

McKinsey  
& Company

Share this email



# Mind | the Gap

CURATED READS FOR GEN Z—AND THEIR Z-CURIOUS COLLEAGUES

Subscribe

Click to get this newsletter weekly

---

FIRST UP



*Welcome back. Here in the Northern Hemisphere, we're in the final stretch of summer—and the summer college break is a time when interns descend on many organizations. So we asked McKinsey Global Publishing's Gen Z summer interns, Hanna Carney, Imaya Jeffries, and Mia Nitekman, to tell us how they felt about their hybrid work experiences. Here's what they had to say.*

We've been working in New York City for a few months, figuring out living situations, commutes, and pay stubs while formatting spreadsheets and bonding over huddled lunches. Now that we are "seasoned" professionals, here are our two cents on the

## Gen Z work experience.

Many [execs speculate that Gen-Zers aren't interested in an office environment](#) and prefer [hybrid work](#). But that's not necessarily true. Over the past two years, we've been virtually attending college lectures and other activities that are all meant to be in-person. So when it came time to start our internships, we were eager for the human connection that the pandemic robbed from us. In fact, [according to a survey of 5,000 Americans](#), the people who want to work fully remote tend to be in an older cohort: 41 percent of workers aged 50 to 64 prefer remote work, compared with 24 percent of those aged 20 to 29. How did this play out for each of us as we entered the world of hybrid work?

### **Imaya liked the office routine.**

Being new to New York, as well as to an internship and an office environment, I started this summer feeling like a fish out of water. Establishing a routine of getting ready in the morning, commuting across the city, and settling at the office with [work friends](#) helped me thrive. Work colleagues play a vital role in balancing our personal and professional lives—boosting happiness, engagement, and job satisfaction. One recent McKinsey Global Survey found that a [positive team climate](#) (in which team members value one another's contributions, care about one another's well-being, and have input into how the team carries out its work) is the most important factor in determining a team's psychological safety at work. But only 43 percent of survey respondents reported that their team had a positive work environment.

One thing that I found daunting as I started my summer job was [attire](#). I've never felt that office-appropriate clothing was flattering or my style. But I've been able to [incorporate some of my thrifted pieces](#) into my office wardrobe, maintaining professionalism while still feeling like myself. And the ability to be your authentic self is extremely important to feeling included at work. For example, [McKinsey research](#) on LGBTQ+ lived experiences at work found that employees were 1.6 times more likely to feel included when leaders placed diversity and inclusion on their strategic agenda.

For some people, working from home is a luxury. But I've found that I really prefer being in an office environment, even though I appreciate the flexibility of hybrid work.

### **Hanna split the difference.**

When I started my internship, I thought that I would have the energy to come into the office every day. I had just graduated from college, and I felt cheated out of many in-person experiences because of COVID-19. But I discovered that I like to stay home every now and then and work remotely. And I'm not the only one who feels this way; [McKinsey research shows](#) that 87 percent of workers who are offered at least some remote work take advantage of that option and spend approximately three days a week working from home.

It's nice to have the choice to work remotely when I need to prioritize my [mental health](#), or in the office when I want to feel social. I'm lucky to have a support system both at home and at work—I've grown close to my three roommates and my fellow interns, who are all also [young women navigating the work world](#).

### **Mia gravitated toward flexibility.**

As someone with an *E* as the first letter of their Myers-Briggs type (which stands for *extrovert*, if you've forgotten), nothing prepared me for how convenient and enjoyable remote work can be. My commute was more than an hour long each way, and while building personal connections is important to me, when I really need to concentrate, working from home served me best.

And during those at-home days, the time I would have spent trekking to and from the office I could spend keeping a hold on [work-life balance](#). Plus, remote work can be a way to improve accessibility. For example, the natural comfort of working from home can be very helpful to [neurodivergent individuals](#). Managers should help [create environments](#) that reflect the working strategies of their employees.

