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3 disconnects between Gen Z and their bosses

☆☆☆☆ Workforce, Leadership

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Gen Z is one of the main drivers of change in today's workplace—serving as trendsetters and trend-enders, the influenced and the influential. Are their employers aligned with their values?

Deloitte research found a number of areas where Gen Z workers and their bosses share priorities and a number of areas where they differ—in the latter case, in three key areas.

- 1. The importance of empathy.** Gen Z workers highly value empathy from their bosses and consider it a prerequisite to engagement at work, but bosses do not place as high of a value on demonstrating empathy. According to the research, Gen Zers ranked empathy as the second most important trait in a boss, while bosses ranked it, on average, a distant fifth.
- 2. The impact of work on mental health.** Gen Z workers feel that they are not getting the mental health support they need in the workplace and believe their ideas about how work impacts their mental health differ from those of their bosses. The survey showed that less than half of Gen Zers say their boss helps them maintain a healthy workload, and 28 percent say they struggle with their mental health because of their boss.
- 3. The connection between work and personal identity.** Gen Z workers and their bosses place different values upon work as part of their identities. Our research found that 61 percent of Gen Zers already in the workforce feel that work is a significant part of their identity, while 86 percent of bosses say that work is a significant part of their identity.

So, what can a leader do to bridge these gaps?

- **Get curious.** Explore a similar line of research with your workforce to understand what would elevate their experiences and build the trust of Gen Z specifically.
- **Connect.** Be intentional about creating opportunities for connection between members of Gen Z and other generations.
- **Co-create.** More than other generations, Gen Z wants to have their voices heard. They want agency to create a future that they find meaningful. Enlist their energy and problem-solving skills.
- **Build a culture of reverse-mentoring.** Many organizations typically have older employees who mentor Gen Zers. In the same way, leaders can promote a culture in which Gen Zers reverse-mentor their mentors, helping these more senior employees better understand Gen Z.
- **Ask the influencers.** Tap into influential members of Gen Z inside and outside their organization to help test ideas and shape the future culture of the workforce.

Go Deeper

Learn more about what Gen Z workers want, and how to help provide it, in this insight's source document:

[Hey bosses: Here's what Gen Z actually wants at work](#), Deloitte Digital / Amelia Dunlop and Michael Pankowski, 2023.

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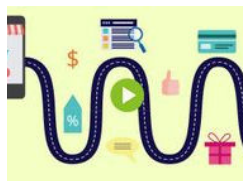
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