

The Next Generation of Talent: Gen Z

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A generational realignment for talent: Gen Z's accelerating entrance to the workforce demands a shift in TA strategy

Who is Gen Z?

- Generation Z comprises people born between 1996 and 2010.
- This generation's identity has been shaped by the digital age, climate anxiety, a shifting financial landscape, and COVID-19.
- They're called "digital natives"—the first generation to grow up with the internet as a part of daily life.

A Generational Shift for Talent Acquisition

In 2025 Gen Z labor force participation will outpace Baby Boomers for the first time. This generational shift in the talent pool poses new challenges for TA teams, specifically:

- Gen Z is smaller than previous generations. This shrinking talent pool will intensify the war for talent, requiring recruiting teams to hone their strategies in order to win over competitors.
- Gen Z's demographics and experiences changed their expectations of employers and work. Gen Z is the most highly educated, online, and racially and ethnically diverse generation. Recruiting strategies honed for older generations will fall flat with Gen Z and miss important sources of talent.

This generational realignment means that past recruiting advantages and strategies will rapidly become outdated for recruiting the next generation of talent. Innovative TA teams that learn Gen Z priorities now and adapt quickly have a unique opportunity to accelerate past competitors and solidify a foothold in the future war for talent.

6 Key Insights for Winning and Keeping Gen Z Talent

1



Gen Z takes a values-centered approach to work

2



Gen Z is online, but reaching them requires intentionality

3



Gen Z aims to renegotiate the work-life contract

4



Gen Z has geographic no-go's

5



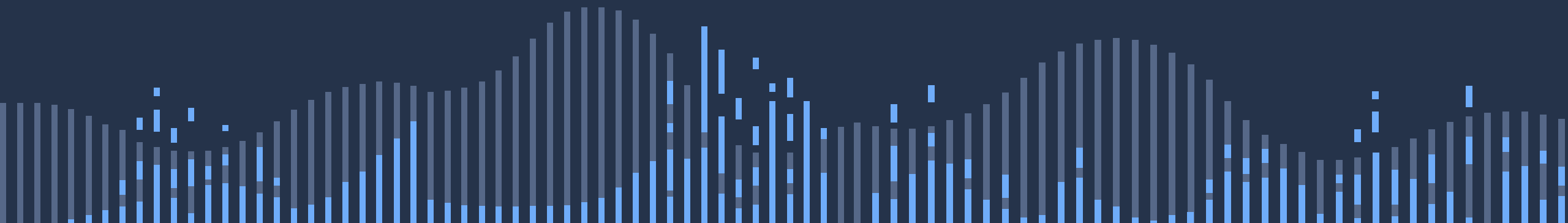
Gen Z values mental health resources

6



Company culture is key to keeping Gen Z talent

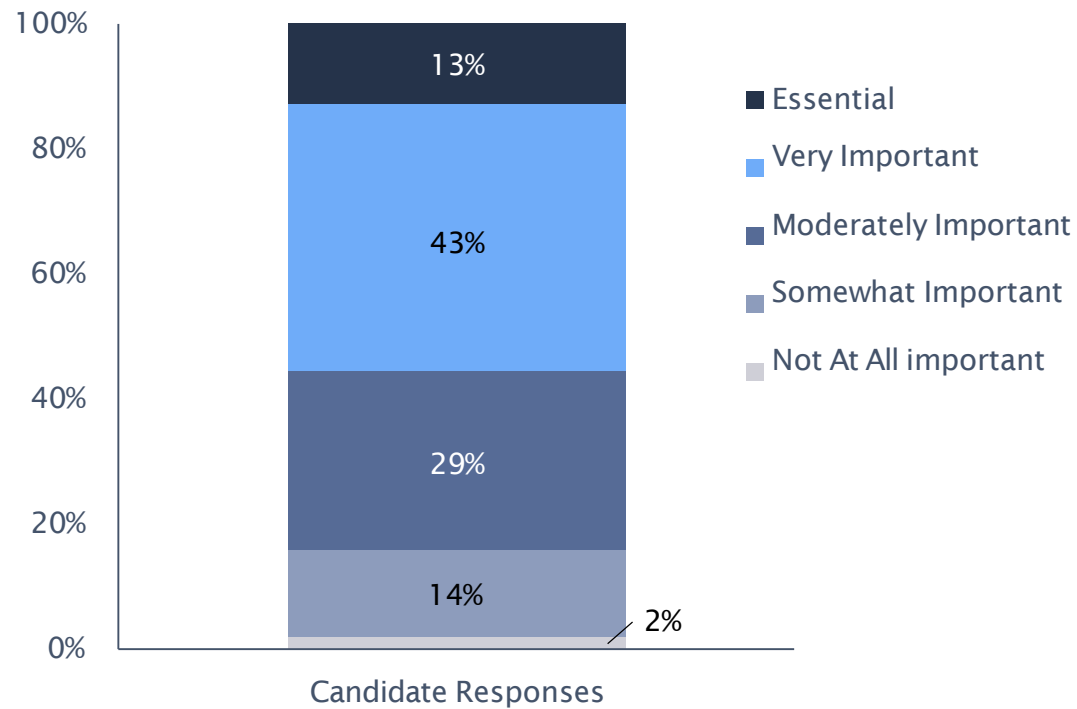
Gen Z Takes a Values-Centered Approach to Work



When choosing employers, Gen Z prioritizes companies that share their values

Nearly 6 out of 10 Gen Z candidates report that working for a company that shares their values is “very important” or “essential,” and they look for signals of how companies demonstrate their values in the interview process. Respect and company honesty are ranked as the top two most important company values for a company to demonstrate

Importance of Working for a Company that Shares Your Values



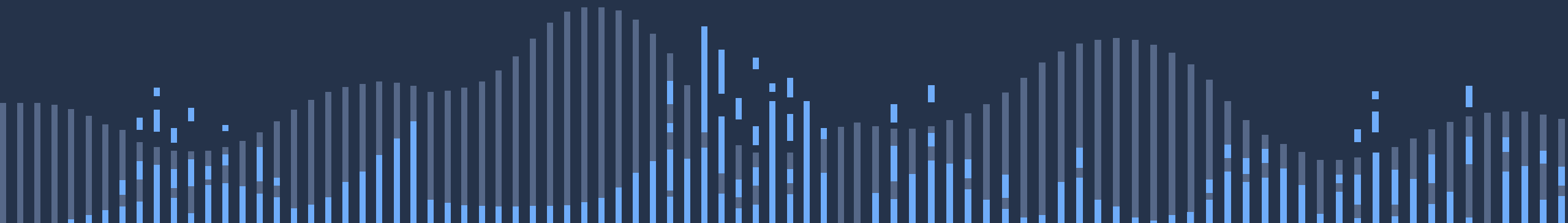
Q: How important is it for you to work for a company that shares your values?

