The Indeed Global Talent Report

Insights into the

Multigenerational Workforce





Mind the Generation Gap

Today's labor market is as multigenerational as it's ever been. Older generations are staying in their jobs longer while Gen Z is barreling into the workforce. So how are companies navigating this new terrain?

To find out, Indeed commissioned a global survey of employers and job seekers. The results expose the challenges of balancing different generations' needs, but also why tackling those challenges is worth the effort. Employers and job seekers in every generation agree that multigenerational workplaces not only improve employees' experiences — they also benefit the bottom line.

Some of the most pressing challenges center on the youngest workers. More than half of employers (57%) and job seekers (53%) say that younger generations are less engaged with work. Respondents view Gen Z in particular as lacking empathy and interpersonal skills — including Gen Z respondents themselves.

Yet Gen Z (born between 1997 and 2012) will soon dominate the workforce. As the largest generation in the world, they'll account for more than a quarter of the global workforce in 2025 alone.¹

That means Gen Z's experiences and preferences will shape the future of work, and the survey shows what that future might look like. For instance, the majority

of survey respondents agree that younger workers care more about their employers' environmental, ethical, and social stances than older generations do.

But even as Gen Z is rewriting the rules of work, baby boomers remain a huge influence. Workers are retiring later in life, and an estimated 150 million jobs worldwide may shift to workers 55 and older — including Gen X and baby boomers — by 2030.² Employers must now cultivate a workplace that appeals to the next generation of leaders while respecting older workers' experiences.

"A lot of people think talking about multigenerational workplace issues is just people clashing heads," says George Murphy, Co-Chair of Indeed's All Generations Empowered (AGE) inclusion business resource group, which creates opportunities for employees of all ages to collaborate. "But when we open the door, it becomes less about us being different ages and more about the fact that you have different experiences than I do. How can I leverage that, and vice versa? How do we work together to be as efficient and productive as we can?"

In this report, we'll share insights from exclusive Indeed survey data and external experts on how talent leaders can do just that.



It's less about us being different ages and more about the fact that you have different experiences than I do. How can I leverage that, and vice versa?"

George Murphy
Co-Chair for Indeed's All Generations
Empowered (AGE) Inclusion Business
Resource Group

Methodology

The Indeed Global Talent Report is based on an online survey conducted from November 13 to December 6, 2024.

Respondents included:

- 11,006 job seekers, defined as people who are in full- or part-time employment or are looking for work.
- 5,600 employers, defined as people with senior management responsibility in their organization.

Age profiles for each audience at a global level are as follows:

- Job seekers: Gen Z (13%), millennials (37%), Gen X (36%), baby boomers (14%)
- Employers: Gen Z (8%), millennials (43%), Gen X (35%), baby boomers (13%)

This report focuses on findings in nine of Indeed's core markets. Respondents per country were distributed as follows:

- Job seekers: U.S. (1,163), U.K. (1,116), Germany (1,193), Italy (1,119), France (1,127), Japan (1,100), Canada (1,142), Netherlands (644), Australia (615)
- Employers: U.S. (1,023), U.K. (1,023), Germany (501), Italy (515), France (500), Japan (516), Canada (253), Netherlands (251), Australia (257)

When referencing this research, please use the following citation:

Indeed Survey with YouGov 2024, Total N=9,219 job seekers and 4,839 employers

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About Indeed

Indeed is the No. 1 job site in the world³ with over 595M Job Seeker Profiles from around the globe.⁴ Indeed strives to put job seekers first, while providing quality matches for employers, fast, to support their hiring needs.

Every day, we connect millions of people to better work to create better lives, combining the latest in AI technology and the power of human judgment and connection.

595M
Job Seeker
Profiles

Indeed data (worldwide), job seeker accounts that have a unique, verified email address

#1
job search app
on iPhone or
Android in 25+
countries

Business Category, SimilarWeb, June 2023 24M total jobs on Indeed, worldwide

6
jobs added
every second,
worldwide

60+
countries
reached where
Indeed has
sites in 28
languages

23.6M+
phone
interviews
on Indeed,
worldwide

3.9M new jobs added each month in the U.S.

Indeed data

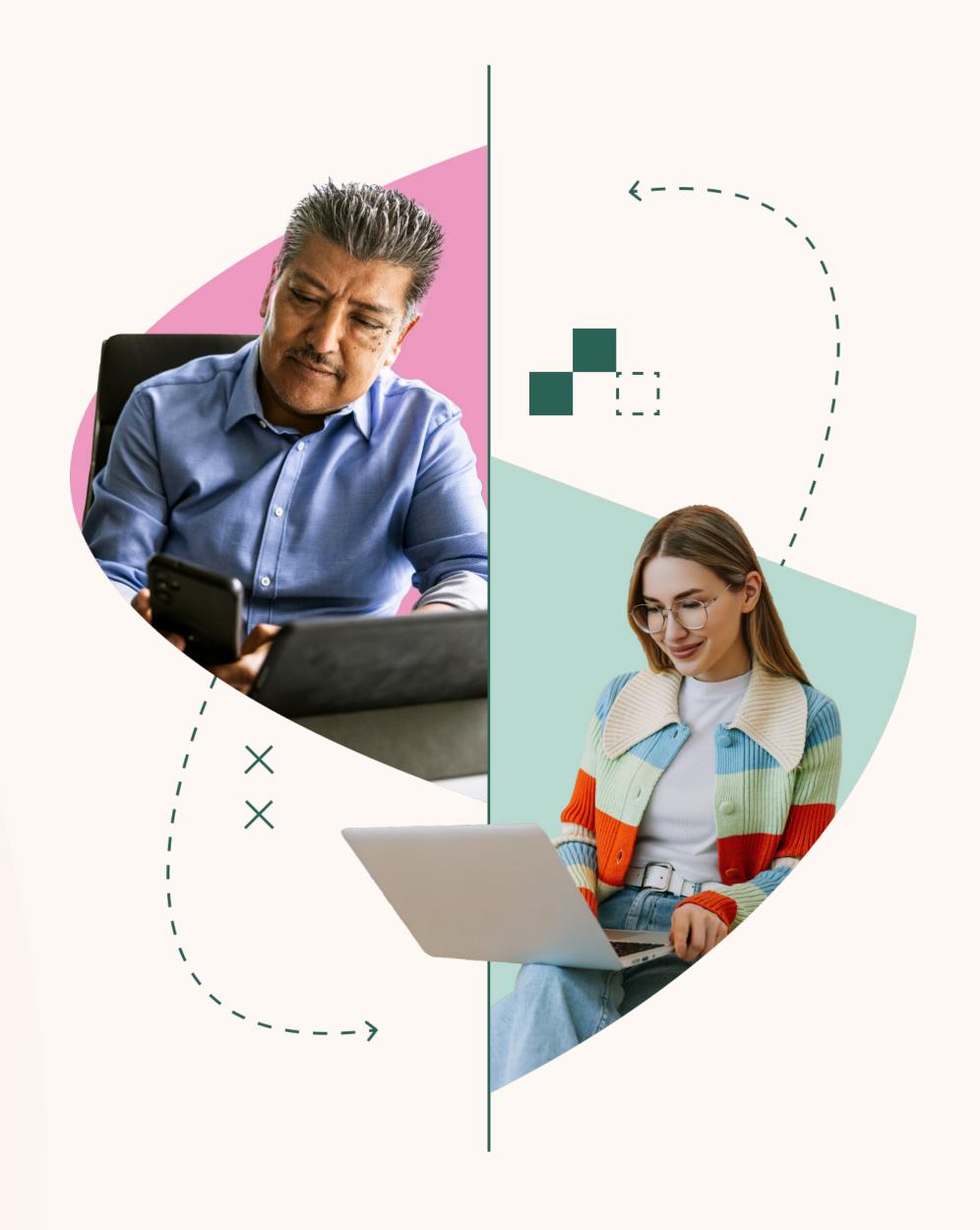
6.3M
Indeed Apply
applications
completed each
day on mobile,
worldwide

