

# Leading Multiple Generations Remotely

New National Research and Insights from  
The Center for Generational Kinetics

SUMMER 2020



# INTRODUCTION

Leaders today are facing an unprecedented, challenging situation: how to understand, lead, manage, and motivate multiple generations remotely. Stay-at-home measures have never happened before and are creating new challenges for leaders in organizations of every size and industry. **Missing from the conversation is data that specifically uncovers what employees are thinking about work, technology, working remotely, and what they need from their bosses now.**

At The Center for Generational Kinetics (CGK), we are passionate about solving generational challenges through original research. Our 2020 study, *Solving the Remote Work Challenge Across Generations*, fills in these missing data gaps so leaders can take fast, data-driven action. This national study enabled us to get an accurate insight into four different generations in the workforce now: Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X, and Baby Boomers. In addition to each generation's attitudes toward work and remote work, we specifically looked at what research leaders need to know right away that they can't find anywhere else.

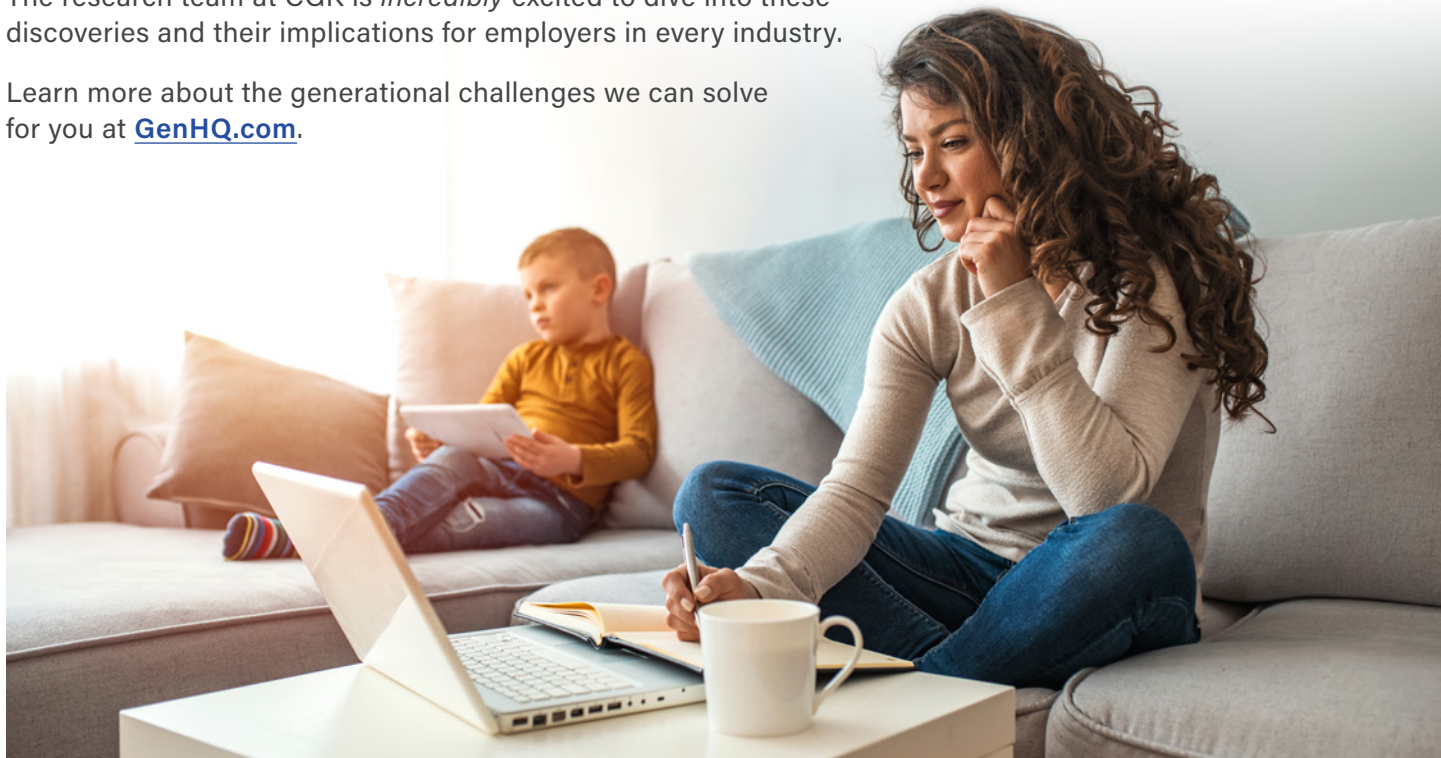
Specifically, we sought to answer: What's different for workers now? How is each generation affected by a rapidly changing workforce reality? How are generations adapting to working remotely? What is each generation looking for from their company and leadership during these challenging times?

