

# Generation Z: Understanding Your Youngest Hires



**By Andrew Bailey**  
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As the father of a 2-year-old, I was slightly freaked out to read that my child belongs to a cohort called Generation Z that includes kids old enough to be entering the workplace. But, knowing how Gen Z's differ from millennials can help us understand not only our own kids but the kids we'll recruit and hire in the next decade.

Gen Z's were born starting in the mid-90s, so the oldest are graduating from college this spring. Only about [a third](#) of young people earn a four-year degree these days, so chances are you're already recruiting Gen Z's, especially if your workforce includes employees with high school degrees.

Here's a quick look at what makes Gen Z different from prior generations. You can exploit these differences to recruit and retain employees in your organization. FYI, my observations are based on two sources worth checking out if you want to read more about Gen Z:

1. The book [Gen Z @ Work](#), which father-and-Gen Z-son duo David Stillman and Jonah Stillman wrote after surveying 6,000 Gen Z's and talking to CEOs and academic experts.
2. Universum's [New Generations](#) series, which surveyed 18,000 students and professionals from 19 countries.

## Who is Generation Z?

Generation Z came of age during the Great Recession and grew up in a post-9/11 world. [Lucie Greene](#) from the Innovation Group at J. Walter Thompson calls them "millennials on steroids," and says Alex Dunphy from "Modern Family" is a typical Gen Z.

They differ from millennials in key ways:

- They're more likely to use Snapchat and YouTube than Facebook or email. This could eventually be an issue if you're recruiting primarily via Facebook and contacting job seekers via email alone.
- Despite their obsession with social media, they like talking to people face-to-face. That comes as a relief to Gen Xers (like me) who appreciate personal interaction.
- They're the most competitive generation since the baby boomers (no participation trophies here!). Don't expect them to write posts revealing how great it is to work for you — they don't want friends competing against them for promotions.

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**Managing Partner and VP of  
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For over a decade, Andrew has specialized in IT staffing and talent acquisition, providing organizations with the people they need to complete projects on time and on budget. He makes life easier for hiring managers by blending information about their technical, business and cultural needs into a custom organizational profile. That process enables him to find the perfect hires for a single position or a large project.

Andrew is a charismatic leader with expertise in starting and building staffing firms and has a deep network of contacts. He's comfortable going old-school and picking up the phone to call people or pitching in on development, which he did for 1Rivet's groundbreaking 1BullsEye app for sourcing, placing and managing job candidates.

A graduate of West Virginia University, Andrew currently resides in northern Virginia with his wife and two children. When he's not pursuing niche talent, Andrew enjoys competing in triathlons, off-roading in his Jeep Wrangler, deer hunting and reeling in striped bass from the Chesapeake Bay.

## What Can I Do to Recruit Gen Z?

As I was reading about Gen Z, I discovered three interesting statistics. Apply them together to get the inside track on recruiting this cohort.

- 60% of high schoolers would be willing to go straight into the workforce if their employer offered to educate them, according to the Universum data.
- 75% of Gen Z would be interested in multiple roles within one place of employment, according to the Stillman data.
- 55% of high school students feel pressured by parents to gain early professional experience, according to the Stillman data.

You can leverage all three stats in two ways:

1. Tailor job postings to Gen Z concerns.
2. Create a high school internship program to get a step ahead of competitors.

## How to Write Job Posts for Generation Z

To craft a job posting targeting Gen Z job seekers, feature training and education benefits at the top of the listing. If you have career pathing, a graphic that shows how employees can move into different areas or positions from an entry-level starting point will appeal to Gen Z.

Think of your job posting as a note to Gen Z applicants explaining what's in it for them to come work for your organization in this particular position.

If you have a solid job description, you can use it to make a list of the knowledge, skills and abilities applicants need to succeed in the job. Then draw on that list to describe skills folks would pick up after being in the position for a year.

## Use Internships to Recruit Generation Z

Many high schools now offer independent study, intern-mentor programs or early dismissal for students who work. If you set up a program where high seniors work part time for your organization, you'll have a recruiting head start on your competitors.

An internship program that includes career path education would also address some of the additional worries high schoolers cited in the Universum survey:

- 37% were concerned their personalities wouldn't match their job.
- 36% feared not getting career development.
- 28% worried about not reaching career goals.
- 41% of girls worried their gender would limit their career chances.

## The Catch With Generation Z

Like all great ideas, my ideas for recruiting Gen Z come with a catch. When asked what the most important factor was in choosing a job, Gen Z had a one-word answer: salary.

That's not surprising given that Gen Z grew up during the recession in households headed by skeptical Gen X parents. (Although it might make you long for those millennials who placed the highest priority on meaningful work.)

The most successful Gen Z internship programs will include pay, even if it's just minimum wage. If an internship program feeds your recruiting pipeline, you might save money in the long run, especially if you're recruiting high schoolers who haven't experienced competitive pay or many internships yet.

## About 1Rivet

Working from offices in Washington, D.C., New York, Toronto and Valsad, India, the company's three core divisions offer:

### STRATEGIC TECHNOLOGY

IT mergers and acquisitions, systems integration, data integration, data visualization and analytics, delivery management and customer experience.

### OUTSOURCING SERVICES

Development and testing, project management, customer service, IT help desks, mailroom shipping and receiving, administrative assistants and reception, concierge, facilities, MFD management and key ops, conference room management, imaging and records management, audio visual and graphic design.

### TALENT ACQUISITION

Strategic hires, contract-to-hires and scalable workforce hires.

The good news is Gen Z's willingness to work sooner rather than later. You'll have a more flexible timeline to develop budgets and programs that incorporate this new cohort, without tailoring your recruitment to a specific university-aged group.

Now that you know what's on the horizon with Gen Z's coming into your company, plan accordingly.

*For help targeting your recruiting to Gen Z or any other generation, contact me at [Andrew.Bailey@1Rivet.com](mailto:Andrew.Bailey@1Rivet.com).*