Developing Our Future Tech Leaders:

Preparing the Workplace for the Generational Shift in Employee Development

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Founder

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Award-winning career development leader, speaker, mentor and changemaker

I have ten years of experience helping people launch new careers and growing organizations hire and develop team members.

I apply a human-first approach to my work. At Workthrough, our values are Empathy, Curiosity, Inclusion and Growth.

Let's go back to 2005

Ping Pong Culture

Burnout
and
Discontent

Aha Moment

Workthrough's
Gen Z At Work Survey
(Ages 18 to 26)
313 responses

What words would you use to describe working with Gen Z?

Survey Question 17
Provide three words that describe your experience working with multiple generations.

Diverse, Slow, Interesting

Competitive, Misunderstanding, Inattentive

Challenging, Bias, Traditional

Role Models, Helpful, Collaborative

Miscommunication, Adaptive, Unenthusiastic

A survey participant's description of the multigenerational workplace

Boomers: Supportive of growth and great people managers

Generation X: Most difficult to work with, often poor leaders, resentful, foster toxic work environments

Millennials: Unenthusiastic, but good performers.

5 Stages of Career Development

Exploration (ages 21-25)

Discovering interests and developing skills

Establishment (ages 25-35)

Aligning professional expectations (feelings of anxiety increase) and improving skills

Mid-Career (ages 35-45)

Promotions and salary increases, evaluating job satisfaction more often and trying to balance home life and work life

Late Career (ages 45-55)

Fewer opportunities for career advancement, mentoring and thinking about life after retirement

Transition (ages 55-65)

Ready to retire, developing new interests and sharing knowledge with younger employees

We are witnessing mid-career and earlier late-career professionals experience the **middle child syndrome**, and it's impacting how we manage, develop and support Gen Zers.

Which of the following workplace benefits and perks do you find most appealing?

Survey Question 5
Which of the following workplace benefits or perks do you find most appealing?

Professional development - 32%

Flexible hours - 31%

Remote work options - 27%

Healthcare benefits - 10%

Survey Question 14

Does your manager show interest in your career goals and support your skills development?

My manager sometimes discusses my career goals and supports my skills development. - 49%

My manager frequently discusses my career goals and supports my skills development. - 29%

My manager rarely discusses my career goals and supports my skills development. -19%

My manager never discusses my career goals and supports my skills development. - 3%

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Gen Zers are not interested in the career ladder.

Survey Question 13
Which statement best describes you?

