

The Gen Z Effect

How a New Workforce Is Redefining
Health, Work, and Retention



Executive Summary

Gen Z—defined as those born between 1997 and 2012—is transforming the workforce with new expectations around health, flexibility, and purpose. Born into an era defined by technology and digital immediacy, they have been shaped by a lifetime of digital fluency and constant connectivity, profoundly influencing how they work, engage, and prioritize well-being.

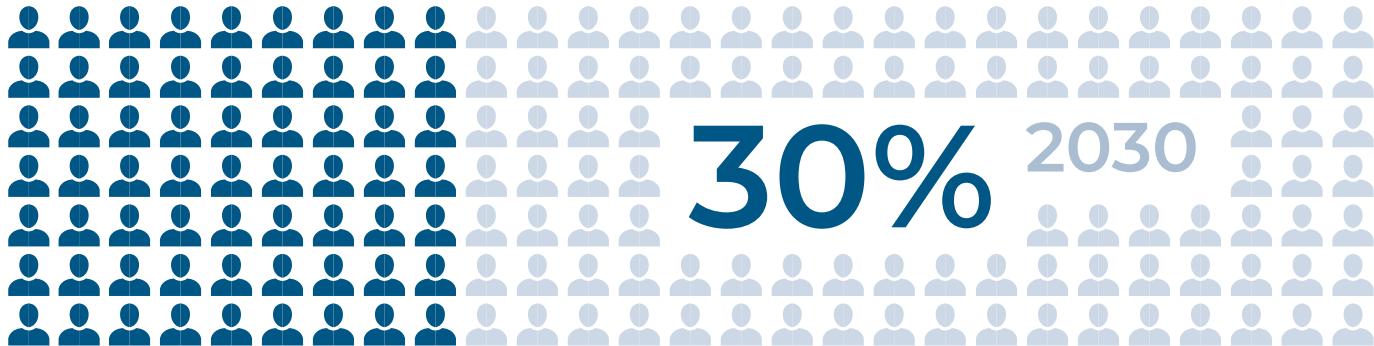
Employers across industries—corporate, manufacturing, logistics, and consulting—are seeing workplace expectations evolve rapidly in response. For Gen Z, remote work, accessible on-site healthcare, tailored wellness programs, and flexible care options have become foundational components of today's workplace. This generation values **work-life balance, meaningful engagement, diversity, inclusion, and mobility**, and they increasingly choose employers who deliver **convenience, transparency, and holistic well-being**. Organizations that adapt to these priorities not only attract top Gen Z talent but also improve engagement, utilization of wellness programs, and overall workforce productivity.



This report explores the key trends shaping Gen Z's workplace priorities and concludes with strategies for employers to meet these needs, including innovative, tech-enabled healthcare solutions designed to improve access, engagement, and retention. With chronic conditions accounting for nearly 90% of total U.S. healthcare spend, and the average primary care visit costing employers two to four hours of lost productivity, solutions like the OnMed CareStation™, which delivers care in approximately 20 minutes, offer measurable ROI. Nearly all employees (92%) say their benefits package impacts whether they remain with an organization, and thus, investing in accessible, efficient care is no longer optional—it's a strategic advantage for attracting and retaining talent.

Workforce Shift

Gen Z's Growing Influence



By 2030, Gen Z will represent nearly 30% of the workforce. Having grown up in a world shaped by on-demand digital services, they approach work with expectations for **flexibility, purpose, and alignment**.

Unlike earlier generations, who experienced the static, informational Web 1.0 (think Yahoo! and GeoCities), Gen Z grew up in Web 2.0, where **interactivity, social connection, and immediacy** are the norm. As digital natives shaped by ubiquitous internet access, Gen Z has never known a world without the internet or mobile devices. They quickly adopt new technology and utilize vast amounts of data and information in ways that previous generations could not have imagined. For Gen Z, social platforms serve as spaces for self-expression, belonging, and discovery, influencing everything from personal values to professional aspirations. The separation between “online” and “offline” no longer exists, reshaping expectations around flexibility, availability, and support.