Company Values that Resonate Most with Gen Z



Q: How important is it for a company to demonstrate the following values?

Gen Z is Online, But Reaching
Them Requires Intentionality



Gen Z uses traditional platforms to assess job logistics, but relies on personal networks for insights into company culture



Traditional Sourcing Platforms

Gen Z uses LinkedIn, Glassdoor, Indeed, and employer websites to learn about:

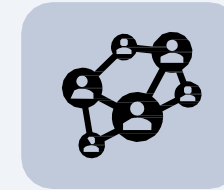
1. Roles and responsibilities (59%)

2. Compensation and benefits (44%)

3. Work location (42%)

4. Company mission and impact (39%)

5. Work-life balance (35%)



Professional and Personal Networks

Gen Z uses their professional network, current or former employees, and friends and family to learn about:

1. Work-life balance (63%)

2. Roles and responsibilities (61%)

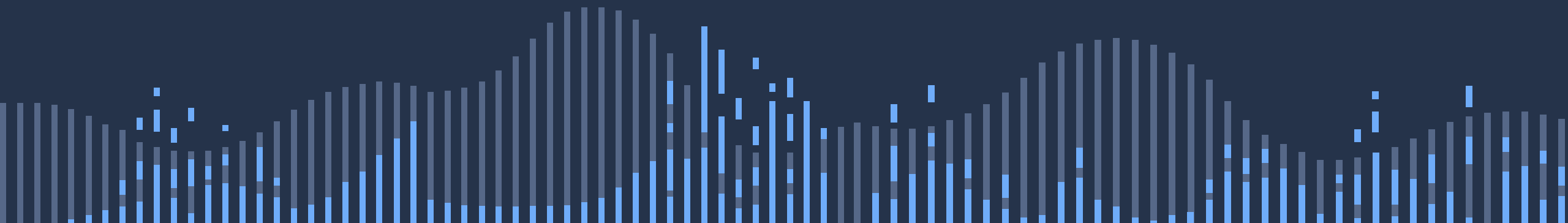
3. Company culture and co-workers (57%)

4. Work location (40%)

5. Job stability (38%)

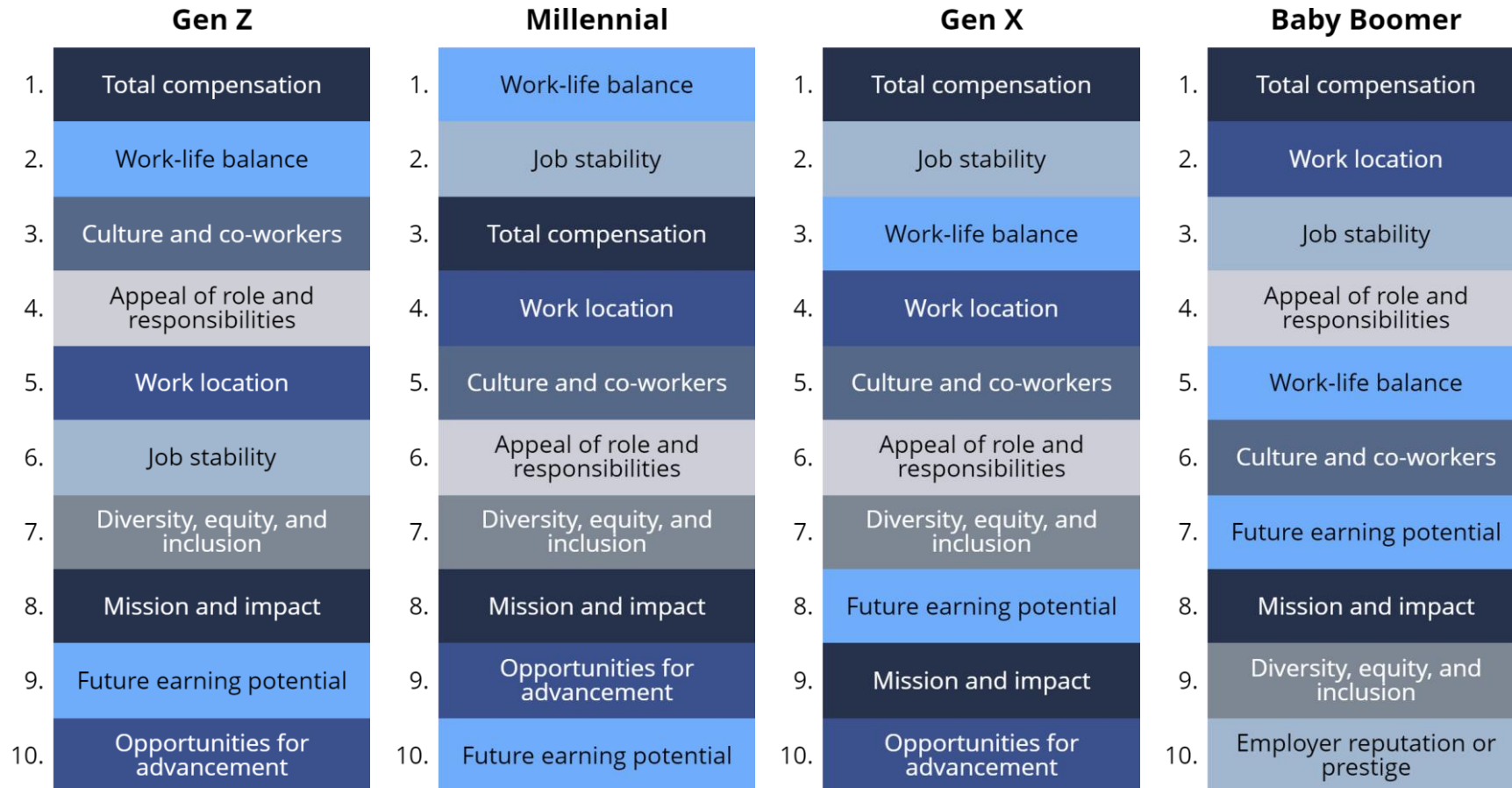
Q: What employer information do you look for when using these channels? Select all that apply.

Gen Z Aims to Renegotiate the Work-Life Contract



Beyond compensation, Gen Z candidates look for employers that enhance their life in and outside of work

Top 10 Employer Brand Factors for Each Generation



Key Insight

Gen Z views work as an important aspect of life rather than defining it.

Gen Z views work through the lens of complementing and enhancing their day-to-day life, and they prioritize (1) employers that empower them to balance life with work commitments and (2) companies that have a strong, positive work culture that aligns with their personal values.

