

Gen Z's secrets unraveled in the workplace

5 insights for your organisation



IN COLLABORATION
WITH
iVOX
Ormit Talent
D'leteren

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Table of Contents

Gen Z: what's in a name?	_____	4-5
Attract young talent from Gen Z: are your basics right?	_____	6-12
Retention: How can you be sure that Gen Z will stay for the long term?	_____	13-15
What is the importance of an open feedback culture for Gen Z?	_____	16-18
How to become a better manager for Gen Z?	_____	19-22
How do you get more female Gen Z talent on your management team?	_____	23-26
Many opportunities for your organisation	_____	27

An Introduction

Gen Z today represents the largest group of consumers worldwide. Each of these young talents, born between 1995 and 2012, has their own values and norms. If companies want to attract and develop young talents, it is necessary to understand what our new generation cares about when looking for and performing a job.

In collaboration with research agency iVOX, Ormit Talent and D'ieren conducted an online survey of 877 Belgian Gen Z'ers between the ages of 18 and 29 between 13 and 21 February 2021. The survey results are therefore representative by gender, language, age and degree.

In this whitepaper, we dive into 5 key topics:

1. Attracting young talent from Gen Z: are your basics right?
2. Retention: how do you ensure that Gen Z will stay long-term?
3. What is the importance of an open feedback culture for Gen Z?
4. How do you become a better manager for Gen Z?
5. How do you get more female Gen Z talent on your management team?

Curious about the results? Keep on reading!

Gen Z: what's in a name?

"Zoomers: Navigating the digital realm, shaping tomorrow's workforce."

"Gen Z: Diverse talents, united by a digital world."



Gen Z, also known as Zoomers, Post-Millennials, or the iGeneration, is the youngest generation currently entering the job market. These young talents, born between 1995 and 2012, have grown up in a world dominated by technology. They are used to having access to the internet and social media at any time, with the latter being their go-to sources for news, entertainment, and communication. What is typical of this Zoomer generation? They have a short attention span, partly due to the ways in which they gather and consume information today.

This generation of young talent is a very diverse group, with each individual pursuing their own values and norms. But just like with other generations, there are overlapping characteristics and expectations within Gen Z. Because this is the youngest group of people entering the workforce, it is important for employers to pay attention to the characteristics and talents of these enthusiastic starters.



Attract young talent from Gen Z: are your basics right?

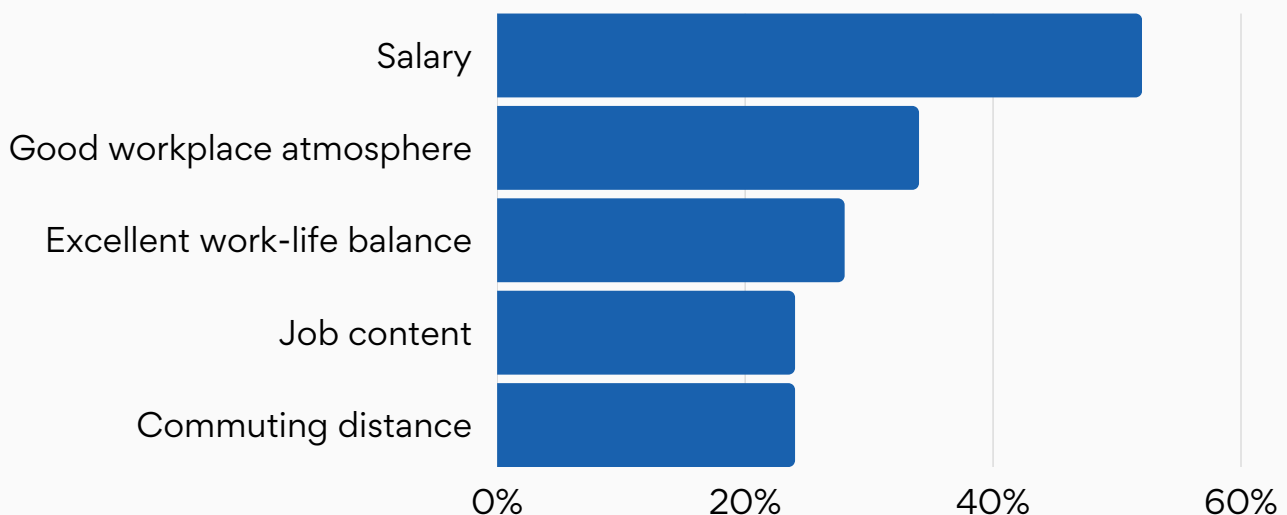
"Gen Z craves financial stability, job security, and personal connection."

"Use social media to authentically engage and retain Gen Z."

Young professionals don't want to just do any job. Organizations must take into account their wishes and expectations if they want to develop a policy in which young talent excels. But what does our new generation consider important in the workplace?

What do young talents consider important?

