BACKGROUND

Most large organizations now bring together five generations in the workplace. Although generational diversity has the potential to deliver significant productivity gains, it has received relatively little strategic attention. To raise the importance of this issue, we launched the *GENERATIONS HUB* at The Inclusion Initiative (TII) at the London School of Economics (LSE) in January 2024, sponsored by Protiviti, a global consulting firm. Our launch report, *GENERATIONS: Unlocking the productivity potential of a multigenerational workforce*, showed how a lack of collaboration between employees of different generations undermines productivity, highlighting the opportunity for intergenerational inclusion to unlock greater productivity while enhancing the overall employee experience.

This report, *When GENERATIONS meet: The productivity potential of multigenerational meetings*, marks the first annual report in a multi-year research effort by The Inclusion Initiative, sponsored by Protiviti. The aim of this initiative is to help leaders harness the benefits of multigenerational teams to raise productivity in their organizations.

When GENERATIONS meet: The productivity potential of multigenerational meetings details concrete actions that leaders can take to help their teams realize greater productivity in meetings and more broadly in the organization.

'Generationally inclusive work practices impact workplace productivity and organizational performance and enhance the overall employee experience. They are an important step forward for all of us in the corporate world.'

'Our research demonstrates that the productivity of meetings at all levels of the organization is undermined by a lack of generational representation and voice, generational frictions and non-inclusive behaviors. I am not surprised by this. The evidence we present here on unproductive meetings also suggests that there are significant productivity benefits to be had by getting better representation in workplace meetings across generations. Even more gains are to be reaped by ensuring each generation is equipped with the right skills and behaviors to make meetings inclusive.'

Dr Grace Lordan
Founding Director of The Inclusion Initiative

This report highlights the importance of harnessing the productivity potential of generations at the point at which key operational and strategic decisions are being made — in meetings. The financial impact of waste and damage to organizations caused by unproductive meetings runs into hundreds of billions of dollars each year. Our data finds that over one third (35%) of meetings are considered unproductive. We estimate that the cost to organizations of these unproductive meetings is approximately $259 billion in the United States and $64 billion in the United Kingdom for professional staff alone.[1] As well as wasting valuable employee time, unproductive meetings can stifle organizations' creativity and prevent teams from addressing key organizational challenges. For individual team members, unproductive meetings can be a source of friction and stress, undermining their overall job satisfaction. Better meetings are key to better workplaces, with each generation having a role to play.

Meetings are central to the future of work because they provide the vehicle for collaboration, innovation, problem solving and decision-making in our increasingly remote and hybrid organizations, across geographies and countries. Meanwhile, an aging global workforce means that the future of work will see lower levels of younger talent in the pipeline and longer working lives. The result

is increasing generational diversity across organizations and in meetings. The presence (or absence) of each generation in meetings affects the experience of every employee, in every role and at every stage of their careers. For The Inclusion Initiative at LSE, our work at the *GENERATIONS HUB* builds on a commitment to bringing together teaching, research and practice to build more inclusive work environments.

By increasing representation across generations and creating more inclusive meetings, organizations can expect to significantly increase productivity benefits. In this report, we provide actionable steps for leaders to realize these benefits.

'Important decisions get made in meetings, yet unproductive meetings are a frequent topic of workplace frustration. Generationally inclusive work practices impact workplace productivity and are an important step forward for all of us in the corporate world. But generational inclusion is not taken as seriously as other aspects of diversity. Having increased generational inclusion in the workplace (and specifically in meetings) can positively impact organizations' performance and enhance the overall employee experience. More diverse, inclusive meetings can result in greater team cohesion and not only bridge generational gaps, but also assist organizations in retaining employees because they feel more included and thereby gain a greater sense of belonging, increasing their commitment to the organization.'

Matt Duncan
Managing Director, Protiviti

All readers of this report are invited to become involved with future *GENERATIONS HUB* research. Find details of how to take part in The Inclusion Initiative's *GENERATIONS Global Annual Survey*, sponsored by Protiviti, and at the end of the report.

---

[1]   All figures are in $USD. Further details can be found in Table 1.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Meetings enable collaboration and the development of professional relationships across generations. However, meetings can also be a source of generational division and stress. Drawing on data from more than 3,400 professional employees surveyed across the world, our research demonstrates the productivity potential of increasing generational representation and inclusive behaviors in meetings. Despite the potential to reduce the waste associated with unproductive meetings, many organizations miss out on the benefits of generational diversity in meetings, especially at senior levels. Three in four (75%) executive meetings do not include a single

voice from Gen Z. And around half (48%) of executive meetings do not include a voice from either Gen Z or Baby Boomer and Silent Generations (the youngest and two oldest generations respectively).

The productivity potential of generational diversity

In this research, we asked employees about the last meeting they attended where important decisions were made.[2] We asked several questions about their experience, including how productive they perceived the meeting to be and the proportion of team members present from each of the generations.

The research found that many meetings lack generational diversity. It also revealed that diverse generational representation is associated with considerable reductions in unproductive meetings, and that achieving proportionate generational representation can help to decrease the financial cost of unproductive meetings. Specifically:

- 35% of meetings are considered unproductive; this is consistent across generations.

- The annual cost of unproductive meetings among professionals is estimated at $259 billion in the United States and $64 billion in

---

[2] Specific details of this measure can be found in Appendix B.

$9.6 million
— estimated annual cost of unproductive meetings for a large organization employing 2,500 people

the United Kingdom. For a large organization employing 2,500 people, this represents losses of up to $9.6 million each year.

- Achieving representation in meetings that is proportionate to the generational representation active in the US workforce today reduces unproductive meetings from 35% to 29%. This means that achieving proportionate generational representation in meetings could reduce the cost of unproductive meetings each year by an estimated $28 billion in the United States, and by $13 billion in the United Kingdom. To an average large organization of 2,500 employees, this represents a saving of up to $1.8 million each year, or $35 million per year for a listed company of 50,000 employees.

- Younger women experience the lowest meeting productivity. 40% of meetings are reported as unproductive by Gen Z women, compared to just 27% of Gen Z men. This gap closes to 37% unproductive meetings for women and 31% for men among Millennials before disappearing for older generations.

- Many meetings have little generational diversity: 71% do not include anyone from the Baby Boomer or Silent generations. 57% do not include Gen Z, while 10% of meetings are limited entirely to a single generation.

Beyond cost reduction, diverse generational representation in executive meetings is linked to better organizational performance. Specifically:

- 82% of executives who report proportionate generational representation in meetings say their organization is outperforming the competition, compared to just 41% of executives who report no generational diversity in meetings.

- Greater generational diversity in executive meetings is associated with higher levels of knowledge, skills and networks among employees. This, in part, explains how diverse representation helps organizations to outperform the competition.

³ Further details of these behaviors can be found in Table 3.

Who speaks most in meetings? And what are the productivity implications?

For the benefits of generational diversity to be realized, it is essential that there are opportunities for all generations to have a voice. We asked professionals to tell us who spoke the most and least in the last important meeting they attended.

We found that the generation of the person who speaks most can influence meeting contributions and productivity. Specifically:

- Gen X are reported to speak most in 59% of meetings, even though they represent 41% of meeting attendees.

- Gen Z have the least voice in meetings; despite representing 10% of meeting attendees, the youngest generation speaks the least in 24% of meetings and the most in just 3% of meetings.

- When older generations speak the most, it can have 'cascading' effects, lessening contributions from younger generations. When someone from Gen X speaks most, Gen Z workers report speaking as much or more than other team members in only 51% of meetings, compared to 84% of meetings in which a fellow Gen Z colleague speaks most.

Towards more productive meetings for every generation

We explored the effect of specific, inclusive meeting behaviors on the reported productivity of meetings, identifying those with the highest impact.³

Our analysis suggests there are three key behaviors leaders can take to make meetings more inclusive and productive:

1) Ensure that all contributions are valued.

2) Leverage everyone's insights to avoid groupthink.

3) Be open to new ideas.

Promoting these behaviors to create more inclusive meetings could reduce the rate of unproductive meetings from 35% to 15%.

Reducing unproductive meetings to just 15% would save organizations an estimated $136 billion in the United States and $37 billion in the United Kingdom each year. To an average organization of 2,500 employees, this means savings of up to $5.8 million each year, or $115 million for a listed company of 50,000 employees.

Generational diversity is part of what enables more inclusive meetings. For example:

- In meetings with no generational diversity, 27% of team members report that others in the meeting are not open to hearing new ideas, compared to just 14% of team members in meetings with proportional generational representation.

Leaders can take practical steps to bolster inclusion in meetings, including:

- Bringing everyone into the room (whether virtual or physical). Hybrid meetings immediately split team members between those 'in the room' and 'outside the room', unlike fully remote or face-to-face meetings. Around 55% of remote and face-to-face meetings are inclusive, but this drops to 48% for hybrid meetings.
- Limiting the team members attending; 38% of meetings with 10 or more team members are reported as unproductive, compared to 33% of meetings with less than 10 team members.

Our analysis shows that just over half (54%) of meetings can be considered inclusive. Inclusive meetings, those in which everyone feels included regardless of generation, are associated with better employee performance and better organizational performance. Specifically:

- Executives who found that their last important meeting was inclusive were more likely to report better financial performance at their organization compared to their competitors (69% inclusive, 55% non-inclusive) and better environmental, social and governance (ESG) performance than competitors (66% inclusive, 40% non-inclusive).
- 86% of employees who reported that their last important meeting was inclusive said they were happy in their job (compared to 56% non-inclusive), and 60% said they were unlikely to look for a new job in the next 12 months (compared to 36% non-inclusive).
- 51% of employees who reported that their last important meeting was inclusive reported being highly productive in their job role, compared to just 28% of employees who reported their last meeting as unproductive.

Overall, this research demonstrates that achieving greater generational representation in meetings is linked with increased meeting productivity. This diversity can also enable more inclusive behaviors in meetings, with inclusive meetings having a range of associated benefits for employees and the wider organization. In addition to reducing the waste associated with unproductive meetings, generational diversity in meetings is linked to higher levels of knowledge, skills and networks among employees. These advantages can help organizations perform better against the competition, with the potential of this benefit limited only by each organization's unique industry factors and growth potential.

