

MAY 2021

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# THE FUTURE OF THE CREATIVE WORKFORCE

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The year 2020 was an inflection point felt around the world. After a time marked by disconnection and social and political turmoil, we are now entering a new era. An era of cultural renaissance that will be marked by an explosion of creativity.

Across cultural sectors, Canadian creatives are navigating this unprecedented moment in their careers. Whether these culture makers are emerging talent or well-established veterans of their milieu, they all face a need to adapt and evolve to this new world. What skills and support do post-pandemic creators need in their toolkit to thrive and continue growing?

Along with this explosion of creativity, there is a growing need to support and sustain it behind the scenes. Are the young people who consume so much of this creative content aware of the many workforce opportunities available to them, out of the spotlight, to help push this creativity forward?

# METHODOLOGY

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Ontario Creates partnered with VICE Media Group to identify interest and awareness across different types of roles in the Canadian cultural media landscape.

We conducted a 360 degree exploration of the creative workforce, inclusive of those in the spotlight and those who keep the lights on. The creative landscape is changing as younger generations take over these industries. Through this research, we present the career toolkit needed for the culture makers of the future, along with a blueprint for building up tomorrow's cultural business leaders.

- We spoke with young content creators across industries to understand the professional skills and support they need to enter and sustain themselves in the creative world. These creatives were Gen Z (18-24 years old) and Gen Y (25-39 years old). Excerpts from these conversations are used throughout the report to highlight their needs.
- We interviewed new business leaders taking over the reigns of various behind the scenes roles to identify key opportunities for attracting and retaining the next generation of talent in the back office. These experts were Gen Y (25-39 years old). Excerpts from these conversations are included throughout to bring the needs of these professionals to life.
- Finally, we conducted an online survey among 1,000 young Canadians - 500 Gen Z (18-24 years old) and 500 Young Gen Y (25-30 years old) - to gauge interest and awareness in career opportunities specifically behind-the-scenes. Throughout the report we have called out where differences exist between generations.

This research was conducted in February-March 2021 by VICE Media Group in partnership with Ontario Creates.

Leveraging previous research conducted by both organizations, we identified the following positions as either creative roles or positions behind-the-scenes. Our focus was across the cultural sectors Ontario Creates supports, including Books, Magazines, Film & TV, Interactive Digital Media and Music.

- **Creative Roles:** Photographer, Social media influencer/content creator, Actor/model, Writer/author, Musician/DJ, Filmmaker/videographer, Director, Anchor/host
- **Behind-the-Scenes:** Sales, Editing, Marketing/PR, Finance, IT, Event management, Human resources, Production, Programming/software development, Legal, Risk management, Talent management, Licensing



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I always loved music as a child, but I didn't really know that there were **other jobs in music, unless you were a musician**. That was mysterious to me. There must obviously be other people working in this world to make it all happen, but there **wasn't the visibility** for any of those people.

— FEMALE, 35, DJ, MUSIC



# SUCCESS IS NO LONGER ABOUT WHAT YOU DO, IT'S ABOUT WHO YOU ARE

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Young people's identity is holistic and expressed through all areas of their lives. Elements like hobbies, passions, values and a sense of purpose are intrinsically tied to who they are, including what they care about when it comes to their approach to work. This value system has caused a shift in how young people define success.

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Part of the bigger picture [of success] is, is this **doing good for someone else?** Is it making someone happy? A lot of the time when people think of success, they think of making more money, which is fine. I'd **rather be happy and feel needed and challenged** over making money.

— FEMALE, 31, ACCOUNTS PAYABLE ASSOCIATE, INTERACTIVE DIGITAL MEDIA/FILM & TV

For today's young generations, work is an important part of who they are and how they express themselves. Gen Z, especially, is focused on doing what they love and doing work that matters above all else. Fame and recognition are at the very bottom of the list. Success is about a well-balanced life, personal fulfillment and the freedom to pursue their passions. Of course, money is important to a certain degree, even Gen Z has bills to pay. But it's not enough to dissuade them from pursuing their dreams and staying true to themselves.

1 IN 2

Say work is an important part of their identity

## DEFINITION OF SUCCESS

- #1 I'm able to do all the things in life that are important to me
- #2 I enjoy the work I do (#1 for Gen Z Males)
- #3 I have strong relationships with my friends and family
- #4 I've made a positive impact in my company, community or the world
- #5 I make a lot of money
- #6 I get public recognition for the work I do
- #7 I become famous

Three in five young people surveyed consider themselves creative. There is great interest in the creative workforce among both Gen Y and Gen Z, as these fields tie directly back to how they define themselves. The effects of COVID-19 had very little impact on their interest in working in a creative field. Two out of three say COVID had no impact on working in a creative field, while one in five say the pandemic made them even more interested. Young people are drawn to this career path on both ends of the spectrum, whether in the spotlight themselves or fueling creativity behind the scenes.

## CREATIVE WORKFORCE INTEREST

### CREATIVE ROLES

94%

INTERESTED

48%

VERY INTERESTED

Young people are drawn to a creative career path because it allows them to pursue their passions and express their identity.