Answering these questions is an urgent priority for leaders to inform how they can attract and keep each generation of workers and drive growth. Taking action now is particularly important. Employee expectations and workplace confidence are shifting dramatically, and the need for innovation is greater than ever.

As we look ahead to the economy reopening, the new reality facing leaders is that some form of remote work is likely to be a part of the workforce for years. This includes the companies moving to fully-remote work, and many more companies moving to a hybrid form of remote work that accommodates their employee's needs, office or workspace realities, and flexible work options.

The research team at CGK is *incredibly* excited to dive into these discoveries and their implications for employers in every industry.

Learn more about the generational challenges we can solve for you at [GenHQ.com](https://GenHQ.com).





## RESEARCH STRATEGY:

# NATIONAL QUANTITATIVE STUDY WITH A DEEP GENERATIONAL LENS

In approaching this national quantitative study, we wanted to uncover and establish a deep understanding of how workers' perspectives have changed as well as leadership expectations across multiple generations in the United States.

Survey participants in the national study consisted of 1,000 adults ages 18 to 90 years old, weighted to the U.S. Census for age, gender, geography, and ethnicity. This sample composition allowed for a generation-by-generation comparison as well as a highly accurate "snapshot" across the U.S. In essence, this type of study enables us to understand how adults in the U.S. are thinking about remote work right now—and with a very low margin of error. This type of research-driven approach is harder to lead and implement, but at CGK, we felt this was exactly what leaders need to know.

## THREE KEY INSIGHTS UNCOVERED ABOUT LEADING MULTIPLE GENERATIONS REMOTELY

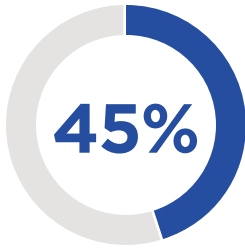
The study uncovered many insights. In particular, three of them have broad implications across a wide array of companies and leadership levels. We'll explore each of these key insights in more detail in this executive summary:

1. Generations are having *very* different workplace experiences during this pandemic, so a one-size-fits-all approach will not work.
2. Working remotely is now normal for many in the U.S. Still, generations have *different* perspectives when it comes to accountability, alignment, and having the technology resources they need to do their jobs remotely.
3. Generations diverge on the qualities they most want from their managers and supervisors during these times when it comes to communication, candor, and preparation.

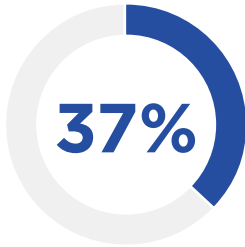


## WORKPLACE CHANGES COMING INTO FOCUS

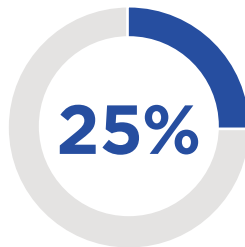
Prior to COVID-19, leaders were tasked with communicating, motivating, retaining, and engaging four or five different generations of employees, colleagues, and team members. Now leaders are tasked not only with driving key employment outcomes but also working within a remote work environment that is new to both the employees and the leaders.



