



Manpower®

STUDENT STUDY 2023



INTRODUCTION

The monthly surveys we conduct at ManpowerGroup Bulgaria, which provide valuable information, focus on different talent groups and employers in the labour market. They aim to understand and analyse the attitudes, needs and trends shaping the labour current market.

One of the main surveys that our Business Intelligence team carries out every year focuses specifically on the attitudes of young people entering the job market, the so called Generation Z. In April and May of 2023, we conducted the latest such survey, with 495 pupils, students and employees, aged between 16 and 25. They were invited to share their opinions, expectations and attitudes about work and organisations.



Student Study 2023 provides information on young people's workplace preferences, the challenges they face in finding a job, and their goals and ambitions for the future. This information is essential for organizations to adapt to the needs and preferences of this new generation of employees.

The results of this study aim to provide advice and guidance on how to improve the relationship between employers and talent in the labor market. The data could help both employers to attract and retain the best young talent and young people to find jobs that match their expectations and ambitions.



RESPONDENTS' PROFILE

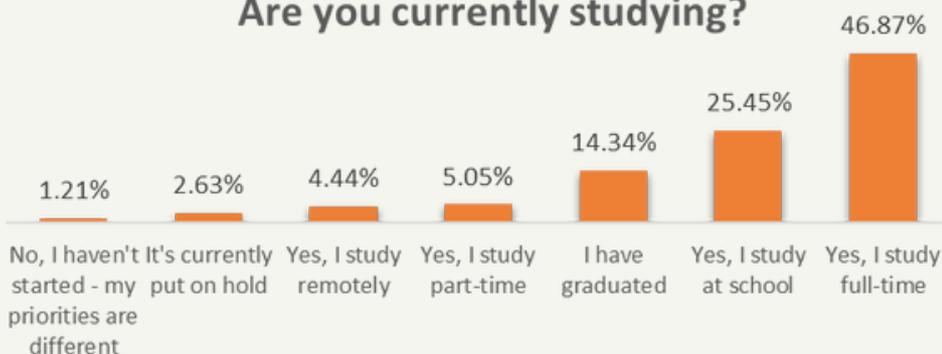
% of the participants based on their age



The age distribution of the respondents revealed that the majority of the respondents (13.74%) were 17 years old, followed by 23 years old (11.31%) and 21 years old (10.91%). These age groups represent a significant number of young people who are in the process of completing their education or looking for their first job.

Another significant sample is observed in the age group of 20-year-old (10.30%), 25-year-old (10.51%), and 24-year-old (10.10%) respondents - young people who have usually already completed their education or have several years of experience in the labour market.

Are you currently studying?



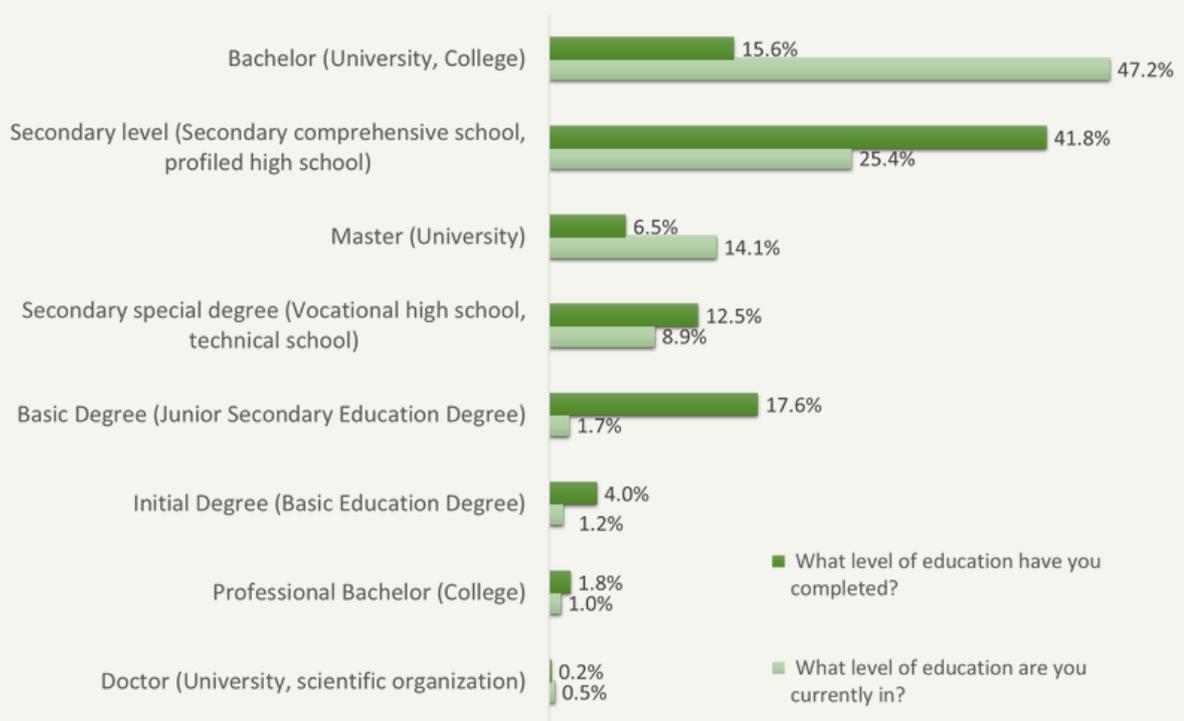
It is important to note that almost half of the respondents indicated that they were currently studying full-time (46.9%) and almost an equal number indicated that they were currently pursuing a bachelor's degree (47.2%). This indicates that a significant number of young people are continuing their studies with higher education.