GENERATIONS BACKGROUND

GENERATIONS: Productivity Potential

Populations around the world are living longer and having fewer children. Currently there are five generations working together in most large organizations.[4] With more generations represented in the workplace, leaders must tap into the diverse strengths each group brings. Yet, the global slowdown in productivity accompanying an aging workforce suggests a failure to capitalize on the potential benefits of this diverse generational representation.[5,6]

Our launch report, *GENERATIONS: Unlocking the Productivity Potential of a Multigenerational Workforce*, showed how a lack of collaboration between employees of different generations undermines productivity. For example, employees with managers more than 12 years their senior were nearly 1.5 times as likely to report low productivity.

This research also demonstrates the productivity potential of intergenerationally inclusive work practices, including:

- Making it easy for people from different generations to 'fit in.'
- Developing and advancing employees regardless of age.
- Demonstrating commitment to hiring and retaining a generationally diverse workforce.
- Effectively managing people from diverse generational backgrounds.

---

[4] OECD (2023), "Labor Market Statistics: Labor force statistics by sex and age (Edition 2022)", *OECD and Labor Market Statistics* (database), https://doi.org/10.1787/43f81975-en.

[5] Goldin, I., Koutroumpis, P., Lafond, F., & Winkler, J. (2024). Why is productivity slowing down? *Journal of Economic Literature*, *62*(1), 196-268.

[6] Jolles, D., & Lordan, G. (2023). Why older talent should be a consideration for today's inclusive leader. *LSE Business Review*.

> Generationally diverse representation in meetings has the potential to inform better decision-making and boost meeting productivity, which more broadly increases the knowledge and networks available to employees to solve problems and grow the business.

Overall, the report found that 25% of employees self-reported low productivity, but this dropped to just 13% of employees in organizations with intergenerationally inclusive work practices.
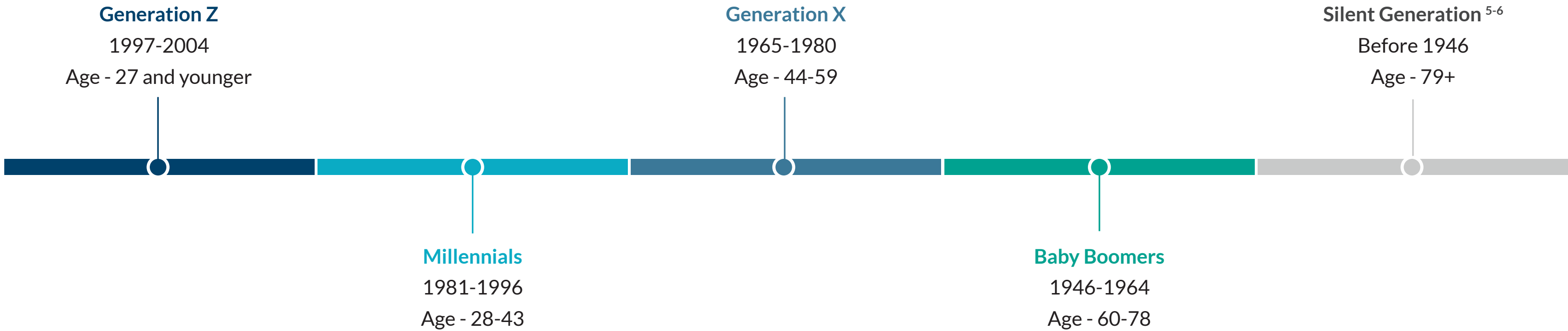
Major operational and strategic decisions are made at meetings; they are key vehicles for harnessing the knowledge, skills and connections each generation brings to deliver organizations' productivity gains and a competitive edge. Generationally diverse representation in meetings has the potential to inform better decision-making and boost meeting productivity, which more broadly increases the knowledge and networks available to employees to solve problems and grow the business.

Generations Defined: Generation Z are those born between 1997 and 2004, Millennials are those born between 1981-1996, Generation X are those born between 1965-1980, and Baby Boomers are those born between 1946-1964. Those born before 1946 are known as the Silent Generation.[7,8]

Approach

To understand the productivity potential of multigenerational meetings according to the generations themselves, The Inclusion Initiative at LSE gathered data from 2,970 professional employees and 460 executives globally. This gave us more than 3,400 responses from across the generations from which to better understand employee experiences in meetings and assessments of productivity and inclusion. These responses have helped us to identify the common factors that drive productive meetings, as well as generational nuances in the way meetings are experienced.

Generations Defined

Generation Z	**Generation X**	**Silent Generation** [5-6]
1997-2004	1965-1980	Before 1946
Age - 27 and younger	Age - 44-59	Age - 79+

Millennials	**Baby Boomers**
1981-1996	1946-1964
Age - 28-43	Age - 60-78

[7] There is no official taxonomy of generation start and end dates; however, these dates have shaped popular understanding and originate with the Pew Research Center, a US Think Tank. See more at www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2019/01/17/where-millennials-end-and-generation-z-begins/

[8] Data was collected in 2024. At the time of collection Generation Z was aged 27 or under, Millennials aged 28 to 43, Generation X aged 44 to 59, Baby Boomers aged 60 to 78, and the Silent Generation aged 79+.

DEMOGRAPHICS

460 executives **2,970** professional employees

50 countries **39%** US **37%** UK

Gender split

Executives **55%** men **43%** women

Employees **51%** men **48%** women[9]

Generation split

Executives

Employees

- ■ Gen Z
- ■ Millennials
- ■ Gen X
- ■ Baby Boomers

Firm size

10% <250 employees

27% 250 to 2,500 employees

27% 2,501 to 10,000 employees

36% 10,000 or more employees

08 years (average) with organization **12** years (average) in occupation

People managers

90% executives **60%** professional employees

Complete demographic attributes of participating employees and executives can be found in Appendix A.

[9] Among executives, 2% chose not to reveal their gender. Among employees, 1% reported another gender identity and 1% chose not to reveal their gender. Complete demographic attributes can be found in Appendix A.

THE COST OF UNPRODUCTIVE MEETINGS

Why we need better meetings that include all generations

At their best, meetings are an opportunity for professional relationships to be formed across generations. They provide a valuable source of learning, development and connection, enabling collaborative problem-solving, creativity and innovation. They also provide an opportunity for managers to demonstrate that they are inclusive of diverse perspectives, which encompasses hearing voices across all generations that are in the room.[10]

At their worst, meetings are a waste of time and a source of stress that can erode employee well-being and provoke group-based divisions.[11] They are a place where team members can experience exclusion, interruptions and being talked over. There is evidence that the waste and damage to organizations caused by unproductive meetings each year runs into hundreds of billions of dollars.[12] Getting meetings right is therefore an opportunity to reduce costs, boost productivity and increase employee engagement.

[10]   Perlow, L. A., Noonan Hadley, C., & Eun., E. (2017) Stop the meeting madness: How to free up time for meaningful work. *Harvard Business Review*, 94(4), 62-69.

[11]   Romney, A. C., Allen, J. A., & Heydarifard, Z. (2023). Meeting load paradox: Balancing the benefits and burdens of work meetings. *Business Horizons*.

[12]   Economy, P. (2019, January 11). *A New Study of 19 Million Meetings Reveals That Meetings Waste More Time Than Ever (but There Is a Solution)*. Inc.com.

$259 billion
in the United States and

$64 billion
in the United Kingdom — estimated cumulative annual cost of unproductive meetings among professionals

Employees of different generations are often thought to have differing views about when and how meetings should take place (remote vs face-to-face, short vs long, etc.). To reduce perceived waste, some organizations have drastically cut meetings from workdays or introduced 'no-meeting' day policies to free employees to focus on individual 'deep' work. However, meetings can play a valuable role in shaping the workplace experience for employees of all generations,[13] and there is no evidence that these steps to reduce the number of meetings create a culture of more productive meetings or benefit the organization's productivity more broadly. Although much debate persists about which practices might make for more productive meetings, little attention has been paid to how meetings can be made more productive by considering the needs of workers of different generations.

Overall, meetings are key to harnessing the knowledge, skills and connections that each generation brings to the organization. At the executive level, this means better strategic decision-making. At the operational level, this means solving problems, coordinating different groups towards common objectives, and providing spaces for employees to engage and develop the skills to become future leaders.[14]

In this report, we look at how organizations can create more productive meetings that fulfill these aims and unlock the productivity potential of a multigenerational workforce.

The cost of unproductive meetings

Employees report that 35% of meetings they attend are unproductive, with little variation between the generations. For executives, unproductive meetings are slightly less common (31%) than for all other employees (36%). In other words, for every employee of every generation, around one third of meetings can be considered a waste of time and a potential source of stress.

Based on average salaries, we estimate the cost of the average meeting to be approximately $402 in the United States and $392 in the United Kingdom.[15] However, given the higher salaries executives typically earn, this cost is likely to be much more for executive meetings.[16] Our estimates suggest the cumulative annual cost of unproductive meetings among professionals alone are $259 billion in the United States, and $64 billion in the United Kingdom (Table 1).[17] At an organization level, this means that a large company employing 2,500 people could lose up to $9.6 million each year to unproductive meetings (Table 2).

---

[13] Allen, J. A., & Lehmann-Willenbrock, N. (2022). The key features of workplace meetings: Conceptualizing the why, how, and what of meetings at work. *Organizational Psychology Review, 13*(4).

[14] Clifton, J. (2014). Small stories, positioning, and the discursive construction of leader identity in business meetings. *Leadership, 10*(1), 99-117.

[15] All figures are in $USD. The average meeting cost is based on mean number of team members attending meetings (11 attendees in the US and 13.6 in the UK), mean number of hours worked per week (43 hours in the US and 39 hours in the UK) in combination with average salaries for professional occupations. Average salary data for professional occupations in the US is based on median usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by occupation (not seasonally adjusted) taken from the Usual Weekly Earnings of Wage and Salary Workers Second Quarter 2024 from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Average salary data for professional occupations in the UK is based on annual full-time gross pay for professional occupations taken from the Employee earnings in the UK: 2023 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings from the Office for National Statistics. Further details can be found in Appendix C.

[16] The average meeting cost is based on the proportionate representation of executives (managers, directors and senior officials) and professional employees (professional, associate professional, and administrative and secretarial occupations) from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (US) and Office for National Statistics (UK). Therefore, executive meetings can be expected to have a higher mean salary than the average used here. Further details can be found in Appendix C.

[17] All figures are in $USD. Details can be found in Table 1. Further details can be found in Appendix C.

