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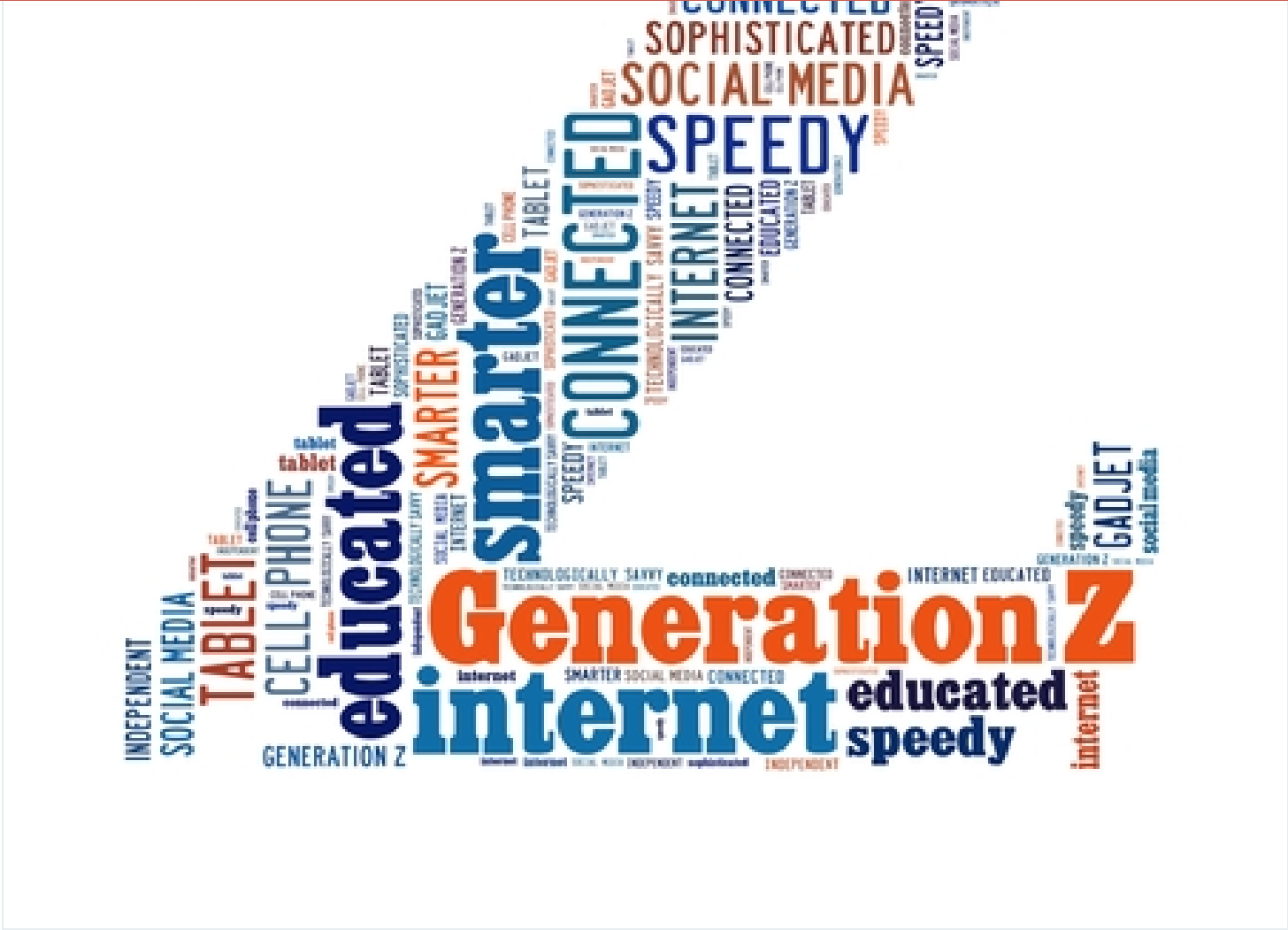
**Paul McDonald** • Mar. 14, 2016

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Four years from now, Generation Z will represent more than 20 percent of the workforce. Undoubtedly, this cohort of employees — born in the 1990s — will affect your approach to staff management.

For public accounting managers, this means overseeing a team composed of baby boomers, Gen X, Gen Y and Gen Z. Knowing a bit about Generation Z's unique style and worldview can assist managers in hiring and retaining the newest group of talent.

## Quick Gen Z facts

- They're digital natives — the first generation that will not know a world without

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## **Gen Z expects rapid upward mobility**

When asked where they expect to be five years out of college, the top response, cited by 32 percent of surveyed Gen Zers, was “managing or supervising employees in a corporate environment.” The second choice (24 percent) was moving up the career ladder but not yet into staff management. These workers have a clear vision of what they want to be — and when.

*Staff management advice:* During recruitment and annual reviews, let Gen Z professionals know they have a future in your firm by discussing potential in-house career milestones. If they think there's no room for growth, they'll look elsewhere for new experiences and professional fulfillment. You may also need to give them guidance to succeed in leadership roles.

## **Gen Z expects to work hard**

The Great Recession made an impact on this generation. Perhaps shaken by seeing their parents go through financial struggles and suffer career setbacks, 77 percent of respondents expect to work harder than previous generations to get ahead.

*Staff management advice:* A competitive [salary](#) is only one aspect of attracting and retaining top accounting talent. Emphasize training and professional development opportunities, both during the hiring process and beyond. Gen Z enjoys learning and is used to listening to instructions.

## **Gen Z workers may lack certain skills as they acclimate to the workforce**

While this generation's listening skills are strong, their writing abilities may be wanting due to growing up communicating with emojis and other texting

shorthand. According to Bruce Tulgan, founder of [Rainmaker Thinking](#), some other

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advice and help them improve their [soft skills](#). As their manager, you may want to hone in on topics such as project and time management. Point out the importance of a more professional writing approach, and offer them guidance as needed.

### **Be the leader they need**

Gen Z workers value honesty and integrity in their supervisors, and they thrive on establishing genuine relationships. They also prioritize bosses who are proven mentors.

*Staff management advice:* While Gen Z workers are able to work independently, many prefer collaborating with small groups. As such, new graduates may not always be the best candidates for [remote work](#), though they are very accustomed to working during personal time.

Regardless of their work arrangements, serve as a career coach and advocate for them; they crave guidance from an employer who will provide them with the tools and feedback they need to be successful. Be sure to schedule regular check-in meetings for them to ask questions and for you to offer constructive criticism, and don't forget to recognize and reward their outstanding work.

Successfully managing Gen Z accountants requires not just understanding, but embracing the traits of this talented, ambitious and eager group of workers. Respect them, help them shore up their weaker skills and offer them the resources they need to move ahead in their career, and you'll be rewarded with invaluable team members and future firm leaders.

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*Paul McDonald is senior executive director at [Robert Half](#), the world's first and largest*

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