



Gen Z in the Workforce

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Emmet Ore:

Hello, everyone, and welcome to part one of our April Wednesday webinar series. I hope you're all doing well. My name is Emmet and I'm a marketing specialist over here at Vensure, and I will be your host for the next hour. Today, our panelist, Robin Paggi, will be talking about Generation Z, or Zimmers, that they're sometimes called in the workforce. Before we get started, just a bit of housekeeping. There will be a Q&A session at the end and we'll do our best to answer all the questions you guys have. But if we run out of time, we'll respond to your questions individually afterwards. And just a reminder, this is being recorded and we will share that recording along with the slide deck with all of you after the session concludes here.

This webinar is brought to you, as always, by Vensure Employer Services. Vensure is the leader of 20 plus partners with clients in all 50 states. Today's agenda includes the different generations in the workforce, recruiting, interviewing, and onboarding Generation Z, and lastly, developing and retaining Generation Z. And we'll have a Q&A session at the end, as I mentioned earlier. So, if you hear a topic that you need a little bit more clarity on, feel free to submit a follow-up in the Q&A box. And the instructions for that are right here. So, when you logged in to Go to Webinar, you should have seen a control panel open. There's a dropdown section in that control panel for questions. Just type your questions and comments into that section and enter. If you're a client, please put "client" in your questions so we can track that later. And all questions are private. You won't see the questions or comments of others. So, feel free to ask anything and everything and we'll try to get to all the questions in the time that we have. But if we don't, please contact us at webinar HR help at vensure dot com. And we're thrilled, as always, to have Robin Paggi joining us as our panelist today. She's a human resource practitioner who specializes in training on topics, such as harassment prevention, communication, team building, and supervisory skills. So I will hand it over to Robin.

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Robin Paggi:

Thanks. People who study generations say that what happens to us during our formative years, and this is basically when we're in high school or high school age, what happens to us during that time has a profound impact on what we value, our expectations, and our worldview. For example, I was in high school in the late 70s and early 80s, and that's probably why I think the best bands ever are the Eagles, Fleetwood Mac, and Queen. So, let's go to our next slide and talk about the different generations in today's workforce.

Obviously, we can't say that all people born during a certain time period are alike. What we can say is that they've all experienced the same thing at about the same time. So, baby boomers, born between 1946 and 1964, and that's an 18-year time period. So, obviously, we can't say that all boomers are alike. Now, the reason they're called baby boomers is because the birth rate in America and other parts of the world skyrocketed after World War II. People who were fighting in the war returned home and started having babies. Some significant events that happened during the boomers' formative years, include Vietnam and civil rights. Older boomers fought in Vietnam or protested against it, while younger boomers like me just watched it on TV. But, we all experienced it in some way. Older boomers marched in civil rights protests, while younger boomers like me just, you guessed it, watched it on TV. But, we all experienced it in some ways. And as a result, boomers are said to question authority. Not every single boomer does, but I know that I do. So, with so many babies being born, there were limited resources. And one of the things that boomers are described as being is very competitive and driven because they had to compete against a lot of people their same age. Now, all of our actions have consequences and the consequence of the civil rights movement was civil rights legislation making it illegal for employers to discriminate against protected classes, including women. So, lots of baby boomer women went to work. And all of our actions also have unintended consequences and an unintended consequence of civil rights legislation making it illegal to discriminate against women is that a lot of women went to work. And one of the things that happened, too, is because a lot of women went to work and could now support themselves, they also divorced. Between 1962 and 1973, the divorce rate in the United States doubled and it peaked in 1981. There were 5.3 divorces per 1,000 people. And the fact that a lot of women went back to work and that there were a lot of divorces had an impact on the next generation, which is called Gen X, and you can see this is only an 11-year time period.

And the reason that we have these different time periods is because of significant events that separate the generations. So, not all Gen Xers' parents were divorced, but again, many had working moms. A 1985 census revealed that half of mothers of preschool aged children were working. So, Gen X is called the latchkey generation because they went home and took care of themselves and sometimes their younger siblings while their parents continue to work. As a result, they are said to be independent, don't want to be told what to do, and they are sensitive to a work-life balance because their parents often were at work, and building their careers, and spending a lot of time there. And so, Gen X wanted more of a balance, wanted to be with their kids more, and that had an impact on the next generation, which originally was called Gen Y, because it followed X, but somewhere along the line, somebody wrote a book about them and called The Millennials.

