



SYMPPLICITY  
**recruit**

# state of early talent recruiting

report

Gen Z's approach to campus recruiting



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# introduction

In our third annual Early Talent Student Survey, Symplicity Recruit delved into key questions about Gen Z's views on campus recruiting, from the initial job search to the application process and offer acceptance, examining how these perspectives have evolved over time. With recent graduates facing a slower job market compared to a year or two ago, have their job priorities shifted? Where are they searching for opportunities? And how likely are they to renege on a job offer?

In May 2024, Symplicity Recruit surveyed over 2,700 students who are expected to earn their Bachelor's degrees in the next two years. Most of these students had searched for an internship or full-time job within the past year. We hope the insights that follow will help companies seeking to hire interns and new graduates better understand and attract the next generation of talent.





# what **Gen Z** candidates are looking for in a job & where

what gen Z candidates are looking for in a job & where

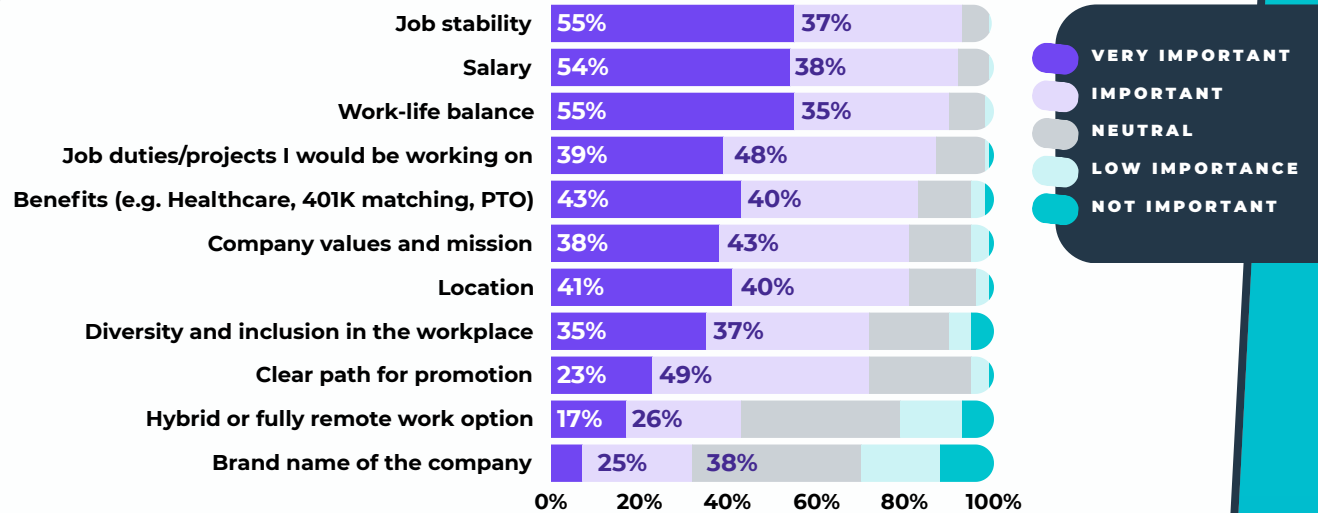
## job stability, salary, & work-life balance remain top considerations when seeking full-time employment

According to our survey, **94 percent of students indicated that job stability was important or very important to them** when looking for full-time positions, with salary and work-life balance following closely behind. These findings align with our previous two State of Early Talent surveys<sup>1</sup>.

The main difference from our Spring 2023 survey is the increased importance of benefits. This year, 83 percent of students reported that benefits were important or very important to them, up from 74 percent. Among the benefits, healthcare and substantial PTO ranked as the most important.