In the iVOX survey, we asked about the top 5 priorities that young professionals keep in mind when searching for a job. For as many as 52% of the respondents, salary is their top priority. This is followed by a good atmosphere in the workplace (34%) and an excellent work-life balance (28%). 24% of the respondents consider job content to be an important factor in determining which organization to apply to. However, a short commuting distance also appears to be necessary for many (24%), especially for women.



In addition to these pillars, there are other parameters that organizations must take into account. Flexibility, sufficient development opportunities in the workplace, and growth support from their manager also emerge as key factors from the results.

"Salary (52%) and a positive work atmosphere (34%) are the top priorities for young professionals, followed by a good work-life balance (28%)."

This pay policy works for Gen Z

Rising prices, the energy crisis, a decrease in purchasing power... Gen Z is worried about societal issues, which is clearly reflected in their job search: a good salary is a priority for young professionals today.

80% of working young people in our study are satisfied with the salary they receive monthly. Their view of a "good" income is usually based on the salary their friends with the same experience receive. Furthermore, 75% of young talents believe that their salary package does not need to be private. In other words, they want to discuss it with others to ensure they are being paid fairly. Therefore, organizations must be well-informed about rapidly changing salary scales. A young talent who discovers that they are being paid less than the benchmark will quickly draw conclusions.

3 Benefits of an open pay policy

44% of the surveyed young talents consider it important that their manager openly communicates about their salary package and that of their colleagues. However, we notice that many organizations are not eager to do so. An open salary policy nevertheless brings many benefits:

Higher loyalty and trust promote retention policies

By openly discussing salaries, the risk of wage discrimination decreases. Moreover, open communication about salaries benefits the trust between the employee and the employer. The more transparent a manager is about salary, the greater the chance that young talents will trust and respect the manager. They do not have to fear that they are being paid too little. Leaving the company for better salary opportunities is therefore something they are less likely to consider.

Higher productivity and motivation

If all young professionals are aware that they are being paid objectively, they will feel valued and respected. The chance increases that they will be more involved and productive. We know that young talents have the drive to build a successful career, so they can set career goals themselves and take initiatives to earn more.

Helps attract talent

For many organizations, an open salary policy is a valuable selling point for young talents. Young talents who are looking for a job know approximately what they can expect. But those who communicate openly give young talents exactly the right expectations. They understand better how the organization's salary policy is structured and know what to expect in the future.

Workplace atmosphere has major influence on Gen Z

For 34% of young talents, the environment, atmosphere, and colleagues are important factors when choosing a company. A positive atmosphere in the workplace contributes to their motivation and productivity, making them feel valued by colleagues and boosting their self-confidence. On the one hand, we see that the influence of social media plays a role here. Platforms such as TikTok and Instagram focus on fun and entertainment. If young talents are exposed to this daily, the atmosphere at work can also become a norm. Of course, the impact of the coronavirus crisis should not be overlooked. Many of them had to complete their studies alone and online. Online job interviews, online onboarding... not easy. Therefore, the atmosphere in the workplace may have become more important on their list.

It is more necessary than ever today to immerse young talents in your organization immediately. Make sure they are impressed by your approach and attract them with experience and emotion. Curious about how Ormit Talent conveys that experience to Gen Z? You can read more about it in this [whitepaper!](#)

“Gen Z doesn't want to work”, but is that really true?

During a job interview, the younger generation of talents will typically ask about work-life balance. In fact, 28% of participants consider it a priority. Young talents want to have enough quality time with their friends because work is not their life. This is partly due to social media, where they are confronted every day with the pleasure of having fun after work.

So, does this generation really not want to work? Actually, they do. They strive for the ideal combination of challenging job content and development possibilities. However, as much as 30% of young talents have no idea what they would like to do after their studies. In this case, a traineeship can offer a solution. It's a great opportunity for companies to find driven talents and for young professionals to discover what they really want.



"30% of young talents have no idea what they would like to do after their studies."

What about sustainability?

70% of young talents indicate that they base their choice of employer on a company's sustainability. Because they are concerned about societal issues such as climate change, this is a decisive factor for many. However, we cannot conclude that sustainability is the first thing they think about when applying for a job. Only 4% of young talents put sustainability in their top 5 priority list for wanting to work at and, above all, stay at a company.

"Only 4% of young talents put sustainability in their top 5 priority list for finding and keeping a job."

Are your social channels Gen Z proof?

25% of young talents who are looking for a job browse job websites on a daily basis. However, 19% also find recruitment agency websites interesting to find a suitable job. In addition, these digital natives also search for jobs on Facebook (25%) and Instagram (24%). When they want to apply for a specific job, the company website is the go-to channel of choice (61%). One in four also looks up the LinkedIn and Facebook profile of the company they are applying to. Social media are therefore an essential part of your recruitment strategy today.

