

PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Isabel Box
Title: Marketing & Communications Manager
Tel: +32 (0)2 302 25 51
Mobile: +32 (0)485 31 79 63
Email: ibox@deloitte.com

Deloitte's 11th global survey on Gen Z and millennials:

Belgian Gen Zs and millennials prioritise flexibility and mental well-being.

It's time for companies to take action.

For the eleventh consecutive year, Deloitte has published the results of its Gen Z and Millennial Survey in which Gen Zs and millennials from 46 countries, including Belgium, are asked to express their views on work and the world around them. The main trends that emerge from this year's survey revolve around four themes: financial stability, work flexibility, sustainability, and mental health. But unlike the optimism and idealism that emerged from last year's survey, this time the focus is on realism and the urgency to act. This is especially true for respondents in Belgium.

Brussels, Belgium – 16 December 2022

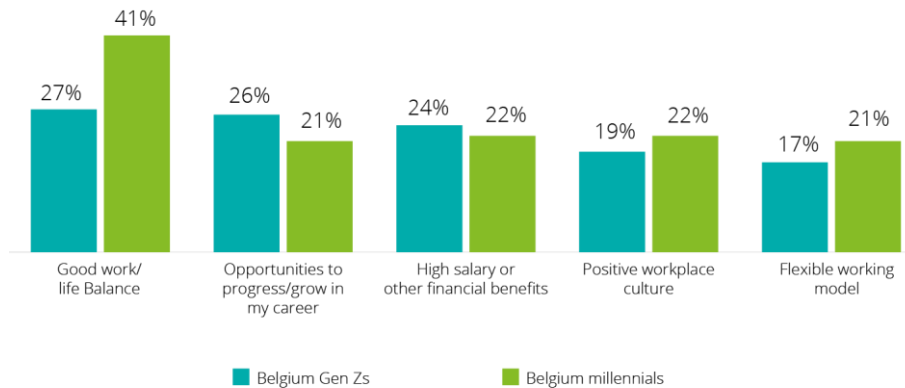
The results of Deloitte's annual survey reveal that members of Gen Z (1995 - 2003) and millennials (1983-1994) are going through an uncertain period. Both globally and in Belgium, young people are concerned about the state of the world and are struggling to reconcile their desire for positive societal change with the demands of everyday life. They are experiencing financial concerns and work-related stress, while trying to invest in environmentally sustainable choices.

Work flexibility is a must-have

Despite the rising cost of living being their primary concern this year, when choosing a job, Gen Zs and millennials consider flexibility, not salary, their number 1 motivator. Offering work flexibility (in all its forms, such as work/life balance, flexible work schedules,...) can also help companies to retain their employees, which is especially relevant in the current tight labour market, where we hear a lot about 'the great resignation'. In Belgium, we do not experience this phenomenon to the same extent as other countries such as the UK or the US. Yet generational differences between the two groups surveyed persist: fewer than 2 out of 10 Belgian Gen Zs say they want to stay with their current employer beyond five years, while this is the opinion of almost half of the millennials questioned.



Top reasons Gen Zs and millennials choose to work for an organization:



The call for flexibility goes beyond the possibility of working from home or providing hybrid working arrangements. Gen Y and Gen Z want employers to also prioritise other flexibility initiatives and non-standard working arrangements to improve their work-life balance, such as creating more part-time jobs or offering flexible working hours or restrictions to send emails outside of set business hours.

"Flexibility is not just about where and when you work, but also about the 'how' and the 'what' of work. These young generations also want meaningful work, variety in activities and inclusiveness in the way work is done."

said Nathalie Vandaele, Human Capital Leader at Deloitte Belgium.

Tackling climate change raises expectations of stronger commitment

The second most important concern for young people in Belgium this year is the fight against climate change, with 25% of Gen Zs and 28% of millennials placing climate change and environmental protection at the top of their priorities. Both generations agree that the global climate has reached a tipping point, and they are very committed to taking personal action to help reduce their impact on the environment: almost 90% of young people in Belgium say they are making efforts themselves. Despite their financial concerns, 64% of Gen Z are willing to pay more for sustainable products.

"Sustainability is not a new topic. Previous surveys already indicated that it was a priority area for these generations," continued Nathalie Vandaele. "Even though they address a strong call to action to governments and businesses to do more to tackle climate change, they have been hit with a degree of realism that obtaining results is not so simple."

As with the economic situation, young Belgians are also less confident than their peers in the rest of the world about the concrete and substantial measures taken by companies and local government bodies to combat climate change. Only 9% of Gen Z and 4% of millennials are convinced that companies are taking substantial actions to mitigate climate change.

It's time to break the taboo on mental health

Mental health is also becoming the new big topic for Gen Zs and millennials in Belgium: elements impacting their mental health or jeopardising their work-life balance are key motivations for leaving an employer. Following the global averages (respectively 46% for Gen Z and 38% for Gen Y), around half of young people living in Belgium, both from Gen Z (45%) and Gen Y (41%), report feeling anxious or stressed all or most of the time.

"As employers, we have a role to play. The calls from Gen Z and millennials are clear. We need to break the stigma and create a safe culture to discuss mental health within companies," stated Nathalie Vandaele. According to the survey, 36% of Gen Zs and 40% of millennials in Belgium are not comfortable discussing mental health with their managers. Moreover, more than 4 out of 10 young people who have been absent from work due to excessive stress or anxiety have not discussed their discomfort openly with their managers and have justified their absence with a different reason. However, 61% of Gen Zs and 35% of millennials find that organisations now talk more about mental health, even though it has not resulted in any meaningful impact on employees yet."



Nathalie Vandaele added: *"There is room for improvement in prioritising mental health and the well-being of employees in organisations across Belgium. Organisations must start thinking now about integrating all aspects related to well-being at work and take the necessary measures to promote an open framework for discussion. To truly create the best environment for employees, organisations should however also consider other aspects such as fostering a culture of inclusion and ensuring purposeful work."*

As Gen Zs and millennials become an even greater part of our workforce and grow to take on more leading roles, it is essential to take their passions, interests, and needs to heart.

"Listening to and acting upon their strong call for action in an inclusive manner will be a crucial step to evolve towards a futureproof talent strategy that does not only take into account the lens of generations but also the many other lenses of today's diverse workforce," concluded Nathalie Vandaele.

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