

THE FUTURE OF WORK THROUGH GEN Z EYES

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WHEN one looks at today's young generation i.e., Gen Z students, they see a fundamental shift in how careers are being imagined & pursued. For earlier generations, careers were often seen as financial anchors or pathways to security. You picked a profession, committed to it for decades, and it became the foundation of stability for the family. But for Gen Z, careers are deeply tied to identity, purpose lifestyle & not confined to the sense of security. This generation is rewriting the rulebook: careers are lifestyle choices, and lifestyle choices are career decisions. And they're not wrong.

The blending of work and life

For Gen Z, the old concept of "work-life balance" feels outdated. Instead, they talk about "work-life integration."A career is now no longer about what you do between nine and five. Instead, it's an extension of who you are, what you care about, and the type of life you wish to live. If you're passionate about travel, you're drawn to careers in content creation, global consulting, or hospitality. If wellness is at the

A deep dive into how values, creativity, and freedom are shaping the next era of career choices

center of your life, careers in fitness, nutrition, or mental health appeal. The career is chosen to complement life & that's what is imperative in the long run.

The very approach is reshaping industries. Employees today understand that younger professionals desire flexibility, autonomy, and purpose. They are less inclined to take up jobs requiring personal sacrifice, and more inclined to go for businesses that align with their values: whether it is sustainability, diversity, or social responsibility.

The magnificent rise of purpose-driven careers

Probably, the most striking pattern here is how strongly Gen Z aligns career decisions with personal values. For instance, many students nowadays are choosing careers in renewable energy, social entrepreneurship, or something like impact con-



sulting; not merely because these fields are growing, but because they align with their aspirations of contributing to society. Similarly, even in technology, there's a visible shift towards aspirational careers. Educators are of immense importance in this scenario as they're responsible for helping students connect the dots between where they are & what they strive to be.

Flexibility as a non-negotiable element

The pandemic accelerated trends that were already underway i.e., remote work, gig

opportunities & moonlighting as a career. Gen Z has imbibed this wholeheartedly. For them, a career shouldn't be confined to one employer or one role. They're comfortable with freelancing, side hustles & modern options like moonlighting. MBA students today are often seen running small e-commerce stores, freelancing as digital marketers, or creating YouTube channels alongside their studies. For this generation, income streams and career identities are increasingly fluid. These pursuits fit into the lifestyle they aspire to: creative, flexible, and self-

directed and that's what matters, ultimately.

Creating the future instead of waiting for it

Careers can draw a lot of fuel from Abraham Lincoln's famous ideology: "The best way to predict the future is to create it." When an educator applies this to career development, it translates to preparing students for the possibilities that don't yet exist. This is the only reason why we motivate students to view careers as growth paths. The values they maintain, the skills they gain, and the decisions they make should



all contribute to making the life they desire for themselves. Most of the time, it is absolutely necessary for students to combine technical expertise with human skills. If you're pursuing IT, understand how those tools affect people's lives. If you're in management, inculcate digital fluency. This integration makes them aligned with their lifestyle choices. After all, a fulfilling career is one that doesn't merely earn you a paycheck but enriches your way of living.

The role of educators & institutions

Marquee institutes have a responsibility to adapt. Traditional models of education revolving around academic knowledge have become outdated pretty quickly. In fact, we need to offer exposure to entrepreneurial thinking & that's super important. This way, students are prepared for life & not confined to the 9 to 5 hustle.

Gen Z is Genz owing to their refusal to separate who they are from what they do. Their careers are extensions of their values, passions, and aspirations. They are unapologetic about choosing professions that let them

live the lives they want & that means prioritizing creativity, global mobility, sustainability & wellness combined into an offering. As educators and mentors, our role is not to fit them into old moulds but to give them the tools, exposure, and confidence to design their own. Because in the end, careers should serve both: economic reasons & lifestyle decisions. And this generation, more than any before, knows it best.

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Equipping young with job-ready AI skills

NEW DELHI

IN a major step to bridge the AI skills gap in India, EY and Microsoft launched the AI Skills Passport, a free online programme designed to provide young Indians with the tools and knowledge needed to thrive in an AI-driven economy.

The initiative, aimed at individuals aged 16 and above, offers equitable access to high-quality AI education, preparing early-career professionals and students with essential, job-ready AI skills.

The launch in India follows a global roll-out earlier this year, which has already seen over 40,000 participants enroll and more than 13,000 complete the programme.

With NASSCOM reporting that only 31 per cent of professionals in India feel well-prepared to use AI tools, EY and Microsoft aim to empower youth to upskill and be future-ready in an increasingly digital landscape.

