

GEN Z & INSURANCE

Why Gen Z is ambivalent about working in insurance

& what the industry can do
to win them over



Seeking out solid ground in uncertain times

While Millennials chased passion and purpose, often burning out along the way, Gen Z is after something different.

Raised amid a global pandemic, economic instability, and AI disruption, Gen Z is under no illusion that a full-time job will deliver what it promised to previous generations: purpose, passion, and stability. So they're taking a different approach to work and financial stability. They're pursuing side hustles and diversifying their incomes, not as a replacement for a stable full-time job, but as a supplement to it.

So, how do careers in insurance fit into this mindset? On paper, the industry offers much of what Gen Z is seeking: stability, benefits, and decent pay. But perceptions of the sector as rigid, outdated, and misaligned with their values are keeping young people at bay.

Facing the looming talent crisis in insurance

Insurance, often dismissed as dull or outdated, has something Gen Z wants: stability. But if the industry hopes to attract the next generation of talent, stability alone won't be enough. Insurance must rethink how work is experienced from the inside out—from the culture and tools employees use every day to the pathways for growth and impact it offers.

With 400,000 insurance workers projected to leave the workforce by 2026, the stakes couldn't be higher.

This report draws on survey data and in-depth interviews with Gen Z workers to uncover what they're really looking for in a career, why so many are wary of insurance, and what the industry can do to create better, more human experiences—inside and out.



Our research: a generation navigating work and stability

To understand how Gen Z is approaching work, stability, and financial security in a time of constant change, we took a two-pronged approach: a national survey to identify patterns and a series of in-depth interviews to bring their experiences to life.

A mixed method study

Nationwide survey

We surveyed 519 Gen Zers, ages 18–28; born 1997–2007, and asked about:

- Financial goals and habits
- Perceptions of the insurance industry
- How they think about work, now and in the future

While not nationally representative, this sample captures a wide range of voices across income, education, and geography—offering a rich, grounded snapshot of Gen Z’s lived experiences.

In-depth interviews

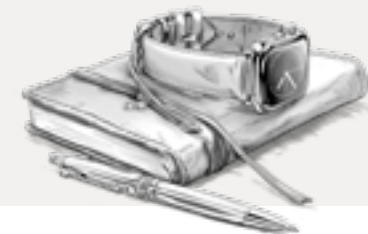
We spoke with 12 Gen Zers from diverse backgrounds—across gender, education, race, income, and family roles, exploring:

- How they feel about the idea of working in the insurance industry
- What makes them feel financially secure
- How their ideas about and expectations of work are evolving

Their stories, and emotional nuance bring depth to the data, conveying more than what Gen Z is doing, but how they are feeling and why.

The people behind the data

- 58% are employed full-time
- 19% are currently in school
- Only 13% consider their current job a career
- Work across sectors, with the highest concentration (27%) working in retail and hospitality.



Findings & Insights



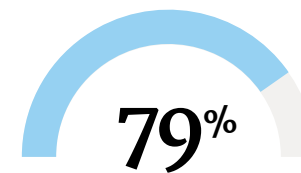
Gen Z is ambivalent about working in insurance

Despite the looming talent shortage, the insurance industry is also facing a deeper challenge: a perception problem. Our research reveals a generation torn when it comes to their views on the insurance industry.

- 55% say they have a positive view of the insurance industry
- 49% say they have no interest in working in insurance
- 14% say there is nothing that could convince them to work in insurance

There's a marked ambivalence, revealing both opportunity and serious challenges for the industry to overcome.

On the surface, insurance offers what Gen Z says they want: stability, benefits, and long-term opportunity. But beneath that is a deeper ambivalence, shaped by concerns about ethics, flexibility, relevance, and workplace culture.

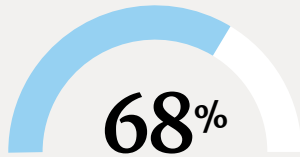


Have never considered pursuing a job in insurance

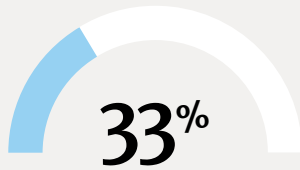
Cake & Arrow Gen Z Survey, 2025

There's a clear gap between Gen Z's drive to grow and their awareness of insurance as a viable career path

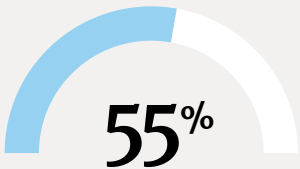
Gen Z is motivated and mobile—insurance has a window to engage...