^{3.} Comscore, Total Visits, March 2024



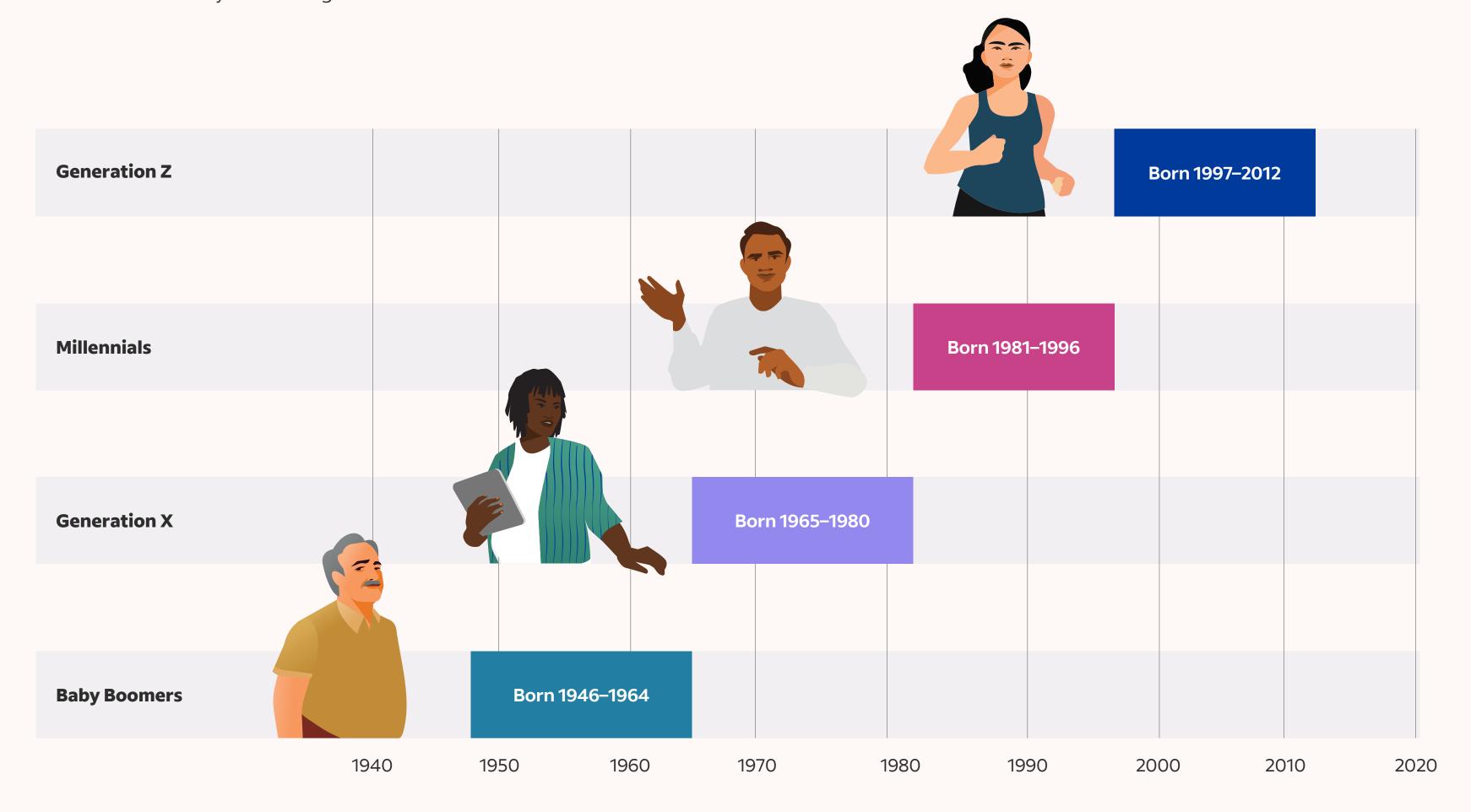
The Generational Culture Clash

How the youngest and oldest generations are struggling to adapt to a changing world of work.



The generations, defined

With baby boomers staying in their jobs longer and Gen Z entering the labor market, the workforce today is as multigenerational as it's ever been.



Source: Pew Research Center, January 2019 The Indeed Global Talent Report 6

Gen Z Gets a Bad Rap — Even from Gen Z

It's a time-honored tradition for older generations to look at their younger counterparts with dismay, and the survey shows that stance persists in the workplace today. More than half of employers (54%) and job seekers (54%) say that Gen Z is too reliant on technology. Another 37% of employers describe Gen Z as lazy, and 38% of job seekers agree. Both groups also say that Gen Z is the most entitled generation.

The odd part? Gen Z agrees.

Gen Z job seekers and employers say their own generation is the most likely to exhibit every one of these negative attributes. This damning self-perception may simply be a result of seeing themselves portrayed this way in pop culture and social media.

How do job seekers of different generations perceive one another?

All generations associate the most negative attributes with Gen Z — even Gen Z themselves.

	Total	Gen Z	Millennials	Gen X	Baby Boomers	
Hardworking	Generation X	Millennials	Millennials	Generation X	Baby Boomers	
Adaptable	Generation X	Millennials	Millennials	Generation X	Baby Boomers	
Ambitious	Millennials	Millennials	Millennials	Generation X	Generation X	
Collaborative	Generation X	Millennials	Millennials	Generation X	Baby Boomers	
Creative/Innovative	Millennials	Generation Z	Millennials	Millennials	Millennials	
Lazy	Generation Z					
Demanding or entitled	Generation Z					
Inflexible	Baby Boomers	Baby Boomers	Baby Boomers	Baby Boomers	Generation Z	
Overly reliant on technology	Generation Z					
Lacking interpersonal communication skills	Generation Z					
Lacking empathy	Generation Z	Generation Z	Baby Boomers	Generation Z	Generation Z	
Risk-averse	Baby Boomers	Generation Z	Baby Boomers	Baby Boomers	Baby Boomers	

Job seeker question: Which attributes, if any, are you most likely to associate with each generation? Please select all generations that apply for each row.

But there is another reason why Gen Z employees may be struggling at work: COVID-19. The pandemic disrupted the stage of Gen Z employees' lives when they would normally learn workplace skills and cultural norms through in-person internships and entry-level jobs. According to a study by the Associated Press, 46% of Gen Z respondents feel that the pandemic has made pursuing their educational or career goals more difficult.⁵

This suggests that employers can help reduce frustration with Gen Z by offering mentorship and targeted skill-building opportunities. Consultancies such as KPMG, Deloitte, and PwC have responded by offering specialized training for Gen Z workers to build skills including teamwork, giving presentations, email etiquette, and effective face-to-face communication.⁶

How do employers view different generations?

Like job seekers, employers believe that Gen Z displays the most negative characteristics.