Estimating the cost of unproductive meetings

Table 1: Total estimated cost of unproductive meetings in United States and United Kingdom

	United States	United Kingdom
Executives		
Executives surveyed	223	92
% Unproductive meetings	30%	34%
Average annual salary (USD)[*]	$ 89,492	$ 62,824
Average weekly meetings[^]	7	7
Average meeting duration (minutes)	67	79
Average total meeting hours per week	7.8	9.2
Average unproductive meeting hours per week	2.3	3.1
Total hours worked per week	45.9	45.8
Unproductive meetings as % of total hours worked	5%	7%
Annual cost of unproductive meetings per employee (USD)	$ 4,480	$ 4,306
Total executives employed[*]	23,890,000	3,151,250
Total cost $BN	$107	$13.6
Professional Employees		
Employees surveyed	1,123	1,178
% Unproductive meetings	34%	37%
Average annual salary (USD)[*]	$ 70,412	$ 46,385
Average weekly meetings[^]	7	7
Average meeting duration (minutes)	52	57
Average total meeting hours per week	6.1	6.6
Average unproductive meeting hours per week	2.1	2.4
Total hours worked per week	41.6	37.8
Unproductive meetings as % of total hours worked	5%	6%
Annual cost of unproductive meetings per employee (USD)	$ 3,482	$ 3,002
Total professional employees[*]	43,570,000	16,845,250
Total cost $BN	$152	$50.6
Total cost $BN	**$259**	**$64**

[*] Average salary data for professional occupations and the number of employees in professional occupations is based on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (US, 2024) and Office for National Statistics (UK, 2023). See Footnotes 15 and 16. Further details can be found in Appendix C.

[^] Average weekly meetings (seven per week) is based on a follow-up survey with a sub-sample of respondents (N = 207). Full details can be found in Appendix C.

35%

of meetings, on average, are viewed by team members as unproductive

Table 2: Total estimated cost of unproductive meetings based on company size

Company Size (employees)	Potential Annual Cost $ Million (USD)
250	$0.96 Million
2,500	$9.6 Million
25,000	$96 Million
50,000	$192 Million

*Annual cost of unproductive meetings per employee assumes average waste of $ 3,482 per employee (based on the pooled average salary of professionals in the United States). Assumes an average of seven meetings attended per week (see Table 1 and Appendix C for further details).

The cost of unproductive meetings is likely to vary based on regional salaries. The rate of unproductive meetings in the United States (33%) and the United Kingdom (36%) is broadly consistent with other regions, including Europe (42%) and Asia-Pacific (42%).

> *What is a productive meeting?* How does a meeting achieve what it sets out to achieve and move the team and organization towards their goals? To understand meeting productivity, we asked employees to focus on the last meeting they attended where important decisions were being made. We then asked them several questions about their experience in the meeting and if they perceived the meeting to be productive.[18]

Unproductive meetings: No generation is safe

Our data suggests that over one third (35%) of meetings are considered unproductive. This statistic is consistent across employees of different generations. However, younger men and women experience meeting productivity differently (Figure 1).[19] Gen Z women report more than 40% of their meetings to be unproductive compared to just 27% of Gen Z men. For Millennials, this gap closes to 37% of meetings being unproductive for women and 31% for men, before the gap largely disappears for older generations. This highlights that while unproductive meetings are a widespread concern for everyone in the workplace, they might be especially undermining the experiences of women early- and mid-career.

Figure 1: Proportion of unproductive meetings by generation and gender
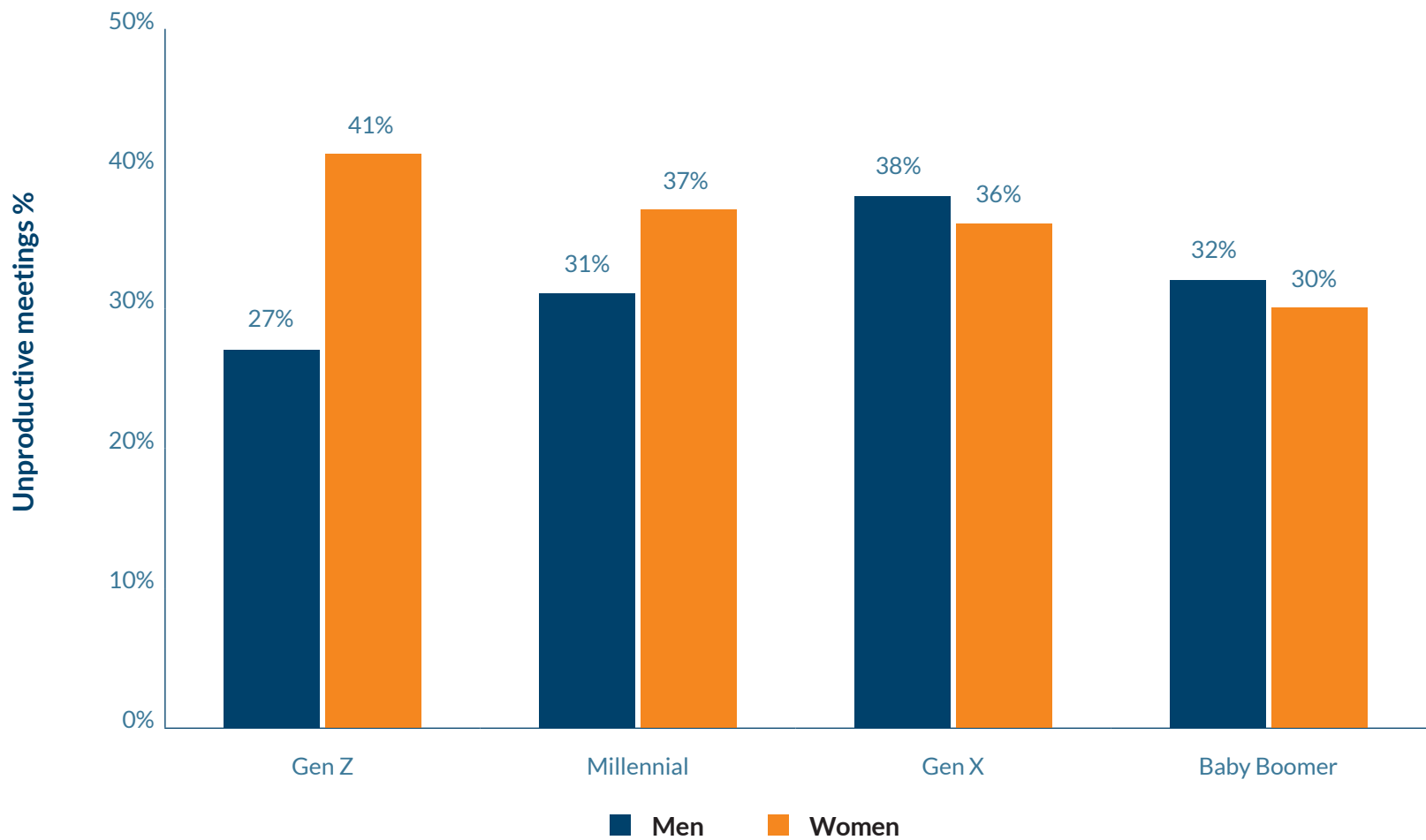
[18] Meeting participants were asked, *'How productive do you consider the meeting to have been?'* Specific details of this measure can be found in Appendix B.

[19] Among employees, 17 respondents (1%) reported having a different gender identity and 25 respondents (1%) preferred not to share their gender identity. Their responses have been excluded from this gender analysis only, due to the small number of responses. Complete demographic attributes can be found in Appendix A.

DOES GENERATIONAL DIVERSITY MAKE MEETINGS MORE PRODUCTIVE?

Can bringing more generations into the room and giving them a voice reduce the likelihood of an unproductive meeting?

We consider a regression analysis to understand better how generational diversity relates to the likelihood of having a productive meeting, controlling for other relevant factors.[20]

Our estimates show that achieving multigenerational representation in meetings that is proportionate to the generational representation active in the US workforce today reduces the likelihood of having an unproductive meeting from 35% to 29%, implying a total savings of $29 billion per year in wasted resources for the United States and $13 billion for the United Kingdom.

It is clear that meetings become more productive simply by having more diverse age representation in the room. However, many executives do not take generational diversity as seriously as other aspects of diversity.

---

[20]   Relevant factors include meeting format (remote, face-to-face, hybrid); number of team members attending the meeting; meeting duration; respondent gender, role and age; company size; and meeting gender diversity. Full details of the analysis of reported meeting productivity based on generational diversity can be found in Appendix C.

Generational diversity currently lags behind other aspects of diversity when it comes to the strategic priorities of executives. Just over a third (37%) of executives report that they have a mature DEI strategy for generations as compared to 54% for gender and 46% for race/ethnicity.

What is generational diversity in meetings? How many people in a meeting represent each of the generations? Imagine a meeting of five people. If every person from this meeting comes from the same generation (e.g., a meeting of five Millennials), this meeting would have zero generational diversity. However, if each of the five meeting team members came from each of the five different generations (e.g., one Gen Z, one Millennial, one Gen X, one Baby Boomer, and one Silent Generation employee) this meeting would have maximum diversity. To understand generational diversity in meetings, we asked employees to focus on the last meeting they attended where important decisions were being made. We then asked them to give the proportion of team members present from each of the five generations.[21]

Our analysis demonstrates that meetings with the highest level of generational diversity are 9% more likely to be effective. Here we are comparing meetings with zero generational diversity to those with the highest level of generational diversity. On average, 35% of meetings are viewed as unproductive by team members; however, the proportion of unproductive meetings drops to 28% when the meeting composition changes from one generation only to the highest levels of generational diversity (i.e., those meetings with equal representation across generations).[22]

Of the meetings reported, nearly two thirds (71%) did not include anyone from the Baby Boomer or Silent generations, while over half (57%) did not include a single voice from Gen Z, and 10% of meetings were limited entirely to team members from the same generation. In practice there is, of course, a disproportionate representation of generations in the broader workforce, and many organizations are unlikely to be able to achieve equal representation of each generation across all meetings.[23] However, having meetings that more equally represent each generation in the workforce today can deliver considerable productivity benefits. For example, our estimates imply that achieving multigenerational representation in meetings that is proportionate to the generational representation active in the US workforce today reduces the likelihood of having an unproductive meeting from 35% to 29%. To an average large organization of 2,500 employees, this could represent a saving of up to $1.8 million each year, or up to $35 million per year for a listed company of 50,000 employees.

It is clear that meetings become more productive simply by having more diverse age representation in the room. However, many executives do not take generational diversity as seriously as other aspects of diversity. Generational diversity currently lags behind other aspects of diversity when it comes to the strategic priorities of executives. Just over a third (37%) of executives report that they have a mature DEI strategy for generations as compared to 54% for gender and 46% for race/ethnicity.

