Hey! What's New? 2026-39

Gen Z and Millennial Survey Finds These Generations Are Seeking Progress on Their Own Terms

As Gen Zs and millennials move deeper into adulthood and leadership, they are reshaping how progress at work is defined, often prioritizing stability, skills and well-being before advancement, according to *Deloitte's 2026 Global Gen Z and Millennial Survey.* Now in its 15th year, the research draws on responses from more than 22,500 Gen Zs and millennials across 44 countries, alongside qualitative insights from business leaders. "This year's findings show that these generations are adaptable, pragmatic and intentional about progress, even as economic pressure and rapid technological change raise the stakes."

According to a Deloitte press release, for the fifth consecutive year, cost of living is the top concern for both generations, far outpacing other societal concerns. Financial pressure is driving the 'maybe later' trend for these generations: while they are ambitious, their financial reality has altered timelines for major milestones. According to the survey:

- **Financial constraints are altering timelines:** "More than half of Gen Zs (55%) and millennials (52%) say they have delayed major life decisions, such as starting a family, furthering education, or launching a business, due to their financial situation."
- **Housing affordability remains a significant constraint and influences career decisions:** "69% of Gen Z and 64% of millennials say that the availability or affordability of housing has a direct impact on their career decisions and where they can work."
- **Despite these pressures, financial optimism persists:** "53% of Gen Zs and 45% of millennials expect their personal financial situation to improve within the next year."

Interest in leadership is widespread, but not urgent. The new release says that, "consistent with last year's findings, only 6% of Gen Zs and millennials say achieving a leadership position is their primary career goal. The hesitation is driven by concerns about the tradeoffs being in a leadership role may present."

- **Gen Zs and millennials are making career choices that prioritize long term fit over short term advancement:** "Most Gen Zs and millennials favor steady progress (44% of Gen Zs and 45% of millennials) over rapid promotions (25% of Gen Zs and 21% of millennials), with some even willing to move laterally or take a step back to find the right role (21% of Gen Zs and 20% of millennials)."
- **Leadership is associated with well-being tradeoffs:** "The most commonly cited barriers to leadership are stress and burnout (50% of Gen Zs and 49% of millennials), excessive responsibility (50% of Gen Zs and 48% of millennials), and concerns about work/life balance (41% of Gen Zs and 46% of millennials)."
- **Yet many still want senior leadership roles in the future:** "Three-quarters of Gen Zs (76%) and two-thirds of millennials (67%) say they are interested in pursuing senior leadership roles at some point in their careers."

Nearly three-quarters of Gen Zs and millennials (74%) report using AI in their day-to-day work, up sharply from last year (57% of Gen Zs and 56% of millennials). “While AI is widely viewed as an accelerant, helping improve efficiency, output quality and work/life balance, some believe organizations are struggling to keep pace. And respondents are facing digital fatigue exacerbated by an influx of digital tools which are often poorly integrated with legacy systems and workflows.”

- **Gen Zs and millennials are using AI as a career coach:** “Beyond advancing efficiency and work quality, these generations are using AI to identify learning and development opportunities (79% of both generations), seek career advice (72% of Gen Zs and 69% of millennials) and cope with work-related stress (67% of Gen Zs and 65% of millennials).”
- **There’s an AI readiness gap between workers and their organizations:** “Gen Zs and millennials feel they are adapting faster than their employers, as nearly one-third believe their organization is not prepared for the changes AI will bring (30% of Gen Zs and 31% of millennials), and another one-third say the AI tools available to them at work are only somewhat or not at all sufficient (33% of Gen Zs and 32% of millennials).”
- **Gen Zs and millennials are optimistic about entry-level career development:** “When asked how AI usage is affecting entry-level jobs within their organizations, respondents most often said it’s enabling entry-level employees to gain experience faster (26% of Gen Zs and 28% of millennials), allowing them to focus on higher value work (25% of Gen Zs and millennials), and accelerating career growth potential (25% of Gen Zs and millennials).”

To learn more, read the full report at www.deloitte.com/genzmillennialsurvey.