On average, Gen Z spends over seven hours a day—7 hours and 18 minutes, to be exact—on digital screens. Their expectations mirror this digital immersion: 57% of Gen Z customers say they anticipate a response from customer service within 24 hours, highlighting a generation accustomed to speed, responsiveness, personalization, and seamless interaction.



7h 18min daily screen time



57%
expect response within 24 hours



Digital innovations like iPhones, Instacart, UberEats, and TikTok have defined Gen Z's daily expectations for speed and responsiveness, while technology's rapid evolution has shifted workplace norms, reshaping how organizations structure and sustain their workforces.

Gen Z is accustomed to personalized experiences, from social media feeds uniquely curated by algorithms to apps that anticipate their needs—a standard Gen Z now expects everywhere. They seek similar personalization in healthcare, like services that align with their schedules and unique preferences.

As expectations around work continue to evolve, traditional benefits and slow healthcare access no longer suffice. Employers must rethink how they deliver care, flexibility, and support to remain competitive with a digitally fluent workforce.



SPEED

Instant results, no friction: Gen Z expects immediate feedback and rapid load times for all interactions, treating delays as system failures.



PERSONALIZATION

Tailored & relevant: Gen Z's experiences must intuitively adapt to individual needs, preferences, and context without explicit input.



ON-DEMAND

Available anytime, anywhere: Services, information, and support must be instantly accessible and functional on Gen Z's terms.

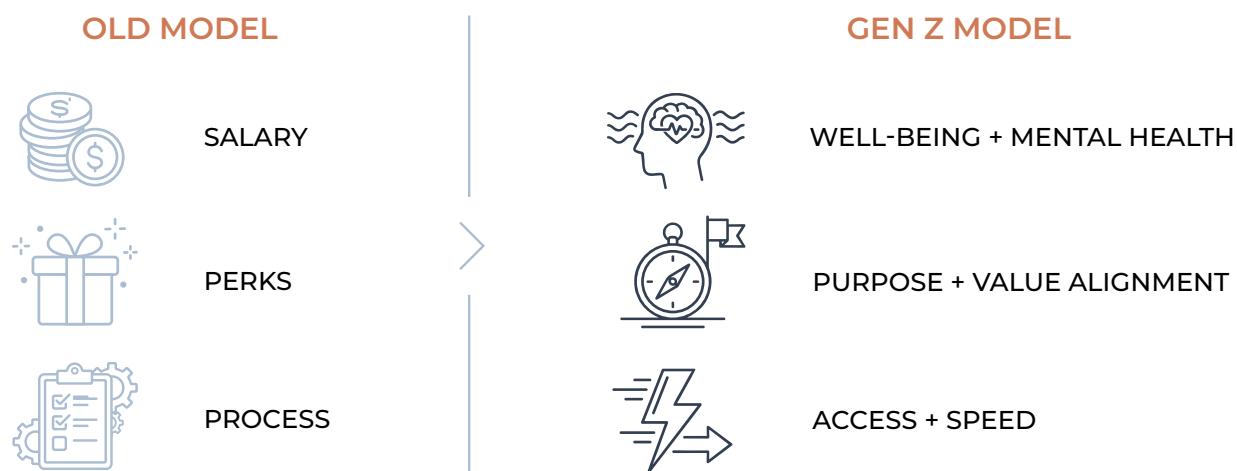


Key Trends Driving Gen Z Expectations

Health & Wellness as a Priority

Gen Z approaches work with different priorities than previous generations. They value balance, with **73% preferring mental health and well-being to maximizing salary**, reflecting an increased demand for on-demand care and mental health support.

Compared with previous generations, Gen Z is more likely to prioritize emotional well-being, welcome conversations about mental health, and utilize professional resources to do so. To meet Gen Z's expectations, employers must offer robust access to healthcare and mental health support that can better attract, engage, and retain Gen Z talent.



Purpose Over Perks

97% of Gen Z views work as part of their identity. They want their work to bring meaning to their lives and contribute positively to society. Organizations that integrate meaning, impact, and values into their culture are positioned to meet the expectations of this workforce, which sees work as an extension of self.

Employer Challenges & Industry Insights

Four in five Gen Z workers say their current job provides them with a sense of purpose. For them, work that feels fulfilling is essential for job satisfaction and well-being, regardless of job seniority.