The potential for generational diversity at the top

More generational diversity implies more productive meetings. However, executive-leadership meetings tend to have lower levels of generational representation compared to wider-firm meetings.[24] Three in four (75%) executive meetings do not include a single voice from Gen Z in the room. And around half (48%) of executive meetings do not include a voice from either their youngest or oldest generations of employees (Gen Z and Baby Boomers or Silent generations, respectively). As these generations represent around one third of the professional workforce, this suggests that many executives are not maximizing the potential benefit of the multigenerational workforce available to inform their decision-making.

[21]   Meeting participants were asked, *'How productive do you consider the meeting to have been?'* Specific details of this measure can be found in Appendix B.

[22]   The highest levels of generational diversity in meetings are based on the top 1% (39 meetings) of generationally diverse meetings reported. Further details of the analysis are available in Appendix C.

[23]   The proportion of the US workforce for each generation is estimated at Gen Z 13%, Millennials 34%, Gen X 39%, Baby Boomers 14%, and Silent Generation 0-1%. Further details can be found in Appendix C.

[24]   Details of this analysis can be found in Appendix C.

Nearly one in three (31%) executive leadership meetings are perceived as unproductive. However, for meetings that have the highest levels of generational diversity, only 16% are rated as unproductive.[25] This means that for executive-leadership meetings, like those more broadly in the organization, higher generational diversity among team members makes for more productive meetings. As executives tend to be older than employees on average, raising productivity through diversity will often require younger perspectives to be brought into the room. For example, just 21% of executive meetings were considered unproductive when there was representation from Gen Z, compared to 34% with no Gen Z representation.

More generational diversity in meetings is linked to higher intellectual capital in the organization and better organizational performance

Generational diversity can be associated with more productive meetings because each generation brings its unique knowledge, experiences, skills, social networks and perspectives (intellectual capital) to the room.[26] The widely held 'business case for diversity' suggests that this type of cognitive diversity increases creativity, innovation and performance.[27] The ability to solve critical business problems and develop new products, services and business networks are all seen to directly benefit from this diversity of perspectives. This is especially important in executive meetings, where diversity can influence strategic decision-making and shape the performance of others within the company.[28] In our data, executives that report higher generational diversity in their meetings are more likely to report productive meetings and better organizational performance overall: 82% of executives who report proportionate generational representation in meetings say their organization is outperforming the competition, compared to just 41% of executives who report no generational diversity in meetings.[29]

The link between generational diversity in executive meetings, more productive meetings and better organizational performance can be explained by the higher intellectual capital of employees in the organization thanks to this increased diversity. Intellectual capital refers to the knowledge, skills, networks and perspectives among employees in the organization and how well employees leverage this to collaborate, develop new ideas, solve problems and capitalize on opportunities. This intellectual capital is strongly associated with better organizational performance against both financial and non-financial measures. When it comes to generational diversity, 91% of executives with proportionate generational representation in meetings report high levels of intellectual capital among their employees, compared to just 39% of executives who report no generational diversity in meetings

---

25   The highest levels of generational diversity in executive meetings are based on the top 5% (32 meetings) of generationally diverse meetings reported. Further details of the analysis are available in Appendix C.

26   Li, Y., Gong, Y., Burmeister, A., Wang, M., Alterman, V., Alonso, A., & Robinson, S. (2021). Leveraging age diversity for organizational performance: An intellectual capital perspective. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 106*(1), 71.

27   Qu, J., Liu, M., Zhao, S., Zhao, Y., & Cao, X. (2024). Team cognitive diversity and individual creativity: the roles of team intellectual capital and inclusive climate. *Personnel Review.*

28   Díaz-Fernández, M. C., González-Rodríguez, M. R., & Simonetti, B. (2020). Top management team diversity and high performance: An integrative approach based on upper echelons and complexity theory. *European Management Journal, 38*(1), 157-168.

29   Details of this analysis can be found in Appendix C.

30   Proportional representation is based on estimates of each generation in the US workforce (see Footnote 20). Details of this analysis can be found in Appendix C.

31   We examined the mediating role of intellectual capital in the relationship between generational diversity in executive meetings and organizational performance using a bootstrapped mediation analysis of executive responses (N = 460). Full details of this analysis can be found in Appendix C.

82%

of executives who report proportionate generational representation in meetings say their organization is outperforming the competition, compared to just 41% of executives who report no generational diversity in meetings.

at all.[30] The higher intellectual capital that develops in the organization as a result of generationally diverse representation explains the link between this diversity and better organizational performance (Figure 2).[31] In other words, the organization's intellectual capital is enriched by generationally diverse employee representation, with the diversity of experiences and knowledge enhancing decision-making and problem-solving capability among employees, which, in turn, results in more productive executive meetings and, more importantly, better organizational performance.

Figure 2: Association between generational diversity in executive meetings, intellectual capital across the business, and organizational performance
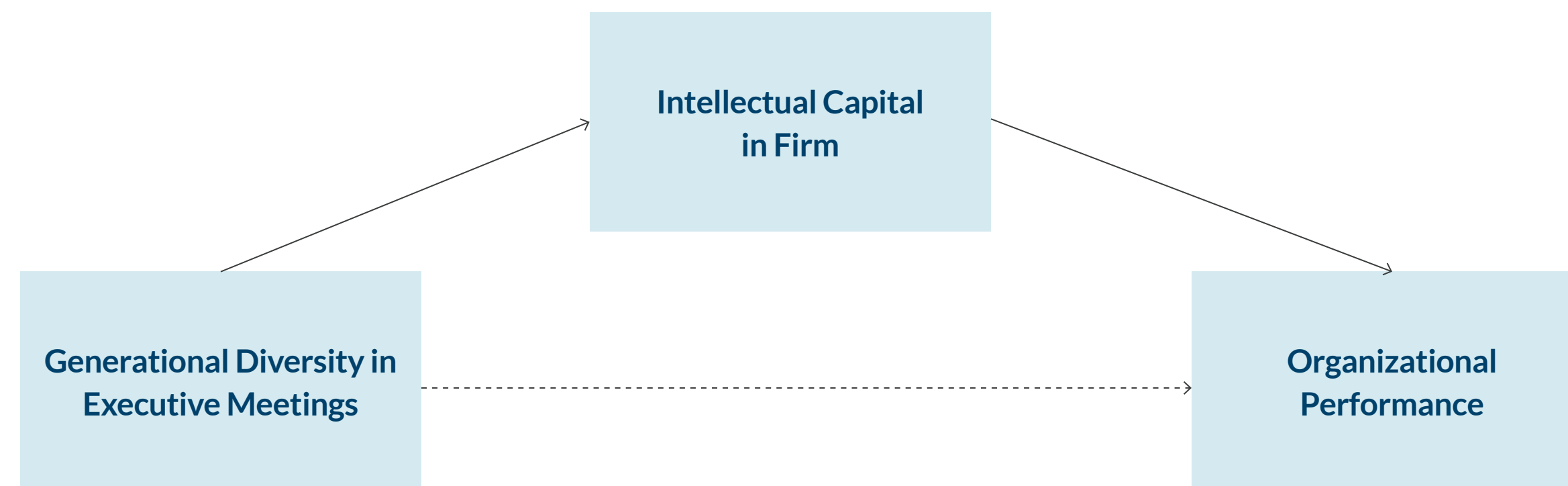
---

[30] Proportional representation is based on estimates of each generation in the US workforce (see Footnote 23). Details of this analysis can be found in Appendix C.

[31] We examined the mediating role of intellectual capital in the relationship between generational diversity in executive meetings and organizational performance using a bootstrapped mediation analysis of executive responses (N = 460). Full details of this analysis can be found in Appendix C.

WHO SPEAKS MOST IN MEETINGS? AND WHAT ARE THE PRODUCTIVITY IMPLICATIONS?

For generational diversity to be useful in meetings, it is essential that there are opportunities for all generations to have a voice. Employee voice is strongly linked to engagement and is important to surfacing innovative ideas.[32] We asked professionals to tell us who s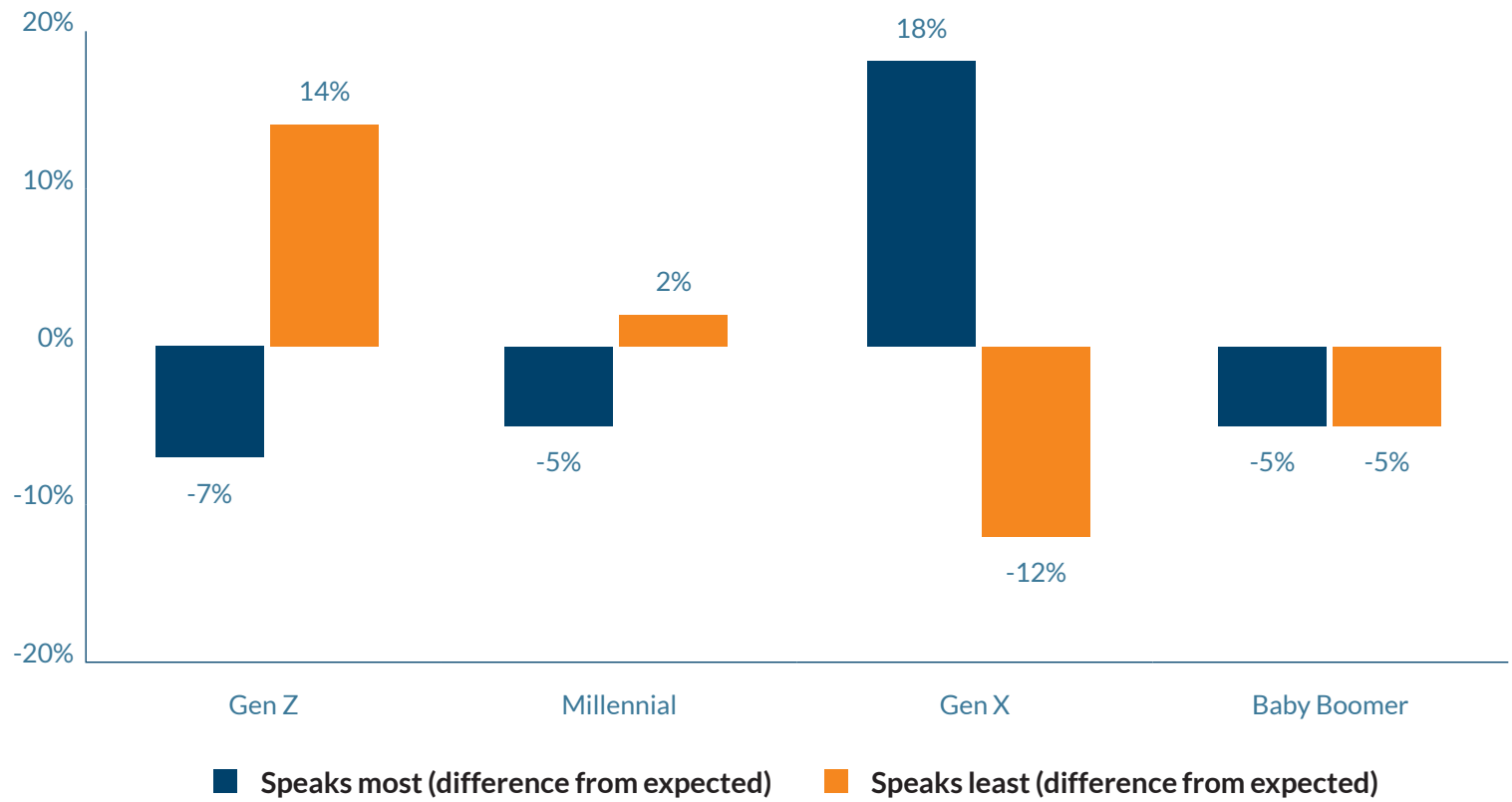poke the most and least in the last important meeting they attended. Despite representing less than 10% of meeting team members, Gen Z speaks the least in 24% of meetings and the most in just 3% of meetings (Figure 3). By contrast, Gen X is the most vocal generation, representing 41% of team members and speaking the most in 59% of meetings.

