00;00;00;05 – 00;00;10;26
Marcie Merriman
Because of the technology that they've grown up with. They have an ability to learn at a rate that's absolutely inconceivable to older generations. Use that to your advantage.

00;00;10;29 – 00;00;17;21
Jon Quinn
Play along. Play the game for a while and then earn it. Yeah. Earn your ability to have some flexibility. That's a big takeaway.

00;00;17;22 – 00;00;23;27
Marcie Merriman
There's a lot of areas that I think they're right in many, many ways. But again, we got to figure out how to change the world together.

00;00;23;27 – 00;00;39;11
Narrator
Welcome to Career EQ, a resource for aspiring young professionals navigating the job search process and the early part of their careers. Your host is Jon Quinn, senior lecturer of marketing at the Fisher College of Business at the Ohio State University.

00;00;39;14 – 00;00;57;05
Jon Quinn
Today at Career EQ, our topic du jour is a very timely and possibly even a touchy one. We're going to talk about Gen Z in the workplace. Now, I interact with thousands of Gen Zers every semester, and I'm even the father of three of them. I've also read several books about Gen Z, of which are listed in our webpage notes that were New York Times bestsellers.

00;00;57;12 – 00;01;05;14
Jon Quinn
But I am not an expert on Gen Z. However, our guest today, Marcie Merriman of EY, is. Welcome to Career EQ, Marcie.

00;01;05;16 – 00;01;37;16
Marcie Merriman
Thrilled to be here. Marci Merriman and I'm currently a managing director at Ernst and Young, where I lead our cultural insights customer strategy practice. So my focus there is on generational, and societal change. So really understanding how generations are impacting the world, how they're impacting the business world, how they're changing consumer behavior, employee behavior, understanding these aspects of things and then helping businesses, including our own, get ahead of the curve.

00;01;37;18 – 00;01;45;27

Marcie Merriman
So understand how they're changing consumer behavior, how they're changing workplaces, what the business impact is of all of this.

00;01;45;29 - 00;02;04;23
Jon Quinn
That's interesting stuff. I want to love the phone like a niche in my career like that because, I'm the type of person, like, back in the day when we had hardcover magazines in my free time hanging out of the pool and summer, I be reading American demographics. Yeah. So, really interesting stuff. So thank you for joining us here at Career HQ.

00;02;04;26 - 00;02;15;24
Jon Quinn
So we're talking about the cultural and societal changes. What drew you to Gen Z specifically, and how did you become widely regarded as an expert in the latest generation to enter the working world?

00;02;15;26 - 00;02;36;28
Marcie Merriman
Well, what drew me to them was seeing a real change in millennials. So I've always focused on youth as a way of understanding societal change. So it's not so much, that we gotta, you know, understand these young people and cater to them or that sort of thing, because that's not what we're bringing to businesses. Instead, I focused on the younger people.

00;02;37;04 - 00;03;04;15
Marcie Merriman
So, you know, say teens, early 20s, as a way of understanding what's happening in our broader society. So if I look at Gen Z, which today we put 18 to 28 and compare them to 18 to 28 year olds ten years ago, 20 years ago, 30 years ago, by looking at that age span and looking, comparing to past groups at the similar age, we can see things that are true societal change and not just life stage and growing into other things.

00;03;04;18 - 00;03;26;07
Marcie Merriman
And for businesses, that is, it can bring a huge competitive advantage because if you can see where things are going next, if you can understand what's actually changing with society, looking at at things as not, you know, it's the difference between, weather of the day and climate change. I'm looking for climate change. I'm not looking for trends.

00;03;26;07 - 00;03;35;09
Marcie Merriman
I'm not looking at what color gen Z wants to wear today or millennials wanted to wear. But instead, what do we see as the real shifts? Yeah.

And

00;03;35;11 - 00;03;37;12
Jon Quinn
So another Pantone color of the year, not the.

00;03;37;12 - 00;03;58;04
Marcie Merriman
Pantone color. I mean, it has it has its place in fashion and other things. But that's not not where I'm focused. And where I really started digging into Gen Z was, I'd say about 2015, when I thought I was doing research on millennials and looking at what, you know, where they were bringing things and what they wanted next.

00;03;58;06 - 00;04;22;14
Marcie Merriman
And I started to see a difference, and I still thought of them as young millennials. And as time went on and data came in, we could see more and more that this wasn't just an extension of millennials. This was a new generation in itself. And I think that's something really important to, you know, convey about how I and my organization focus on generations.