25%

VISIT JOB WEBSITES
DAILY

25%

SEARCH FOR JOBS ON
FACEBOOK

61%

VISIT THE COMPANY'S
WEBSITE WHEN APPLYING
FOR A SPECIFIC JOB

19%

VISIT RECRUITMENT
AGENCY WEBSITES

24%

SEARCH FOR JOBS ON
INSTAGRAM

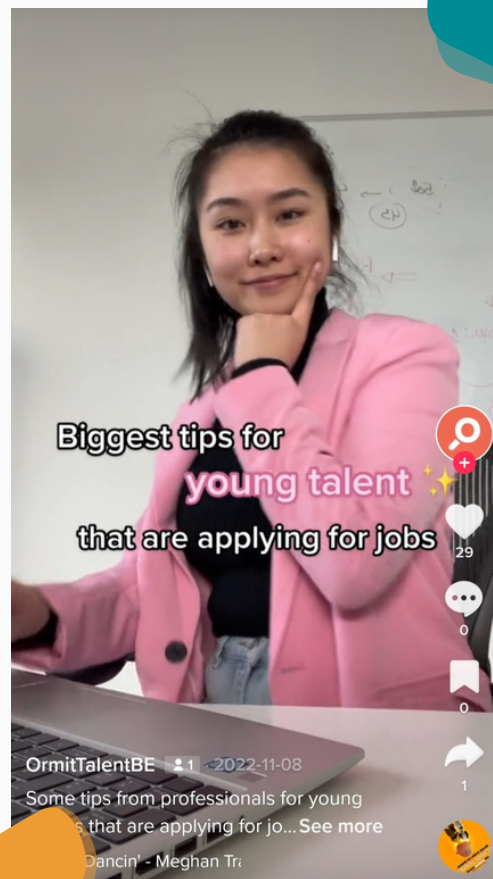
25%

LOOK UP THE LINKEDIN
AND FACEBOOK PROFILE OF
THE COMPANY THEY APPLY
FOR

Social media are good tools for showcasing the working atmosphere

Gen Z'ers are online looking for fun, pleasure, and entertainment. Visual platforms like TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat, and YouTube are very popular among this group. They stay up-to-date on social issues, celebrities, trends, and fun facts. Because they have a short attention span, they prefer snappy, fun content on their favorite social media channels.

In fact, Gen Z wants to learn more about your company online and the many benefits that come with a job in your company. Focus on content about your company culture. Showcase the paths of employees and highlight events and learning opportunities. If you present this as a company in an exciting way, you will successfully attract Gen Z. Moreover, you can easily interact with these young professionals on social media. If you respond quickly to questions, they will undoubtedly feel appreciated.



Video first

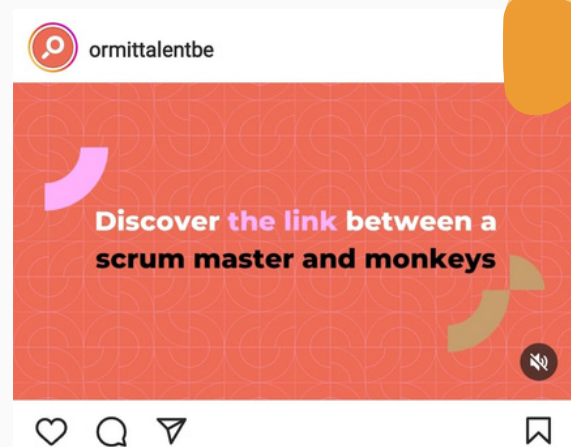
Video or text? Young talents clearly prefer video content when they want to get to know a new organization. That is also the reason why they are most active on the channels mentioned above. It even goes so far that they trust companies that develop videos more than brands that do not. So, go for short, strong video formats that really stand out and use them widely. Go all out for video and photo material that attracts attention. Young talents fall in love with the experience, not the product.

The power of influencers

In addition to video formats, it is necessary to convey your story authentically and creatively. This can be done perfectly with video, but influencer marketing is also gaining ground among young professionals. These creators are strong in creating video formats and have the right knowledge and opportunities to reach Gen Z. So, use the power of influencers and engage them to create content that perfectly matches the world of these young talents.



"Gen Z trusts companies that develop videos more than brands that don't."



Retention: How can you be sure that Gen Z will stay for the long term?

"Gen Z sees themselves as loyal employees."

"Development opportunities and social connections play a role when considering changing jobs."

Young talent that works is happy. This is evident from the research, as 50% of working young talent does not consider switching jobs. However, this means that almost half of working young talent is considering changing jobs. Organizations must therefore focus strongly on initiatives to retain young talent in the organization.

Need help setting up a solid retention policy? This [article](#) will get you started.

This is why Gen Z switches jobs

Salary is a top priority for Gen Z, as 56% of the surveyed talent considers a better salary package the main reason to switch jobs. A better work-life balance also proves to be important (38%).

What is striking, however, is that working young people who are effectively considering changing jobs do so significantly less for a better salary. For them, better development opportunities and nicer colleagues are significantly more decisive factors than when they are not considering a change.

