building on collective
strength

Managing a multigenerational workforce
during economic challenges.

A business of Marsh McLennan

Executive summary

Various workplace and economic changes over the past few years have increased the need for companies to set their priorities right and develop focused talent management strategies. It is important that our strategies are aimed at building a workforce that is resilient to sudden changes and focused on growth. To activate these strategies, companies must foster organizational agility and place the right talent in the right roles. Understanding their current workforce and combining the strengths of their people is key to workforce transformation.

Mercer | Mettl deployed their MPM Personality Map* to analyze the personality traits of the current workforce, which is comprised of Gen X (born between 1965–1980), Gen Y or Millennials (born between 1981–1996) and Gen Z (born 1997–2012).

Key findings:

Gen X is more stable and trusting:

Altruism, dynamism and proactivity are their higher traits. They can be trusted with important decisions of the organization and help others execute them.

Gen Y is an all-rounder generation:

Gen Y has lesser weaknesses and tends to fare well on most personality traits relevant to work success. They form the bridge between Gen X and Gen Z.

Gen Z is the innovators and influencers:

They can get things done with the right guidance. Gen Z is best suited for projects where innovations are required.

The report also provides recommendations on talent management strategies that can be leveraged to help the workforce succeed and build a more cohesive workplace where people thrive.

Agenda

1. | Introduction: Current workplace challenges

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated digitization and ever since 2020, the world of work is constantly changing.

Varied workplace changes have increased the need for companies to set their priorities right and make the right use of their most important assets - their people. In this report by Mercer | Mettl, we analyzed key personality traits of the three generations of people at work- Gen X, Gen Y (the millennials) and Gen Z.

Based on assessment data of 1600+ professionals,

we have come up with recommendations on how companies can build on the collective strengths of their people's personalities to build a resilient workforce that delivers.

Workforce challenges of today

Redesigning
work and organization

High inflation
volatile financial markets
and a looming downturn

Tightening
labor markets

Growing
social inequities
and unrest

Emerging new
ways of working
**hybrid,
remote**

63%

experts predict an economic recession in 2023 [1]

Key priorities

Over 83%

of organizations today continue to focus on their growth strategy irrespective of different economic and workplace challenges. [2]

To activate these strategies, having the right talent in the right roles and organizational agility will be key to execution in the months ahead.
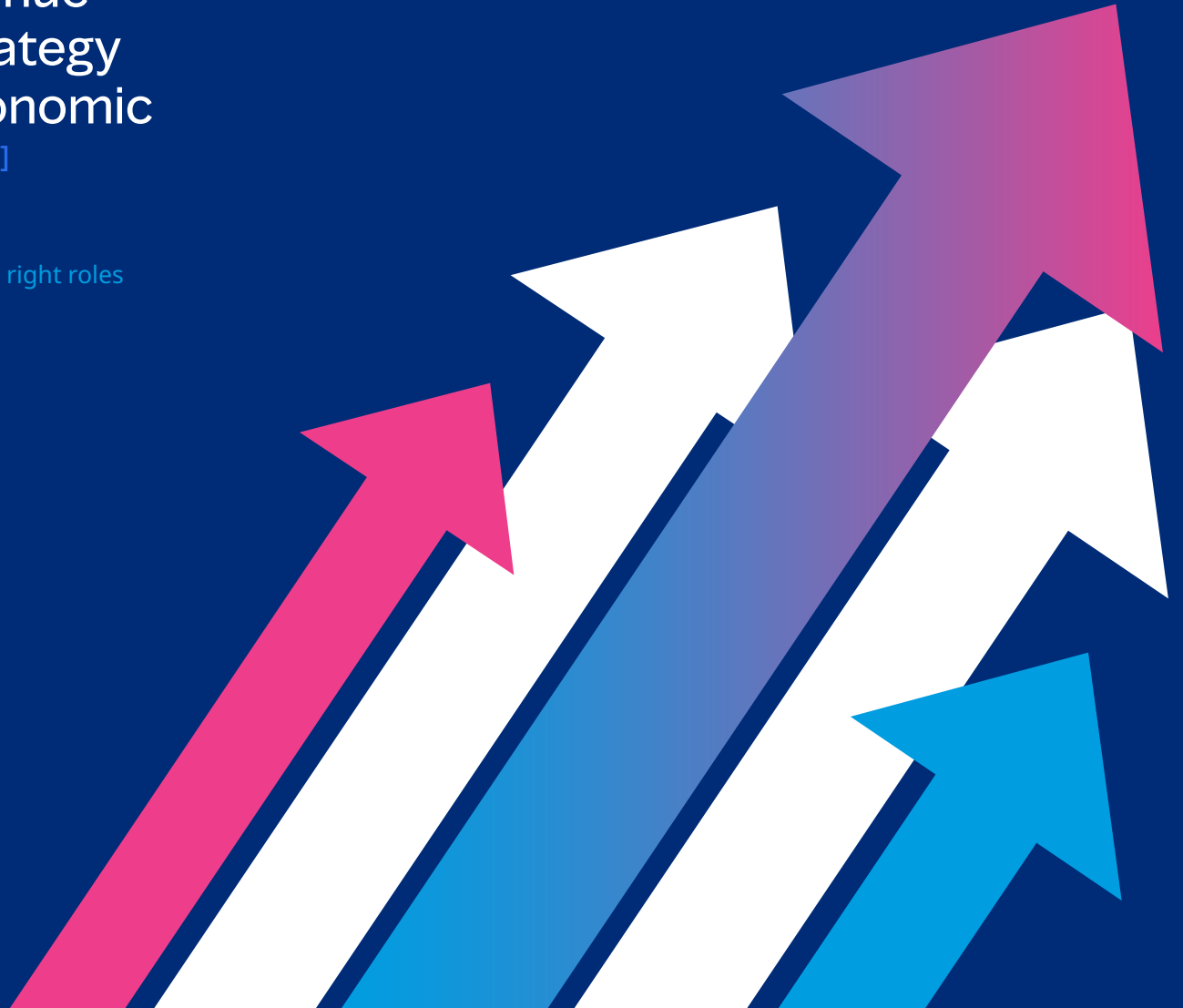
Understanding and transforming
your current workforce is the answer