Monesh Dange, Partner and Leader, Alliances and Ecosystems, EY India, said, "In an era where AI is revolutionising work and redefining career paths, the launch of the AI Skills Passport addresses India's growing demand for skilled AI talent."

- **Free and inclusive learning:** A fully online, free programme available in English and Hindi, ensuring broad accessibility across regions and backgrounds.
- **Practical, career-focused curriculum:** Around 10 hours of content combining AI fundamentals, responsible AI, real-world applications, and career development support.
- **Verified credential for employability:** Participants enhancing their job prospects and credibility in the AI-driven economy earn a verifiable digital badge, enhancing their job prospects and credibility in the AI-driven economy

"Many professionals remain unprepared to harness AI's full potential. Together with Microsoft, we're committed to ensuring this programme is not only free but impactful at scale, providing access for everyone to build essential AI skills," Dange added.

The AI Skills Passport is a fully online programme with approximately 10 hours of content, available in both English and Hindi to ensure broad accessibility.

The programme combines modular video lessons, practical exercises, and asynchronous assessments, allowing learners to engage at their own pace.

It covers fundamentals of AI, responsible AI practices, and applications of AI across industries such as healthcare, finance, and

technology. Real-world case studies, hands-on exercises, and career guidance, including résumé building, interview preparation, and networking strategies, are integrated to help learners apply their skills and enhance employability.

Upon successful completion, participants receive a verifiable digital badge to strengthen their job profiles and career prospects in the AI-driven economy.

Bhaskar Basu, Enterprise Partnerships Leader, Microsoft India & South Asia, said, "AI is transforming India's digital economy, with youth at its core. The AI Skills Passport, launched in partnership with EY, reflects our vision of 'AI for all' and our commitment to fostering future-ready talent."

TODAY IS GLOBAL HANDWASHING DAY

Raising awareness about hand hygiene

ONE of the simplest and most effective ways to prevent the spread of disease is something we often overlook — washing our hands regularly. From classrooms and offices to hospitals and homes, proper hand hygiene is a powerful defense against germs, bacteria, and viruses that cause illness.

Every day, we touch countless surfaces — doorknobs, phones, keyboards, money — all of which can harbor harmful microorganisms. When we touch our eyes, nose, or mouth without washing our hands, these germs can easily enter our bodies, leading to infections such as the flu, common cold, food poisoning, or even more serious diseases.

Regular handwashing



with soap and clean water can reduce the risk of respiratory and diarrheal

infections by up to 40%. It's a simple habit with enormous health benefits

— one that protects not only you but also those around you. The key is to

wash your hands for at least 20 seconds, especially before eating, after using the restroom, after coughing or sneezing, and after touching public surfaces.

Raising awareness about hand hygiene is just as important as practicing it. Schools, workplaces, and communities can take small but meaningful steps — like putting up posters, organizing awareness drives, or teaching children the right way to wash their hands.

Clean hands symbolize care, responsibility, and respect for others. As global health challenges continue to rise, adopting regular handwashing as a daily habit is one of the easiest and most effective ways to build a healthier, safer world for everyone.

WORLD STUDENTS' DAY CELEBRATING THE POWER, POTENTIAL, AND PROMISE OF YOUTH

EVERY year on October 15, the world celebrates World Students' Day — a day dedicated to honouring the spirit of learning, creativity, and curiosity that defines students across the globe. The date marks the birth anniversary of Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, India's former President, eminent scientist, and one of the most inspiring educators of our time. His life's message was simple yet powerful: "Dream, dream, dream. Dreams transform into thoughts and thoughts result in action."

World Students' Day is not merely a celebration; it's a reminder of the vital role students play in shaping the future.

In an era driven by rapid technological advancements, climate change, and global interconnectivity, today's learners are tomorrow's innovators, leaders, and problem-solvers. Their ideas have the power to redefine industries, influence societies, and build more inclusive and sustainable communities.

Modern education is



evolving beyond textbooks and examinations. It now emphasizes critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and compassion — the skills that truly prepare students for life.

The rise of AI, digital learning platforms, and experiential education has created new opportunities

for students to learn anytime, anywhere. However, with these opportunities come responsibilities — to use technology ethically, to think globally while acting locally, and to pursue learning not just for personal growth but for the collective good.

As we celebrate this day,

it's essential to reflect on the challenges students face today — academic pressure, mental health struggles, and the growing digital divide. Institutions, educators, and policymakers must work together to create environments that nurture curiosity and emotional well-being, ensuring that

learning remains a joyful, empowering experience.

World Students' Day also celebrates the spirit of resilience. Whether adapting to online learning, exploring entrepreneurship, or leading social impact projects, students continue to prove their ability to innovate even in uncertainty.