	Considers to change (43%)	Doesn't consider to change (50%)
Development opportunities	32%	21%
Nicer colleagues	26%	7%

Creating **an informal atmosphere between colleagues** and focusing on sufficient development opportunities are therefore priorities for many organisations to keep top talents on board. Experience and emotion, as well as feedback, motivation, and inspiration are crucial pillars in this regard.

Curious about our approach? [Read more](#) about how Ormit Talent develops the talents of our future leaders here.

Job security trumps making a career

Almost 70% of young talents want to stay with the same employer for as long as possible. An even larger majority sees themselves as loyal employees. This generation of talents considers stability to be extremely important. They are said to be more realistic than Millennials. One possible explanation for this is that these young talents have witnessed how their parents experienced economic crises. As a result, Gen Z is currently more focused on job security than career security.

Why job security is so important for Gen Z

Financial stability

Those who are certain of their job can count on a stable income. Every young person has some financial obligations to fulfill, such as paying rent, saving for travel, or saving for the future. With a steady job, they can be sure of a monthly amount in their account.

Career growth

Young people prefer job security over career security. However, 3 out of 5 of the surveyed young talents want to advance in their careers. Having a stable job allows them to take on new projects, discover new skills, and take risks to grow professionally.

Emotional well-being

Gen Z experiences a lot of stress and pressure to perform. With a steady job, the young talents have security. This indirectly affects their mental health. When there is a steady job in play, the pressure to "perform" is lower, or at least it should be.

Personal growth

Young professionals who feel good and secure at work are more likely to take on new challenges. This leads to a sense of fulfillment and satisfaction in both their personal and professional lives.

What is the importance of an open feedback culture for Gen Z?

"30% of Gen Z wants to get more feedback."

"Gen Z looks at their manager to facilitate professional and personal growth."



Each generation deals with feedback differently. We believe that this has a lot to do with the era in which they grew up and their age. Baby boomers, born between 1946 and 1964, prefer personal feedback. Formal feedback structures such as annual performance reviews are appropriate for this generation. Generation X workers (born between 1965 and 1980) value direct and honest feedback based on results.

For Millennials (born between 1981 and 1996), specific, constructive feedback is welcome. Gen Z, on the other hand, has grown up with technology and explicitly prefers feedback through technology platforms and applications. They appreciate regular feedback, given in a collaborative and interactive way.

Managers give too little feedback

Nearly 3 in 10 working young talents indicate that their manager gives too little feedback. 24% even feel that they receive too little positive feedback. Young talents expect their manager to provide regular feedback and comments, and to work with them to find solutions to problems. It is therefore important for organizations to create a setting in which young people are not afraid to ask for feedback. Because not all young talents do this on their own. At the same time, they should not expect the manager to see everything and do everything for them.

Yet it takes a manager to grow

Young talents want to move forward in life. They want to grow, not only personally but also professionally. 1 in 4 working young talents feel that their manager does not adequately ensure that they grow in their job and as a person. This clearly shows that they expect their manager to support them sufficiently to seize new opportunities. Walking the tightrope with a safety net, that's what we like to call it. Being aware of this as an organization is necessary if you want to attract young talent to your organization.

"It is important for organizations to create a setting in which young people are not afraid to ask for feedback."

An open feedback culture: here's how to do it

Every young talent makes mistakes. Feedback is therefore necessary to grow.

- Agree on fixed moments to give feedback to the talent. Weekly or monthly, it doesn't matter. This way, young talents are aware that feedback is coming and they get the opportunity to prepare for it.
- Emphasize that asking for feedback is normal. Clearly communicate that you expect young talent to ask for feedback at any time. This way, they can address their strengths and improve weaker points.
- Everyone likes to receive feedback in different ways. For some, a face-to-face conversation is appropriate, while others prefer to communicate via email or chat. Ask your talents about their preferences.

Need more tips to support young talent? You will find them [here](#).



How to become a better manager for Gen Z?

"Equality and opportunity pave the way for Gen Z's thriving workplace."

"Mistakes are growth opportunities; Gen Z seeks managers who support and understand this."

Gen Z'ers are passionate and seek meaning in their work. They are a curious group of young talents who attach great importance to diversity, inclusion, and their own values and norms. Managing this group of emerging talents is therefore a challenge for managers. How can you become a better manager for Gen Z?

Treat everyone equally

38% of young talents surveyed believe it is important for their manager to treat them equally with other employees. As a manager, ensure that each employee understands what is expected of them and that these expectations are the same for everyone. Additionally, offer every talent the same opportunities. If there is a training planned, make sure everyone has the opportunity to apply. Provide feedback, but ensure that the feedback given is always objective. Base it on measurable criteria so that no one feels left behind.

While every young talent is unique, it is important to respect all individual differences. Each has their own strengths and challenges, so make sure you support and treat them all respectfully. They will greatly appreciate it.

