

# Welcoming the iGeneration into the workplace

 By [Lyndy van den Barselaar](#)

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As the oldest of millennials (those born between 1981 and 1996) are well into adulthood, a new generation of workers is now entering and shaping today's workforce. Born between 1995 and 2009, iGen (or Gen Z) is the first global generation of digital natives.



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For the first time in history, today's workplace is made up of five different generations working together – thanks to lifestyle improvements, later retirement ages and earlier career starts. Unlike the previous generations, these young people are experiencing the world of work through this altered lens.

According to ManpowerGroup's Talent Shortage 2020 research, titled *Closing the Skills Gap: What Workers Want*, iGen's are ambitious, hungry for cash and career development; yet already, women and men have differing desires. Women rank pay twice as much as their next priority — developing skills — while men say skills and career matter almost as much as pay. As more tertiary-educated women than men enter the workforce for the first time after decades of unequal pay, women know their rights, and money matters.

For businesses, generational diversity will assist with driving innovation, skill diversity, organisational flexibility and the opportunity for strategic mentoring and skills transfer between generations. Essentially, a multi-generational workforce will present organisations with a competitive advantage in the ever-evolving world of work. Now, what does the entry of this fifth generation of workers mean for workplace trends in the near future?

## Skills are king

Many organisations may be looking to alter their recruitment processes to be in line with the working generation's needs, as well as their own business needs. This could mean recruiting candidates primarily based on capabilities and transferable skills, rather than work experience and specific qualifications – as employability today is less about what candidates already know, and more about their capacity to learn.

## Strong focus on development

Further to this, as the world of work evolves and the lifespan of skills diminish, employers will be expected to prioritise a culture of continuous learnability and skills development within their organisations in order to nurture talent. Mentoring and career coaching will also need to become a priority.

Not only will this support the personal and professional development of their existing and future workforce, but ensures that the organisation is flexible enough to remain relevant in an ever-evolving environment.

## **Focus on flexibility**

With both millennials and iGen's looking for jobs that provide them with the opportunity to have a flexible schedule, more organisations will offer workplace flexibility in order to attract and retain this talent for the long-term.

## **Changing structures**

With more millennials stepping forward into roles that shape the future of work and working environments, and younger leaders at the forefront of organisations, it's likely that organisational structures will begin to change. Junior employees will have more direct working relationships with their senior leaders, opening the doors for two-way mentorship between generations. As a result, there will be more opportunities for iGen workers to influence business strategies in future.

## **Increased values**

Younger generations are increasingly environmentally and socially conscious, and look to work with organisations that prioritise purpose and meaning in their work - such as sustainability, diversity, and inclusivity, for example.

Organisations are becoming more open about what they stand for and how their employees will be contributing positively to their business and communities; allowing iGen workers to make a more informed decision about the organisation that is right for them.

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