

HOW TO ATTRACT NEW EMPLOYEES TO YOUR COMPANY

WHAT DO GENERATIONS X, Y AND Z WANT FROM AN EMPLOYER?



SUMMARY

This report discusses, among others, the different preferences and expectations of three generational groups in the labor market. The aim is to give employers insight into what is required to attract and retain such diverse talents. It follows that Generation X, because of the economic decline they experienced, valued job security, work-life balance, and respect for personal time. They favoured flexible working conditions and the opportunity to work independently. The key drivers for Generation Y, or Millennials, are meaningful work that aligns with their values, career development, and flexibility in their roles. They look to employers who can offer continuous learning and recognition. Generation Z is the youngest generation and in search of a tech-enabled environment, job security, and attention to mental health and inclusivity. They expect modern tools and a supportive culture from their employers. Employers will have to offer different approaches to attract these generations: stability for one, meaningful engagement for another, and technological integration for the next. This will create an inclusive, supportive workplace that reflects the unique needs of each group.







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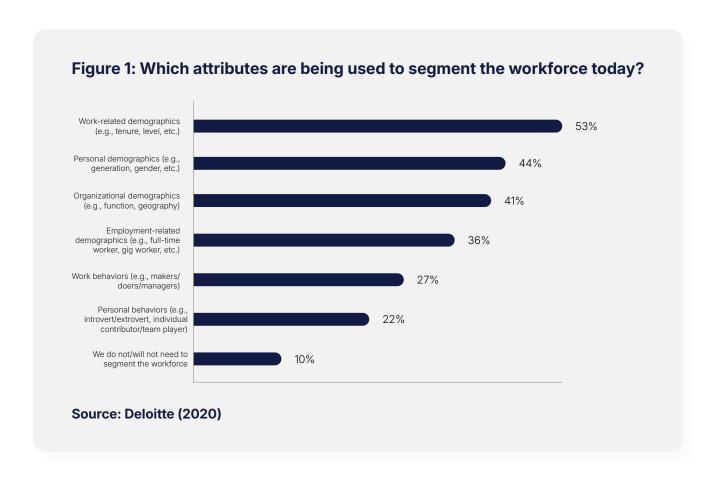
With USIQ, he offers, among other things, employee surveys based on current scientific standards. He helps employers find out what their employees want by conducting a representative employee survey. Successful employers can then receive an award as a top employer or family-friendly employer, in addition to a comprehensive evaluation. A suitable marketing package can then help employers increase their visibility as an employer. Such an employer certification follows this sequence: survey and analysis, award and communication. Hundreds of companies already rely on the expertise of PhDr. Oliver Scharfenberg.

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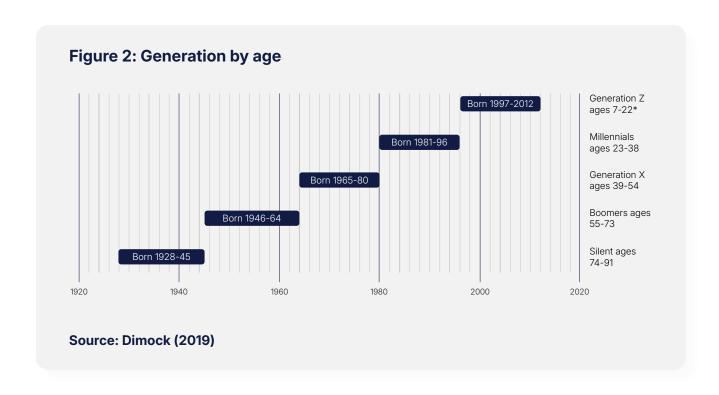
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INTRODUCTION

Generations X, Y, and Z are different cohorts of employees, each of which was formed under the unique historical, cultural, and technological events that influenced attitudes, behaviors, and expectations at work as seen in Figure 1.