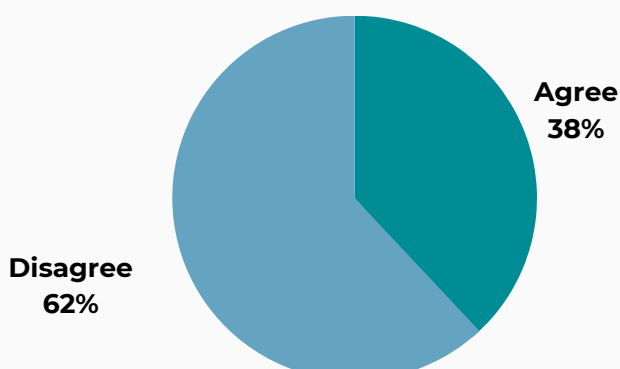
Take into account the opinions of young talents

Be open and transparent about decisions and policies at all times. Everyone expects to receive information at the same time about changes. If a decision is made from the top, each young talent will have an opinion about it. A good manager takes these diverse opinions into account. 38% of young professionals surveyed consider it important for a manager to hear these opinions and take them into account.

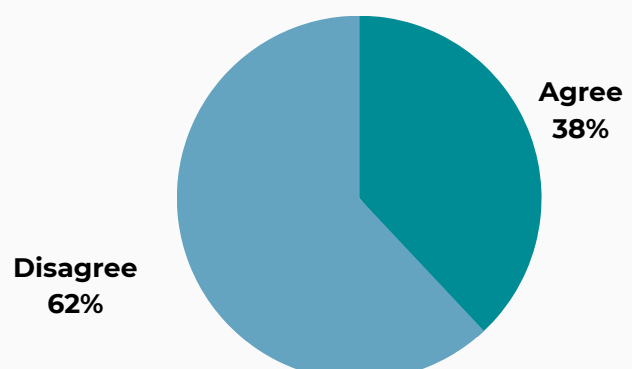
Don't punish people making mistakes

Falling down and getting up. With a **safety net** beneath you. This is what young talent does every day. This youngest work generation particularly benefits from a manager who does not punish them when they make a mistake. 35% of the young talents surveyed indicate this as one of the top 5 most important qualities of a manager.