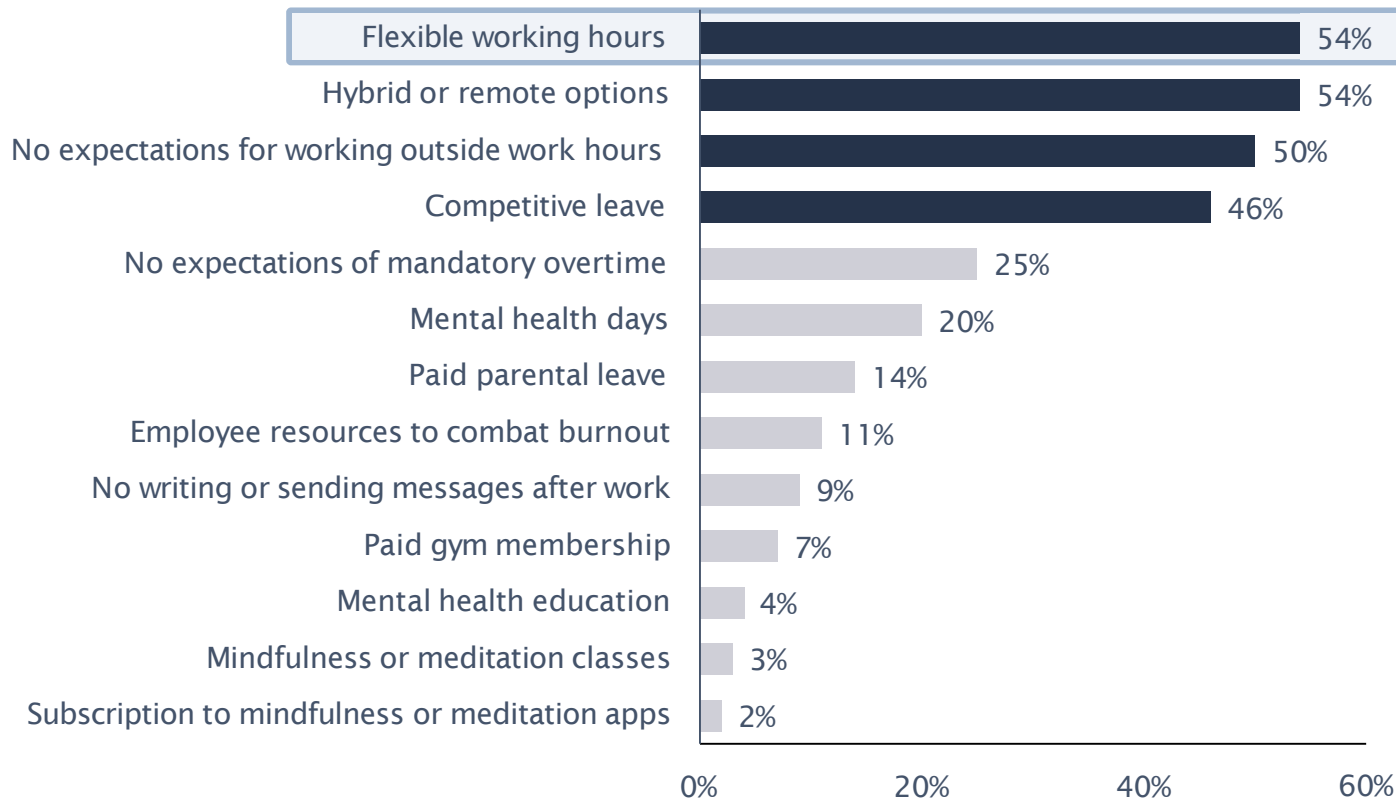
For recruiting teams, winning Gen Z talent requires a clear narrative of how employers support employee flourishing.

Q: Please rank these factors in order of importance when considering potential employment opportunities.

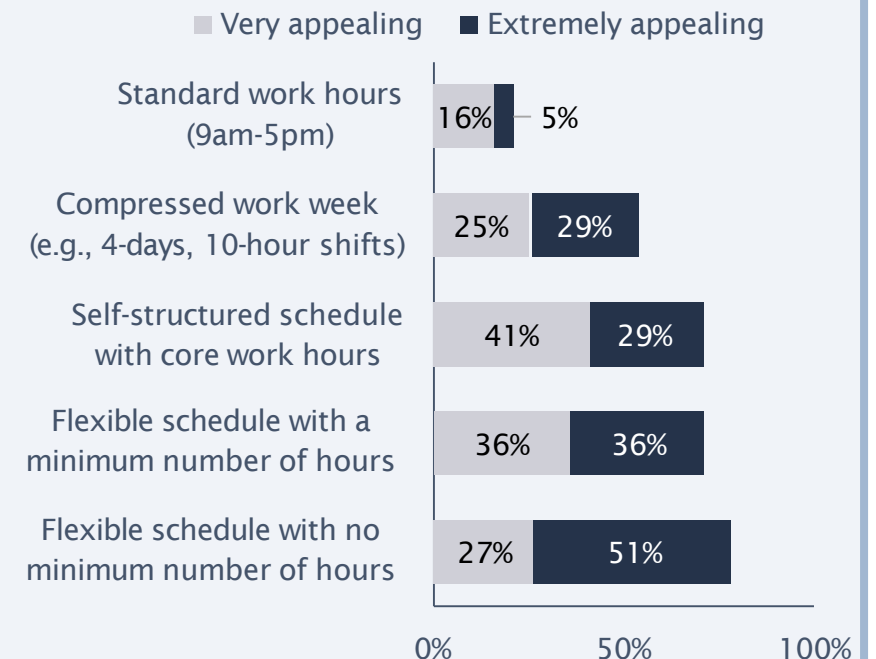
Flexible working hours and remote work options are powerful signals to Gen Z of a strong work-life balance culture

Half of Gen Z rate flexible work hours, hybrid or remote work options, no expectations for working during non-work hours, and a competitive leave policy as the most important signals of a company with strong work-life balance

Gen Z: Most Important Signals of Work-Life Balance



Appeal of Flexible Working Hours



Q: When considering a new job, how appealing are the following types of flexible working hours?

% of candidates; Gen Z candidates (n = 435)

Q: When considering a new job, what are the three most important signals of good work-life balance at a potential employer?

In their own words: Gen Z describe why flexible working schedules are an important signal about employers



The hybrid model is more modern. It feels like the post-COVID thing. It's also something that I'm looking for, because I really like that flexibility.

I value having an in-person work culture, which is what makes hybrid is ideal. And I feel like I remember even pre-pandemic thinking that I would love a job where I could work from home a couple times a week.”

— *25-year-old Woman in Manufacturing*



Three days in the office is optimal. But I like knowing that I can come in five days if I want to, or I could come in one day if like that's how my week pans out. I don't like a rigorous schedule where you're mandated to be in-office on specific days. That to me is a little too 'big brother'.”

