceful when they're plugged in but they will likely feel pretty lost without access to a device or the internet. Gen Z started using Microsoft Excel around the 3rd grade. They were given laptops and tablets in school. If you ask these young employees to go through old filing cabinets of paper accounting documents, they will lose their patience very fast. One thing you can do to support these incoming employees is give them the opportunity to request new tools from IT. Maybe this means having a form where employees can request licenses for new softwares or an annual meeting to discuss any gaps in your company's internal technology

suite. I have seen days where sales softwares go down or internal messaging tools break and it basically becomes a vacation day for Gen Zers because they don't know how to move forward, they would rather wait for access to return.

Cynical

In the strengths section of this book, I highlighted how Gen Z is pragmatic. Well, extreme cases of Gen Z being pragmatic ends in them being somewhat cynical. Cynicism can take on multiple definitions, but the form of this word that relates to Gen Z is that they are quick to see negative realities. If Gen Zers lose a sense of purpose, hope or belief that their goal is feasible, they will come to a spiraling halt. If they realistically believe in a goal or outcome, they will show incredible determination and grit. Gen Z has no interest in doing mundane work that has no purpose. You need to explain to them the WHY behind every project they are assigned.

Weaker Mental Health

Research has found that only 45% of Gen Z says that their mental health is good or excellent. This is 11% lower than the millennial generation that brought the conversation of mental health into the workplace (AECF). The shift to remote work has left Generation Z more isolated than ever because they are just entering the adult world and trying to establish adult friendship in and out of work. COVID-19 hit at a very transitional phase of life for Gen Zers, whether they were in college or just entering the workforce. This took a toll on their mental health. 87% of Gen Zers that we surveyed said that working for a

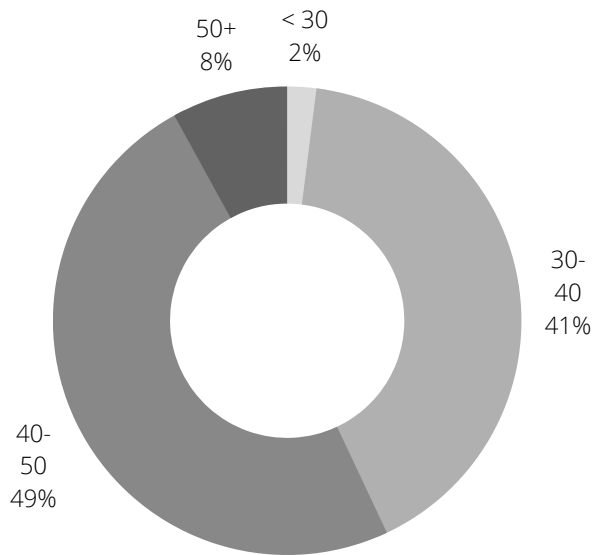
company that values their physical and mental health was very important to them. This is something we have incorporated into our product at Shaka but your company can also support Gen Z employees by offering mental health days off, benefits packages that cover mental health appointments and having your HR department conduct mental health check ins across your company.

#1 WORKPLACE REQUIREMENT

By far, the highest priority for Generation Z is work/life balance. Maybe you have heard the phrase "live to work vs. work to live," Gen Zer's certainly lean toward working to live. People of older generations may perceive this as a lack of work ethic or lack of passion for a career because, historically, there has been a pattern of entry level employees paying their dues by working endless hours in their early careers. This priority of work/life balance should not be viewed as a lack of enthusiasm but rather a healthy habit that this generation will normalize in workplaces.

The way to optimize a young Gen Zer without having them in the office for excessive hours is to recognize that, when given the right tools, they can be incredibly efficient workers. If you set clear and reasonable goals, milestones and timelines for projects, Gen Zers will find a way to accomplish tasks within the workday at a high caliber faster than you would imagine. Pay attention to the number of hours Gen Zers are working and understand that everytime you push them beyond the normal work week, you are directly cutting into their job satisfaction and increasing your risk of employee turnover.

We asked Gen Zers how long they expected to work each week, and their responses may surprise you. Most adults would consider 40-50 hours a standard work-week, perhaps even a few extra hours per week in the early years of your career. Gen Z has slightly different expectations.



Expected Hours Per Work Week

Only 8% of Gen Zers expect to work more than 50 hours per week. 49% expect to work between 40-50 hours per week. Here is where things get interesting: 41% of Gen Zers responded that they expect to work between 30-40 hours per week. 2% responded that they expect to work less than 30

hours per week. You can see that these responses align with their strong desire for work-life balance. The biggest takeaway from all of my research on Generation Z is that you can expect the leading cause of their turnover to be a lack of work-life balance or feeling that they are being pushed to work too many hours.

