

Working Together

– A Study of Generational Perspectives in
Canada's Labour Force

Summary

Fall 2020



INTRODUCTION

In 2020, **Food Processing Skills Canada** commissioned research to examine generational perspectives in the workplace. Given the changing workplace environment for not only the food and beverage manufacturing industry but the Canadian workforce at large, this research was designed to provide Canadian companies and other industry stakeholders with insights into how Canadians in general, and five generations in particular, think about work in 2020 (pre-pandemic).

The following summary provides a snapshot of research highlights and recommendations for employers. The full report, **Working Together - A Study of Generational Perspectives in Canada's Labour Force** - is available to download (**Click here**).



GENERATION Z
(16 – 23)

- Job security a priority
- Highly collaborative
- Workplace flexibility is very desirable



YOUNG MILLENNIALS
(24 – 30)

- Interested in leadership training
- Prefer texts & email over chat in person



OLDER MILLENNIALS
(31 – 39)

- Want to be judged for their results over hours
- Career development opportunities valued



GEN X
(40 – 55)

- Self-reliant
- Hardworking
- Prefer less supervision and greater autonomy



BOOMERS+
(56+)

- Job security is appealing
- Great source of industry knowledge
- Hardworking



GENERATION Z

Digitally Innate, Entrepreneurial Spirit, Realistic

Goals

Helping to solve social and/or environmental challenges and doing work they are passionate about are significantly more important to Generation Z.

Motivations

65% of Gen Z agree “work should be fun” and 64% “expect to make friends at work”

Career Challenges and Generational Stereotypes

Most Generation Z (60%) express worry about fitting in and making friends at work, as do 54% of Young Millennials.

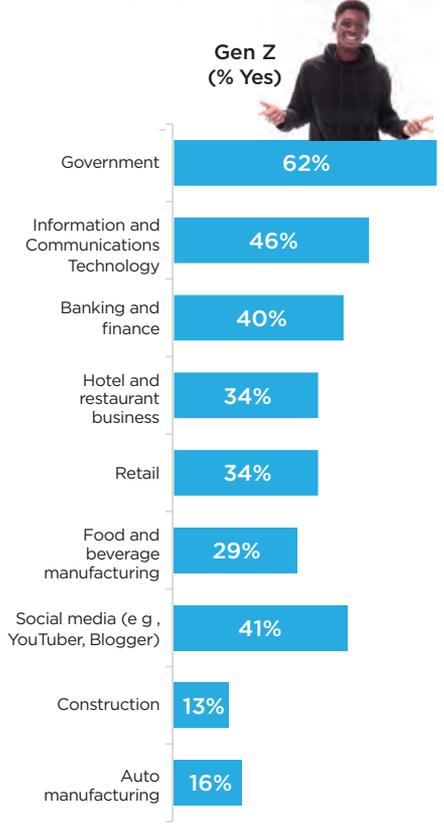
Overall, Canadians are more likely to agree than disagree that “most young workers have unrealistic expectations” about advancement (49% to 16%). The older one is, the more likely they are to agree, while Gen X members are evenly split

Learning Preferences

Generation Z is more likely than any other segment to prefer learning onsite in a classroom (i.e., 50% select this approach compared to only 17% who would rather learn on their own, online).

“The opportunity to try different jobs within the organization” is appealing by 82% of Generation Z

Openness to Working in Various Sectors



Q. Would you consider working in any of the following sectors? Base: All Respondents, n=1,500



YOUNGER MILLENNIALS

Collaborative, Passion over Paycheck, Globally Connected

Goals

Younger Millennials are more focused on career advancement (e.g., becoming an expert, a senior leader and learning new things).

They are also interested in helping to solve social and/or environmental challenges and doing work they are passionate about.

Career Challenges and Generational Stereotypes

54% of Young Millennials express worry about fitting in and making friends at work.