Are currently prioritizing their career

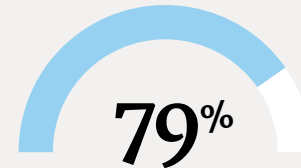


Are actively looking to move on from their current role

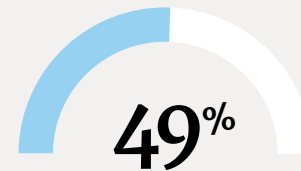


Have a positive view of the insurance industry

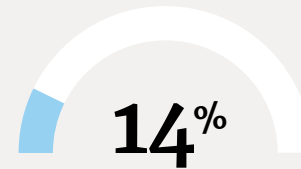
...but most have never considered insurance as a career—and many would actively rule it out



Have never considered pursuing a job in insurance



Have no interest in working in insurance



Are not persuadable—they'll never consider a job in insurance

1. Gen Z wants to do fulfilling work that aligns with their values

For Gen Z, doing work that matters means working for a company with ethical standards they can get behind

The reasons behind Gen Z's ambivalence about working insurance vary, but our qualitative research found that values alignment is a core concern.

Many of the Gen Zers we spoke to expressed ethical concerns about the business practices of insurance companies and felt that working in insurance would require compromising their values.

Among those who raised ethical concerns, they believed that the industry is too profit-driven, prioritizing shareholder value over delivering on its commitments to customers, especially when it comes to how they deal with claims. For instance,

11 out of 12 of our research participants agreed that “insurance companies will do whatever they can to deny claims.”

While Gen Z may feel that a passion job is a pipe dream, they do want to find fulfillment in work, and many feel that compromising their core values to work in an unethical industry would make that impossible.

For some, fulfillment can mean helping people, for others it can be as simple as knowing that the company they work for provides a product or a service that people want and need. Jobs in insurance don't always check these boxes.

41%

Say doing meaningful work that makes an impact is among the most important things to them in a job

Cake & Arrow Gen Z Survey, 2025

Ethical concerns—especially around claims—make it hard for Gen Z to imagine insurance careers as fulfilling

Concerns about fairness, transparency, and impact are pushing Gen Z away from the industry.

“

What might make me consider a job in insurance is if insurance companies had ethics I could actually stand behind, instead of relying on my ethics to navigate their unethical business practices on behalf of their customers. I just don't want to be a part of that.

Zoe, 24, Computer Chip Engineering PhD Candidate

“

If I knew I could actually help people—not just, you know, deny claims—I might consider it. But I highly doubt any insurance company is really fair and equitable in their approach to doing business.

Charles, 18, Computer Engineering Undergraduate

2. Gen Z is looking for stability and flexibility

As the stability offered by full-time work becomes more elusive, Gen Z has come to see flexibility as a non-negotiable. Where does this leave insurance?

41%

Say flexible work options would make them more likely to consider an insurance job.

39%

Say that strong work-life balance would make them more likely to consider an insurance job.



Cake & Arrow Gen Z Survey, 2025

When we asked Gen Z what the most important thing is to them when it comes to work, 66% said financial stability. But beneath this seemingly obvious response lies a deeper truth: for Gen Z, working a full-time job doesn't necessarily guarantee economic stability.

While they still see a full-time job as extremely important, they don't always see it as sufficient. That's why many also view having a steady side hustle as equally important. Job stability matters, but it's not a given, making the flexibility to pursue other income streams a non-negotiable when it comes to a job.

So, where does this leave the insurance industry?

When it comes to offering stability, insurance gets high marks from Gen Z. This is the rare case where the industry's reputation for being traditional is, in some regards, working in its favor.

In our qualitative interviews, we found that stability was the most appealing aspect of insurance careers, especially compared to industries being disrupted or decimated by AI and economic volatility. In this environment of upheaval, insurance feels like solid ground.