00;04;22;14 - 00;04;46;26
Marcie Merriman
It's not pop culture. It's not the headlines that you, you know, read every day. Those things honestly really drive me crazy. It really is looking at from a social science standpoint and true generational theory, in order to understand how things are flipping, how they're changing. And with that, you're looking at the societal events that impact how you think the world should work.

00;04;46;28 - 00;05;08;19
Marcie Merriman
And with Gen Z, you I think about the amount of change they've been through. So we're putting a mess. Born 1997 to 2007. So the oldest of them was two when the Columbine massacre happened. They had just started kindergarten just before 911. They had witnessed a collapse of global financial markets. While they were in grade school.

00;05;08;25 - 00;05;10;14
Jon Quinn
We saw their parents laid off.

00;05;10;16 - 00;05;36;14
Marcie Merriman
And absolutely saw their parents lose houses. You know, these other things. So even if they were young, they experienced that collapse and the impact of it. And it goes on and on and on what they've experienced. And with that, with this degree of change and the

technologies come along on top of it, there's no way that they could, an 18 year old today is going to behave the same way as an 18 year old 20 years ago.

00;05;36;19 – 00;05;56;14
Marcie Merriman
There's just no way. It's truly a different generation. And that's where when we look at what comes next with Gen Alpha, we can't really say when they start. Right now I'm putting Gen Z youngest at 18. They could go younger. But my belief is because of the amount of change we've been through in the last, you know, five years, you know, ten years, five years.

00;05;56;14 – 00;06;17;26
Marcie Merriman
Certainly the new technologies, Covid, all these things have created way too much change for the generation coming up now, even just behind Gen Z to be the same generation. So I really do believe the 17 year olds and below are going to reflect different standard beliefs, attitudes, and even what we're seeing in Gen Z.

00;06;17;28 – 00;06;43;16
Jon Quinn
Well, I hadn't really thought about that, but Gen Alpha were a very formative stage in their life when Covid hit. It's gonna have a huge impact on who they are as a generation. Absolutely. So something you talked about, you mentioned they're talking about cultural influences and the experiences a Gen Z kind of leads into. My first question is like Gen Z is somewhat stereotyped about their preference for work life balance, right.

00;06;43;18 – 00;06;54;02
Jon Quinn
And desire for working hybrid or even maybe 100%, remote work arrangements. How realistic is that going to be for Gen Z going forward?

00;06;54;04 – 00;07;20;21
Marcie Merriman
Yeah, it's such a struggle because in many ways they're right. And and and thinking, why should I be in an office? Why should we do these things? And that's where, you know, most of the time I'm I'm advising and, you know, talking with people that are Gen Xers or older millennials with as business leaders. So I'm helping them understand Gen Z and themselves relative to Gen Z.

00;07;20;28 – 00;07;50;04
Marcie Merriman
And in this case, we're flipping it. Right. So we're talking to more of the Gen Z, own group and helping them think about what all this

this means in the workforce and where they're going. I believe their expectations are very realistic. However, they have to remember they're going into workforces with people who came up through the workforce and have been in the work environment and very different ways than they have.

00;07;50;06 - 00;08;26;04
Marcie Merriman
And I think where it's been a struggle for Gen Z, because the most of them, you know, spent a good deal of their life remote in school, you know, because of Covid or, you know, even locked up in their houses to a degree. And an awful lot of them haven't worked in the work world in a way that, you know, you and I grew up in the work world, and the struggle isn't a lack of understanding because we have the leaders, the Gen X, the millennials is some of the boomers who remember what it was like before, who remember the collaboration.

00;08;26;10 - 00;08;50;19
Marcie Merriman
There's some nostalgia for how things worked and wanting to have that back. But the fact is, even if we suddenly five days a week had everybody in the office, it's not going to go back to what it was. So to some degree, I they need to shift their thinking, because just bringing everybody back isn't going to change things to suddenly be the collaboration you wanted before.

00;08;50;21 - 00;09;13;09
Marcie Merriman
At the same time, Gen Z needs to ease into it a little bit. So I experienced this myself a couple of years ago. You have a Gen Z daughter, college senior, who had an internship, at a nonprofit. And this is she's a hard working kid, and she will do anything, especially when she's passionate about. And she's very passionate about this nonprofit.

00;09;13;11 - 00;09;33;18
Marcie Merriman
Excited to go in. And as she went in and the first hour or so, she sent me pictures of her own office and, you know, all excited about these things, really excited about the job. By the time she came home. Her immediate comment was 9 to 5, 9 to 5. They want me in the office 9 to 5.