Equal treatment by the manager is important

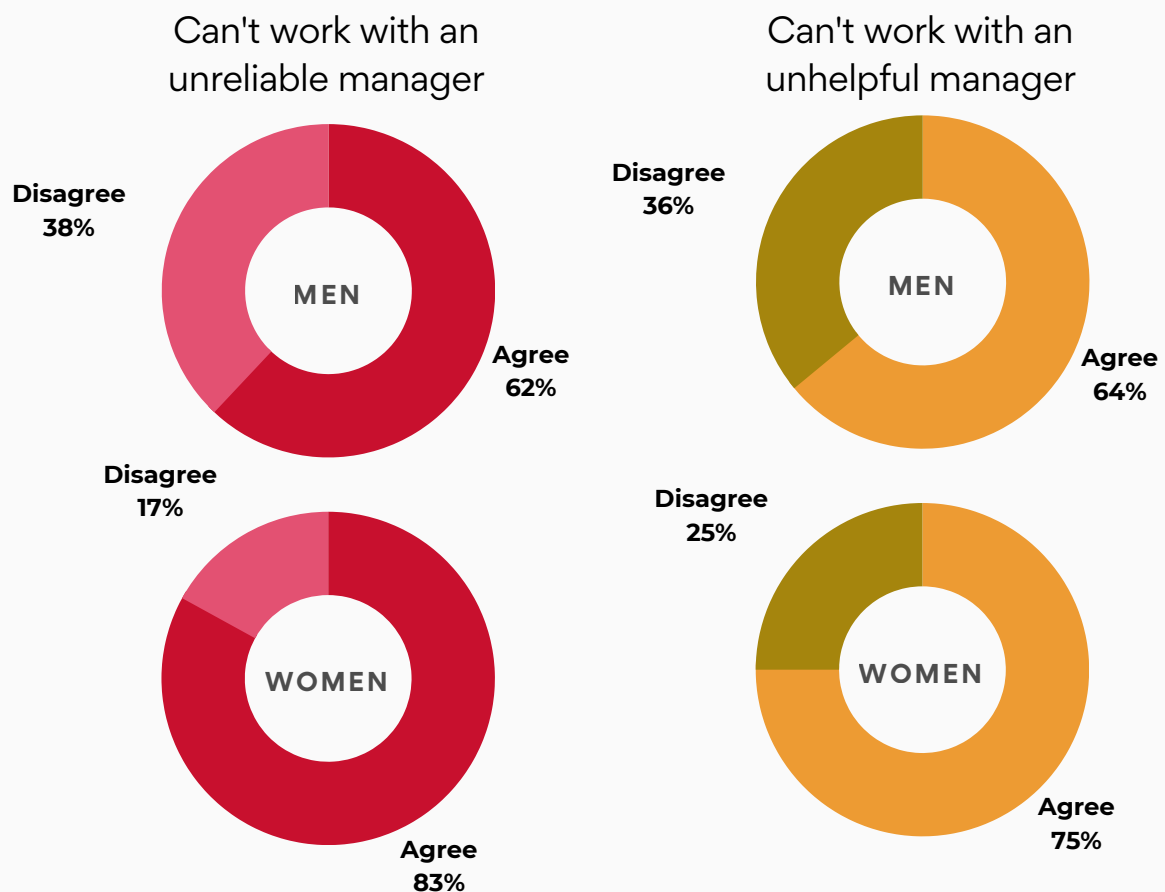


Being heard by the manager is important

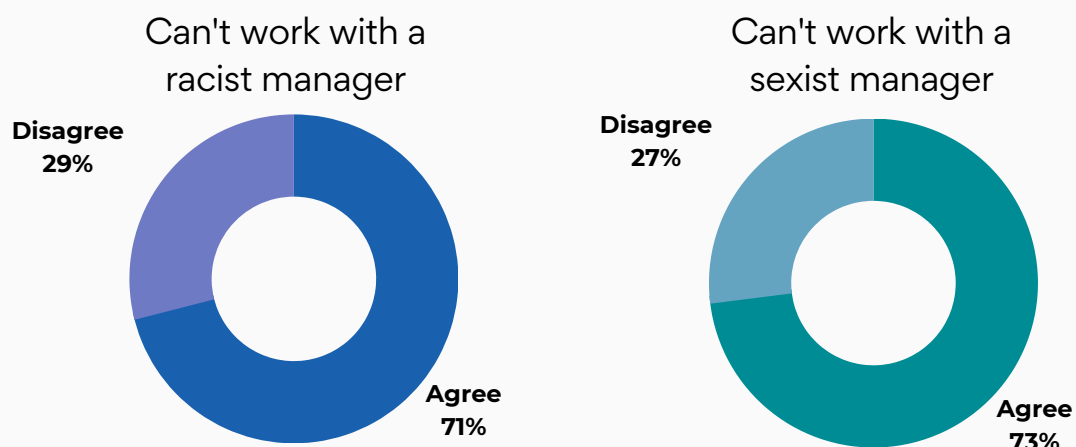


Absolute no-go's in the workplace

People join organizations and leave managers. As a manager, meeting the needs and demands of your employees is necessary if you want to keep them in your organization. Many young talents unanimously agree: they can do without unreliable and unhelpful managers. Especially women indicate that they cannot work with an unreliable (men: 62%, women: 83%) or unhelpful (men: 64%, women: 75%) manager.



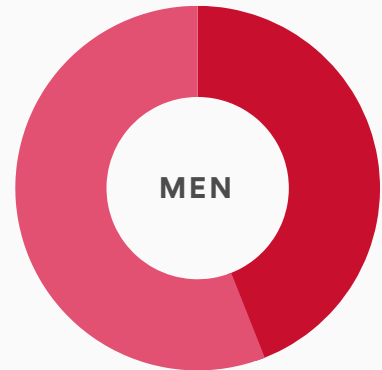
Furthermore, young talents indicate that they cannot work with a manager who is racist (71%) or sexist (73%). Once again, it is mainly female talents who struggle with racism (men: 57%, women: 79%) and sexism (men: 56%, women: 83%).



It is striking that 17% of women and 44% of men indicate that they are able to work with a sexist manager. This toxic behavior is absolutely unacceptable, but unfortunately, it is sometimes hidden in organizations. We often hear stories in the news about bullying and racism in the workplace. Therefore, companies must create a culture in which people dare to address this toxic behavior with each other.

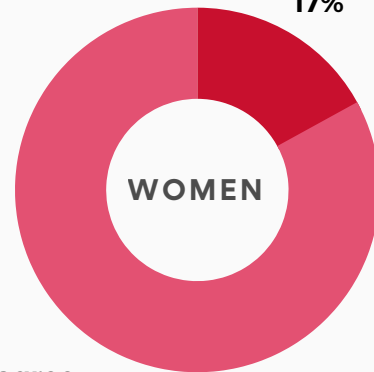
Could work with a sexist manager

Disagree
56%



Agree
44%

Agree
17%



Disagree
83%



**"Young talents
unanimously agree:
they don't tolerate
unreliable and
unhelpful
managers."**



How do you get more female Gen Z talent on your management team?

"Salary and security: female talent's top concerns."

"Encourage women's ambitions to shatter glass ceilings."