In a workplace where people of different generations work together, there is a chance for conflict due to the attitudes, values and beliefs of the different age groups. [3]

1 Gen X will outnumber baby boomers by 2028.

2 Millennials or Gen Y are on the verge of becoming an overwhelming majority in the workforce.

3 Gen Z is fast on its heels as greater numbers enter the workforce.

4 The combined influence of the three generations will dramatically transform the workplace.

By 2025

75% of the global workforce will be millennials. [4]

By 2028

Gen X will outnumber baby-boomers.*

By 2030

1/3rd of the global workforce will be Gen Z. [5]

*The baby boomer generation refers to those born between 1955 and 1964.

2. | Fostering workforce transformation

A company's ability to build a future-ready workforce depends on the effectiveness of combining the strengths of the three generations at work.

Gen X

Born 1965–1980

Flexible, informal, skeptical, independent
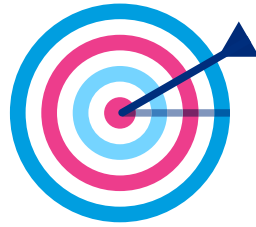
Shaped by:

The AIDs epidemic, the dot-com boom

Communication style:

72% prefer face-to-face conversations, phone calls

Worldview:

Resistant to change at work if it affects their personal lives, go by a "work hard, play hard" mentality, tech-savvy, but not tech dependent. [6]

Gen Y / Millennials

Born 1981–1996

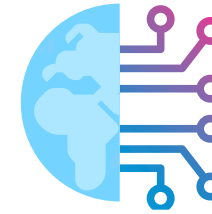Competitive, civic-minded, open-minded, achievement-oriented

Shaped by:

The rise of the internet, grew up during an economic boom

Communication style:

Instant Messages, texts, and email

Worldview:

Focused on experiences and not savings, seeking challenge, growth, and development; fun work-life and work-life balance, valuing diversity, shaped by technology. [6]

Gen Z

Born 1997–2012

Global, entrepreneurial, progressive, less focused and less independent

Shaped by:

Access to technology from a young age

Communication style:

Instant messages, texts, social media, less face-to-face interaction

Worldview:

Focused on saving money, valuing individuality, preferring to work with innovative coworkers and new technologies, and self-proclaimed digital addicts. [7]