495

participants

16-25

aged between

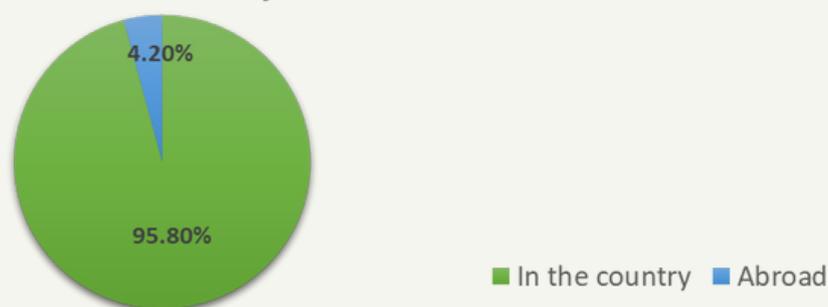


They were followed by participants who had a master's degree (14.1%) and those with a secondary degree (25.4%).

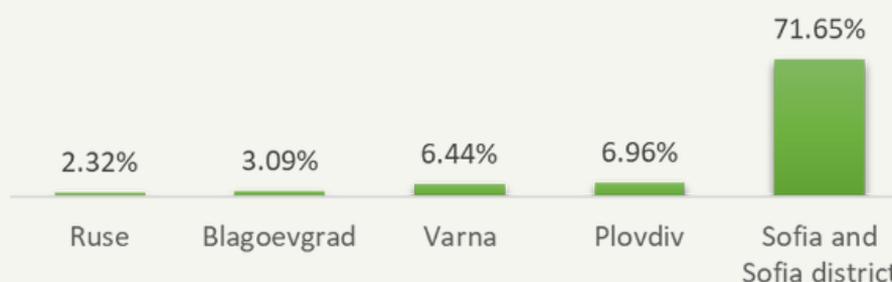
Analyzing both distributions, it can be observed that there are some differences. For example, the percentage of participants with a basic degree is higher in the distribution relative to the degree completed compared to the distribution relative to current training. This can be interpreted as the fact that there are participants who have interrupted their education after the basic degree and are not currently in training.

Also, the percentage of participants who are in the process of obtaining an intermediate special degree is higher in the distribution relative to training currently compared to the distribution relative to the completed degree. This may reflect the fact that some participants decide to obtain additional vocational qualifications after completing their basic degree.

Indicate where the educational institution you attend is located:



Less than 5% of the respondents studied abroad, while the remaining 95.8% chose to continue their education in Bulgaria and predominantly (71.65%) in Sofia.



