

5W1H Document: GenZ Career Alignment and Employer Challenges

Problem Statement:

GenZ individuals are struggling to secure roles that align with their passions and aspirations, leading to dissatisfaction. Simultaneously, employers are facing difficulties in attracting, retaining, and managing GenZ employees effectively.

Who:

1. Who are the GenZ individuals struggling to secure roles?

○ Demographics:

- College graduates, those with 0–3 years of work experience, and recent job seekers.
- Primarily individuals aged 18–24 (born between 1997–2012).

○ Key Characteristics:

- **Educational Background:** College graduates with degrees in humanities, social sciences, business, and STEM fields.
- **Geographic Location:** Predominantly in urban areas but also growing in rural and suburban locations.
- **Industry Preferences:** Seeking roles in tech, creative industries, sustainability-focused organizations, and companies with strong social values.

2. Who are the employers struggling to attract, retain, and manage GenZ employees?

○ Industries:

- Tech, retail, hospitality, healthcare, and financial services.
- Growing challenges in companies that are traditionally hierarchical or offer rigid job structures.

○ Business Type:

- Includes large corporations, mid-sized businesses, and startups.

○ Leadership/Management:

- Companies with outdated management structures, top-down hierarchies, or a lack of flexibility in work practices (remote work, flexible hours, etc.) face more significant challenges.

3. Who is responsible for addressing the misalignment of passion and role expectations on both the employee and employer side?

- **Primary Responsibility:**
 - **HR professionals,** career coaches, recruitment agencies, and individual employees.
 - **Support Systems:**
 - Educational institutions, career counselling centres, mentors, and leadership teams.
4. **Who are the key stakeholders involved in finding solutions to this problem?**
- **Key Stakeholders:**
 - **Educational Institutions:** Provide career counselling and alignment of curricula with market needs.
 - **Corporations:** Adapt recruitment and retention strategies.
 - **Recruitment Agencies:** Facilitate better job matching and understanding of GenZ expectations.
 - **Mentorship Programs:** Offer guidance in navigating career aspirations.
 - **Government Agencies:** Assist with employment policies, job training programs, and internships.
-

What:

1. **What specific issues are GenZ individuals facing in securing roles that align with their passions and aspirations?**
 - **Key Issues:**
 - Mismatch between academic qualifications and available jobs.
 - Lack of job roles that combine both passion and career growth potential.
 - Insufficient career guidance and networking opportunities during education.
2. **What challenges do employers face when trying to attract and retain GenZ talent?**
 - **Employer Challenges:**
 - **Workplace Culture:** Struggles with creating a culture that aligns with GenZ's preference for inclusivity, transparency, and flexibility.
 - **Salary Expectations:** GenZ's desire for fair compensation, job stability, and competitive salaries.
 - **Work-Life Balance:** Strong demand for work-life balance, remote work options, and flexible schedules.
 - **Values Alignment:** Challenges in offering roles that align with GenZ's values around sustainability, ethics, and corporate social responsibility.

3. **What are the unmet expectations or aspirations that GenZ employees have when it comes to their careers?**
 - **Unmet Expectations:**
 - **Career Growth:** GenZ seeks roles with clear career progression and learning opportunities.
 - **Meaningful Work:** Desire for work that aligns with their personal values and contributes to society.
 - **Flexibility:** Preference for flexible working hours, remote work, and autonomy in their roles.
 4. **What factors are contributing to the dissatisfaction that GenZ employees experience in their roles?**
 - **Factors Contributing to Dissatisfaction:**
 - Lack of growth opportunities, insufficient mentorship, or leadership development.
 - **Poor Leadership:** Lack of effective communication, micromanagement, or disconnected leadership.
 - **Company Mission:** Feeling disconnected from the company's mission or values, leading to a lack of engagement.
 5. **What role does workplace culture play in this issue for both employees and employers?**
 - **Cultural Factors:**
 - Workplace culture that doesn't foster inclusivity, diversity, and purpose-driven work can create friction with GenZ.
 - GenZ places high value on organizations that are actively involved in social issues like environmental sustainability and equity.
-

When:

1. **When did this problem of misalignment between GenZ's passions and career opportunities become noticeable?**
 - **Timeline:**
 - This problem became more apparent as GenZ entered the workforce in significant numbers (post-2020).
 - The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, remote work, and shifting societal values exacerbated this gap.
2. **When do employers typically realize that they are struggling to attract and retain GenZ talent?**
 - **Timing:**

- Typically noticed during **recruitment** when traditional methods (job boards, in-person interviews) yield fewer results.
 - Employers also recognize it **post-onboarding** when turnover rates spike or when engagement metrics decrease.
3. **When are GenZ individuals most likely to experience dissatisfaction in their careers?**
- **Key Moments of Dissatisfaction:**
 - Early in their careers (0–2 years) when they realize the job doesn't align with their values.
 - During career transitions (e.g., switching jobs or industries), when expectations are not met.
 - After 2–3 years in a role, if there is no visible growth or progression.
4. **When should employers start to adapt their recruitment and retention strategies to effectively engage GenZ employees?**
- **Ideal Timing:**
 - **During recruitment:** Employers should adapt their strategies to align with the values and expectations of GenZ before the hiring process.
 - **Post-onboarding:** Regular check-ins and career development initiatives should be implemented early on to retain GenZ employees.
-

Where:

1. **Where are GenZ individuals typically looking for career opportunities?**
- **Job Search Platforms:**
 - **LinkedIn, Glassdoor, Indeed, AngelList** (for startups).
 - Specific job fairs, networking events, and social media platforms like **TikTok** and **Instagram** (influencers, creators, startups).
 - **Geographic Preferences:**
 - Urban areas, especially tech hubs like **San Francisco, New York, London, or Berlin**.
 - Increasing interest in remote or hybrid work, with less focus on geographic location.
2. **Where are employers most likely encountering difficulties in managing GenZ employees?**
- **Management Issues:**
 - **Onboarding:** A lack of structured onboarding programs, mentorship, and clear role expectations.

