

Generation Z – What a Crock!

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Fortune Magazine was out with an article recently based on a **Monster survey** that claims to identify the future expectations and work habits of a generation that has yet to be clearly defined. They interviewed a selection of youngsters, ages 15-20 who “who pre-qualified themselves as either employed or, among younger teens, planning to work in the future.” These, they claim, are members of Generation Z whose membership, according to them, is 60 million teens, pre-teens and toddlers.

The research, conducted by **TNS**, included 2000 people across four generations, including this supposed cohort. If you assume that their sample included 500 of these young people, they surveyed .000008 percent of possible respondents. I wouldn't have been able to get this kind of survey design past my undergraduate behavioral stats professor.

I've been asked for the past five years what the next generation will be like. I've always demurred by saying no one knows yet. Firstly, they have barely entered working age. Secondly, their consumer habits have been based primarily on the money they've received from parents. This fact, by itself, should give competent people a reason to withhold judgment, but not Monster. In a transparent attempt to get a step on their competitors, they've released some shallow findings that were picked up by the erudite editors at Fortune who are, as well, anxious to remain ahead of the curve.

So what are employers to do with this “research?” Ignore it. It's easy to become intoxicated by all the new, new, new “findings” out there. While the media, and others remain desperate to capture your attention, this cohort will not be relevant for another several years unless you employ teens. Even then, this sample lacks adequate veracity due to it's tiny size and self-reporting data collection.

With a workforce of transitioning Baby Boomers and Millennials who are reaching critical mass, you have better things to do than worry about the expectations of today's teenie-boppers. And remember, just because a big magazine published it doesn't mean the research is holds water.

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