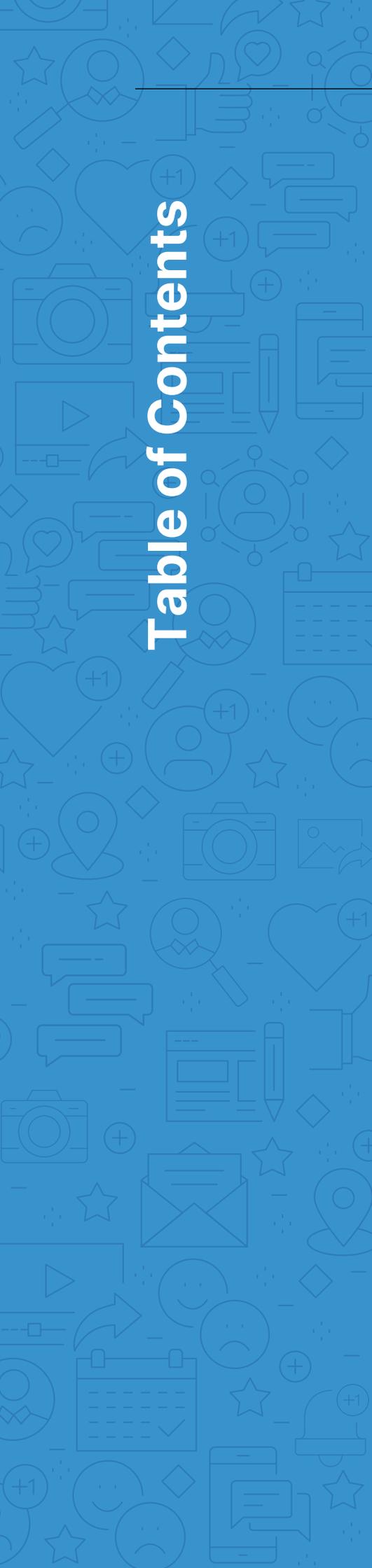


# World of Work for Generation Z in 2025





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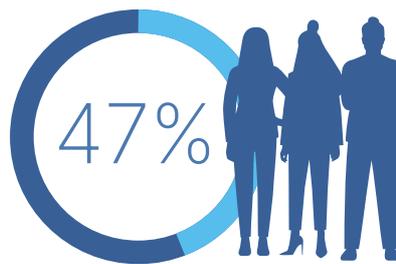
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# Executive Summary



## Key Findings

- **Generation Z (born 1996-2012) will comprise approximately one-third of the global workforce in 2030.** The majority of the generation has entered or will enter the workforce during a period of massive disruption – from the COVID-19 pandemic to geopolitical unrest and widespread digital transformation and automation.
- According to ManpowerGroup’s 2024 Global Talent Barometer Research, global Gen Zers’ current lives as “corporate Zoomers” are a mixed proposition. **Gen Z workers were the most likely (47%) of all age groups to say they will voluntarily leave their current roles in the next six months,** but were also the least confident they could find a new job that meets their needs.



*Of Gen Z workers are considering leaving their current role in the next six months.*

- Despite some persistent concerns, employers are undertaking a variety of strategies to **make their workplaces more palatable to Gen Z, including improving technology tools (76%), workforce well-being (75%), work hours flexibility (73%), increasing compensation (73%), and career development opportunities (73%).**
- The Gen Zers of 2030 will be **more accustomed to remote or hybrid professional work and frontline work infused with AI-based technologies and automation.** Gen Zers are likely to amass an unprecedented number of diverse, transferable skills that they can use to redeploy into new roles as business and economic conditions continue to evolve.
- Moving forward, leaders can keep their Gen Z pipelines moving via AI-informed recruitment, multi-dimensional skilling, clear career growth and succession planning, and holistic care and support – as well as through promoting a culture that does not stereotype employee needs based on age or generation.