"I always knew that I wanted to **pursue music from a young age**. It was always something that I **loved**, something that I was good at, something that I spent a lot of time working on. **There was never any other option** that came to mind for me when I had to decide what to do after I finished high school."

— **Female, 24, Musician**

"When it comes to producing any type of content, especially when you're the face of that content, **success comes** when you are **representing your values** and brands **that add purpose** in some way. When you get the chance to **celebrate who you are** and really own values that speak to you through and through, that's successful."

— **Female, 33, Content Creator, Interactive Digital Media**

### BEHIND-THE-SCENES

94%

INTERESTED

51%

VERY INTERESTED

Those excited over a career behind-the-scenes are motivated by how closely these jobs align with their view of success. They are not pursuing fame or public recognition, but are still able to align their identity with creativity.

### BEHIND-THE-SCENES CAREER MOTIVATIONS

#### Personal Values

78%

(Matches passions, ability to make a difference, inspiration, personal growth, etc.)

#### Career Benefits

78%

(Salary, stability, career growth, flexibility, etc.)

34%

#### In the spotlight

(Fame, content creator)

# EXPERIMENTATION DIFFERENTIATES THEIR CAREER PATHS FROM PAST GENERATIONS

Young people have a fluid approach to their careers. They expect to have multiple jobs and even multiple careers over the course of their lifetime. Additionally, side hustles provide further opportunities to experiment, explore and follow their passions. This way of working also echoes a gradual cultural shift that has resulted from the mainstreaming of the gig economy. This fluidity is even more pronounced in creative fields.

**1** IN **2** Say "I am constantly exploring new things to try or do"

**2** IN **5** Gen Z<sup>^</sup> plan to have one main job and a "side hustle" that brings in extra money/contentment (vs. 1 in 3 in Gen Y)

Those interested in the creative workforce know they want to be working in a field that creates and supports innovative thinking. However, young people are not clear about all of the different possibilities available, both creatively and behind the scenes, so it often takes time to find the role they are best suited for.

"I wanted to be a **writer**, so when I graduated from university, I was like - I really like writing, what are some **different ways** I could do that? I thought writing for film and television would be cool. I wanted to be **involved in film in a creative capacity**, but I **didn't know how to go about doing that.**"

— Female, 29, Writer, Film & TV

"I studied in a program called Media Information and Technoculture. There was the **ability to pick and choose** a bunch of courses to **figure out what kind of media you want to study**. I was able to take courses from **website building to video editing** to video filming, basic animation, graphic design. Then you can **sprinkle interest in music and pop culture and celebrity culture** in the mix, too."

— Male, 32, Producer, Interactive Digital Media

"I went viral in my third year [of university], but being an **influencer wasn't a viable thing**. I never thought that could be a **revenue stream**. I always thought the only way to get where you want is to get a 'real' job. [Social media] content creation is so new that there's **not formal pathways or guardrails.**"

— Male, 26, Content Creator, Interactive Digital Media

"It first sparked for me when I was in my internship. I was like, **I don't think I could ever be on camera**. But I **still loved the whole process** and I loved being able to create that for people. **It sparked when I was behind the camera**. So much goes into the preparation of a show that **people just don't see**. I took **a lot of pride in that.**"

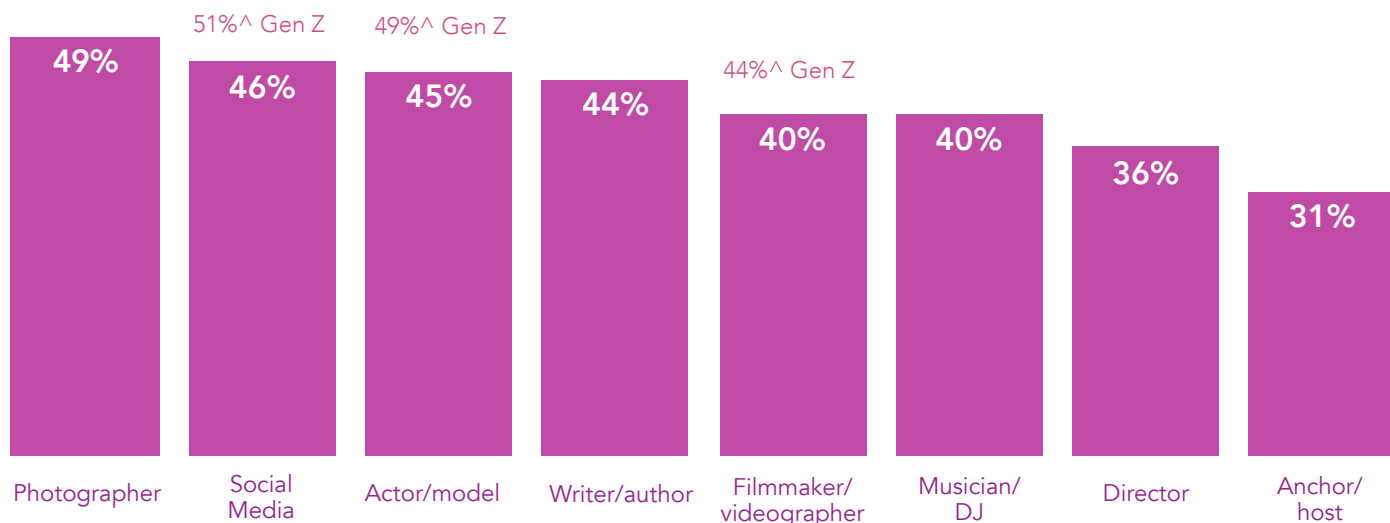
— Female, 26, Digital Resources Manager, Interactive Digital Media/Film & TV