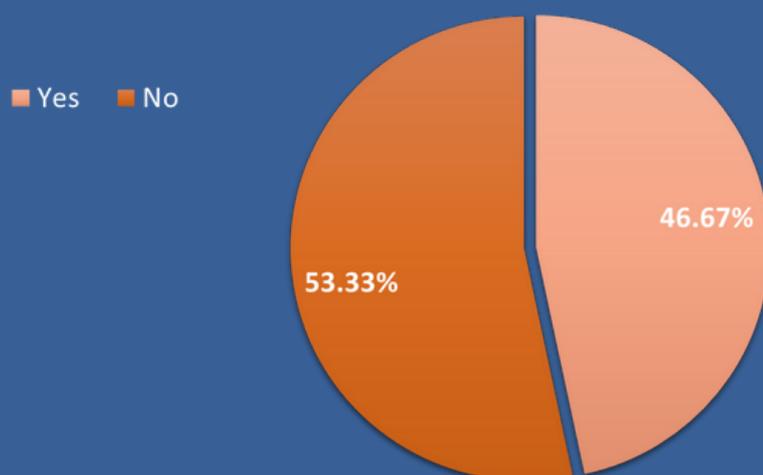
EXPECTATIONS OF GEN-Z

TOWARDS THEIR CURRENT AND POTENTIAL EMPLOYERS

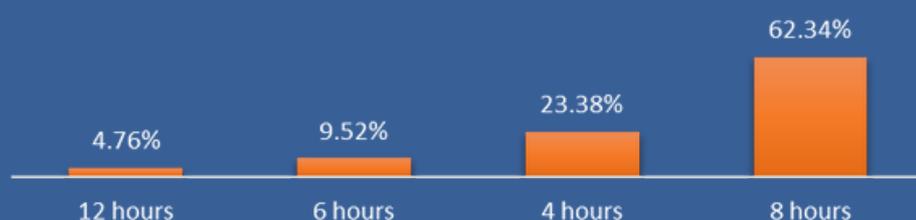
The results in this section of the survey reflect changes in the preferences and values of young people from Generation Z.

Although relatively evenly distributed, a majority of respondents are not currently working. And of those working (46.67%), the majority are employed full-time.

Are you currently working?



How many hours a day do you work:

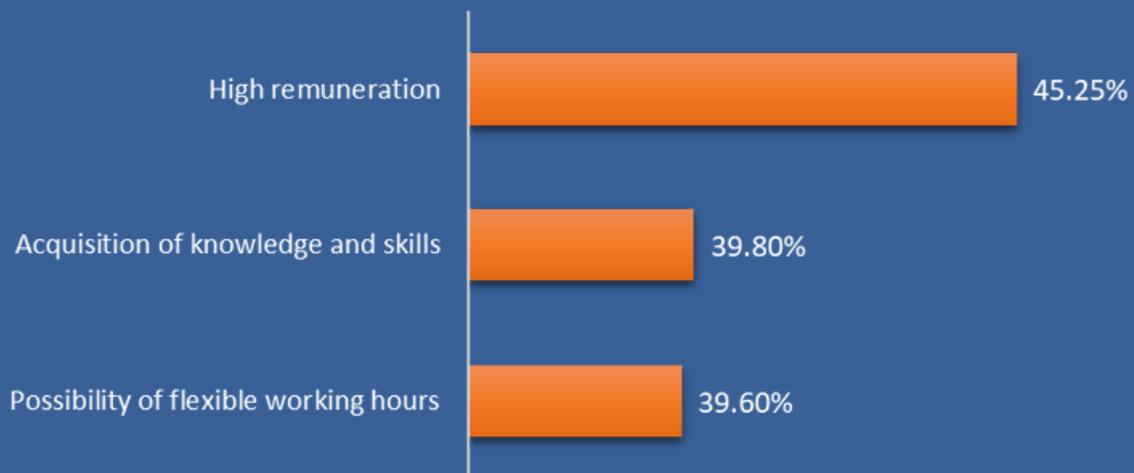


Factors in choosing an employer

When choosing an employer, the three most important aspects for Generation Z are high remuneration (45.3%), the acquisition of knowledge and skills (39.8%), and the possibility of flexible working hours (39.6%). These results reflect the priorities of young talent seeking fair pay, opportunities for personal and professional development, and work-life balance.

