Gen Z: Redefining the Future of Consulting

ekatva

www.ekatvaindia.com info@ekatvaindia.com

Introduction

With over 2.5 billion people worldwide and nearly 377 million in India alone, Gen Z is the dominant force in work and business. Born roughly between 1997 and 2012, Gen Z, also known as Zoomers, is the first fully digital-native generation. They grew up with smartphones in hand, social media as second nature, Google as their teacher, and a mindset deeply rooted in diversity and social consciousness.

This is the time when this cohort is entering boardrooms as consultants, leading startups as decision-makers, and reshaping client demands with their digital-first, value-driven strategies.

A Deloitte India survey reveals that 85% of Gen Z professionals are upskilling every week, while an equal share is already experimenting with generative AI at work, which proves them arguably the most tech-enabled talent pool consulting has ever seen. At the same time, as startup founders and business leaders, Gen Z is becoming the new power in the consulting market. The result? An industry once buttoned-up and governed by formal hierarchies must now adapt processes, training and client engagement models to a workforce that expects autonomy, rapid feedback and modern tooling.

Why Gen Z Matters in Consulting?

Gen Zers are entering in workforce as a consultant in large amount. By 2025, they will make up over 27% of India's workforce. Unlike the past generation, they bring skills already steeped in AI, automation, cloud tools, and digital collaboration. As EY's Stefanie Coleman puts it, "You can't put tomorrow's talent into yesterday's jobs", and consulting firms are realising the old models of training won't match it. This influx is a signal of new modernised training and a rethink of workplace culture to keep pace with the kind of talent now walking through their doors.

Beyond being employees, Gen Z is also shaping consulting as clients. This age group is stout-hearted than any other. They are launching startups and making bold purchasing decisions well before their 30s. In India alone, Gen Z already influences 43% of consumer spending (about $860B today, projected to hit $2T by 2035).

This dual influence is changing the consulting playbook. Gen Z clients and employees prioritise work-life balance while using straightforward and visual-first communication.

For consulting firms, that means there will be a significant shift from:

Suits and slide decks
↓
to co-creation and design-thinking workshops.

Hierarchy and formality
↓
to collaboration and transparency.

Long cycles
↓
to faster, tech-powered solutions.

Traits That Make Gen Z Powerful in Consulting

Tech Fluency

They don't just "know tech," they "live it" and maybe this is the reason that Gen Z also known as Digital natives. This makes them natural problem-solvers in a consulting world that thrives on digital transformation.

Value-Driven

Gen Z pushes for sustainability and ethics in every sphere. They expect consulting advice to align with these principles.

Creative Problem-Solvers

This generation thinks out of the box, whether it's for memes or for market strategies. They mix creativity with pragmatism and turn fresh ideas into actionable business solutions.

Financial Realism

Money talk is real. A significant share of Gen Z lives paycheck-to-paycheck (55% in India, per Deloitte) . They are pragmatic about money, focusing on value and ROI. As consultants, they emphasize practical, efficient solutions on the other hand, as clients, they demand services that deliver visible results.

Communication Style

For Gen Z, communication is more about impact than length. They favour sprints, infographics, Miro boards or two-way dialogue instead of 100-page PDFs.

Impact on the Consulting Industry

Working Models

Consulting firms have had to seriously adjust how they work in the last few years. Some of it came from the COVID pandemic, but Gen Z has played a huge role, too. Case Interview Hub observes that consulting firms have shifted from the old model of constant client-site presence to more flexible arrangements (fully remote with periodic in-person meetings, rotating offices, etc.). However, client demands still govern hours. Nonetheless, the working model has changed drastically over the past years, even if the client has the last word on it.

Work-Life Balance

The new generation believes in balancing professional and personal life. Work hours in consulting remain intense, but Gen Z has been much more vocal about setting boundaries than generations before. Many firms now offer blackout windows or core-free schedules to protect this balance.

Meaningful Work

For Gen Z, professional growth matters more than titles. Their focus is on learning new skills and improving their craft, which is reshaping career trajectories. According to Randstad's "Gen Z Workplace Blueprint", the average tenure in the first five years of career for Gen Z is about 1.1 years, much shorter than for Millennials (1.8 years), Gen X (2.8), etc, which signals that Gen Z moves roles more quickly in search of growth. In India, recent research found that 94% of Gen Z say on-the-job learning drives their growth, and 85% of them engage in weekly learning activities.

Digital-First Delivery

Gen Zers are true digital natives. For instance, KPMG's Gen Z interns expect ~20% of their future jobs to be automated by AI, and 57% say role-specific tech skills are the most valuable training. Big firms in accounting and auditing consultancy are therefore ramping up "Audit 4.0" initiatives (AI, blockchain in audits, continuous monitoring) to meet this demand. One global firm even created a "Netflix-inspired" streaming Careers Hub to recruit tech-savvy graduates. (In 2023, Accenture's UK team won an award for this approach, which doubled regional applications through engaging video content.) Internally, mobile apps and social recognition tools are being adopted. For example, EY GDS launched "Extraordinary You", which is a real-time employee recognition platform that lets peers give instant shout-outs via social media.

Values and Well-Being

Gen Z expects their workplace to reflect their worldview. During recruitment, ~77% of Gen Z say "values alignment" is key. Thus, firms publicly tout D&I credentials, ethical standards and pro bono work. On the other hand, for financial security, firms are offering financial-wellbeing apps (like Accenture's Nudge) or AI-driven career-planning platforms such as iAspire. As Mercer notes, even mid-level managers are now being trained specifically to understand Gen Z's traits and expectations.

Future Outlook

Gen Z's entry into the workforce marks a turning point that will leave a bigger impact than any generation before them. India is a young nation with 377 million Gen Z citizens, and over the next two decades, they will shape the country's growth story in ways we've never seen. In the consulting market, they're simultaneously the workforce, the client, and the consumer voice. They will bring their own ideology with their arrival, and we should keep the door open with their arrival.

Our Team

CA. Amish Khandhar
Chairman

CA. Trushar Shah
CEO

CA. Vipul Gandhi
Partner

CMA. Mitanshu Shah
Partner

CA. Harsh Mehta
Partner

CA. Mangesh Katariya
Partner

CA. Harshil Shah
Partner

CA. Dhaval Limbani
Partner

CA. Tejas Desai
Partner

Anil Birajdar
Partner

CA. Shailesh Wadhwaniya
Head - ESG & AI

CA. Ravi Vyas
Head - Capital & Structured Finance Advisory

www.ekatvaindia.com info@ekatvaindia.com

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