But accompanying this perception of stability is the perception that insurance is rigid, overly corporate, and inflexible. In this regard, insurance is failing to resonate with the expectations of Gen Z workers.

Gen Z is conflicted about careers in insurance, which they see as stable but too rigid

They value stability, but won't sacrifice flexibility, autonomy, or work-life balance to get it.

“

I get the vibe that a lot of insurance companies are like... every day, full return to the office. That's definitely not for me.”

Anjali, 23, Product Manager

“

What would it take for me to accept a job in insurance? Very lax restrictions or requirements around when and where I work, and a very, very high competitive salary.”

Michaela, 29, Entrepreneur & Small Business Owner

3. Gen Z has a narrow view of what a career in insurance might look like

From call centers to cubicles, Gen Z's perception of what a job in insurance might look like is largely shaped by their own negative experiences with insurance companies

When we asked research participants to describe how they imagine a job in insurance, the most common response was boring. Gen Z tends to have a limited conception of what a job in insurance might look like. When they think about insurance jobs, the kinds of things that come to mind are claims, customer service, and paperwork. They conceive of insurance work as stressful, tedious, and most of all boring.

These conceptions of insurance aren't so much judgments of the industry and the work that people who work in it do, they're reflections of how invisible much of the work that comprises the insurance industry is to people outside of it.

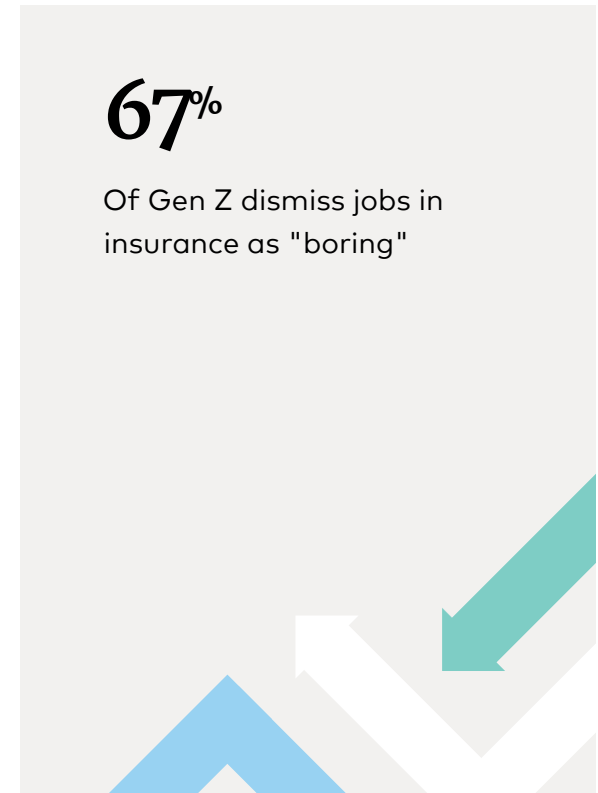
Gen Z's exposure to insurance careers is limited, and when they do encounter them, it's often at the point of stress: a denied claim, a billing issue, or a long phone queue. These experiences tend to dominate their perception of the industry. They rarely see or even hear about the behind-the-scenes roles that involve tech, data, research, design, or strategy—let alone anything innovative or future-facing.

“I just don't want to be on the phone all day in a cubicle being yelled at by some random person.”

— Tekalegn, 19, Marketing & Communications Undergraduate

67%

Of Gen Z dismiss jobs in insurance as "boring"



Free Brands The Re:Generation Report 2024

Even when skills might translate, insurance is rarely Gen Z's first choice

They don't see insurance as a place where their skills or ambitions can thrive.

“

I would consider working in insurance if I couldn't do the job I do now. I manage data, I manage clients, I manage programs, so I imagine those skills would transfer. It's just not as appealing as what I get to do now.”

Ian, 28, Agricultural Consultant

“

I think I'd be decent at it, but I definitely don't think I would enjoy it.”

Zoe, 24, Computer Chip Engineering PhD Candidate

If there were insurance roles tied to things I'm more interested in, like sustainability, I'd be into that. But if you asked me straight up, 'Is insurance where you want to work?' I'd say no.”