I'm interested in career exploration where I can deepen my skills by being exposed to learning opportunities and various work experiences that prepare me for future career opportunities. - **61%**
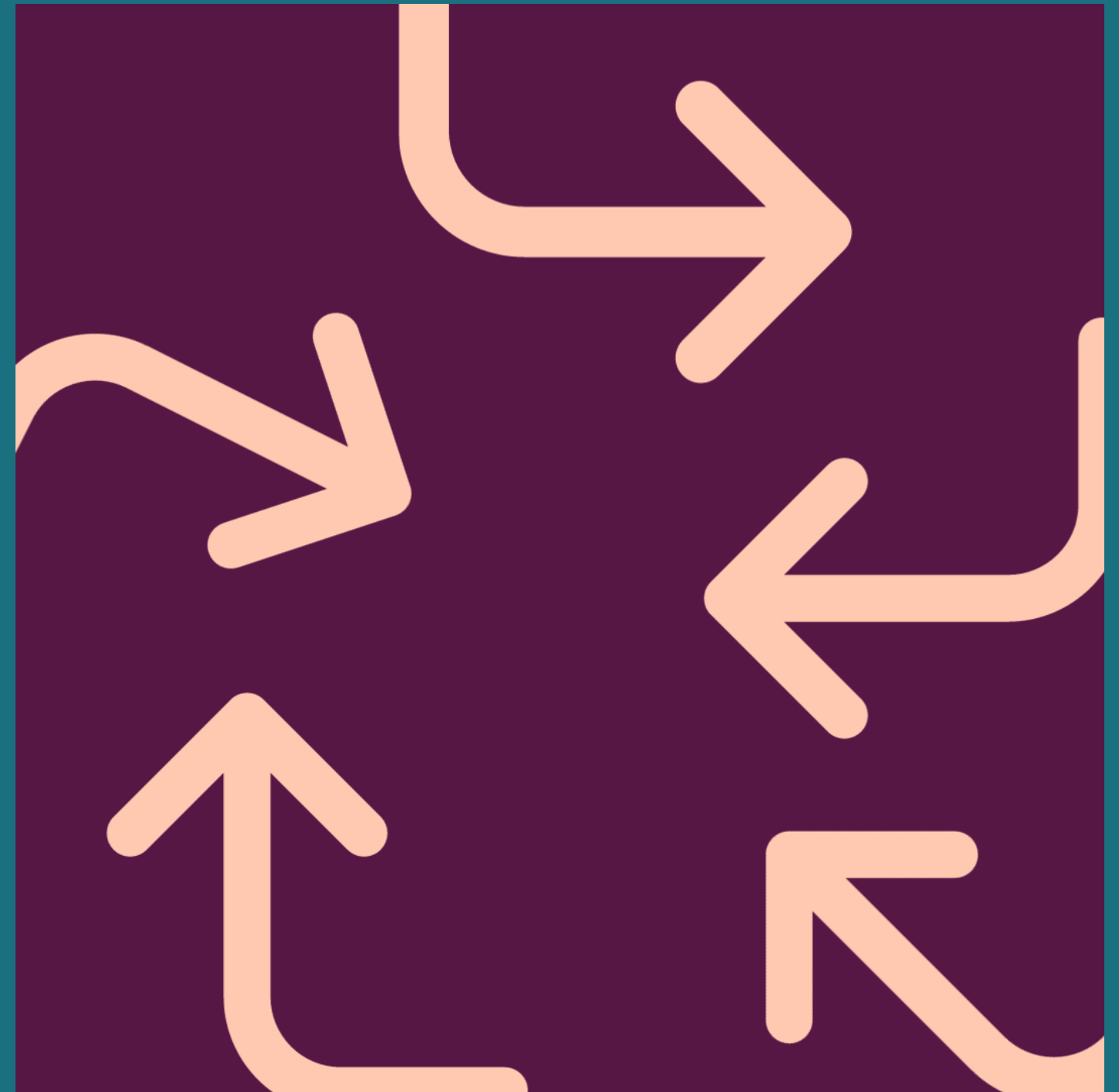
I'm interested in following a clear linear path where I am exposed to learning opportunities that allow me to climb the career ladder and move into people management positions. - **39%**

