# Challenges and Proposals for Training Generation Z through Corporate Education

*Desafios e Propostas para o Treinamento da Geração Z por meio da Educação Corporativa*

*Retos y Propuestas para Formar a la Generación Z a través de la Educación Corporativa*

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**Abstract**: This article addresses the challenges organizations and Human Resources (HR) managers face in hiring and retaining Generation Z talent. These individuals, who grew up in a virtual environment, stand out for their technological skills, creativity, and multitasking ability. However, corporations have faced difficulties in hiring and retaining these talents due to their different worldview and their singular behavior, which values freedom and autonomy at work with less supervision. A qualitative research was conducted to identify the challenges faced by HR professionals. The results show Generation Z has difficulties carrying out teamwork, emotional intelligence problems, and behavioral lapses. As a strategy to overcome these challenges, implementing corporate education in organizations is proposed to develop the limiting skills of these professionals. In addition, the engagement of HR professionals is considered, especially in companies that do not have a Corporate University, as a strategy for adopting this resource in training and developing employees of the studied generation and, thus, improving the retention of these talents in the job market.

**Keywords** : *Challenges; Generation Z; Corporate Education; Proposals*

**Resumen**: Este artículo analiza los retos a los que se enfrentan las organizaciones y los responsables de Recursos Humanos (RRHH) a la hora de contratar y retener a los talentos de la Generación Z. Estos individuos, que crecieron en un entorno virtual, se destacan por sus habilidades tecnológicas, creatividad y capacidad multitarea. Sin embargo, las empresas han tenido dificultades para contratar y retener a estos talentos debido a su diferente visión del mundo y a su comportamiento único, que valora la libertad y la autonomía en el trabajo con menos supervisión. Se llevó a cabo un estudio cualitativo para identificar los retos a los que se enfrentan los profesionales de RRHH y los resultados muestran que la Generación Z tiene dificultades para trabajar en equipo, presenta problemas de inteligencia emocional y fallos de comportamiento. Como estrategia para superarlos, se propone la implantación de la Educación Corporativa en las organizaciones, con el objetivo de

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desarrollar las competencias límite de estos profesionales. Además, se considera que la implicación de los profesionales de RRHH, especialmente en las empresas que no disponen de Universidad Corporativa, es una estrategia para adoptar este recurso en la formación y desarrollo de los empleados de la generación estudiada y así mejorar la retención de estos talentos en el mercado laboral.

***Palabras clave***: *Retos; Generación Z; Educación Corporativa; Propuestas*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Several investigations have already been carried out to understand Generation Z's characteristics and behaviors in the corporate world. Therefore, a study that addresses the challenges of organizations when training these young talents is fundamental, as these are people who are already inserted into the job market driven by many perspectives and values. Another striking characteristic is that this generation dominates technological tools, and this reality requires companies and managers to adapt meticulously to attract, retain and manage these employees effectively.

Digital transformation has had a significant impact on Human Resources (HR) practices, requiring professionals in the field to reevaluate methods and strategies to understand the expectations of Generation Z, adopt innovative processes, and, in this way, achieve effective results, generating value for the company and strengthening it in the market. In addition, technologies such as digitalization and automation have optimized processes and transformed the work environment, making it more collaborative and efficient. Companies that invest in technology and develop the skills needed to take advantage of these changes are better prepared to face future challenges.

In this context, Corporate Education (CE) emerges as a fundamental tool to promote and provide an evolution in Training and Development (T&D) in organizations, as it can offer positive perspectives and high results. Therefore, this study investigates which elements can interfere with the retention of Generation Z talents, considering their creative and innovative contributions to technological, social and environmental projects.

Based on the general objective presented in the previous topic, the specific objectives developed for this work were to map the main challenges faced by HR professionals in strategic planning, assess the impact of digital transformation and automation on HR practices, and propose innovative methods of strategic planning in HR. Through a bibliographic review and interviews with HR managers, this study seeks to offer suggestions and proposals aligned with Corporate Education (CE) to address effective methodologies in their application in corporate environments.

## 2. THEORETICAL BASIS

### 2.1 Generation Z and its characteristics

To understand the particularities of Generation Z, it is necessary to contextualize all generations: *Baby Boomers*, Generation X, Generation Y and, finally, Generation Z. However, there are disagreements among scholars regarding the exact dates. In the view of Lima (2012), for example, the *Baby Boomer Generation* refers to those born between 1940 and 1964; Generation X, between 1965 and 1980; and Generation Y, between 1981 and 1995. According to Jordão (2016 apud NOVAES, 2018), Generation Z is made up of individuals who were born from the year 1995 onwards.