Bryan, 24, Financial Analyst

4. Gen Z is seeking a dynamic career journey, not a corporate ladder

While Gen Z values the stability of the insurance industry, they're wary of corporate environments where career growth is steady but slow and culture is stuffy.

Although a significant number of the Gen Z we surveyed currently work at large corporate companies, only 16% expressed interest in working for these same kinds of companies in the future.

For Gen Z, the word "corporate" is loaded. Not only does it imply a certain set of values, but it also carries with it ideas of stagnation and rigidity.

While many Gen Zers (50%) feel they are gaining skills in their current roles, fewer see opportunities to grow (44%), and only 13% view their current work as a career.

When we dug into these findings in qualitative interviews, we learned that despite half of Gen Zers feeling like they are

learning new skills in their jobs, many feel invisible in their roles, like advancement opportunities are disconnected from their professional achievements, and frustrated by not seeing the impact of their work.

They seek to work in dynamic and creative cultures that recognize their accomplishments, offer autonomy, value their contributions, and provide clear opportunities to grow.

In their minds, the corporate ladder of insurance is more a place to get stuck than it is something to ascend.

37%

Currently work for a large company or corporation

Only 16%

Express interest in working for a large company or corporation in the future



Gallup, 2025

Gen Z wants to work where they can grow, contribute, and be heard

They're seeking fast-moving, inclusive environments, which they don't tend to associate with insurance.

“

I really like fast-paced work—where every hour feels like it's contributing to something real, something the customer can see or that drives an outcome.

In larger companies, that gets harder. There are more layers, more planning, and longer timelines. In insurance, if you're working on something like a new system roll out or a campaign, it can take years to see the impact.”

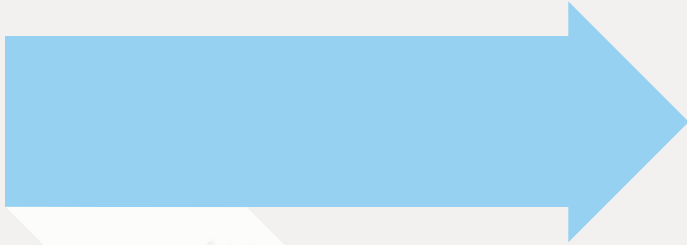
Anjali, 23, Product Manager

“

I'm looking for a workplace that's inclusive—where there's space for everyone to speak, even if you're younger or less senior. A culture without blame, where you're encouraged to try new ideas and experiment. Where hard work and merit matter more than politics. That's not at all what I imagine the insurance industry to be like.”

Jade, 25, Project Manager

A new relationship to work



Redefining the meaning of work

Gen Z is rethinking what work is and what it's for. They're not chasing passion jobs like Millennials once did, but they're not entirely cynical either. For them, a single job or career path isn't expected to deliver purpose, stability, and identity all at once. There's too much uncertainty to pin their future on one employer, and they've seen firsthand how going all in results in burnout.

