

A photograph of three young women in a city setting. The woman in the center has a large, voluminous afro and is smiling broadly while looking at a smartphone. She is wearing a denim jacket and has a nose ring. To her right, another woman wearing a black headscarf and sunglasses on her head is looking at her own smartphone. To the left, a third woman with long dark hair is also looking at a smartphone. The background shows a city skyline with buildings and a bridge, with a pinkish-purple light flare effect across the scene.

# Chief Tomorrow Officer

The power of Generation Z  
in the boardroom

**T** · · **Systems** ·

Let's power  
higher performance



*Change is accelerating. Our world, our markets, our organizations and our boards are already unrecognizable from what they were just two years ago.*

As leaders, we are searching for the questions that will allow us to get ahead of these shifts. What could we have asked to prepare us for this world? What actions would these questions have led to? Now, what questions can we ask to put us in a different position tomorrow? Are our organizations inclusive and flexible enough to respond to these questions, these shifts, effectively?

At Deutsche Telekom and T-Systems, we had long believed in the power of questions, but recently realized we needed to change how, and to whom, they were asked. To meaningfully engage the future, we needed to engage Generation Z: a hopeful, realistic, and courageous generation, which by 2030 will make up 30% of the workforce.

Gen Z is already forming powerful movements and asking questions at every decision point. Not only do they ask questions, they act on them. Gen Z will advocate shifts away from traditional processes and towards new, future-proof ways of working.

In 2021, we created the Chief Tomorrow Officer program to give Gen Z representation in the C-Suite.

Our results are encouraging so far; we are still learning the true shape of the role and the exciting benefits it could unlock for every organization.

By co-creating and growing this role with customers, partners and the Gen Z community, we can harness Gen Z's unparalleled change power and accelerate towards answering the questions that define our future.



**How is your organization anticipating these shifts?  
How are you engaging the next generation?  
Are you ready for new business models and culture change?  
Ready for Gen Z?**

” How do we engage Gen Z in the most effective way? Let them work on the questions that they pose. Let them engage their peers. Let them engage experts and expertise to address the very questions they are thinking about.

**Katharyn White**  
Chief Marketing Officer, T-Systems

## What does Generation Z think about work and life?



- **74%** say **work** should have a **greater purpose** than earning a salary
- **Only 48%** think the economy has a positive impact on society
- 69% would **pay more for a product** if the brand supported an issue they cared about
- 66% believe that **wealth** and **income** are unfairly distributed
- 60% say **systemic racism is widespread** in society
- **56%** use **social media apps** to express themselves creatively



## How did we start the Chief Tomorrow Officer program?

We engaged Generation Z on social media, asking for their #questionfortomorrow – questions that are inspirational and not instantly solvable, but with a pragmatic element, a starting point from which we could move towards the solution.

The questions we received were empowering, challenging and encouraging. One question was from Nouran Elsherbiny. She asked: How can we use AI to create a less stressful working environment?

Nouran became Deutsche Telekom's first Chief Tomorrow Officer. As the executive team, we co-created the CTO program with her, to ensure her impact was fast, meaningful and visible, all the way to the C-suite.

To move towards the answer to her question, she connected with experts inside and outside our organization.

Critical to her success was an equitable, collaborative approach. The power was in the question, not in the hierarchy; however, her title helped open doors for her. As she continued asking important questions – not trying to promote preordained solutions – she made meaningful connections and uncovered ideas.

By connecting teams and growing expertise, Nouran began to design a solution to her question. In less than three months, she created proof-of-concepts and UX designs for an AI-powered advisory service, designed to meet employee needs holistically. Her passion translated into progress; our organization is accelerating and connecting in new ways to apply AI to make our work environment less stressful.

## What did Gen Z teach us?

The most important step we took in our Chief Tomorrow Officer program was getting started. Once we did, we quickly uncovered new insights into what the 'future of work' looks like for us, gained by engaging the organization through Nouran's inquisitive and personal approach.

On a business level, we began to think of Chief Tomorrow Officers as entrepreneurs within our organization. Every question they ask is like a new start-up idea; they may not know precisely how to turn that idea into a reality, but they find a way through engaging the right people. Their solutions are boundless, and their enthusiasm is a natural motivator that attracts expert support, internally and externally.

