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# Next Generation Workforce: What Young People Are Telling Us About Effective Recruitment

March 28, 2024 [Katherine Follansbee](#) [in](#) [twitter](#) [f](#)



The idea that all young people want to be influencers may have some truth to it, and for good reason. Aside from the fact that making a living by posting videos and receiving gifts from brands seeking your endorsement seems fun, the

influencer “sector” has also been targeting young people in ways that they report are most effective.

Last September, I had the pleasure of spending the day with a large group of high school students to learn about their career aspirations. Our team wanted to understand who young people talk to about their futures, how they form aspirations, what they want to be when they grow up, and why.

The almost unanimous sentiment from this conversation was that high schoolers desire greater awareness of what is available in the job market. Many sectors are experiencing a rapidly aging workforce without adequate succession planning. To draw young people into these sectors, we must understand how to best communicate with and market to them.

The students we spoke with that day suggested experiential learning, social media campaigns, increased visibility, and career profiles as ways to pique their interest.

## Experiential Learning

Students agreed that most of the jobs they are interested in are ones they have gotten to experience firsthand. They explained that showing someone something is much more effective than telling them something.

For example, rather than asking a doctor to come in and explain her day-to-day job duties, ask her to bring in x-rays to let students look for broken bones or teach them how to use a stethoscope and what to listen for. These experiences have a lasting impact and allow students to imagine themselves in these roles in the future.

Ideas for hands-on and experiential learning include:

- Workers visiting classrooms to provide demonstrations
- Workshops at summer camps
- Job shadowing with the option to rotate through roles to try different things

## Social Media Campaigns

Unsurprisingly, students reported that social media is one of their primary sources of career information. While keeping up with the latest platforms may seem daunting, meeting young people where they are (online) provides a captive audience that reports being interested in this content. When discussing what would make an impactful career-oriented social media campaign, students provided the following pointers:

- Humor is effective
- There need to be young people in the videos
- If it looks like an advertisement, they will skip it
- The source must appear trustworthy
- You cannot just share the high points; you must also share the challenges of the role
- A “day in the life” of a worker video is compelling

## Increased Visibility

Students said things like, “I would be interested in almost anything if I knew enough about it,” and “How could I be interested in something I don’t even know about?” So, perhaps the issue of talent attraction has more to do with exposure than interest. To increase your company or sector’s visibility, consider getting involved in the following:

- Workplace tours
- Job fairs
- Flyers, posters, and advertisements with more information
- Meeting with guidance counselors

## Career Profiles

Lastly, students told us they wanted to see as much information as possible to compare different careers. Specifically, they asked for “profiles” with the following information:

- A list of jobs available in the sector of interest
- The salary range for each job
- Any relevant data or statistics available
- Details on what the job entails
- An idea of the work-life balance
- Positive impacts of the job (how does it help people, animals, or the environment)

When you consider the jobs that young people are interested in, their preferred methods of communication make sense. They aspire to be athletes and influencers not only because those people are “cool” but also because they already have personal experience playing sports or posting online; they connect with people in these jobs via social media, they are aware that these jobs exist, and they can see these people make comfortable salaries and have time to spend with their families.

High schoolers explained that they want more experience and information before choosing their career path and asked that we provide that using experiential learning, social media campaigns, increased visibility, and career profiles.

Rather than assuming that young people are not interested in specific sectors, we should explore these avenues of engagement and see if we can rebuild these workforces. It will benefit the entire sector, including those who are ready to leave it and those who are wondering what comes next.

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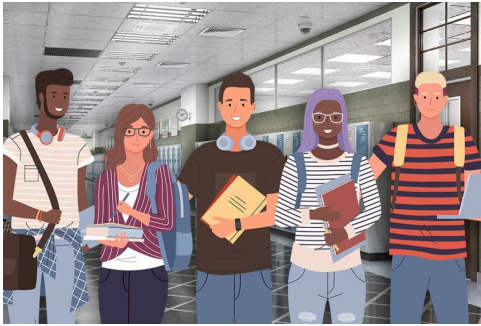
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## Next Generation Workforce: What Young People Are Telling Us About Effective Recruitment

What's the best way to engage with young people in order to pique their interest in career opportunities in different sectors? Find out what a group of high school students recently told our author.

March 28, 2024 • Katherine Follansbee



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