How to help Gen Z achieve work life balance at your company:

- Measure their success at your company by their output, not by the number of hours they work. Managers should create timelines for deliverables and be sure to reiterate that "as long as your work is meeting or exceeding expectations, you can log off for the day whenever you need to." Leadership needs to genuinely believe this policy. **Remember, you are hiring Gen Zers to do a job and that they may be able to do that job in less than 40 hours.** Some companies say these things to their employees and others truly mean it (there is a very obvious difference as an employee).

- Make sure that this list of deliverables/priorities does not create more than 50 hours of work for your Gen Zers. If it does require overtime, be sure it is paid overtime or they will likely start dropping resumes elsewhere.
- During your employee 1-on-1's check in on work-life balance, make sure this conversation seems honest or create an anonymous way for Gen Zers to indicate that they need a break.
- The last suggestion I can make to HR and business leaders on this topic is that you should consider updating your sabbatical policy. To Gen Zers, the word sabbatical doesn't mean a long vacation or leave of absence. **For this new generation, a sabbatical is a time to actively pursue finding purpose.** It doesn't need to be a year, rather, it could be having the option to take a month of unpaid leave. Your leadership team will have to reflect on whether they would rather lose an employee temporarily to a sabbatical or permanently to a new job.

With these policies in place, you will likely see your company's young talent find new ways to innovate, automate work, and boost efficiency all-around. It might not feel like it, but allowing Gen Z to work a few less hours will be a win-win-win for the employee, the manager, and the company. There will be major savings from reduced turnover and a boost in productivity. I predict that by the time Generation Z becomes the tenured leaders of companies, a 4-day workweek is a normal perk at many companies.

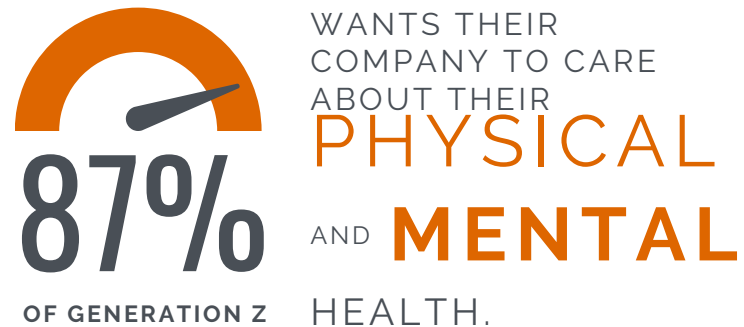
WHAT GEN Z NEEDS FROM THEIR EMPLOYER

The first chapter of this book was all about work-life balance because it is the very top priority for Generation Z at work. Beyond work-life balance there were other key workplace attributes that stood out as very important to Generation Z. Knowing and implementing these things at your company is sure to help you attract and retain the best young talent!

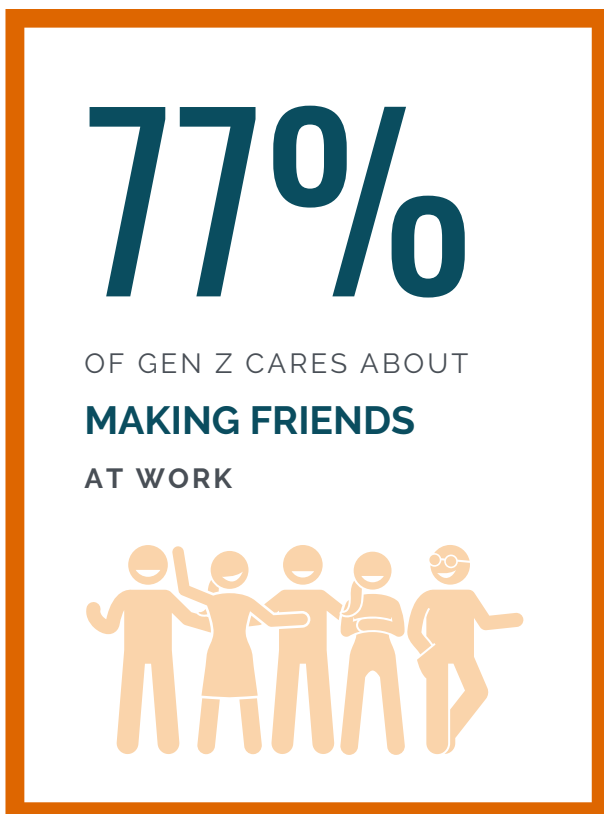
87% of Gen Zers surveys indicated that a company that values their physical health and mental health was important to them. In recent years, we have

seen HR departments become more and more responsible for checking in on employees' well-being. These practices will need to continue to grow to better support the future workforce.

