

# Does Gen Z feel prepared to enter the workforce?



## White Paper

This paper looks at recent research on whether education and skills development has adequately prepared Gen Z for the workforce.

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# Survey Intro

## The Research Question and Preliminary Results

In the Fall 2023, one of our Market Research student groups conducted research on the hypothesis that Gen Z feels prepared by basic education to begin full-time work after graduation. Their goal was to ask questions about their actual and mental preparedness for entering the workforce.

### Demographics

They collected 150 survey responses from people ranging from 18 to 27 years old, with 69% being 18-22. 57% of their respondents were female, and 79% were White.

### Preliminary Results

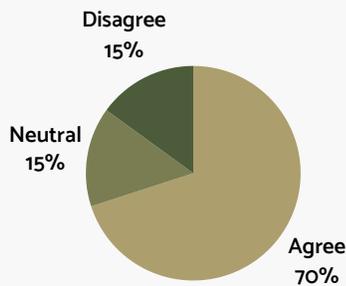
The survey results showed that the majority of Gen Z respondents feel confident in their ability to succeed in the workplace. They generally feel that their basic education did a good job of preparing them for the future. Aligning with current research, the survey found that Gen Z is more optimistic about their ability to provide for themselves in the future than previous generations.



# Training and Skills

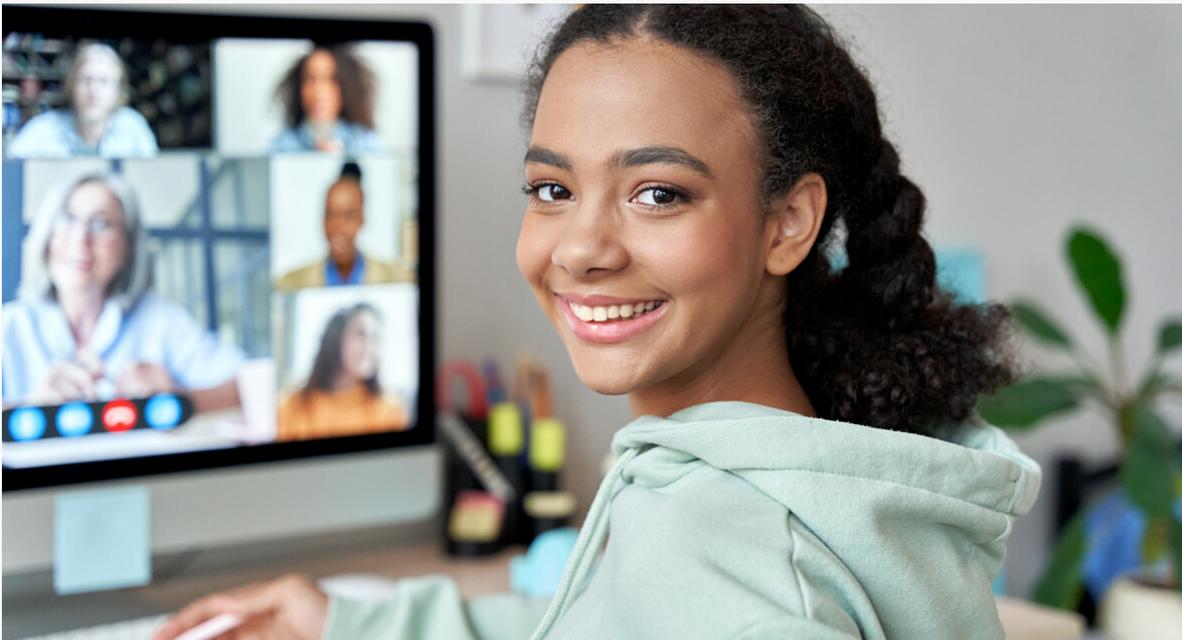
A recent survey from [Intelligent.com](https://www.intelligent.com) found that **58% of employers and hiring managers** felt **Gen Z is unprepared for the workforce**, so we thought there might be a gap in skills and training. Our student workers asked their respondents several questions relating to training and skill development. Their results found that our Gen Z respondents felt prepared and confident to enter the workforce.

*"I feel prepared to enter the workforce."*



**46%** agree that basic high school classes were important

**78%** feel their education or training was worthwhile for career goals



# Communication & Employment

## Our Research Results

Once again we saw a sharp difference between our survey results and outside resources.



## What Employers Said

A [CNBC video essay from 2022](#), found that **3 in 4 managers feel that Gen Z** are the most challenging generation to work with. Communication differences are often listed as key reasons for intergenerational issues in the workplace.

[The Intelligent.com survey had some harsher critiques of these young workers](#). Their research found that employers believe Gen Z job candidates struggle to pick up on professional cues. They claim that young employees lack professionalism, do not respond well to feedback, and have poor communication skills.

When there is this much difference in the data, it can be hard for us to know what to believe. Is Gen Z prepared for the workforce or are they lacking in professional skills? We'll talk more about the applications of our research at the end of the paper.



# Career Progression

One of the biggest factors of our research into Gen Z and their perspectives on workplace preparedness was their viewpoints on career progression. This has also been identified as a key issue from an employer and management perspective.

Our research found that for their first job, Gen Z workers:



The [CNBC video essay interviewed several Gen Z early career workers](#) and argued that Gen Z workers want to be “drivers of meaningful change” and that there is a sense that they are impatient for change. This could, in part, explain why they feel like a clear career progression plan is an essential part of their first post-school work experience.

**50% of employers**

[said young job candidates asked for unreasonable compensation](#)

**66% of employers**

[said that young employees are unable to manage their workloads](#)

In sharp contrast, the Intelligent.com survey found that the employers’ perspective is quite different to the expectations of young workers. With this research we are seeing a large generation gap when it comes to perspectives of young workers and their potential employers. These differences highlight some of the bigger differences in communication styles, workplace attire, and career progression between Gen Z and the older generations in the workplace.

# Findings

What does this mean about our understanding of this rising generation and whether or not they are prepared for the workforce?

Here is what we've learned:

- Our survey data showed that Gen Z students feel that they are prepared to enter the workforce and confident about their ability to succeed.
- The student respondents also reflected a high level of confidence in terms of communication skills, one that was sharply contrasted by other research findings.
- A primary question posed by our contradictory findings is whether Gen Z is right to expect changes within workforce, especially when it relates to career progression.

# Applications

What does it all mean?

Every research project tells a story, and here's how this story can help you better understand this rising generation in the workforce:

- If you've noticed conflict issues between older managers and younger employees, make sure you understand their different expectations for job performance and communication styles.
- Bridging the generation gap has to be an active pursuit - consider conducting surveys as part of your "entrance" interviews for new staff to get a sense of what they are looking for from employers.
- Don't let your tenured employees or your new ones make assumptions about what to expect in your culture - clear communication about those expectations is kind to all.

# How can we help?

This White Paper only scratched the surface of our understanding of Gen Z and how they impact multigenerational workplaces.

If we can help you or your organization reach a fuller understanding of generations, please reach out via the contact information below, or scan the QR code to book a call with us or learn more about the trainings we offer!



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 **BOOK A CALL**



 **Our Trainings**