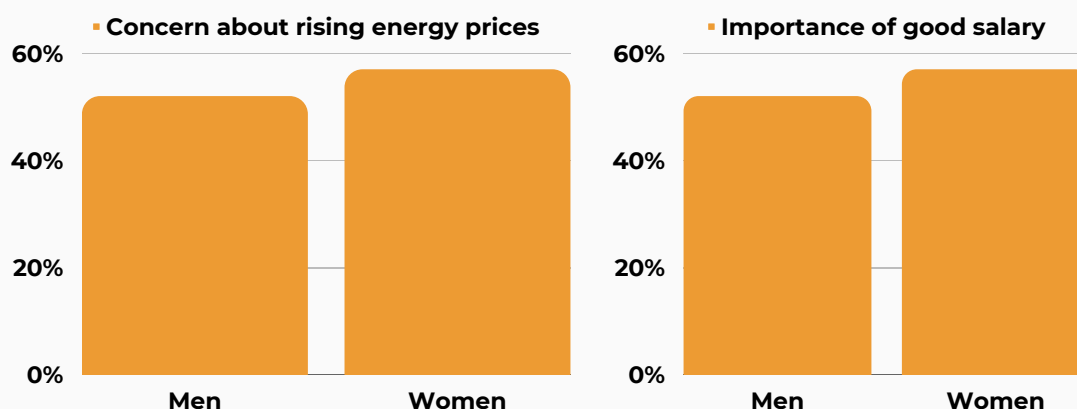
Gender equality in the workplace is still an area for improvement in many organizations. If we want to achieve more equality, it's important to understand what attracts and retains female talent in an organization. In some cases, a different approach is required to achieve that equality. But how do you ensure that more female Gen Z talent ends up in your management team?

Workplace inequality and importance of pay

As many as 52% of the young talents surveyed make their salary a top priority. Especially women (57%) seem to find a good salary important (men: 47%). When we look at working talents, 86% of the surveyed women are happy with their current salary, compared to 69% of the men. Despite men having significantly higher wages than the surveyed women.

It's noteworthy that women are particularly concerned about rising energy prices (women: 32%, compared to men: 22%). Additionally, women are significantly more interested in job security (women: 53%, compared to men: 42%). This may explain why women are significantly more likely to indicate that they find a good salary important.

Possibly, the awareness plays a role here that there is still inequality between men and women in many companies when it comes to salaries. For many male talents, it may be more natural that they will receive a good salary when they ask for it. Women, on the other hand, are less likely to take the step to their manager to express a higher salary expectation. An open salary policy can help to minimize this inequality, as discussed extensively under Topic 1: "Attracting young Gen Z talent: are your basics in order?".



"An open salary policy can help to minimize gender inequality."

Career under the glass ceiling?

As many as 67% of male talents indicate that they want to make a quick career when they are at the beginning of their careers. This figure is significantly higher than the number of women who want to climb the ladder quickly (47%). Does this say something about the glass ceiling or not?

We're not so sure. According to us, the biggest difference lies in the fact that women may express their ambitions less often. Many of them have a perfectionistic side, which means that they want to excel in their position first. Only when that's the case, will they indicate that they want to climb up. As a manager, you need to be aware of this, which is obviously not easy. When thinking of promoting people on your team, don't assume women aren't interested because they didn't actively ask for it.

There is a side note here: there are certainly also men who don't find it important to climb the ladder quickly. Much depends on the personal ambitions and goals of our youngest generation. It's especially for this reason that managers should keep an eye on it.

Work-life balance important for women

28% of the surveyed talents rank excellent work-life balance as one of their top three priorities for wanting to work for and stay with a company. This generation of young talents wants to work on their own terms, which could be an explanation for why they find work-life balance just as important. But these characteristics also play a role:



Personal well-being is a priority: Gen Z values their mental health. This requires a balance between their work and personal life.



Different work ethic: Gen Z places less value on long hours and absolutely does not want to sacrifice personal time for their work. Instead, they want to spend their energy on work that gives them fulfillment and aligns with their personal values.



Flexibility: Gen Z grew up in a digital world where flexibility is the norm. They want to be free to work where and when they want.

When we ask working talents about their satisfaction with working from home, 33% indicate that their current employer is not doing it well. Nevertheless, 1 in 8 (12%) of young talents include the ability to work from home in their top 5 essential benefits for working with a company. It is mainly women who are currently dissatisfied with this (women: 44%, compared to men: 24%).