Career Ladder

Career Lattice

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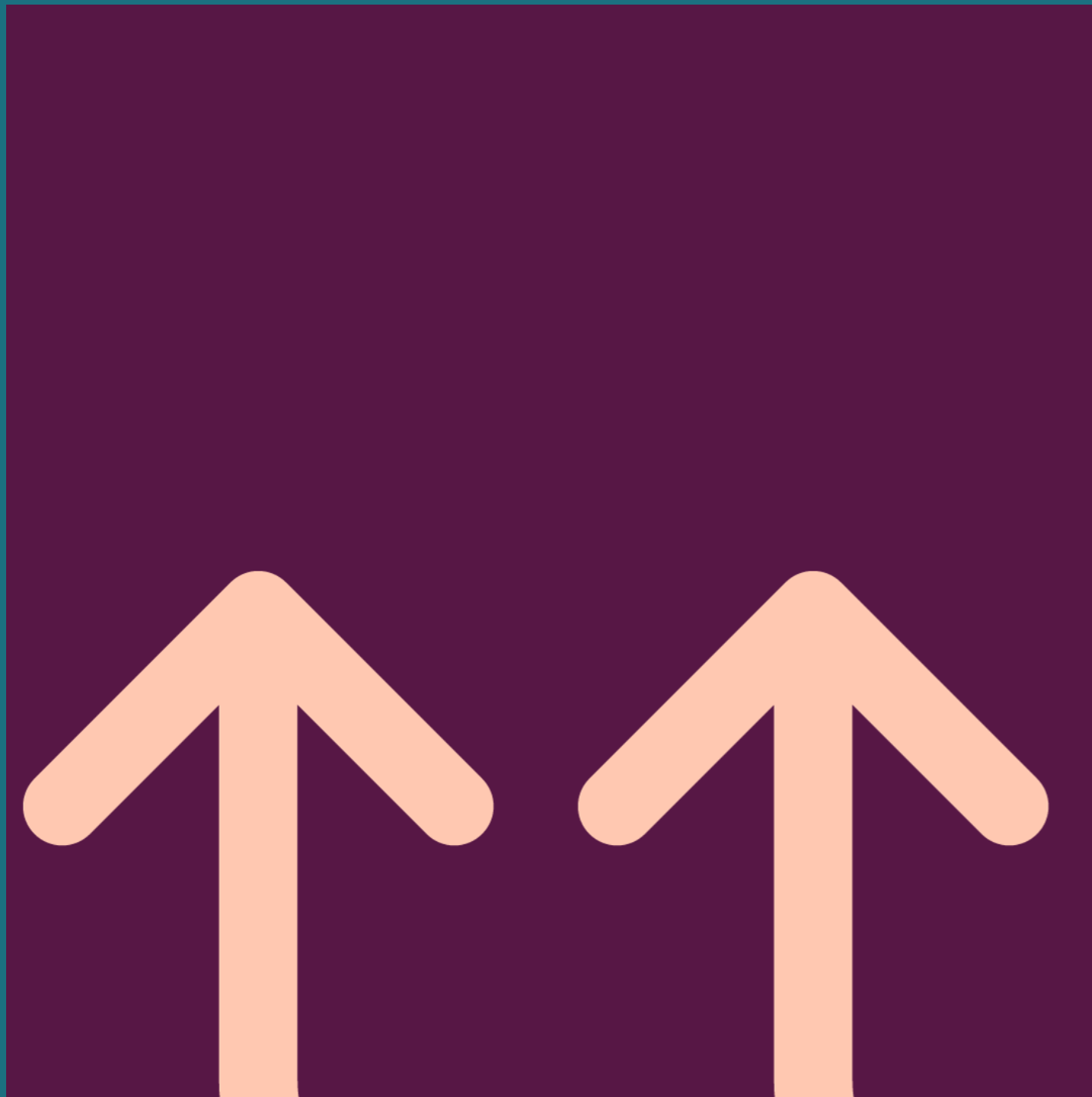
Career Ladder

- **Hierarchal structure**
- **Linear, vertical and narrow career paths**
- **Compensation is tied to authority**
- **Individual contributor driven**
- **Tasks define the job**
- **Promotion is the priority**

Career Lattice

- **Matrix structure**
- **Multidirectional career paths**
- **Compensation is tied to impact**
- **Community and team driven**
- **Competencies define the job**
- **Progression is the priority**

A career lattice approach to development can help bridge the generational gaps because it requires everyone to be involved to make it successful.

How can your organization implement a career lattice?

If you research how to build a career lattice, these are the steps that you will learn:

1)Gain executive buy-in to make it a strategic imperative
2)Survey employees to acquire career data
3)Identify and map job roles, skills and competencies
4)Create learning and development opportunities
5)Promote internal mobility
6)Communicate with employees

Some steps are missing.

Your design process and implementation should focus on answering three questions:

1) How are we providing clarity?
2) How are we fostering connectedness?
3) How are we ensuring consistency?

Three Cs Model

Gain executive buy-in to make it a strategic imperative

Clarity sub-step
- Understand the strategic priorities so the career lattice can support them

Example strategic priorities
- New products, features and services
- Improve customer service
- Increase profitability

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Survey employees to acquire career data

Clarity sub-step
● Determine your organization's career development philosophy to inform goals of the career lattice

Example LEAPS philosophy
What we learn will be explored to determine where it can be applied to facilitate employee progress and support business objectives.

Identify and map job roles, skills and competencies

Clarity sub-step
- Determine career development competencies

Connectedness sub-step
- Determine career development roles of employees

Career Ladder	Career Lattice
Junior Sales Rep	Project Manager
Associate Sales Rep	New Accounts
Account Manager	Special Accounts
Sales Manager	Sales Rep
VP, Sales	Junior Sales Rep

Note: Unlike the career ladder, the career lattice of a salesperson does not follow a vertical path. An Account Manager can make a lateral move to Special Accounts because of their strong relationship management skills and outstanding customer support skills.

