

MOVEMENT
TO WORK



Youth Action Forum #4

May 2023



THE CHALLENGE

What is the **perception of young people** from employers today?

What is the **perception of employers and work experience** from young people today?

It is important for us to remember that when talking about “young people” aged 16–30, we are in fact talking about two very different groups of people with professional characteristics which can be generalised by “Gen Z” and “Millenials”.

The Youth Employment UK (YEUK) Youth Census shows us that more than **56%** of these young people feel that a lack of work experience stands in their way of securing employment, nearly **29%** believe employers are *not* supportive of hiring young people and only **14%** of young people feel “confident” or “extremely confident” in finding work where they live.

Following our recent Youth Summit and Youth Voice insights, Movement to Work addressed the most commonly shared perceptions of work experience from young people during a Career Map webinar, in partnership with our Youth Ambassadors. These common concerns centre around work experience **not being “real” work**; not leading to a **“real” job**; that little **support** is received from employers during work experiences and that **meaningful connections** are not made during this time either.

This context became the starting point for our discussion – which naturally became focused on optimising and benefiting from a multi-generational workforce – and we would like to offer thanks to everyone who took part. We received representation from **IBM, Thames Water, Diageo, BT, Marriott, B&Q, Sodexo, Wagamama, BAE Systems, Starbucks and DWP**. We have anonymised feedback in order to create a truly safe space for authentic discussion and debate.

THE YOUTH ACTION FORUM PRINCIPLES

Peer-to-Peer

Respectful and open sharing of challenges and opportunities related to youth employment

Action-oriented

Helping more young people access quality work experiences by solving the problems employers are facing and maximising collective success

No formal presentations

Short stimuli will be sent ahead of each session

No formal speakers

The speakers and content will be shaped by those in attendance

Intimate and meaningful

No more than 5-10 individual attendees, ideally representing diverse business sectors

Invitation only

Sign up / Registration process - first come, first served

DISCUSSION POINTS

We started the session with an open discussion for the attendees to share their views, experiences and to ask questions of one another.

A number of observations and key comments came from that discussion.

“Manager aren’t just managers now.”

THE CONTEXT

Managers of young people now are not just responsible for ensuring they are on task, but are expected to support them holistically, checking in on their work, well-being, financial stability, relationships etc.

This can cause a huge strain on managers, who don’t have the time, resources, or knowledge to deal with the evolving needs of young people fresh to the workplace.

One effective approach being taken by organisations is providing young people with two managers, one solely responsible for the task management, and the other providing well-being and soft skills education mentoring. This ensures the young person receives the ‘wrap-around’ support required for their development.

“There are many misconceptions about younger & older generations.”

THE CONTEXT

Values, expectations, and communication styles can massively differ between generations, which can cause conflict.

Gen Z typically value flexibility and part-time work, whilst Gen X value predictability of working patterns and full-time dedication.

Millennials often prefer instant communication via Teams, Whatsapp etc., whilst Gen X preferring detailed, less frequent communication e.g. emails and meetings.

Through cross-generational education, such as huddles and presentations, organisations have been able to reduce any potential conflict due to these differing values.

“We’ve learnt so much from young people, they’ve helped guide our business.”

THE CONTEXT

Generational differences should be embraced rather than feared.

Companies that lean into this benefit from learning ‘both ways’ with young people able to upskill colleagues in tech, demonstrate how to be more inclusive and diverse, and how to appeal authentically to the younger generation, as both a prospective company to work at and a brand to spend with.

Organisations within this session shared that they have created a specific “Generations” network to encourage all age learning, producing a short film for internal illustration of intergenerational benefits and adapting their onboarding process by issuing QR codes at spaced intervals throughout the first couple of months to reduce overwhelm of information.

“We need to put a positive spin on the squiggly career path young people may take.”

THE CONTEXT

Building on misalignment of values of young people vs older generations, one key difference is that young people do not expect to be in one job at one company for long periods of time, contrasting with Gen X, who can view those looking for a varied career as flighty, and therefore not worth investing time and money into.

However, businesses who invest in their young people, even for shorter periods than they ideally want, experience many benefits. Many young people ‘boomerang’, returning to the business post education or other jobs, bringing new skills. Young people with a positive experience of a company via employment also become keen brand ambassadors, referring others for employment, and or services.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

We then asked the attendees to add Post-it notes with any suggestions, actions, initiatives or further research that they felt are worth considering to help tackle the issues raised, and to 'vote' on the most favoured.

Enable steering groups of young people

Enabling the sharing of experiences by creating networks for young people to support and lead initiatives within the business. This will create a space for young people to build their knowledge of careers within the business and contribute to company culture.

Education of opportunities across sectors

By creating a network of facilitators e.g. partners, and employers to run educational sessions with young people on the opportunities available to them, we can build young people's confidence and knowledge of career paths options.

Youth career fairs

Such events will enable young people to learn about the diversity of employment available to them.

Social media

Meeting young people where they are by utilising social media to emphasise different career paths.

Parent/guardian guide to apprenticeships

Inviting parents or guardians into a business to learn about the different pathways can help to encourage young people to explore non-traditional pathways into employment.

Apprenticeships to help build a career

By providing on-the-job training alongside education you can create the perfect combination to introduce young people to the workforce. This will provide young people foundational training whilst engaging with the company within a supported career framework..

Work experience programmes & developing employability skills

Work experience programmes for NEET young people aims to introduce them to the progression opportunities within a company. A key focus is on employability skills equipping young people with the knowledge on how to be a successful applicant.

Soft skills onboarding

Young people require life skills training in addition to more traditional training to gain the critical skills required to be confident in themselves and in the professional world e.g. knowing how to behave at work and where to access help.

Engagement within the business

By engaging young people already within a business can help to drive external engagement and raise awareness of opportunities. Utilising different methods such as videos and podcasts to sit on careers pages can encourage young people to get involved.

Engaging with young people in schools

Tackling perceptions of different jobs and sectors at an early age can enable young people to broaden their awareness around different careers. In a world that is forever changing, it is important to teach young people about the diversity of opportunities available to them.

Career pathway programmes

Internal programmes to progress from colleague to team leader to line manager will enable young people to build their career within a company whilst feeling supported to do so.

Foundation development managers

By taking a two tier managerial approach - Line Manager and Foundation Manager - you make the young person feel supported as they start their career. This encourages career progression and development to be at the forefront of the minds of young people as a direct result of 1:2:1 support and focus they receive.

360 mentoring across generations

Challenging perceptions and stereotypes across generations to enable a more inclusive company culture. This approach will meet young people where they are, to enable them to find their own place within the business. It will also encourage cross-generational learning and enable the business to utilise critical skills.

Engaging charity partners

Utilising charity partners to host educational sessions to give careers advice to young people and inform them of opportunities.

Next Steps



NEXT STEPS

01



Visit our exclusive Members Area

Outputs from our Youth Summit, CEO Summit, Youth Employability Awards, Youth Voice workshops and previous Youth Action Forums can all be found within our members area on our website – feel free to download and reference them at any time.

02



Save the date for the next Youth Action Forum

The next Youth Action Forum will be held on **Friday 1st September 2023** from **0930 to 1100** – please give an indication of attendance by responding to the placeholder invite that has been sent out.

03



The topic we'll cover at the next Forum

Our next topic will be: ***TikTok, a deeper dive...***

We look forward to discussing this with you in September!