<sup>^</sup>Significant difference at 95% confidence vs. Gen Y

# CREATIVE ROLES ACROSS SECTORS APPEAL TO YOUNG CANADIANS

Interest in types of creative careers is generally consistent across various roles. There is a particular curiosity around the fairly new role of social media content creator, especially among Gen Z.

## CREATIVE ROLE INTEREST



^Significant difference at 95% confidence vs. Gen Y

Many creatives view social media as a more open channel to express their creativity. On social platforms they can be more experimental and evade barriers they may come up against in traditional media.

"About six years ago, I got **laid off from TV**. That's when I realized...I **have to branch out**. I started **using social media** as a means to **create a community**. I was going through a tough time with the layoff and from that I **grew an audience** and started **creating content** that I wasn't able to create on network television **that spoke to real life struggles** with my own life. Then paid partnerships started to come about."

— Female, 33, Content Creator, Interactive Digital Media

"I found traditional Canadian media to be **extremely inaccessible**. I always wanted to be a television host, but **it was impossible to get in**. I took my own content creation seriously because these traditional media companies **didn't value my voice or my perspective**. Luckily, the influencer realm evolved at the same time so I was able to get work as **an independent content creator** versus needing to be employed at [a traditional media company]."

— Male, 26, Content Creator, Interactive Digital Media

# CREATORS NEED A DIVERSE SKILLSET

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In a world where the competition for creative work is steep, a broad skillset provides a leg up for creators to stand out. Whether creating content for their own audiences or an outside client, both groups are putting the pressure on creators to do more independently. This may be a shift from previous ways of working, where content creators would collaborate with other creatives of different skillsets and backgrounds. Nowadays, for example, someone who shoots video is expected to be versed in how to market that content, and a writer may need a firm grasp on social media to be discovered.

“If you have **somebody who can do everything** to some degree, that's how the industry is going to go. If I can offer both photo and video, and be able to go to the client and say, **I can do 80% of what you're asking personally**. You're going to know what it's going to be like because you know how I'm going to execute. I can also be a copywriter. I was doing the entire job of a whole marketing department, but as one person. **I saw that as the future.**”

— Male, 30, Videographer, Film & TV

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While three out of four of those interested in a creative role believe that formalized education is important to their future success, this may not come from a traditional four year degree. Hyper-focused programs that are very specific to the creator's expertise might be even more helpful.

“I went to university but dropped out after half a year...From there I went to a program called Independent Music Production. It was **specifically geared to musicians who are just starting out**. They had songwriting, production, music business and grant writing. That was a **one year program** and that was really helpful because **the assignments** I was doing were things that I actually ended up **using in real life.**”

— Female, 24, Musician

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In addition to specialized programs, new skills are often self-taught. Creators deepen their skillset through public resources found online, especially YouTube.

“I'm **fully self-taught** in everything that I've done. I taught myself how to edit on Photoshop Premier Pro, all of that, just by Google-ing how to do it. I taught myself how to film, shoot, everything. It was just **all Google and me.**”

— Male, 26, Content Creator, Interactive Digital Media

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“You need to **constantly be learning new stuff all the time** - program software, new techniques with new gear. [I learned all of this from] **YouTube university.**”

— Male, 30, Photographer, Film & TV

# BUSINESS ACUMEN IS WANTING

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Business knowledge was cited by creators of all types as an area where they lack expertise. Many creatives don't have the infrastructure of a corporation for support and this type of training is not endemic to their chosen fields. Things like invoicing clients, navigating taxes, and negotiating fair wages are also areas that are difficult to learn online. The needs of each creator in this area are bespoke, depending on their creative industry and the context of the project on which they're working. Some need to learn how to pitch and market their talents, while others need financial advice.

**"I didn't know how to do my own taxes** before I was a freelancer, and **not knowing that was really, really hard**. The first time that I did them, **I missed out on all these valuable deductions** and credits for all the expenses that I was incurring. **I didn't really understand that I was a small business**. I had to spend a lot of money at the end of the year to pay taxes when I was already earning less than \$30K. That year was really challenging."

— Female, 31, Writer, Magazine

"It's stuff on the back end of things that I'm learning. I wish there were resources to figure out all these little things that a lot of us have no idea how to do. **How do you make a media kit?** How do you organize a pitch? **Who do I pitch to?**...How do I **monetize my passion** to take it from a side hustle to [full time]?"