	Total	Gen Z	Millennials	Gen X	Baby Boomers	
Hardworking	Generation X	Millennials	Millennials	Generation X	Baby Boomers	
Adaptable	Generation X	Millennials	Millennials	Generation X	Baby Boomers	
Ambitious	Millennials	Millennials	Millennials	Generation X	Generation X	
Collaborative	Generation X	Millennials	Millennials	Generation X	Baby Boomers	
Creative/Innovative	Millennials	Millennials	Millennials	Millennials	Generation X	
Lazy	Generation Z					
Demanding or entitled	Generation Z					
Inflexible	Baby Boomers	Generation X	Baby Boomers	Baby Boomers	Generation Z	
Overly reliant on technology	Generation Z					
Lacking interpersonal communication skills	Generation Z	Generation X	Generation Z	Generation Z	Generation Z	
Lacking empathy	Generation Z	Baby Boomers	Generation Z	Generation Z	Generation Z	
Risk-averse	Baby Boomers	Generation X	Baby Boomers	Baby Boomers	Baby Boomers	

Employer question: Which attributes, if any, are you most likely to associate with each generation? Please select all generations that apply for each row.

Hiring Gen Z Is Hard. Retaining Gen Z Is Harder.

Employers view Gen Z as the worst offenders when it comes to a range of common recruiting issues. Roughly one-third say Gen Z is the most likely to:

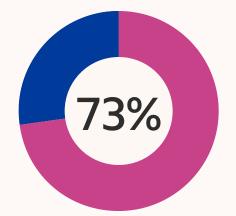
- Be inflexible in the recruiting process
- Have poor communication skills
- Refuse to attend in-person interviews
- Request unreasonable compensation, increased benefits, and remote work arrangements
- Be unfamiliar with what their company actually does

Gen Z has a similarly bad reputation when it comes to sticking with a job once they're hired: Nearly three-quarters of employers (73%) and job seekers (73%) say that younger generations are the most likely to job hop. While older generations are more likely to think this (74% of baby boomer employers and 78% of baby boomer job seekers agree), 72% of Gen Z job seekers are on board, as are 74% of Gen Z employers.

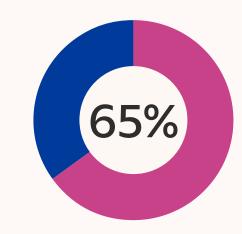
Which generations present the biggest hiring challenges?

Employers say Gen Z is most likely to be the cause of common challenges with recruiting and retention.

	Gen Z	Millennials	Gen X	Baby Boomers
Lack of flexibility	28%	21%	18%	21%
Poor communication	33%	20%	16%	16%
Not being willing to attend in-person interviews	29%	19%	14%	11%
Unreasonable compensation requests	33%	24%	20%	15%
Increased holiday allowance or other benefits	29%	25%	21%	16%
Remote work/flexible work hours	37%	34%	22%	14%
Lack of familiarity with our company or what the company does	34%	23%	17%	13%



of job seekers say that younger generations are more likely to change roles or organizations.



of Gen Z job seekers are actively looking for or are open to a new job.

Employer question: Which of the following issues have you experienced when recruiting employees of different generations? Please select all generations that apply for each row.

Baby boomers' perception that younger generations are "disloyal" is a bit harsher than reality, but it turns out there's some truth behind the reputation: 65% of Gen Z job seekers say they're either actively looking for a new job or are open to finding one. That's the biggest portion of any age group, though millennials aren't far behind. While this is a fairly common practice for young people trying to advance their careers, the survey suggests it's a point of frustration for employers.

"People who are younger feel less connected to the company [and] change jobs more quickly, which is completely fine, but it always disrupts our process," wrote one baby boomer employer from Germany. "Gen Z and millennials job-skip often," echoed a Gen X employer from the U.S. "It's almost not worth the month of training and certification process if they quit every time the seasons change!"



Gen Z and millennials job-skip often. It's almost not worth the month of training and certification process if they quit every time the seasons change!"

Gen X employer, U.S.

Baby Boomers Need Training Too

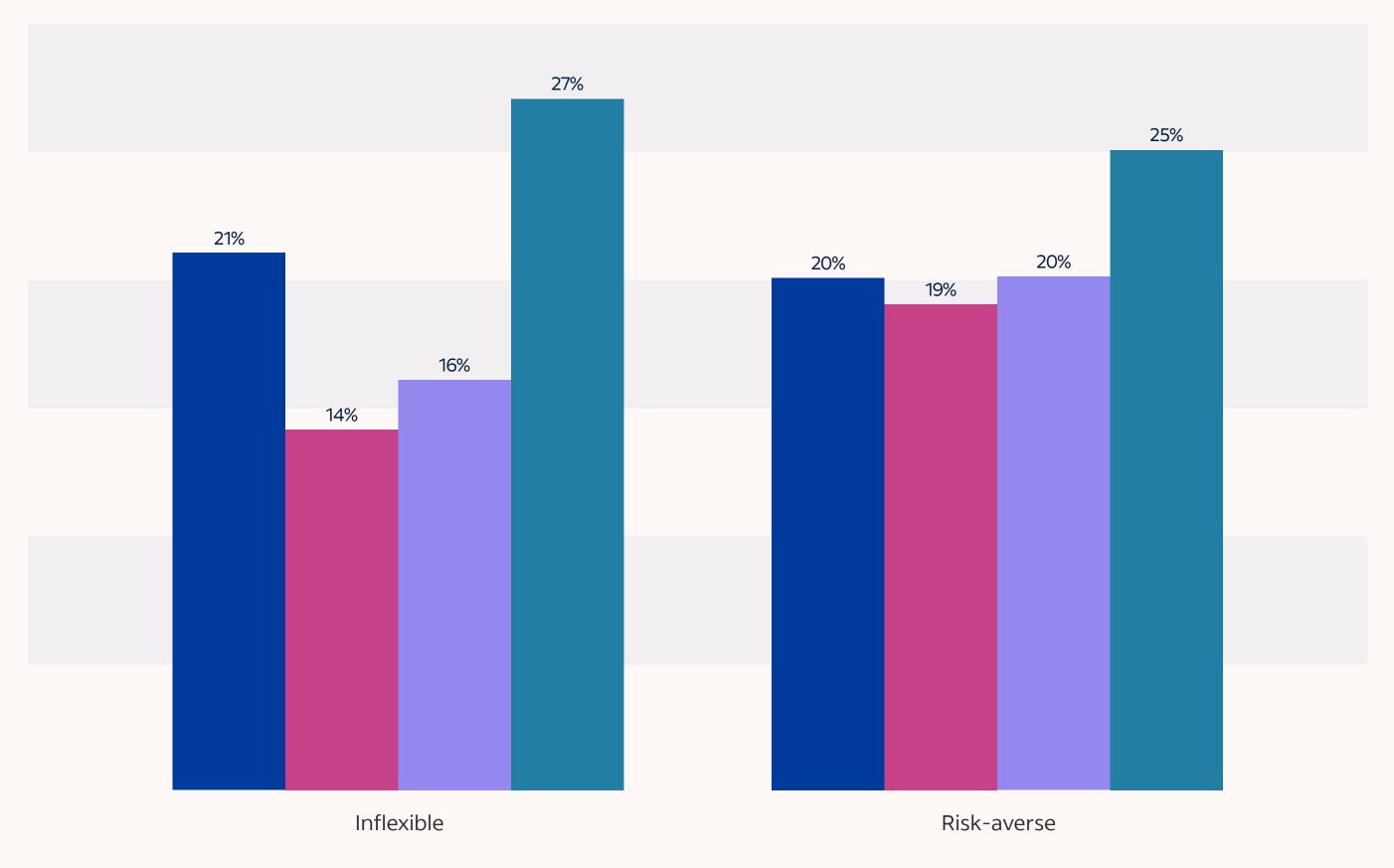
Older generations tend to stereotype younger people as lazy and entitled, but younger generations buy into stereotypes as well, viewing their elders as out of touch. Nearly three-quarters of all respondents say that older generations are the least technologically competent, but older workers disagree: Just 21% of baby boomer employers and 13% of baby boomer job seekers view their own generation as technologically incompetent.

