

# Standing Out from the Crowd: Attracting Top Early Talent

Jacob Winston-Galant

May 11, 2022

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# Agenda

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Definition of “early talent”
- ▶ Current state
- ▶ What we know about Generation Z
- ▶ Key points: Diversity recruiting
- ▶ Best practices
- ▶ Resources
- ▶ Q & A



# Introduction

## Jacob Winston-Galant

- ▶ BA - Michigan State University
- ▶ Management Consultant - Accenture
- ▶ MBA – Wash U in St. Louis
- ▶ Brand Manager – Kimberly-Clark
- ▶ Brand Manager – Kraft Heinz
- ▶ MS – Northwestern University
- ▶ Admissions Director – NU Kellogg School & NU Medill School
- ▶ MA – University of Chicago
- ▶ Career Management Director – Michigan State University



# What Do We Mean By “Early Talent”?

- ▶ Most commonly known as “Gen Z”
- ▶ Undergraduate students: Internship and full-time roles
- ▶ One year master programs: “5+ programs”
  - ▶ Less than 2 years of work experience between academic programs
- ▶ More recently: Include MBA programs



# Current State

\*Career Services  
Network, MSU

- ▶ Demand for talent is strong\*
  - ▶ MSU job postings = 158,873 in past 12 months
  - ▶ December '20 = 6,539 vs. December '21 = 17,038
- ▶ Employer feedback
  - ▶ “We’re not filling positions,” “Need a more diverse candidate pool,” “Students we talk to already have positions,” “We usually fill our positions in the fall; we still have needs this spring,” “Students aren’t applying to the position I posted”
- ▶ In-person recruiting vs. virtual; mandates vary by university
- ▶ Multiple ways to reach students; email saturation
- ▶ Touchpoints within universities can be difficult to navigate
- ▶ This generation, “Gen Z,” is different than the “Millennial” generation
- ▶ Few companies really getting early talent recruiting “right”



# What We Know About “Generation Z”

- ▶ Born 1995-2012
- ▶ 7 key traits\*
  - ▶ Phigital
  - ▶ Hyper-custom
  - ▶ Realistic
  - ▶ FOMO
  - ▶ Weconomists
  - ▶ DIY
  - ▶ Driven

We will focus on these four traits

\*Gen Z @Work by David Stillman and Jonah Stillman



# What We Know About “Generation Z”

- ▶ Phigital = “for every physical element there is a digital equivalent”
  - ▶ No clear line between physical and digital – they don’t work against each other, they work WITH each other
  - ▶ “If a company doesn’t have a dynamic presence online, it doesn’t exist”
  - ▶ 91% of Gen Zs surveyed indicated that a company’s technology sophistication would impact their decision to work there
  - ▶ What does this mean?
    - ▶ Companies must have an active social media presence
    - ▶ Website must be engaging, up-to-date, interesting
    - ▶ Talk/SHOW! technology used on the job – platforms, hardware, software
    - ▶ Students are interested in working in a hybrid (virtual/in-person) environment
    - ▶ Early talent recruiting presence should occur in both virtual and in-person modalities



# What We Know About “Generation Z”

- ▶ Hyper-custom = this generation has always been able to identify and customize their world and their identity/brand
  - ▶ Spotify playlists, social media handles, shopping online, etc.
  - ▶ What does this mean?
    - ▶ They want employers to leverage their interests/personal brand even if not part of the traditional job function
    - ▶ High level of interest in Employee Resource Groups (ERG’s) within organizations to customize their experience within a company
    - ▶ If possible, show them multiple career paths/how their career path is “customizable” within your organization
    - ▶ Customizable job titles
    - ▶ Personalize the recruiting experience



# What We Know About “Generation Z”

- ▶ Realistic = this generation has had exposure to: The Great Recession, school shootings, extreme climate events, COVID-19 pandemic, significant social unrest, etc. – they’ve also been raised by Gen X (cynical) parents
- ▶ Not just classroom learning: Students often have had experiential projects in high school
- ▶ Gen Z is more likely than Millennials to show up and feel lucky to have a job
- ▶ 85% of Gen Z reported that straightforward, constructive communication is important
- ▶ What does this mean?
  - ▶ Consider experiential projects for students/can use as a recruiting tool
  - ▶ Be prepared to back up claims/promises/what is on your website
  - ▶ Consider getting involved with high schools