Most critical factors
for success globally in 2023

Mercer | Mettl delves deeper into the data to find the key personality traits of each generation across four factors to help companies transform their workforce during times of economic crisis and help them succeed.
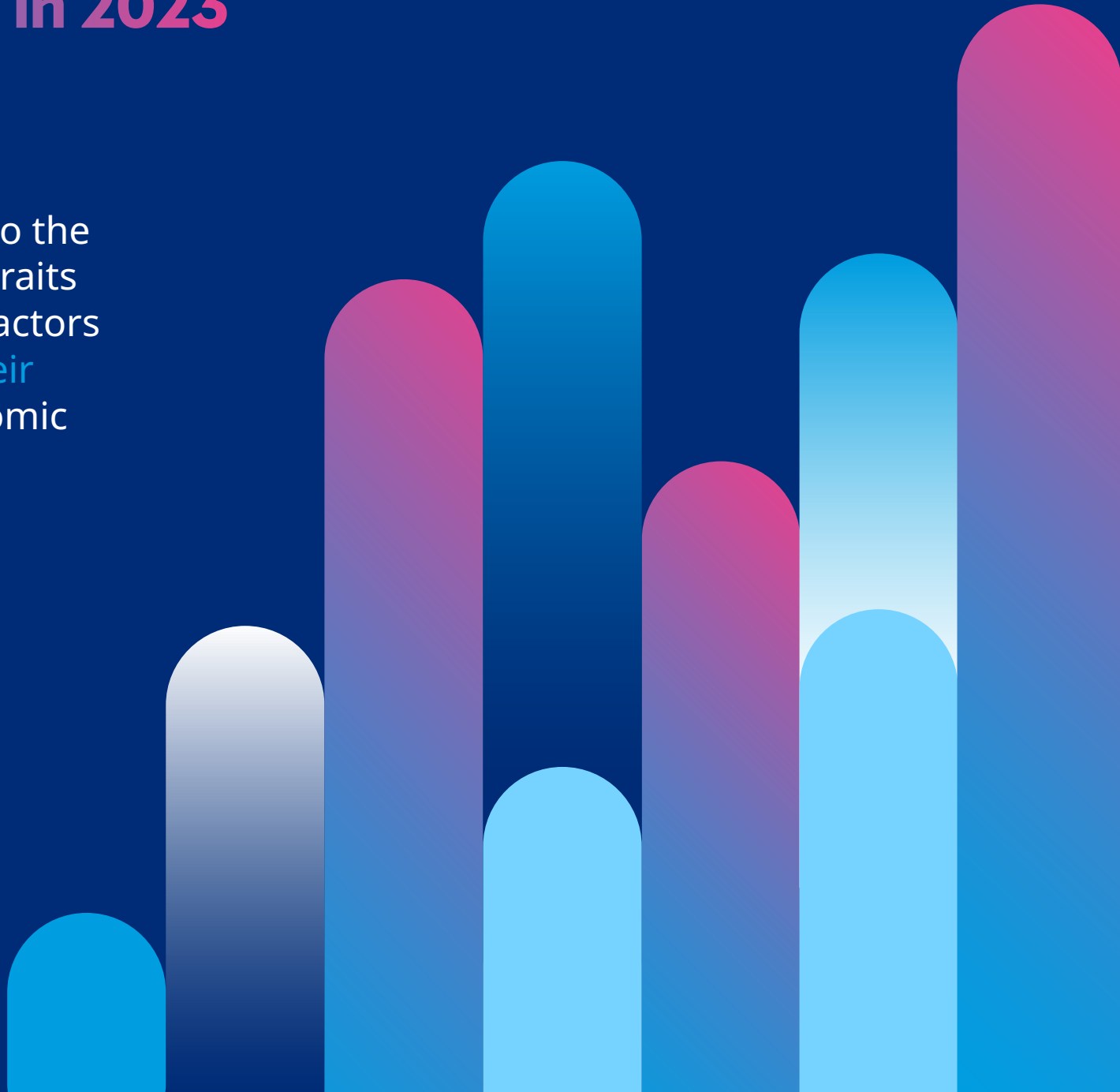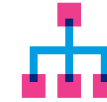
Self:

Tendency to remain strong and positive towards oneself and display positive character at work.

People:

Tendency to understand and interact with people around them at work.

Factors influencing workforce performance

Lead:

Tendency to move forward by proactively taking charge and ownership of things around oneself.

Goal:

Tendency to plan, pursue and achieve one's goal

We analyzed critical personality traits across these four factors that are paramount for success in the workplace. These include dynamism, a growth mindset, altruism and others. Some significant differences were observed in many of these traits amongst Gen X, Gen Y and Gen Z.

3. | Key Findings:
Higher traits of each generation

Gen X

Gen X is more stable and trusting as a generation.

Gen Y

Gen Y is an all-rounder generation with lesser weaknesses. They form the bridge between Gen X and Gen Z.

Gen Z

Gen Z is an innovative and influencing generation that can get things done with the right guidance.

Building a resilient workforce - Focusing on strengths

Personality traits	Intellectual mind-set	Influence	Independence	Modesty	Proactivity	Risk propensity	Trust	Altruism	Dynamism	Sociability
1 Gen X	Low	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	High	High	Low
2 Gen Y	High	Low	High		High			High	High	Low
3 Gen Z	High	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	Low	Low	High

High   Low

4. Leveraging people insights for success

Placing the right people in the right roles and on the right projects

Trust Gen X and Gen Y with onboarding and cultural alignment

1 — A more altruistic workforce can help make the newer employees feel at ease.

2 — The more proactive and trusting behavior of Gen X and Gen Y can help your new employees build faith and align themselves with the companies' goals faster.

3 — Preserve the culture and values of the company by trusting your Gen X and Gen Y workforce to pass on their trust in the company to the newer workforce.