The person who speaks the most in meetings influences how much others contribute to the meeting directly when taking up too much time. Dominant team members in the room also cause 'cascading', which limits the content of the discussion in the room. This is particularly true when the person who speaks the most is influential in the organization.

[32] Rees, C., Alfes, K., & Gatenby, M. (2013). Employee voice and engagement: connections and consequences. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management, 24*(14), 2780-2798.

37% of Gen Z say they speak less than others in meetings compared to 27% of Millennials, 21% of Gen X, and 19% of Baby Boomers

Speaks most (difference from expected) ▪ Speaks least (difference from expected) ▪

Non-management roles ▪ Management roles ▪

Less than 2 years tenure ▪ 2 or more years tenure ▪

The differences reported by professionals about who speaks in meetings are mirrored in the self-reports of meeting participants themselves, with 37% of Gen Z saying they speak less than others in meetings compared to 27% of Millennials, 21% of Gen X, and 19% of Baby Boomers. As well as having less voice in meetings, Gen Z are more likely to report their own contributions as unproductive. Specifically, 51% of Gen Zs report that their meeting contributions are not productive, compared to 44% of Millennials, 39% of Gen X and 37% of Baby Boomers. Some of the generational differences in voice and productivity of contribution can be explained by seniority and tenure. As the youngest employees, Gen Zs often occupy the most junior positions and often have not been with the organization for as long as older counterparts. As younger generations establish longer tenure with the organization or take on management positions, their voice in meetings and the productivity of their contributions increases. By contrast, Gen X (aged between 50 and 60 years old), often occupy the most senior positions within companies and are among the longest-serving employees. Yet, the strong voice and contribution of Gen X employees often comes regardless of their role or tenure with the organization (Figure 4).
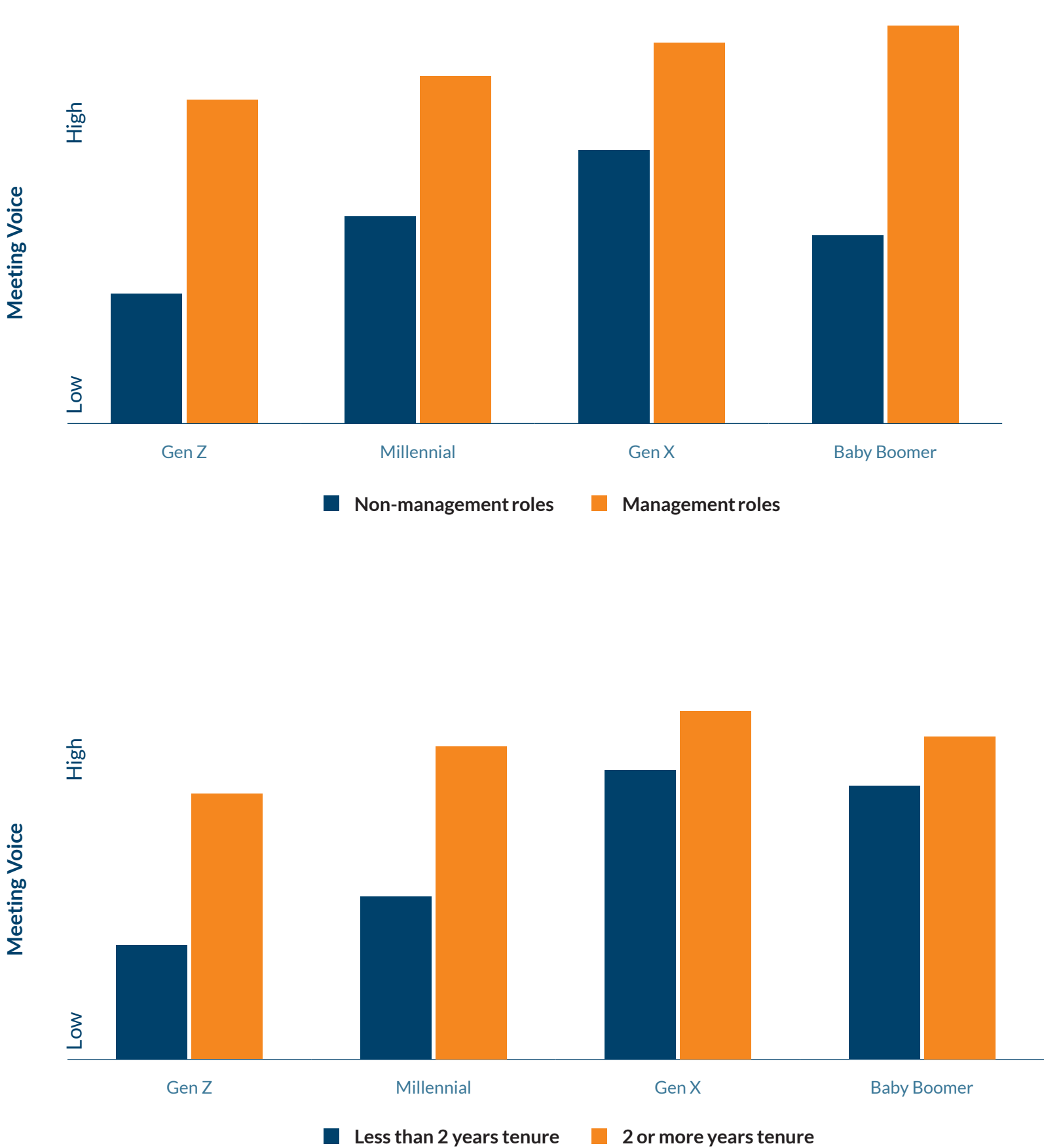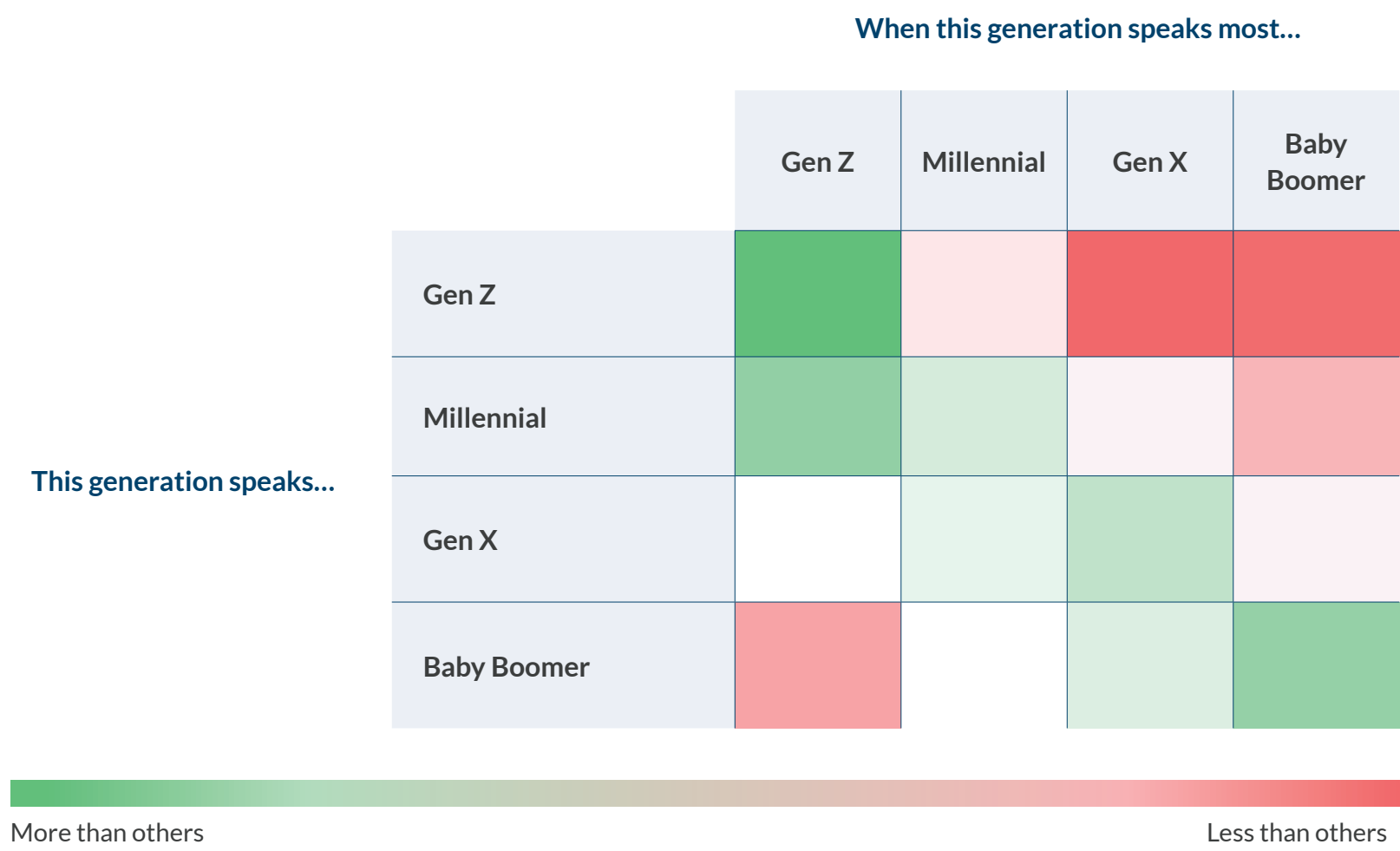
Generational tensions can undermine meeting inclusion

The person who speaks the most in meetings influences how much others contribute to the meeting directly when taking up too much time. Dominant team members in the room also cause 'cascading', which limits the content of the discussion in the room.[33] This is particularly true when the person who speaks the most is influential in the organization.