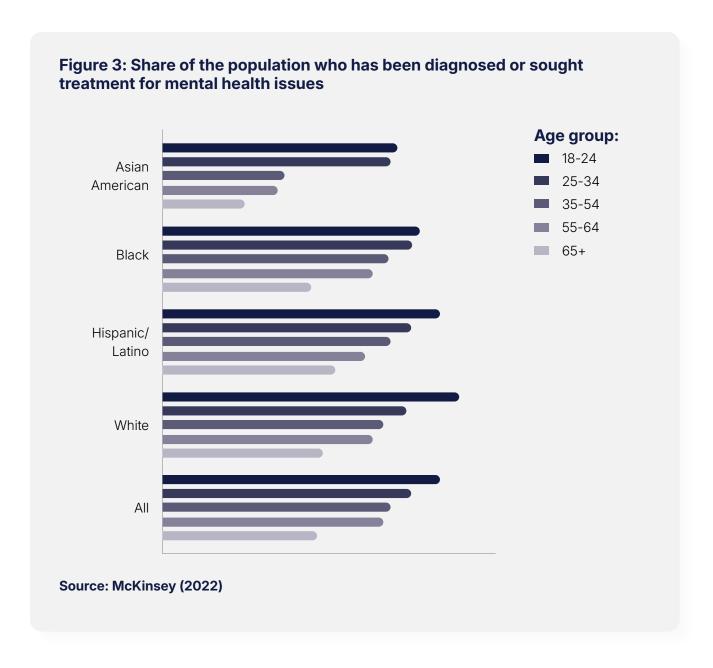


According to Figure 2, Generation X was born between 1965 and 1980. This generation grew up during times of great social change, such as dual-income households, increased divorce rates, and the rise of personal computing. Because of this, according to Fixen (2018), Generation X tends to be independent, self-reliant, and places a strong emphasis on work-life balance. They are often portrayed as sceptical, resourceful, and practical due to growing up in a time of economic unpredictability and social norm change. This generation's attitude towards work and life greatly differs with socio-economic background, race, and education.



Generation Y, or Millennials, is the largest and most studied generational cohort in today's workforce, generally defined as those born between 1981 and 1996. This generation grew up during the digital revolution of the rise of the internet, social media, and mobile technology. Millennials are described as tech-savvy, globally connected, and civically conscious. They reportedly valued meaningful work, career enhancement, and flexibility. That in turn, involves a fit between the workplace culture offered and personal fulfillment balanced with professional growth (Deloitte, 2020). Still, one of the many criticisms of the Millennial label is that it typically portrays this generation as entitled and/or overly concerned about life-work balance. Furthermore, the assumption of Millennials being technologically savvy needs to be tempered by an understanding that access to technology within the generation varies greatly (West, 2018).





Generation Z is the youngest cohort in the workforce born between 1997 and 2012. It is the first generation to grow up entirely in the digital age, where smartphones, social media, and constant connectivity are ubiquitous. As a result, they are very flexible, accustomed to multitasking, and expect that technology will seamlessly integrate into the work environment (Benítez-Márquez et al., 2022). However, their relation to technology is not one-dimensional. At ease with digital tools, they are also increasingly concerned about privacy and potential negative effects of social media on mental health-the largest generation proportionately with diagnosed mental health problems regardless of race, except for black people as shown in Figure 3 (McKinsey, 2023). Moreover, this generation is more likely to favour employers that can provide them with some sense of security in a precarious economic environment, even if this goes against the flexible, gig economy values associated with previous generations.

