

URL: recruiting-gen-z-automotive-technician

Title Tag: Recruiting Gen Z Into the Automotive Technician Field | Today's Class

Meta Description: Getting younger technicians into your shop is a must. Find out how you can start recruiting gen z effectively.

Keywords:

hiring gen z

recruiting gen z

Recruiting Gen Z Into the Automotive Technician Field

Recruiting Gen Z successfully starts with understanding how this generation approaches work. Compared to millennials, they're more likely to join the trades, but the automotive industry isn't always on their radar.

That's why there's a real opportunity here. By understanding what matters to this generation and adjusting how you reach and support them, you can open the door to a whole new group of potential technicians.

In this blog, we'll walk through what Gen Z values, the roadblocks they face, and how you can make your shop a place where they want to start—and grow—their careers.

Table of Contents

- [What Gen Z Wants from a Career](#)
- [Barriers Gen Z Face](#)
- [The Right Places to Reach Gen Z](#)
- [Career Paths That Show Growth](#)
- [Tools That Match How Gen Z Learns](#)
- [A Work Culture That Supports Them](#)
- [Early Access Through School Partnerships](#)
- [Benefits That Compete With College Paths](#)

1. What Gen Z Wants from a Career

If you want to bring Gen Z into your shop, it helps to understand what they're looking for in a job. While not every person fits the same mold, this generation tends to be more thoughtful about the kind of work they do and who they do it for.

Who is Gen Z?

Gen Z includes people born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s. They grew up with the internet, smartphones, and social media as part of everyday life. On the whole, they're more comfortable with technology and more tuned in to issues like mental health, sustainability, and equity than previous generations. That awareness often shows up in how they choose employers.

What motivates them?

Gen Z cares about building a life, not just making a living. Some of the things that tend to matter most when choosing where to work include:

- **Work-life balance:** Time outside of work is just as important as time on the clock.
- **Purpose:** They want to feel like their work matters—not just for the business, but for people or the community.
- **Social responsibility:** Companies that give back or take environmental impact stand out.
- **Supportive environments:** They notice when a workplace feels welcoming—and when it doesn't.
- **Modern tools and training:** Outdated processes can be a dealbreaker for a generation that grew up using tech for just about everything.

The more you can show that your shop understands these priorities—the better your chances of standing out to Gen Z job seekers.

2. Barriers Gen Z Face

Bringing Gen Z into the trade starts with removing the friction that keeps them out. While there's interest in hands-on careers, the path to becoming a technician isn't always clear or accessible.

Understanding these hurdles can help shops create a smoother entry point—and a better long-term fit—for the next generation of techs.

Education Access

For many students, the cost of trade school is a major hurdle. Tuition, fees, and tools can add up fast, and not everyone has access to financial support. In some areas, trade programs are hard to get into due to long waitlists or limited resources, which can leave interested students without a clear way to move forward.

Workplace Misalignment

Gen Z tends to see work a little differently than previous generations. Things like flexibility, open communication, and support really matter to them. But some shops are still operating the way they always have—and that can create some disconnect.

When a young tech walks into a shop that feels rigid, outdated, or closed off, it can be tough for them to settle in. That's when frustration builds, and people start thinking about other options.

Here are a few things that often cause friction:

- Schedules that are hard to adjust
- No real support
- Gaps in communication between younger and older team members
- Not much clarity on how or when they can grow in the role

You don't have to flip everything upside down, but small changes in how your team works and communicates can go a long way in keeping younger techs engaged and wanting to stick around.

3. The Right Places to Reach Gen Z

If you want to connect with Gen Z, traditional methods like newspaper ads or career fairs aren't going to cut it. With all the information they're taking in online, it's important to show up in the right places *and* in the right way. That means going beyond just listing an open position—you've got to help them actually see what the job and your shop are all about.

What works:

Authenticity goes a long way. Gen Z doesn't expect polished, corporate videos—they'd rather see real people doing real work. A short clip of one of your techs walking through a repair or a quick look around the shop says more than a flashy ad ever could.

Use your content to give them a sense of the job, your team, and the kind of environment they'd be walking into. When they can picture themselves there, you've already gotten one step closer to bringing them in.