We also asked students who had already accepted full-time job offers about their top reasons for doing so. While job stability is a significant consideration when searching for a job, **salary, benefits, and location are the top deciding factors when accepting a full-time position.**

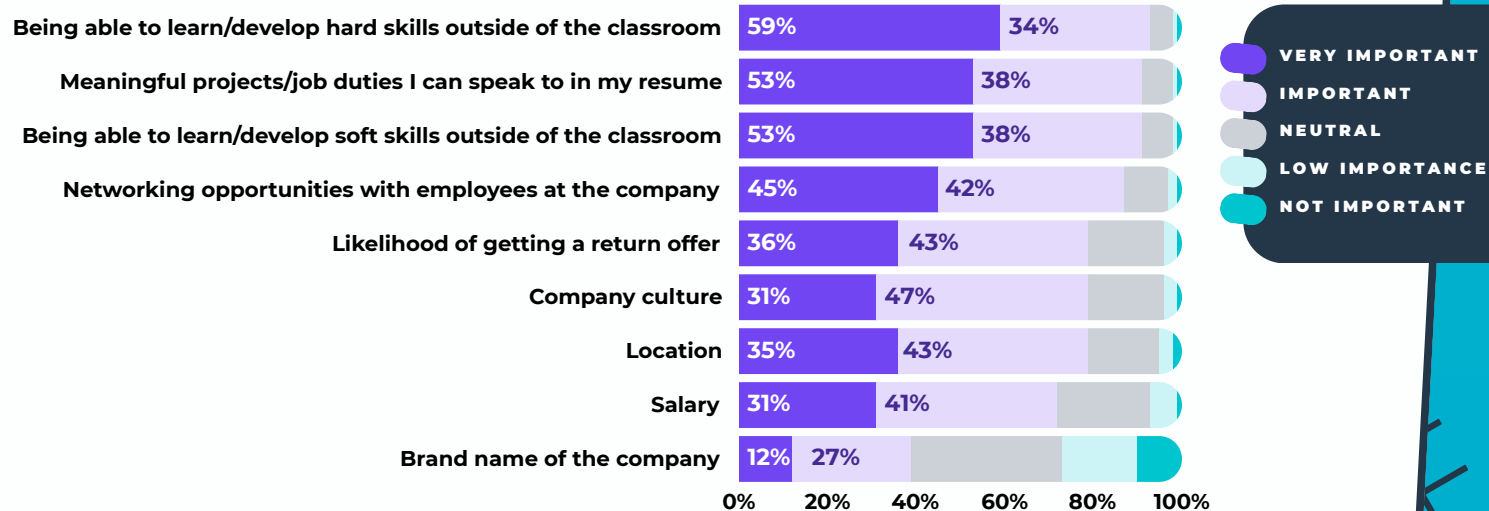
### how important are the following when searching for full-time employment?



### what are the top three reasons why you accepted the job offer?



## how important are the following to you when searching for an internship



what gen Z candidates are looking for in a job & where

## students are looking for meaningful work in internships to complement their classroom studies

While students seeking full-time jobs focus on factors such as job stability, salary, and work-life balance, the priorities for those looking for internships differ. **Developing hard skills is the top priority** for students seeking internships, with **93 percent indicating it is important or very important**. Additionally, students place high importance on developing soft skills and working on meaningful projects they can discuss. They want to avoid menial tasks and aim to gain transferable skills and valuable experiences.

what gen Z candidates are looking for in a job & where

## LinkedIn, career fairs, & employer websites are the most helpful resources

Students identified LinkedIn, career fairs, employer websites, and their school's job board as the most helpful resources when looking for job opportunities. While diversifying sourcing methods is essential for employers, traditional methods should not be neglected. Meeting students on campus at career fairs and posting jobs on school job boards, as well as other platforms like LinkedIn and Indeed, remain crucial. With Symplicity Recruit, employers can efficiently manage career fair registrations and job postings across multiple campuses in one place, saving both time and money.

which of the three resources did you find most helpful in finding job opportunities?





