



Gen Z Talent: Understand Them To Recruit Them

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Gen Z Will Transform Your Workforce

All of your college recruitment, from now until 2033, will be tapping Gen Z talent. To say that Gen Z will change the workforce is an understatement. Born after 2000 (some say 1995), Gen Z will make up one-fifth of the workforce by 2020.

At College Recruiter, where we are *this close* to entry-level talent and swim in the pool of TA trends, we think this generation will transform your workforce. We teamed up with Door of Clubs to tap into current insights and bring forth real tips for recruiters, employment branding specialists and HR leaders.



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Test Your Knowledge of Gen Z

This generation is transformative, unique and not like anything you've seen before.

Quick facts:

- One of the most defining characteristics of Gen Z is its **diversity**. They are the first non-White majority generation in the U.S.
- Gen Z is the first **digital native** generation. They are the biggest consumers of media, including streaming movies, shopping, social media, etc. They do not remember a time when information wasn't a click away. They understand computers and their users as being connected to all others in the world.

Interestingly, 79% believe they spend too much time online.*



- While they often shop online, they actually prefer to buy from small, local family-owned shops in person.* **As consumers, they are somewhat turned off by huge corporations.**
- Throughout their lives, Gen Z has been exposed to **economic strife**, including the Great Recession. The U.S. has been at war their entire lives, and school shootings have become the norm. As such, **they seek security and stability.**
- **They make safer decisions** such as using less alcohol and fewer drugs, they have a lower rate of pregnancy, and they are more careful about what they share online, for example, their location.

Diversity and Equity

Not only is Gen Z the largest generation ever, but it is the most diverse. As the first non-White majority generation in the U.S., Gen Z'ers are likely to identify with more than one race or ethnicity. In addition to a curving color line, they also see gender as a spectrum, not as binary opposites.

The desire for equality is here and it's not going away.

Pranam Lipinski, CEO of Door of Clubs says, “Equality and diversity are no longer a choice but part of our fabric as a nation. There is no reversing that trend.” HR leaders can no longer limit themselves to selling the business case for diversity. Diversity is here, so your question now is, **How will you make your [D&I initiatives](#) effective?**



Many employers include diversity statements in their job descriptions. As well-intentioned as that may be, Gen Z will actually see that as archaic. Why? Because “diversity should just be a part of the fabric of your organization,” says College Recruiter’s President and Founder Steven Rothberg.

The lesson for employers is that diversity is non-negotiable with this talent pool. “If you’re thinking about business strategy,” says Lipinski, “you have to build in a well-funded diversity initiative. Think about how it can attract this talent and make them feel comfortable.” If Gen Z'ers don't see themselves reflected in your leadership team, they will be less interested in applying. According to a Door of Clubs survey, **the number one reason that determines whether Gen Z trusts an employer is “how equality-minded” that employer is.**

Authenticity

A key trait of Gen Z is their expectation of authenticity. As they consume your media messages, they will “sniff out anything that isn’t authentic,” says Lipinski. Being digital cynics, Gen Z will block, filter or delete anything that feels like mass advertising.

Authentic communication is the difference between winning and losing Gen Z talent.

Too often, recruiters pass on the opportunity to [respond personally to candidates](#). Instead of giving a personal tip to the young woman who shows potential leadership skills, many time-strapped recruiters put her resume in the pile and tell her to apply through the general process. The entrance of Gen Z into your workforce should force **the end of generic communication to candidates**.



“College recruiters play a huge role in winning the future,” says Lipinski. They must translate your organization’s high-level vision down to the ground without diluting it.

Because of their need for authenticity, Gen Z prefers face to face communication. Certainly they are savvy online communicators but when it comes to employers, **they want to engage with you in person on some difficult conversations**. They expect leadership to dive into discussions about equality, political turmoil, and other social topics, especially if a crisis or scandal involves your own organization.

Career Focused

Gen Z is already starting to save for their future and make decisions around financial security. They saw their parents put off retirement after losing their net worth during the Great Recession, and they see a growing class of financially insecure Americans.

Gen Z accepts responsibility for their career development

Understanding that not everything is distributed fairly, Gen Z'ers recognize they must work hard to earn their share.

A huge portion of their paychecks will go toward paying off student debt. **They are concerned about having enough money to live or save for the future.** It makes sense then, that Gen Z is more interested in working for a mid-sized company than a risky start-up. Despite a growing gig economy, **Gen Z wants the stability of permanent employment.** They may pursue a side job or project but employers shouldn't fear losing their full-time permanent workforce.

Gen Z wants more privacy at work. Compared to millennials, they are less interested in out-of-office activities. They are able to collaborate but they mostly just want to do their work and contribute. **“Gen Z has an independent streak and they really want to be self-sufficient,”** Lipinski says.



HR TIP: Provide the on-the-job training and mentorship they need to be self-reliant.