NEEDS AND DESIRES OF GENERATIONS X, Y, AND Z IN THE WORKPLACE

2.1 Generation X

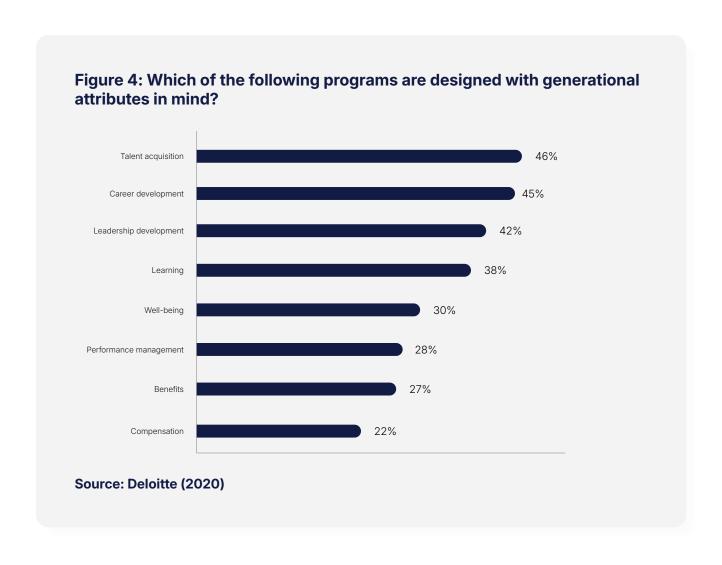
A primary need of Generation X employees is to balance work life with personal life. Understanding what growing up and having their parents work excessively long hours has been like, many Gen Xers need flexibility in their jobs (Kohll, 2021). Correspondingly, this balance translates into a commitment to work. Unlike Millennials and Generation Z, Generation X has more of a traditional work ethic. They believe in getting the work done but not necessarily at the expense of their personal time.

Moreover, Generation X values job security more than their Millennial or Gen Z counterparts. This is due to the simple fact that they grew up in times of

economic unease (Miller and Cepuran, 2019). Most people who have grown up in the ranks of Generation X had severe disruptions in the job markets, such as the dot-com bubble and the 2008 financial crisis. Their preference for an employer with long-term stability, pension plans, and clear career paths speaks volumes about them. This is contrasted with individuals in the Millennial or Gen Z generations, primarily, who look more for an opportunity to create flexibility and avenues of growth rather than an assurance of job permanency.



The key drivers for Gen X at work are a need for autonomy and respect. They had a less supervised childhood than Millennials and therefore appreciate independence. They seek jobs that will allow them to have a certain level of control over their work. (Dannar, 2012) This can be understood to mean that Figure 4 frames leadership management to be amongst the top workplace programs where Generation X forms the bulk of the current workforce, especially at the supervisory and management levels (Deloitte, 2020). Appreciation in terms of respect by colleagues and seniors is also paramount since there is a sense in the Gen X mindset where they view themselves as largely experienced and knowledgeable and due for recognition. Hence, the reason why it is significant that a supportive work environment prevail-where mutual respect and trust exist among the individuals to attract and retain X Generation talent.



2.2 Generation Y

The most significant wants of Millennials revolve around meaningful work. Unlike past generations, who might have had other priorities such as job security or financial benefits, Millennials want jobs that reflect their values and make a contribution to social welfare (Parmlee, 2023). They are motivated by jobs that give them a sense of purpose-be it contributing to change in society or working in industries that foster environmental sustainability or social justice.

Also, Millennials are ambitious and career-oriented (Moore, 2014). Professional development is very important for them; they value opportunities to learn new skills. This generation is interested in employers offering continuous learning, mentorship programs, and career advancement opportunities (Gallup, 2016). Without these apparent development pathways, it is not expected that Millennials will remain with their employers. They are also known for job hopping frequently, which usually aims to get them to greener pastures.

Similar to Generation X, Millennials also value flexibility, but their definition is more related to the ability to balance personal interests with professional responsibilities. To this generation, work-from-home options, flexible hours, and even the possibility of compressed workweeks fall into the category of important job benefits. Indeed, in a recent study, Gallup (2016) found that Millennials are more likely than other generations to switch jobs if flexible conditions are not extended to them. It also goes hand in hand with a desire for autonomy in decision-making and in work processes.

Finally, Millennials love feedback and recognition. They appreciate regular performance feedback and acknowledgment of achievement, because it gives them validation of their contribution and helps them to feel accomplished. According to Deloitte (2020), Millennials prefer a collaborative environment where their opinions will be heard. They believe in regular communication with managers regarding performance and career path.

2.3 Generation Z

Gen Z is very tech-savvy, and for them, it goes without saying that the employer must be able to offer an innovative, tech-enabled environment to work in (Hackl, 2021). Advanced technologies like AI, cloud-based tools, and collaboration platforms are not a luxury but an absolute must-have for them to do their jobs effectively. They would want their employers to seamlessly facilitate digital communication and make the latest tools available to enhance productivity and efficiency.