— *24-year-old Woman in Finance*

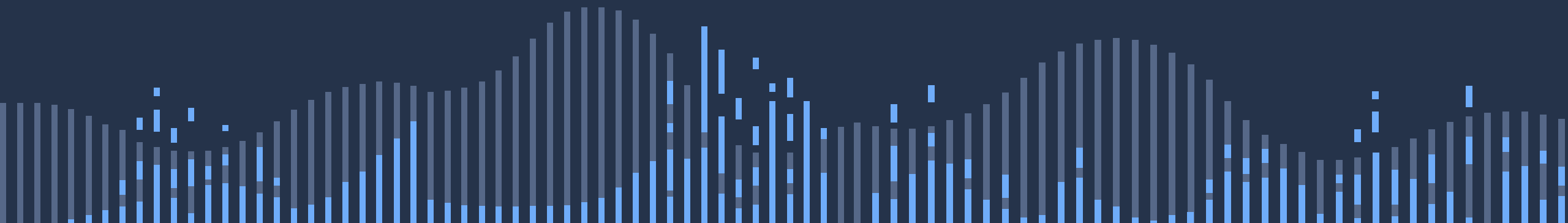
Key Insight

Trust and respect are two values that Gen Z prizes most, but putting those values into action authentically can be challenging for employers.

Flexible work schedules and remote work options are an important way companies can live those values. And for recruiting teams, this is a powerful opportunity to differentiate from competitors.

Highlighting these benefits and tying them to a narrative of trust can help distinguish your company and attract Gen Z talent.

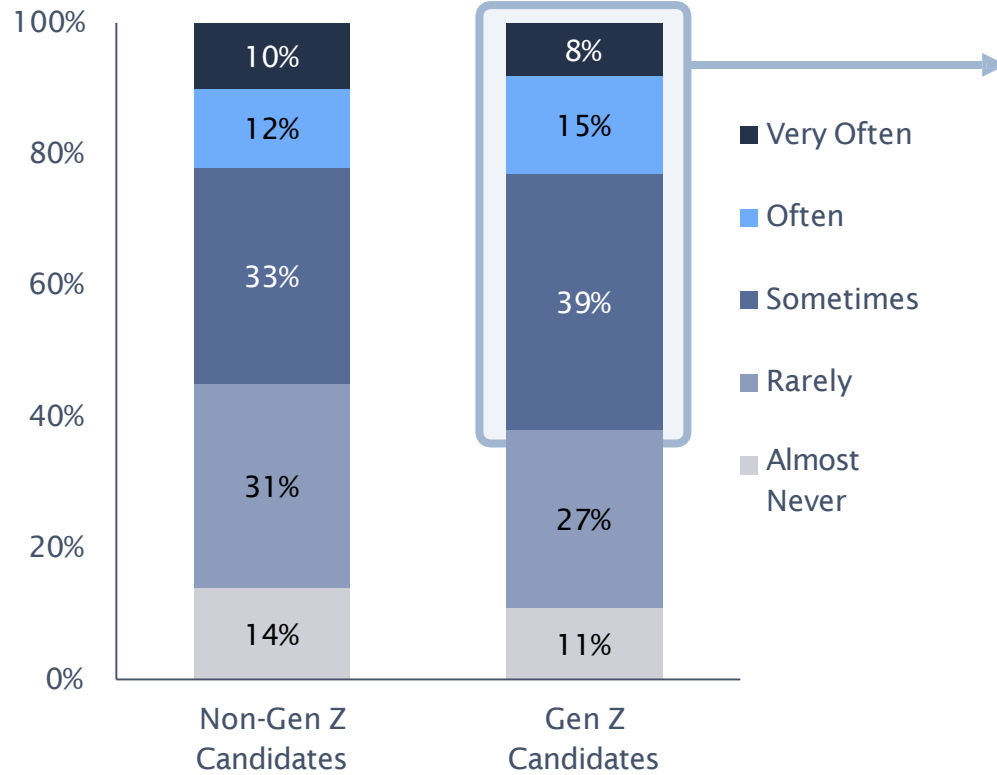
Gen Z Values Mental Health Resources



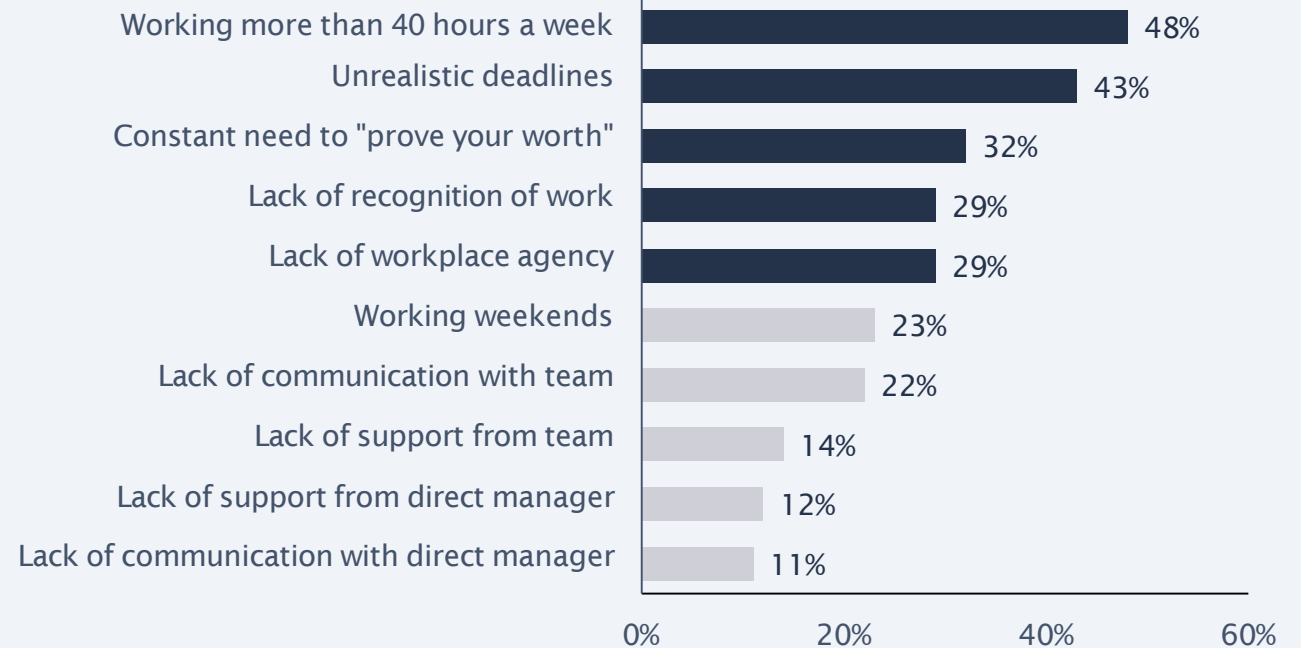
More than 6 in 10 Gen Z employees are experiencing burnout with long work weeks and difficult deadlines as leading causes

Burnout among Gen Z employees is 7% higher than older generations, with half of Gen Z employees citing long work weeks as one of the largest factors contributing to high levels of burnout

How Often Employees Feel Burned Out from Work



Why is Gen Z Burnt Out?