— Male, 26, Content Creator, Interactive Digital Media

"When I first came into working for myself, I **didn't have any knowledge about how getting paid works**. I wish there was more information out there for people wanting to get into this, because **it's a mystery**. Luckily, I had some experience working for myself and earning my own money before I ever wanted to get into this really creative world."

— Female, 35, DJ



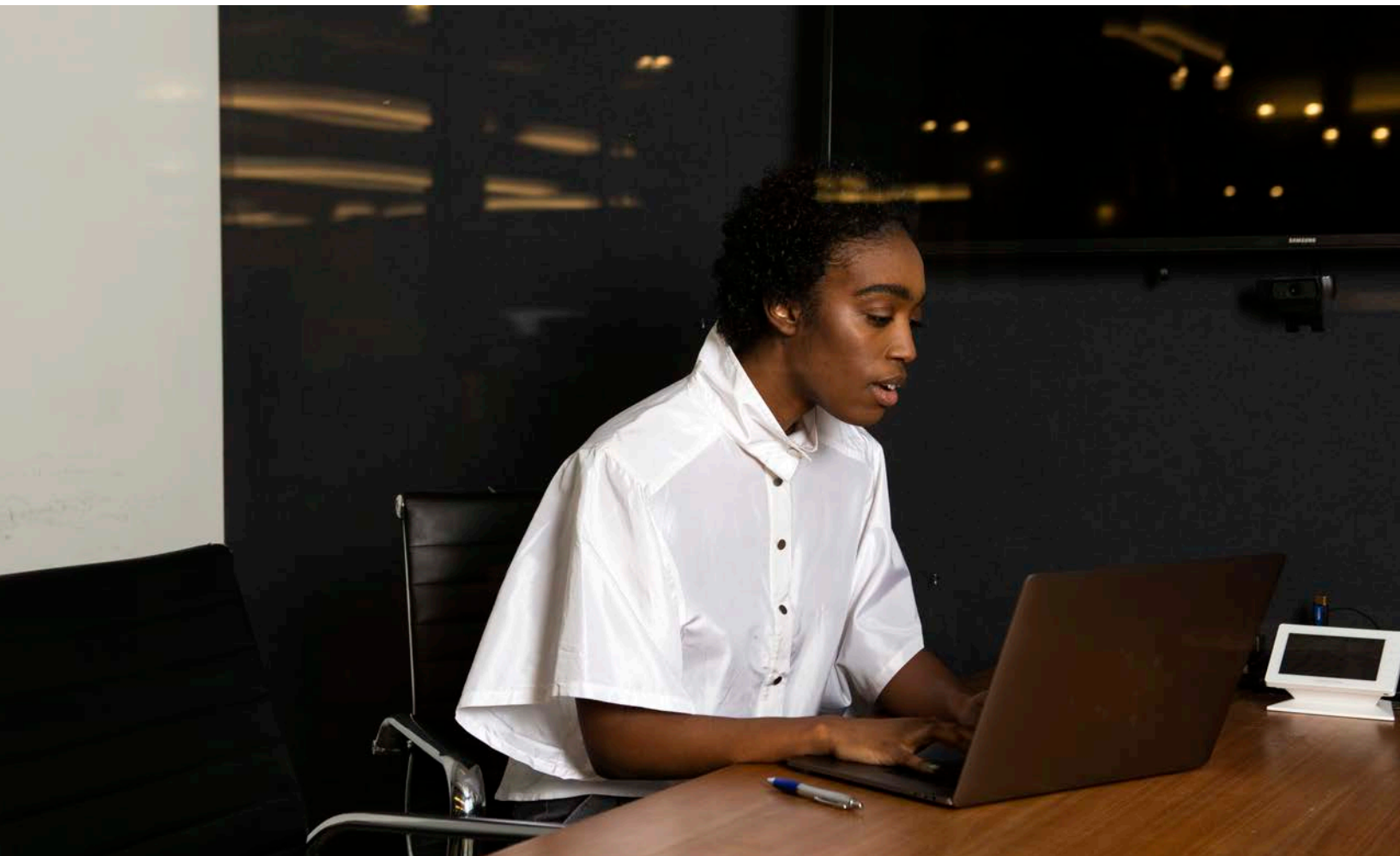
Creators also seek technical help navigating the Canadian grant system. The grant system is viewed as a huge benefit to creating content in Canada. It helps keep creatives passionate about focusing on local content and telling stories from their own communities. However, the process is complex. There is a lack of understanding about how they might qualify and how to stand out in the application process.

"We work with a person...everyone knows that **she's the master grant writer in Toronto**. So she's **helping us navigate this world** of grants. We don't even know where to begin and which grants apply to us. **Where do we go for this information?** That's our main focus now, really **trying to find if there are grants** and creative partners out there that we can really work together on."