And so, that stuck. So we know that with millennials, they were raised at a time when computers and technology was booming and other things that were happening is that parenting styles changed tremendously. As I said, Gen X wanted more of a work-life balance so that they could be around for their kids and some of them become what were called helicopter parents, hovering around their children. The world also became less safe during their years. We had lots of school shootings, the Oklahoma City bombing, and so people were really concerned about the safety, especially of their young children. And so, hovering around them to make sure that they are safe. As a result of that, millennials have been said to expect to be at the table with the people who are guiding them, that they want to be coached instead of being told what to do, and constructive feedback on how to improve their performance is valued more highly. And I would agree with millennials on that being coached instead of being told what to do and being given constructive feedback. I think that their demanding for it, got it right. So, next is Gen Z and born after 1996.

So, the defining factor with Gen Z is that they might have been alive during 9/11, they just don't remember it. And 9/11, again, one of those factors of the millennial generation that wanted their parents to keep them safe. And so, Gen Z doesn't remember 9/11. And so, what was happening during their formative years? Well, smartphones, social media, the Internet—this generation is not used to having any privacy, stability, or security. And the world has just gotten less safe as we go along, especially when you consider that a whole bunch of Gen Z, during their formative years, experienced a pandemic that has killed a lot of people and that hasn't had an impact on all of us. But especially when you're 14 to 18 years old and it's happening to you, it looks different and feels different because of your capacity to be able to handle something like that during your teenage years. So, what about Gen Z that we really need to know about? I'm going to get into that, but one of the things that we need to know is that because of what they experienced, and more likely what they did not experience that the rest of us did experience, they do not have the same common experiences. So, they do not have the same idea of common sense. And so, that's something we're going to talk about a lot. Now, before we move on, I just want to say, even if you disagree with generalizations about the generations, one indisputable fact about Gen Z is that they're young. And when people are young, they tend not to have the knowledge and experience they need to meet their older manager's expectations. And there are older managers, by the way, forgot that they didn't know everything when they started working either. So, why they have the expectation for younger people to know stuff that they probably didn't even know, I don't know.

But, let's move on to our next slide and talk about that Gen Z has probably never been bored. So, today's teens and tweens, because Gen Z's youngest Gen Zs were born in 2012, they have had an unparalleled access to technology. They've grown up with high-speed Internet, laptop, social media. Many have had smartphones since elementary school and the majority of time users spend on their phones. They tend to be engaged because tech companies really try to keep people engaged because they make more money that way. However, one of the things that's funny is, I looked into this a little bit more, is that human beings adapt to all of their surroundings and technical advances are no different. And what one generation thinks is the bomb, the next generation thinks is dull and boring. And so, to many teens, smartphones and the Internet have already lost their appeal. And now, there is something called phone boredom. So, I love how we always have new phrases come up and this occurs when you're technically on your phone, but you're still bored because you're just scrolling, and scrolling, and scrolling, and you're not finding anything interesting. So, this is kind of fun because previous generations did that same kind of scrolling, they just did it differently. And so, chances are you used to scroll through your radio channels to find a radio station that met your needs, or just wandered about the house going into different rooms trying to find something interesting, or going through TV channels. Of course, for some of us, there were only three TV channels when we started watching TV. But as they gained momentum, just going through, and going through, and isn't that one of the things now is we've got all of these things like Netflix, and Hulu, and everything under the sun, and we still can't find something interesting to watch. So, there's a notion among older people that Gen Z, with their smartphones and unlimited Internet access, never experienced boredom. As a matter of fact, CNN and other media outlets have repeatedly declared that the smartphones have killed boredom as we know it. But, today's teens are like every other teens and they're bored with stuff that's going on. So, I guess Gen Z has been bored, but they have probably never been held back in school. Now, I'm in California. In California, education code states that students who don't meet grade standards, and you know, there's all this standardized testing and that's one of the things that has shaped this generation also, but if students don't meet grade standards, they must repeat the grade. And that's what used to happen when I was younger, is that you failed school and the worst thing that you could do was fail a grade and be held back. And there was quite a stigma to that. And that's probably why, even though it is allowed, lots of times it does not happen. A student can be promoted if the student's teacher decides retention isn't appropriate for that child and sometimes the stigma of being held back is so damaging to a student's self-esteem that they quit school. And so, maybe that's not the answer. And by the way, in California, well, Los Angeles says, "Los Angeles Unified School District is our nation's second-largest school district and it's been promoting failing students for a long time." One school administrator said, "If you survey