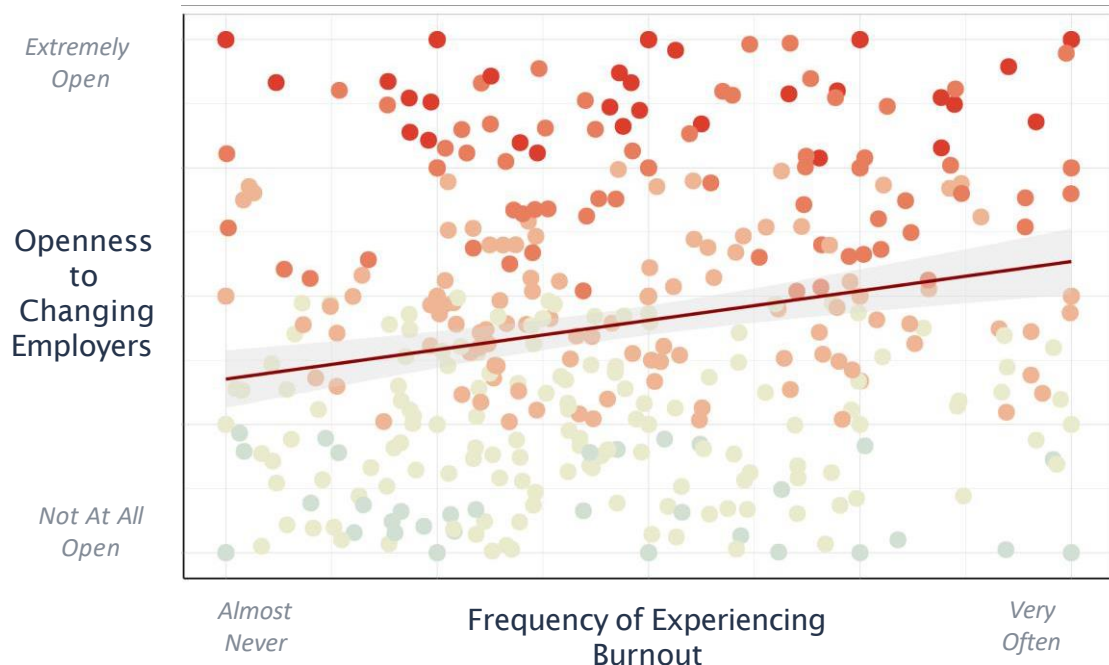
Q: What are the three most important factors that contribute to your level of burnout?
 % of respondents ranking factor in their top 3; Gen Z employees who reported being burnt out from work "sometimes", "often", or "very often" (n = 264)

Q: How often do you feel burned out from your work?

Frequent burnout is a leading cause of Gen Z employees intending to leave their company

More frequent experiences of burnout at work predict higher amounts of attrition among Gen Z employees

Frequent Burnout Predicts Increased Attrition Risk



I was struggling early in my career to put that barrier between work and life. And I would just work late because I was working remote and had nothing else to do, which was very harmful.

And my manager noticed and encouraged me to (1) take time off, and (2) he was like 'Under no circumstances work late. Don't work weekends. We don't need you to do that.' He coached me through it."

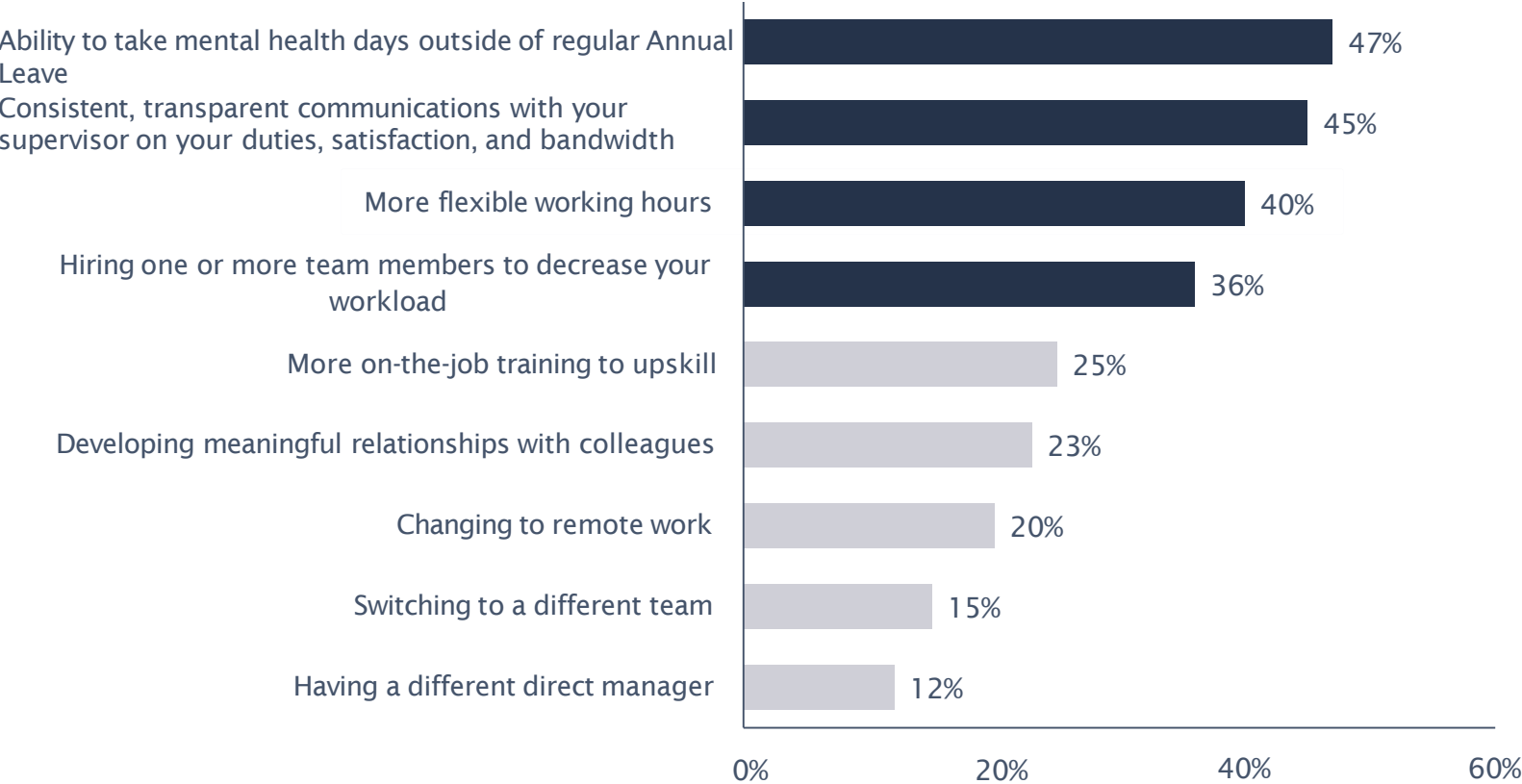
— 25-year-old Middle Eastern/North African Woman in Tech

Q: How often do you feel burned out from your work?

