

Gen Z apply for twice as many jobs as older workers before being employed, research finds

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Gen Z are applying for twice as many jobs as older workers before landing a job, according to new research from [Totaljobs](#). 24 is the average number of applications those aged 18-28 are submitting before securing a job, compared to just 13 for Gen X and only 11 for Baby Boomers. This is in addition to research indicating that half (52%) of respondents feel they are perceived as less reliable or loyal to employers due to their age.

As a result of this age-related bias, over half (56%) of younger applicants have considered taking positions they are overqualified for. Totaljobs' latest report, *The Age Advantage: Overcoming Age Bias to Hire Experienced Talent*, underscores the critical need to harness the skills and knowledge of younger workers and nurture their potential.

Despite the significant skills shortage in the UK, a third (34%) of young people worry they won't be able to secure a job because they are considered 'too young'. Consequently, nearly half (46%) have adjusted or removed age-related information from their applications. Additionally, two-fifths (44%) of Gen Z candidates report being explicitly rejected for a job due to their age, which is almost double the rate for older generations (24%). This underscores the real impact of age-related bias on young people's career development.

Natalie Matalon, Chief People Officer at Totaljobs (part of The Stepstone Group) said: "Younger workers are the future of any business. Ensuring they have opportunities to gain experience and develop their skills is critical for the workforce's future. However, our research indicates that unconscious biases still prevent

many businesses from fully accessing this vital talent pool.

“Businesses that embrace training and onboarding the fresh perspectives of younger workers will be better positioned to address talent shortages and nurture a skilled workforce for the future. While it’s promising that many employers already recognise the value of Gen Z, accelerating efforts to build more inclusive recruitment practices will unlock even more growth opportunities for both businesses and individuals.”

Discrimination in the recruitment process

Nearly three in five (59%) HR decision-makers admit to making assumptions about candidates based on age, with 51% agreeing that younger candidates’ applications are often dismissed due to perceived lack of work ethic. Additionally, nearly half (47%) believe that a candidate’s age influences their ‘cultural fit’ within an organisation.

For those aged 35 and under who have changed jobs in the past three years or are currently job hunting, significant challenges have emerged: 46% have faced inappropriate age-related questions, and over half (58%) felt that workplace culture favoured more experienced applicants.

As a result of these challenges, almost a third (30%) of under-35s hesitate to apply for jobs because they believe they are too young.

Natalie Matalon added: “Businesses have the tools to tackle these biases and create more inclusive hiring processes. Whether it’s using AI to identify biased language in job ads, forming age-diverse hiring panels, or shifting from ‘cultural fit’ to ‘cultural add’ when assessing candidates, there are many positive and proactive steps businesses can implement to tackle this issue. The organisations that act now will not only gain access to a broader, more diverse talent pool, but also take an active part in developing workers’ essential skills and experience. Giving opportunities to younger workers also makes businesses more attractive, improving retention, creating a stronger long-term workplace.”