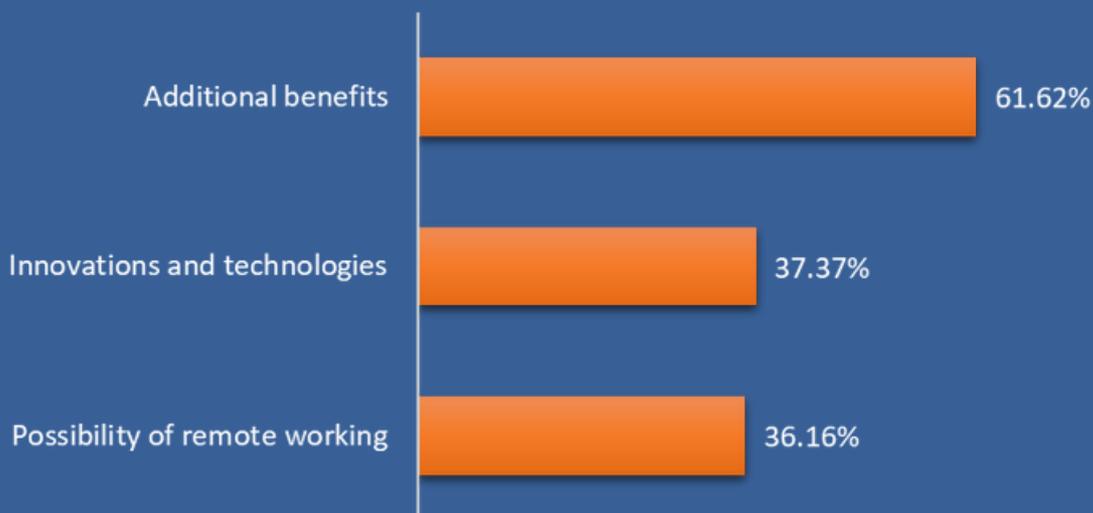
Ranking the option of flexible working so high on the scale is a clear signal that Generation Z values the freedom to organize their work schedule, and work commitments and would purposefully seek out those that will allow them to achieve work-life balance. This may also be linked to the increasing importance young people place on flexibility and autonomy in the work environment.

Indicate the three most important aspects for you when choosing a suitable employer:



On the other hand, the ability to work remotely (36.2%) and innovation and technology (37.4%) emerge as less important aspects of employer choice for Generation Z. This may mean that despite significant advances in technology and the ability to work remotely, young people still prefer face-to-face interaction and collaboration in a shared environment. Also, they focus on acquiring new knowledge and skills that can help them in their career development.

Indicate the three least important conditions for you when choosing a suitable employer:



It is interesting that additional benefits (61.6%) emerge as the least important aspect for Generation Z. This may mean that young people are more interested in the basic elements of a job, such as pay and development opportunities than in additional perks or benefits.

Qualities young people look for in their mentors and supervisors

In terms of the qualities respondents look for in their future mentors or direct supervisors, **direct and open communication (37.2%)** ranks in the top three. Thus, young talent clearly signals that they are looking for opportunities to have open conversations with their mentor, space to share their opinions and questions, and clear and understandable answers when questions arise. This highlights the need for effective communication and transparency in the interaction between mentors and young talent.

Indicate three qualities that the perfect manager/mentor should possess:



The ability to listen to the opinions and suggestions of the team (39.2%) appears even more significant for young talent. The percentages here show that young people are looking for a mentor who is open to new ideas and provides them with the opportunity to share their opinions and suggestions. This highlights the need to actively listen to and respect the voice of young people in the work environment.

Mentor competence (40%) was cited as the most important quality of a potential mentor or direct supervisor. Young talent is looking for a mentor who has knowledge and experience in their field and can provide valuable guidance and leadership. This highlights the need to continually update the knowledge and skills of the mentor to be able to meet the needs of young people.

Name three qualities that are not defining for your potential supervisor/mentor:



In terms of qualities that Generation Z does not look for in their mentors, respondents ranked "**strong strategic skills**" in the top three least important (**43.8%**). This could be interpreted as a signal that young people are focusing more on the practical implementation and operational side of the job rather than strategic planning and leading.

Respondents also cited "**friendliness**" as unimportant (**46.9%**). This result may indicate that Generation Z values a more pragmatic and professional approach to mentoring, preferring clear and purposeful relationships to overly intimate and friendly ones.

