Gen Z: A new generation changing the way we recruit

The millennial mindset won’t work for Gen Z

Remember the millennials—the generation born between 1981 and 1996 that currently makes up more than one-third of the workforce? It’s fair to say we’ve heard a lot about them.

This generation came of age and entered the workforce at the height of an economic recession. They’ve been described as lazy, self-absorbed, and prone to jump from job to job, while at the same time being regarded as open-minded, confident, self-expressive, liberal, and receptive to new ideas.

Millennials changed the recruiting game in that it was the first time HR embraced talent acquisition in the digital age and started using emerging technologies to find the right fit.

Many of today’s college students are no longer millennials—they’re Generation Z (Gen Z). Born after 1996, the oldest are turning 21 right now. They’re graduating from college this year and will start entering the workforce in the coming months.

Understanding the next generation of employees is critical to the future of your organization. This new generation of talent isn’t made up of “young millennials”—they’re a unique demographic with their own values, beliefs, habits, and preferences. To remain competitive and build strong teams going forward, it’s crucial that today’s organizations learn how to attract, recruit, and retain this new generation of workers.
Get to know Gen Z

The line between digital and physical has never been smaller

If you think millennials are good with technology, wait until you meet Gen Z. They’ve grown up in an always-on, tech-driven environment and are constantly connected. They’re the only generation to have grown up with technology rather than adapting to it. In other words, Gen Zers are true digital natives: they don’t know life without the internet.

“Gen Z grew up in the era of smartphones. Most of today’s youth can’t even remember a time before social media. That’s a key difference.”

Gen Z isn’t merely adept at using social media, they rely on it as a method for communicating, making an impact, and getting things done. Gen Zers are able to shape their own stories, push their worldviews, and collaborate in ways that are lost on previous generations.

Millennials were Facebook users who put their whole life on display and struggled to hide their red Solo cup pictures from colleges and employers. Gen Z prefers content with no paper trail — and the shelf life of Snapchat and Instagram Stories. They embrace personal branding and understand the value of connecting with employer brands on social.

Gen Z doesn’t make these mistakes—most of them would share their social media profiles with potential employers. Social channels are avenues for legitimate communication and learning—even when it comes to finding a job.

Gen Z adores video content—whether that’s in the form of snackable bites on social or longer-form pieces hosted on YouTube or blogs.

Gen Z favors video communication

GEN Z FAVORS VIDEO COMMUNICATION

50% SAY THEY CAN’T LIVE WITHOUT IT

Source: 1 - CBS News
Gen Z is the most diverse generation

Gen Z possesses a two-dimensional level of diversity. They are the most inherently diverse generation to date, but have also acquired diversity through their unique experiences. Their preference for diversity eclipses previous generations—and it’s not just about inherent traits like gender, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. Their 2-D understanding of diversity includes circumstantial facts like whether a person grew up in a single-parent household or went to public school. All of these traits contribute to the diversity of thought, which is important to Gen Z across the spectrum.

“[Gen Z] will push for more-inclusive public policy, much like how millennials and some Gen Xers were big proponents of gay marriage and gender-inclusive language.”

Gen Z’s completely different demographic and psychographic makeup means they’ll demand their employers more boldly embrace diversity. The realities of exponentially faster communication have broadened their thinking, behaviors, and cultural awareness.

The countless platforms and channels in which Gen Z connects, consumes, and contributes their attitudes, opinions, and beliefs have helped to inform their encompassing worldview. They have a global mindset and are more interested in working abroad than any previous generation. They will look for companies that give them this opportunity.

Gen Z is entrepreneurial and self-reliant

While building inclusive communities is a priority for this generation, they are simultaneously self-reliant and instinctively independent. Gen Zers are unabashedly entrepreneurial, work best with “an element of personal freedom, and don’t want to be micromanaged.”

---

77% OF GEN Z WOULD LIKE THE COMPANY THEY WORK FOR TO VALUE DIVERSITY

81% OF GEN Z ARE INTERESTED IN WORKING ABROAD

Source: 2 - U.S. Census Bureau 3 - Bustle, 2018
Since they value their independence, they will want your organization to value it as well, and will favor companies that will give them the freedom to choose how they work and learn. That’s a win-win, since worker autonomy (the antithesis of micromanagement) leads to innovation, productivity, and greater employee satisfaction. The practice of entrepreneurship is incredibly attractive to a generation that both values innovation and constructive collaboration.

**Gen Z is political**

Gen Z is a generation of people who want to talk about issues — and resolve them. Politics is no longer taboo. Your organization may want to consider how open it is to political dialogue in the workplace as it begins to recruit the Gen Z candidate.

These young adults have also been called “philanthroteens” because community consciousness is a defining characteristic. They have a genuine desire to make a difference and will want to know what your company's values are. Their job choices will be based on whether they fit into that picture. This applies directly to recruiting, as Gen Z is highly interested in working for companies that place a value on corporate social responsibility.

As a member of your workforce, Gen Z may challenge you in other ways. They have grown up with much more leeway and aren’t afraid to break the rules. They need to know that their will to make change can be accommodated by your company — for example, by allowing them to take a hands-on role in D&I initiatives or efforts to limit environmental impact. How does that translate for recruiters? Look for people who bring new ideas to the table, can think outside the box, and have a propensity to shake things up—which is great for innovation.