people, they'll say that social promotion, just promoting people based upon their age, they'll say it's wrong, but they are reluctant to retain students." And as a result, Gen Z will probably expect to be promoted because of tenure as opposed to of their ability to do the job. And that's one of the things earlier in my career, I was a college instructor and I was amazed at people who were getting into college, who did not have the reading and writing skills that I expected them to have. And one of the reasons for that is because of this social promotion. Gen Z looks like the boomer generation when it comes to probably not being silenced. And so, that's one of the things the boomers, a lot of them participated in social movements that had an impact on society. Things changed as a result of people speaking up and Gen Z looks a lot like that. With platforms like Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok, Gen Z has been able to use the digital world they were born into to revolutionize activism. And so, there is people being on the street, marching, holding signs— but technology helps in addition to that. In a 2019 report, Irregular Labs found that nearly three-quarters of Gen Zers believe that being politically and socially engaged is very important to their identity. And for many, being politically and socially engaged is simply being a good citizen. And I wholeheartedly agree. And so, here are some examples, and again, not all Gen Z is like this. But I mean, think about these examples. The members of Gen Z who organized the marches nationwide after the killing at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Florida in 2018; seventeen-year-old Greta Thornburg, just about everybody knows who Greta is talking about climate change all over the world; twenty-three-year-old Malala Yousafzai, leading the feminist movement in the Middle East. So, of course, not everyone can be a Greta or a Malala, but certainly, they are representative of the massive social movements that we are seeing by young people today. So as a result of that, Gen Z will probably expect to be listened to in the workplace. Gen Z has probably never been disconnected. Now, research that I conducted said that 95% of Gen Z owns a cell phone. And so, that's one of the things to do with Gen Z. We've got a lot of different kinds of Gen Z. We've got a whole group of Gen Zers who are dreamers, whose parents brought them here undocumented. And so, that adds a stress to them that others do not understand. We've got a lot of Gen Z that lives in poverty and experiences racism and all of those things. So, certainly not all Gen Zers are the same. But one of the things that is very much the same for them is they have phones. And so, according to a new report from Snapchat, the majority of Gen Z smartphone users say they are constantly connected online. 57% said they feel insecure without their phone. 78% percent of them said their mobile devices are their most important device to go online. And so, that's one of the things that some employers found out during the pandemic when they sent workers home is that a lot of Gen Zers own a phone, but they don't own a computer. And a lot of them are very technically adept at using a phone, but not a computer. And then one of the things about Gen Z is that they are probably not employed. Now again, some of them are really young, the oldest Gen Z are 24, but lots of us had jobs while we were in high school, and only 19% of Gen Z has any job experience during their high school years. And maybe one of the reasons for that is because they are really involved in extracurricular activities. But there are things that you learn in employment during your job at McDonald's or Taco Bell or whatever, that then you take to your first real job. And a lot of Gen Zers did not learn those things. And so, that's one of the things that employers and managers need to understand. Employers and managers frequently think that people have the experience that they don't. They make assumptions about them that lead to misunderstandings. And when older managers make these assumptions and show frustration when younger people don't know how to do what they expect them to do. Younger people tend to quit and we don't want that. So, let's go on to our next slide and find out what we can do to help Gen Z in the employment world.

First of all, getting GenZ into the employment world is going to require you to know how to use social media. So, if you want to find great people or want them to find you, social media is the current way to do it, not just for Gen Zers, but for everybody. Here's something that you might find interesting. In the first quarter of 2020, over 2.6 Billion people logged on to Facebook every month. And of course, the pandemic, lots more people were logging on to Facebook than they did before. Twitter had over 166 million daily active users in 2020, and 690 million people were LinkedIn members. And so, lots of people on social media. Of course, if you want to find people, social media is the place to do it. So even if you think that Facebook is silly, I have no idea how to tweet, I've never tweeted, I don't know how to do it, or have begrudgingly set up a

LinkedIn account that you never look at, you're doing yourself a disservice if you discount the impact that social media has on employee recruitment, especially Gen Z. So, if you want to use social media, here are things that you need to do. And in addition to Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and Twitter, use your company's website. Now hopefully, you have a very dynamic website, because if it's not dynamic, then people will think your organization is not dynamic. So, in addition to posting job openings on your company website, your website should entice people to want to work at your business. So, you can do this by posting pictures of company events, employee testimonies of why they like working there, your mission statement and company values, and other things that communicate your company culture. And of course, you want it to look like it's a great place to work. Also on your company website, you want to allow applicants to be able to apply, and on their phone. Remember, a lot of GenZ does not have access to a computer and the application process needs to be pretty quick. And by that, I mean less than 15 minutes. And one of the things you want is for people to be able to save their application along the way, not just when they are finished with it so that if they need to come back to it, it's all there and they don't have to start all over again. Consider allowing applicants to express an interest in a job online to connect with them so they can express an interest before actually applying for the job and be sure to promptly get back with them, because if you don't, then they go on to the next thing. And again, that's not just GenZ, that's all of us are used to a faster world and we're used to people responding to us very quickly. And when we don't get that, we tend to move on. So, it's not just them. It's a good practice for older applicants as well.