CORPORATE EMPLOYERS

Employers seeking scalable health benefits must address productivity, loyalty, and engagement by aligning benefits with Gen Z's expectations for speed, access, and purpose-driven support.



MANUFACTURING & INDUSTRIAL

Industries requiring on-site work face challenges around downtime, compliance, and workers' compensation. Preventive, convenient, healthcare solutions are critical to reducing disruption and maintaining workforce continuity.



DISTRIBUTION & LOGISTICS

For distributed and shift-based teams, simple, no-cost care helps keep employees healthy and operational without pulling them off the job for extended periods.



CONSULTING & BROKERAGE FIRMS

Organizations advising employers on benefits and cost control seek innovative, measurable solutions that improve outcomes while delivering tangible ROI.



Strategic Imperative

Why Access to Healthcare Matters

Healthcare access is a non-negotiable for Gen Z. However, while employers are investing heavily in benefits, Gen Z reports the lowest satisfaction with traditional healthcare access. Appointment wait times, limited mental health availability, and fragmented care navigation clash with the expectations of a generation raised on immediacy and digital convenience. Gen Z is more likely than any other generation to delay care due to inconvenience, cost, or lack of trust in the healthcare system—a pattern that leads to avoidable emergencies, absenteeism, and long-term health risks.

This gap between what employers offer and what Gen Z expects is widening. While organizations focus on cost control and compliance, younger workers prioritize speed, transparency, and seamless digital experiences. Without modern, accessible, tech-enabled care options, employers risk disengagement, turnover, and rising downstream costs.

Retention & Engagement

Gen Z is health-conscious, career-driven, and purpose-oriented. This generation is willing to pivot roles to find a workplace that aligns with their priorities, with 75% reporting they would leave a job if it didn't meet their expectations. Given the high cost of turnover, organizations without competitive healthcare offerings may struggle to attract and retain younger talent.

Cost Efficiency

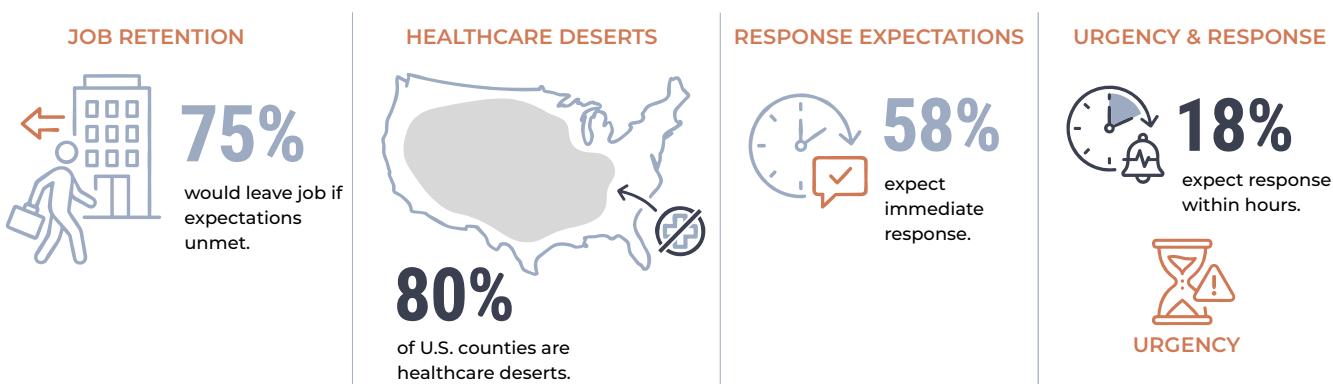
Workplaces that integrate wellness, accessibility, and preventive care into benefits strategies position themselves to reduce absenteeism and presenteeism, which together cost U.S. employers an estimated \$530–\$575 billion annually in lost productivity, while avoiding unnecessary emergency care and improving long-term health outcomes. On average, employees miss 6–9 workdays per year due to illness, many of which are preventable or manageable with early access to care. This integrated approach helps prevent the compounding workforce and healthcare costs that arise when care is delayed or inaccessible.

