

# Personalizing Your Recruiting Outreach to Gen Z (+Examples)

When it comes to engaging with companies, Gen Z turns to their inbox more than any other form of communication. Handshake Campus to Career report confirms that **95% of students prefer engaging with employers that send personalized, proactive messages**. Before sending your next message to a candidate, read these five effective strategies for personalizing your outreach (plus, examples for inspiration).

## 1. Do your research.

- ▶ Identify who your ideal talent segments are, then tap into their profiles to map out a bird's-eye view of their interests, extracurriculars, and student organizations. Handshake can help uncover this, since students complete their profiles and university career centers confirm this information with their system of record.
- ▶ Complement your research findings with data around what motivates Gen Z by reviewing assets like Handshake's **Campus to Career** and **Women in Tech** reports. This thorough collection allows you to create a rich profile of who your perfect candidate is, and what they crave out of their next role.
- ▶ With this information in mind, zero in on relevant talent that might be interested in what you offer by filtering for candidate interests, like athletics, or extracurriculars, like Model UN. Then set yourself apart by speaking that audience's language.

Tip: Conducting research student-by-student and personalizing each message can be cumbersome. Campaigns, a **Handshake Premium**, feature lets you scale your personalized messages based on these student attributes.

## 2. Start with a personal introduction.

- ▶ Begin with context around who you are, why you're reaching out, and what it takes to be successful at your employer. This is also where you'll reference any of their relevant interests, along with ways your company's culture can help them thrive.
- ▶ Referencing your search criteria can go a long way in personalizing your message. Call out specific student attributes in your email, like first name, major, and institution name.

- ▶ Students are receptive to employers that hire alumni from their school, location, and age demographic. If you have that information handy, use it in your outreach. It feels less scary for students to join a company that's already welcomed their peers.
- ▶ Tip: **Handshake Premium** partners can Segment from more than five million active students using these attributes. Then leverage that information to make a memorable introduction.

### 3. Communicate authentically and honestly.

- ▶ As students graduate from nearly two decades of school, they're understandably nervous about the change. In the same way you're screening for fit, they are too. Every point of communication provides insight into how a student sees your employer.
- ▶ Early talent is invited to dissect the language in your outreach. Is the message positive and hopeful, or impersonal and terse? Students evaluate when and how calls are scheduled, and study your work environment the moment they interview.
- ▶ Set the tone for your relationship by communicating authentically from the get-go. Illustrate how your key value propositions can better accommodate their careers. When you start to evaluate these components, your hiring narrative shifts quickly.

Tip: Financial services firm **Raymond James**, for example, tailors its Campaigns to students by open role, allowing them to deliver a scalable personalized recruiting experience that persuades candidates to learn more about their culture.

### 4. Close with a call to action.

- ▶ End your message with a clear call to action (CTA) that persuades candidates to take action. Closing out with a personal note like, "I look forward to reviewing your application!" and bolding important information like your CTA goes a long way.
- ▶ What's in a CTA? It could direct candidates to RSVP for an upcoming event, apply to an open job or internship, or simply learn more about you as an employer of choice. Keep it focused. Don't overwhelm your audience with multiple CTAs.

- ▶ Most candidates won't respond to their first email. Don't get discouraged. Following up just once has the ability to convert 22% more replies, and it can sometimes take up to three emails or more to really get your audience's attention.

Tip: Draft and schedule follow ups during this process. Learn how **Handshake Premium** partners can schedule automated follow ups in advance, so that they never miss an opportunity to nurture a relationship with ideal talent.

## 5. Review, review, review.

- ▶ The more a student feels like they're talking to a real person and not a robot, the more likely they are to respond. Does your message address a student directly? Does it sound genuine and personal? Does it have an actionable CTA?
- ▶ One surefire way to ensure you never hear from a student again is to send a generic, impersonal message. Misplacing your variables, such as your name with theirs, can have equally harmful effects on your reputation.
- ▶ Review your message before hitting send. If you're mailing a large list, invite a colleague to proof your work.

Tip: Keep your message between 50 and 125 words to boost your response rates by half, according to a marketing email studies.

Whether you're building your early talent recruiting program from scratch or **rethinking how you approach your current one**, continue optimizing your messaging.

Review message data, such as open and engagement rates, to reveal trends around language that consistently outperforms, and remain curious about your ideal talent segments. Authenticity coupled with insight can elevate your candidate experience.

# Inspiring Templates to Personalize Your Outreach

Hi [first name],

My name is [your name] and I'm a [role] at [employer name]. We're currently hiring [job role], and based on your background in [degree] at [institution name], I think you should apply!

[Employer name] is a leading global transportation and logistics service provider, responsible for coordinating and moving goods bought and consumed every day. As a member of our [team name] team, you would play an instrumental role in helping our customers succeed.

**Apply below! I look forward to reviewing your application, [first name].**

Best,  
[your name]

Hi [first name],

My name is [your name], [your title] with [employer name]. Our company is a leading technology-enabled logistics services provider. We'll be on campus at the [institution name] Career Fair and would love to meet with you!

[Employer name]'s Early Career Development Program is committed to building a diverse group of future leaders within our organization. We're focused on creating a great place for new college grads to thrive and offer an accelerated training program designed to build both leadership and technical skills.

Our program offers an opportunity to leverage the power of your degree with real world momentum. We offer web-based, on-the-job training, mentor support, and extensive networking opportunities to help you achieve success.

We'd love to invite you to stop by [employer name]'s booth at [institution name] Fall Career Fair. If you're interested, please RSVP here.

Thank you,  
[your name]

# Inspiring Templates to Personalize Your Outreach

[first name],

Can you believe graduation is right around the corner?

I remember being in your shoes, not knowing which career I wanted to pursue. That's when I interviewed with [employer name] and launched my career less than one month after graduating from [institution name]. I've been with [employer name] for almost 10 years—time flies. I wanted to pass it on and share this amazing opportunity with you.

Please reach out to me directly for more info or click the link below to apply online. I look forward to speaking with you!

[link to job description]

Warmly,  
[your name]