We built Shaka Challenges to enable companies to run fun, custom wellness challenges. We have seen organizations run healthy recipe challenges, walking challenges, fitness challenges, mindfulness challenges, even philanthropic canned food drives as a friendly competition. I hope this provides some ideas for you of how your company can find new ways to demonstrate that you care about your employees health both physically and mentally.



84% of Gen Zers said it was important to them that they know what is expected of them in their role. Your managers absolutely need to deliver clear position expectations to Gen Z employees. I will go more into depth on this in the next section of the book, but companies should make frequent meetings between managers, employees, and HR solely focused on providing the Gen Z employee with constructive feedback and positive recognition. This will serve multiple purposes because **Gen Zers also value recognition with 72% responding that being recognized for their work was important to them.**



77% of Gen Z cares about making friends at work. 76% also said it was important to them that their manager and team know them as a person. On page 29, we will dive deeper into employee relationships and networking, but it is clear that personal relationships at work are incredibly important to this generation. Consider how you can support these new employees in making friends as they come into your company.

WHERE AND WHEN THEY WANT TO WORK

I would consider this section of the book to be the hottest topic of 2021. If you are an HR leader, you have likely seen a lot of different research and statistics on where and when employees prefer to work. Remember, this is a book based solely on Generation Z, specifically those who are ages 18-25. Many of these individuals are just starting their careers and, for the most part, are only caring for themselves at this time, not other dependents.

Our research found that 55% of Gen Zers prefer hybrid workplaces (a combination of working at home and in the office). 43% Preferred to work in person at an office. Only 2% of respondents indicated that they would like to fully work from home.

Gen Z Preferred Work Location

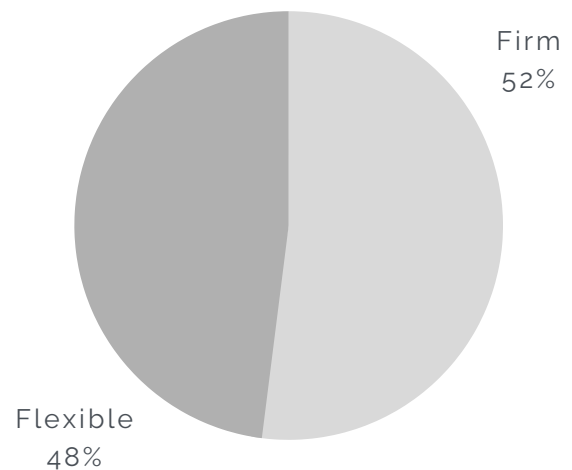


Offering hybrid work options is clearly the best option for Generation Z employees. However, these results do not align with the preferences of the overall working population, which creates an obvious challenge for

business leaders. Other generational studies are finding similar results. The majority of the employees who are asking for more in-person work time are the younger employees, presumably because it is difficult for them to get acclimated to their team and receive training while being remote. The older and more tenured employees who have had time to acclimate and have additional dependents at home are the ones demanding the flexibility to work from home.

We not only asked Gen Zers where they prefer to work but also when they prefer to work. I believe that the following results will surprise you. 52% of Generation Zers prefer to work on a set schedule. 48% responded that they would like to have flexible hours. That is right, over half of Generation Z would choose to have

Gen Z Prefers Their Schedule



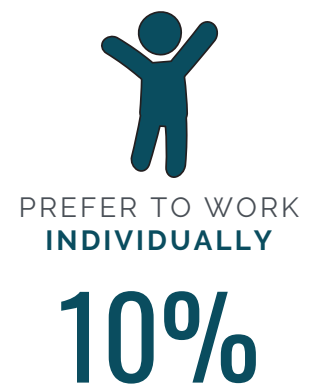
a set schedule rather than working at their convenience. I dug through this data a few times because I could not believe my eyes when I received these results! My best advice is to encourage each manager to ask their employees about their preferences regarding schedules and accommodate the individual to the best of their ability. Perhaps Generation Z realizes how challenging it is to have meetings and ask questions when everyone is working on their own schedule. Maybe they have already come to the realization that "working flexible hours" often translates to "working extra hours."