— Male, 39, Content Creator, Interactive Digital Media

"We're more on the creative side, so **the business side of things is difficult**. We didn't have the experience on that. We **tried to write business proposals**, many of which **we did not get**. We learned from those, some of these [funding] organizations give you feedback. If they didn't fund a project, **they explained why**."

— Female, 36, Art Director, Interactive Digital Media



# CREATIVITY NEEDS COMMUNITY TO THRIVE

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Creatives need a community around them that offers support and guidance so they can reach their full potential. Specifically, they need mentors who come from similar backgrounds and experiences to provide practical advice tailored to their situation. This specificity can be challenging to find in just one person. Since each creative's position is unique and their skillsets are becoming more diverse, they may need to have a robust network to provide expertise across all sorts of business and creative directions.

"Once you start making it and **you put it out there that you're an artist**, you're going to **meet another artist** that does the same thing. You're going to **develop a kinship**. And you'll **sharpen each other's skillsets** and that's pretty much how I learned."

— **Male, 30, Musician**

"I'm a **multi-hyphenate**. I have all these different assets and I **wish I had someone who was established enough** in this career to say **'own all the different things that you are good at.'** Own the fact that you, as a content creator, you're an actor, you model, you create videos, **own all of those things.**"

— **Male, 26, Content Creator, Interactive Digital Media**

"I could **ask [my mentor] questions about financing or loans** and **how to run a business** because there's **very little information** that explained what I needed to do to run a business successfully. And **we don't learn anything like that in high school or university.**"

— **Male, 30, Videographer, Film & TV**



As well as providing support and advice, relationships are often how creators get new projects and more work. It is common to discover other creatives through social media, but targeted outreach through events and even cold calling can form valuable relationships. Building a deep network is critical.

"We have reached out to creative people that we **see on Instagram**. We really love giving new people, less experienced people, a **platform for growth**. We've mentored a bunch of writers, a bunch of DJ's, and **given them the confidence to reach a wider audience** because we know they're so good. Now some of those people are writing for us all the time. Some of those people are deejays who have started their own collectives and **done their own thing**."

— Male, 39, Writer, Interactive Digital Media

"My approach to networking has been understanding that **nothing I've ever gotten has not come through a connection**. Usually it's someone knows someone, who knows me... At least once a month, if not more, **I cold call someone**. I'll have a Zoom with them and be like, 'This is what I like to do, can I help you?' So, **introducing myself to people** when there's not a job opportunity open."