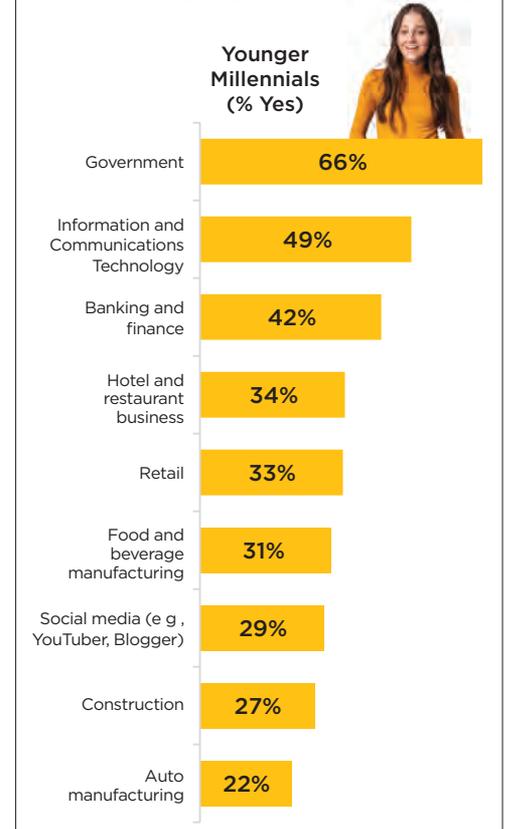
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Learning Preferences

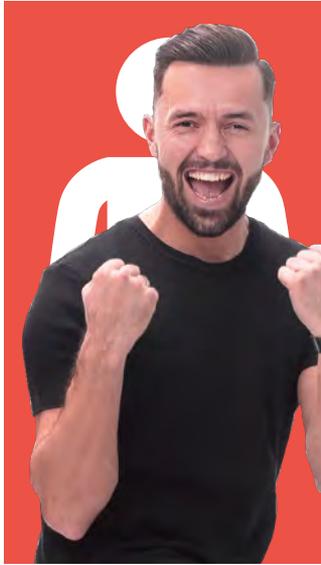
Younger Millennials are more likely than any other segment to prefer learning onsite in a classroom (i.e., 50% select this approach compared to only 17% who would rather learn on their own, online).

“The opportunity to try different jobs within the organization” is appealing to 67% of Younger Millennials.

Openness to Working in Various Sectors



Q. Would you consider working in any of the following sectors? Base: All Respondents, n=1,500



OLDER MILLENNIALS

Focused on Health, Access not Ownership, Want to Own a Home

Goals

65% of Older Millennials answered that they would want to stay with the same organization for as long as they can. 59% agreed that work should be fun.

Career Challenges and Generational Stereotypes

The most common sources of worry, from a list of nine, revolve around finances (i.e., being able to enjoy retirement and making enough money) and work-life balance (i.e., balancing work and a healthy lifestyle).

54% of older millennials were in agreement that “Most Older Workers Resist Change”

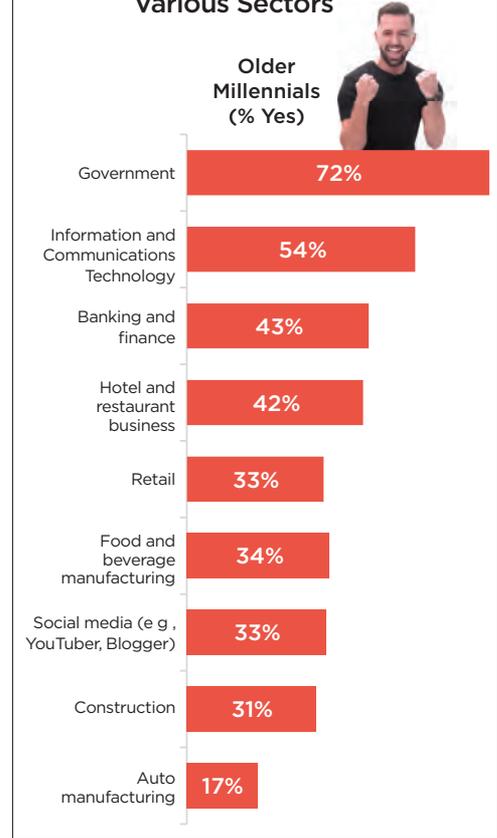
Learning Preferences

35% of Older Millennials selected a classroom setting onsite as their preferred learning approach.

74% of Older Millennials found “The opportunity to work with new technologies” appealing

54% of older millennials were in agreement that “Most Older Workers Resist Change”

Openness to Working in Various Sectors



Q. Would you consider working in any of the following sectors? Base: All Respondents, n=1,500



GENERATION X

Skeptical, Work-Life Balance, Independent

Goals

The majority of Gen X (71%) answered that they would want to stay with the same organization for as long as they can.