Every company is going to approach these workplace policies differently but there is some universal advice I can share based on my experience with Gen Zers. First, hosting in-person socials and in-person training sessions are critical to helping Generation Z feel at home at your company. If your company is switching to fully remote work, request that a budget be set aside to host these events and help employees travel to attend them (the savings from not having an office will certainly cover these costs). Make sure you have a team member dedicated to planning these events.

Second, it is imperative that you start to invest in an online training platform and extensive documentation of processes and procedures for every role at your company. Ask your employees to record themselves as they complete their regular tasks and explain out loud on the recording each step they are taking and why they are doing it. Have organized archives of these videos that can be shared with incoming employees. Generation Z has a lot of experience following video tutorials, this will feel like a comfortable way for them to “sit alongside” a coworker and learn how to repeat their work. It will also be helpful for knowledge retention when an employee leaves the company.

COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION

Often, people express concerns about Gen Z's ability to communicate and collaborate because the majority of their interactions are managed behind a screen. I was curious if the generation themselves shied away from collaboration at work, so I asked the 1000+ survey participants how they prefer the majority of their project work to be assigned in their careers. 10% of Gen Zers responded that they prefer to work alone most of the time. Only 7% responded that they prefer to work in teams most of the time. The strong majority, 83% of respondents, said that they prefer to be assigned a mixture of team and individual work.

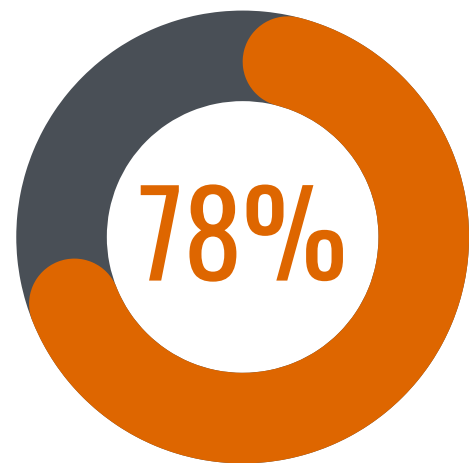


A key takeaway here is that, although the majority of Gen Zers prefer a mixture of team and individual work, when you look at the total population, 93% of Gen Z preferred that at least some of their projects be individual projects where they are working alone. Often, at the start of your career, your projects will all be team-based to give you time to learn and develop into your role, but only 7% of Gen Z will be satisfied

if they are working in teams all day everyday. If you are hiring young talented Gen Zers and you have concerns about retention, be sure that their managers are assigning them at least a portion of work that they can do independently.

Other things you can do to help support Gen Z's need for individual work at early stages of their career is to have them block off an hour of independent work time on their calendar each day and encourage them to turn off notifications during that work hour. If you have an in-person office, you can create dedicated small workspaces in your office where they can close the door to get work done independently. Also, if you're purchasing this year's team Christmas gift, consider noise cancelling headphones instead of another sweatshirt. These things help Gen Zers get in their own headspace and have some time for non-collaborative work, even if it is just for a small portion of their day.

If you are a manager of a Gen Z employee that doesn't get exposed to a lot of team projects, consider finding a project owned by a different department that the employee can play a supporting role in for a few hours per week. According to our research, 78% of Gen Zers would like to be involved in projects outside of their direct role or department. Offering these opportunities outside of their normal work scope will give them the ability to meet and collaborate with new



OF GEN Z WOULD LIKE TO TAKE PART IN PROJECTS OUTSIDE OF THEIR DEPARTMENT

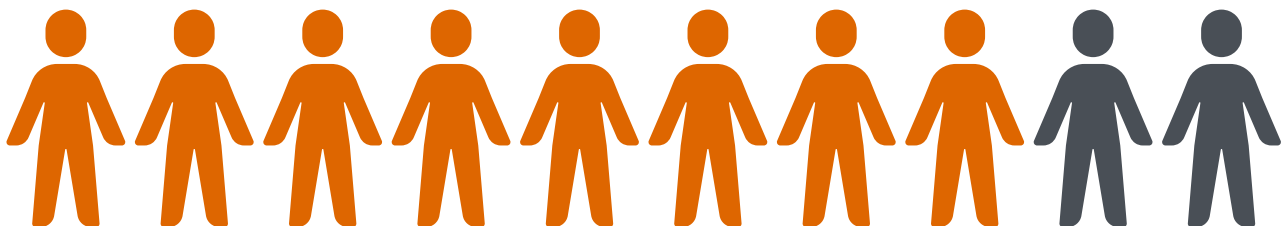
colleagues and exercise a new area of their brain. Often, this cross-departmental knowledge will benefit your company in the long-run.