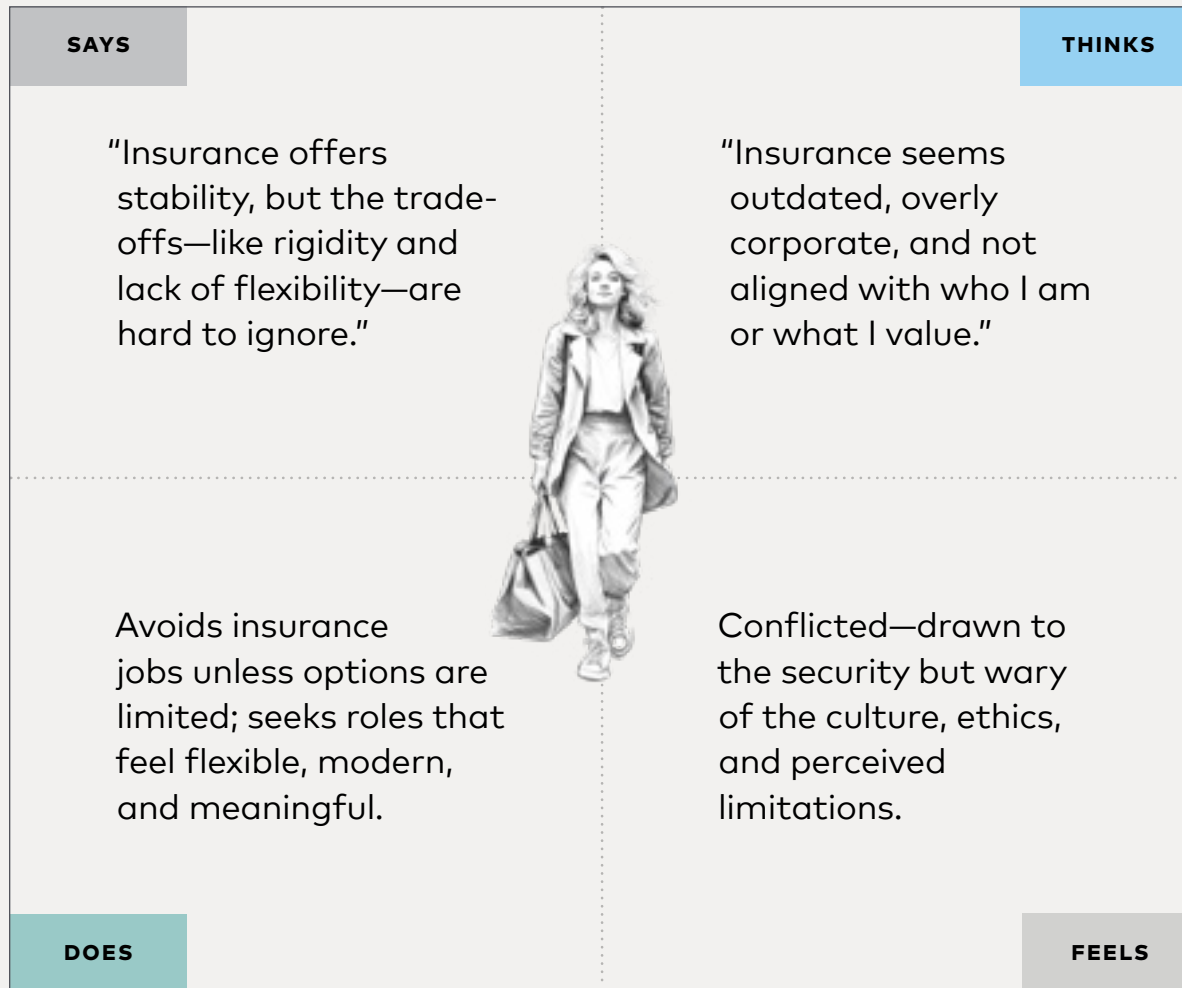
Instead, they're looking for work that fits into a broader life strategy, one that allows them to grow, build skills, and stay aligned with their values, without losing themselves in the process. Across different mindsets and starting points, four needs consistently rose to the top:

- A desire to do work that makes an impact and aligns with their values
- Flexibility to grow on their own terms, beyond the 9–5
- Clarity on how skills translate into meaningful, non-menial roles
- A dynamic, inclusive culture where contributions are recognized regardless of age or tenure

Understanding Gen Z's varied mindsets can help insurers meet them where they are. But translating that understanding into action—through better experiences, messaging, and opportunities—is what comes next.

Externalizing Gen Z's ambivalence

Drawing on what we hear from Gen Z in our research, we mapped the disconnect between their values and their feelings about working in insurance.