Generation Z has influential characteristics imprinted in its DNA, called ' Gen Z,' a term used to describe its multifaceted personality. This generation developed in a context in which technology was already established and predominant, so as a result, it has a generation with advanced technological attributes in several spheres, which differs from previous generations, as these people can perform several activities simultaneously, such as listening to music, watching TV or interactive games, they are accustomed to digital environments and games in which they obtain immediate results. As Bublitz (2012) explains, the letter 'Z,' for this generation, comes from the word 'zap,' that is, to change channels continuously using a remote control, looking for something out of habit.

These individuals are also engaged with environmental issues and social inclusion and are constantly seeking change, which can have positive but also limiting aspects. Despite being an inspiration in technologies for previous generations, they still have difficulty adapting to current business scenarios, as dependence on technological stimuli interferes with social relationships, compromising their communication. According to Borges (2013), Generation Z can interact with the world using several technologies simultaneously but lacks communication and social interaction.

They are people with a very latent sense of freedom; they tend to take risks in various spheres of life in search of knowledge and information, thus becoming experts in all technologies available on the market. Tapscott (2010 apud BOLDRINI; LUCENA, 2014) lists the characteristics of Generation Z, also called by him the 'Internet Generation', as people who have the freedom to try new things, customize products and shopping experiences, are investigative and consistently seek to check information. They have integrity as a synonym for loyalty and transparency and collaborate, mainly through digital technologies. Entertainment is associated with almost all life experiences, starting with work.

Speed is a natural expectation for those accustomed to instant responses and innovation is a continuous mode of the 'Internet Generation' (TAPSCOTT, 2010 apud BOLDRINI; LUCENA, 2014). However, they do not stick to organizations, and this instability does not allow them to 'put down roots' like previous generations. They tend to migrate from one company to another from time to time, making efficient Training and development complex, as these employees end up burdening organizations since these talents are not retained, systematically causing turnover. above expectations and, consequently, generate losses.

## 2.2 Corporate Education

Corporate Education (CE) is a strategic tool focused on people management in which their skills are trained and developed to benefit the organizational sector. The term ' Corporate Education' was created in 1956 by Raph Cordiner of General Electric in the United States. Designed as a model to seek greater efficiency in training for the educational development of employees in the business sector, this approach acts strategically, requiring rapid perception of knowledge. Quartiero and Bianchetti (2005) state that Corporate Education began in the United States when companies spread this movement to achieve market leadership.

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In Brazil, CE emerged in the 1990s during the government of Fernando Collor de Mello. Configured in the ideology of the globalized market, CE is a model of educational strategy initiated by organizations through the Brazilian Quality and Productivity Program (PBQP) (Martins, 2004). For Meister (1999), Corporate Education aims to enhance the development of employees, suppliers and customers, optimizing organizational strategies by establishing *lifelong learning.*

Éboli (2004) adds that establishing a CE plan requires following some principles that stimulate a behavioral understanding based on technical, cultural and structural knowledge. According to the author, CE is a management system focused on people and their skills, fostering the improvement of attentive and lasting learning of internal and external employees, emphasizing organizational objectives, goals, values and purposes (ÉBOLI, 2008).

## 2.3 Human Resources Challenges

Currently, organizations face turnover mainly associated with Generation Z. One of these reasons is the high demand, which can lead to demotivation and promote job transition. According to Souza, Ayarza, and Spiller (2022), few organizations are prepared to give importance to the behaviors of this generation. Thus, organizations delegate many activities, and young people from Generation Z feel overwhelmed and give up their positions since these individuals are looking for a good salary and want to be recognized and valued. They also seek great benefits, an excellent work environment, opportunities to stand out with growth and development, and personal and professional life balance.

And with different expectations for both work and their career, Generation Z stands out from the rest. They need professional appreciation and such work to involve their emotional and social needs, in other words, to fulfill all their psychological states (SANTANA, 2020). However, due to constant changes, adaptations, and digital and technological innovations, it is possible to observe, create, understand, listen and optimize behaviors to develop and adapt organizations in their internal communication, languages and expressions.

As explained by Silva and Diniz (2022), Human Resources carries out all of the organizations' hiring processes and works on all requirements so that these employees remain engaged, motivated, and informed of all departments to achieve a good and participatory organizational climate. Despite the assessments and strategies used to train Generation Z young people through CE, retaining these young people is still a challenge for the HR department of organizations. According to Gnoatto (2022), organizations must work to retain talent, using technology and strategies such as evaluation and performance feedback, teamwork, assertive communication, career planning, and interaction with other departments.