Imagine that you're twenty-two years old and working in your first corporate job. You are fully remote with no opportunities to engage with your manager or colleagues in person. Not only are the skills of the role new to you, but you also lack any context regarding organizational culture and what you need to do to make substantial contributions that your leaders recognize.

### You are flying blind.

### This is the plight of the Generation Z employee.

It has always been challenging for recent college graduates to assimilate to a business world environment that plays by different rules than school. But prior generations had the benefit of lengthy orientations, close mentorship, chance elevator meetings, and weekly happy hours – whereas Gen Zers have a lot to figure out on their own.

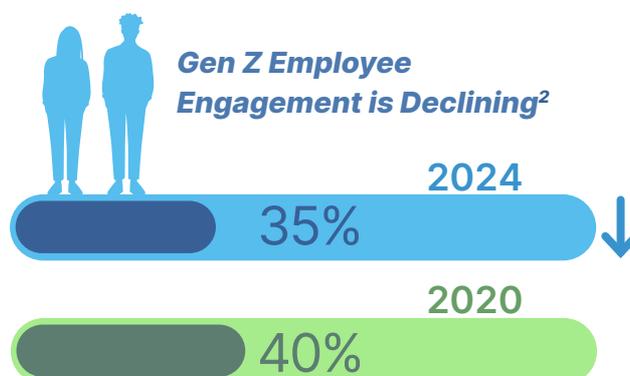
According to 2024 Glassdoor research<sup>1</sup>, Generation Zers – or those born approximately 1996–2012 – will overtake Baby Boomers in the full-time workforce this year. And the difference in engagement between older Gen Zers who entered the workforce prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and the younger ones who started working during or after is striking.

Gallup's U.S.-based 2024 employee engagement study<sup>2</sup> found that since March of 2020, our youngest employees

have experienced a five-point decline in active engagement, from 40% to 35%. The youngest workers saw the greatest declines in feeling cared about by someone at work, having opportunities to learn and grow, feeling connected to the mission of the organization, having progress discussions with managers, being given opportunities to develop, and feeling that their opinions count.

These disconnects add up to a lot of Gen Z workers who do not see a future for themselves in their current organizations. At a time when skilled labor shortages are increasing and we need young employees to take the leadership mantle, it's critical that we reverse this trend.

To do so, let's look closely at the global state of the Gen Z workforce, including what younger employees want and what leaders are seeing from them. The hope is that by understanding where Gen Z employees are today and peeking into the future five years from now, we will be able to take specific steps to ensure their permanent home in our organizations.



<sup>1</sup>[Glassdoor](#) <sup>2</sup>[Gallup](#)

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# Global State of the Gen Z Workforce



ManpowerGroup's 2024 Talent Barometer Research<sup>3</sup>, which polled more than 12,000 employees in 16 countries, shows global Gen Zers' lives as "corporate Zoomers" are a mixed proposition.

In addition to the declining engagement reported by Gallup, ManpowerGroup found that Gen Z workers were the most likely (47%) to say they will voluntarily leave their current roles in the next six months and were also the most likely (34%) to believe they will be forced to leave their current roles. Gen Zers were also the least confident they could find a new job that meets their needs.



**Gen Z workers are most likely to say they will leave their current role in six months<sup>3</sup>**

Deloitte's 2024 Gen Z and Millennial survey<sup>4</sup> illustrated some of the more provocative job-seeking priorities of younger workers. For example, **nearly six in 10 Gen Zers (59%) believe the prevalence of generative AI will prompt them to look for job opportunities that are less vulnerable to automation, such as skilled trades or manual labor.** But at the same time, they are choosy about the jobs they are willing to accept, as nearly nine in 10 (86%) of Gen Zers said that having a purpose is key to workplace satisfaction and well-being.

When it comes to upskilling and reskilling, a 2024 global study by Indeed<sup>5</sup> showed that **45% of Gen Zers are open to taking on side projects or small gigs to expand their professional development.** Unlike prior generations, many understand that professional development is a shared responsibility between employers and employees, and **42% reported that on-the-job training** is the best tactic for their professional development.

