

## WHAT KIND OF BOSS ZOOMERS WANT TO HAVE

### Who are ZOOMERS?

Generation Z is most often assumed to be the generation of people born in the 1990s and the first decade of the 21st century. Bruce Horovitz gives 1995 as the starting birth year to describe Gen Z. „(...) Kelley School of Business defines that Generation Z includes children born between 1997 and 2010. The communications and marketing agency Frank N. Magid Associates, founded by US marketing consultant Frank Magid, has named this group Pluralist Generation or Plurals and maintains that this group includes children born from 1997 to the present day. (source: "Wayback Machine", March 4, 2016 [accessed on 2018-02-02], from: [https://pl.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pokolenie\\_Z](https://pl.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pokolenie_Z), [accessed on 2018-11-15]). For my analysis and research, I assume that generation Z includes people born in the years 1995-2010.

What are zoomers like? These are primarily people who from birth have contact with new technologies and the Internet and who check every doubt on the Internet. They also generally have permanent access to it. They often have friends all over the world with whom they communicate via the Internet (the only limitation are time zones, and the communication itself takes place in a unified "globish" language, i.e. in simplified English). Barriers do not exist today thanks to the Internet. Besides, ease of travel contributes to making friends all over the world. Changing the place of residence is no longer the problem as it used to be. It is easy to maintain relationships with "remote" friends. Zoomers are brought up in the world of prosperity, they often get what they want before they even start earning money. Hence, they often feel they deserve everything. They demand a lot, not necessarily from themselves. Therefore, the main objection of employers that I often hear against this group is their demanding nature and high financial expectations. They are able to do several things simultaneously ("multitasking"). It is normal for them to play video games and talk on Skype or on the phone at the same time. As a result, they have trouble focusing on one thing and get bored quickly. They are individualists - rebellious, creative, valuing independence and development.

When I talk to employers and chiefs about Zoomers, I generally hear negative opinions. What they usually say is that Zoomers are demanding, disloyal and that work is not a value for them. They cannot perform basic tasks such as sweeping, punching sheets as they don't know how to use a broom or they don't know what a paper punch is, etc. Some employers, however, also see positive sides of employing Zoomers. Zoomers are great at looking for information on the Internet and they learn quickly. They have no experience and they are young, so they haven't acquired bad habits. They are open and eager to develop. They cope well with new technologies, they are well suited to the IT industry, e-marketing, and social media. They have no complexes, also when it comes to communication in foreign languages. They value speed and practicality. They quickly assess whether something suits them or not, and thus quickly make decisions, also about changing jobs. They combine many activities in their lives. In the past, even for my generation (born in 1981), work was a value in itself. People devoted a lot to work and gave up many things for it. Generation Z treats work as one of the elements of life, not the most important thing. There are situations when someone changes jobs because the schedule was not flexible enough to reconcile work with interests, e.g. training in the gym. Hobbies, university, family, girlfriend, second or third job - Zoomers do not give up anything. They know that they will find another job, and if not, they can always count on parents, for example. To keep such a young employee in your company, you need to be a flexible employer, create an interesting work environment and generally be a very good boss.

(source: own experience and article about the Z generation on the website: [www.poradnikprzedsiębiorcy.pl](http://www.poradnikprzedsiębiorcy.pl)).

### **Who is a good boss?**

Leader, manager - what term to use when it comes to boss or supervisor? "Leader" and "Manager", do these terms mean the same thing? If not, what's the difference? Here, I will try to explain it briefly.

Abraham Zaleznik, a professor at Harvard Business School, published an article in 1977 "Managers and Leaders. Are They Different?" (source: <https://www.hbrp.pl/b/menedzerowie-i-liderzy-czym-roznia-sie-od-siebie/NSDBEx6c>; accessed on 27.06.2017 (translator's note), from: Harvard Business Review, Podręcznik menedżera, Poznań 2017). The article caused much controversy. The professor claimed that "(...) scientific management theorists, with their charts and research on work efficiency, do not see the other half of the picture - which is defined by inspiration, vision and complex human nature. And that's what leadership is all about", argued Zaleznik. (Harvard Business Review, Podręcznik menedżera, Poznań 2017, p. 21). Another Harvard Business School professor, John Kotter, went further in specifying the differences between "manager", "director" and "leader". According to him, "(...) *management* is about responding to complexity. To get a job done, managers must focus on control and predictability, and they must organize processes that will produce orderly outcomes. Planning, budgeting, and staffing are all management activities. When you draw up task assignments, for example, or discuss optimizing a production line, you're wearing the manager hat. *Leadership* by contrast" explains Kotter "is about producing and responding to change. Leaders see opportunities in the instabilities that their managerial alter egos want to tame, and they emphasize ideas over process. Setting direction, aligning people, and providing motivation are all leadership activities. (...)" Kotter argues that "management and leadership are complementary modes of being and need not be in conflict. The most successful managers in today's challenging business environment leverage both management and leadership competencies selectively to benefit the organization." (Op. Cit., pp. 21-22). It can be said that an effective boss should be a manager and leader in one person - a manager as it comes to technical and administrative matters, a leader in terms of vision, strategy and motivation. What kind of person is an effective boss? What should a leader do? What features does a leader have? Daniel Goleman is one of the people who looked for answers to these questions and found them. According to him, "(...) the only task of a leader is to achieve good results." (Daniel Goleman, "Przywódstwo, które przynosi efekty" p. 1, in: Harvard Business Review, "O zarządzaniu ludźmi", Warsaw 2012.).