Where to connect:

- **TikTok:** Great for quick, behind-the-scenes clips that show off day-to-day work or shop life.
- **YouTube:** Perfect for longer videos—like how-tos, day-in-the-life content, or team interviews.
- **Instagram:** A good mix of visuals and short videos to highlight your people, your space, and your culture.

These platforms aren't just for promotion—they're tools to tell your story. When you use them to offer a real, honest look at what it's like to work in the trade, Gen Z is much more likely to take interest.

4. Career Paths That Show Growth

Gen Z wants to know there's room to grow. If a role feels like it has no clear next step, it can be tough to keep them engaged for the long haul.

Start with the big picture

From the beginning, it helps to talk through what the future could look like. Explain how someone can build their skills, take on more responsibility, and move into roles that fit their interests—whether that's diagnostics, team leadership, or even training others down the line.

Break down the steps

You don't need a corporate-style career ladder, but outlining a general progression makes a difference. Let them know:

- What a new tech usually starts with
- How long it takes to move into more complex work
- What traits or skills lead to leadership or specialty roles
- How continued learning plays a role in advancement

Even a rough roadmap gives them something to work toward.

Read More: [Create a Career Development Plan for your Auto Shop Employees](#)

Show how you support growth

If your shop offers mentorship, certification opportunities, or in-house training, say so. Gen Z values learning, and they'll appreciate knowing you're invested in helping them improve.

Examples of support that matter:

- Pairing new techs with experienced ones for on-the-job guidance
- Encouraging or covering the cost of ASE certifications
- Offering time to learn new systems or technologies
- Providing feedback and check-ins tied to growth goals

Make it feel achievable

You don't need to promise a fast track—but you *do* want to show that growth is possible. A little clarity and encouragement go a long way in helping Gen Z feel like they're building something solid, not just punching the clock.

5. Tools That Match How Gen Z Learns

Gen Z grew up learning from YouTube and mobile apps, so sitting through a 4-hour PowerPoint lecture or flipping through a thick training manual just isn't going to work. They prefer learning in short bursts, with visual cues and interactive formats.

What training styles they prefer:

- **Microlearning:** Bite-sized lessons that are easy to absorb
- **[Gamification](#):** Earning badges, competing in quizzes, and tracking progress
- **Real-time coaching:** Immediate feedback helps correct mistakes and build confidence
- **Hands-on experience:** Internships and apprenticeships are non-negotiable

Modern platforms that combine tech and training not only keep Gen Z engaged—they also make it easier for shops to track progress, identify gaps, and scale learning across the team.

6. A Work Culture That Supports Them

It's not just about the pay—culture plays a huge role in whether Gen Z sticks around. A shop that feels rigid, unwelcoming, or disconnected from its team won't retain top young talent for long.

What Gen Z wants in a work environment:

- **Flexible schedules:** If you can offer some level of flexibility, you'll stand out.
- **Positive culture:** Open communication, respect, and a sense of belonging go a long way.
- **Regular feedback:** A once-a-year performance review won't cut it. They want to know how they're doing—and how they can improve.
- **Recognition:** A quick "good job" or shout-out in a team meeting makes a difference.

Building a culture that supports all employees—not just Gen Z—improves morale, reduces turnover, and increases shop productivity over time.

Read More: [Auto Repair Shop Employee Recognition Ideas](#)

7. Early Access Through School Partnerships

Waiting until Gen Z graduates to start recruiting is too late. To get ahead of the curve, shops should partner with high schools, vocational programs, and technical colleges to build interest early.

How to get involved:

- Attend career days and offer shop tours
- Sponsor tools, uniforms, or supplies for local programs
- Host "Technician for a Day" events to give students hands-on experience
- Provide co-op opportunities, internships, or scholarships

By showing up early and often, shops can build strong pipelines of future techs who already feel connected to the brand.

Final Thoughts

Generation Z brings curiosity, drive, and a desire to make an impact—traits that align perfectly with what the automotive industry needs right now. But to fully tap into their potential, shops need to adapt: in how they recruit, how they train, and how they support their teams.

The shops that embrace modern tools, offer clear growth paths, and foster supportive environments will not only weather the technician shortage—they'll thrive.

If you're looking to update your team training to match what Gen Z is looking for, be sure to [reach out to the Today's Class team](#).