Unlike Millennials, who might want job flexibility or personal growth, Generation Z is concerned more with financial stability and a secure job. Growing up during the COVID-19 pandemic and observing economic recessions, Generation Z values having a stable and well-paid job (Francis, 2022). They will

also be more likely to look out for employers offering competitive salary packages, benefits, and long-term career prospects.

Moreover, Gen Z highly values diversity and inclusion in their workplace. They expect an employer to create an environment receptive for all kinds of people, where everybody has equal opportunities for going upwards. According to a report by the IMF (2024) mental fitness is also one of the pivotal issues of this generation. The Gen Z population is very sensitive to the issue of maintaining good mental health in a fast-moving and competitive world. They are more likely to choose employers offering resources for mental health, work-life balance, and a supportive culture that supports well-being.

HOW TO ATTRACT EACH GENERATION

3.1 Generation X

Employers will need to emphasize job security, flexible working conditions, and respect for personal time. Most of the Gen Xers started their work in the times of economic decline, so their generation saw recessions in the 1980s and the dot-com bubble burst, which built a sense of survival instincts for keeping stable employment and a secure career (Miller and Cepuran, 2019). In fact, employers can satisfy this need by offering a clear career progression route and, in addition, providing financial security through a competitive compensation package, retirement benefits, and job permanence.

Besides, Gen Xers value work-life balance and flexibility since most of them have passed through the hustle of trying to balance family life with a tight work schedule. Therefore, offering remote working options or flexible hours is a good way to attract them (Kohll, 2021). While flexibility is important, employers should also understand that Generation X is known to be independent and loves to work autonomously. They prefer to work without excessive control, so creating a culture that allows independence on how the work is to be done will increase job satisfaction and loyalty.

It is also important that employers respect the experience and expertise which Generation X brings into the workplace. As a generation that is wired for efficiency and results, opportunities leading teams, influencing decisions, and using their problemsolving skills will attract them to organizations that value practical experience and not just seniority or credentials.

3.2 Generation Y

Employers have to provide Millennials with jobs that would resonate with their values and focus on corporate social responsibility. As Deloitte (2020) argues, Millennials are most influenced by companies that clearly demonstrate a compelling commitment to sustainability, diversity, and social causes. A company that actively supports charitable causes or environmental sustainability would no doubt impress Millennials, who seek employers whose values match their own.

Career development is another critical area when it comes to attracting Millennials. Indeed, 87% of Millennials, as per a Gallup (2016) finding, consider professional development an important aspect of a job. Hence, firms have to give mentorship programs, well-defined career trajectories, and chances for constant learning and enhancement. This would explain why lack of career development was ranked as the main reason why they leave their jobs as seen in Figure 5. Also, recognising their efforts through constructive criticism can go a long way in improving their morale. (Murphy, 2018).

Figure 5: Main reasons manufacturing employees take, keep or leave a job

Taking



Meaningful work



Workplace flexibility



Reliable coworkers

Staying



Workplace flexibility



Meaningful work



Adequate compensation

Leaving



Lack of career advancement



Inadequate compensation.



Uncaring leaders

Source: McKinsey (2024)

Besides that, Millennials look for flexibility in a working environment, at least concerning remote work and flexible time. In this respect, the COVID-19 pandemic has been able to test the ability of Millennials to work outside an office environment: most would prefer this over working inside an office setting (Deloitte, 2020). Because of this fact, every employer willing to recruit Millennials uses flexible working arrangements as one of their many perks (Gallup, 2016). It is, however, important to put in that Millennials are not entirely obsessed with working remotely; they do value a blend of face-to-face interaction and autonomy at work.

3.3 Generation Z

With the technological advancement of Generation Z, for instance, employers have to ensure that the workplace is also digitally sophisticated and equipped to support collaboration, efficiency, and innovation. In fact, this generation expects workplaces to underpin digital transformation in regards to using cloud-based collaborative tools, Al-powered enabling systems of working remotely, and so on (Francis, 2022).