<sup>3</sup>[ManpowerGroup Global Talent Barometer](#)

<sup>4</sup>[Deloitte](#)

<sup>5</sup>[Indeed](#)

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Financially, many Gen Zers are not meeting their own expectations. A recent report by Yahoo!<sup>6</sup> indicated that **Gen Z workers require an average salary of more than \$170,000 to feel financially healthy**, the highest generational income reported. Unfortunately, Deloitte's 2024 research showed that nearly six in 10 Gen Zers (56%) live paycheck-to-paycheck – up five percentage points from last year.

It has been widely reported<sup>7</sup> that Gen Z has poorer mental health than other generations. Regardless of the cause of this, ManpowerGroup's Talent Barometer research found that **Gen Zers were among the most likely (52%) to say they experienced high levels of workplace stress on a daily basis. In comparison, only 33% of Baby Boomers reported high daily stress at work.**

Despite these obstacles, the Indeed research showed that Gen Zers are relatively confident in their ability to weather an unpredictable future. However, 43% believe that leaders need to be more effective in addressing the needs of the evolving workforce.

On the employer side of the equation, a pivotal 2023 Intelligent.com survey<sup>8</sup> found that **40% of leaders believe recent college graduates are unprepared for the workforce.** Of those who responded citing Gen Z graduates' unpreparedness, 88% claimed this was truer in 2023 than 2020, and 94% said they occasionally avoid hiring recent graduates. Furthermore, 70% of leaders cited poor work ethic as the main

reason new graduates are unprepared.

Similarly, in a 2024 poll conducted by Newsweek<sup>9</sup>, **40% of U.S. adults identified Gen Z as the most difficult generation to work with and 36% agreed that Gen Zers are also the hardest to manage.**

Nevertheless, many employers maintain a focus on Gen Z's recruitment and development. For example, according to the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) 2024 Internship and Co-op Report<sup>10</sup>, more than half of eligible Gen Z interns went on to become full-time employees. And ManpowerGroup's 2024 Employment Outlook survey<sup>11</sup> identified **recruiting (28%) and upskilling and reskilling (28%) of Gen Z workers as top global employer priorities.**

Leaders recognize the need to assist Gen Zers while they are still in the recruitment phase. **In a U.S.-based 2024 iHire study<sup>12</sup>, 58% of employers said Gen Z job seekers need to improve their interviewing skills and 57% said they need to communicate better with hiring managers.**

### **More than half of Gen Z reports high daily stress at work<sup>3</sup>**



<sup>6</sup> [Yahoo! News](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Axios](#)

<sup>8</sup> [Intelligent.com](#)

<sup>9</sup> [Newsweek](#)

<sup>10</sup> [NACE](#)

<sup>11</sup> [ManpowerGroup Employment Outlook Survey](#)

<sup>12</sup> [iHire](#)

Will these improvements be enough to keep Gen Z employees engaged and productive as they mature into more senior roles? We examined some of the challenges and opportunities Gen Z is likely to experience in the next five years.

**Despite their reported difficulties hiring and integrating Gen Z, employers are undertaking a variety of strategies to make their workplaces more palatable to this generation, including:**

Improving technology tools	<b>76%</b>
Workforce well-being	<b>75%</b>
Work hours flexibility	<b>73%</b>
Increasing compensation	<b>73%</b>
Career development opportunities	<b>73%</b>



<sup>11</sup> [ManpowerGroup Employment Outlook Survey](#)

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# Gen Z 2030 Forecast



According to the World Economic Forum<sup>13</sup> and other sources, **Generation Z will comprise approximately one-third of the global workforce in 2030.** At the time of the 2008 global financial crisis, workforce experts noted that the twenty-somethings at the time – known as the Millennial Generation (born 1980-95) – were experiencing a delayed career onset due to economic volatility.

Generation Z may follow the same path. The majority of this generation will enter the workforce during a period of massive disruption – from the COVID-19 pandemic to geopolitical unrest and widespread digital transformation and automation.