What is Cascading? Cascading occurs when individuals choose what to say based on other members' perspectives and the group's reactions to them, regardless of their own perspective. This can lead to poor decisions because individuals don't disclose everything they know. This hidden information can include excellent outlier ideas, innovative insights or a novel perspective on risk. Cascading can be monitored by paying attention to whether team members reiterate ideas mentioned by those who speak before them.

When the person who speaks most in a meeting comes from an older generation, younger generations contribute less (Figure 5).[34] For example, Gen Z reports speaking as much or more than others in only 51% of the meetings where someone from Gen X speaks most, compared to 81% of meetings in which a fellow Gen Z colleague speaks most, and 71% of meetings in which a Millennial colleague speaks most. A similar pattern exists for Millennials, who speak as much or more than others in only 61% of the meetings where Baby Boomers speak most, but in 76% of meetings in which a fellow Millennial speaks most and in 87% of meetings where a Gen Z speaks most.

Figure 5: Level of meeting contribution and inclusion by generation based on generation of person who speaks most

When this generation speaks most…

This generation speaks…	Gen Z	Millennial	Gen X	Baby Boomer
Gen Z				
Millennial				
Gen X				
Baby Boomer				

More than others ———————————— Less than others

---

[33] Hirshleifer, D. (1995). The blind leading the blind: Social influence, Fads, and Informational Cascades. *The New Economics of Human Behaviour,* 188.

[34] Of the 3,430 meeting observations, there were limited numbers in three scenarios: 1) When GenZ speaks most, Baby Boomers speak… N = 10; 2) When Baby Boomers speak most, Gen Z speaks… N = 4; 3) when Gen Z speaks most, Gen X speaks… N = 9. Figure 5 is for illustrative purposes. Detailed analysis of these effects can be found in Appendix C.

[35] Further details of this analysis can be found in Appendix C.

No single generation is responsible for promoting or undermining the productivity of meetings. Our analysis shows that equalizing voice across the generations in the room is the key to unlocking the overall productivity of meetings.

How the strong voice of Gen X influences productivity

There are subtle ways in which the voice of Gen X influences meeting productivity. When a person from Gen X speaks most in meetings, 38% of meetings are unproductive, significantly higher than when Millennials speak most, at 32% unproductive (Figure 6). However, this does not necessarily mean that Gen X employees should sit back entirely in meetings. Among meetings when someone from Gen X speaks least, 38% are unproductive, which is higher than when younger generations speak least (32% for Gen Z and 33% for Millennials).[35] Team members can pay attention to who speaks in meetings and seek opportunities to ensure each voice is heard.
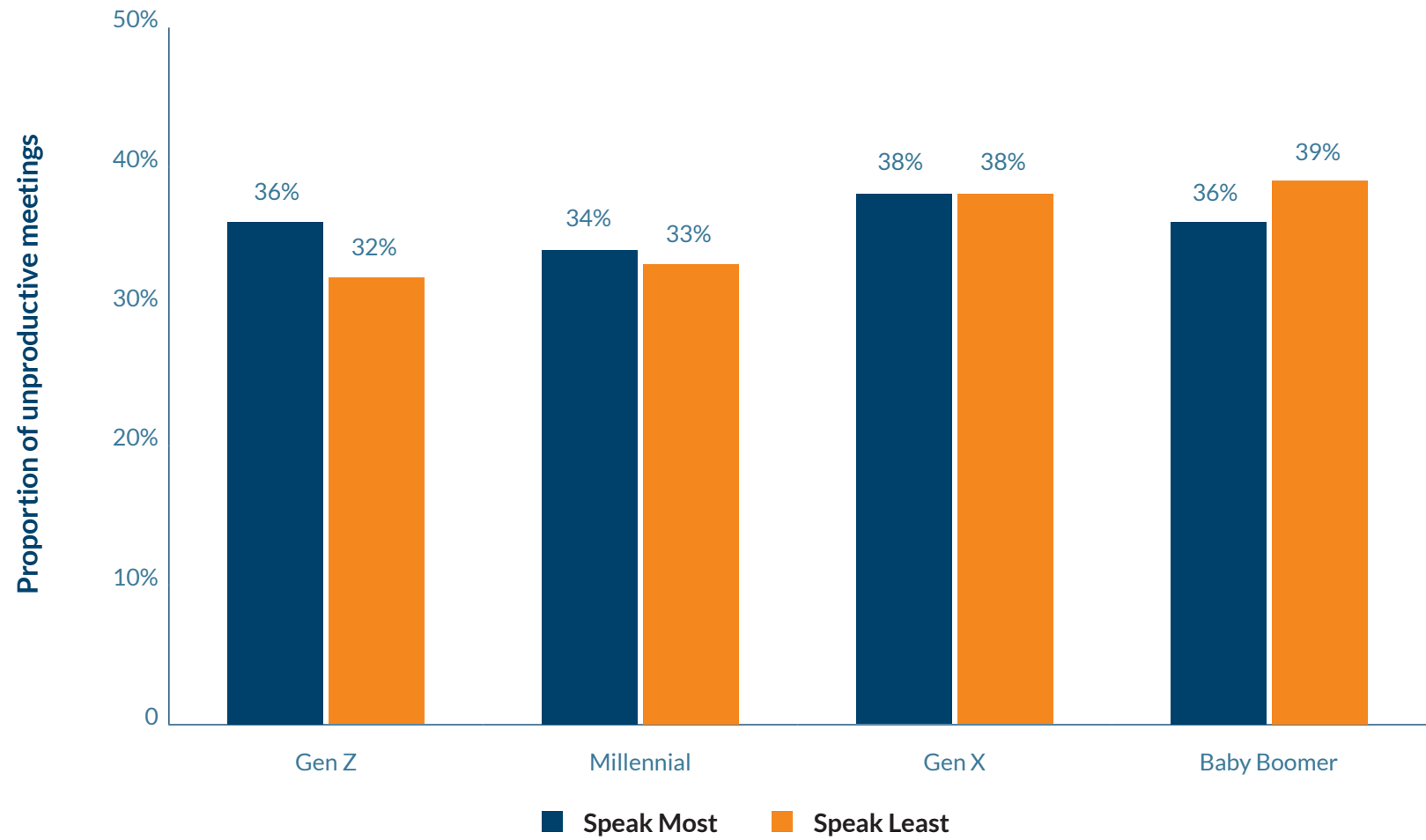
No single generation is responsible for promoting or undermining the productivity of meetings. Our analysis shows that equalizing voice across the generations in the room is the key to unlocking the overall productivity of meetings.

Figure 6: Proportion of unproductive meetings based on which generation speaks most and least

Proportion of unproductive meetings

	Speak Most	Speak Least
Gen Z	36%	32%
Millennial	34%	33%
Gen X	38%	38%
Baby Boomer	36%	39%

■ Speak Most   ■ Speak Least

[35] Further details of this analysis can be found in Appendix C.

THE BEHAVIORS THAT CHARACTERIZE PRODUCTIVE (AND UNPRODUCTIVE) MEETINGS

The inclusive characteristics of productive meetings

How can leaders create more productive meetings once they have generational diversity in the room? We explored the impact of specific, inclusive meeting behaviors on the perceived productivity of meetings. We also explored a range of meeting characteristics associated with team inclusion, psychological safety, belonging, disagreement and dissent (Table 3).[36] We considered these alongside practical details about the meeting, including the meeting format, duration and total number of team members.

Rather than any one generation having a large influence over meeting inclusion, diverse representation across generations in meetings is associated with a greater openness to new ideas and readiness to listen to suggestions and requests.

[36] Meeting characteristics were examined alongside meeting format (remote, face-to-face, hybrid), number of team members attending the meeting, meeting duration, meeting gender/generational diversity, respondent gender, role and age, and company size. Details of this analysis can be found in Appendix C.

Only 18% of inclusive meetings that enabled the voice of all team members were viewed as unproductive. By contrast, 58% of meetings with symptoms of groupthink were viewed as unproductive.

Table 3: Meeting behaviors ranked by strength of association with perceived meeting productivity *(behaviors above the line are significantly linked to meeting productivity)*

			Behavior
Association	**Higher >**	**Important to meeting productivity**	
			1. Team member contributions were valued
			2. Everyone's insights were used to rethink or redefine the task
			3. Those in the meeting were open to hearing new ideas
			4. Everyone's ideas for how to do things better were given serious consideration
			5. Those in the meeting were ready to listen to everyone's suggestions and requests
			6. The meeting had a culture in which employees appreciated the differences that people brought
			7. Input was actively sought from team members
	< Lower	**Unimportant to meeting productivity**	8. Team members did not feel excluded
			9. Those in the meeting were valued for who they were as people
			10. The views expressed by team members were consistently challenged by other team members
			11. The meeting was a non-threatening environment in which team members could reveal their "true" selves
			12. At least one team member expressed ideas completely different to those of other team members
			13. Team members felt comfortable disagreeing with others
			14. The opinions of at least one team member were different from the rest of the team
			15. There were some team members who disagreed with others in the meeting
			16. Everyone in the meeting had the opportunity to contribute to decisions

In addition to improving generational diversity in meetings, our analysis suggests three key behaviors that leaders can take to make meetings more inclusive and productive.

1. Value contributions to boost productivity

In an optimal meeting, every participant contributes something to move the group towards its goals. Yet, in more than a quarter of meetings, participants feel that their contributions are not valued by others in the meeting. This is strongly associated with the perceived productivity of the meeting, with 68% of these meetings viewed as unproductive. By contrast, only 25% are considered unproductive when contributions are valued. Ensuring that all contributions are recognized and acknowledged has the potential to reduce unproductive meetings by nearly a third.