Engagement at AARP, says it's true that older workers may lack some of the digital skills of their younger colleagues. But "not always, and that doesn't mean that they can't learn them," she says. After all, older workers have lived through and adapted to vast technological changes during their years in the workforce. Tinsley-Fix says it's important for employers to create educational opportunities throughout people's careers, not just at the outset, to ensure that everyone can take advantage of new technologies to improve productivity, drive innovation, and make work easier and more enjoyable.

What negative attributes do job seekers see among their older counterparts?

Job seekers overall say that baby boomers are the most inflexible and risk-averse generation.





Job seeker question: Which attributes, if any, are you most likely to associate with each generation? Please select all generations that apply for each row.

The survey also found that older generations are most likely to be seen as inflexible: The highest total percentage of job seekers (27%) and employers (27%) view baby boomers as the least flexible generation. Baby boomers themselves are the only exception, pointing to Gen Z as the least flexible cohort.

Tinsley-Fix says the disconnect here may be rooted in the fact that older workers have more experience with changes that go wrong. Baby boomer respondents are most likely to say they are the most risk-averse generation. This suggests that what other generations may view as inflexibility feels to baby boomers like caution.

"Older workers often say, 'Look, I've learned five different systems already. How long is this one going to last?" Tinsley-Fix says. If others assume that all change is good, "that hesitancy and that pushback can be interpreted as inflexibility."

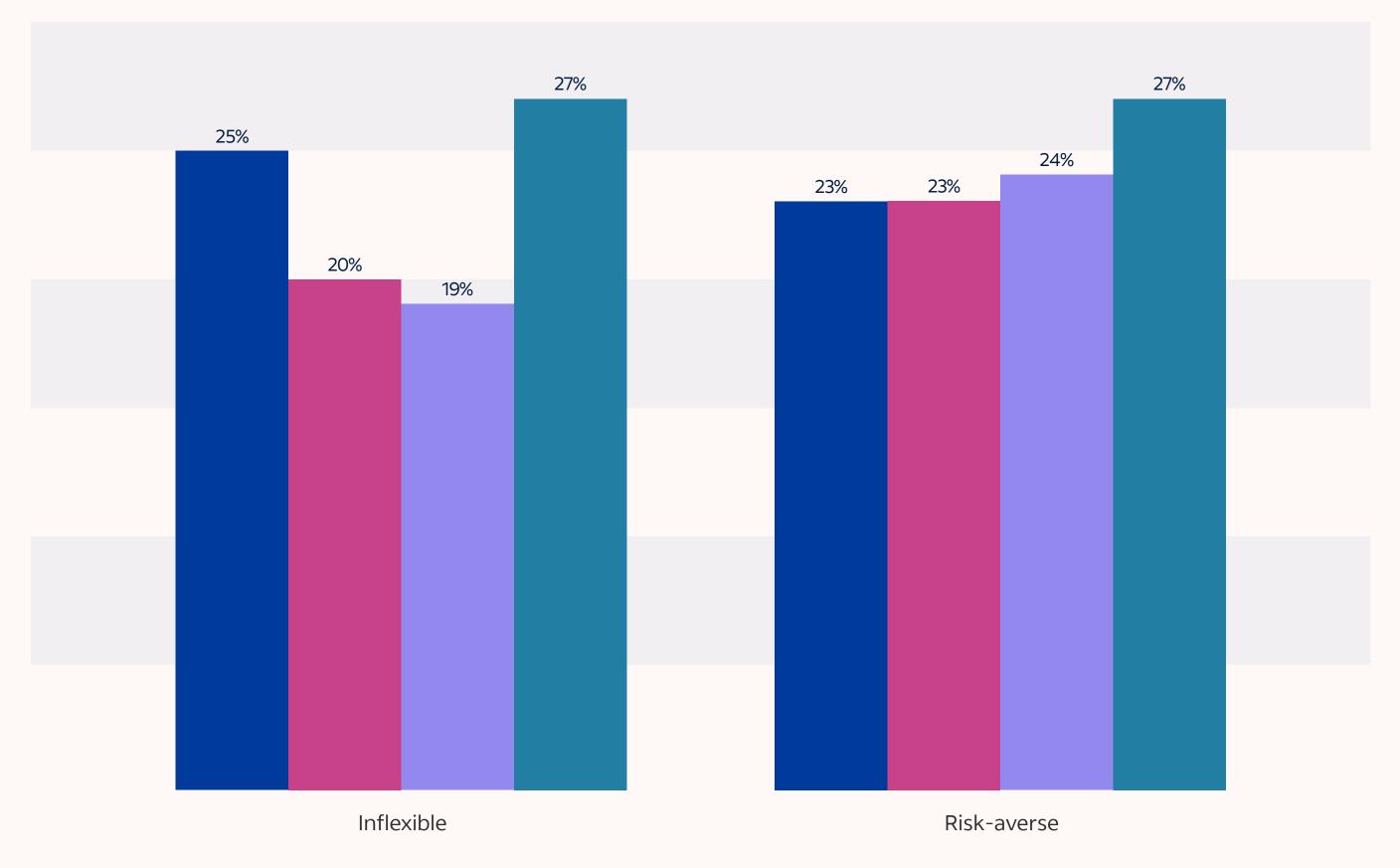
Tinsley-Fix suggests giving older workers opportunities to chime in on major changes. "Frame it as a conversation rather than a dictation," she says. "Acknowledge any frustration when communicating a needed change."

That way, employers can utilize older workers' experience to manage change effectively, identify potential obstacles, and consider ways around them.

What do employers see as negative attributes of older generations?

Like job seekers, employers overall believe that baby boomers are the most inflexible and risk-averse.





Employer question: Which attributes, if any, are you most likely to associate with each generation? Please select all generations that apply for each row.



Multigenerational Workforces Are Worth It

Organizations need to put in the work to overcome intergenerational challenges, but those that do can realize substantial benefits.



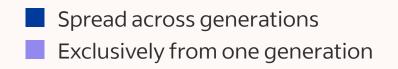
The Upside of **Generational Differences**