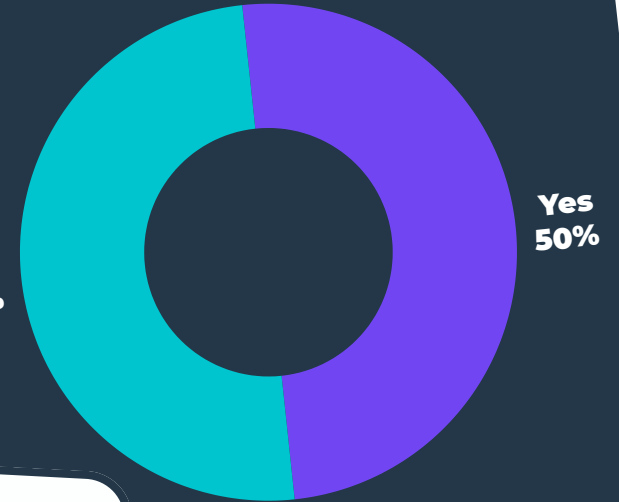
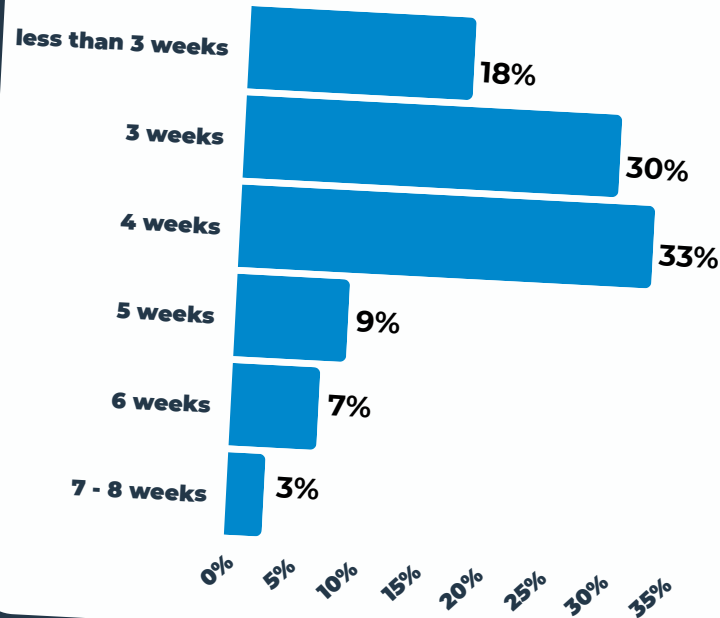
# recruiting from Gen Z's perspective



## students expect quick responses from employers

81 percent of students believe the hiring process should take one month or less. Additionally, 50 percent of students said they would be deterred from accepting a job if the interview process took longer than a month. While this is an improvement from two years ago, when 62 percent of students felt the same way, it remains crucial for employers to move quickly when competing for top talent. If a company cannot keep its interview process under a month, providing updates at each step can help keep candidates engaged.

how long do you think is a reasonable amount of time for the hiring process to take?



if an interview process took longer than 1 month, would it deter you from accepting a job with the company?

recruiting from  
Gen Z's perspective

## red flags students look for when applying to jobs

In our **2022 survey** we asked students tips on the best ways to engage with them on campus, and in our **2023 survey**, we inquired about how employers could improve job descriptions. This year, to better understand how students evaluate companies during the early job search process, we asked which red flags would deter them from applying to a company.

"Reviews on websites such as Glassdoor and hearing first account experiences from social media such as Instagram or TikTok."

"If the salary is not posted within a reasonable range"

"Vague or overly demanding job descriptions without clear responsibilities or expectations might suggest disorganization or a lack of understanding of the role."

"Listed as 'entry level' but also asking for 3-5 years of experience."

## the top 10 themes that emerged included:

- 1 Lack of Transparency:**  
Not listing salary/compensation information, vague or unclear job descriptions, limited information about the company, culture, and benefits.
- 2 Poor Communication:**  
Slow or no responses to applications, unprofessional communication, lack of updates on application status.
- 3 Unreasonable Requirements:**  
Asking for many years of experience for entry-level roles, long lists of skills/qualifications that don't match the role or compensation, overly complex or lengthy application processes.
- 4 Company Reputation Issues:**  
Bad reviews from current/former employees, high turnover rates, scandals, or unethical practices.
- 5 Work-Life Balance Concerns:**  
Mentions of "fast-paced environment" or similar phrases, expectations of long hours or always being available, indicates a lack of a flexible work environment.
- 6 Low Compensation:**  
Below market salary for the role, no benefits or limited benefits, commission-only pay structures.
- 7 Diversity and Inclusion Issues:**  
Lack of diversity in leadership/employees, overemphasis on DEI to the point of tokenism, discriminatory language in job postings.
- 8 Unprofessional Presentation:**  
Poorly designed websites, typos/errors in job postings, outdated information.
- 9 Location Issues:**  
No remote/hybrid options, unclear work location, long commutes required.
- 10 Growth/Advancement Concerns:**  
No mention of professional development opportunities, unclear career progression paths, lack of mentorship programs.