The best way to communicate with Gen Zers online is via instant messaging tools like Slack and Teams. Most Gen Zers will feel comfortable communicating with their boss and team via text message when needed, but it is important to remember their highest priority of work-life balance when communicating with Gen Zers. Encourage them to turn off their work messages at a certain hour of the day. They are so accustomed to instant communication that they might need to be reminded by their managers that it is okay to not reply immediately to every work message.

GEN Z AS INTRAPRENEURS

Earlier in this book I highlighted that one of the top strengths of Gen Zers is being Entrepreneurial. Some recruiting teams hesitate to hire entrepreneurial employees because they might be motivated to leave and start their own company at some point in the future. This mindset has begun to shift with the rising popularity of the term "Intrapreneur," or an employee who innovates from the inside of an already established business. There is a lot of value in hiring intrapreneurs because they help your company discover efficiencies and stay in front of industry trends. We researched a few topics to help us better understand the "Intrapreneurial" traits of Generation Z.

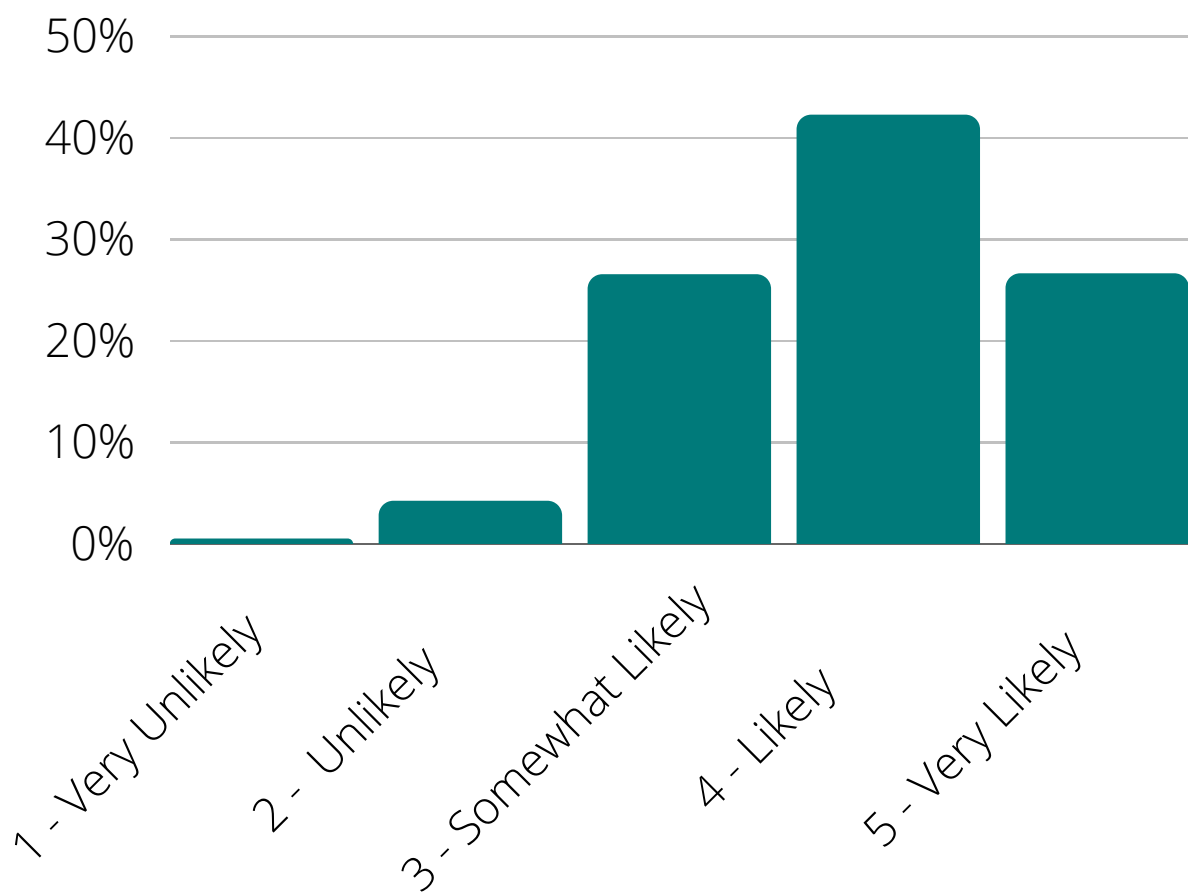
First, we researched how important it was to Gen Z that their companies give them space to experiment. We asked our 1000+ Gen Zers ages 18-25 if it was important to them that their company lets them take risks, try new things and potentially fail. 80% responded, "yes" it was important to them that they had this freedom to experiment at work. 20% responded "no", that this was not a priority for them at their future company.