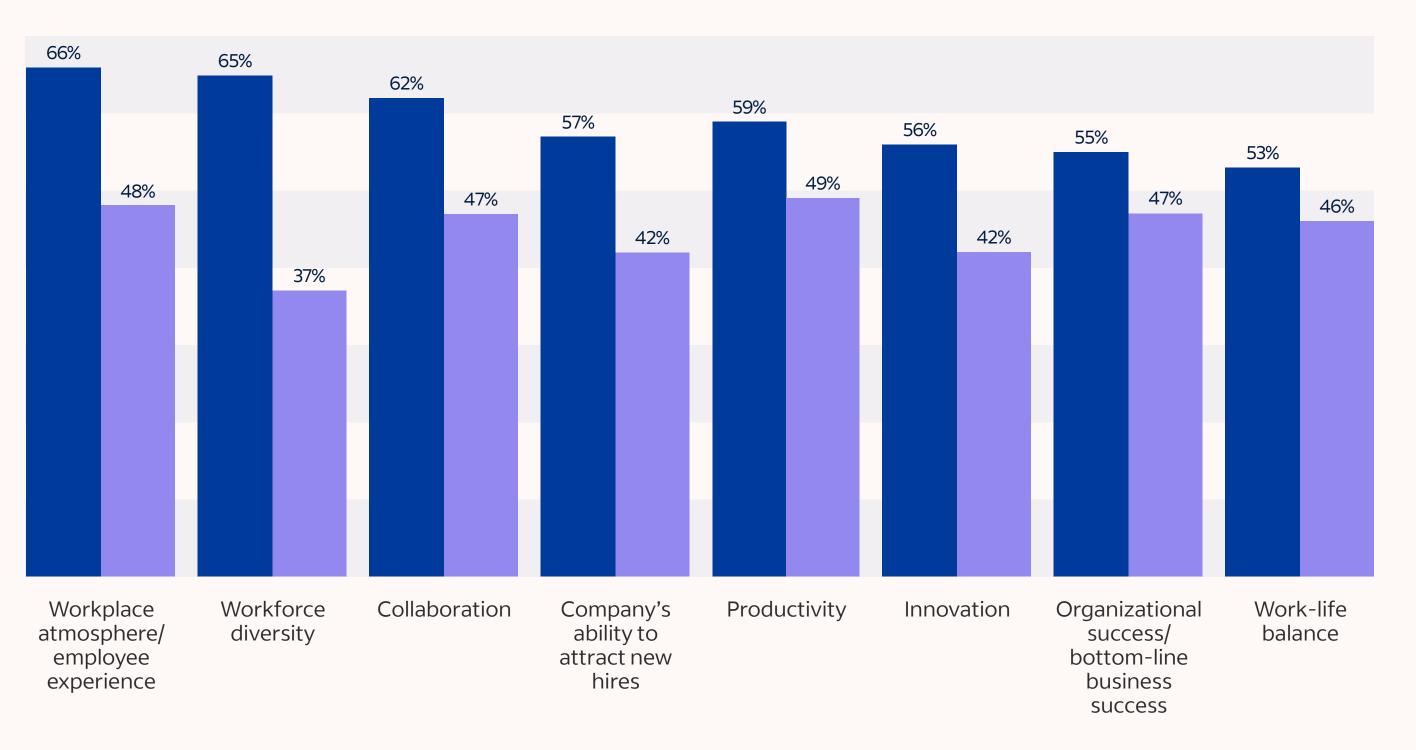
A significant majority of respondents — at least two-thirds of employers and job seekers — believe multigenerational workforces have broad benefits for companies and employees.

The biggest benefit, according to respondents of all ages, is shared knowledge, with younger and older workers learning from each other. That's closely followed by the advantages that come from having a wealth of experiences across generations.

What do job seekers see as benefits of multigenerational workforces?

Job seekers of all ages say that a generationally diverse workforce is better for companies and employees.





Job seeker question: You said that employees in your workforce are spread across generations or exclusively from one generation. What impact, if any, do you think this has on the following aspects of work? Please select one option per row.

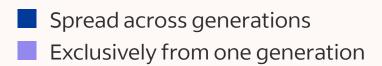
The more diverse a company is generationally, the bigger those benefits feel. At companies where the workforce is evenly spread across generations, 77% of employers say generational diversity has a positive impact on the workplace atmosphere. Meanwhile, just 56% of employers say the same about a workforce that is exclusively from one generation. This pattern also emerges among job seekers, who are more likely to report positive outcomes if they work for a company that employs many generations.

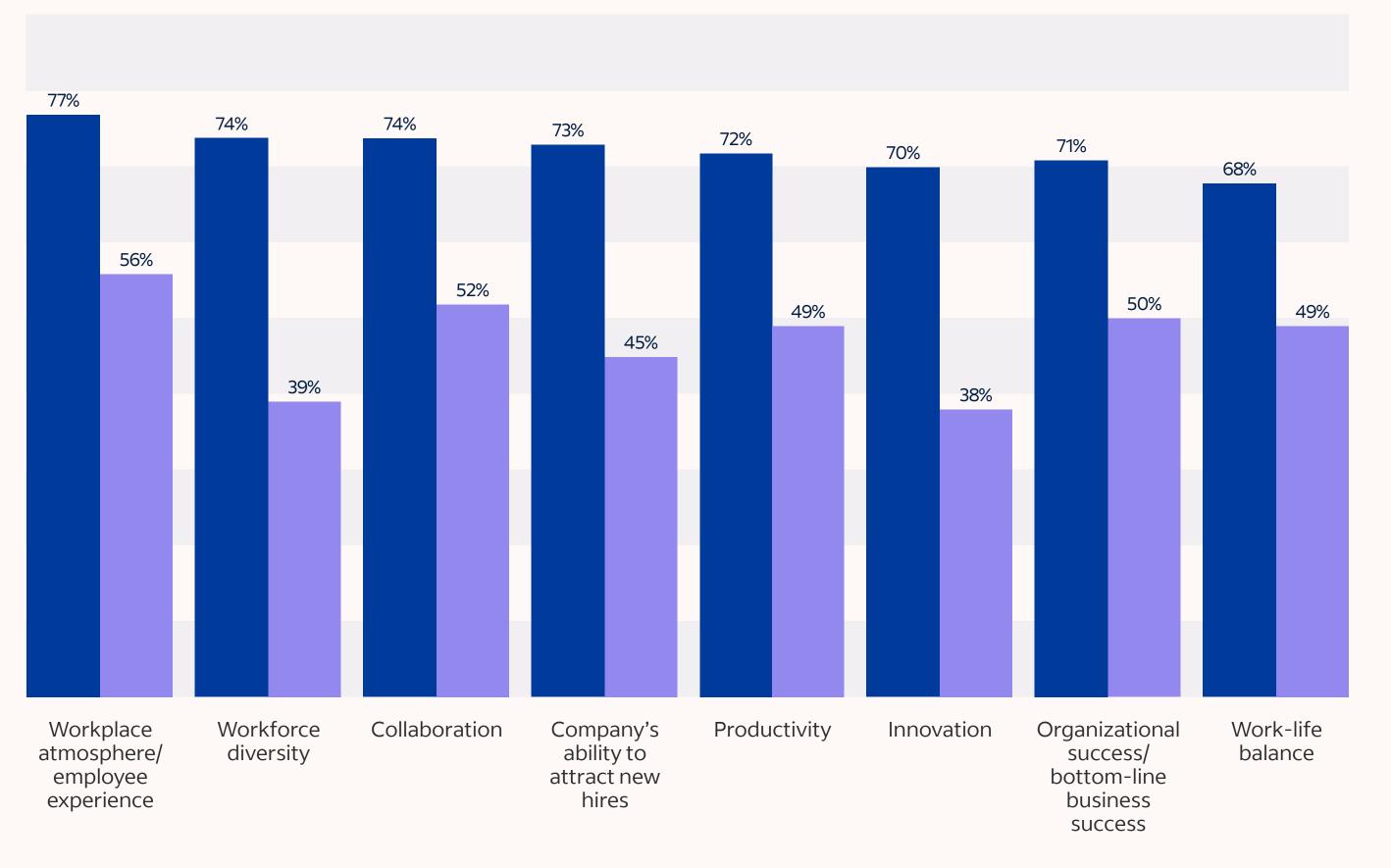
But these benefits don't just flow to employees. Nearly three-quarters of employers managing workforces that are spread across generations say it boosts both productivity and their bottom line; only about half of employers managing a single-generation workforce say the same.