00;09;33;26 - 00;09;57;16
Marcie Merriman
To her, it was just unfathomable. Like, she works best in, you know, these different environments. And what I advised her. And this is what I advise Gen Z is just just experiment. Go along with it for two weeks. You know, show them. Do do what they're asking. Show them who you are. Show them how you work. Show them the value you bring.

00;09;57;18 – 00;10;05;02
Marcie Merriman
And I guarantee, you know, knowing the leaders of this organization, I guarantee they are going to really care. They aren't going to care. Yeah.

00;10;05;04 – 00;10;06;21
Jon Quinn
And saying stablish a level of trust.

00;10;06;21 – 00;10;11;05
Marcie Merriman
Once they establish the trust, they show the ability. And I think this.

00;10;11;05 – 00;10;11;29
Jon Quinn
Is prove yourself.

00;10;12;02 – 00;10;23;01
Marcie Merriman
Absolutely. And I mean, I'm sure you've had through your career employees that have worked for you, that bring so much value that in some ways you're willing to bend.

00;10;23;04 – 00;10;24;07
Jon Quinn
Yep. Absolutely.

00;10;24;08 – 00;10;45;01
Marcie Merriman
Right. But then there's some that they're bringing enough value, but you're not going to bend because it's not necessarily worth the bending. So if you bring that extra thing, if you do the extra work, you know, I think of it as, you know, more of a sports analogy, which of course, oh, issue is perfect.

00;10;45;04 – 00;10;46;21
Jon Quinn
We love our sports analogies around here.

00;10;46;21 – 00;11;09;17
Marcie Merriman
Absolutely. And if you think about the relationship with the employer and the employee and think about it as the coach and the player, right. And if you want to be a successful player, if you want to be the star player, if you want to be the best. Just getting enough and telling the coach, nah, I'm not going to really do these training programs.

00;11;09;17 - 00;11;33;10
Marcie Merriman
I'm going to do my own. If you're an outstanding, gifted player, that is cannot be, you know, denied, then maybe you're going to be able to stay on the team. Anything short of that, you're going to be let go. And I think it's the same thing in the organization. Your going to get the opportunities based on what you provide, how you perform.

00;11;33;10 - 00;11;55;13
Marcie Merriman
And it's really hard to perform without giving it all, without understanding where the coach is coming from and why they want you to do it. And I think having a little bit of that mentality makes it less of a blame game, because one of the biggest challenges we have right now is the leaders, again, often the older generations.

00;11;55;16 - 00;12;06;08
Marcie Merriman
They think they're right and they think these people coming in should just do what I want them to do, and they should behave and they should do what I did and blah, blah, blah. We got the younger people.

00;12;06;13 - 00;12;10;05
Jon Quinn
I think I, I'm guilty of that a little bit too.

00;12;10;07 - 00;12;30;07
Marcie Merriman
I think we're all guilty a little bit. We get the younger people who think they're right. Neither side is right. You know there's elements and that's where it needs to get beyond the my way or the highway in both sides and understand more about why. You know why they want what they want.

00;12;30;10 - 00;12;54;11
Jon Quinn
So something I kind of gleaned what you just said was like for the aspiring young professional, maybe they shouldn't go into an interviewing situation or a job offer situation trying to dictate their work arrangements like saying, I need to be 100% remote or I need hybrid, or this is like play long. Play the game for a while and then earn it.

00;12;54;18 - 00;13;13;26
Jon Quinn
Yeah. Earn your ability to have some flexibility. That's a big takeaway. So, I want to kind of shift gears a little bit. About a week or two ago, there was a story in NPR marketplace talking about the unemployment rate being twice that for the leading part of Gen Z. So

let's say maybe those 23 to 28, right?

00;13;13;26 - 00;13;43;20
Jon Quinn
Those are in the working world now in employment rates, twice that of the their predecessor. And part of that's just being young right. Part of it's I think that's somewhat true over time. But this is over indexing what's going on right now. And kind of associated with that was a bunch of articles that came out. I think the lead article might have been fortune, but there's a bunch of different articles, about it late last year, early this year about Gen Z getting fired at a higher rate than other previous generations.

00;13;43;23 - 00;14;11;10
Jon Quinn
And there's a stereotype that's starting to be formed out there as Gen Xers and some of the millennials are forming a stereotype about. They're the younger counterparts of Gen Z. And I want to our listeners, just be aware of this and make and avoid some of the pitfalls. So I'd like to talk a little bit about some of those challenges that are being offered up in all of these articles, so they can avoid being stereotyped.