## 3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This article used a qualitative descriptive approach based on the data collected. Vieira and Zouain (2005) state that qualitative research gives crucial importance

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to the testimonies of the social actors involved and to the meanings and discourses that they transmit. Thus, this type of research is valued by the detailed description of the elements and phenomena that comprise it. Semi-structured interviews were used.

According to Marconi and Lakatos (2004), the interview is a research technique that represents one of the basic instruments for data collection. It is an oral conversation between two or more people, one of whom is the interviewer and the other the interviewee. The data were collected through a questionnaire via *Google Forms* with the Authorization Term attached to the declaration by the academic research. The responses were transcribed literally for the complete absorption of the results, which were later analyzed according to the analysis technique of Flores (1994).

## 4. RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

We sought to conduct targeted interviews with professionals in the Human Resources area with knowledge and/or experience in Corporate Universities (CU) with intergenerational learning to identify the challenges corporations face when hiring and retaining young talent from Generation Z in the job market. Among other results, it is interesting to note that, among the respondents, 3 belong to Generation X; 1 to Generation Y and 1 to Generation Z. Thus, the opinions analyzed include professionals from previous generations and those who belong to the generation studied. This and other data are presented in Figure 1.

Table 1 – List of Research Participants

| Participant | Gender | Age | Education | Position | Time in Function | Company Size |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Feminine | 23 | Superior | Ass Am RH | 3 years | World |
| 2 | Feminine | 33 | Superior | DP Analyst | 9 years | Average |
| 3 | Feminine | 45 | Postgraduate studies | HR Analyst | 12 years | Small |
| 4 | Feminine | 45 | Superior | HR Analyst | 20 years | Small |
| 5 | Masculine | 47 | Postgraduate studies | Project Manager | 6 months | Average |

Source: prepared by the authors (2023)

The interviewees agreed that Generation Z stands out in several factors, such as career development, hybrid work, benefits, health and engagement. However, many challenges remain to be overcome, such as impatience, lack of attitude and qualifications. Table 1 details these views.

Regarding the generation gap, most interviewees stated that Generation Z resists commands from more experienced or older managers. However, the number of this generation in management is not yet significant, so their conduct was not analyzed. Organizations' models, strategies and innovations to promote short-, medium- and long-term results were highlighted: training, gamification, development paths, career plans, engagement, leadership guidance, *feedback models* and behavioral training.

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Table 1 (part 1) - Meta category

| Code | Category Definitions | Units |
|------|---------------------|-------|
| CPV | Includes how they behave when faced with professional challenges about "opposing " points of view. | R1- They are willing to discuss their positions without fear of their age group.<br><br>R2- Well<br><br>R3- They are very inquisitive.<br><br>R4- Questioners, skeptics and resisters<br>R5- In a variety of ways. Some go beyond the professional with personal issues. Irritability, reactivity |
| CAC | Does it include the behavior of this generation towards collective activities? | R1- More individualistic but open to challenges<br><br>R2-They have good behavior<br><br>R3- Sometimes, they rely on others to avoid compromising themselves.<br><br>R4- There is a little more difficulty regarding behavior and posture<br><br>R5- Objective to show your personal skills and stand out within the group |
| IEO | Does it include having emotional intelligence to solve organizational problems? | R1- Yes<br>R2- Yes<br><br>R3- Not yet. They would have to be willing to develop.<br><br>R4-No<br><br>R5- No, they are not prepared for that. |
| PIG | Includes innovative proposals to optimize the management of Generation Z talent in the job market | R1- Most current vision of the corporate environment<br>R2- Maintenance of what has already been applied in continuous improvement and innovation<br>R3- Involve them in meetings to participate in possible decision-making<br>R4- Offer challenges, work-life balance, recognition<br>R5- Collaborative, integrative, and perhaps modeling activities to guide expected actions |
| ECA | Includes what types of learning in Corporate Education this generation feels most motivated to complete stages | R1- Training that makes clear its importance in the daily lives of your employees<br><br>R2- Gamification<br><br>R3- Everything that involves technology<br><br>R4- Innovation<br><br>R5- Leadership |

Source: prepared by the authors (2023)