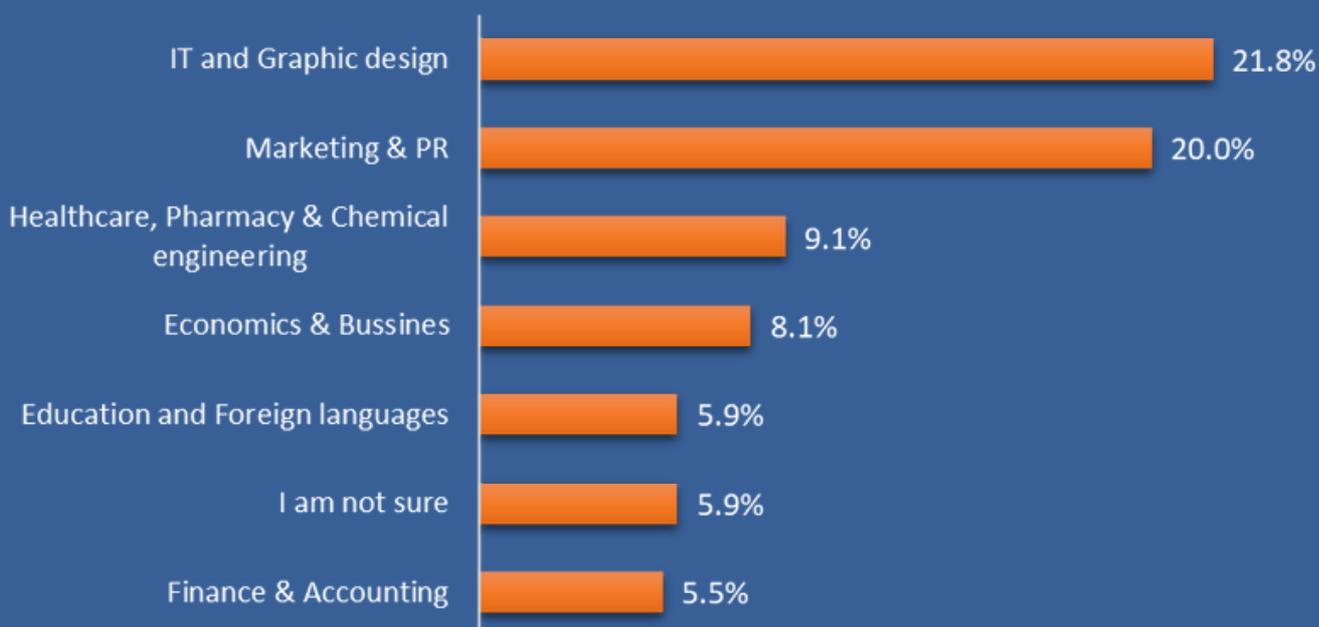
62.6% of respondents also felt that having **extensive work experience** was a less important quality for a mentor. This indicates that young Generation Z talent highly values a mentor's experience and expertise with which they can provide valuable guidance and direction.



Professional direction

According to the survey of young people aged 16 to 25, **digital and general marketing, as well as IT and graphic design**, are their most preferred career paths. This can be linked to the trend towards digitalisation of business and our society as a whole, which is increasingly ubiquitous in today's world.

In what career field would you like to develop yourself?

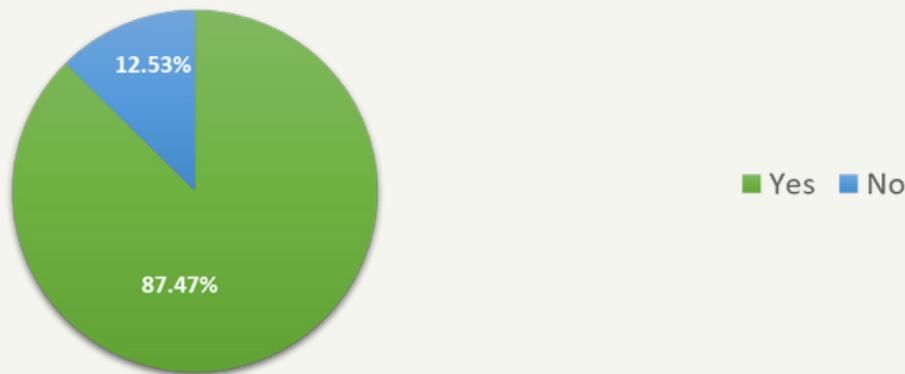


Another notable trend is the orientation toward healthcare, pharmaceuticals, and chemical engineering. This can be attributed to the increasing focus on health and the growing need for medicines and innovation in the healthcare sector.

Interestingly, **11.8%** of responses indicated **"Don't know yet"**, which may reflect young people's indecision or uncertainty about their career preferences in a dynamic job market.

Specifics in working environment and relationships

Do you think you would be more motivated and productive if you had the option of a 4-day work week?



