

Hey! What's New? 2026-50

Deloitte's 15th Annual Gen Z and Millennial Survey Finds They 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.

"For fifteen years, this survey has captured how Gen Zs and millennials respond to change, and how they shape it," says Elizabeth Faber, Deloitte Global Chief People & Purpose Officer, in a press release. "They've already transformed work in tangible ways and are now making deliberate choices about when – and under what conditions – they pursue leadership and major life decisions. 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."

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

Interest in leadership is widespread, but not urgent. "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."

Notes Deloitte, "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). 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."

According to the press release, "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."

As baby boomers retire, notes Deloitte, "organizations face mounting pressure to preserve institutional knowledge, all while preparing for the arrival of Gen Alphas, who are expected to

enter the workforce in significant numbers by the end of the decade. Only 54% of Gen Zs and 60% of millennials say their teams could maintain performance if a key expert left tomorrow, citing limited incentives, time constraints, confidentiality concerns and high turnover as barriers to effective knowledge sharing.

AI's impact on hiring is evolving: "Nearly a quarter (23%) of respondents say AI is leading their companies to create new entry-level roles, though some remain concerned about AI's impact on jobs with 20% of Gen Zs and 17% of millennials saying their organizations are scaling back entry-level roles."

Nevertheless, says Deloitte, "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)."

"Gen Zs and millennials are adapting to a world that has demanded resilience early and often. They are moving forward thoughtfully, selectively, and on their own terms. How they navigate uncertainty – how they define success, weigh tradeoffs, and engage with employers – will help set the norms that Gen Alphas encounter as they begin entering the workforce in a few years," adds Elizabeth Faber. "This underscores a broader reality: what generations need, want, and expect from their work will continue to evolve, and the organizations that keep up will be those willing to evolve with them."

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