So far, it has been difficult for these young people to gain a foothold in the workforce, and by 2030, Gen Zers may be the victims of what is known in employment circles as scarring. Scarring takes place when longer periods of unemployment cause a group to miss its formative years of career training and development. Five years from now, we may start to see the effects of scarring on Gen Z's ability to advance in organizations and accrue lifetime earnings commensurate with their skills.

Nevertheless, in 2030 some of the oldest Gen Zers will have started to realize their grand ambitions. **The average CEO age is still mid-fifties today.** But due to demographic and psychographic shifts, including a smaller Generation X (born 1964-79) in leadership positions and the larger Millennial Generation caught in a priority sandwich between raising children and caring for elderly relatives, the most talented Gen Zers are likely to be tapped for c-suite roles at a younger age.

McKinsey<sup>14</sup> noted this trend already, finding that the number of Gen Z CEOs is already on the rise, and that Gen Zers are more than twice as likely to want to be a CEO compared with Gen Xers and Millennials.

<sup>13</sup>[World Economic Forum](#) <sup>14</sup>[McKinsey](#)

The Gen Zers of 2030 will be more accustomed to remote or hybrid professional work and frontline work infused with AI-based technologies and automation. As digital natives, they will be better equipped to transition to new work models, and in this respect, will serve as mentors and teachers to members of older generations.

As they settle into their careers, Gen Zers are likely to amass an unprecedented number of diverse, transferable skills that they can use to seamlessly redeploy into new roles as business and economic conditions continue to evolve. For Gen Z, work uncertainty and the need to prepare for ongoing shocks will be a permanent reality.

Recent research from the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) and Handshake<sup>15</sup> found that a majority of Gen Zers expect to work longer than their parents to pay off student loans and mortgages, and to support their extended families. More than 80% of them are already considering how they will fund their retirement, and by 2030 their focus on company-sponsored 401(k) benefits will only increase.

Although the rise of the contract workforce by 2030 is likely to lead more Gen Zers to pursue project-based careers with a variety of organizations, many younger professionals may find this type of career stressful. Given that **seven in 10 cite guaranteed hours or job stability as “very important” factors in evaluating job opportunities**, Gen Zers are likely to be attracted to employers who can provide a sense of continuity and a caring-centered culture regardless of employment arrangement.



## ManpowerGroup and Junior Achievement Worldwide: Building the Next Generation of Leaders

As one of the world’s largest and most-impactful youth-serving nonprofits, Junior Achievement (JA) develops hands-on, immersive learning programs to promote entrepreneurship, work readiness, and financial health among Generation Z innovators, entrepreneurs and leaders.

JA’s commitment to support all young people, including refugees, those affected by war and violence, and those in impoverished communities, has earned the organization three consecutive Nobel Peace Prize nominations.

Every year, hundreds of ManpowerGroup employees across Europe, North America and LATAM **volunteer thousands of hours to teach job readiness, sustainability, and digital literacy to more than 100,000 students.**

<sup>15</sup> SHRM and Handshake

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### *ManpowerGroup and Junior Achievement Worldwide (continued)*

**In 2024, ManpowerGroup collaborated with JA to deliver work readiness programs to Gen Zers around the globe.** Focusing on green and digital transformation this year, ManpowerGroup's training programs, job shadowing opportunities, interview coaching, hackathons, and workshops put Gen Zers on a path to a lifetime of sustainable, meaningful work.

At the annual Europe-based GEN-E Festival, Gen Z entrepreneurs compete for the ManpowerGroup Ready for Work Award. **The winning team receives 12 months of hands-on mentoring from ManpowerGroup Talent Solutions and Right Management** to explore their motivations, dive into personal behaviors, understand their teams, nourish their entrepreneurial mindset, and fast-track the skills they need to turn ideas and dreams into reality.

Finally, ManpowerGroup is part of a 13-member JA consortium turning EU grants into breakthrough programs. In 2024, these efforts **produced EmPass, a micro-credential program jointly developed with JA Europe, Accenture, and Zurich Insurance.** EmPass identifies the most in-demand soft skills in the labor market and establishes quality standards for developing and implementing related skill building programs and curricula. Ensuring these skills are taught well provides Gen Z workers with a firm foundation for career growth.