Practical Tip: For managers, giving timely feedback to team members on when their contributions are valued and how their contributions could be more productive will allow team members to feel recognized and to improve.

What is Groupthink? Groupthink refers to the social pressures that lead to consensual decisions without critical evaluation of the consequences or alternatives. Members of a team can accept the decision that represents the perceived group consensus, even if they don't believe it to be reasonable or correct. Succumbing to the desire for conformity or harmony, team members feel compelled to avoid dissent and to agree with the group decision at all costs. While groupthink minimizes conflict, it typically leads to unchallenged decisions, which are often suboptimal. It also leads to unproductive meetings.

2. Leverage everyone's insights

Groupthink undermines the unique ideas and perspectives that can drive the best outcomes for the organization. Based on our data, 40% of meetings had symptoms of groupthink where participants report that the insights of only a few team members of the group are used to make decisions. This is a productivity drain. In order to realize the productivity benefits of diversity, the unique perspectives of those that think differently to ourselves must be heard. This does not need to be time consuming; we find no difference in the length of meetings when everyone's ideas are considered versus those where a small few dominate.[37] From our data, only 18% of inclusive meetings that enabled the voice of all team members were viewed as unproductive. By contrast, 58% of meetings with symptoms of groupthink were viewed as unproductive. Creating meeting environments where all generations have voice and have the opportunity to add valuable insights is key to more productive meetings.

Practical Tip: Asking team members to provide input into decisions helps surface ideas and perspectives. However, based on our data, nearly one in three meetings fail to seek this input, with 61% of these meetings perceived as unproductive. When input is sought from team members, only 24% of meetings are unproductive.

3. Be open to consider new ideas

New ideas and perspectives in important meetings enable meeting productivity. Just 23% of meetings are viewed as unproductive if they have an environment where new ideas are welcome. By contrast, when meetings are closed to new ideas, 66% are viewed as unproductive. In other words, if a meeting is not inviting new ideas, the outcome could have been achieved via an email. Overall, having team members in a meeting that are open to

---

[37] No association was found between 'giving consideration to everyone's ideas' and meeting duration. Further details of this analysis can be found in Appendix C.

Just 23% of meetings are viewed as unproductive if they have an environment where new ideas are welcome. When meetings are closed to new ideas, 66% are viewed as unproductive.

new ideas and ways of doing things has the potential to significantly reduce the number of unproductive meetings. It is one thing to be open to hearing new ideas; it is another to give them serious consideration. In one-third of meetings, survey participants stated that ideas are not being seriously considered as viable options by other participants.

Practical Tip: When was the last time you had your mind changed on something fundamental in a meeting? Before scheduling meetings, leaders should ask if they're open to altering their course based on fresh ideas from team members.

When it comes to making meetings more inclusive and productive, our analysis suggests that the presence of these positive behaviors is of much greater importance to outcomes than more dissenting or challenging behaviors. While constructive, consistent challenging within meetings can help productivity, open disagreement between team members is likely to undermine outcomes.[38]

The productivity potential of more inclusive meetings

What is an inclusive meeting? Meetings are more inclusive and more productive when they:

1. Value contributions of everyone in attendance.

2. Leverage everyone's insights to rethink and seek input from all team members.

3. Create an environment that is open to considering new ideas.

Our analysis of these three key inclusive behaviors across all meetings shows

that just over half (54%) of meetings can be considered inclusive.[39]

Promoting these behaviors to create more inclusive meetings could reduce the rate of unproductive meetings from 35% to 15%. This improvement could cut the estimated $259 billion annual loss from unproductive meetings in the United States by over $135 billion, or $37 billion in the United Kingdom.[40] At an organization level, this represents savings of up to $5.8 million each year for a large organization with 2,500 employees, or $115 million for a listed company with 50,000 employees.

Generational diversity and inclusive meetings

Generational diversity enables more productive meetings. For example, in meetings with no generational diversity, 27% of team members report that others in the meeting are not open to hearing new ideas, but this is just 14% in meetings with proportional representation from across the generations.[41] Rather than any one generation having a large influence over meeting inclusion, our analysis shows that diverse representation across generations in meetings is associated with a greater openness to new ideas and readiness to listen to suggestions and requests.

---

[38] Details of this analysis can be found in Appendix C.

[39] See Footnote 36. Further details of inclusive meeting characteristics and reported meeting productivity can be found in Appendix B.

[40] See Table 1 for summary. Full details of this analysis can be found in Appendix C.

[41] Proportional representation is based on estimates of each generation in the US workforce (see Footnote 23). Full details of this analysis can be found in Appendix C.

INCLUSIVE MEETINGS, FOR THE ORGANIZATION AND EMPLOYEES OF EVERY GENERATION

How to bolster inclusion in meetings

Having identified the three key inclusive behaviors connected with meeting productivity, how can leaders take actions to give meetings the best chance of being inclusive? We have identified a number of practical steps to help bolster inclusion in meetings.

1. **Rethink hybrid meetings:** Unlike fully remote or face-to-face meetings, hybrid meetings immediately split team members between those 'in the room' and 'outside the room'. Around 55% of remote and face-to-face meetings are considered inclusive, but

this drops to 48% for hybrid meetings.[42] To maximize productivity, everyone should be in the same room (virtual or physical).

2. **Limit the number of team members attending:** The more people you have in a meeting, the less opportunity each person has to contribute and have their voice heard. This perception of productive meetings was consistent across generations, with 39% of meetings with more than 10 team members reported as unproductive, compared to 33% of meetings with less than 10 team members and 32% of meetings with less than six team members.

3. **Consider team members before duration:** It is often believed that inclusive meetings will undermine productivity due to the extra time required to invite, consider and value contributions. We did not find any link between meeting duration and inclusivity or meeting productivity. The average time of both inclusive and non-inclusive meetings is around 60 minutes.[43] Leaders instead may want to focus on limiting team members to those essential to the outcome.

---

[42] 54% of remote meetings and 56% of face-to-face meetings, are considered inclusive; however this difference is not significant. Details of this analysis can be found in Appendix C.

[43] We examined differences in meeting inclusivity based on meeting duration. Details of this analysis can be found in Appendix C.
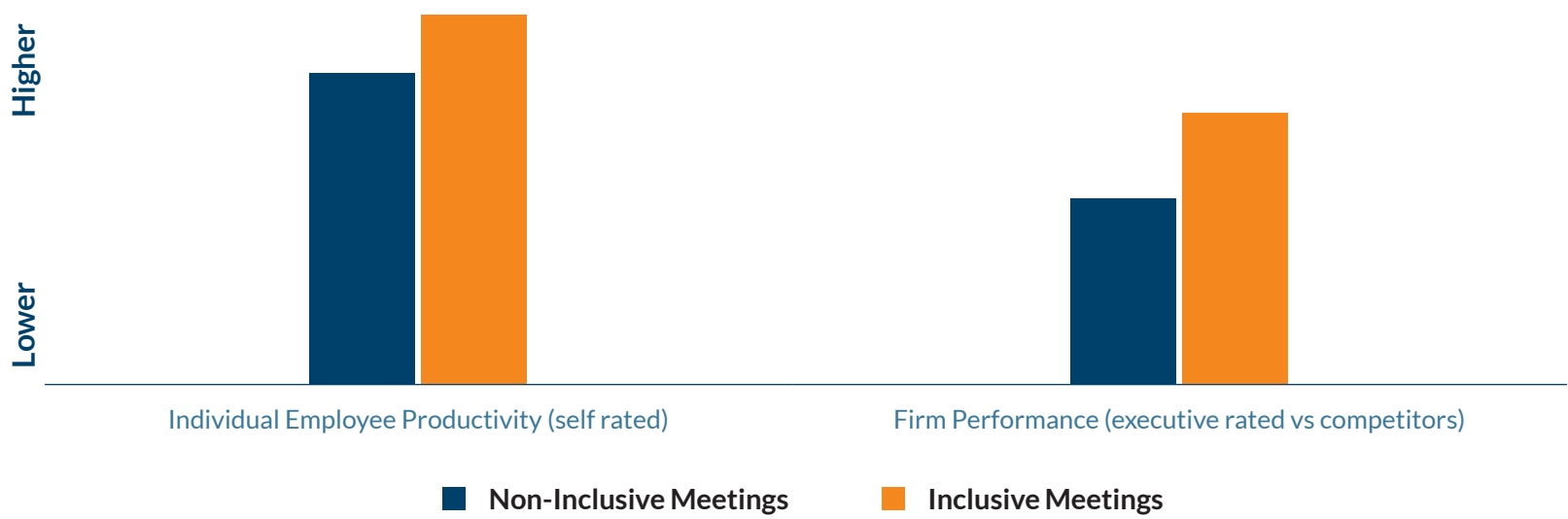
A majority of employees (60%) who reported their last meeting to be inclusive said they were unlikely to look for a new job in the coming 12 months, compared to just 36% of those who reported their last meeting was not inclusive.

How focusing on inclusive meetings can help organizations outperform

We find that the benefits of more inclusive meetings go beyond meetings themselves, raising the performance of individuals and the wider organization (Figure 7). Evaluating inclusive and non-inclusive meetings using the three key inclusive behaviors detailed on page 25, we investigated links between meeting inclusion and employee productivity, as well as the overall performance in the organization.[44]

To measure individual productivity, we asked employees how their manager viewed their productivity at work, including their overall performance, quality and quantity of their work, and their ability to deliver work on time.[45] To measure organizational performance, we asked executives to rate their organization's financial and non-financial performance compared to competitors.[46]

Figure 7: Individual productivity and wider organizational performance in companies when inclusive (vs noninclusive) meetings are observed

Individual Employee Productivity (self rated)   Firm Performance (executive rated vs competitors)

■ Non-Inclusive Meetings   ■ Inclusive Meetings

For the 54% of employees and executives who reported the last meeting they attended at their organization to be inclusive, this meeting inclusion was associated with better individual and organizational performance.

Across generations, employees experiencing inclusive meetings in their organization reported higher productivity, greater job satisfaction and lower likelihood to look for a new role in the coming 12 months (Figure 8).[47] For example, 86% of employees who reported their last meeting to be inclusive said they were happy in their job, compared to just 56% of employees who reported their last meeting was not inclusive. A majority of employees (60%) who reported their last meeting to be inclusive said they were unlikely to look for a new job in the coming 12 months, compared to just 36% of those who reported their last meeting was not inclusive.