One way for employers to encourage more of this intergenerational knowledge transfer is to share it internally, Murphy says. "Highlight when someone helps somebody. Highlight someone asking for help," he says. "Those things make a huge impact on people, no matter what age, feeling like they can be open to asking."

What do employers consider to be the advantages of multigenerational workforces?

Employers overwhelmingly see generational diversity as an asset — even more than job seekers do.





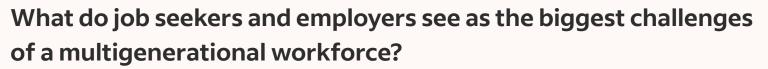
Employer question: You said that employees in your workforce are spread across generations or exclusively from one generation. What impact, if any, do you think this has on the following aspects of work? Please select one option per row.

Communication Is Key

Communication is the biggest obstacle to achieving the benefits of multigenerational workforces. Roughly one-third of all respondents say that generational differences in communication style and expectations are the biggest challenges they face in multigenerational companies. The only outliers on this question are Gen Z employers: 35% say that clashing views and opinions are a bigger issue.

Some of that tension may come down to misinterpretation. For example, older generations may assume that younger colleagues who turn their cameras off for Zoom calls are disengaged. But according to Deloitte, more than half of Gen Z workers live paycheck-to-paycheck,7 and often live with roommates to save on housing costs. They may not have a formal home office space — or even a desk — and might be embarrassed for co-workers to see that they're joining a meeting from their bedroom. Rethinking common assumptions around communication styles can help reduce friction.

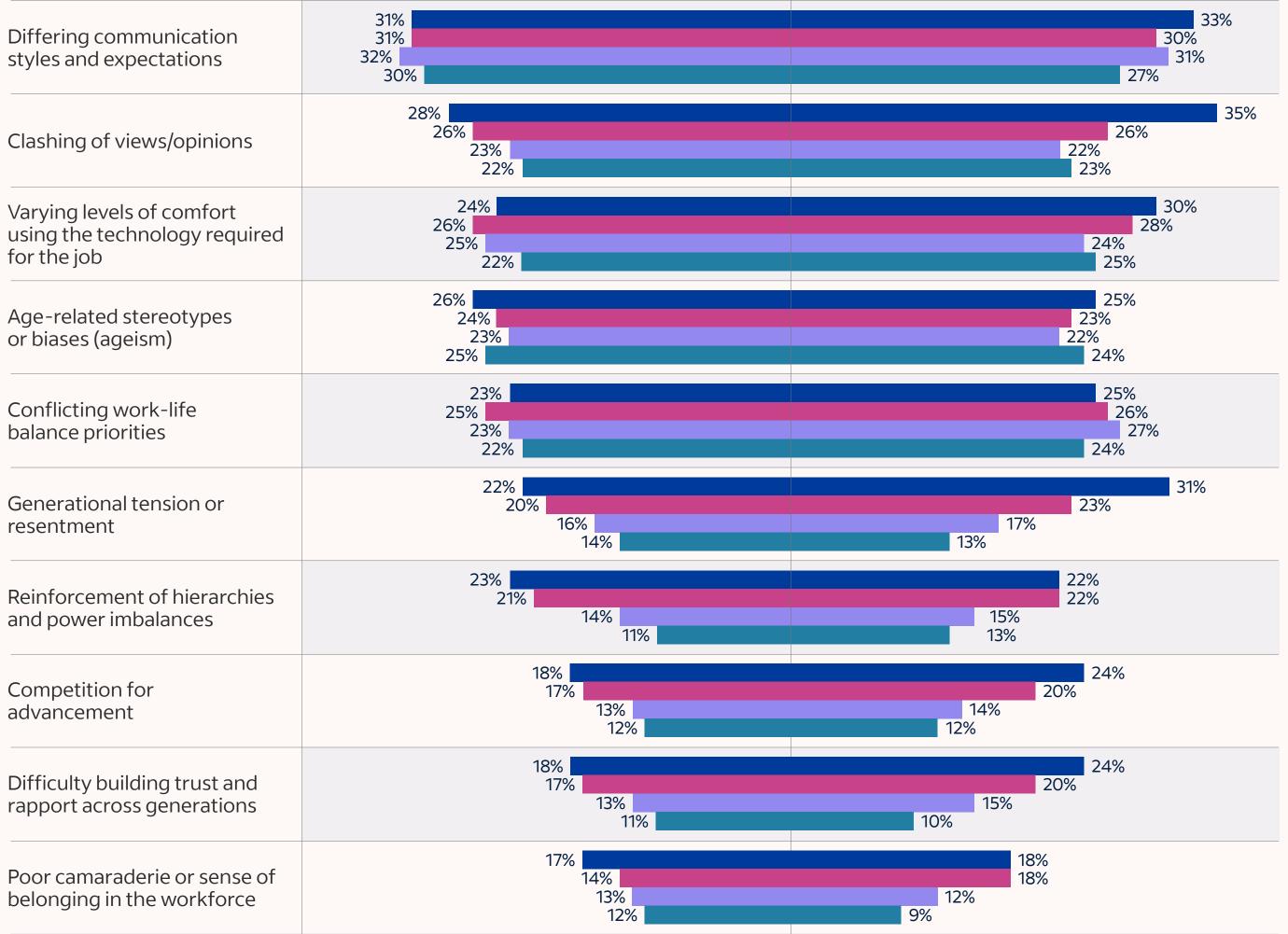
Job seeker question: Which, if any, of the following are the main challenges you associate with a multigenerational workforce? Please select all that apply. Employer question: Which, if any, of the following are the main challenges you associate with a multigenerational workforce? Please select all that apply.



Communication challenges top the list, followed by clashing views and opinions.







That doesn't mean companies need to toss out workplace norms to accommodate younger workers' communication styles. But it does mean they need to be more intentional about acclimating younger workers to those norms (and vice versa).

Tinsley-Fix says intergenerational employee resource groups (ERGs) can help older generations better understand younger ones, while creating a forum for younger generations to learn. "We need to make sure that whatever institutional norms we have, we ease younger workers in with grace and provide them that opportunity for mentorship," she says. And mentorship isn't a oneway street — younger employees can help their older colleagues build fluency with new technologies and understand the norms, expectations, and preferences of an increasingly influential demographic.



Older team members share their wisdom and experience, while younger team members bring in new energy and tech skills."



A mix of generations brings diverse perspectives, fresh ideas, and a blend of experience and innovation, which boosts creativity and problem-solving."

Millennial employer, U.S.

Millennial job seeker, U.K.

Ageism Remains an Obstacle

Our survey found that job seekers and employers are generally aligned in their opinions and experiences with multigenerational workforces, but one topic revealed a stark disconnect: the perception of age as a barrier to employment and career advancement.