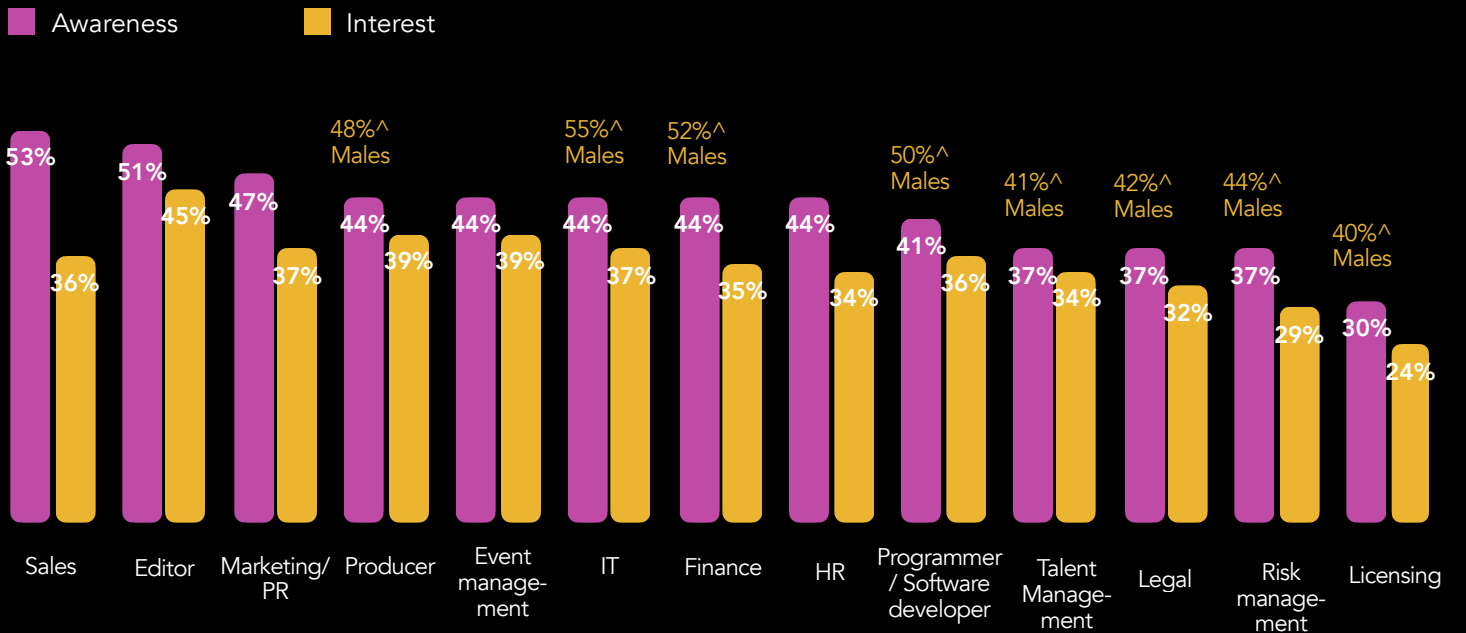
— Female, 29, Writer, Film & TV



# MORE AWARENESS NEEDED OF BEHIND-THE-SCENES ROLES

There is work to be done to raise awareness of the breadth and depth of behind-the-scenes positions, especially among young women. Among those aware, many show interest in pursuing such a career. Interest is slightly more focused on “hands on” roles that directly shape creative content, such as editors and producers, and slightly less interest in sales.

## BTS ROLE INTEREST



<sup>^</sup>Significant difference at 95% confidence vs. Females

Young people are also attracted to roles based on tech innovations that are available to leverage in certain positions. These can range from emerging creative formats they need to learn or software that streamlines their jobs.

“Digital video editing has always been at the **forefront of computational advancement**. Video files are constantly getting bigger. And there's also a lot of opportunities like distribution and **how people are viewing things**.”

— Female, 28, Video Editor, Film & TV

“In terms of book publishing, there's an **increasing interest in audio** from the wider world out there. **Finding new ways** to work with audio and with authors is really, really fun and exciting. It's a **different way to bring people to books**, which is cool.”

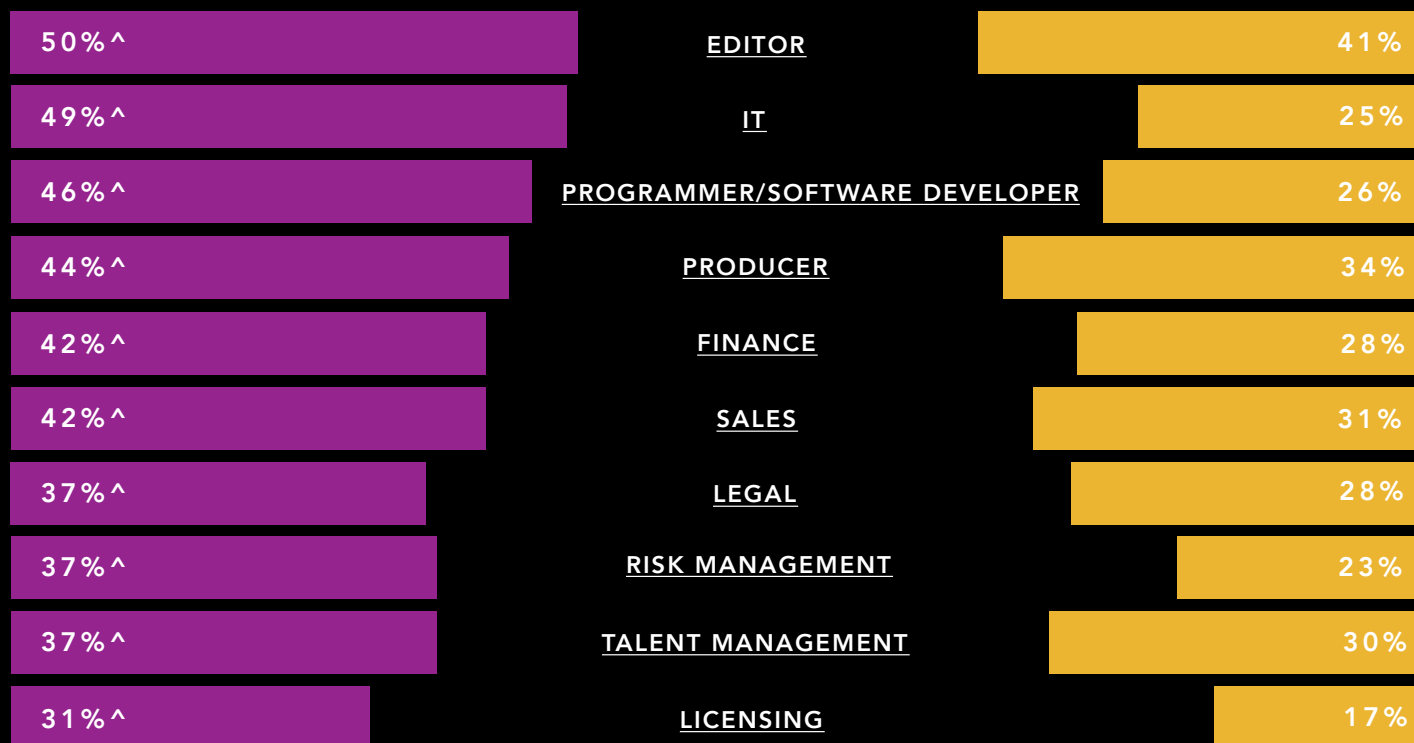
— Female, 30, Editor, Books

Males are more familiar with behind-the-scenes roles and more interested in these job opportunities. There is not a job type where interest is significantly more female. This is consistent across Gen Z and Gen Y. A gender gap is not surprising, but it is important to note that this systemic issue is impacting an emerging field. As more young people begin their behind-the-scenes careers, there is a real opportunity to avoid the pitfalls of the past. Now is the time to build awareness among young women about all the viable career opportunities available.