Pains

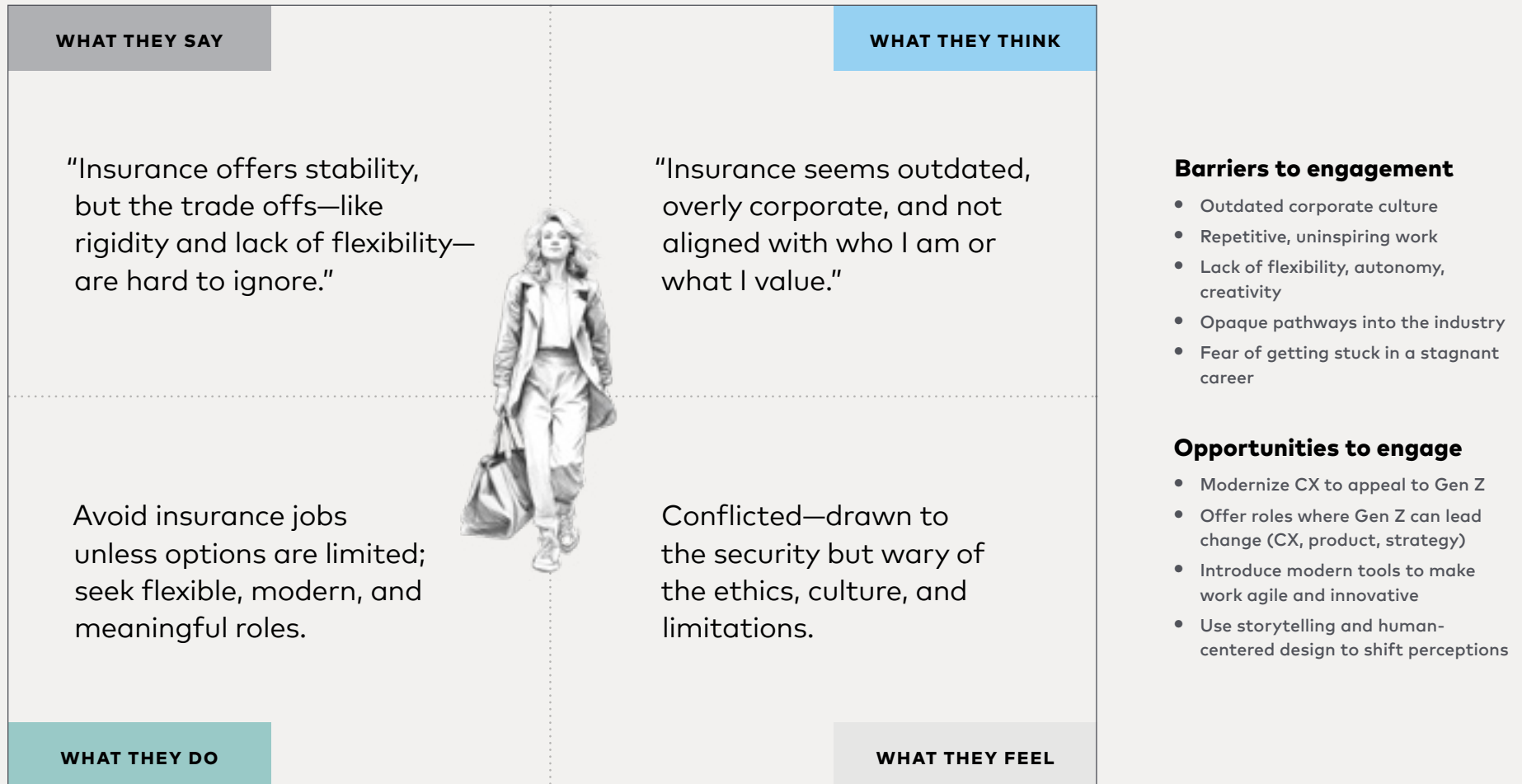
- Stability comes at the cost of flexibility, autonomy, and creativity
- The culture feels corporate and outdated, disconnected from Gen Z's values.
- The work is seen as repetitive, process-heavy, and uninspired.
- Pathways into the industry feel opaque and uninspiring.
- There's a fear of getting stuck in systems that won't evolve.

Gains

- Stability doesn't have to mean stagnation—modern, flexible work can fuel innovation.
- Design roles let Gen Z modernize outdated systems with impact.
- Modern work tools can make insurance feel agile and innovative.
- Storytelling and human-centered innovation can shift perceptions and draw in Gen Z.
- Modernizing CX makes insurance more appealing as a Gen Z career path.
- Roles in CX, product, and strategy let Gen Z lead change from within.

Externalizing Gen Z's ambivalence

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Redesigning the insurance industry for Gen Z

If the industry wants to close the gap and make insurance an industry that excites Gen Z, then it has to more than rethink job descriptions, but the experience of work itself.

1 Design customer experiences that reflect modern values

Build trust through experiences that are clear, empathetic, and fair. Gen Z notices when things feel outdated or transactional, especially in moments that matter.

2 Make modern work the default, not the exception

Ditch rigid roles and dated processes. Prioritize autonomy, flexibility, and digital tools to reflect how Gen Z already works—and wants to work.