45% of Gen Z's work hours have decreased



37% of Gen Z are unable to work



25% of Gen Z agree that they will be worse off when the pandemic is over

In addition, this new leadership mandate is taking place during a time of tremendous stress, anxiety, and uncertainty—for companies, communities, and our world. Leaders of large, small, local, and global organizations are struggling to figure out how the future will look. They need new, accurate data to **understand it** from different generations and stakeholders. Gaining a precise, research based-understanding of what employees expect, need, and want in a remote work environment is the first pivotal step to leading them effectively.

The research we led shows that across the U.S., Americans have experienced a variety of workforce changes and challenges. The national research study uncovered that in the past 30 days, over 1/3 of Americans have experienced decreased work hours (36%) and are less busy at work (35%). **Gen Z has experienced the most workplace challenges of any generation in the past 30 days.** Almost half (45%) of Gen Z's work hours have decreased, over one-third (37%) are not able to work or get paid, and over one-fourth (26%) have filed for unemployment in the past 30 days. What's more, 25% of Gen Z feel that they will be worse off when the pandemic is over.

Older generations have experienced their own unique work changes and new work reality. Fifty percent of Millennials and 48% of Gen X are working completely remotely or from home, and 19% of Boomers reported that they had to take unpaid time off in the past 30 days.

Leaders and managers need to be aware of the breadth and depth of the workplace changes experienced by each generation. Understanding these changes is key to empathizing, connecting, and rebuilding trust with a workforce that now has a dramatically different view of work than only a short time ago.



## REMOTE WORKING IN TODAY'S WORLD

Working remotely is impacting every generation, but some generations are more affected than others. In CGK's global research, strategic advisory, and keynote speaking for over 700 clients, it is clear that technology is both the glue that brings different generations of employees together but it also creates a new set of challenges. There are numerous emerging trends in these challenges that we believe could positively improve employment and business over the long term.

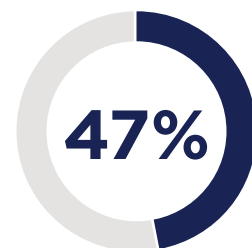
The national study found that in the past 30 days, almost half (47%) of all Americans are working completely remote or from home. Also, almost half (49%) have used Zoom or other video chat platforms *for the first time ever* in the past 30 days! When asked how remote working has affected their jobs, almost half of all Americans say they trust their team more (46%), they're more productive (46%), and team communication and collaboration has improved (44%). What's more, Americans say that after the pandemic, 47% would prefer to work remotely part of the time, and 35% would prefer to continue working remotely full time. These expectations represent a seismic shift for many employees.

Generations clearly bring different perspectives when it comes to remote working. Millennials and Gen X have the most positive overall experience with this workplace change. Fifty percent of Millennials feel more productive when working remotely, and 41% of Gen X would prefer to continue working remotely full-time after the pandemic, both more than any other generation. Also, more than other generations, Millennials, and Gen X agree that working remotely fosters better communication and trust in their co-workers and managers. Gen Z, however, finds remote working more challenging overall. More than any other generation, Gen Z feels like remote work has negatively affected their work-life balance (36%). They also feel their employer needs to provide them with better tools to work remotely (34%), and that remote work has been an imposition on their lives (32%).

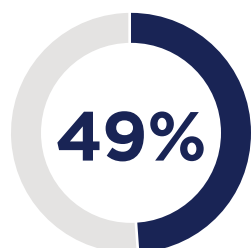
Clearly, there is a distinct difference between generations' experience and future expectations for remote working. These findings show us not only generational differences but could point to the impact of different career and life stages that exist between generations.

## LEADERSHIP EXPECTATIONS IN A TIME OF REMOTE WORK

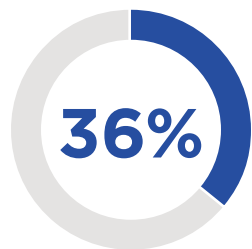
What generations want from leaders is different now, and *how* they need to be engaged by leaders and organizations has changed rapidly. Leaders can act on the specific needs from each generation to drive communication, performance, and trust. Driving these outcomes with each generation will play a pivotal role in how organizations perform short and long-term by generation.