Figure 6: Top reasons why Gen Z take, stay and leave a job in manufacturing **Taking** Reliable Workplace Meaningful Caring Inclusive flexibility coworkers work leaders community Staying Workplace Meaningful Safe Reliable Career flexibility work workplace coworkers advancement Leaving Lack of career Lack of Inadequate Lack of Uncaring advancement meaningful workplace compensation leaders flexibility work Source: McKinsey (2024)

Apart from technological integration, the desire for diversity and inclusion adds a lot to the generation; this is within the top five reasons why they take the job in manufacturing, as obtained in Figure 6. As outlined by Morrison (2023), Gen Z expects the workplace environment to be diverse and inclusive, with equal presence or fair treatment of people having different backgrounds, ethnicities, and genders. Employers who demonstrate a commitment to diversity through their hiring practices, leadership representation, and company culture stand a better chance of gaining the attention of this group. Another important factor with regard to attracting Generation Z is mental health. Unlike older generations, Gen Z is more forthcoming about mental health challenges and needs employers who actively support mental well-being.

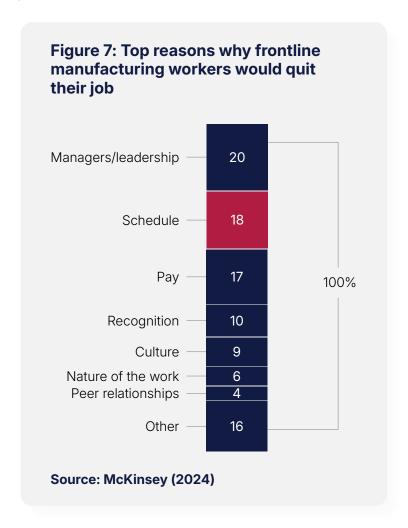
McKinsey (2023) identifies providing mental health resources such as counselling services, wellness programs, and supportive work environments as important ways of appealing to this generation. Employers that actively promote a culture of mental health awareness, flexible leave policies, and resources for stress are most likely to appeal to their needs. This may explain why a safe workspace is among the top 5 reasons for staying in a job as seen in Figure 6. In addition, meaningful work ranking second in the reasons for taking and staying at a job as this makes them feel better about themselves knowing that their work is a having a positive impact on the community.

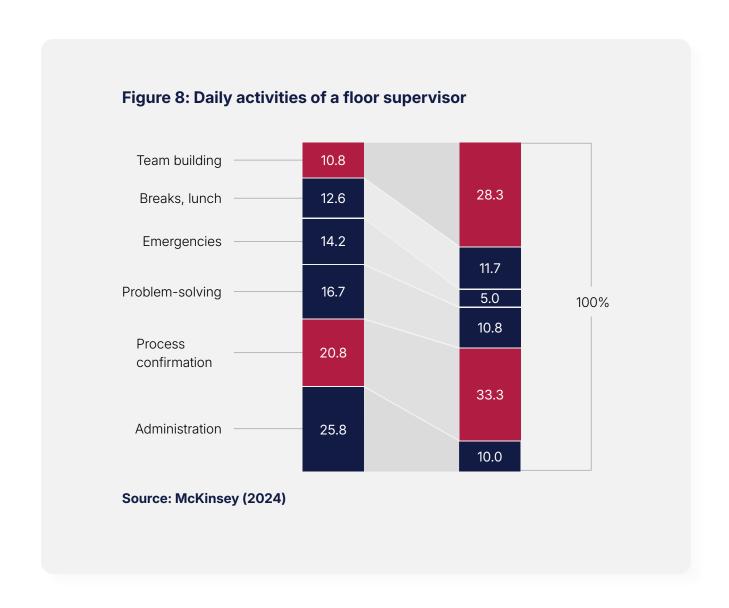
WHAT EMPLOYERS CAN OFFER TO BE PERCEIVED AS ATTRACTIVE BY EACH GROUP

For Generation X, employers can offer flexibility and autonomy because leadership and schedule are the top two reasons frontline workers-most of whom are Generation X-leave their jobs according to Figure 7. Generation X grew up during a time of economic flux and often had dual-income households or single-parent households, which encouraged a desire for work-life balance. With that, while flexibility is much loved, Generation X yearns to get stability, have security in their jobs, and feel valued for the experiences they have. This would therefore imply that the management or employers have to avail long-term career prospects with clearly defined routes for growth, besides making offers of competitive compensation.