## BTS ROLE INTEREST BY GENDER

### MALES

### FEMALES



^Significant difference at 95% confidence vs. Females



Young people are drawn to work in cultural sectors that reflect the content they're consuming in their personal time. A previous study by Ontario Creates and VICE Media Group identified key areas of interest for Gen Z when consuming cultural content. The topics of gaming, music and internet culture are at the top of their list and align with the fields this up-and-coming workforce is attracted to.

## PREFERRED CREATIVE INDUSTRY FOR A BEHIND- THE-SCENES ROLE

1. GAMING
2. SOCIAL MEDIA
3. MUSIC
4. FILM & TV
5. BOOKS
6. MAGAZINES

## GEN Z FAVOURITE TOPICS<sup>1</sup>

1. MUSIC
2. HUMOUR
3. MEMES/INTERNET  
CULTURE
4. GAMING
5. FOOD/DINING/DRINKS

<sup>1</sup> Ontario Creates x VMG, Gen Z: The Culture of Content Consumption, 2020



# PERSONAL SKILLS NEEDED, TRAINING REQUIRED

Jobs behind-the-scenes in creative industries often entail working across different types of projects and teams, requiring a robust and broad skillset. Both current behind-the-scenes professionals and those surveyed who are interested in these roles identified similar foundational characteristics that are necessary for success. The most important skills to have are personal skills like creativity, adaptability, flexibility, problem solving and organization.

Notably, these softer skills are also areas where young people feel they could benefit the most from further training. Education around tech skills, like social media, coding and digital marketing, are less needed for this age group.

Knowledge that is specific to their profession is also important, of course. Behind-the-scenes professionals largely hone these types of skills through experience at work, rather than formalized education or other forms of professional training. On-the-job training is strongly desired, with 41% saying they would be more interested in exploring behind-the-scenes careers if it was guaranteed to be offered.

## ■ BTS SKILLS REQUIRED

## ■ BTS SKILLS THAT NEED MORE TRAINING

### PERSONAL SKILLS

(Creativity, organization, problem solving, communication, etc.)



### PERSONAL SKILLS IN NEED OF MOST TRAINING

1. Creativity
2. Communication
3. Problem solving
4. Collaboration
5. Critical thinking

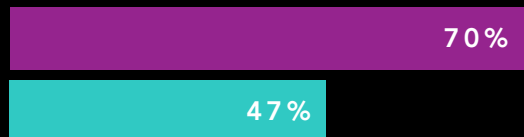
### BUSINESS SKILLS

(Financial, math/science, entrepreneurial, etc.)



### TECHNICAL SKILLS

(Social media, consumer tech, software/coding etc.)



Those who credit formal education to success in their behind-the-scenes roles received hands-on, practical experience.

"Something that was very specific about [my] film program, which I liked a lot, is **a lot of the classes** after the first two years **were workshop-ish**, where you are actually sitting in classes with 10 people. **I was directing**, but I was **also editing other people's films.**"

— Female, 28, Video Editor, Film & TV

# MENTORS BUILD CONFIDENCE BEHIND THE SCENES

The broad skillset needed and indirect path to behind-the-scenes jobs often make them complex to navigate, especially during the early career stages. Regular, consistent guidance from industry insiders is key to a successful career in this field. Young people naturally rely on those closest to them - their friends, family and colleagues - but report that they also seek out mentorship outside of their close circles. While mentors can provide career development and direction, they are also vital to helping young professionals discover their personal potential and build confidence.

## TOP 3 SOURCES OF CAREER ADVICE FOR BTS PROFESSIONALS

1. FRIENDS/FAMILY
2. COLLEAGUES/BOSSSES
3. MENTOR(S)

1 IN 2

Would seek out career advice **often or always** to grow their BTS career

64%

Say networking is **crucial** to finding a job in a creative industry



"My colleague at [my current organization] has been a **huge mentor for me**. I've learned a lot from her about **what it means to build something** that includes everything and that **does not leave people out**. She's been particularly instrumental in me **realizing my own strengths as a disability activist**."

— Female, 38, Communications and Development Coordinator, Books

"Having someone in the industry **who is your buddy** is helpful, **someone on the inside**. It's just good to have that kind of **alliance** somewhere. I think that's more natural than even specifically going to networking events."

— Female, 28, Video Editor, Interactive Digital Media

To form these connections, young people turn to more general places like professional networking sites, such as LinkedIn, or even social media. Their professional and personal connections are additional sources that strengthen their network.