Using job boards. So, there are a variety of online job boards such as Monster and Indeed that you can use to advertise job openings, but you'll want to post on the job board that gets you the best results. Don't just post on everything. And so, for example, I'm a member of the Kern County Society for Human Resource Management. That has a website that allows for job postings. And so, if you want somebody in HR to fill an HR position, going to the Society for Human Resource Management Job Board is the logical place to go. If you have a Facebook page, you can always post job openings on it. However, you'll probably want to buy an ad so more people and the right people will see it. And Facebook will allow you to choose the exact audience you want to target and then calculate different options and a range of prices for your ad. So, that's nice. When you use Twitter, use hashtags such as #jobpost, so your tweet will be instantly searchable and you'll need to be concise and interesting to attract attention. And LinkedIn is considered by many to be the more businesslike place to post job openings than Facebook and Twitter. And you can post available positions for free on your profile or sign up for LinkedIn talent advantage to pay for recruiting on the site. And additionally, you should use LinkedIn to search for prospective candidates and reach out to them to apply. And if you haven't been doing that, then you're really missing out. And so, LinkedIn can be great for people finding you or you trying to find them.

Now, here's the deal. The majority of Gen Z gets information about job openings from their family, friends, and people they know. So, using those platforms that I told you about is not necessarily to get to them, it's to get to their people that they get their information from. What Gen Z does use social media for when it comes to employment is determine whether they want to work for a company or not. But, they don't use the same platforms, they tend to go to YouTube. So, the Center for Generational Kinetics said 40% of Gen Z says they would use YouTube to determine if they want to work for a company, while 37% said they would use Instagram, and 36% would use Snapchat. And so, if you don't know how to use YouTube, Instagram, or Snapchat, you're probably going to figure out how to do it. But, whatever sites you use, any social media recruitment campaign is only as good as its reach to your target audience. So, you want to make sure that you carefully plan where you're going to post your openings. And high unemployment and all of this posting will undoubtedly bring a whole bunch of unqualified candidates. And so, how do you screen through all of this? Well, one easy way to weed out people is that when they apply for a job, have them answer questions about the position that you send them after they apply before you interview them. The unqualified people won't answer and will be easily spotted and eliminated. And then finally, relationships with local schools. So, volunteering to speak to a class about careers in your field, getting involved in career day, participating in on-campus interviews, and/or offering internships to students are great ways to introduce your

business to future job candidates. And additionally, campus job counselors can help you and your recruitment efforts by steering qualified candidates your way. So, if you have some colleges in your area, you definitely want to do that. Alright. That's recruiting. Let's go on to interviewing and onboarding.

I've talked about both of these topics in previous webinars, but I want to talk specifically about interviewing and onboarding for Generation Z. When I talked about interview questions before, what I said was that one of the easiest ways to develop interview questions is just look at your job description, the essential job duties on it, and put the phrase, "tell me about your experience with," in front of the essential job duty and boom. You've got most of your interview questions right there. But I already told you that only 19% of Gen Z has any job experience while they're in school. So, chances are when you're talking about, "tell me your experience with your previous employment," they don't have previous employment. So, how do you develop interview questions for people with no job experience? Doesn't have to be radically different. It's just instead of, "tell me about your experience with your previous job," it could be in other areas. So, for example, you might ask, "Are there responsibilities you might have at home or school that give you experience in this area?" Doesn't have to be job. It could be home or school. "Do you have any volunteer experience or hobbies that give you experience in this field?" And so, again, experience doesn't necessarily have to be on the job it can be in other areas as well. Here are other things to ask: "How do you approach your schoolwork?" So, that's one of the things that some people, well, my school work is as soon as I get home, I want to get everything done and out of the way so that I can enjoy things, or I need to relax a little bit before I get into things. So, it tells you a little bit more about people. "What do you do well and like doing? What do you not do well and don't like doing?" So, those are things that can tell you whether a good fit for the job and, "If you could do anything you wanted to for a living, what would you do?" So, again, you can ask questions that determine whether an applicant is a good fit for the job, even if they don't have any real job experience. One of the things you want to make sure you do also is provide a realistic job preview. So, according to a survey by Job Buy.com, one in four employees quit their job within the first 90 days, and 43% said they quit because the day-to-day role wasn't what they expected it to be. So, it's really important that you provide a realistic preview of what the job entails so people don't bounce right out of it. So, if people are going to get dirty on the job, don't just tell them about it. Show them pictures of employees after a day's work. If they're going to work in a noisy environment, take them there so they can experience the noise, have them talk to current employees to see what it's really like to work at your organization—do whatever you need to do so applicants know exactly what they're getting themselves into. Otherwise, again, they might bounce out. And if you are not aware of this, it usually costs three times the employee's pay to replace the employee. So, again, people with no previous job experience don't have an understanding of what the working environment is like. And it's really important to give them a feel for it before you hire them.