---

Source: 4 - WayUp 2018 Gen Z survey

---

**Are Likely to Share Positive Opinions of Companies They View as Socially Conscious 4**

- 87%

**Use Social Media to Talk About the Issues They Care About 4**

- 82%

**Want You to Value Social Responsibility 4**

- 78%
Gen Z is selective and potentially loyal

Because Gen Zers are more intent on looking for companies that align with their personal values, they’ll prefer workplaces with a stronger cultural fit. They’ll work somewhere they feel they really belong. Gen Zers may stay and grow with your company longer — provided you are the perfect fit for them and give them opportunities for growth and skill development.

“Young job searchers look for a purpose-driven culture that also aligns with their values”

A study of 5,000 Gen Zers by Medium cited “empowering culture and growth potential” as the number one reason for them to stay at the same company three years or more. They are less likely to job hop than the previous generations — and that’s great news for employers.

Recruiting Gen Z

Recruiting as a sales and marketing opportunity

If you want to hire great people and appeal to the new generation of young candidates, you need to elevate your employer brand. Create a diverse, culture-driven workforce that’s engaged and aligned with your company’s core values — well before a Gen Zer’s first day on the job. More so than millennials, Gen Z wants to understand your company principles before they talk with you, because they’re looking for an employer who is aligned to their values—even more important, this may imply that they would avoid companies who oppose their social and political values.

Source: 5 - WayUp, 2018  6 - WayUp 2018 Gen Z survey
Since Gen Z cares so deeply about culture and values, the employer brand and pre-hire experience are more important than ever. That means when a candidate interacts with your brand, your culture and values need to be transparent and consistent throughout the entire experience.

Offer agile and flexible work arrangements

Because Gen Zers are entrepreneurial and know the true value of independence, they want work environments that support that. They’re capable of working and learning by themselves through more efficient, non-traditional routes than their predecessors. And they are more likely to want their own work space, too.

If you want independent and creative thinking, these candidates can provide it — if they’re given the opportunity to evolve, develop their skills, and grow in your organization. Make sure your company showcases what it can offer in this regard from the first touchpoint.

Embrace who they are and help them grow

When it comes to Gen Z, organizations must place value on both inherent and acquired diversity (2-D diversity), and establish a culture in which all employees feel free to contribute. This unlocks innovation and drives market growth. In early recruiting, that means hiring the “whole person” for culture, fit, and potential — which is exactly what Gen Z wants.

• **INCLUSION:** Show them you value an open forum for sharing ideas and views—even if those views are challenging.

• **WORK-LIFE INTEGRATION:** Communicate your values clearly because quality of life is a top priority for them.

• **GROWTH:** Show them you value opportunities for them to grow and will invest in their development.
Use social media to have a real conversation

As far as Gen Z is concerned, social conversations are real conversations. What does that mean for how you appeal to and recruit Gen Z?

- **USE CHANNELS IN AN INTEGRATED WAY**
  Go where they are, and where they want to be — in their media, on their phones and computers

- **THINK VIDEO AND BITE-SIZE CONTENT**
  Gen Zers prefer micro-interactions with online content that might last only a few seconds, so make use of video, and stream content in snack-size bites

- **FAVOR MOBILE-OPTIMIZED**
  Use SMS text reminders and touchpoints to gather feedback and communicate clear career paths

“Generation Z tends to be more inclined to turn to technology to explore career opportunities and they embrace resources that streamline the job search process more than any other group of candidates before them.”

---

Source: 8 - Pavel Krapivin, founder and CEO of VelvetJobs
About WayUp

The go-to platform for college students and recent graduates to meet their future employer

WayUp is the best place for entry-level candidates to explore internship and job opportunities, receive advice, and get discovered by employers. Founded in 2014, WayUp has helped candidates launch their careers.

THE GO-TO PLATFORM FOR BUSINESSES—FROM STARTUPS TO FORTUNE 500S

An easy online process engages a diverse pool of candidates to:

• Reduce time to fill open positions and cut hiring costs
• Help find, land, and keep the right employees for your open positions

From custom company profiles to our extensive notification system—which includes texts, chat messages, or other targeted push notifications—the WayUp platform reaches candidates wherever they are and on the devices they’re using.

WE’VE GOT WHAT IT TAKES TO FIND THE RIGHT FIT • WayUp’s smart algorithm sorts applicants, so recruiters can find the best fit for their organizations.

WE PROVIDE DATA-DRIVEN INSIGHTS TO MAKE RECRUITING EASIER • Meaningful applicant data and reporting enable recruiters to measure, optimize, and repeat successful hiring processes.

WE’LL GET YOUR BRAND IN FRONT OF THE RIGHT AUDIENCE • Our in-house creative team crafts full content suites, social campaigns, and targeted outreach. WayUp establishes a meaningful connection with your talent audience in order to showcase the employer brand image that works for you AND your candidates.

LEARN MORE ABOUT PARTNERING WITH WayUp

VISIT wayup.com/employers

EMAIL engage@wayup.com