Following Nouran's pioneering success, we have already engaged two more CTOs, who are working on the future of mobility and the power of IoT devices in healthcare. In fact, our entire Gen Z workforce is now engaged: they have self-organized a Tomorrow Board that meets regularly to question our future and progress topics such as sustaina-

bility and digitalization. It's clear that Gen Zs move naturally from thinking about complex ideas to taking real action. They can work in the theoretical and practical dimensions simultaneously. They value constant feedback, and apply that insight to enhance their effectiveness. They are creating a new timeline for innovation, one that is self-managed and selfless.

We are also partnering with universities to create a CTO curriculum, culminating in a CTO internship. We continue to enable the community to build the community through Gen Z's own networks. Our objective is to expand the program and accelerate Generation Z's board-level presence and impact. Our mission is to create an industry-wide movement.

Now is the time for all of us to listen to Gen Z – to apply their talents to designing a better, more sustainable future, one in which all our organizations benefit.

” We believe in the power of the questions we ask today, to find answers for the future. And who would be better suited to asking those questions than Generation Z?

**Birgit Bohle**  
Chief People Officer, Deutsche Telekom

# #questionfortomorrow

## What Gen Z asked us when we invited their questions

- How can we make businesses more gender-inclusive?
- How can we increase productivity without exploiting humans and nature?
- What's tomorrow's most in-demand career?
- How can we preserve our humanity in a tech-driven world?
- In the age of machines, what role will AI psychologists play?
- Will we soon have all-in-one subscriptions for telecom, healthcare, streaming or mobility?
- How do we counter internet-based oppression, manipulation and surveillance?
- Will there be a universal digital currency in the future?
- How can we make creating savings easier in countries with a high inflation rate?
- How can we make mobility more efficient?
- What is the role of art in the future?
- How do we prepare young generations better for the challenges in life?
- How can we create a future in which we look forward to growing old?
- How do we empower the powerless?



# Why every organization should have a Chief Tomorrow Officer

*The Chief Tomorrow Officer program is transferable and sharable. While every organization will engage Gen Z in their own way, consistent with their culture and business model, there are some common factors.*

We identified six steps to successfully creating a CTO program:

## 1. Identify who will drive the project forward

Find an internal champion or sponsor who will lead your Chief Tomorrow Officer program. Secure C-level support

## 2. Engage Gen Z holistically

Reach out via universities, a cause, and through Gen Z's own communities

## 3. Partner with an organization that's already starting to work with Gen Z via CTO programs

Work with an experienced partner can accelerate your program from planning to execution

## 4. Start!

Commit to moving forward with your first Chief Tomorrow Officer hire

## 5. Co-create and test the role

Give your new Chief Tomorrow Officer a stake in defining their own role. They will naturally determine the areas where they will have the greatest impact

## 6. Scale up

Don't limit yourself to one Chief Tomorrow Officer. Engage several, each asking new questions and kick-starting a new journey. Gen Z will engage Gen Z to identify more candidates and grow the movement

What can you achieve by getting started? By capturing the insight of Gen Z and applying it across your organization through a well-structured and supported CTO program, you can identify the questions that matter for you, that enable you to move in the right direction to future-proof your organization.

This can take many forms. Finding ways to identify expertise gaps and attract talent; understanding your customers and employees of tomorrow; defining the future of work in your organization;

” Gen Z does not want to choose between a fulfilling professional and personal life, or between commercial success and sustainability. We would rather change the world so all our needs are met.