- **Daily Management:** Difficulty in providing feedback in a way that resonates with GenZ's communication style (frequent, direct, and transparent).
 - **Career Development:** Employers struggle with providing long-term growth paths or opportunities for continuous learning.
3. **Where do GenZ employees feel the most lack of alignment between their passions and the roles they are offered?**
- **Misalignment Locations:**
 - **Industries:** In roles within more traditional or hierarchical industries like finance or manufacturing, where flexibility, innovation, and values alignment may be lacking.
 - **Role Types:** Entry-level positions that don't offer career growth or don't align with personal values.
4. **Where are the gaps in communication between GenZ employees and employers in terms of career expectations?**
- **Communication Gaps:**
 - **Recruitment:** Employers fail to clearly communicate role expectations, career growth opportunities, and company culture.
 - **Onboarding:** GenZ employees often feel that the reality of the role doesn't match what was promised during recruitment.
 - **Performance Reviews:** Lack of transparency or regular feedback mechanisms leads to misalignment in expectations.
-

Why:

1. **Why is it so difficult for GenZ individuals to find roles that match their passions?**
- **Challenges:**
 - Limited job opportunities that align with their educational background and personal values.
 - Structural constraints in many industries (e.g., traditional office-based roles, rigid hierarchical job structures).
2. **Why are employers finding it challenging to attract GenZ talent?**
- **Challenges:**
 - **Competitive Job Market:** GenZ has many options, including gig economy roles, freelancing, and entrepreneurial ventures.
 - **Cultural Mismatch:** Many employers fail to align their culture with the values that GenZ holds (e.g., sustainability, work-life balance, diversity).
3. **Why do GenZ employees have such high expectations for their careers compared to previous generations?**

- **Societal Shifts:**
 - Raised in the digital age, GenZ values immediacy, flexibility, and work that is aligned with their values.
 - Economic factors like rising student debt, the gig economy, and the collapse of traditional career ladders have shaped their expectations.
 - 4. **Why do some employers fail to adapt to the needs of GenZ employees?**
 - **Reasons:**
 - Generational disconnect between management and younger employees.
 - Slow adaptation to digital tools, flexible work models, and inclusivity practices.
 - 5. **Why is retention such a big issue with GenZ employees?**
 - **Retention Issues:**
 - Lack of career growth opportunities.
 - Desire for more meaning in work and the ability to contribute to causes they care about.
-

How:

1. **How can GenZ individuals better align their career aspirations with available job opportunities?**
 - **Solutions:**
 - Participate in **mentorship programs** and career counselling.
 - Engage in **internships, apprenticeships, and skill-building workshops** to better understand market needs.
 - Actively build a **professional network** to access opportunities in desired industries.
2. **How can employers improve their recruitment processes to better attract GenZ talent?**
 - **Strategies:**
 - Implement **digital-first recruitment** (social media, job platforms, virtual fairs).
 - Offer **flexible work options** (remote, hybrid, flexible hours).
 - Align **brand messaging** with GenZ values (sustainability, diversity, and inclusivity).
3. **How can employers create an environment that fosters both engagement and retention among GenZ employees?**
 - **Retention Strategies:**

- Offer **purpose-driven roles** that align with GenZ's personal values.
 - **Career development opportunities** through mentorship, continuous learning, and growth potential.
 - Implement **regular feedback** loops and recognition programs.
4. **How can organizations improve the management of GenZ employees to reduce dissatisfaction?**
- **Management Solutions:**
 - Introduce **personalized coaching** and **clear role definitions**.
 - Offer **continuous learning opportunities** and the possibility for flexible working arrangements.
 - Create a culture of **open communication**, transparency, and empathy in leadership.
5. **How can both employers and GenZ individuals bridge the communication gap regarding expectations and job satisfaction?**
- **Communication Solutions:**
 - **Frequent feedback cycles, clear role definitions, and career progression check-ins.**
 - Foster **ongoing conversations** around work expectations, culture, and values from the moment of recruitment through to performance reviews.

Timeline for Action

Timeline	Actions
Short-Term (0-3 months)	Begin updating recruitment processes to align with GenZ values. Focus on creating clear role expectations and flexible work options. Start offering mentorship programs.
Medium-Term (3-6 months)	Implement ongoing feedback mechanisms, improve onboarding processes, and adjust management strategies to cater to GenZ expectations. Focus on internal training for managers.
Long-Term (6-12 months)	Evaluate and refine employee retention strategies. Establish long-term career development plans, expand remote work policies, and align company values with GenZ's social responsibility expectations.

Conclusion:

The misalignment between GenZ's career aspirations and available job opportunities, coupled with employers' struggles to attract, retain, and manage GenZ talent, presents a significant challenge. GenZ seeks flexible, purpose-driven work environments that align with their values, while employers need to adapt their recruitment, management, and retention strategies to meet these expectations. By improving communication, offering career

development opportunities, and fostering inclusive, values-driven workplace cultures, both GenZ employees and employers can bridge this gap. Implementing these strategies will lead to greater job satisfaction, reduced turnover, and a more engaged workforce, benefiting both parties in the long term.