Alright. Now, orientation challenges, especially for Gen Z, is that orientations tend to be boring. And we've already talked about them being bored. So, think about this: what's the first day on the job like for new employees at your workplace? Or are they put in a room for hours to complete piles of paperwork and watch decades-old videos? Are they handed off to the first available employee to be trained, whether that employee likes to train people or not? Are they forced to work in the break room because their workspace isn't ready? All of this is bad stuff and makes the employee wonder what they've got themselves into and again are likely to bounce right out of that situation. So, you want to make your orientation a little bit more interesting, and you definitely want to make sure that when you are bringing people on board, you're giving them a full onboarding experience. Now, onboarding is the process of helping new employees feel connected to your workplace and it's critical for their success and for them to stick around. So, again, I had an onboarding webinar a little bit while ago. But here, just very quickly, some examples of onboarding, especially for Gen Z. First of all, begin before their first day of work by sending them a welcome letter that outlines exactly what's expected of them, where they're supposed to show up, what time they're supposed to show up, who they'll report to when they show up...all of those things and encourage them to call. If they have any questions, don't wait for them to call because a lot of them will not actually place a phone call. So, you might want

to check in through them by texting, not even emailing because a lot of them are not emailing. So, texting usually is the best way to get a hold of them. Check in with them, make sure that they do, are doing okay, and they're ready to come to work, and they have everything that they need in order to get their prepare their workspace before they arrive. So, have computers, phones, or any other equipment ready to go, ready to operate, have keys, access cards available, everything that they need, and to kick it up a notch to really make them feel welcome. Have employees sign a card, a welcome card that is given to them when they arrive, have them, have a company t-shirt or jacket and their size all ready to go so that they feel like they are part of the team. One of the things you should have is a welcome packet that has all the pamphlets and paperwork necessary. But one of the things a friend of mine said her workplace does is in their new hire packet, they have a "favorites and appreciation" questionnaire of how new employees prefer to receive feedback and some of their favorite drinks, candy, sports, and ways they like to be recognized. And she said, "I have one staff person who really likes goldfish crackers and one who loves red vines," and so, when I want to give them a treat that says thank you to them, she gets some goldfish and red vines and that makes them feel appreciated. So, really personalizing the appreciation factor. We'll talk a little bit more about that. And so, again, onboarding help— have them meet with their new supervisor, trainer, or mentor. Start with the basics. So, again, my friend said that there are new employees are assigned to mentor them. They call it a champion who spends time with them each week for the first few weeks to help get them settled in. So, the whole throw people can sink or swim thing doesn't work for anybody, but especially people who this is their first job. And so, help having somebody assigned to them to help them settle in, and during that time together, they talk about items on their champion agreement that they have with them, such as lunchroom etiquette, parking, good lunch locations, things like that. Again, just to help them feel really grounded. And so, again, through onboarding, their champion or their mentor or their trainer or whoever should go over their job description, set some short-term goals that they can achieve something and have a sense of accomplishment right from the get-go. Even if it's just training that they've been assigned, that they feel a sense of accomplishment because they get to check off a box or they have met a SMART goal or something just in being trained. And so, one of the things we know is that people become productive faster when they have all of these things, the why, when, where, and how they're supposed to do things. And you want them to feel successful because that will help them stick around. Now, it takes time and effort to have all of this stuff, but lots of studies have demonstrated that when you make this kind of investment, employees are more productive, their morale is better. And again, they stick around. And so, those tools to help them succeed include smart goals, job descriptions, employee handbooks. And I know employee handbooks sound really boring and a lot of people need never use them. But as much things that you can write down to so have available to them job aides, all of those types of things will help them succeed. So, let's go on to the next slide and talk about how to develop them.

