



# Praise for the Book

I have worked side-by-side with Nikhil in India with his high-profile clients which include many of India's most well-known and successful enterprises, and I never failed to learn something new from him. His work in HR and talent and corporate learning and development was and is leading-edge. Besides, his insights on other topics like customer experience are also compelling, especially when it comes to brand values that are key to winning over Gen Zers in India. I am sure, the readers of his book will experience the same reaction I have had.

**– Dr. Lynn Phillips (CEO, Reinventures,  
Marketing Professor at Stanford and Harvard)**

My first interactions with Nikhil were in India about 5 to 6 years back through a leadership program that was conducted for Axis Bank. I was always impressed by Nikhil's thought clarity, patience and ability to connect with everyone in those sessions. I think Nikhil's own story represents a classic Gen X story and almost all Gen Xers would be able to relate to various aspects of his life. This book is a must-read for all generations and also for everybody who is involved in any sort of marketing to better understand the thought processes of different generations. A very well-structured and articulated analysis of various generations with a particular focus on Gen Z.

I wish Nikhil all the best for his first book and eagerly await his future writings.

**– Sachil Dagur CEO Habib Bank Zurich (Hong Kong, Ltd)**

## *TARGET GEN Z*

Target Gen Z is a book that one can only miss to read at one's own risk. It has valuable insights for corporate leaders and managers to assimilate and create appropriate strategies to handle a vast mass of population entering the workforce and the consumer pool year-on-year. The slice of the population, which Nikhil has so endearingly sketched graphically as well as dynamically, differs from what leaders and managers have ever experienced before. Nikhil unveils nuances of aspirations, expectations, motivations, attitudes, values of a community that constitute a large chunk of the Indian population. His insights can prove to be user-friendly from the lens of leadership development across the different sections of industry and even for parenthood.

The personal reflection sheet at the end of each chapter adds immense value to this extremely insightful book by raising the right questions for leaders and managers to ruminate over.

**– Devashis Rath, SVP, Talent Mgmt, & Org. Effectiveness  
(Ultra Tech, Aditya Birla Group)**

As a learning professional, I took pride in knowing the Gen Z better. I must admit that I was unmindful of many aspects until I read this book. The book dives deeper into my core area of interest, which is to understand this generation and their learning preferences. Also, the book touches upon the digital generation, as an employee and a consumer, which brings in the missing pieces of the puzzle. A great read indeed!

**– Beena Mathew, Global Knowledge Mgmt. Leader, GBS @ PepsiCo**

Nikhil has created a book that you will want to share with all the Gen Zers, making us understand wonderfully their corporate life and career goals. I can't wait to share this with all the Gen Z entrepreneurs in our business network. Wishing Nikhil all the very best.

**– Vikas Panjabi, Co-Founder,  
Chocolate Room – India's Largest Coffee Chain**

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Whether you are a new leader or an experienced one, a parent wanting to inspire, lead or be led by Gen Z; this book is for you. Very crisp and succinct, something you can finish in one go but will keep going back for pointers.

**– Sajith Kurup, Global Director, Marketing Analytics – Ab InBev**

A Great Book on understanding the key dimensions of Gen Z, especially their attitudes on Learning and Corporate Life expectations. Enjoyed it – it is a must-read.

**– SM Lateef, Global Hiring Leader, Genpact**

The Gen Z era is here, and we all have a lot to learn from this generation. Nikhil's book is a valuable and relevant resource in understanding this important group. It will help not only the business leaders who manage a multi-generational workforce but also parents, teachers, politicians, everyone. I'd like to get a copy when done, hopefully, a signed one.

**– Greg Marchi, Chief Learning Officer,  
Assistant Dean, Mays Business School (Texas A & M)**

This book is A MUST-READ. Nikhil captures Gen Z's work expectations so clearly. The book is a good ringside view on understanding this new generation. Every manager will definitely benefit.