recruiting from  
Gen Z's perspective

## red flags students look for during interviews

Companies understand that the interview process is as much about the candidate evaluating the employer as it is about the employer evaluating the candidate. This is no less important when hiring for entry-level positions. Students are not afraid to walk away when they encounter red flags during the interview process. When asked about the top red flags that would deter them from continuing the interview process, the top 10 themes that emerged were:

“We're like a family here” generally means  
work/life balance is lacking”

“More than 2-3 rounds of interviews”

“Unorganized or late interviewer,  
little to no interest in my interview,  
and general apathy”

“Interviews that are not personalized  
or feel too scripted”

### the top 10 themes that emerged included:

- 1 Lack of Transparency:**  
Vague answers about salary, job duties, or work culture.
- 2 Poor Communication:**  
Long delays in responses, lack of clarity on next steps, ghosting candidates
- 3 Unprofessional Behavior:**  
Interviewers being late, unprepared, rude, or disinterested.
- 4 Excessive Processes:**  
Too many interview rounds, long hiring timelines.
- 5 Cultural Red Flags:**  
Phrases like "we're a family here", signs of high turnover, poor work-life balance.
- 6 Misalignment:**  
The job seems different from the description, interviewers can't clearly explain the role.
- 7 Inappropriate Questions:**  
Personal questions unrelated to the job, discriminatory language.
- 8 Desperation:**  
Hiring on the spot, seeming too eager to fill the role.
- 9 Lack of Interest in Candidates:**  
Not asking about their background/skills, asking generic questions.
- 10 Poor Organization:**  
Multiple scheduling issues, conflicting information, unprepared interviewers.



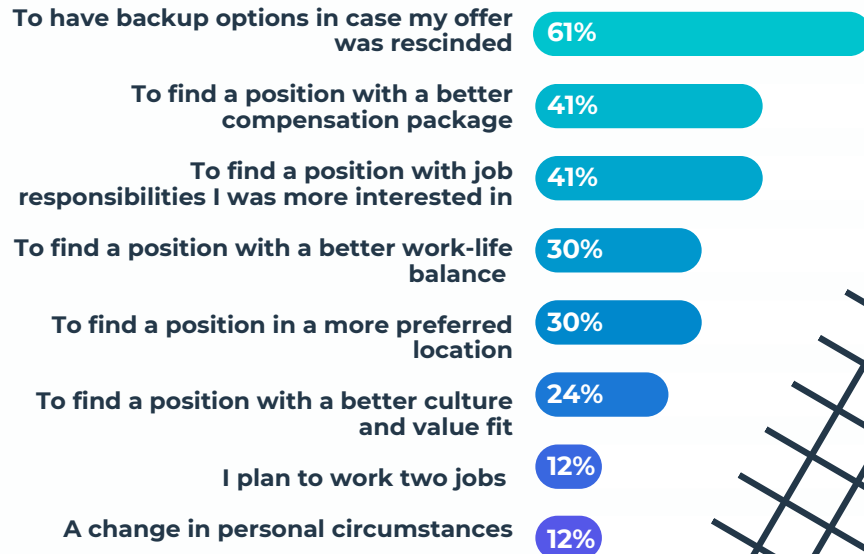
# after the offer acceptance

after the offer acceptance

## Students are keeping their options open even after accepting offers

While the bulk of the work is done after offer letters are given and accepted, it remains crucial for employers to stay engaged with new hires before they officially start. In fact, **61 percent of students we surveyed, who had already accepted an internship or full-time position continued to look for other opportunities afterward.** The overwhelming reason (also at 61 percent) was to have backup options in case of a rescinded offer.