Power your innovation-led projects with GenZ

1 — Due to high risk propensity, GenZ can be deployed in more projects where stakes are high and a new intellectual mind-set is required.

2 — Let the more trusting GenX workforce place their bet on your fresh hires.

3 — Build a culture of mentorship between GenX and GenY and GenZ.

4 — Help GenZ win at innovations!

Leave important decisions with Gen X and Gen Y

1 — High independence and proactivity make GenY and GenZ more trustworthy when important independent decisions need to be made.

2 — Proactivity ensures that they can take positive and future-oriented actions.

3 — Their dynamism ensures that they can handle execution at multiple levels while also being mindful of everyone's needs and concerns.

5. | Building a future-ready workforce

Strategies to
build on collective strength

Helping Gen Z workforce
succeed during economic crisis

Hire the right Gen Z talent in the right roles and help them succeed

Help Gen Z become more dynamic by engaging them with your brand, community and culture.

Leverage their people-skills by placing them in roles that enable them to interact more.

Provide them with the opportunity to lead small and big projects, and build trust in your Gen Z workforce.

Training Gen Y to help them increase their influence

2

Ensure your Gen Y workforce is growing and upskilling

Helping your millennial workforce improve their leadership skills would help them leverage their network, position in the company and skills better.

Enable your intellectually mature, independent Gen Y workforce to find purpose in their work through more opportunities.

Now is the time to invest in your millennial workforce and create resilient leaders.

Build an independent and proactive leadership culture with the help of Gen X

3

Foster a culture of learning and development

Mentorship and leadership development programs can go a long way in helping different generations of the workforce learn from each other.

Help your Gen Z become more proactive to help align their career goals.

Create a cross learning culture where Gen Z's modesty can inspire a better leadership culture.

6. | **Annexure I- Definitions**

Independence	Preference for working autonomously and under minimal supervision.
Influence	A desire to want to convince or persuade others by reading and anticipating situations in a way that allows them to prepare, adapt and tailor their behavior based on the people and conditions around.
Intellectual mindset	Tendency to look at ideas and information that is different and complex, and understand concepts that are not concrete.
Modesty	Tendency to be self-effacing and unassuming of one's achievements.
Proactivity	Tendency to engage in self-starting, future-oriented behavior to enact positive change rather than react to things and situations or engage in an activity only when directed to do so.
Risk propensity	Tendency to engage in behaviors that have some potential danger or harm but also provide an opportunity for some benefit.
Trust	A firm belief in fairness, honesty, and good intentions of people in general.
Altruism	Active concern for the well-being of others and willingness to help or support someone in need.
Dynamism	Tendency to work at a fast pace and with high energy, characterized by getting involved in multiple activities.
Sociability	Tendency to enjoy social situations and find the company of others energizing and rewarding.

7. Annexure II- Mercer | Mettl MPM personality map

Mercer | Mettl Personality Map (MPM) is a personality assessment tool that goes a step ahead of the Big Five Model of personality traits by incorporating modern and newer traits relevant in the workplace. It is well-suited for assessing the personality traits and behavioral competencies of leaders.

Key constructs of Mercer | Mettl MPM:

- Mercer | Mettl's four factor model
- 175 item questionnaire
- Likert scale
- Norms (n=6307)
- Reliability construct (median trait reliability 0.78)
- Validity construct (criterion validity between 0.25-0.51 with job performance competencies)
- Suitable for all job roles

References

1. ^ https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2023/01/global-recession-economic-outlook-2023/#:~:text=Since%20then%2C%20the%20World%20Bank,January%202023%20in%20Davos%2C%20Switzerland. ↗

2. ^ https://www.forbes.com/sites/rebeccahenderson/2022/08/31/what-to-do-in-a-recession-prioritize-workforce-transformation/?sh=5c36ba582b45 ↗

3. ^ https://www.knowledgecity.com/blog/generational-differences-in-the-workplace/#:~:text=In%20a%20workplace%20where%20people,lacking%20in%20respect%20for%20authority. ↗

4. ^ https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescoachescouncil/2022/06/27/millennials-and-gen-z-now-is-the-time-to-reshape-businesses-to-harness-their-power/?sh=21be929e5c98 ↗

5. ^ https://www.uschamber.com/co/grow/thrive/personality-traits-for-running-business-during-recession ↗

6. ^ https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/02/meet-generation-z-the-newest-member-to-the-workforce/ ↗

7. ^ https://www.purewow.com/family/gen-x-characteristics ↗

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About us

At Mercer | Mettl, our mission is to enable organizations to make better people decisions across two key areas: acquisition and development. Since our inception in 2010, we have partnered with more than 4,000 corporates, 31 sector skills councils/government departments and 500+ educational institutions across more than 90 countries.

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