8 OUT OF EVERY 10 GEN ZERS FEEL IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THEY HAVE THE ABILITY TO TAKE RISKS AT THEIR COMPANY AND POTENTIALLY FAIL.

Next, we asked how likely they were on a scale of 1-5 to contribute new ideas at their company. The results shown below indicate that 95% of Gen Zers believe they are at least somewhat likely to contribute ideas to their company and 69% of that population is confident that they are likely to contribute new ideas to their company. I think that we should be excited about this statistic for our future organizations. Here is how you can take action to support Gen Z employees: coach your managers to be receptive when these young employees make suggestions and know that asking them to contribute ideas or brainstorm solutions will feel like an exciting opportunity to most Gen Zers.

HOW LIKELY ARE GEN ZERS TO CONTRIBUTE NEW IDEAS AT THEIR COMPANY?



BUILDING A COMMUNITY AT WORK



94%

**OF GENERATION Z
WOULD LIKE TO MAKE
FRIENDS AT WORK**

One piece of data that is incredibly underrated by business leaders regarding retention is that having a close friend at work makes you seven times more likely to be engaged in your job (Mejia). Imagine, all of your turnover problems could basically be solved with one ingredient - friendship! 94% of Gen Zers hope to make friends at work, leaving just 6% that feel that their friendships should be separate from work.

77% of Generation Z responded that they would like to be on a committee or to be involved in community leadership roles at their company, such as joining the diversity committee, leading a volunteer group, or planning a holiday party. This means only 23% of Gen Zers have no interest in being involved in company 'extra-curricular activities.'


77%

**OF GENERATION Z WOULD LIKE TO BE ON A
SOCIAL COMMITTEE OR TAKE ON A
COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP ROLE AT THEIR
COMPANY**



This finding was the basis of the creation of the Shaka Communities feature. I wanted to offer a space where employees felt empowered to create or lead company groups on their own. I would encourage HR leaders to ask employees about these interests during their final interviews or their early days at their organization. These 'extra-curriculars' give employees a new sense of purpose and belonging. They also are a way for young employees to show their dedication to the company and its culture. Whether you do it with Shaka or via your own internal programs, creating these micro-roles are sure to improve your ability to retain Gen Zers.

92% of Gen Z employees would like to meet colleagues outside of their direct team/department and learn about what they are working on.

92% 
OF GEN ZERS
WOULD LIKE TO

**MEET COLLEAGUES
OUTSIDE OF THEIR
DIRECT DEPARTMENT
OR TEAM.**

The majority of Gen Z employees are interested in internal networking opportunities but are likely lacking the courage to make these introductions on their own. Our team at Shaka found that even if employees are confident enough, they simply don't find the time to make it happen despite the positive effects it has on their job satisfaction.

On a small scale, your company could mimic our Shaka Connections tool, which pairs employees for 20-minute internal networking meetings at the frequency of their choice and automatically schedules these meetings and provides conversation starters. On a larger scale, I

hope you will contact our team at Shaka to help develop an awesome connections program that your employees will love.

If you have a larger team and you're looking for a way to run a similar program without Shaka, you could host quarterly "speed networking" events at your company. As the host, have prompts ready so the employees don't feel like they are just repeating the same phrases in every round. Encourage all the participating employees to send a follow up "nice to meet you" email or slack message so they have a reminder of who they chatted with down the road. An online tool that I have used for hosting an event like this is called "Gatheround" which is in no way affiliated with Shaka, myself or this great book, but I encourage you to check it out!

LEADING AND DEVELOPING GEN Z TALENT

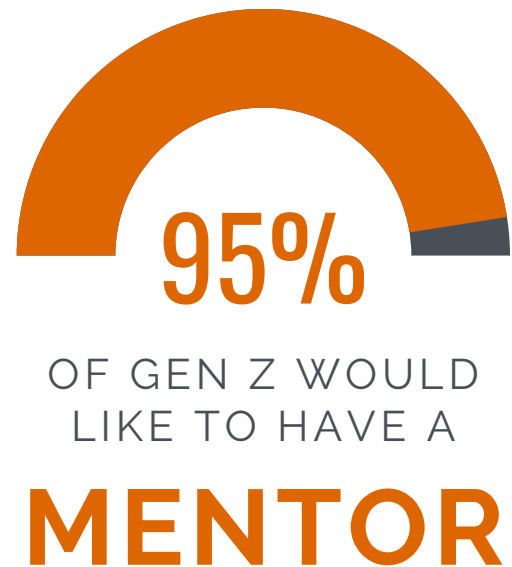
As I mentioned earlier in this book, Generation Z is extremely independent and resourceful, however, their learning style is different from that of prior generations. Our research found that when assigned a new project, 83% of Gen Zers prefer to have clear expectations, procedures and guidelines over 17% that preferred to figure things out on their own while having someone available for questions.