### why did you continue looking for other opportunities after accepting a job offer?



## Students aren't afraid to renege on job offers

While a majority of students said they continued to look for other opportunities after accepting an offer, we wanted to know how many students actually found a new opportunity and reneged on their original offer. **Of the students who had accepted an offer in the past, 21 percent later declined the offer.** When asked why, the top two reasons were finding a new position with more interesting job responsibilities or a position with a better compensation package, which is consistent with results from our Fall 2022 survey.

### why did you decide to renege on your job offer?



# concluding thoughts

## compete for talent by offering meaningful internships

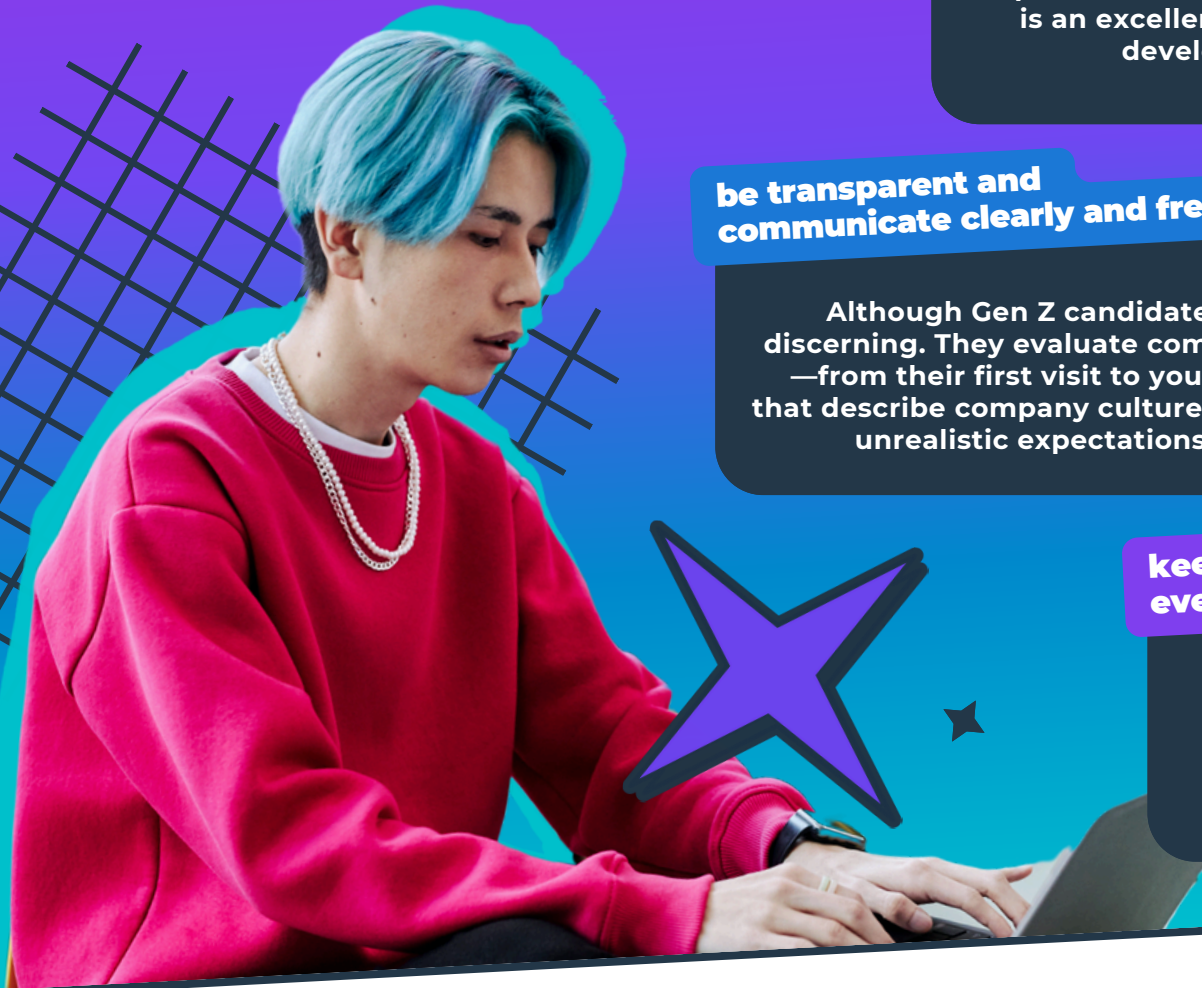
When it comes to internships, Gen Z students prioritize meaningful experiences over salary, unlike with full-time positions. Offering internships that involve substantial projects is an excellent way to engage Gen Z students who are eager to develop both hard and soft skills outside the classroom.