## Key Action Steps for Employers

Given that skilled labor shortages will be embedded in the fabric of the global workforce for a long time to come, here are immediate strategies leaders can use to help our youngest workers choose us initially, assimilate effectively, and contribute meaningfully.

### **Hire Individuals, Not a Class**

We often think of bringing Gen Z aboard in groups – for example, intern classes and entry-level cohorts. But **most Gen Zers, from recent college graduates to frontline workers, desire a recruitment experience that is highly personalized and skills-based.** AI-based talent intelligence tools match Gen Z candidates to open positions in your organization – not based on their limited work experience, but on the skills they are actively developing and the career growth they are looking for. Because talent intelligence tools discern candidate potential, they open up alternate pathways for young workers that hiring managers may have not considered.

And, as Gen Zers are accustomed to chatting with conversational bots, set your company apart by offering genuine human interaction and rapport-building during the recruitment process. If young workers have taken the time to create a profile and interview with you, communicate actively about their status and don't leave them hanging.

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Finally, if you can, bring individual Gen Z hires on campus for onboarding and an initial training period. Hiring managers should be involved in creating a schedule of introductory meetings and social events to accompany standard orientation fare.

## Offer Multi-Dimensional Upskilling

In the Gen Z employee population, there is a need for both reskilling and upskilling. Reskilling involves training people in a new area, whereas **upskilling takes competencies they already have to the next level**. Given how hungry Gen Z workers are for professional development opportunities, make sure you have a variety of modalities in place that are appropriately customized to knowledge and frontline workers.

These modalities **may include job shadowing or cross-functional rotations, reciprocal mentoring programs, and bite-sized, online learning content curated from reputable internal and external sources**. Some of your content can focus on transferable skills that are relevant across a wide range of industries and roles, such as diplomacy and problem-solving. Other offerings might focus on the application and use of new technologies such as generative AI and automation.

When creating skilling initiatives for Gen Z, it is critical to keep context in mind. Many young workers are thrust into remote or hybrid roles with minimal supervision, while others lack the apprenticeship experience that was once so common to frontline and service roles. In addition to effectively integrating Gen Zers into our specific organizations, we must also take responsibility for assimilating them into a work world that has drastically changed.



### MyPath<sup>®</sup>

Training the next generation of workforce leaders is critical. The Manpower MyPath **program helps associates focus their skills development and training, and pursue opportunities in high-growth sectors** such as advanced manufacturing, information technology, supply chain and customer service.

For recruiters, MyPath provides insight into an individual's experiences, motivations, interests, talents and strengths. They can see possibilities, rather than limitations, and help people move up and earn more with accelerated training and coaching specifically designed to help them get that next great job.

**Almost 36%**  
**of our current talent pool (more than 240,000 people) and nearly 13,000 clients across 12 markets have engaged with MyPath.**



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## Show Them a Clear Trajectory



Like many generations before them, Gen Zers may be eager to lead on the first day. Especially now that AI-based technologies can facilitate decision-making, Gen Z wants to be in on the action. As much as you can, build project ownership into their job descriptions, set metrics to hold young workers accountable, and provide the right resources to achieve their goals and exceed expectations. Consider inviting Gen Zers to spearhead innovation and creativity initiatives that will infuse the organization with a fresh perspective and help leaders see around corners.

Understandably, many organizations will have a leadership bottleneck in 2025. The Baby Boomer generation has been slower to retire than any prior group, and now that it is the Gen Xers and Millennials' turn to run our global companies, Gen Zers might be in for a long wait.

**It is essential to conduct your succession planning in such a way that Gen Z talent has a high-quality employment experience today, and that this experience directly maps to what they'll need to be successful in future senior roles.**

If Gen Zers understand why they are being asked to meet career milestones in a particular order, as well as the value of taking their time, they will be more likely to approach their own advancement with humility and patience.