**- Aparna Sharma, HR Practitioner, Board Member,  
Best-Selling Author & Motivational Speaker**

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In this book, Nikhil packs his real-life observations as a parent of a Gen Zer along with his insights from extensive experience in leadership development. This gives us a deeper insight into the worldview of Gen Z's and what it means for the organizations. The book reveals the mental models, behaviors, expectations and aspirations of Gen Z to help us understand how to best engage with them as they join the workplaces of the future. A must-read for anyone who wants to capture Gen Z's attention as a manager, learning professional or even a marketer!

**– Varuna Gupta, Practice Lead,  
Organizational Development, Infosys**

Nikhil uses his extensive expertise in developing world-class leaders to present an insightful, thought-provoking exposé of a group that few understand: Gen Z – to our collective loss. The book is a must-read because it addresses the impact of a currently ignored and neglected workgroup, which is crucial in driving the future of the world, Our Future.

I wish him the best of success for this new book.

**– John Thomas, VP International, Regis Company, Colorado, US**



## Foreword

# Resolving the Paradox of Bridging Generational Divides

It is said that experience is the greatest teacher. For many of us, the paradox of bridging generational divides is most palpably felt through the experience of parenting.

I do not know any parents who do not aspire to create a better life for their children than they had for themselves. To achieve this aim, they diligently and selflessly sow the seeds of hard work to build a better future for the next generation in their family. In so doing, however, they inevitably become frustrated when their children fail to recognize and appreciate all that their parents have sacrificed in order to give them a better life.

This pattern typically culminates with the group of parents from one generation, who have been engaged in an animated conversation that goes something like this *“Kids these days... They just have no idea how easily they have it... When we were young... They don’t know what hard work really is... Oh my gosh... Listen to us... We sound just like our parents!”*

This pattern repeats generation after generation. The older generation laments how the younger generation does not understand how things

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work, while the younger generation wonders why their parents are so out of touch with reality.

The paradox of bridging generational divides is that both the generations are “*right*” in their assertions because they are framing their arguments based on the generational context that has shaped their worldview. While we all may be living on the same planet, we are living in very different worlds. Worlds that are framed by our shared generational experiences.

To make matters even more challenging, today there are at least five different generations: Maturists’, Boomers’, X’s, Y’s and Z’s. And, as technology proliferates and the rate of societal change accelerates, the chasm between these generational divides appears to be widening.

Nikhil’s life experience - both at home and in the workplace - makes him uniquely qualified to resolve the paradox of bridging generational divides for us.

His decision to return to India following his parents’ tragic accident and to live in close proximity to his father and brother accorded him the opportunity to live in the midst of three generations. In addition, his leadership role at Duke CE, where I had the great fortune of working alongside him, endowed Nikhil with the opportunity to help organizations bridge generational divides in the workplace.

In drawing on these experience bases to write this book, Nikhil has cracked the code on Generation Z. Coupling this experience with in-depth research, he reveals keen insight into what this generation expects as a consumer, what they want from those they work with, and how they prefer to learn and grow.

For organizations seeking to market to Generation Z, Nikhil explains how to appeal to Generation Z’s need for authenticity, safety and security. For companies seeking to welcome Generation Z’s to the workplace, Nikhil provides clear guidelines on how to create an organization that provides mutually beneficial learning opportunities across generations.

And - perhaps most importantly - for any parent, like me, trying to understand how to help my Generation Z kids grow up to become happy and fulfilled adults, Nikhil provides an in-depth picture of what it’s like to

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be a Gen Zer today and what they need from their parents to help them along their development pathway.

I am so glad that Nikhil took the time and effort to write this book. I am already reaping the benefits from having read it, both as a parent and as an educator. As Gloria Steinem so eloquently put it, “Across generations, there is as much to learn as there is to teach.” We can all learn a lot in working to bridge generational divides.

I wish you all the best in your own journey to help resolve the generational paradox within your own context. Reading and applying the wisdom that Nikhil shares in the pages that follow are very good initial steps to doing so!

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