

WORKFORCE COMPOSITION

Currently in the **workforce** there are **5 different generations**, bringing distinct experiences during their formative years that have molded their perspectives on **work**. Consider the various **historical events** or **technology advancements** that occurred during the different generations and how that has shaped them in the **workforce**.¹⁹



Silent Generation

1928 - 1945



Baby Boomers

1946 - 1964



Gen X

1965 - 1980



Millennials

1981 - 1996



Gen Z

1997 - 2012

Birth Year

Technology

Less familiarity with current technology

Less familiarity with current technology

Can usually adapt to current technology

Comfortable with current technology

Comfortable with current technology

Communication Style

Prefers personal interactions

Prefers interactions through verbal communication

Prefers interactions through verbal communication

Prefers digital communication (e.g., email, IMs, and text)

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Work priorities

Retirement planning, mentorship to younger generations

Mentorship to younger generations, longevity

Pride in what they do

Quality of work and not hours worked

Diversity and creativity in the workplace

REFRAMING STEREOTYPES

There are many **stereotypes** about **Gen Zers** in the **workforce**. Consider if you hold any of these negative stereotypes - and then try to reframe them into attributes.

Instead of:

Lazy

"They never work late."

Not loyal

"They won't stay here long."

Entitled

"They only care about themselves."

Short Attention Spans

"They can't focus on one task."

Addicted to Technology

"They are always on their phone."

Consider this:

Different from previous generations, **Gen Zers often want to understand the reason for doing a job** a certain way. If they do not agree with the reason, they may feel their values differ from the values of the **workplace**, and thus **do not want to engage more than necessary**. However, if they are given the chance to change the way a job is done, they will likely provide **creative and innovative solutions**.

Job searching has become a much more **competitive** and **lengthy process** than it was for previous generations. **Gen Zers** often want **straightforward answers** to compensation, job expectations, and benefits. They are also **more likely** to state **mental health concerns** due to their job than any other generation.²⁰ To enhance their mental health, they may seek advancement opportunities more quickly to further their earning potential and gain useful experience.

Gen Z has grown up during a time of inflation, a housing crisis, climate change, polarizing politics, social unrest, and school violence - all of which they have had **little control over** and will **impact their future**. However, they do have control over how **work** impacts their personal lives, making **work/life balance** a priority for them.

Gen Zers may appear to have short attention spans, but in reality they are **operating with high efficiency** due to how they engage in their personal lives. They have grown up **communicating their thoughts and experiences on social media**, where character counts are emphasized.

Gen Zers lived through a time when working-from-home and virtual school was the norm, and still continues to be in many instances. They also are the first generation to grow up using **cell phones** and having access to the **internet** from a **very young age**. Their parents/caregivers may have used phone apps or TV programs to help teach them **important skills**, like vocabulary, shape recognition, and reading. Because of the normalcy and emphasis on technology for communication, **Gen Zers** are a big **asset to workplaces** because of their **knowledge** and ability to **teach generations about newer technology**.