Table 1 (part 2) – Meta category

| Code | Category Definitions | Units |
|---|---|---|
| ECA | Includes what types of learning in Corporate Education this generation feels most motivated to complete stages | R1- Training that makes clear its importance in the daily lives of your employees<br>R2- Gamification<br>R3- Everything that involves technology<br>R4- Innovation<br>R5- Leadership |
| DES | Includes the challenges faced by HR with Generation Z employees | R1 - Career development, hybrid work, benefits, emotional health<br>R2- None<br>R3- Engagement<br>R4- Impatience of processes and lack of posture<br>R5 - In my area of expertise, minimum qualifications are required. Respect for those with more experience, compliance with company standards |
| RES | Includes resistance to commands from more experienced managers | A1- Yes, because they do not accept many things that previous generations were used to.<br>R2 - None<br>R3 - Most of the time, yes.<br>R4 - Yes<br>R5 - Yes! Not in its entirety, but in part. |
| IND | Includes the significant number of Generation Z in management | R1- Yes<br>R2- Yes<br>R3- No<br>R4- No<br>R5-Not yet |
| MER | Includes which strategy and innovation models promote short, medium and long-term results | R1- Training that makes clear its importance in the daily lives of your employees<br>R2- Gamification<br>R3- Development Paths, Career Plan<br>R4- Leadership engagement and guidance makes all the difference<br>R5-Feedback models, behavioral training, lectures on leadership and management, goals and challenges plan |
| EUC | Includes the question of whether the company has a Corporate University | R1- Yes<br>R2- Yes<br>R3- No<br>R4- No<br>R5- Not yet |
| PFE | Includes the most effective platforms and tools to empower and develop these young talents | R1- Campus X and Linkedin<br>R2- Corporate University, Smile Academy<br>R3- Solids<br>R4- Trainings<br>R5- Agreement with schools and universities |

Source: prepared by the authors (2023)

Companies use diverse training platforms and tools, such as *Campus* X, *LinkedIn*, Corporate University, Academia do Sorriso, Sólides, and Training and agreements with schools and universities. This study indicates that 60% of respondents work in companies that do not have UC in their organization.

Another point to be discussed concerns Generation Z's behavior when faced with opposing points of view. In short, the responses indicate that these individuals are very questioning, skeptical and resistant and are willing to discuss their positions. It was also mentioned that some professionals overreact to personal issues, irritability and reactivity.

In collective work, they were assessed as individualists, but open to challenges, have good behavior and, at times, rely on others to avoid compromising themselves. Some have difficulties related to behavior and posture, while others stand out for their skills.

Regarding emotional intelligence, 60% of respondents stated that Generation Z is unprepared and needs to be willing to develop this skill.

Some proposals were mentioned to optimize the management of these talents in the market: a current vision of the corporate environment; improvement in innovation; participation in meetings; offering challenges; balance between personal and professional life, collaborative, integrative and modeling activities.

At EC, the learning paths that most motivate Generation Z are focused on technology, gamification, leadership and training with themes that highlight their importance in everyday life.

### 4.1 Proposals and Improvements

From the data collected, it can be inferred that companies should invest in UC, as its purpose is to enable continuous learning using various digital tools and promote individual and collective training in organizations. However, engaging Human Resources professionals in immersive courses related to UC can be a differentiator for large-scale adoption and a reduction in turnover *costs*, as well as training their employees with standardized training.

It is important to emphasize that these aspects refer to a highly technological and positioned generation, but that, on the other hand, they are still considered immature and unprepared for specific functions. Consequently, they have areas for improvement. To this end, it is proposed to address, in the learning paths, integrative activities with themes on emotional intelligence, the importance of collective work, organizational climate, ethics, respect and diversity in order to foster this multigenerational union with collaborative and respectful ideas. This tool can generate a powerful and expressive viability of information in the short, medium and long term, minimizing companies' operational costs, maximizing, a priori, emotional health and, consequently, the levels of commitment to the results expected by organizations.

## 5. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The main objective of this study was to analyze the challenges organizations face

when dealing with Generation Z, which has recently entered the job market. Therefore, the study proposed to encourage the participation of this group through Corporate Education, making the connection between learning and the development of this learning. The results show that many companies do not have a Corporate University, but this is an essential tool for the training and developing both professional and personal employees, aiming to attribute values to organizations.

The research aims to demonstrate how companies have been limited in investing in Corporate Education. It is necessary to invest in platform improvements, and training focused on addressing topics such as emotional intelligence, collective work, ethics, sustainability and technology, promoting more effective integration and increasing commitment. of employees, reducing the turnover of this generation in organizations.

Despite the limited sample, area managers perceived the urgency of fostering engagement. The aim was to encourage and establish the insertion of Corporate Education in organizations to develop personalized training and development according to the organization's needs.

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"The authors declare that during the preparation of this work, https://gemini.google.com/app/1eae20b1afaaac63 was used. The technology was an annex to assist in the composition of the research. After using this tool/service, the authors edited and revised the content as necessary and assume full responsibility for the publication's content."