Q: How open are you to changing employers?

Mental health days and regular conversations with managers are the most high-return interventions for reducing burnout

Most Important Factors for Alleviating Burnout According to Gen Z



The Role of EAP!

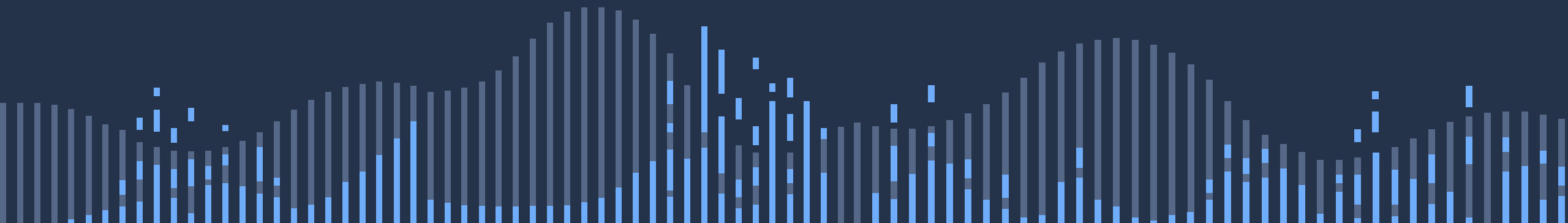
Employee Assistance Programs (EAP): EAP's are typically underused by employees.

These programs can help address issues like substance abuse, relationship problems, financial challenges, family struggles and mental health issues.

Gen-Z employees in their very first job—may not understand how an EAP works.

Q: What are the three most important factors that could alleviate burnout?

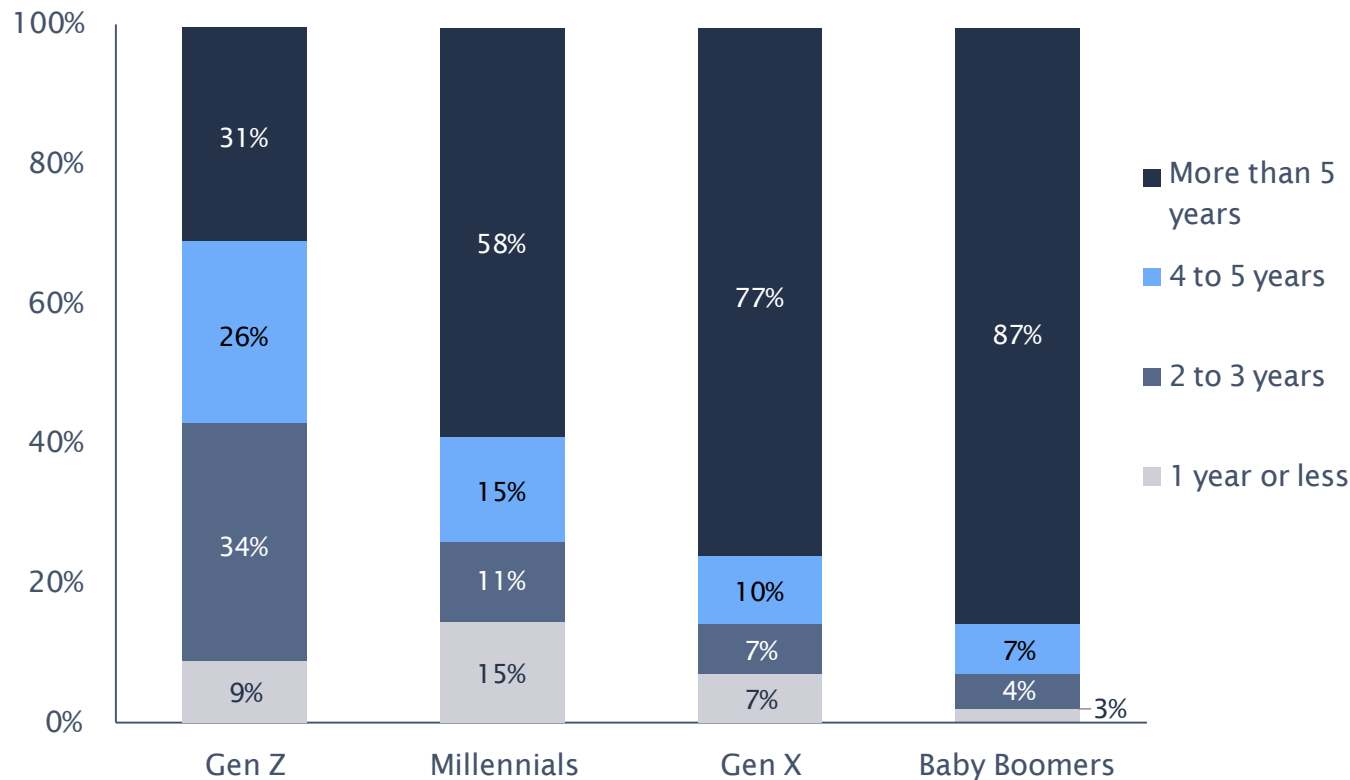
Company Culture is Key to Keeping Gen Z Talent



Gen Z employees plan to stay with their company for less time compared to older generations

Over one-third of Gen Z candidates aim to work for an employer for 2 to 3 years while 31% want to stay with an employer for more than 5 years

Planned Employer Tenure by Generation



Q: Assuming you liked your job, how long would you want to stay at a single employer?



I don't like the idea of staying at one company for more than 5 years. There are so many different places I want to live, and people I want to meet. I don't like the idea of staying stagnant. I want to see other things."