The survey results show that the vast majority of young people aged between 19 and 25 (87.5%) think that the introduction of a 4-day working week would be good for them - a clear signal in favour of more flexible working conditions and more balanced work-life time.

In addition, a more flexible work schedule could also address another need that young people shared as important - allowing them to engage in activities outside of working hours.

In case you can determine your working hours, you would choose:



Flexible working hours, including weekends, appeared to be the preferred option for the largest percentage of respondents (31.7%). This is consistent with the global trend towards greater work flexibility and the growing interest in flexible and remote working models that allow people to manage their time and place of work.

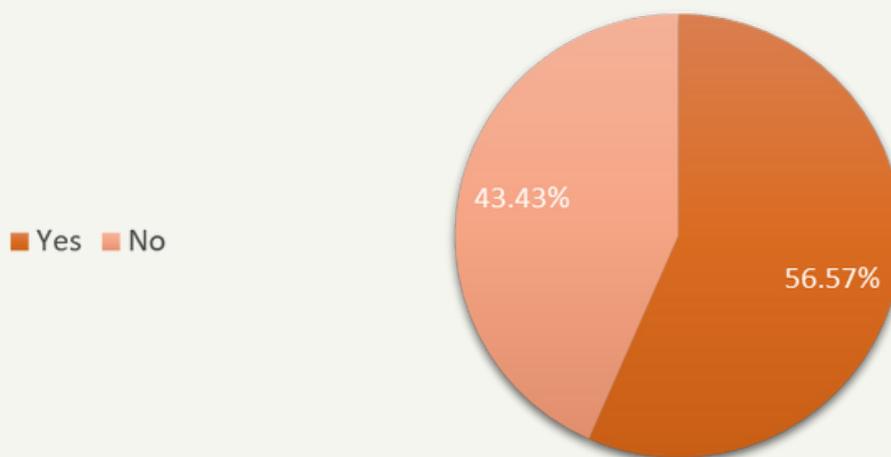
The standard 5-day working week still enjoys considerable support (21.2%). Although there are voices for more flexible working patterns, many still prefer the traditional working week.

Project-based work was also a noted preferred option (20.4%). This reflects the growing popularity of the freelance model and project work, where the work process focuses on achieving specific goals and outcomes.

These results provide important insights for employers and managers who need to adapt and provide the right conditions and opportunities for young talent to attract and retain them in their organisations.

Corporate green policy as a contributor

Is it important to you that your potential employer has imposed a green policy?



One of the notable trends with Generation Z is the growing concern and interest in environmental protection and sustainability. This is also reflected in the expectations they have of employers. Generation Z expresses a strong desire for employers to implement "green policies" and have a responsible attitude towards the environment. They look for employers who integrate green practices and sustainable approaches into their business operations and strive to contribute to greener and more sustainable goals.

Generation Z's demand for "green policies" from employers is thus a reflection of their activism and commitment to sustainability and environmental responsibility. Employers that are focused on green practices and have a clear green policy are better positioned to attract and retain Generation Z talent while contributing to a more sustainable business environment and society.

Analysis by age group: expectations towards future and current employers

The three most important qualities the perfect employer must possess:					
16-year-olds		17-year-olds		18-year-olds	
Positive work environment	39.4%	High remuneration	36.8%	Positive work environment	37.2%
High remuneration	42.4%	Acquisition of knowledge and skills	41.2%	Acquisition of knowledge and skills	44.2%
Work-life balance	45.5%	Flexible working hours	52.9%	Flexible working hours	55.8%

The three least important qualities the perfect employer must possess:					
16-year-olds		17-year-olds		18-year-olds	
Innovations and technologies	30.30%	Innovations and technologies	29.41%	Innovations and technologies	37.21%
Ability for remote work	42.42%	Ability for remote work	45.59%	Ability for remote work	41.86%
Additional benefits	72.73%	Additional benefits	69.12%	Additional benefits	65.12%

The three most important qualities the perfect employer must possess:					
19-year-olds		20-year-olds		21-year-olds	
Positive work environment	46.2%	Positive work environment	43.1%	Ability for remote work	38.9%
Flexible working hours	48.7%	Acquisition of knowledge and skills	45.1%	Acquisition of knowledge and skills	42.6%
High remuneration	48.7%	Flexible working hours	60.8%	High remuneration	44.4%