58% agreed that work should be fun

Career Challenges and Generational Stereotypes

When it comes to older workers, a strong plurality of those surveyed (47%) agree that “older workers resist change” (only 18% disagree).

Learning Preferences

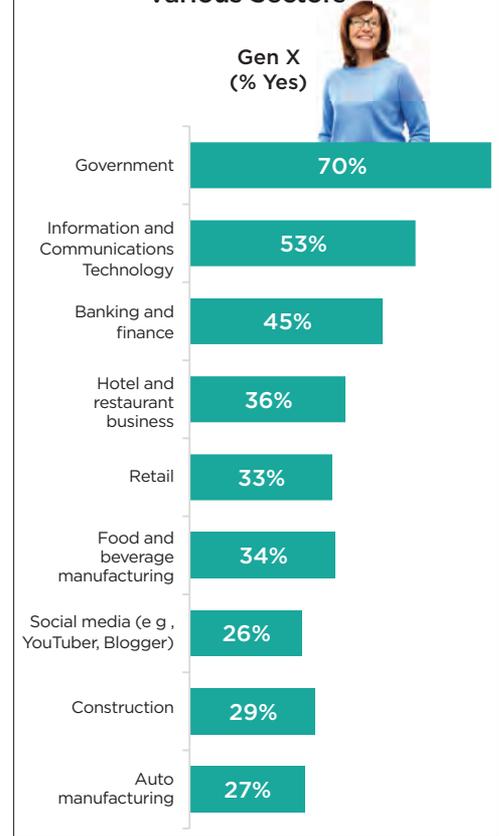
67% of Gen X found “The opportunity to work with new technologies” appealing.

30% of both Gen X and Boomers preferred the option “Online learning at my own pace” as their preferred learning approach.

70% of Gen X “The opportunity to try different jobs within the organization” appealing.

67% of Gen X found “The opportunity to work with new technologies” appealing.

Openness to Working in Various Sectors



Q. Would you consider working in any of the following sectors? Base: All Respondents, n=1,500





BOOMERS+

Optimistic & Idealistic, Questions Authority, Redefining Retirement

Goals

First, most Canadians (58%), and Boomers in particular (70%), say that they “love” their job, while only 24% of the sample agree that work for them is only about a paycheck.

70% of Boomers agreed with the statement “I would want to stay with the same organization for as long as I can”

Career Challenges and Generational Stereotypes

Among the five age segments, this study finds that Boomers are least worried about most issues examined in the survey, including making enough money, career advancement, achieving work-life balance, making friends and fitting in, being overworked, and raising children while working.

When it comes to older workers, a strong plurality of those surveyed (47%) agrees that “older workers resist change” (only 18% disagree). The Boomer segment is the only cohort within which there is not majority agreement with this view (33% compared to 36% who disagree).

Learning Preferences

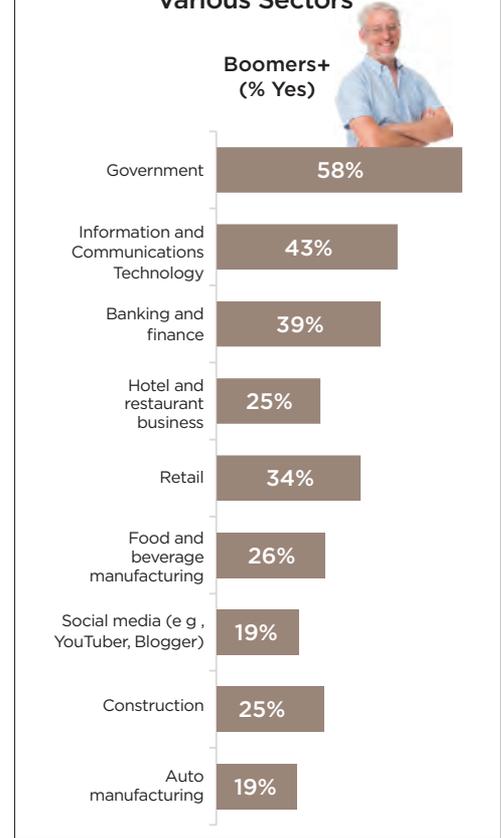
Self-directed online learning is most popular among Boomers.

61% of Boomers found “The opportunity to coach/mentor others” appealing.