***Build project ownership into their job descriptions, set metrics to hold young workers accountable, and provide the right resources to achieve their goals and exceed expectations.***

## Provide Holistic Support



Whatever you want to call it – work/life balance, integration, or blend – is non-negotiable for Generation Z, as it's all they've ever known. **Gen Zers want a say in where, when, and how they work, and even frontline workers expect some degree of scheduling flexibility.**

Whether in an in-person or virtual work environment, Gen Zers expect psychological safety, the freedom to be themselves, and respect for their contributions. Contrary to what many believe, Gen Zers value face-to-face interaction with their managers and peers. An effective employee experience for young workers certainly includes technology touchpoints like text notifications and email, but also fosters human collaboration, relationship-building, and a two-way feedback exchange.

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Gen Z prefers frequent, informal check-ins as opposed to scheduled, biannual performance evaluations, and enjoys continual reinforcement of how the team's work contributes to the organization's purpose. In other words, when deciding on return to office policy, make sure your Gen Zers aren't stuck in an empty, uninspiring cube farm with only a speedy Wi-Fi connection for company.

At work, Generation Z tends to be more open, honest, and vulnerable about personal struggles than older generations. They want their employers to care about them as multi-faceted individuals who may have mental health, financial, or relationship challenges. Therefore, attempting to recruit and keep a Gen Z workforce while dialing back your employee assistance programs, DEIB initiatives, and other benefits is not a wise strategy. In addition to continuing to offer these resources, train your leaders in empathic communication so they are prepared for complex situations that may come their way.

## Transcend Generational Differences



For a few years now, workforce experts have received healthy pushback on the concept of generational differences. And while it has always been impossible to judge the characteristics of an individual based solely on their birth year, it's true that people born at a similar time in history are often influenced by the same social, economic, and political factors and develop many of the same attitudes as a result.

**What makes Gen Zers different, though, is that they aren't poised to pass through traditional life stages as predictably as older generations.** We're already seeing this with the Millennials, who are choosing to have children anywhere from 15 to 45 years old or not to have them at all. By the time the entirety of Generation Z is in the workforce, these young people are likely to run the gamut in terms of lifestyle, financial status, career stage, and family structure.

Therefore, be careful about assuming that all Gen Zers need a specific type of support because of their age. Rather, through town halls, focus groups, and surveys, solicit input from individual or small groups of employees to learn what they need from you today and in the near future. Their generation will only be part of the answer.



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# Global Workforce Solutions



**Workforce Management**

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**Talent Resourcing**

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**Career Management**

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**Career Transition**

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**Top Talent Attraction**

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**Strategic Workforce Planning**

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**Workforce Consulting & Analytics**

## About ManpowerGroup

[ManpowerGroup®](#) (NYSE: MAN), the leading global workforce solutions company, helps organizations transform in a fast-changing world of work by sourcing, assessing, developing, and managing the talent that enables them to win. We develop innovative solutions for hundreds of thousands of organizations every year, providing them with skilled talent while finding meaningful, sustainable employment for millions of people across a wide range of industries and skills.

Our expert family of brands – Manpower, Experis, and Talent Solutions – creates substantially more value for candidates and clients across more than 70 countries and territories and has done so for 75 years. We are recognized consistently for our diversity – as a best place to work for Women, Inclusion, Equality, and Disability, and in 2024 ManpowerGroup was named one of the World's Most Ethical Companies for the 15th time – all confirming our position as the brand of choice for in-demand talent. For more information, visit [manpowergroup.com](https://manpowergroup.com).

## About the ManpowerGroup Global Talent Barometer

The ManpowerGroup Global Talent Barometer measures worker confidence, job satisfaction and well-being around the world. The Talent Barometer leverages independent survey best-practices and statistically significant samples to create a powerful tool to better understand what workers want globally. The research aims to improve the future of work through deeper understanding of key drivers of workforce sentiment today. To learn more and explore the data, visit the [Global Talent Barometer website](#).

## Stay Connected