Competitive Advantage

Investment in human capital is crucial for employers eager to attract top talent.

Organizations that create meaningful value for employees see benefits in well-being, skill development, career growth, and engagement, while employees experience purpose, advancement, and opportunity. As Gen Z represents an increasing proportion of the workforce, employers that tailor healthcare strategies to their specific needs create meaningful value for Gen Z employees, increasing the likelihood of Gen Z candidates selecting and staying with an organization.

Access Gaps



Access to healthcare remains a critical challenge for Gen Z, with 80% of U.S. counties containing multiple care deserts, leaving many young adults without timely access to primary care, mental health services, or preventive support. These gaps create long-term consequences for well-being, productivity, and workforce readiness.

The COVID-19 pandemic only intensified these challenges, disrupting the first professional and social milestones of a generation just entering adulthood. Nearly two in five Gen Z employees experienced job losses, furloughs, or temporary layoffs, while lockdowns and social isolation heightened stress and mental health concerns. For a generation already facing uneven access to care, the pandemic underscored the urgency of accessible, convenient, and tech-enabled healthcare solutions.

Tech-Forward Solutions

Gen Z expects healthcare to reflect the same speed and accessibility as their digital lives.

When contacting a provider, **58% expect an immediate response, and another 18% expect one within a few hours**, reinforcing expectations for seamless, responsive care.

Future-Ready Solutions for Employers



GEN Z EXPECTS



Immediate



Private



Accessible

ONMED DELIVERS



Instant clinician



Walk-in privacy



20-min care

The OnMed CareStation™ Solution

As workplace wellness evolves, the OnMed CareStation™ offers a solution that resonates with Gen Z's priorities: speed, accessibility, and trust. OnMed is a state-of-the-art, tech-enabled hybrid care solution that facilitates access to healthcare services conveniently and quickly.

The OnMed CareStation™ offers private, real-time video consultations with licensed medical professionals. When patients enter the CareStation, they are connected with a life-sized clinician on screen who provides a personalized and complete exam, supported



by advanced diagnostic tools including thermal imaging, a stethoscope, an HD camera, real-time scans, and remote vitals monitoring. Gen Z students are already using the OnMed CareStation™ for fast, private access to care—without appointments, travel, or wait times. Across multiple campus deployments, CareStations are seeing strong Gen Z adoption, repeat utilization, and peer-driven awareness. Today, OnMed CareStations™ exist on university campuses across America, including Tuskegee University (AL), South Carolina State University (SC), and Navarro College (TX)—demonstrating how easily Gen Z adapts to new healthcare technology. The consistent adoption of CareStations across these campuses demonstrates how quickly Gen Z embraces healthcare that mirrors the speed, privacy, and usability of the technology they already trust.

87% of patients are Gen Z (between 18 and 29 years old)

Approximately **40%** are returning patients

55% of all patients heard about OnMed through a friend or peer

Nearly half of all patients would have gone to the ER if there were no CareStation™, and **82%** were successfully treated on-site

4.96/5 patients report satisfaction with their CareStation™ experience

Employer Benefits

OnMed also provides CareStations for the workplace. If an employee feels unwell, instead of taking the day off to visit urgent care, they can be seen immediately by a licensed clinician. Appointments average 20 minutes, and prescriptions can be e-prescribed instantly. By improving access and convenience, OnMed helps lower absenteeism, mitigate mental health challenges, and boost productivity and wellness engagement.

OnMed blends traditional primary, urgent, and post-acute care with virtual care and partners with employers, governments, colleges, healthcare systems, and insurers to deliver measurable ROI through reduced downtime, improved retention, and enhanced employee experience.



What Comes Next for the Modern Workforce



Employers



Governments



Universities



Insurers

Gen Z is reshaping workplace expectations, with health access central to their priorities and personal well-being. Employers who invest in accessible, tech-forward healthcare solutions will lead in retention, productivity, and brand reputation.

OnMed is committed to helping employers and universities improve quality of life and sense of well-being by providing easy, immediate, and private access to everyday healthcare.

Empower your employees with
immediate on-site access to healthcare.

Contact us to learn how the OnMed CareStation™ can fit into your workforce strategy.