67% found “The opportunity to try different jobs within the organization” appealing.

67% found “The opportunity to work with new technologies” appealing.

Openness to Working in Various Sectors



Q. Would you consider working in any of the following sectors? Base: All Respondents, n=1,500

QUEBEC COMPARED TO THE REST OF CANADA

Quebeckers are notably different when it comes to career goals, aspirations and concerns, and their lack of openness to working in food and beverage manufacturing.

- 85% of Quebeckers say that work should be fun most of the time, compared to only 54% of those living in other parts of Canada.
- Only 15% of Quebec would consider working in food and beverage manufacturing compared to 35% of those living in other provinces.
- Most Canadians outside of Quebec agree that the trades pay well (69%), compared to about half of Quebeckers (48%).
- Only 31% of Quebeckers, compared to 50% of Canadians in other provinces, are open to part-time work.

Quebeckers are also less interested in working in “smart manufacturing”.



Conclusions and Recommendations

CONCLUSIONS

Older Workers

- More modest expectations about what they hope to derive from work and have higher levels of job satisfaction.
- More self-sufficient, and flexible (e.g., more open to part-time work).
- Require less feedback and are fine with learning new things on their own.
- Strive for work-life balance but are not as attracted by corporate health and wellness policies and programs.
- Value honesty above all.

Youngest Workers and Labour Market Entrants

- View the world of work through a wider lens and have higher expectations about what a job should provide them, beyond a paycheck.
- Interested in making friends, having fun at work, and are hopeful to have a supervisor who is friendly.
- Like older workers, they want to be proud of where they work and what they do, but they are also keen to see how their work/organization contributes to the greater good.
- A sense of belonging is important and want more feedback about how they are doing with more structure provided.
- Attracted to health & wellness policies and programs.

As Generation Z ages into Younger Millennials, advancement becomes more important. They hope to see a path forward and are particularly keen to learn new things.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Collaborative, Passion over Paycheck, Globally Connected

- Consider how easy it is for employees to make friends and social connections at work. Determine if opportunities differ across the organization (e.g., office versus production staff). Identify activities and events (including after work hours) that can be developed and implemented with employees (e.g., clubs, teams, charity events linked to CRS initiatives, parties).
- Consider having younger employees report to younger supervisors. This will reinforce the idea that it is possible to advance and could lead to tighter bonding.
- Consider providing information on the “big picture” issues (e.g., corporate plans, goals, success, challenges, performance) but in a manner that isn’t forced or burdensome, for example through a modular approach (e.g., provide an overview along with options for those who want to know more).
- Consider having multiple ways for employees to learn. For younger employees, remember that they are used to school and having a lot of feedback and support.
- Consider discussing career path/advancement with employees, especially Young Millennials, along with the learning and training they require to advance.
- Consider tailoring feedback frequency to individual needs as part of a career development plan.
- Examine how the organization projects its values and principles to a range of audiences, from junior employees to customers, along with suppliers, the communities you work in, and governments. For example, are junior employees aware of your CRS efforts? Are they participating in them? Similarly, do employees have a sense of how the organization contributes to feeding Canadians/the world, or how it contributes to the communities in which it operates?
- Finally, consider ways of allowing employees to input into decisions and planning (e.g., CRS initiatives, scheduling)



ABOUT US

Food Processing Skills Canada (FPSC) is the food and beverage manufacturing industry's workforce development organization. As a non-profit, located in Ottawa with representatives across Canada, we support food and beverage manufacturing businesses from coast to coast in developing skilled and professional employees and workplace environments.

Our work directly and positively impacts industry talent attraction, workforce retention and employment culture. We care about assisting the industry in finding, training and retaining the very best people for the job. Through our partnerships with industry, associations, educators and all levels of governments in Canada, FPSC has developed exceptional resources for the sector including the **Food Skills Library™**, **Canadian Food Processors Institute™**, **FoodCert™** and **Labour Market Information** reports.

Available online at www.fpsc-ctac.com

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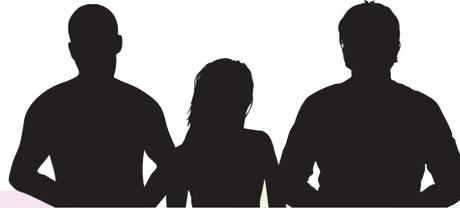
The opinions and interpretations in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the Government of Canada.

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