**Nouran Elsherbiny**

Chief Tomorrow Officer, Deutsche Telekom

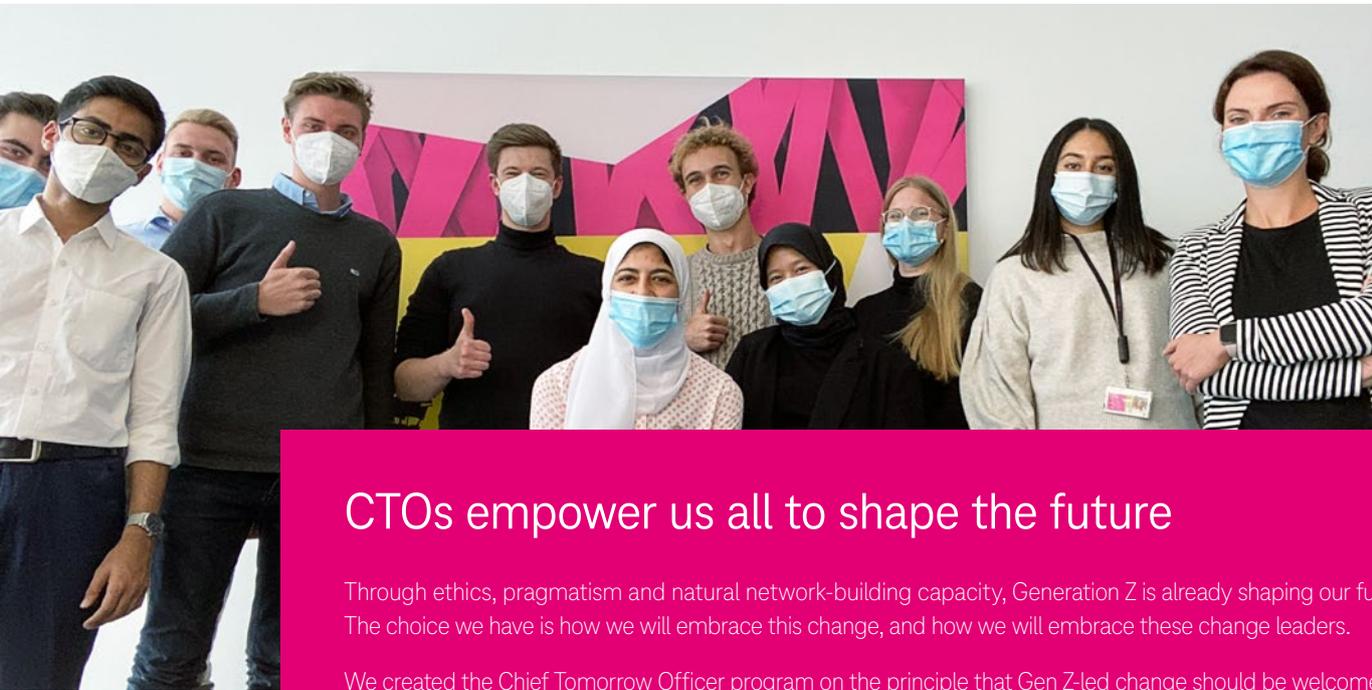


making opportunities more open and equitable; removing stresses and blockers to productivity; becoming more sustainable and contributing to the fight against society's biggest challenges.

The key is that, with Gen Z on board, you will be able to identify what effective transformation looks like for you. You will not solve every issue, or answer every question, instantly – but you will have started the journey, and that is what matters.

## How does New Work apply to Gen Z?

[Read more from Nouran](#)



## CTOs empower us all to shape the future

Through ethics, pragmatism and natural network-building capacity, Generation Z is already shaping our future. The choice we have is how we will embrace this change, and how we will embrace these change leaders.

We created the Chief Tomorrow Officer program on the principle that Gen Z-led change should be welcomed, nurtured and accelerated. Gen Zs engage the future through a new lens – one that is widening ours as they become part of our internal start-up community, client advisory networks and boards.

At Deutsche Telekom, we are eager to share our insights and experiences to enable organizations to initiate their own CTO programs, creating a multiplying effect in our organizations, our clients, our markets, and our world.

The key questions for the future belong to Gen Z. How we engage Gen Z is our choice. How we respond to their questions will guide us into the future. We would welcome the opportunity to co-create this future with you.

To get started, just visit [t-systems.com/cto](https://t-systems.com/cto).

## About the author

### Katharyn White

Senior Vice President and CMO at T-Systems

A recognized leader in C-level change, Katharyn is a market force in redefining the CMO role and raising its impact. Now, as the creator and leader of T-Systems' Chief Tomorrow Officer program, she has gained a first-hand understanding of its disruptive potential and benefits. She is working through community engagement, universities, and advisory boards to create more change.



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