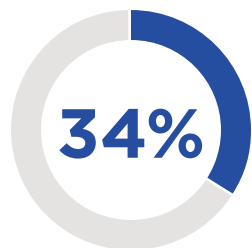
**47% of all Americans are working completely remotely**



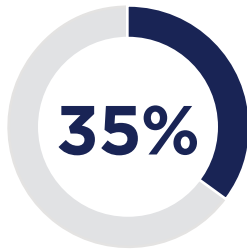
**49% of all Americans have used Zoom or other video chat platforms for the first time ever**



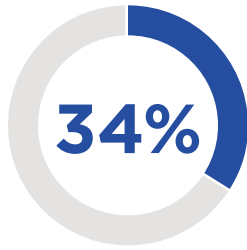
**36% of Gen Z feels like remote work has negatively affected their work-life balance**



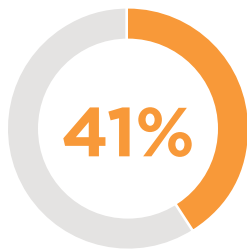
**34% of Gen Z feel their employer needs to provide them with better tools to work remotely**



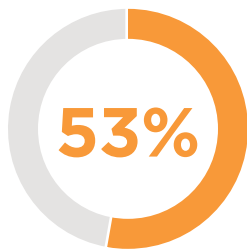
35% of Americans say the most important quality in a manager now is to be honest



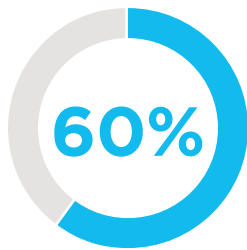
34% of Gen Z say it's most important that their manager is well informed



41% of Gen X and Boomers say the most important quality in a manager now is to be honest and candid



53% of Gen X feel like they can trust their company's CEO



60% of Millennials feel like their employer is acting with integrity

The national research study revealed that over 1/3 of Americans say the most important quality in a manager now is to be honest (35%), and to communicate clearly (34%) during these challenging times. These were the top two highest-rated qualities people want in a manager or supervisor.

When studied through a generational lens, generations preferred *different* qualities from their managers during these times. More than any other generation, Gen Z want their managers to be well informed (34%) and empathetic to the challenges of those they are leading (26%). The qualities Millennials most want from managers are being well-prepared (24%) and quickly solving problems (23%), while Gen X and Boomers' most desired quality is for managers to be honest and candid with them (41%).

When asked to identify how employers are performing during these tough times, almost half of Americans feel like their employer is acting with integrity (48%) and feel like they can trust their managers (46%), while the other half of Americans feel the opposite. Gen Z feels the most skeptical toward their company and management during these times, with 41% paying close attention to how their company treats the people that have been laid off – more than any other generation. Millennials and Gen X, however, are *significantly* more trusting and loyal to their management. More than any other generation, 60% of Millennials feel like their employer is acting with integrity and 53% of Gen X feel like they can trust their company's CEO or owner during these tough times.

In short, Americans are split overall in the trust they have for their managers and supervisors. Leaders should understand the qualities that are most valued by each generation during these tough times. This unique research-based perspective provides a window of opportunity for leaders to reach specific generations and appeal to them when they feel the most vulnerable and need the outreach most.





## MOVING FORWARD: WHAT THIS MEANS FOR LEADERS

One benefit of leading a national study is uncovering unexpected insights, trends, and behaviors that leaders can turn into action and drive recruiting, re-boarding, engagement, and immediate results. This study found that generations are experiencing very different workplace changes, remote working experiences, and leadership expectations based on their unique perspective and circumstances. It is a key time for leaders to adjust to meet each generation where they are now.

The study's findings answer several questions about how Americans are affected by workplace changes, remote working, and leadership expectations. Generations are all experiencing these changes uniquely and should be considered based on their own unique perspective and circumstances.