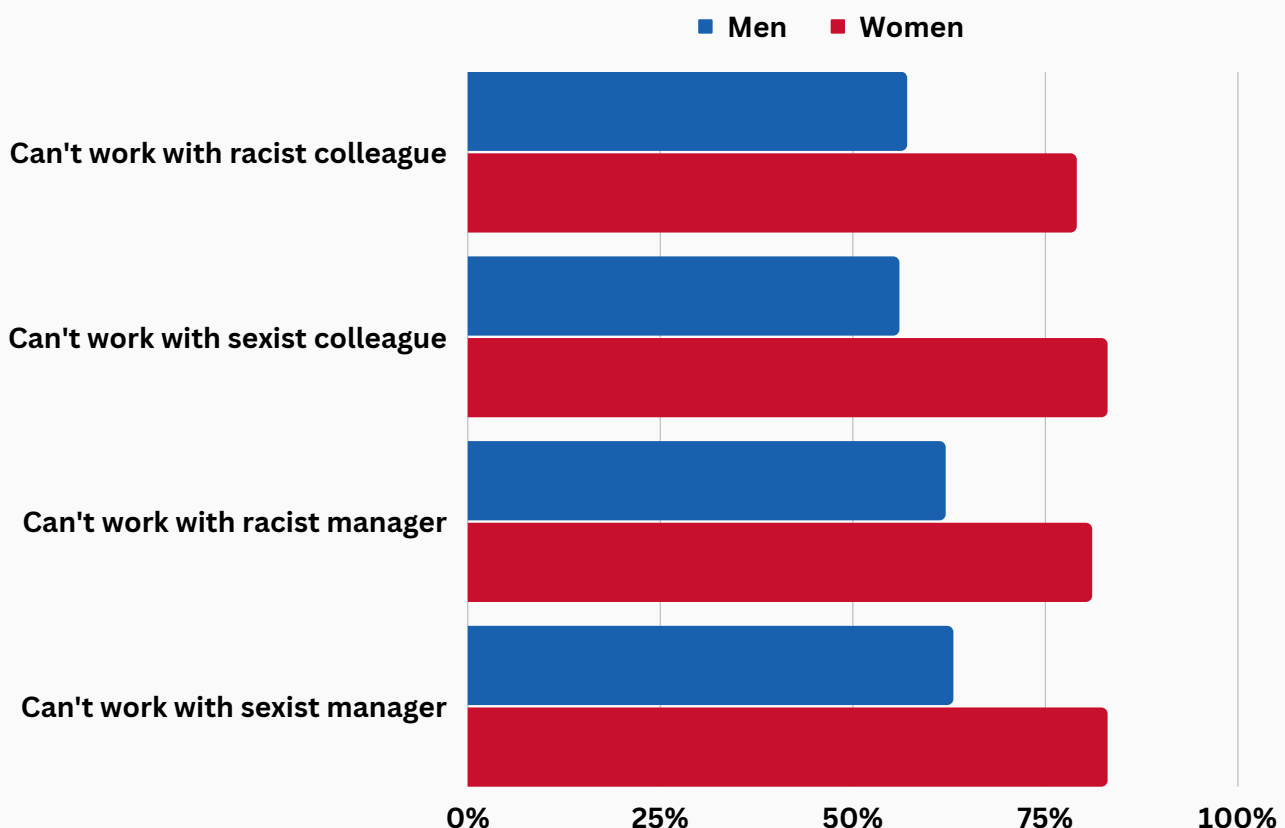
Women clearly find it more important to be able to work from home regularly than men. Working from home is ideal for maintaining a work-life balance. Companies should therefore focus more on this according to this generation.

How to deal with feedback, racism, and sexism

In general, women find feedback from their manager more important than men. In their top 5 priorities, they more often include characteristics such as 'my manager should treat me equally with other employees (38%), my manager takes into account my opinion (38%), and does not let me down when I make mistakes (35%}'. It is also mainly women who indicate that their manager currently gives too little feedback (women: 35%, compared to men: 23%). This mainly concerns positive feedback (women 34%, compared to men: 15%).

Furthermore, it is also primarily female talents who indicate that they cannot work together with a racist (men: 57%, women: 79%) or sexist (men: 56%, women: 83%) colleague. Let alone with a racist (men: 62%, women: 81%) or sexist (men: 63%, women: 83%) manager.

This could be because women more often become personally involved in these issues. They are more regularly confronted with gender or ethnic-based inequality and discrimination. Moreover, the great need for inclusion and diversity of Gen Z also plays a role here. Keep in mind that this applies to the entire generation, including male Gen'Zers who also consider inclusion and diversity important.



Many opportunities for your organisation

After reading this whitepaper, you now better understand what this young working generation considers important when searching for and performing a job. If you want to attract and retain young professionals from Gen Z in your organization, these are the most important take-aways you need to remember:

- Especially salary, atmosphere, work-life balance and job content are important in the job search
- Young talents are mainly concerned about energy prices and climate change. This makes them attach more importance to a good salary, job security, and sustainability.
- Websites and social media are important for this generation in their job search. Companies should therefore strongly focus on snappy video content and distribute it on TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat, LinkedIn, and their website.
- Young talents prefer to work for one employer after their studies. They consider job security more important than quick career advancement.
- More than 1 in 2 young talents do not consider changing jobs. Many companies have developed a good policy to attract and retain Gen Z. Focus on fostering an informal atmosphere and providing enough development opportunities to keep the other 50% happy.
- One-third of young talents feel that their manager gives too little (positive) feedback. Therefore, companies should focus even more on an open feedback culture.
- Finally, young talents absolutely cannot work with unhelpful, racist or sexist managers and colleagues. Having an eye for discrimination and inclusion is therefore a priority for the organization.

Do you succeed in making the above findings a priority as an organisation? Then you will soon find that young talents will automatically come to you.

Ormit Talent believes in the power of Gen Z



Do you want to make
your talent strategy
future-proof?

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