## be transparent and communicate clearly and frequently

Although Gen Z candidates may be early in their careers, they are savvy and discerning. They evaluate companies throughout the entire recruitment process—from their first visit to your website to assessing phrases like "we are family" that describe company culture. A lack of transparency, poor communication, and unrealistic expectations are major turn-offs for these young professionals.

## keep candidates engaged even after the offer is accepted

Gen Z students are aware that job offers can be rescinded, so they often continue exploring other opportunities even after accepting an offer. It's crucial to keep them engaged and reassured throughout the onboarding process.



# methodology/ audience details

## Student Details

### When are you scheduled to earn your degree?

I have already graduated - 8%  
I will earn my degree by summer 2024 - 28%  
I will earn my degree by summer 2025 - 51%  
I will earn my degree by summer 2026 - 7%  
Other - 7%

### In the past year, which of the following have you recruited for?

Full-time or part-time internship - 52%  
Full-time position for after graduation - 19%  
Part-time position - 29%  
None - 29%  
Other - 2%

### What is your area of study?

Arts and humanities - 14%  
Business - 19%  
Health and medicine - 6%  
Multi-interdisciplinary - 2%  
Public and social services - 3%  
Science, technology, engineering, math - 32%  
Social science - 11%  
Other - 13%

### Gender

Prefer not to respond - 3%  
Female - 60%  
Male - 33%  
Non-binary - 4%

### First generation college student

Prefer not to respond - 4%  
Yes - 28%  
No - 69%

### Race/Ethnicity

Prefer not to respond - 6%  
American Indian or Alaskan Native - 0.6%  
Asian or Pacific Islander - 17%  
Black or African American - 11%  
Hispanic or Latinx - 14%  
International student with non-immigrant(visa) status in the U.S. - 2%  
Multiracial - 6%  
White or Caucasian - 43%  
Other - 1%

Symplicity Recruit surveyed over 2,700 students currently enrolled in over 131 four-year colleges and universities across the United States in April - May 2024 working towards their Bachelor's degree. All students surveyed attend a university that is part of the Symplicity network. Most of the students surveyed are scheduled to graduate between the summers of 2024 and 2025.

# about recruit

## SYMPPLICITY recruit

Symplcity Recruit is the premier early talent recruiting platform connecting employers with our exclusive global network of academic institutions. We empower employers with the technology to find the right candidate amongst our pool of over 6 million active students in an efficient, targeted way.

Learn more about Symplcity Recruit at  
[SYMPPLICITY.COM/EMPLOYERS](https://www.simplcity.com/employers)

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## Recruit Features

### Job Posting

Post into our network of 6+million students. Refresh on demand or extend and refresh with one 1-click.

### Global Search

Discover and send personalized emails to career-ready students and recent grads from our resume database.

### Recommended Candidates

Within minutes of posting a job, our AI technology will automatically search through our database and find qualified candidates for recruiters to invite to apply.

### Smart Invites

Automated proactive outreach to students looking for similar jobs inviting them to apply to yours (over 70% open rate).

### Diversity and Inclusion

Discover and engage with underrepresented talent from any school on our network utilizing our sourcing and campaigns features.

### Brand

Publish your company profile to all connected schools with a single click and measure brand awareness based on student following at each school.

### Analytics

Get the data and insights you need to inform your recruiting strategy. Out of the box reports such as our Top Connected Schools leaderboard, Candidate Pipeline dashboard, and Sourcing dashboard help you understand which schools, Recruit sourcing tactics, and jobs perform the best for your company.