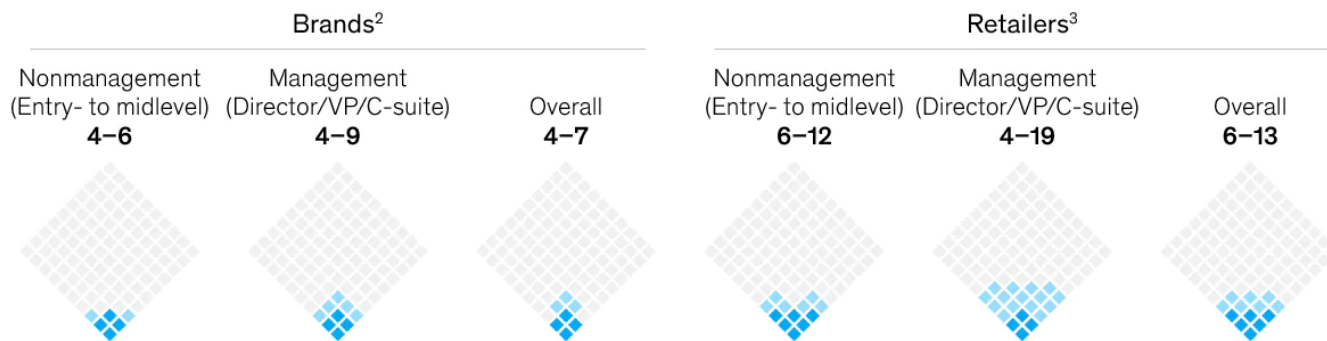
**Though we are all** Gen Z interns at the same firm in the same city, we have unique takes on the work experience and are navigating the professional world in our own ways. The bottom line? You can't fit all of Gen Z in a box—much less a cubicle.

**VISUALIZE IT**

Black beauty brands are setting the foundation for a more inclusive and healthy industry. So why are they underrepresented?

**Black employees are underrepresented throughout the beauty industry—a challenge that extends to representation at retailers that sell beauty brands.**

**Black representation in US beauty industry by employment level,<sup>1</sup>%**



<sup>1</sup>Lower bound assumes all unidentified are non-Black and upper bound applies share of Black representation to those unidentified.

<sup>2</sup>Represents those in merchandising or marketing positions.

<sup>3</sup>Represents organizational structure within each company's beauty category.

Source: Analysis based on publicly available and attributable references to beauty industry job titles across select department stores, specialty beauty stores, mass/grocery stores, and drugstores, completed Sept 14, 2021

Black representation in the beauty industry

**WAIT, DON'T SCROLL**

**Dress up.** Looking to build your office wardrobe? Do something healthy for your planet *and* your wallet: office-appropriate clothes are out there and [recirculating](#).

**Reimagining.** The new frontier may be in your own backyard—literally. Check out talent experts' take on the [good, the bad, and the innovative](#) when it comes to hybrid work.

**Your Big Three.** Think of it as the sun, moon, and rising zodiac signs of a value-driven organization: addressing three pressing questions can help leaders [build](#)

[purpose](#).

---

### NOT US; STILL GREAT

**Looking to the future.** The interns of today will be the bosses of tomorrow. Here's how leaders today can understand and support their Gen Z interns. [[Fast Company](#)]

**Spectrum of opportunity.** Remote productivity tech can help make working remotely work for everyone, including colleagues on the autism spectrum. [[WSJ](#)]

---

### INTERESTED IN WORKING FULL-TIME HERE?

Search >500 job openings →

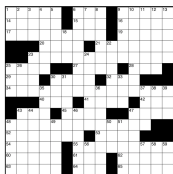
On our *Careers Blog*, Sarah, an intern in McKinsey's Risk & Resilience Practice, talks about why she gave McKinsey a shot even when she didn't want another internship →

Sign up for our free *Careers Blog* newsletter or >45 other free alerts and newsletters →

---

### CROSSWORD

#### Your latest McKinsey Crossword: National Book Lovers Day



23-Across: 2022 book subtitled *A Radical Approach to Business and Life*

Dive into a good book →

— Edited by Hanna Carney, Imaya Jeffries, and Mia Nitekman,

*summer interns, New York*

Subscribe

Click to get this newsletter weekly

**BACKTALK**

Have feedback or other ideas? We'd love to hear from you.

Tell us what you think

McKinsey  
& Company

Follow our thinking



**McKinsey Insights** - Get our latest thinking on your iPhone, iPad, or Android.



Copyright © 2022 | McKinsey & Company, 3 World Trade Center, 175 Greenwich Street, New York, NY 10007