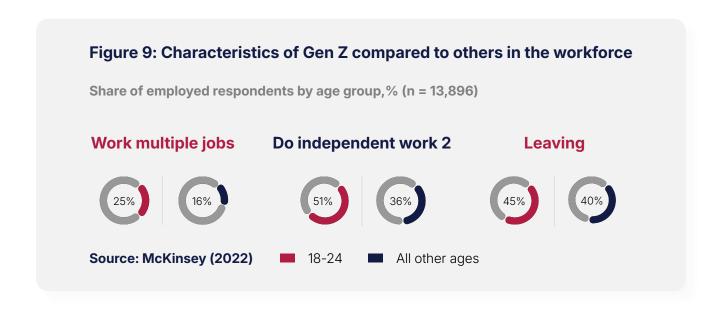
In addition, employers have to provide millennials with meaningful work, career growth, and opportunities for personal development as shown in Figure 5 on why people take and stay at a job.

Millennials, who came of age during the rise of technology and globalization, seek work that contributes to a greater good for society. According to Deloitte (2020) this generation is deeply motivated by an organization's social responsibility initiatives, with a preference to work for companies whose values align with their own. Employers can attract Millennials by offering them jobs that can also involve them in projects with a greater social contribution, such as sustainability, diversity, and inclusion, or volunteer work. It seems hard to do at this time since even though a manager is supposed to spend 28.3% of his time in team building, he actually spends 10.8% as shown in Figure 8.





Moreover, Millennials value flexibility but also demand robust technological integration in the workplace. They are digital natives who use mobile apps and collaborative tools, so companies need to make sure workplace technology is up to date (Gallup, 2016). However, flexibility and technological tools are not enough. Millennials also want an engaging work culture of frequent feedback and recognition. As Deloitte (2020) pointed out, Millennials are highly engaged if their contributions are recognized and they receive feedback on their performance. Supervisors also spend too much time on problem solving (16.7% instead of 10.8% reflected in Figure 8), and this acts as the greatest hindrance to flexibility.



Regarding Generation Z, employers need to offer digital tools, job security, and mental health support. Growing up with smartphones, social media, and technology, this generation expects employers to provide a modern, tech-enabled work environment. Gen Z values access to cutting-edge technologies that let them work efficiently and in close communication, enabling them to work more jobs at a time compared to other generations, as depicted in Figure 9 (McKinsey, 2022). Moreover, this generation is pragmatic and especially appreciates job security; hence, this generation will prefer to work more for companies that can guarantee them a better salary, benefits, and job security compared to previous generations (as seen in Figure 11) that are willing to take on risks for better career advancement or job satisfaction.

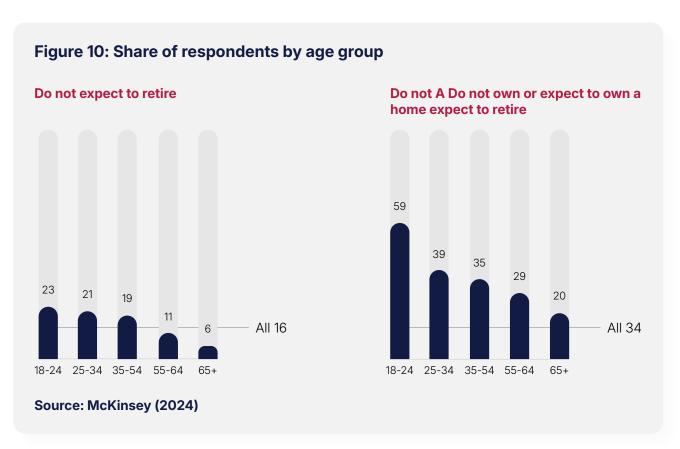
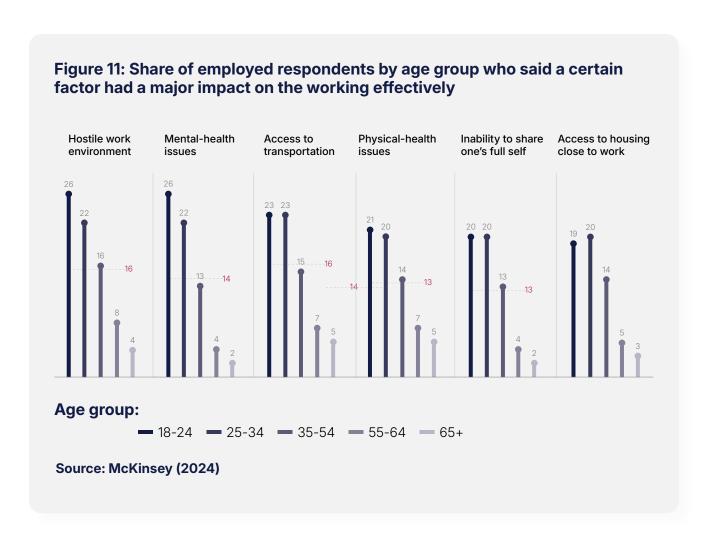


