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There is no doubt that Generation Z (people born between 1997 and 2012) is starting to make its mark. Often referred to as “the iGeneration,” “zoomers,” “centennials,” and “post-millennials,” Gen Zers as of 2025 represent approximately 27% of the global workforce. Understanding their unique workplace motivations, values, and behaviors is important and increasingly essential for business leaders’ success.

Digital Natives Expect Tools

As digital natives, Gen Z has grown up with screens – smart phones, apps for every need, and addictive social media. Unlike generations before them, they don’t struggle to learn new technology – it comes naturally to them. They experiment with new platforms with ease and welcome new tech tools. AI, in particular generative AI will impact them exponentially as they will expect the latest AI-driven platforms at work. And while AI can boost productivity, it will also bring managerial challenges, many of which have yet to be identified.

A Diverse Group Focused on Equity and Inclusion

Racial and ethnic diversity defines Gen Z with 48% identifying as non-white (Pew 2024), 53% as neurodivergent (Texthelp 2024), and 22% as LGBTQ+ (Axios Research 2023). Living in an age of global interconnectivity, they view themselves as citizens of the world, rejecting conventional labels and identifying based on personality traits, hobbies, and passions. As a result, they tend to be more focused on equity and inclusivity, and look for workplaces that share a commitment to these values.

Prioritizing Work-Life Balance and Desiring Purpose

According to Deloitte’s 2025 Gen Z and Millennial Survey of 23K+ respondents in 44 countries, young professionals seek to improve their financial security while finding greater work-life balance and purpose-driven work. For Gen Z, purpose is an important motivator; 54% report that when evaluating a potential employer, meaningful work is very important to them. Gen Zers expect employers to take issues such as climate change seriously – recycling, reducing carbon footprint, and other sustainability initiatives make a difference.

A LinkedIn survey revealed that 72% of Gen Z workers have left or would leave a position due to an inflexible work policy. In fact, because they are more concerned than prior generations about financial insecurity, having experienced economic turmoil and job market instability, many Gen Zers have multiple jobs, working “side hustles” or interests that help them afford a higher quality of life. Having experienced the work-from-home pandemic early in their careers, they assume the hybrid work model – work from home sometimes and in office other times – is in some way part of a healthy work-life balance. Hybrid work models that allow for both personal and professional commitments are very important to attracting and retaining Gen Z talent.

Challenging Authority and Seeking Feedback

With mental health and work-life balance as critical drivers, Gen Z is more comfortable challenging hierarchical structures and authority. In Gen Z’s digital world, communication is less formal and they are generally more confident interacting with people of different levels and expressing their views candidly. Managing Gen Z talent successfully means more regular direct communication and coaching as well as creating opportunities for frequent feedback. And they demand authenticity – it is not acceptable to post corporate values on the office walls and operate independent of those values.

Creative Thinking and Career Development is Important

Gen Z grew up in a world that celebrates the start-up and through social media they have been exposed to start-up intricacies and successes. They are gamers, accustomed to creative thinking and group problem solving so they prefer collaborative work teams. Encouraged by Gen Z, many innovative companies have embraced this mindset and built continual learning and inspired entrepreneurship into career development. Google, for example, encourages employees to spend 20% of their time focused on personal work projects. This has reinforced their reputation as innovators and has landed Google on the “Best Places to Work” list year over year.

Managing Gen Z talent successfully means providing open communication and regular feedback, career development opportunities, tech-driven tools, and workplace flexibility. And while they may be candid in expressing their perspectives, they value in-person mentoring and empathetic leadership. Our clients recognize they need to invest in strategies and tools that will enable them to attract and retain top Gen Z talent for their future success.

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