Throughout my career, I have heard multiple times managers say "Don't ask me questions that you can Google," which is a fair request (to an extent) but, I suggest for managers who feel like they are getting too many questions to reflect on the quality of the instructions they gave to their employees. Generation Z is very concerned with delivering work that meets or exceeds expectations and this is why a lack of clear deliverables can be detrimental to a project. If you have an employee who is struggling, consider taking an extra hour to expand their written instructions.

Again, only 17% of these employees preferred having a resource to ask for help over clear instructions and procedures. The underlying insight here is that Gen Zers are not very comfortable asking another human for help or support. Remember, anytime Gen Z had a question, Siri or Alexa was there to help. Siri and Alexa can't judge you for your dumb

questions or from opinions about what you don't know. In a work setting, it is critical that Generation Z asks questions. You can help them feel comfortable approaching people for help. Training on how to be approachable and how to approach higher level employees for help is a good idea as you begin to hire Gen Zers.

Another shocking statistic we found is that 95% of Gen Zers would like to have a mentor at their company. This is probably the most easy-to-implement program or takeaway from our findings. Offering a structured mentorship program at your company can be a strong selling point during interviews to help you attract young talent. You should be highlighting your employee mentorship program on your website's career page and during interviews. A study done by Randstad found that employees with a mentor at their company are 49% less likely to turnover and, as a result, companies save ~\$3,000 on recruiting and training costs per employee per year (Reeves).

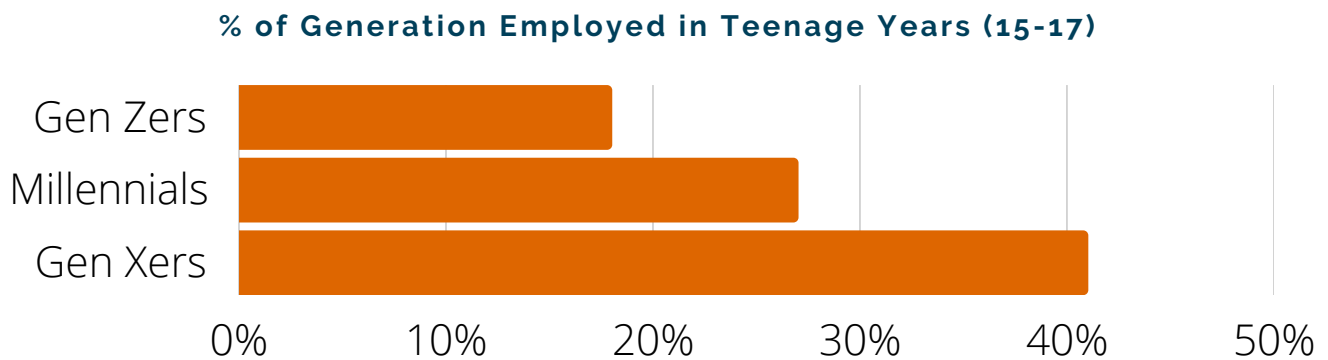


Looking for other perks or programs you can implement to attract and retain this young generation? Consider offering a continued learning stipend. 97% of Gen Zers responded that they would like their company to provide opportunities for them to take classes, attend conferences, and listen to industry speakers. Often, continued learning programs are

mutually beneficial for the employee and the employer. For the employee, continued learning helps them grow their resume, feel like their company cares to invest in them, and increases their engagement in their work. For the employer, their team members are bringing back new skills and helping the company stay up-to-date with the latest innovations.

TENURE AND PROMOTIONS

One notable change that will create a shift in workplace dynamics is the age that Gen Zers have started working. Significantly fewer Gen Zers are employed in their teenage years (ages 15-17) than prior generations. Infact, only 18% reported having a job at the age of 15-17 compared to 27% of Millennials and 41% of Gen Xers .