The three least important qualities the perfect employer must possess:					
19-year-olds		20-year-olds		21-year-olds	
Ability to collaborate with a successful leader/mentor	41.03%	Ability for remote work	37.25%	Ability for remote work	31.48%
Innovations and technologies	48.72%	Innovations and technologies	41.18%	Ability to collaborate with a successful leader/mentor	31.48%
Additional benefits	64.10%	Additional benefits	76.47%	Additional benefits	55.56%

The three most important qualities the perfect employer must possess:							
22-year-olds		23-year-olds		24-year-olds		25-year-olds	
Positive work environment	42.9%	Ability for remote work	39.3%	Ability for remote work	36.0%	Acquisition of knowledge and skills	38.5%
High remuneration	42.9%	Positive work environment	39.3%	Acquisition of knowledge and skills	42.0%	Ability for remote work	40.4%
Ability for remote work	44.9%	High remuneration	55.4%	High remuneration	54.0%	High remuneration	59.6%

The three least important qualities the perfect employer must possess:							
22-year-olds		23-year-olds		24-year-olds		25-year-olds	
Ability for remote work	32.65%	Ability to collaborate with a successful leader/mentor	39.29%	Ability to collaborate with a successful leader/mentor	38%	Ability to collaborate with a successful leader/mentor	34.62%
Innovations and technologies	40.82%	Innovations and technologies	39.29%	Innovations and technologies	44%	Innovations and technologies	38.46%
Additional benefits	63.27%	Additional benefits	51.79%	Additional benefits	48%	Additional benefits	53.85%

Generation Z enters the workforce with a range of knowledge and skills, and their expectations towards employers are high. For young talents in the different age groups of the generation, they want to work for companies that meet their values and offer them opportunities for personal development in different directions.

Creative and entrepreneurial, but also living in an age where all information is easily accessible, Generation Z also insists on flexibility in the work environment. Unsurprisingly, high remuneration is present in all age groups surveyed, although it is not a top consideration for the younger ones, similar to the survey of young talent conducted last year, in which half indicated it as "extremely important" when choosing an employer.

It is also interesting to comment on the topic of additional benefits, which are a mandatory part of the remuneration package and are perceived as a basic necessity by employees. Companies offer a number of different types of additional benefits, and the most successful strategy is to make them flexible to the wants, needs, and age of the employee. However, survey data from this year and last year indicates that the benefits package is not of great importance to members of Generation Z. This can be explained by the fact that these age groups are still in the early stages of their professional development and focus more on other aspects such as knowledge and skills acquisition, promotion opportunities and collaboration with leaders or mentors, a trend that is maintained compared to last year's survey results, in which these conditions were rated as most important by more than 70% of respondents.

The survey data supports these trends, and it is important to stress that employers should strive to provide development opportunities, support from experienced professionals, and flexible working conditions while keeping in mind the individual preferences and changing needs of young employees.



Analysis by age group: expectations towards future and current supervisors/mentors

The three most important qualities the perfect supervisor/mentor must possess:					
16-year-olds		17-year-olds		18-year-olds	
Competency	33.3%	Understanding	30.9%	Tolerance	32.6%
Understanding	39.4%	Motivating effect on the team	38.2%	Direct and transparent communication	39.5%
Motivating effect on the team	39.4%	Ability to listen to the opinions and suggestions of the team	45.6%	Competency	44.2%

The three least important qualities the perfect supervisor/mentor must possess:					
16-year-olds		17-year-olds		18-year-olds	
Direct and transparent communication	33.3%	Friendliness	41.2%	Excellent organisational qualities	37.2%
Extensive professional experience	45.5%	Strong strategic skills	44.1%	Friendliness	62.8%
Friendliness	48.5%	Extensive professional experience	64.7%	Extensive professional experience	65.1%

The three most important qualities the perfect supervisor/mentor must possess:					
19-year-olds		20-year-olds		21-year-olds	
Competency	38.5%	Tolerance	37.3%	Competency	33.3%
Motivating effect on the team	43.6%	Direct and open communication	39.2%	Motivating effect on the team	33.3%
Ability to listen to the opinions and suggestions of the team	48.7%	Competency	45.1%	Ability to listen to the opinions and suggestions of the team	40.7%

The three least important qualities the perfect supervisor/mentor must possess:					
19-year-olds		20-year-olds		21-year-olds	
Strong strategic skills	30.8%	Excellent organisational skills	43.1%	Friendliness	46.3%
Friendliness	59.0%	Strong strategic skills	47.1%	Strong strategic skills	53.7%
Extensive professional experience	64.1%	Extensive professional experience	51.0%	Extensive professional experience	57.4%