00;14;11;13 - 00;14;28;25
Jon Quinn
So, let's take a first. One of the top ones was lack of motivation. How can how would you recommend a, an aspiring gen Z professional to demonstrate that they're motivated.

00;14;28;27 - 00;15;04;04
Marcie Merriman
Okay. So this is another every every single question's tricky because there's so many sides to it right. The motivation how the Gen X and older millennials are assessing motivation is often by how hard you're working, how much time you're putting in, how much effort you're putting in. And I don't think that's necessarily right, because we've had so much of the world that's evolved to where we can use technologies in different ways, and we can accomplish things in different ways.

00;15;04;06 - 00;15;35;23
Marcie Merriman
I did some research with my, you know, part of my, my team. I had them do the research within the firm to understand some things. And one of the things that came back that surprised me was, my, the Gen Z who did this research, discovering that. All right. Discovering that the younger people in the firm were putting as much time as the older people and believing that this gave, this validated the younger people's belief that they weren't appreciated.

00;15;35;26 - 00;15;59;07
Marcie Merriman
And as I dug into this more, I'm like, wait a minute. Do you think that younger people shouldn't work as much, or the junior people shouldn't work as much as the senior people? And they're like, you. Yeah. And of course I go into the well, do you know, you know, back in my day. Right? Like, we were always there before, the boss and before the client.

00;15;59;07 - 00;16;13;02
Marcie Merriman
We never left after. And they vary. And I've got an amazing group. They very respectfully one of them asked like, well, were you always working like. Well, no, but, you know, I was there. Were you while.

00;16;13;03 - 00;16;13;19
Jon Quinn
You're in the office.

00;16;13;19 - 00;16;45;02
Marcie Merriman
Were you always productive? Were you always, you know. And she's like, well, you know, when when you know their focus more on the productivity in getting the work done and then having the free time to do other things. And when we got our things done, we asked for more things to do. And when I share this with the leaders who are in the older generations, they're always shocked to hear that younger people think that they shouldn't be working as much.

00;16;45;05 - 00;17;08;14
Marcie Merriman
At the same time, when I dig in with my generation and my peers and colleagues and, you know, talk about this, they joke about the what they used to do in order to appear. They were working harder. So the idea of staying in the office till 9:00 and when they left, leaving their door cracked in the light on just in case anybody was there.

00;17;08;14 - 00;17;24;23
Marcie Merriman
So it looked like they were still working. Or I remember one colleague who actually set his alarm clock to wake up at two in the morning to, said the project manager, the person leading it, the presentation at two in the morning. So it looked like he was working at two in the morning because this is how we assessed value.

00;17;24;25 - 00;17;29;00
Marcie Merriman
And when you look at it that way, it really does look ridiculous, right?

00;17;29;02 - 00;17;29;11
Jon Quinn
That's the.

00;17;29;11 - 00;17;53;25
Marcie Merriman
Point. So that's where it's not saying that that Gen Z and how they view it is completely wrong. However, it's understanding the people who are deciding whether you're going to work for them and whether you're going to get promoted and that sort of thing are looking beyond just what you turn in. And they're expecting more than just the minimal viable product.

00;17;53;28 - 00;18;14;19
Marcie Merriman
They're expecting more than that. I think Gen Z's had challenges because of the way that they've grown up in an environment where they didn't have people looking over their shoulder. You know, they didn't have people assessing. How hard are you working to get this done? Much of it's been done at home, whether it's school work or work work.

00;18;14;22 - 00;18;40;00
Marcie Merriman
And they just have not been programed to think that way. I think that's a positive, but they're going to have to gently work their way into the work world and demonstrate what they can do in less time. And I think it's going to be a real asset in the long run, especially as we have AI and other technologies coming in when the whole point is to make things more efficient, to get done more, with less.

00;18;40;02 - 00;19;01;19
Marcie Merriman
They have a huge advantage. Yeah. Yeah, huge. But they're going to have to get past the front door and gain the trust of showing the leaders that they really want to do the job, that they really want to do these things, and then demonstrate that there's other ways to do it and that you can do it faster and that can work to your advantage.

00;19;01;24 - 00;19;02;20
Marcie Merriman
Yeah.

00;19;02;22 - 00;19;33;20
Jon Quinn
So a couple of things you said in there. One you mentioned about the minimum viable product. And also when I've got my work done, that is to ask, is there anything else I can do? And then also maybe stepping up to, maybe step outside your job description. What would be your recommendations to Gen Z for, like taking on that extra work in, which could mean maybe it does throw your balance of life off for a little

bit or.