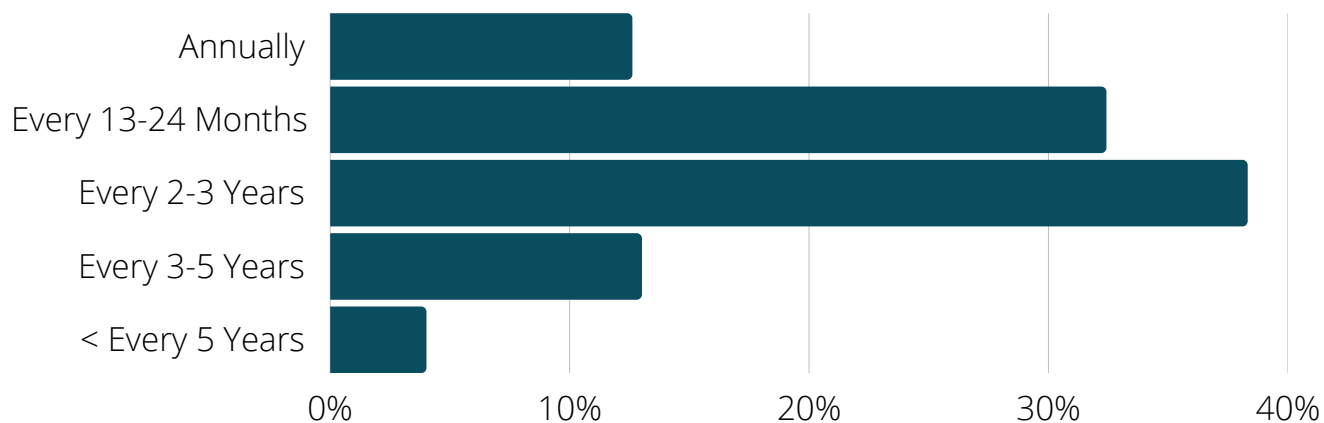


What does this mean for you as a business leader? This data indicates the Gen Zers have less experience reporting to a manager, providing customer service and understanding work expectations and deliverables. Companies will need to adjust to accommodate Gen Zers work history by providing additional training and onboarding support. Managers should create plenty of opportunities for Gen Zers to ask questions and get feedback before deeming them incapable of learning on the job. It will require extra effort to build and define a manager-employee relationship with a member of Gen Z.

It is likely that the average employee tenure will continue to decrease in the future, however, I was staggered by the results of our research regarding Gen Z and promotions. We asked Generation Z how often

they expect to be promoted or to change roles. The results of which can be seen in the graph below.

How Often Gen Z Expects to Be Promoted or Change Roles



The most popular response to this question was every 2-3 years. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average employee tenure in the U.S. in 2020 was only 4.1 years (BLS), so it is surprising to me that Gen Zers expect to wait 2-3 years to be promoted or change roles. Assuming the average tenure continues to decrease (as it has in past years), Gen Zers will likely only have 1 or maybe 2 titles at your company. Which makes you wonder: are management trainee programs really worth continuing for the next generation of employees? Perhaps employees coming out of these trainee programs have significantly longer tenures, that is for your team and company to measure and decide!

My biggest takeaway for you in this chapter is that Generation Z wants their career path to feel unique and customizable. A standard ladder to be climbed will not be enticing to Generation Z. Your HR team and

management team should take time to discuss multiple career path options for your young employees and make them feel like they have the freedom to make choices that fit their interests along the way. Perhaps your company will need to invent a lot of new titles, but that is little to give up to make Gen Zers feel like they are still following their passions.

CONCLUSION

It always baffles me the way people speak negatively about different, often younger, generations. It is counterproductive and creates a division within workplaces that is surely losing companies hundreds of thousands of dollars. People raised in every era have different weaknesses, but also have great strengths. I hope this book will allow you to prepare your workplace for Generation Z in a way that feels positive and uplifting.

In the upcoming years, we will see Gen Z redefine work-life balance. There will be a pattern of miscommunication before managers understand how to correctly provide expectations and procedures to successfully lead Gen Zers. Companies will invest in mentorship, employee wellbeing and continuing learning programs. Career paths will no longer be standardized, but rather custom built around each individual's purpose and passions.

Great leaders and managers invest in deeply understanding how to motivate their employees. The information you gained from this book makes you an expert on building workplace for the next generation. Being able to provide insights to your colleagues on how to attract and retain Gen Z talent will be incredibly valuable.

Welcome to the workforce, Generation Z!

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The majority of the statistics throughout this report came from my research. I would like to thank the thousands of Gen Zers who participated in my studies. This book could not have been possible without you! I hope it results in greater workplaces for you all to enjoy!

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