

# Half of Gen Z tech employees feel uncomfortable at work due to their identity, according to new report

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## Key findings



Key findings. Credit: Wiley's "Diversity in Tech: U.S. 2022" report.

The technology industry's years-long effort to diversify its workforce remains slow-moving and disjointed, according to Wiley's latest

"Diversity in Tech: U.S. 2022" report, released today following a survey of more than 2,000 early-career professionals and 200 business leaders.

The second annual report compiled by Wiley Edge—Wiley's industry-leading talent development solution—explores the early-career experiences of tech and non-tech Gen Z employees, while providing actionable recommendations for businesses to advance their [diversity](#), equity and inclusion (DEI) goals.

The tech industry is still struggling to recruit and retain talent from myriad backgrounds. Nearly 70% of [business leaders](#) said they struggle to recruit Black, Hispanic or Latino/a/e, Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) and other historically underrepresented talent at every organizational level—including entry-level talent (39%), mid-level talent (28%) and senior-level talent (18%)—while 43% said the same about retaining their historically underrepresented employees.

This challenge is well recognized by most organizations. Sixty-one percent of business leaders are aware of a continuing lack of diversity on their tech teams, with 37% noticing a lack of gender diversity, 32% a lack of ethnic and [racial diversity](#), 27% a lack of socio-economic diversity and 16% a lack of neurodiversity.

"With a growing awareness of the tech industry's lack of diversity comes a growing responsibility to finally address it," said Todd Zipper, Wiley's executive vice president and general manager of University Services and Talent Development. "This effort begins with creating more equitable pathways to tech careers for young professionals, including through customized training programs that prepare them for success from day one."

The report's key insights include:

## **Working in tech remains an uncomfortable experience for many Gen Z employees**

Despite nearly 60% of business leaders saying their companies work hard to foster an inclusive culture, half of Gen Z tech workers (50%) have still felt uncomfortable in a job because of their gender, race, ethnicity, socio-economic background or neurodevelopmental condition. This number rose to 55% for women, 56% for LGBTQ+ respondents and 61% for Black respondents.

When asked why they had left or wanted to leave a tech role, employees most often cited the lack of a sense of belonging (20%). Young Black professionals were the least positive (47%) about their experience across all racial or ethnic categories.

Given the tools and environment to succeed, however, more than half (53%) of Gen Z professionals currently working in tech said they aspire to one day be in a senior leadership position, including 57% of women compared with 49% of men.

## **Greater awareness of tech-career pathways is essential**

Gen Z professionals often don't know about, or feel qualified for, career pathways in tech. Less than a quarter (23%) of 18–24-year-olds who are not currently working in tech said they believe it offers excellent career opportunities, despite the same percentage also saying tech careers are likely to be some of the most future-proof. A quarter of women and 17% of men said they didn't know anything about careers in tech.

Thirty-nine percent of respondents said they didn't have, or know how to get, the right qualifications to pursue a career in tech; not having the

right qualifications was the top-ranked choice among Hispanic or Latino/a/e (25%), white (25%) and Black (17%) respondents. Women (23%) were more likely than men (15%) to say they weren't good at math and science, which deterred them from pursuing a tech career.

## **Focusing on a small talent pool is limiting hiring efforts**

While 39% of business leaders said they struggle to recruit entry-level employees, 45% admitted they are more likely to hire—or exclusively hire—graduates from top-ranked universities, which ultimately makes it more difficult to fill entry-level tech roles.

For example, whereas 79% of businesses that focused their recruitment exclusively on top-ranked universities said they struggle to recruit entry-level software developers, only 19% of businesses that equally consider all applications said the same.

However, 77% of business leaders said they try to develop employees internally when recruiting for senior tech positions, establishing pipelines of talent and growth opportunities within organizations.

## **The value of diversity initiatives is not yet fully acknowledged by employers**

When asked why they are conscious of their workforce's diversity, only a third of [business](#) leaders (33%) said it's because it's the right thing to do.

Nearly a third (31%) of businesses are still failing to collect workforce demographic data, only about half (49%) have a mentorship program to support the personal and professional development of Gen Z employees,

and 38% utilize employee resource groups aimed at fostering an inclusive workplace.

"There's still much more work to be done to increase diversity in the [tech industry](#)," said Daniele Grassi, Chief Operating Officer of Wiley Edge. "We are committed to helping businesses improve diversity, equity and inclusion in their workforces as well as attract and retain early-career professionals, including those from historically underrepresented backgrounds."

Wiley Edge provides employers with an edge in the marketplace by harnessing a Hire-Train-Deploy model that trains college graduates with in-demand skill sets to meet the highly specific needs of corporate clients. To help these companies diversify their tech teams, Wiley Edge helps to recruit graduates from historically underrepresented backgrounds and communities. Of graduates placed with companies in 2021, 31% were female and 51% were from Black, AAPI or other historically underrepresented groups.

## Methodology

The employee sample consisted of 2,000 respondents ages 18-24, who are part of Generation Z (born between 1996-2012). Individuals working in a technology or IT-based role represented 36% of respondents. The employer sample consisted of 200 respondents serving in leadership roles within the [financial services](#), health care, pharmaceutical, insurance or life sciences industries. All respondents resided in the United States at the time they participated in the survey.

**More information:** Report: [wiley-edge.idstud.io/edge/site ...  
- us - 13092022.pdf](https://wiley-edge.idstud.io/edge/site...-us-13092022.pdf)

Provided by Wiley

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