— 22-year-old Woman in Tech



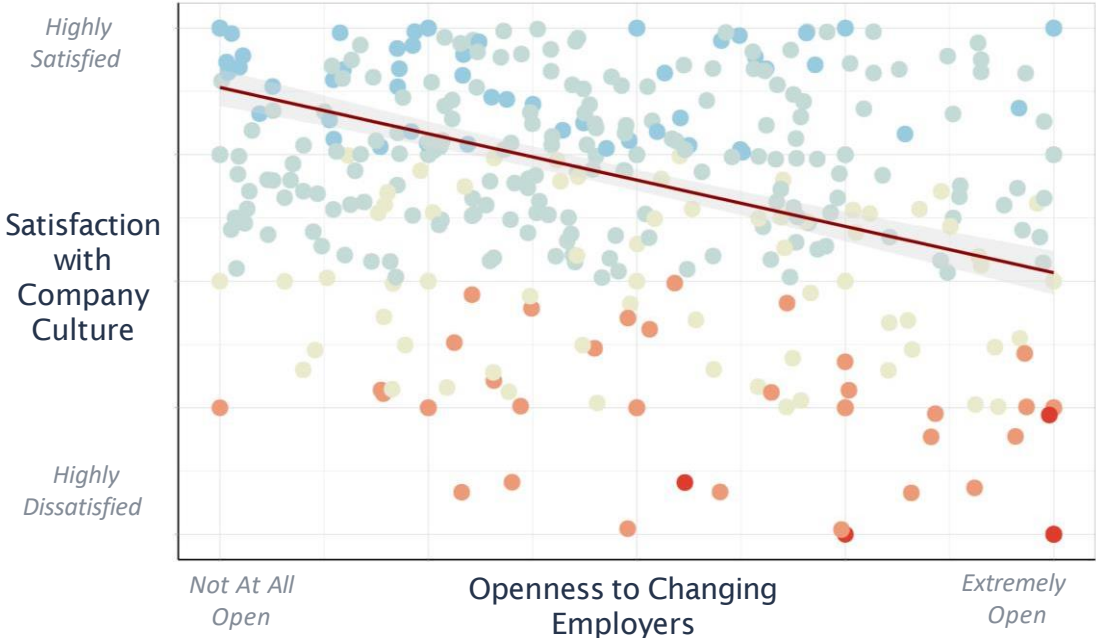
"I think I'm still at a point where I'm not ready to set roots in one particular place. I also see there's a lot of benefits with changing jobs in terms of the pay and career progression."

— 23-year-old Man in Consulting

A strong company culture is critical for retaining Gen Z talent

Gen Z employees who are more satisfied with their company's culture are less open to changing employers

Satisfaction with Company Culture and Openness to Changing Employers



Q: How satisfied are you with your current workplace culture?
Q: How open are you to changing employers?

“ I enjoy the company culture, and I enjoy my co-workers. We like to have a good time! Having a relationship with a lot of my co-workers, and the fact that the people are genuinely my friends, definitely keeps me.”

— 25-year-old Middle Eastern/North African Woman in Tech

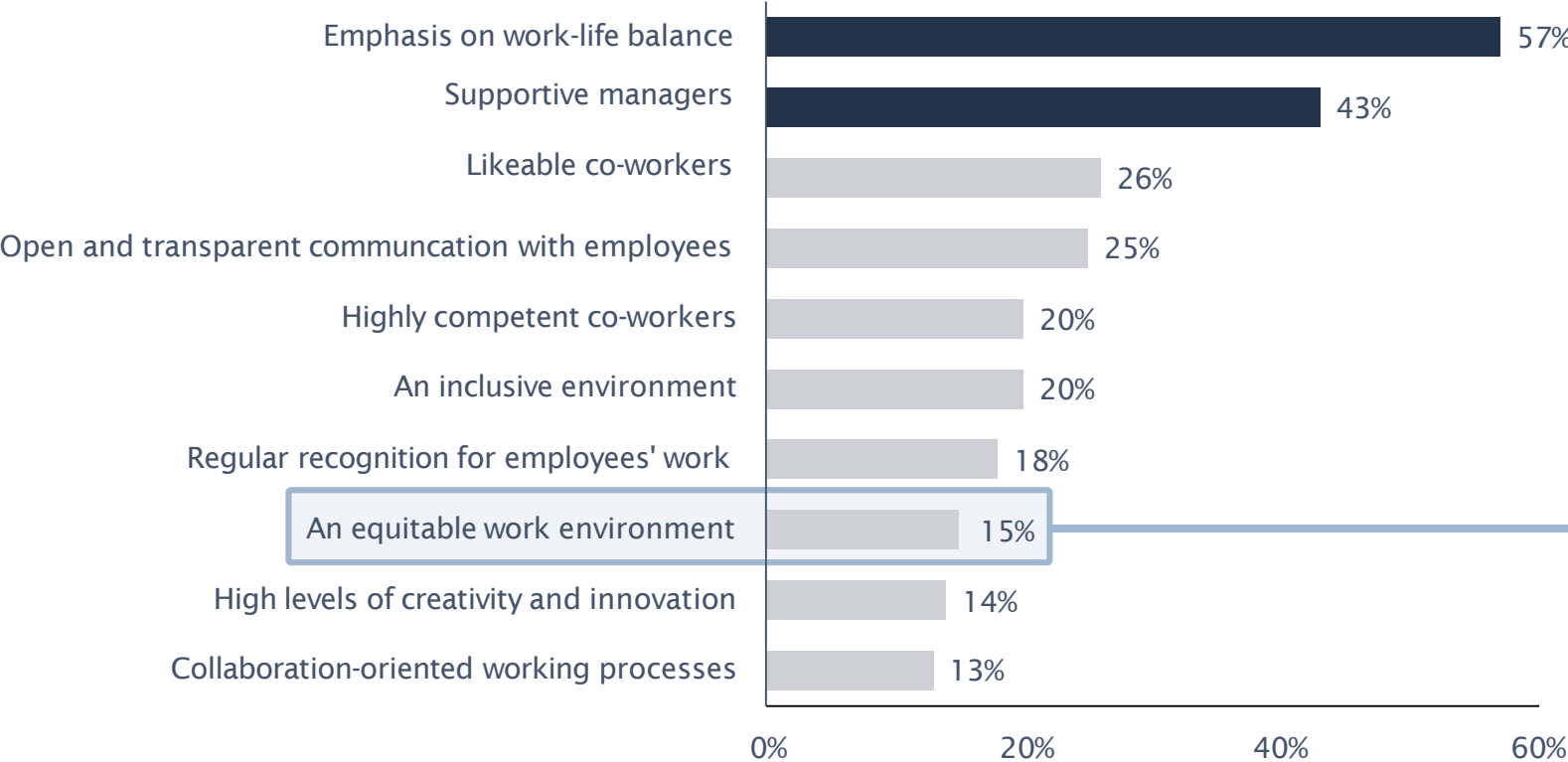
“Company culture really matters! Every job we do is essentially team-based. We derive so much of our work satisfaction and well-being from the people who we work with. It’s not just in terms of how they treat you, but also in the values they espouse. Despite other perks and benefits, bad company culture ultimately drags you down and wears you out and makes it so that it's not a place I want to be long term.”