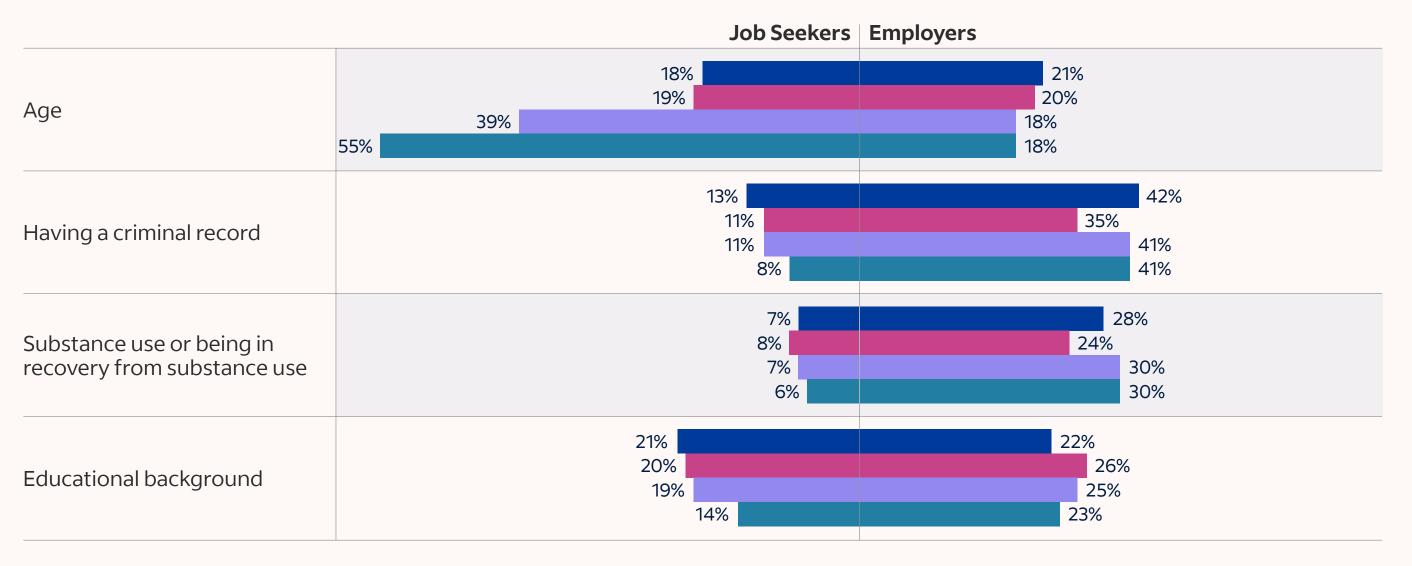
Job seekers believe age is the main obstacle to obtaining a job, and also the biggest barrier to receiving a pay raise or promotion. The older the respondents, the more likely they are to feel that age limits opportunity: 55% of baby boomers say age has stood in the way of obtaining a job, and 35% say it interferes with raises, promotions, and new opportunities. Gen X job seekers are also more likely than either millennials or Gen Z to see age as a barrier to employment and advancement.

But for employers, age ranks low on the list of obstacles. They are most likely to view a criminal record as the biggest barrier to employment, promotions, and pay raises.

What do job seekers and employers see as the biggest barriers to getting a job?

Job seekers say age is a major obstacle, but employers say age is not a significant factor.





Job seeker question: Which factors, if any, do you think may be barriers to you obtaining the job you want? Please select all that apply.

Employer question: Which factors, if any, do you think may be barriers that prevent some people from applying for jobs at your company? Please select all that apply.

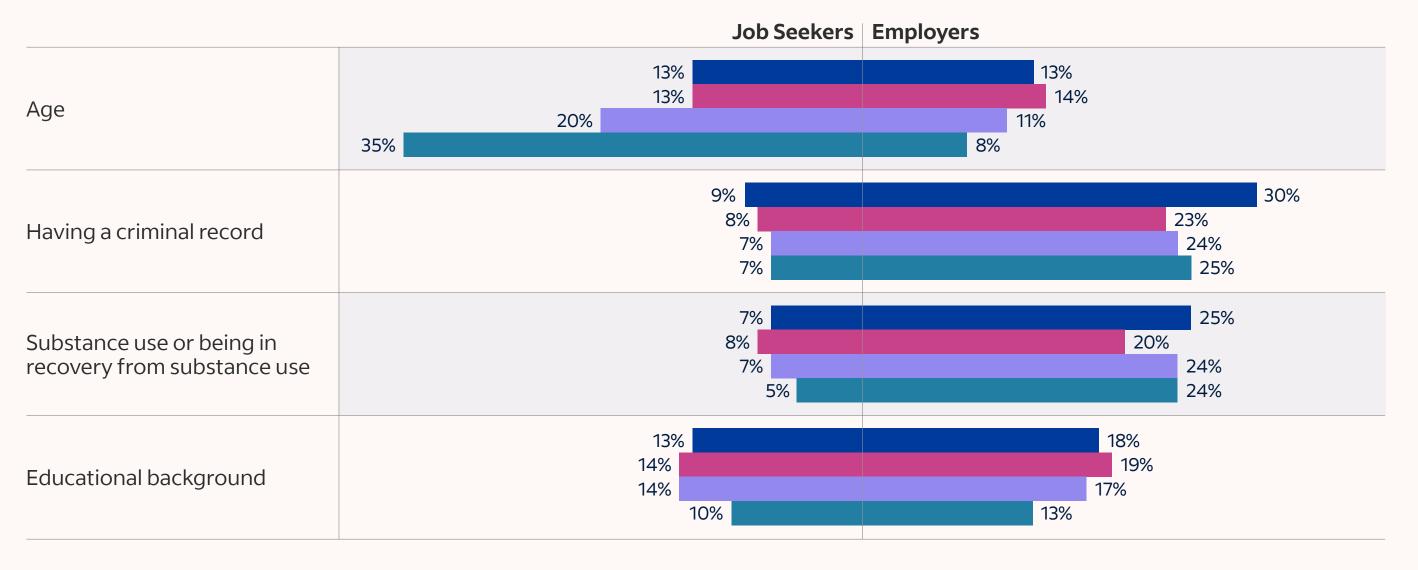
Tinsley-Fix of AARP says it's possible employers aren't being entirely honest with themselves. "There is ageism out there," she says, citing AARP's own research that has found that about two-thirds of people over 40 have felt or witnessed age discrimination. It's also possible, she says, that employers are weeding out older candidates not because they're older, but because they appear overqualified.

"I think employers would be much more willing to hire so-called 'overqualified' workers if they could see them as a bargain, bringing extra skills and experience to the role," she says.

What do job seekers and employers see as the main reasons employees don't get promotions and pay raises?

Job seekers believe age is the most significant barrier, while employers say it's the least impactful factor.





Job seeker question: Which factors, if any, may create barriers to you in receiving promotions, pay raises, or new opportunities at your company? Please select all that apply. Employer question: Which factors, if any, do you think may create barriers to employees receiving promotions, pay raises, or new opportunities at your company? Please select all that apply.

How to Bridge the Gap

Despite their differences, there are some things that job seekers and employers across all generations value. Roughly half of job seekers and employers say that competitive salary and benefits packages, flexible work arrangements, and work-life balance initiatives are the most effective ways to retain multigenerational workforces. Those traits are even more important to the Gen Xers and baby boomers in both groups.

The survey also shows significant support for skills-first hiring, or sourcing and evaluating candidates based on skills, regardless of where or how they gained those skills. Across all generations, 40% of employers and 37% of job seekers say they are comfortable with employers using a skills-first approach to make hiring fairer. But employers need to be aware of generational differences when adopting a skills-first hiring strategy.

For example, Al tools can be an important part of an effective skills-first hiring strategy. "Al gives us the ability to look at a job description from an employer and pull out the key skills needed to succeed in the role, and then to analyze job seekers' profiles and understand which skills they have built across a variety of roles to find a good potential match," says Hannah Calhoon, Head of Al Innovation at Indeed.

What makes multigenerational workplaces work?

All generations agree that competitive salaries and benefits are key, but Gen Z and millennials say flexibility and work-life balance are just as important, or even more so.