Figure 11 apart from good pay shows that Gen Z has substantial priorities on mental health and inclusivity. The COVID-19 pandemic gave people a lot to experience right from childhood; this shapes their mindset and what to expect at workplaces. Besides, Gen Z is less likely to retire or own a home compared to other age groups despite being required to work harder than other generations, as depicted in Figure 10 (McKinsey, 2022). This generation actually vocalizes calling on employers to work on mental health awareness, counsel their employees, and consider having an inclusive environment with allowed full selves at work. Besides mental health considerations, Generation Z connects best with workplaces that allow equal opportunities and actively endorse diverse inclusion.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Gen X's emphasis on stability and work-life balance will respond favourably to those offering security and autonomy. The employers in retaining such a workforce may require enhancing retirement benefits to allow the workers to feel that their retirement is secured and have their own stability at work for a long career. For work-life balance, flexibility can be made available at work: flexible time, working from home, or supporting family/ personal commitments such as caring for an immediate family member. Because so many of the Gen Xers are at that crucial juncture in their careers, employers should offer leadership development programs to tap their potential as managers. This would include more formalized mentoring, refinement of leadership skills, and avenues for career advancement-all increasing job satisfaction and retention.

On the other hand, Millennials are motivated by meaningful work, career growth, and flexibility. Employers need to establish mentorship programs where experienced professionals can guide Millennials in their career development for growth and realization of potential. Offer flexible work arrangements like remote work, flexible hours, and hybrid models, since Millennials believe in work-life balance. Added to that, employers should

clearly spell out career development pathways, opportunities for training, and skill-building programs. Millennials like ongoing education; thus, employers can offer such opportunities in the way of continuing education subsidies, online courses, and other means of professional and personal growth. The approach, on one side, helps attract Millennials while encouraging them towards long-term loyalty.

Last but not least, Gen Z has very high expectations with regard to technology, inclusivity, and career growth. Organizations should be more digitalfirst in their approach by introducing the latest technology and tools to help Gen Z to communicate and work effectively. It may range from modern communication software, cloud-based systems to Al-powered applications that enhance productivity. Also, establishing an inclusive culture goes a long way in hiring and retaining Generation Z. There has to be an enabling environment where diversity is embraced, and no one feels ostracized based on their background. And lastly, to fulfil Generation Z's need for speed in career development, fasttrack development programs, clear pathways of progression, and leadership training opportunities should be provided for rapid progression within the firm.

O6 CONCLUSION

Talents across Generations X, Y, and Z need an attracting and retention approach that is nuanced and strategic, with a tailored touch to each group's different needs and desires. Generation X looks forward to stability, worklife balance, and leadership opportunities. Millennials focus on meaningful work, career development, and flexibility. Generation Z, being native digital, is looking toward modern technology, inclusivity, and fast career growth. Employers need to understand these preferences and move to adopt strategies that blend these varying expectations, such as flexible work arrangements, investing in professional development, and fostering inclusive and supportive environments. This will provide a workplace that will resonate with all generations and promise an organization a diverse, engaged, and loyal workforce. What this finally means is that, for success in such a dynamically changing job market, a flexible and inclusive approach will be required for talent attraction and retention.

Combining employee surveys with expert analysis is a good way to identify the individual needs of employees. This will provide you with important information for further developing your position as an attractive employer.



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