00;19;33;22 - 00;19;48;00
Jon Quinn
But, because there's, there's this old cliche about dressing for the job you want, right. But there's also kind of like acting and producing for the job you want versus the job you have what recommend like what recommendations we have along those lines.

00;19;48;06 - 00;20;21;14
Marcie Merriman
Yeah. Well, I think one of the, one of the things that's unique about Gen Z and young people in general today is because of the technology that they've grown up with and have at their fingertips. They have an ability to learn at a rate that's absolutely inconceivable to older generations. Use that to your advantage. Like so. If you're bringing, you know, the boss or your manager or whatever, whatever assignment, tell them how you got it done and that you were able to do it, you know, five times faster by doing it this way.

00;20;21;16 - 00;20;49;06
Marcie Merriman
So are there other things I can show you? You know, that I can do, and I'll show you how we can do it a different way. You. In doing that, you're bringing an incredibly unique value. You're showing initiative beyond what, your peers might be showing. You're you're you're you're engendering yourself because you're becoming an asset that is beyond what the expectations might be at this point.

00;20;49;09 - 00;21;08;01
Marcie Merriman
So don't I don't think of it as asking for, you know, just asking you for more work, but actually showing what you can do. Doing more work, but demonstrating how you can do it differently, too, and almost turning it into a game. Yeah, right. So it doesn't feel so much like just pile more on me, right?

00;21;08;03 - 00;21;39;20
Marcie Merriman
Instead, it's more of a challenge. Absolutely. Absolutely. And our generation was, you know, how many more hours can I work? Which doesn't necessarily produce more. So I think focusing on how can you get more done and demonstrating you can do more than they even expect you to do. And showing them how things can be done differently that can really change how you're perceived and add unique value that is needed in order to stay in the workplace today.

00;21;39;23 - 00;22;07;24
Jon Quinn
So another component of this was the professionalism. That whether

it's professionalism communication how you interact with your, your boss or your colleagues dress just talk a little bit about like different perceptions of professionalism and what the expectations are out there and, and recommendations you get for Gen Z along those lines. Yeah.

00;22;07;26 - 00;22;39;12
Marcie Merriman
Yeah. I think this is one where they have to ease into the workplace in different ways too. So just because we do things or there's rules doesn't necessarily mean they're right, but it also doesn't mean you're going to be able to change them overnight. So when I came into the workplace in the 90s, and I was with Ernst and Young the first time, we, had a manager this late 90s who, didn't we had to wear suits to work.

00;22;39;12 - 00;22;59;20
Marcie Merriman
First off, and who didn't want us wearing pants suits. That said, we should wear, you know, dress suits. And you always had to wear pantyhose and everything else. And I remember thinking, okay, you know, on the today show, Katy Currence not worry. Pantyhose. Like, why do I have to wear pantyhose? So I could see where the trends were going, you know, where things were moving.

00;22;59;23 - 00;23;01;03
Marcie Merriman
But if that's the best.

00;23;01;09 - 00;23;02;14
Jon Quinn
Then I can know who. Katie Kerr.

00;23;02;15 - 00;23;28;28
Marcie Merriman
You're right, you're right, you're right. And the today's show. The morning show. But if that's the battle you're picking. Yeah. Then you're you're in for a really tough fight. So with that, things do evolve. They do change. And it depends on what kind of industry you're in. I was in a very conservative, you know, type of organization that is not going to be where the change happened.

00;23;28;29 - 00;23;34;01
Marcie Merriman
It happened in other industries such as entertainment. And then it filtered in.

00;23;34;03 - 00;23;37;12
Jon Quinn
So with to, to varying degrees based on the culture though.

00;23;37;13 - 00;24;04;24
Marcie Merriman
Absolutely, absolutely. But I think with the professionalism is one understand what is expected. Understand from a dress code, from a behavior, from these different things. And determine, first off, why, you know, why are they wanting to do that. And if you immediately go to, well, it's because they're stodgy, you know, old people, whatever it is, and be like, okay, is there any evidence, you know, against that?

00;24;04;24 - 00;24;29;11
Marcie Merriman
Is there any way that that's not true? Is there other reasons that they could be wanting it? Could it be because the client expectations and you have to meet the client expectations? I think it really comes down to picking your battles. And if the battle is going to be around, well, you know, I should be able to act this way or dress this way or whatever, because this is the way people do it today.

00;24;29;13 - 00;24;54;04
Marcie Merriman
And in that environment is something different. You need to accept you're not going to succeed there. I think about, one of the startups I worked in, which is a, retail strategy design firm. And when I started there, I had spent my career up until that point in corporate, mostly retail, which, you know, is more of a tough love industry.