So what are effective leaders like? What are they doing? Goleman cites research by the consulting firm Hay/McBer, conducted on a sample of 3,871 managers from around the world who answered the question of who an effective leader is. He writes: "The research found six distinct leadership styles, each springing from different components of emotional intelligence. (...) The most revealing conclusion from this research is that (...) leaders with the best results do not rely on only one leadership style; they use most of them in a given week – seamlessly and in different measure – depending on the business situation. (...) *Coercive leaders* demand immediate

compliance. *Authoritative leaders* mobilize people toward a vision. *Affiliative leaders* create emotional bonds and harmony. *Democratic leaders* build consensus through participation. On the other hand, *pacesetting leaders* expect excellence and self-direction, while *coaching leaders* develop people for the future. (...) Research shows that the most effective leaders have skills in the following areas of emotional intelligence: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. There are six basic styles of leadership, each of which uses different combinations of the key elements of emotional intelligence." (Op. Cit. pp. 2-3).

### **The boss of dreams - what kind of boss do zoomers want to work with?**

From April to November 2018, I met nearly 40 people in order to find answer to the question: who do the young employees, zoomers, want to work with. What are their expectations from their bosses. The people I spoke to met two conditions:

1. They worked under a contract (employment or mandate contract).
2. They were born between 1995-2010.

I conducted five group meetings in which participants, first in small groups, then openly, were to answer the question: What should the boss be like? What should their perfect boss like? What do they expect from a boss or supervisor? There were also two meetings where the participants, individually, on sheets of paper, anonymously, answered the above questions in writing.

### **I have gathered the following features of an ideal boss or a supervisor with whom zoomers want to work:**

1. A boss with a human face - a normal person who is equal to employees, is a partner and does not exalt himself or herself.
2. Involved in work of the team - is a true leader and member of the team.
3. Pays attention to employees - person who will be eager to suggest something, explain, appreciate, talk, take the initiative, remember about the employees and about important things for them.
4. Is able to listen - works on the basis of an open-door policy.
5. Tolerant - respects the views of others, does not judge by appearances.
6. Assertive - can set limits; controls and supervises work of the team and implementation of tasks.
7. Forbearing - gives the right to make mistakes; understands differences between people. Not all are the same, not all can do the same, not all learn at the same pace, etc.
8. Professional - inspires respect, is a trustworthy and honest person, does not divide employees into better and worse ones. Performs his or her duties well - is able to adequately assign tasks, taking into account not only the skills of a given employee, but also a worker's condition on a given working day.
9. Mannerly - can behave in a courteous way in any situation.
10. Demanding - clearly presents expectations, gives feedback, develops the team.

Below, I present individual descriptions of respondents:

Dream boss/boss/leader/supervisor is:

1. Kind but a bit demanding; appreciating efforts of employees; cooperating; helping; understanding; keeping his or her word.
2. A person who can clearly communicate information; understanding; mobilizes to work; stimulates creativity; can be trusted.
3. Provides assistance on both corporate and private level; listens; has a sense of humor; works well together; exchanges interests and experience; friendly relations; equal treatment.
4. Helpful; understanding; encouraging; honest.
5. Nice; self-possessed; calm; smiling.
6. Perfectionist; accurate; precise; demanding; open to suggestions; open-door policy.

To keep a generation Z employee in your company, you need to be a flexible employer, with a properly prepared team of good bosses - listening, understanding, supportive, shaping a creative work environment, demanding and challenging, thanks to which they will be able to learn a lot. Bosses should also be understanding towards people who combine many activities and will not always be able to appear at work. The youngest like to be concrete and to be treated with respect, without condescension. They want to be treated as partners, on an equal level, they don't need a boss who is a statuesque figure somewhere on a pedestal. They value a sense of humor and having a good time.

I have already drawn some conclusions for myself. I encourage you to do the same.