The three most important qualities the perfect supervisor/mentor must possess:							
22-year-olds		23-year-olds		24-year-olds		25-year-olds	
Understanding	38.8%	Competency	46.4%	Direct and open communication	40.0%	Ability to listen to the opinions and suggestions of the team	40.4%
Direct and open communication	40.8%	Ability to listen to the opinions and suggestions of the team	48.2%	Ability to listen to the opinions and suggestions of the team	40.0%	Direct and open communication	44.2%
Motivating effect on the team	44.9%	Direct and open communication	50.0%	Competency	48.0%	Competency	48.1%

The three least important qualities the perfect supervisor/mentor must possess:							
22-year-olds		23-year-olds		24-year-olds		25-year-olds	
Excellent organisational skills	34.7%	Friendliness	42.9%	Strong strategic skills	46.0%	Friendliness	48.1%
Strong strategic skills	51.0%	Strong strategic skills	46.4%	Friendliness	54.0%	Strong strategic skills	53.8%
Extensive professional experience	73.5%	Extensive professional experience	71.4%	Extensive professional experience	64.0%	Extensive professional experience	63.5%

Comparing the results on the Student Study conducted in 2022, there are some changes in the qualities sought in successful leaders/mentors.

The most pronounced change is in the expectations of Generation Z talent towards the 'organisational skills' of their leader, which was prioritised by 85% of respondents to last year's survey, while in the current survey, it is noted as one of the 'least important' qualities of the perfect mentor by the 18, 20 and 22-year old group.

One of the trends that we see persisting from the previous year is the desire and expectation for "open communication and regular feedback", which is present as a response across all age groups, albeit at a slightly lower percentage and frequency. Another quality that continues to be sought after in a good mentor is that they are able to motivate their team by giving time to their members and listening to their opinions and suggestions, setting a 'good example' for talent just starting out on their career path to follow. This is extremely important for young people because it gives them the opportunity to feel "heard and actively involved in the process", absorbing their knowledge and skills in a more practical rather than purely theoretical way.



"Competence" also remains one of the top three qualities sought in a supervisor, being present in the responses of all age group participants, albeit with a lower percentage distribution compared to last year's responses.

It is important to take into account that in allocating and considering the results of this survey, responses are considered against three age groups, as opposed to last year's which were presented overall for the whole sample, which may have an impact on the percentages and frequency of responses received.

The conclusion that can be drawn based on the most frequent answers given in relation to the question about the most unimportant qualities of the perfect leader/mentor is that for the youngest the "personal qualities" of the leader are more important than the "rich professional experience".

Key conclusions

- 1. High remuneration remains an important aspect of employer choice for Generation Z. This can be explained by the desire of young people to have financial security and to be adequately rewarded for their work and efforts.**
- 2. Generation Z's preferred working pattern reflects their desire for greater flexibility and the opportunity for work-life balance.**
- 3. Employers should adapt to the preferences and needs of Generation Z by providing development opportunities to be more successful in attracting and retaining young Generation Z talent.**
- 4. Young talent is looking for a mentor who is willing to engage and interested in the opinions and suggestions of the team.**
- 5. Young talent expects their mentor to provide clear and direct communication. They value the opportunity to express their opinions and questions uninhibited and to receive answers that are understandable and meet their needs.**

CONTACTS

Adding Assert to our portfolio we aim to support companies in making business-wise and people-wise decisions and individuals in their personal career management by providing unique insights generated through the application of internationally recognized and standardized methods.

Assert Assessment - A wide range of quality solutions that provide information concerning abilities, skills, personality characteristics, motivation, preferences, emotional intelligence, and all other aspects which are important within the work environment.

Assert People Development - The approach is based on the precise identification of development needs, the application of the most efficient methods and techniques based on quality and innovative adapted development solutions.

Business Intelligence - The aim is to provide every client with successful benchmarking, both regarding working conditions and human potential, in the labor market

For further analysis of the results and information, you can contact the experts:

Maria Dineva

Business intelligence team lead

M: +359 878 573 521

E-mail: maria.dineva@manpower.bg

Maria Stoeva

Head of Sales and Business Development

M: +359 879 958 628

E-mail: maria.stoeva@manpower.bg