At CGK, we believe understanding these new realities by generation is an important first step for leaders to decide what strategies and actions to take to work in their specific situation. This includes acknowledging that different generations are having different experiences. What each generation wants from leaders today is different—but can be delivered at very little or no cost. The key is to know what matters most and then take the appropriate action.

As we look ahead, we are committed to leading further studies that take these initial findings and dive deeper into specific actions, strategies, and tactics that leaders can implement now. This is what inspires us to work with leaders around the world and bridge the different generations at CGK—who are also working remotely! We are on this journey with you and are here to be your resource when you're ready to take action.

On behalf of the entire team at CGK, thank you for what you do. We are all in this together, and we look forward to hearing from you.

Please visit [GenHQ.com](https://GenHQ.com) to contact us and see more of our ongoing research.



## THREE WAYS WE CAN HELP YOU

# SOLVE YOUR GENERATIONAL CHALLENGES

### INTERACTIVE VIRTUAL KEYNOTES

Our professionally filmed, interactive virtual keynotes are packed with CGK's latest research and unexpected insights. From leadership meetings to global customer summits, we'll design an engaging program that aligns with your must-achieve outcomes. Each program is customized to your event, includes unique data, and is highly interactive. We've delivered virtual presentations to leaders in over 100 countries!

### STRATEGIC ADVISORY WORK

We advise executive teams around the world on new ways to solve generational challenges to drive measurable results. Our strategic advisory work ranges from helping car manufacturers launch new vehicles to rethinking legacy CPG brands and informing investment strategies for private equity funds.

### CUSTOM GENERATIONAL RESEARCH

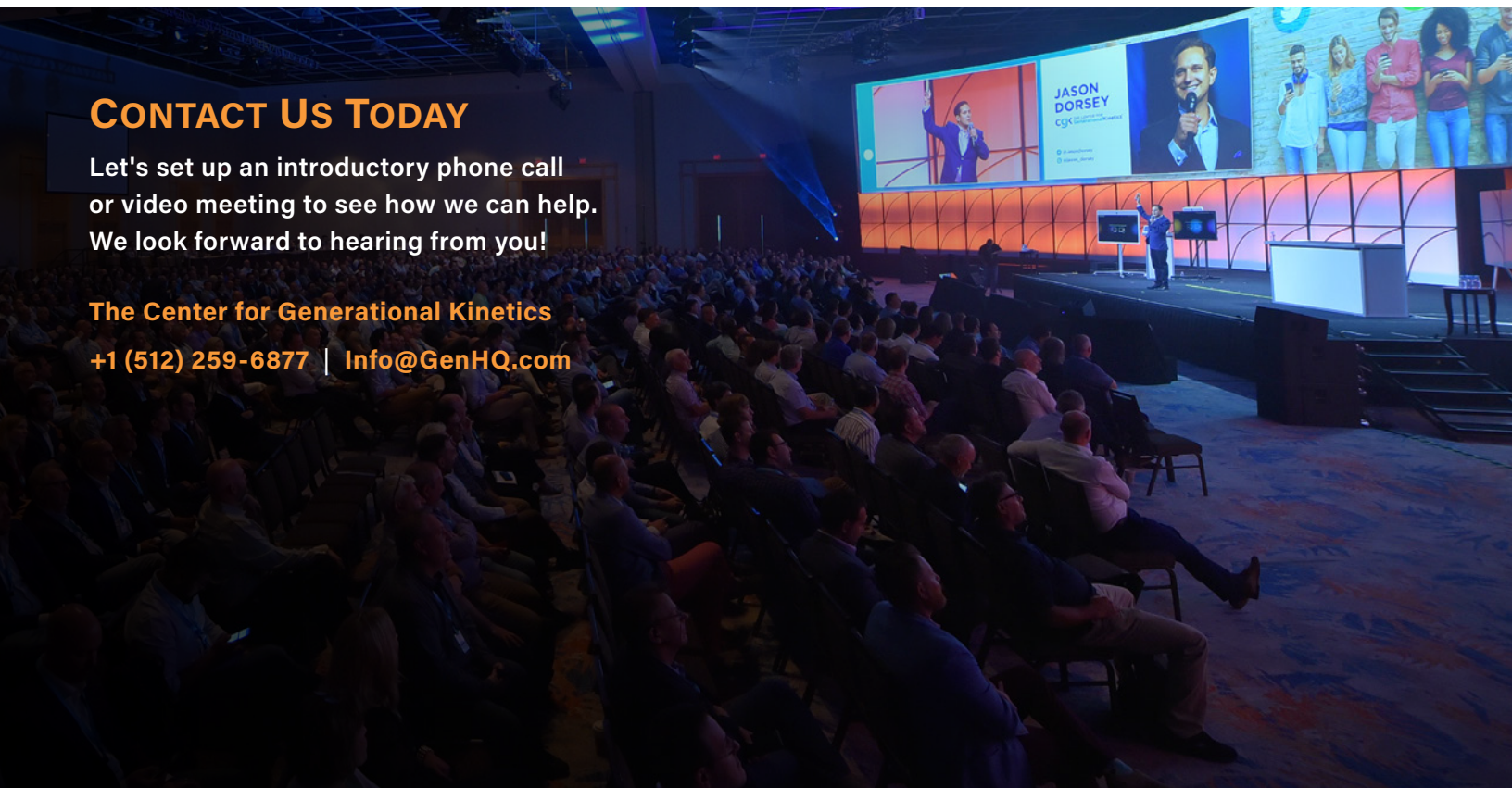
We lead custom research that solves challenges for brands, leaders, and employers. Our team has worked in almost every industry and brings unparalleled research expertise and front line experience, a rare combination.