Well, training, obviously, but I'm a trainer, so I think that training is always obvious. Of course, you're going to train people, but it's amazing how many people do not receive training that they need in order to do their jobs well, and especially with Gen Z, because, again, many of them do not have previous job experience. So, one of the things that you'll want to do, again with the job and the job descriptions and checklist and all of those types of things is to tell them exactly what to do and how to do it. And there are three primary reasons for that. Again, because of lack of job experience. And the other thing is because of being digital natives, being born into technology and that means that they didn't learn how to do things the old-fashioned way or the old-school way. So, I'll give you a couple examples of that. I asked my granddaughter to meet me at a fundraiser and I gave her the address where she needed to meet me. And then she texted me and she asked if the fundraiser was at a church because that's where Google Maps had told her to go—the fundraiser was actually next door to the church. And so, when she got to where she needed to go, I showed her how to look at the numbers on the building to determine whether you're in the right place and if you're not, how to get there. Now, again, for those of us who are older, we naturally assume that people know how to do that. But when you have people who are raised on technology and look to technology for answers, if technology doesn't provide them with the right answers, sometimes they're stumped. Another example: a friend of mine told me that she instructed her young assistant to light some candles and the assistant asked

where the candle lighter was. My friend said she didn't have a candle lighter and handed her assistant a book of matches. And the assistant asked, "What do I do with these?" Well, those of us who are older, we probably played with matches when we were younger and set things on fire that we weren't supposed to, but people who had parents that paid a little closer attention to them, and also because we have all of these extra safety precautions, they probably never played with matches or live matches. And so, these examples aren't intended to make fun of young people or to imply that they're not intelligent. It's just intended to demonstrate that you can't assume that people know how to do the things that you know how to do. What's common sense to you is not necessarily common sense to everybody else. And then the third reason of why you need to tell people what to do is because, again, if you don't, they'll most likely try to figure things out for themselves through Google or YouTube, and that might be a good thing. But it also might be a bad thing because what Google or YouTube tells them to do is not how you want them to do it. So, it's important to train them to do exactly what you want them to do. That way, you'll get the results that you want. Setting boundaries is important also. So, as I said before, they've got an attachment to their cell phones and most everybody has an attachment to their cell phones now. So, it's a good idea to have things like cell phone policies, social media policies, dress codes. People tend to dress differently and if you're running the show and you want people to dress more formally, you'll probably need to tell them what that looks like. Codes of conduct, just all of these types of things. And while I'm not a big fan of creating a policy for everything, I am a fan of communicating your expectations to people so that there are no unhappy surprises on either party's part. So, if you want employees to look, sound, and behave professionally, you need to tell them what that means to you because chances are they'll have a different definition of the word. And when people have different definitions of the word, there are needless misunderstandings and hurt feelings as a result of that. So, spell it out. And then giving lots of feedback. When employees are new, and especially when they're young, they need guidance to ensure they're on the right path and feedback provides them with that guidance. Now, the Center for Generational Kinetics says that 60% of Gen Z employees said they want feedback from their managers every few weeks, if not more. You don't need to spend a lot of time when giving the feedback, just a few minutes. But you probably need to give feedback more than what you're used to doing if you are older. According to Gallup, employees who receive weekly feedback are five times more likely to strongly agree that they receive meaningful feedback. They're three times more likely to strongly agree they are motivated to do outstanding work and they are two times more likely to be engaged in their work. So, those are all things that you want. And so, if you just need to talk to people a little bit more in order to get those things, it's probably worth your time. Now, I read an article, "The Best Gift Leaders Can Give is Honest Feedback," which I agree. And in this article, the author said, "strong employee engagement is closely aligned with the ability to give honest feedback and a helpful way." And he cited a study that he conducted that shows that leaders who ranked in the top 10% in their ability to give honest feedback received engagement scores of 77% from their direct reports. So, again, a little bit more feedback and you've got engagement. Now, this author said giving honest feedback is a fantastic gift, but apparently people only experience it as a gift when it is delivered well. As we used to say in the eighties, "duh." Yeah. When you give feedback not well, then that can hurt people's feelings. Now, is it only young people who get their feelings hurt with the feedback that's delivered is not great? No. Google something like, "Do people take feedback personally?" and you'll find pages and pages of articles with titles such as, "How to not take feedback." So personally, I have to work on not becoming defensive when someone gives me feedback that I don't like and I'm in my late 50s. You probably react defensively too. So, it's not fair to say that Gen Z gets their feelings hurt when you tell them how to do their jobs. I spend a lot of time teaching people how to critique in a constructive rather than a destructive manner. And the format I use usually includes these things. A door opener statement. So, you say something like, "Robin, I'd like to talk to you about yesterday's workshop." Then you make the statement of the issue, such as, "The workshop ended 20 minutes late, which cut into the participants' schedule." Then you ask for the employee's input, "Did something prevent you from ending on time?" And then you tell the employee how to be successful, "Let me show you how to organize the workshop so you end on time in the future." And so, this kind of feedback helps in just about every situation when people fail to meet expectations, policy violations, discussing personal issues such as body odor. When the emphasis is on helping the employee be successful, the employee is usually more