00;24;54;06 - 00;24;59;14
Marcie Merriman
It was especially back then, I think it was worse. It wasn't always very kind. And you.

00;24;59;18 - 00;25;01;10
Jon Quinn
Pretty much had to be type eight to survive.

00;25;01;11 - 00;25;24;18
Marcie Merriman
You'd be type A and thick skinned and it was very, very tough industry. But going into a design firm and a smaller organization, it was it was much it was not so much tough love. It was much kinder and gentler, which is a wonderful thing. But I had to learn. How do you succeed and function in that environment?

00;25;24;21 - 00;25;50;04
Marcie Merriman
I couldn't go in as wonderful as I thought I was. If I went in like a, you know, bull in a China shop. I was I was going to be out. I had chosen to go into that environment. I had strategist I hired to work

for me who were amazing, smart, brilliant, very Type-A, who I remember one who was really frustrated that the creatives didn't move fast.

00;25;50;04 - 00;26;13;21
Marcie Merriman
They didn't get things done this fast. They didn't do these separate things. And the way I explained it to him was, this is a design firm, and we chose to be here, and it is up to us to make it work with the people that we chose to join. And if we can't do that, then we probably should be in a different organization.

00;26;13;23 - 00;26;39;24
Marcie Merriman
So it's deciding what you're comfortable with, with the degree of change, but also recognizing the organization you go into. Understand the culture, understand the expectations, understand how they expect you to work. Don't don't sell yourself as something you're not going to be willing to be. Really understand it and accept when you go in that I am choosing to be here.

00;26;39;28 - 00;26;53;02
Marcie Merriman
This is what their expectations are. It doesn't mean you can't evolve it with time and evolve changes. But, if you go in hard nosed, you're not going to you're not going to succeed and you probably won't be there very long.

00;26;53;05 - 00;27;06;19
Jon Quinn
So very closely tied to the professional in piece is a communication skills. A lot of these articles mentioned, some challenges regarding communications. So.

00;27;06;21 - 00;27;26;14
Jon Quinn
Gen Z has developed their own methods and their own platforms for communicating, but that doesn't often translate very well to the working world. Right? How would you recommend to, to better, adapt to the communication expectations of the professional world?

00;27;26;17 - 00;27;45;28
Marcie Merriman
Okay. So the communications is one I'm working with a lot of organizations on because, I'll give Gen Z some credit here. Again, like there's a lot of there's a lot of areas that I think they're right in many, many ways. But again, we got to figure out how to change the world together. And you can't do that by just going in and pushing your way through, making it happen.

00;27;46;00 - 00;28;10;19

Marcie Merriman
So if we look at the communications and the ways of communicating, a lot of organizations have much of it is very backward, not very clear, like we think about how you're communicating to your customers. Think about the, you know, when was the last time, you know, you got an email or a message that was paragraphs long and you had to try and filter out or whatever it is.

00;28;10;21 - 00;28;23;15
Marcie Merriman
So organizations themselves need to make some changes in these areas and figure out how to more clearly communicate period to their customers to their employees, that sort of thing.

00;28;23;17 - 00;28;29;09
Jon Quinn
I'm laughing because I think of some of the emails I get from Ohio State that's multiple paragraphs long, you know?

00;28;29;11 - 00;28;30;23
Marcie Merriman
Absolutely. I'm like, I don't.

00;28;30;23 - 00;28;31;22
Jon Quinn
Have time for this, right now.

00;28;31;22 - 00;28;49;00
Marcie Merriman
Absolutely. I mean, if you open an email and it says, you know, here's what I'm asking you here. The bullets, you bullets, those are the ones you respond to, the ones you open that have paragraphs, you flag it. Maybe I'll get to it later. Could be the most important one.

00;28;49;01 - 00;28;51;11
Jon Quinn
And the call to action is in the fourth paragraph.

00;28;51;13 - 00;28;51;29
Marcie Merriman
Lutely.

00;28;52;01 - 00;28;53;01
Jon Quinn
Absolutely maddening.

00;28;53;07 - 00;29;14;11
Marcie Merriman
Absolutely. Or know I think, of a friend that does a lot of work in this area, around health care and the health care forms that are sent

to customers where the customer or the, you know, patient, hopefully patient is just trying to figure out whether they're covered for something. And it's, you know, this long and at the end they still don't know if they're covered.

00;29;14;13 - 00;29;37;19
Marcie Merriman
And what her organization is doing is working with these companies. And right from the beginning, it's opening. You know, dear Mr. Smith, good news you're covered. And then the, you know, bullets with the details around it. Right. So companies need to make some changes around these things. That said, Gen Z doesn't necessarily have all the answers or the best ways of communicating themselves.