Career Development Role	Career Development Competency
Career level - Fundamental	**Knowledge Acquisition and Application** Focuses on learning and applying core skills required for their role
Career level - Experienced	**Knowledge Acquisition and Application** Takes initiative to learn new skills and expand impact and occasionally provides guidance to Fundamental employees
Career level - Advanced	**Knowledge Acquisition and Application** Has a proven process for learning and developing new skills and is becoming a subject matter expert due to their organizational-wide impact, and frequently guides Fundamental and experienced employees.
Career level - Expert	**Knowledge Acquisition and Application** Has a proven process for learning and developing new skills and is a subject matter expert due to their organizational-wide impact, influence and strong mentorship abilities.

Create learning and development opportunities

Connectedness sub-step
- Map your multigenerational workforce to career development roles and leverage their expertise in development opportunities for Gen Z

Example
- Map late-career and transition stage employees to advanced and expert roles
- Transfer their knowledge to employees in the exploration and establishment stage through mentorship and cross-functional projects

Promote internal mobility

Connectedness and consistency sub-step
● Expand performance review cycles to include talent review sessions between people managers

Example
● Create a quarterly process where people managers meet to discuss their team members' skills growth and professional interests and identify opportunities for lateral movements, secondments, cross-functional special projects, and peer-to-peer learning

Communicate with employees

Consistency sub-step

- Provide people managers and employees with the tools to engage in career development conversations meaningfully

Example

- Organize career management training to help employees develop their self-advocacy, goal-setting and career exploration skills
- Train managers on coaching techniques and career conversations frameworks with supportive resources readily available

Examples of Indicators and Measures

- Retention rates
- # of lateral movements
- # of promotions
- Engagement scores
- Participation and usage L&D initiatives and resources
- New services, products and features launched
- Customer satisfaction scores

Survey Question 10

My corporate work experience (e.g. internship, co-op, new grad employment) has only been in remote work environments.

Yes - 54%

Technology and Tools to Consider

- **Tilr** - Building and maintaining a skills inventory
- **Pando** - Employee-led career development and career progression management

What words would you use to describe the ideal workplace and culture for Gen Z?

Survey Question 20
Provide three words that describe your ideal workplace and company culture for Gen Z.

Collaborative, diverse, empowering

Innovation, technology, autonomy

Transparency, equality, learning opportunities

Knowledge sharing, social responsibility, communication

Understand each other, respect each other, work together

Survey Question 19
What should employers know about Gen Z?

Gen Z is by far the most diverse generation with the most inclusive perspectives and expectations, and Gen Z is the generation most focused on self-actualization.

Survey Question 19
What should employers know about Gen Z?

Generation Z usually has an innovative mindset, and employers should encourage and support them to come up with new ideas, try new approaches, and reflect a culture of innovation at work.

Survey Question 19
What should employers know about Gen Z?

Generation Z is more focused on practical skills development, and employers can provide training and skills development opportunities that are closely related to market needs.

Survey Question 19
What should employers know about Gen Z?

Gen Z prefers a personalized career path where employers can provide customized training programs, advancement opportunities and career development support.

Survey Question 18

What's one thing employers can do to improve the generational divide that exists in the workplace

Creating a cross-generational mentorship program allows the younger generation to learn from the experiences of the older generation, while also exposing older employees to the new perspectives and skills of the younger generation.

Survey Question 18

What's one thing employers can do to improve the generational divide that exists in the workplace?

By pairing together employees from different generations, not only can elder employees pass on their industry knowledge and professional experiences, but younger employees can also share their insights on technology and current trends. This encourages empathy, mutual respect, and better understanding across generations, thereby bridging the generational divide.

Three Cs Model

Remember to ask:

1) How are we providing clarity?
2) How are we fostering connectedness?
3) How are we ensuring consistency?

The Gen Z at Work Survey explores:

- Career Development
- Mental Health and Well-being
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Tools and Technology
- and more

Email chi-chi@workthrough.ca to get on the list to be notified of when the report launches.

THANK YOU!

Workthrough