HR TIP: Pay them a competitive salary, give them good health benefits and show how your organization makes a positive impact in the world.

Source From Non-Traditional Schools

Employers have to source from non-traditional schools because, as Lipinski puts it, “you don’t have a choice.” Without reaching beyond your traditional top schools, you are fighting everyone else for the same fish in the same small pond. With tightening immigration, competition for that limited pool is getting tighter.



If you restrict yourself to elite schools, you’ll not only be less likely to reach your diversity goals, but you’ll hurt your productivity as well. At College Recruiter, Rothberg has seen more employers pay closer attention to quality-of-hire data. **Many are discovering that entry-level hires from elite schools leave the organization more quickly** (and therefore produce less over time) than hires from non-traditional sources such as community colleges and vocational schools.

[Related: Methods to recruit non-traditional students](#)

Access Points to Recruit Gen Z

Face it. As an employer, you are an outsider. As Lipinski puts it, you are noise to Gen Z. This generation doesn't want to let employers into their inner circle, which creates a challenge. **You need to get personal and empower your candidates.**

How do you go from being an outsider to an insider? First, understand what they want. (See above: Diversity, Authenticity, and Career Focus!)



TA TIP: In your application and during your hiring process, use gamification, asynchronous video interviews and other new technology.



But don't take our word for it. **You need to gather insights how Gen Z perceives your own brand.** Get inside their communities, says Lipinski, and find unique ways to connect. For example:

- Scan and engage on Instagram
- Look inside their student clubs
- Pursue influencer marketing

It is important that you create a **feedback loop between Gen Z and your TA team to respond to their perceptions of you.** If you don't do it right, says Lipinski, "it can be a feedback loop of death." There are brands who did great with millennials but are losing with Gen Z.

[Also read: Learn from real-time feedback to tweak your internship program](#)

Employer Branding to Gen Z



BRANDING TIP: Get them into your conversation, creating their own content. The more snackable your content, the better.

Why is YouTube is a [top brand](#) with Gen Z? Because they empower the creator. Another example is Adidas, which has empowered customers by personalizing shoes and focusing on lifestyle.

Gen Z believes strongly in creating and sharing content with people around the world to affect change. They will trade off personal benefits to impact their community, says Rothberg.

Gen Z is your talent pool is your customers. They are influenced by peers regarding what to consume and where to work. Employers should leverage Gen Z's social circles, says Rothberg, because they are simply larger. **When you enable unfiltered conversations to connect to Gen Z's hearts and minds, they become fans.** And fans tell their friends.

“Gen Z will bury your brand if you don’t get it right,” Lipinski warns. **Traditional advertising doesn’t work with them and they don’t trust what you post on social media.** Instead of risking getting blocked, analyze what perceptions exist of your brand and shift accordingly.

If you give the impression that your organization is farming massive amounts of user data, you will lose Gen Z in a flash. They want a two-way street with your brand, and they want you to value their opinion. Lipinski says Gen Z is 50% more likely than millennials to return to your website for a reward after doing an activity online.



Benefits That Appeal to Gen Z

Critical benefits are **competitive pay, good health care and mentorship**. Those are more important than offering a fun atmosphere or remote work options. (Only 8% of Gen Z'ers want an open work space, compared to 88% of millennials, according to Door of Clubs.)

Offer a **financial wellness program that addresses their unique needs**. It's more difficult for this generation to make ends meet. They worry more about immediate financial needs, so employers should balance long-term financial benefits (e.g. retirement accounts) with short-term support. For example, consider pay advances, ongoing financial coaching (and not just via an EAP), and automatic savings deposits. They will be paying off massive student debt and have less experience managing their finances. This support is an attractive benefit.



HR TIP: Beef up your wellness program to include more support for short-term financial concerns.



Another attractive benefit is your social or environmental impact. Gen Z'ers feel strongly about working for an organization that makes a positive impact. Rothberg at College Recruiter has seen this to be so important that **Gen Z'ers would trade off higher pay to work for an employer with a strong mission**.

Also read: [Attract students and grads with your wellness program, especially financial wellness](#)

About College Recruiter

At College Recruiter, we believe in two things. First, that every student and recent grad deserves a great career. Second, that both candidates and recruiters deserve a high quality experience.

College Recruiter is the leading interactive recruitment media company used by college students and recent grads. Our primary customers are Fortune 1,000 companies and government agencies who advertise their part-time, seasonal, internship and entry-level positions with us to recruit dozens, hundreds, or thousands of students and recent grads.

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About Door of Clubs

Door of Clubs is a digital platform that connects employers with diverse, technical, and business talent within college clubs. The company has a unique win-win approach: employers receive insider insights and access, while clubs receive funding and job opportunities. Happy customers include Fortune 500's and non-profits.

www.DoorOfClubs.com