— 25-year-old Man in Consulting

Work-life balance and supportive managers are most important for Gen Z's experience of a positive company culture

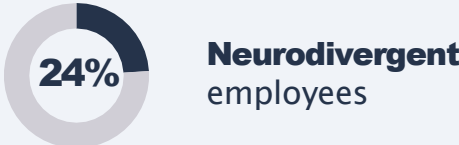
While not a top 5 factor overall, Neurodivergent and LGBTQ+ Gen Z employees rate an equitable work environment as a top 5 factor for a positive workplace culture

Top 10 Factors for a Positive Workplace Culture for Gen Z



Spotlight on an Equitable Work Environment

An equitable work environment is even more important for a positive company culture to:

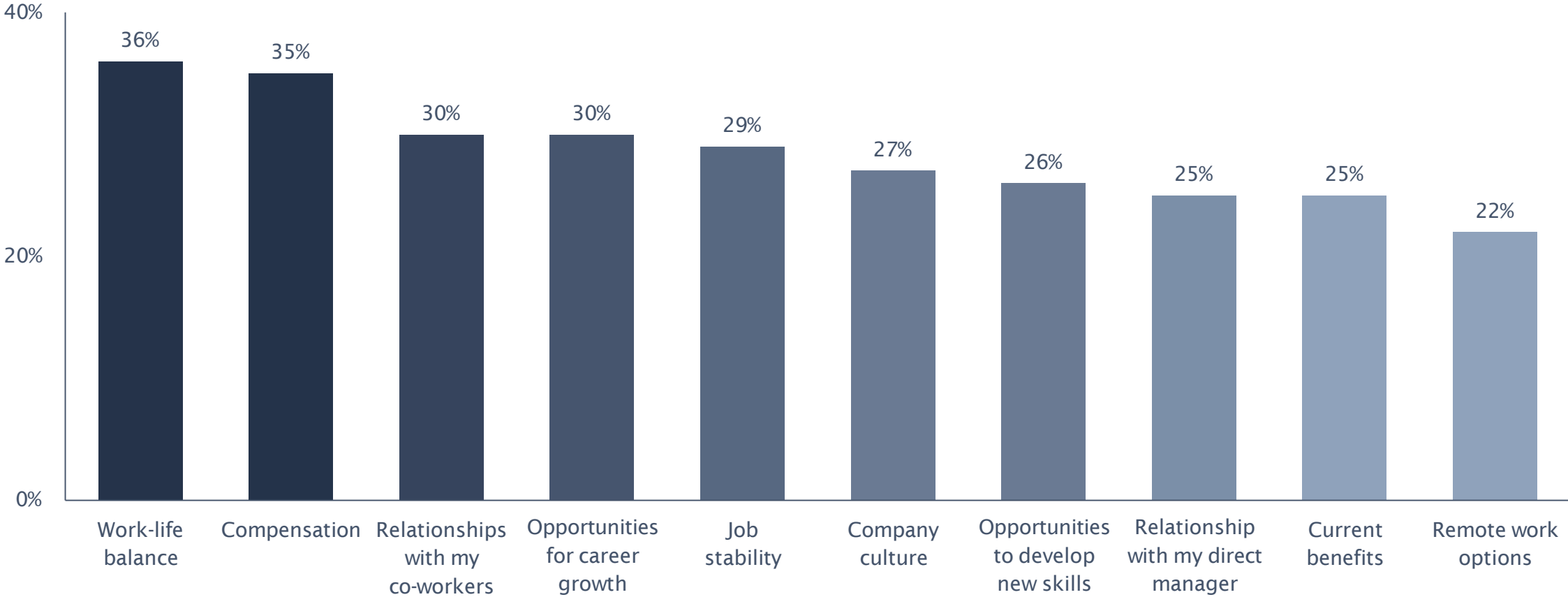


Q: What are the most important factors for a positive workplace culture?

Gen Z stay with employers who maintain work-life balance, pay well, and offer opportunities for career growth

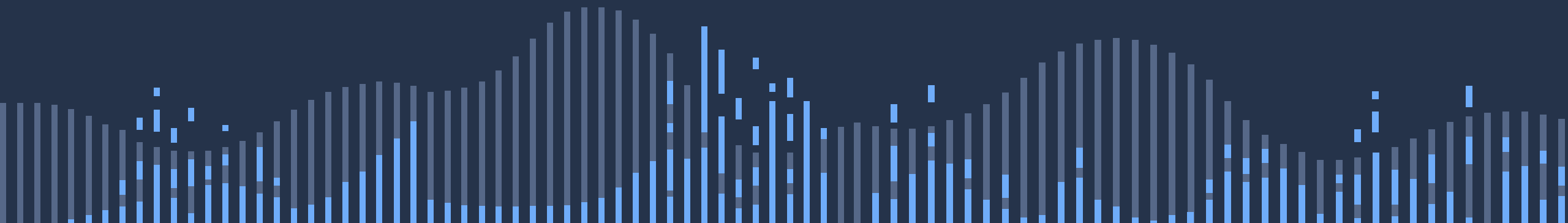
3 out of 10 Gen Z employees say that strong relationships with co-workers are a top reason they want to stay with their current employer

Top 10 Reasons Gen Z Employees Stay with a Company



Q: What are the five most important reasons why you stay with your current employer?

Future-Forward Tactics



Winning and Keeping Gen Z Talent

1

Gen Z take a values-centered approach to work, and winning them requires a commitment to honesty, transparency, and trust.

- Write about company values on career websites to show candidates what the organization stands for
- Facilitate conversations with employees who can speak to the impact of philanthropic efforts

2

Gen Z is the most online generation ever, but earning their attention demands intentional curation of engaging and authentic content.

- Use social media to offer insight into company culture and how employees use benefits
- Create posts that are brief and easy-to-digest along with a call-to-action to drive engagement

3

Gen Z view work as an important, but not defining, aspect of life, and want to work for employers who support flexibility and balance.

- Use company newsletters or social media to offer examples of how employees balance work and life
- Highlight options for flexible or remote work in outreach and explain the benefit in terms of the autonomy and trust given to employees

Winning and Keeping Gen Z Talent

1

Gen Z care deeply about where they live, and showing how the location offers access to travel, amenities, and a vibrant social life is crucial.

- Discuss remote work options that allow candidates freedom to choose where they work
- For in-office roles, highlight the uniqueness of the area so candidates can envision how they would spend time outside of work

2

Burnout poses a serious risk to Gen Z's tenure with an employer, and keeping them requires proactive attention to mental health.

- Call out available wellness benefits to demonstrate a commitment to mental health
- Encourage managers to hold regular 1-1s with employees to assess workload and burnout risk

3

Gen Z want a sense of belonging where they work, and creating a company culture that supports and connects them will keep Gen Z talent for longer.

- Talk about affinity and employee resource groups that allow employees to develop strong connections outside of their immediate teams
- Give candidates a calendar of company events and activities that they can look forward to