Our findings are designed to drive immediate action. In addition to uncovering new and unexpected answers to your most important research questions, we can work with you to create reports, webinars, media tours and more to make you the research-based thought leader in your market.

## CONTACT US TODAY

Let's set up an introductory phone call or video meeting to see how we can help. We look forward to hearing from you!

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## ABOUT

# THE CENTER FOR GENERATIONAL KINETICS

The Center for Generational Kinetics (CGK) is the leading generational research, keynote speaking, and strategic advisory firm focused on Gen Z, Millennials, and solving cross-generational challenges. We've taken clients from last to first in employee retention and customer growth.

CGK's team of generational researchers, strategists, and keynote speakers helps leaders around the world. We solve tough generational challenges such as helping leaders adapt to recruit, retain, and train Gen Z employees as well as how to sell and market to each generation of customer.

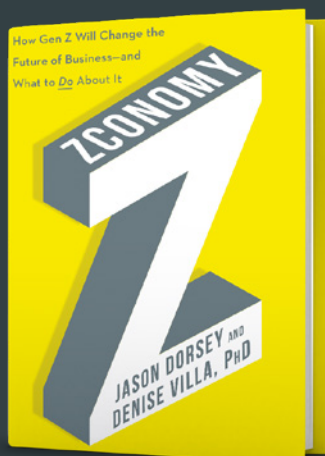
Each year, CGK works with more than 100 clients around the world. These clients range from car manufacturers and global hotel brands to venture capitalists, private equity, insurance companies, hospitals, and pioneering software firms.

CGK's team is frequently quoted in the media about the effect of generational differences on everything from shopping and spending to parenting, work habits, voting, and the impact of social media.

Learn more about The Center for Generational Kinetics and the study's authors at [GenHQ.com](https://www.genhq.com).



Denise Villa, PhD, CEO and Jason Dorsey, President, co-founders of The Center For Generational Kinetics



## ZCONOMY

### How Gen Z Will Change the Future of Business —and What to Do About It

The most complete and authoritative guide to Gen Z, describing how leaders can adapt their employment, sales, marketing, and growth strategies to attract and keep this important generation of customers, employees and trendsetters.

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