00;29;37;22 - 00;30;05;12
Marcie Merriman
So it's not with the short, the clear like it. If you look at any Instagram or message from your kid or text from your kid or whatever, sometimes it's can be really hard to understand what they're they're saying, you know, what they want or whatever it is. So as you're going into the organization, this is what I would challenge them to do is one think about how they're communicating, what their communicate.

00;30;05;19 - 00;30;28;24
Marcie Merriman
Is it clear, is it understandable? Is it concise? Does it help the reader or the person you're sending it to understand what you're looking for from them? Become part of the solution in the organization. So rather than going in and just communicating the way you do, can you help make this shift within the organization or can you help move them forward?

00;30;28;26 - 00;31;06;27
Marcie Merriman
And this is where it needs to be handled with maturity. It can't be. And curiosity about why the organization is doing what they're doing and trying to figure out how you can shift it. But it does take clear communication themselves. And honestly, this is where I think I can be a real friend. I use it, you know, I use I use multiple different things because I have a lot of thoughts in my brain by the time they come out on paper, an email, I don't know if they make any sense, but that's where you can put it in the systems now and say, help me more clearly communicate this, or I'm trying to

00;31;06;27 - 00;31;29;07
Marcie Merriman
communicate this to my manager who's 45 years old. What's the best way? Like we can actually use these tools to work to our advantage? They can't come up with the idea for us or the things we want to say, but they can help us figure out better ways to say it. And through

that, we learn. I mean, you think about, like, I'm a horrible speller and think about spellcheck and what that's done for us.

00;31;29;13 – 00;31;49;00
Marcie Merriman
And we literally like when I went into the workforce, if you want to just spell, you had to look in the dictionary to figure out how to do it. So I think it's the same thing with Gen I and these tools that can help us in these other ways get more clear. But take it on yourself to figure out how can you do things better and share it back with your managers in the communication area.

00;31;49;02 – 00;32;21;23
Jon Quinn
So the last couple I want touch upon, that's brought up in some of these articles, possibly two different sides of the same coin, but Gen Z is getting stereotyped as being somewhat entitled, and also thin skinned. Probably to maybe one degree unjustly so. But how does a Gen Z or young Gen Z professional demonstrate that they don't fit that stereotype of being entitled and or being thin skinned?

00;32;21;25 – 00;32;22;11
Marcie Merriman
I think, like.

00;32;22;18 – 00;32;34;07
Jon Quinn
By the way, just for thin skin, meaning like you don't take criticism very well, meaning like, you take things personally too quickly and too easily just because you didn't know what things can be.

00;32;34;12 – 00;33;03;23
Marcie Merriman
Yeah, absolutely. Well, first on the entitled, I think one thing that would help Gen Z is to have, a mindset as they go into an organization where they're even interviewing with the organization that you're going to dislike half your job, like half of what you do if you're if you like more than half or you love more than half, consider yourself lucky and hopefully it's going to be much more than half.

00;33;03;25 – 00;33;31;04
Marcie Merriman
But I think we've got to shift the mindset a little bit about, the idea, especially as you're starting out and you're proving yourself and you're learning and you're developing of thinking that you're going to walk into an ideal world where everything is perfect and you love every aspect of it. And if you can go in with that mindset, it's going to help your expectations around what should happen and how it should happen and how you should feel about it.

00;33;31;06 - 00;33;59;09
Marcie Merriman
And it's going to help you be more receptive to the criticism, the things you need to learn. That's the other thing I think I'd be really beneficial when we think about criticism is the person who you see as criticizing you is actually trying to help you improve. So the I think the worse thing is a manager or a boss that doesn't tell you what you can do better, that doesn't tell you how you can prove.

00;33;59;09 - 00;34;18;28
Marcie Merriman
Again, this comes back to the the athlete coach. If you have a coach who just says you're wonderful and you don't need to do anything differently, do you really feel like you're getting better? Do you feel like you're and get stronger? Is there really even any reason to have a coach? I mean, if we think about it from that standpoint and they're actually there to help you.

00;34;19;00 - 00;34;27;03
Marcie Merriman
And then that's what they're sharing. They're developing you. I think it helps us to be a little bit more thick skinned. And what we're hearing back. Yeah.

00;34;27;05 - 00;34;41;22
Jon Quinn
Yeah. Very good point. So any like parting advice for the aspiring Gen Z professional as their, as they're entering the workforce or getting in their first job, what would be like the biggest piece of advice you would offer them?