The benefits of inclusive meetings to the broader organization are also reflected in executive ratings of organizational performance, including financial performance, intellectual capital (employee knowledge, skills, networks and collaboration), ESG, and company mission and purpose beyond financial measures versus competitors (Figures 8 and 9).[48] For example, 69% of executives who reported their last meeting to be inclusive reported the organization's financial performance is better than the competition,[49] compared to 55% of executives who reported their last meeting was not inclusive. Furthermore, 83% of executives who reported their last meeting to be inclusive said their employees develop new ideas and knowledge better than the competition, compared to 56% of those who reported their last meeting was not inclusive. This demonstrates how the benefits of inclusive meetings can extend beyond simply cutting the cost of unproductive meetings, potentially raising organizational performance across several key success measures.

44 We performed several regression analyses to understand better how inclusion in meetings relates to the likelihood of specific individual (productivity, turnover intentions, job satisfaction) and organization (firm performance, intellectual capital) outcomes, controlling for other relevant factors. Relevant factors include organization type and size, respondent gender, role, age, years in occupation, education, and country. Details of this analysis can be found in Appendix C.

45 Complete details of this measure can be found in Appendix B.

46 A total of five measures were used to measure Organizational Performance. Two financial measures (overall financial performance and revenue per employee) and three non-financial measures (company mission and purpose beyond financial measures, company Diversity Equity & Inclusion, and overall ESG performance). Complete details can be found in Appendix B.

47 Full details of the analysis of inclusive meetings and individual productivity, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions can be found in Appendix C.

48 Full details of the analysis of inclusive meetings and executive ratings of organizational performance compared to competitors can be found in Appendix C.

49 Specifically, 'last meeting' refers to the last meeting they attended where important decisions were made. Full details can be found in Appendix B.

Figure 8: Employee responses to questions of productivity and intention to look for a new job
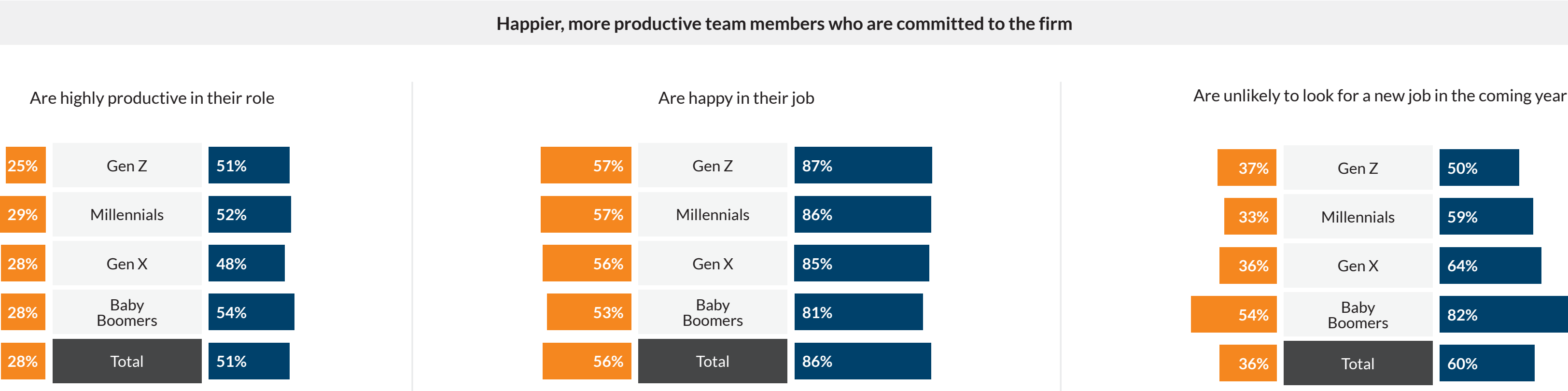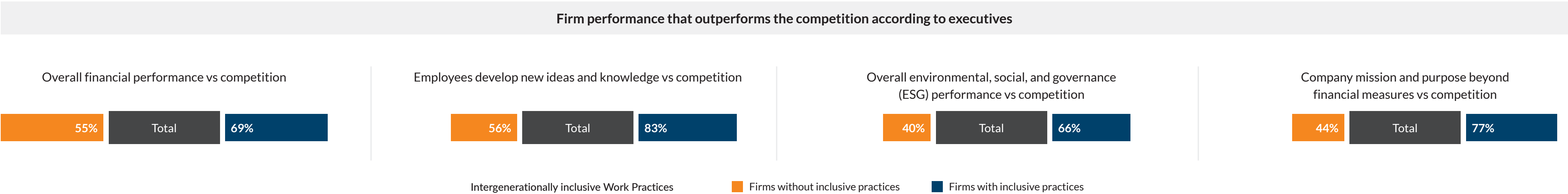
Happier, more productive team members who are committed to the firm		

Are highly productive in their role	Are happy in their job	Are unlikely to look for a new job in the coming year

Are highly productive in their role

25%	Gen Z	51%
29%	Millennials	52%
28%	Gen X	48%
28%	Baby Boomers	54%
28%	Total	51%

Are happy in their job

57%	Gen Z	87%
57%	Millennials	86%
56%	Gen X	85%
53%	Baby Boomers	81%
56%	Total	86%

Are unlikely to look for a new job in the coming year

37%	Gen Z	50%
33%	Millennials	59%
36%	Gen X	64%
54%	Baby Boomers	82%
36%	Total	60%

Figure 9: Executive responses to questions of organizational performance

Firm performance that outperforms the competition according to executives			

Overall financial performance vs competition

55%	Total	69%

Employees develop new ideas and knowledge vs competition

56%	Total	83%

Overall environmental, social, and governance (ESG) performance vs competition

40%	Total	66%

Company mission and purpose beyond financial measures vs competition

44%	Total	77%

Intergenerationally inclusive Work Practices   ■ Firms without inclusive practices   ■ Firms with inclusive practices

Note: *In figure 8, the percentage of employees who self-reported affirmatively to specific questions have been categorized by generations and split by observation of meetings attended having inclusive characteristics. Firm performance has been categorized by the percentage of executives who reported the performance of the firm to be better (vs competition) against specific areas and split by observation of meetings attended having inclusive characteristics.*

CONCLUSIONS

This report shows the importance of generational representation for creating productive meetings. In addition, it highlights the value of inclusive meeting practices in terms of meeting productivity gains.

We estimate the annual waste from unproductive meetings is around $259 billion in the United States and $64 billion in the United Kingdom. This waste is likely to be mirrored in other economies worldwide. Achieving generational representation in meetings that matches the generational diversity in the broader workforce could reduce the cost of unproductive meetings to organizations by $28 billion in the United States and $13 billion in the United Kingdom.

Our overall conclusion: Greater generational representation in meetings is linked to more productive meetings and better firm performance. Despite this, many meetings lack generational diversity, especially those at executive levels.

Achieving greater generational representation in meetings and promoting inclusive meeting behaviors are a key to reducing waste from unproductive meetings and unlocking the productivity benefits for employees and the wider organization that come from intergenerational collaboration, knowledge sharing and innovation.

GENERATIONS HUB AND GENERATIONS GLOBAL ANNUAL SURVEY

GENERATIONS HUB

The ability to attract and retain top talent in a tightening market is the top risk leaders are facing over the next decade.[50] This report highlights the people and productivity potential from creating better generational representation and inclusion in meetings.

For more resources to help leaders navigate the multigenerational workplaces of the future, the *GENERATIONS HUB* provides research-grounded resources to help teams perform at their best while attracting, retaining, and developing multigenerational talent. For more relevant publications, articles and events that cover the latest behavioral science findings on this topic, visit the *GENERATIONS HUB*.

---

[50] Protiviti (2023). The Top Risks for 2023: A Global View. www.protiviti.com/uk-en/newsletter/bp159-top-risks-2023.

Participate in our GENERATIONS Global Annual Survey

The *GENERATIONS Global Annual Survey* draws on the experiences of workers, managers, directors and C-suite executives to understand *'what matters'* in driving productivity and talent retention across generations. The benefits outlined in this report highlight the need for ongoing understanding of the experiences of workers across the generations, with a clear path towards work practices that drive the performance of increasingly multigenerational teams.

The *GENERATIONS Global Annual Survey* aims for an ambitious understanding of generations and the organization-wide practices that improve performance and employee experiences. Specifically, the survey aims to surface actionable insights leaders can leverage to respond to global talent challenges and to shape their employee experience to overcome key productivity blockers.

For leaders committed to unlocking the potential of a multigenerational workforce by maximizing intergenerational inclusion and productivity, we would invite you to follow the latest insights at the *GENERATIONS HUB* and participate in the *GENERATIONS Global Annual Survey*.

LSE Contacts

Dr Grace Lordan
Director of The Inclusion Initiative

Dr Daniel Jolles
Research Officer in
Behavioral Science

Protiviti Contacts

Fran Maxwell
Managing Director and Global Leader,
People & Change

Matt Duncan
Managing Director,
People & Change

AUTHORS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Authors

Daniel Jolles: Dr Daniel Jolles is a Research Officer in Behavioral Science at The Inclusion Initiative at the London School of Economics and Political Science. Daniel's research focuses on applying behavioral science to questions of aging workforce and age-diversity. This research is aimed at helping organizations create productive, multigenerational, and inclusive workforces. His research has been published in international scientific journals and business publications including Fast Company, LSE Business Review and World Economic Forum's Future of Work.

Grace Lordan: Dr Grace Lordan is the Founding Director of The Inclusion Initiative and an Associate Professor at the London School of Economics and Political Science. Grace's research focuses on inclusive leadership, women's progress in the workplace, the future of work, productivity through diversity and individual success. Her academic writings have been published in top international journals, and she has written for the Financial Times, Fortune, MIT Sloan Management Review and Harvard Business Review. Grace is a regular speaker and advisor to blue chip finance and technology firms. *Think Big, Take Small Steps and Build the Future You Want*, is her first book.

The Inclusion Initiative: The Inclusion Initiative leverages behavioral science insights to advance the understanding of the factors that enhance inclusion in financial and professional services firms. Located within the London School of Economics and Political Science, The Inclusion Initiative produces rigorous research and measures to help firms understand barriers to inclusion, quantify the benefits of inclusion and achieve better inclusion outcomes. Email: TII@lse.ac.uk

LSE The Inclusion Initiative