# What We Know About “Generation Z”

- ▶ DIY = Do It Yourself; this generation looks at everything as being able to do it themselves
  - ▶ Find out how to do something/anything through videos, social media, etc.
  - ▶ 71% of Gen Z think, “if you want something done right, do it yourself”
  - ▶ Google – 55% of courses taught internally by employees with a particular talent
  - ▶ What does this mean?
    - ▶ The side hustle: If the work they do on the side that doesn’t interfere/compete with their work, consider helping them to promote it
    - ▶ Let potential employees know how they can engage inside and outside the company – philanthropic activity, ERG’s, social groups, committees, etc. – and share their talents internally
    - ▶ Entrepreneurial culture is attractive to Gen Z; let them know where they can bring/vet ideas
    - ▶ Consider on-demand, customizable training



# Key Points: Diversity Recruiting\*

- ▶ Increasing diversity is not a pipeline problem, it is a sourcing and bias issue. Gen Z is the most diverse generation (50% increase in multiracial youth population since 2000). Companies need to identify biases and adjust hiring practices accordingly.
- ▶ Authenticity is key. Work to develop advocates who can attest to your goals and goal achievement.
- ▶ Be transparent and accountable to make progress. Involve your current employees of diverse backgrounds in this work but don't put the burden only on those folks to make change.
- ▶ Recruiting and hiring programs don't automatically nurture belongingness. Develop mentorship programs, affinity and resource groups, and other ways to develop a sense of community, safety, advancement and belonging.
- ▶ Students are attuned to authenticity. Back up what you say with action (involvement, sponsorships, open discussions, etc.).
- ▶ Think about professional development for your team. Develop a dedicated space to educate around cultural competencies, implicit bias, increased consciousness around diversity topics.

It is important to bringing in talent: 77% of Gen Z indicate a company's level of diversity affects their decision to work there (from Gen Z@ Work)



# Best Practices: Early Talent Recruiting

- ▶ Identify and/or develop your company's story – ensure consistency
- ▶ Know who is going to be working with your talent acquisition team: Your “best” people
  - ▶ Young alumni, dynamic managers, key execs
- ▶ Have a single point of contact, when possible, for students – make it clear to whom they should reach out
- ▶ Keep the recruiting process moving, be transparent, get back to students when you say you'll get back with them
- ▶ Customize the recruiting process – refrain from sending bulk emails/mass messages
- ▶ Post interesting/engaging content to company's social media



# Best Practices: Early Talent Recruiting

- ▶ Connect with the university/college's career services center
  - ▶ Partnership/sponsorship opportunities
  - ▶ Can provide connections, introductions, recommended strategies
  - ▶ Identify long-term and short-term goals – 3-to-5-year plan of engagement
- ▶ Consider multiple touchpoints in a year/vary by academic year
  - ▶ Quality over quantity
  - ▶ Fresh/Soph – exposure, classes, professional development sessions, student affinity organizations
  - ▶ Juniors/Seniors – recruiting events, career/functional student organizations
- ▶ Engage with relevant student organizations
  - ▶ Career/functional focused
  - ▶ Affinity focused



# Best Practices: Early Talent Recruiting

- ▶ Host unique events in multiple modalities that align with your organization mission/purpose
  - ▶ Consider philanthropic activities
  - ▶ Happy hours/mini golf/food trucks/bowling
  - ▶ Coffee chats, networking events (without PPT presentations), panels
- ▶ Be honest and open about the organization; goals achieved, growth opportunities
- ▶ Stay connected with high potential students throughout academic progression
- ▶ Consider experiential projects, micro-internships, short leadership academies/programs, job shadowing opportunities



# Resources

- ▶ Jacob Winston-Galant  
▶ [winston8@broad.msu.edu](mailto:winston8@broad.msu.edu)
- ▶ Gen Z @ Work: How the Next Generation is Transforming the Workplace – Stillman, David & Stillman, Jonah
- ▶ Marketing to Gen Z: The Rules for Reaching this Vast, and Very Different, Generation of Influencers – Fromm, Read



# Q&A

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