00;34;41;25 - 00;35;07;16
Marcie Merriman
There's a million things I think the biggest one, this is something I've really been working on a lot more lately, is how you're going to communicate with that boss, that organization, that manager. And what I'm encouraging organizations to do is to go back to, like the employment letter or the employment agreement or the employment blueprint, whatever you want to call it.

00;35;07;18 - 00;35;35;08
Marcie Merriman
The biggest thing, I think that causes problems in organizations for both the organization and the managers and for the employees or the Gen Z, is a lack of understanding, a lack of clarity about what the expectations are. And organizations create a lot of it themselves. I see a lot of organizations, you know, especially in the last few years, this is starting to be less so as the labor market tightens.

00;35;35;11 - 00;36;10;08

Marcie Merriman
But many have been so hungry for people. They've done a really great job around marketing and pitching to the employees. And so I think you're getting it now and you're getting it. It's a it's a false promise, right? You're selling something that you're not delivering on. And that does not work for anybody. It doesn't help anyone. And that's where I think we're seeing a lot of the the layoffs or cuts or, you know, the Gen Z quitting is because there hasn't been a match between what they expected, what they were sold and what they're getting when they're getting in.

00;36;10;10 - 00;36;37;23
Marcie Merriman
So I'm working with employers on how to be more transparent around that and sharing what it actually is. And maybe you can say it's aspirational. This is what we want to achieve. But here's where we are today. I think same thing. Employees, especially Gen Z, they're because they've grown up on social media and internet and, you know, all these things, they're really, really good at creating a brand around themselves and pitching who they are based on what they think the organization wants.

00;36;37;25 - 00;36;58;21
Marcie Merriman
And that's where I think we need to create more transparency and actually have this agreement or this blueprint. When you go in, ask your manager, even if they're not initiating it, there's ways you can initiate this yourself and say, you know, I want to be successful here. I want you to be happy with what I'm doing. Here's some things I want to understand to do that.

00;36;58;23 - 00;37;22;25
Marcie Merriman
How do you prefer to be communicated with? Do you prefer email? Do you prefer text? Do you like face to face talks? Should I set a call up with you every week? It's understanding those things and conforming to the degree around how things should work. Ask them what kind of hours you expect. Do you expect me here to certain time?

00;37;22;27 - 00;37;39;09
Marcie Merriman
Is there a reason you want me here at a certain time? Did you expect to be able to reach me at all times like these things? You have to be careful in how you communicate it. But if you do, it is a genuine curiosity and wanting to know and wanting to understand because you want to fulfill expectations.

00;37;39;11 - 00;38;02;11
Marcie Merriman
You will then get more of the facts and you can accept what we know.

Determine whether it's something you can accept. Do you want to be part of or not? So I think this has to happen much more during the recruiting and the interviewing process. But even once you're on board, you know, having those touch bases, initiating those touch bases with your manager on a regular basis, but again, telling them, I want to do this monthly with you.

00;38;02;13 - 00;38;26;06
Marcie Merriman
This is half hour to understand what's working, what's not working, you know, where have there been challenges. And then ask them to, you know, over the next week or two weeks to to, you know, take notes and tell you if they see things and give you the feedback. It what I see is it's much harder for managers to give feedback than often it is to receive it.

00;38;26;09 - 00;39;01;06
Marcie Merriman
And because they managers have become fearful of the thin skin and what kind of reaction they're going to get, often they're not giving the feedback and the employees not learning it until it's too late. Yeah. So I think these types of things and taking control, taking initiative, taking, you know, empowering yourself not with, you know, attitude, but instead with the facts and asking the questions that are going to help you be successful and showing your manager you the genuine interest in understanding them and who they are and how they want to be treated.

00;39;01;08 - 00;39;04;05
Marcie Merriman
I think it helps come back the other way as well.

00;39;04;07 - 00;39;23;08
Jon Quinn
Marcie, that's been... that was great. Very useful, very helpful. I greatly appreciate it. Thank you for joining us here at career EQ. And it's been great having you. Stay tuned, listeners, because our next episode, Marcie, is coming back and we're going to field some questions from actual Gen Z students and check our website page for additional resources.

00;39;23;08 - 00;39;32;03
Jon Quinn
We've got some links in there. So some of Marcie's videos and some of the resources she's provided and, some other things I think, our listeners will find useful.

00;39;32;06 - 00;39;33;13
Marcie Merriman
Thank you for having me.

00;39;33;16 – 00;39;34;01
Jon Quinn
Thanks, Marcie.