receptive to the feedback. And that's what we want. So, one of the things I want to say very quickly about feedback is that people have told me that they've been taught that if you're going to say something negative, you have to say something positive to or the sandwich effect where you say nay, positive, negative, positive. So, an example of this would be, "Robin, the participants thought your workshop was great, but I received a complaint that it ran over time." And what I say is that if you're going to say a positive with the negative because it's true and you want to get rid of the word. But I'll say that again, "Robin, the participants thought your workshop was great. But I received a complaint that it ran over time." When you put that but in there or something similar, such as, however, it negates everything that came before it. And so, if you do want to use a positive along with a negative or constructive, avoid using the word but use and instead. "So that was a good presentation and enlarging the graphics will make it even better." So, use the word and so that it's constructive. It doesn't always work. Such as if you were to say you're a great employee and you're fired doesn't always work. However, it can prevent a positive statement from being negative and making a negative statement sound constructive. Alright. So, let's go to our next slide and talk about how to retain Gen Z.

One of the main things you need to do is train their supervisors, as supervisors can have more influence on productivity, worker absenteeism, product quality, morale of the workforce, labor relations, and cost reduction than any other group of people in the workplace. Supervisors have a profound impact on the people they supervise. And one of the things that I do a lot is train supervisors for different employers. And a lot of times that training is seen as a luxury by the company. Many times people are promoted into supervisory positions because they're really good at their job. But being a supervisor requires a different skill set. Supervisors need to be taught how to communicate and interact with employees. They need to know a little bit of some legal stuff. They need to know how to plan, organize, delegate—do a variety of things that just don't come naturally to most people. But, the biggest thing is about communication. And everything that we do is communication is the basis of it. And so, if we are not communicating are good communicators, then it just has a negative impact on everything else that we do. So, training their supervisors can help retain Gen Z and also showing that you care. Now older generations, and I heard just the other day where I had a supervisor say their paycheck is their reward for showing up for work, and I disagree. Our paycheck is just not enough to motivate us to be productive at work because we expect to be paid. And one of the things is that pay is a short-term motivator. As soon as we get a raise, it only takes about two months before we're thinking we need another raise. And so, money, throwing money at people, is not what inspires them to perform. Showing them that you care about them is what inspires them to perform. And so, some ways of doing that, for supervisors especially, is being present. And that means interacting with employees face to face as soon as everybody gets to do that, as well as focusing all your attention on them during these interactions. And so, again, one of the things people get so easily sidetracked with their phones and other things. And when you are talking with employees, it's critical that all of your attention is on them. If it's not a message that you're sending, is that whatever else is on that phone or anywhere else is more important than the employee themselves. Now, being truthful, and as I talked about feedback, having honest feedback is something that can be very, very motivating for employees. But, you also need to be tactful with that feedback, because if you are telling people they're not performing and it sounds too harsh, then chances are they will leave. Being personable, letting employees get to know you and getting to know them. And so, that's one of the things I've done a little bit of conflict resolution lately. And that was one of the things that we identified that has led to some of the conflict is that people just didn't know each other very well, haven't gotten the opportunity to get to know each other, and that they need to take that time to get to know each other as people so that they're not making assumptions about each other. Resolving conflicts are very important in order to show that you care, not allowing tension to be there and people to be gossiping or bullying or doing any of those types of things. It's important to keep people in the loop, especially younger generations are used to 24/7 news alerts.