3 Support sustainable, adaptable career journeys

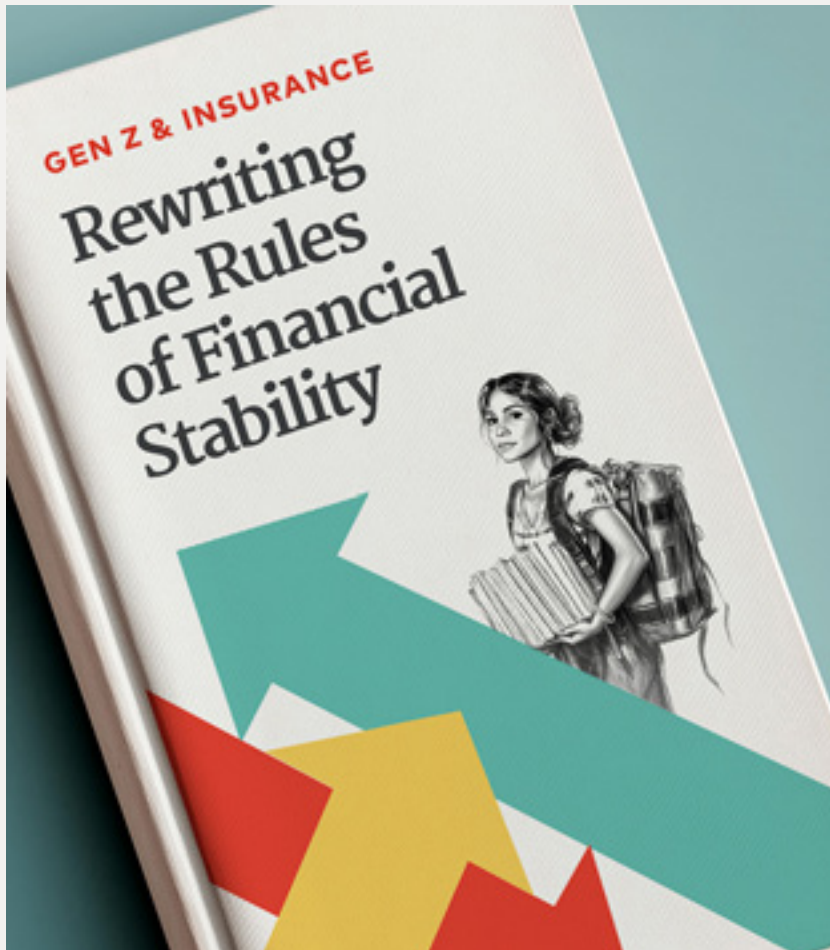
Offer flexible roles, adaptive benefits, and entry points that reflect today's non-linear career paths. Gen Z needs options that match their economic reality—not outdated assumptions.

4 Give Gen Z a hand in re-imagining legacy experiences

They've grown up distrusting these systems, now let them fix them. Bring Gen Z into CX roles where they can modernize outdated touch points and make insurance feel more human, intuitive, and future-ready.

5 Reposition insurance as a platform for impact and innovation

Show how insurance can do more than manage risk, it can support communities, re-imagine outdated systems, and drive change. Help Gen Z see a future where their values and ideas have real influence.



RELATED REPORT

Gen Z is rewriting the rules of financial stability. What does this mean for insurance?

In the face of economic uncertainty and declining trust in institutions, Gen Z is seeking tools that offer structure, consistency, and long-term support—without sacrificing their sense of control.

Based on a mixed-methods research study—including a national survey and in-depth qualitative interviews—this companion report explores how insurers can meet Gen Z’s evolving needs through messaging, products, and services that reflect their values and worldviews.

Download the full report to learn how Gen Z is redefining stability, and how insurance can evolve to meet evolving needs and expectations.

About Cake & Arrow

Experience design and product innovation for Insurance

We believe empathy sparks opportunity. Our human-centered design approach helps carriers, distributors, and service providers create breakthrough digital experiences that drive results. For more than 20 years, we've helped the insurance industry make buying, selling, and servicing insurance better for everyone, by design.

Contact us to learn more about how we can support your business.

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