	Job Seekers				Employers				
	Gen Z	Millennials	Gen X	Baby Boomers		Gen Z	Millennials	Gen X	Baby Boomers
Competitive salaries and benefits packages	45%	51%	56%	62%		41%	47%	55%	58%
Flexible work arrangements (i.e., remote work, flexible hours)	48%	50%	53%	56%		47%	47%	50%	51%
Work-life balance initiatives	43%	48%	50%	52%		49%	47%	49%	51%
Career advancement opportunities	44%	43%	48%	52%		47%	44%	47%	52%
Opportunities for continuous learning and development	39%	41%	43%	47%		44%	43%	43%	46%
Inclusive company culture	28%	28%	24%	25%		39%	33%	30%	29%
Purpose or company mission	26%	22%	17%	18%		38%	27%	25%	23%
Focus on employer branding	18%	15%	8%	5%		34%	22%	14%	11%

Job seeker question: Which of the following strategies do you think are most effective in retaining talent across different generations? Please select all that apply. Employer question: Which of the following strategies do you think are most effective in retaining talent across different generations? Please select all that apply.

But the survey shows that 10% or less of baby boomer employers and job seekers support the use of automated screening, messaging, matching, and recruitment tools.

This points to the need for education around the benefits of AI tools, as those tools may be the future: About one-third of Gen Z employers say they would consider using automated technology to enable fairer hiring — more than any other generation.

"While younger employees may be more comfortable with AI tools in hiring, there is still more to do to help job seekers of every age feel a high level of confidence and trust in the process," Calhoon says. "This starts by explaining clearly to job seekers how and why AI is being used in the process and giving them control over how they're presented to employers — both of which are core tenets of Indeed's Responsible AI approach."

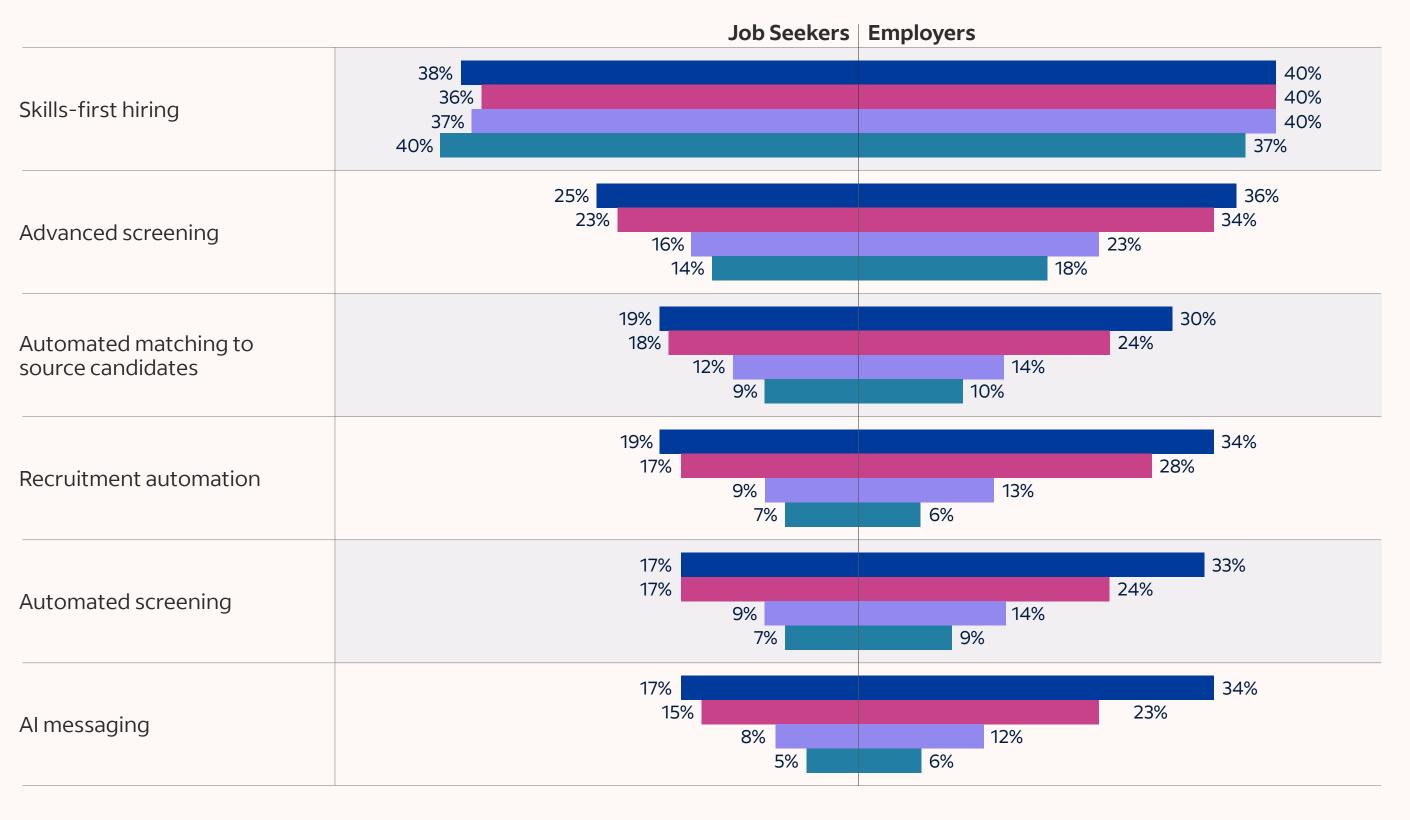
While the barrier for learning how to use AI may seem high, both job seekers and employers need to adapt. "The game has changed," says Tinsley-Fix of AARP. "You have to compete in the game."

Gen Z is also more likely than older workers to say that an organization's purpose or mission is important to retaining employees, and the same is true for employer branding. These preferences point to key ways for employers to future-proof their hiring and talent management practices.

How comfortable are people with the following tools and practices when it comes to fairer hiring?

Employers and job seekers both rank skills-first hiring highly.





Job seeker question: Which, if any, hiring tools or practices would you be comfortable with employers using to hire more fairly? Please select all that apply. Employer question: Which, if any, hiring tools or practices would you consider using to hire more fairly? Please select all that apply.



At Indeed, we've seen how multigenerational collaboration fuels innovation, strengthens resilience, and creates a real competitive edge through diverse perspectives."

Carmen Graf
Executive Sponsor of Indeed's
All Generations Empowered (AGE)
Inclusion Business Resource Group

Conclusion and Key Takeaways

The unprecedented range of generations in the labor force today creates entirely new opportunities for building and sustaining a strong workforce, building organizational resilience, and driving a competitive advantage.

- 1. As Gen Z enters the workforce and older generations defer retirement, the labor force age gap has grown as wide as it's ever been. Discover what each generation values and what makes them all distinct on our thought leadership platform, Lead with Indeed.
- 2. Gen Z missed out on key opportunities for in-person internships and entry-level jobs because of the COVID-19 pandemic, but mentorship and skill building can help young employees catch up and learn the ropes of corporate culture. Learn more about upskilling with <u>our skills-based strategies to future-proof your workforce</u>.
- 3. Job seekers frequently cite age as the biggest impediment to hiring and career advancement. Find out more about older workers' perspectives on hiring, job-switching, and age discrimination with <u>AARP's research</u>.
- 4. Skills-first hiring is one way to make the hiring process fairer for all generations. Get started with our <u>beginner's guide to skills-first hiring</u> and learn how to overcome barriers with <u>The Employer's Guide to Skills-First Hiring</u>.



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