News is always available to them. And so it's important to keep them in the loop when it comes to what's going on in the company. Remember that when you don't tell people what's going on, they make up stories about it. And usually, those stories are way worse than what's actually happening. Provide social opportunities. Again, so people can get to know each other and allow people to socialize. Older generations tend to think that you can't talk while you're working. And so, try to shut that down. And it's important for people to have those social opportunities in order to feel connected. And celebrating people's successes. Employers, the supervisors who think that people are supposed to do a good job and therefore shouldn't have to be thanked for need to think again. So, showing you care is very important. Providing them with opportunities for growth. And one of the great tools of doing that is a career development plan. And having a career development counselor can be a supervisor, it can be a mentor, can be somebody else. But asking employees, "Where do you want to go on in your career? What do you think you want to learn, what you want to do, what promotions do you think that you'd like to have?" And then helping them plan a course in order to get there? Do they need to have some additional education in order to do it? Or do they need to be certified in various things in order to get where they need to go? And so, having very deliberate conversations about what they want to do and helping them understand what they need to do to get there will help them be more engaged and committed. And then finally, learn from them. And that's one of the things, they know a whole bunch of stuff, especially technologically, that some of us who are older just don't know. And so, it definitely needs to be a two-way street when it comes to mentoring. So, give them knowledge and ask for knowledge from them, because, again, that makes people feel good about being asked for their opinions and for their advice. So, I think this sums it up nicely. If you understand culture, you can understand a generation, and if you understand a generation, you can bridge the gap that can so easily divide us. And we do have some generation gaps going on. And so, it's really important that we all understand that we all need to be involved in closing those gaps by getting to know each other better and help each other out. By the way, a lot of the information that I've given you today is in a book that I co-wrote called *Managing Generation Z*, and it is now available on Amazon. Alright. That's all I have for you. Do you have any questions for me?

Emmet Ore:

Thanks, Robin. Looks like we got a couple of questions here to start us off. Can employers refuse to hire people because they're young?

Robin Paggi:

Well, one of the things that we have an employment law is the Age Discrimination in Employment Law, and that was a federal law created in 1967. That law says employers may not refuse to hire applicants because of being 40 or older. And so, theoretically, if you are younger than 40, employers may refuse to hire you because of your age. Now, state laws make exceptions to that. The only state law that I know of that says that employers may not discriminate based upon age is in Oregon. And so, they cannot take age into account when making employment decisions. So, that might seem really unfair. And I have heard some employers saying they're not going to hire anybody under 30. That might seem really unfair, that employers can make employment decisions about people if they're under the age of 40 simply based upon their age. But what they're usually making decisions about is whether somebody has the experience they need or the maturity that they need. And younger people don't have experience that the employer needs often. Now, that goes for people over 40 too, you can refuse to hire people because they don't have the experience they need or the maturity they need when they're over 40. Age just can't be a factor in the employment decision when people are 40 or older, but when they're younger than 40, yes, it can be in every state except Oregon.

Emmet Ore:

Excellent. Should we change our work policies to accommodate them, for example, dress code, and hair code?

Robin Paggi:

Well, one of the things I think that you probably should and but I mean, you don't have to throw it out the window. There needs to be some kind of compromise. So, one of the things, I had a client once who required females to wear stockings if they were going to wear a skirt or dress and younger women don't wear stockings, for the most part. A lot of older women don't now, too. But they really rebelled against this policy of having to wear stockings. And when I asked the client, "Well, why do you have this policy anyway?" And they said, "Well, because there is this one employee who, really, stockings make her legs look a lot better." Now, and really, you're making everybody adhere to a rule-based upon one employee? So, that's one of the things, is that you don't want to have a battle over things that really don't seem that important, like how people dress. Having said that, there are some people whose idea of work attire might differ very much from yours. And so, having some guidelines about what people can wear is a good thing. But I wouldn't make things that seem really trivial, determine whether people are going to stay with you or not. Then the other thing about hair, same thing. Employers are allowed to have policies that say that employees must have natural hair color, not necessarily their natural hair color, but a natural hair color. So, no blue, or pink, or green, or purple, or anything like that, but really doesn't matter whether somebody has blue hair or not. Maybe we just need to be concerned about how well people can do their job and not how they look.

Emmet Ore:

Excellent. Looks like we have time for one more here. Any advice for a millennial who supervises a lot of older generation employees? It has been difficult to get respect and a lot of the time they get very defensive.

Robin Paggi:

Yeah. And so, that's one of the things—it's important when you are managing older employees to ask their advice on things, seek their knowledge and wisdom about how to do things. I mean, you can get some good stuff. And that's one of the things as we age when we're young and our parents are trying to give us advice and stuff like that, we don't want their advice. And then when we finally realize, hey, they know a lot more than I do because they've been around a lot longer than I have, and take advantage of that. Everybody wins on that. So, I would say that most important thing is to ensure that, you know, that they are knowledgeable and experienced and you want to benefit from that and want the entire organization to benefit from that. And so, that goes a long way in making them feel valued and behave more along how you want them to behave.

Emmet Ore:

Alright, well, if you guys have any other questions, email us at webinarHRhelp@vensure.com. Thank you for joining us today and I hope you'll join us next week for a discussion about problem-solving and decision-making.