## BTS NETWORK AND MENTOR SOURCES

PROFESSIONAL NETWORK SITES	39%	
CURRENT COLLEAGUES/BOSSSES	38%	
SOCIAL MEDIA	37%	(40%^ Gen Z)
PERSONAL LIFE CONNECTIONS	36%	
SCHOOL CONNECTIONS	32%	(38%^ Gen Z)
INDUSTRY EVENTS/CONFERENCES	32%	
ONLINE DISCUSSION FORUMS	30%	
PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS	28%	

^Significant difference at 95% confidence vs. Gen Y



Despite the need for a strong professional network and a seasoned mentor, most young people do not have one in their lives. They may be intimidated or unsure in how to start building these relationships, especially for those early on in their careers. Despite this, they know making the effort to build these connections is necessary to getting their foot in the door, and will pay off in the long run.

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## ROADBLOCK TO A BTS CAREER

"I don't know the right people to get a job in this type of field"

"When you meet someone cool that you find within the industry...**what you want**, especially if they're senior or a few years older, **[is advice]**. But sometimes when you're starting out, **maybe you're a bit shy or scared or you don't want to get in the way or bother.**"

— Female, 28, Video Editor, Film & TV

57%

Say it's **challenging/intimidating** to build up a professional network in a creative industry

"**I never had a mentor or anyone to guide me** through this world of agency versus in-house, the different streams of production that could exist and **even the different job titles that exist**. I wish there were **resources where I could understand** that a little bit more."

— Male, 32, Producer, Interactive Digital Media

There are many benefits to building a network and having a mentor, including assistance in finding a job. However, young people's go-to sources to learn about behind-the-scenes job opportunities tend to be more broad and less personal. Their first instinct is to turn to where they're most comfortable, online. There is an opportunity to encourage more individual relationship-building among behind-the-scenes roles.

## TOP SOURCES FOR A BTS JOB

1. PUBLIC JOB LISTING SITES (E.G. LINKEDIN, INDEED, COMPANY'S OWN SITE)
2. SOCIAL MEDIA (E.G. INSTAGRAM, TIKTOK, TWITTER)

## FORMAT THEY PREFER TO CONSUME JOB INFO

1. WATCH ONLINE VIDEOS
2. READ INFORMATION THROUGH ONLINE BOOKS, ARTICLES, MAGAZINES, ETC.

# NO MATTER THE CAREER PATH THEY FOLLOW, WORK CULTURE MATTERS

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Both the creatives and behind-the-scenes professionals are passionate about what they do. It helps round out their holistic identity, but it is by no means everything. Young people now prioritize mental health more than previous generations, so balancing work with other areas of their lives is of utmost importance.

For this cohort working in creative industries, work-life balance may look different than the traditional definition. It doesn't necessarily mean working 9am-5pm with evenings and weekends free. Young people understand that the demands of many creative fields often mean long hours and days on set, in a studio, or even at the office. However, they still need to find balance and pockets of down time when possible.

## 78%

Say **work-life balance** is the most important thing to consider when choosing a job

"I used to always work as much as possible, but I realized it was **absolutely draining on my mental health**...Not being tired all the time and **taking care of yourself is cool**. I work from 9:00 to 5:00, usually I set those hours, and then if I have to **work extra**, I'll do that."

— Male, 30, Videographer, Film & TV

There are nuances in how both groups approach work-life balance. For creators, work-life balance is more blurred because they are often getting paid to do what they love most. At the same time, they are aware when they're engaged in their passion for work-related purposes versus for their own personal enjoyment. Achieving work-life balance for those employed behind the scenes is more deliberate. For this group, seeking balance may be more of a priority because they want time to pursue their passions, which are often different from how they spend their work day.

"I'm lucky enough to have now **carved out this world** where **I love the work that I do** because it's what I do. **I live to work on that stuff**. But then I **create my own stuff, just for fun**."

— Male, 39, Content Creator, Interactive Digital Media

"I like to **do my job during the day** and then I like to go **do my fun things on my own time**. I'm **more creative** than an accounts payable role in my personal life."

— Female, 31, Accounts Payable Associate, Interactive Digital Media/Film & TV

For young generations, it is critical that their workplace reflects the diversity of backgrounds and experiences of the world in which they live and create. A previous study by Ontario Creates and VICE Media Group<sup>2</sup> revealed a strong desire to see different representation, across gender, sexual identity, ethnicity, etc., reflected in the content young people consume. Not only is diversity a requirement in the subject matter depicted, but in who is creating and supporting this content behind the scenes as well.

Many agree that progress has been made in the representation and diversity across creative fields, but there is still work to be done in terms of action and accountability. Recruiting new talent from non-creative industries, actively building a diverse team and creating programs that support underserved populations are just a few ways companies and individuals can take action to continue moving forward.

## 6 IN 10

Say creative fields should actively recruit talent from different industries to provide more visibility and diversity

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"Creating programs that help support young artists, young girls of colour and non-binary people and **providing them with resources** to start their creative projects. [Whether] that **being mentors or workshops**, and even **gear to help them get going**. Then people can sign up and start to get involved and have that **encouragement of marginalized people who normally wouldn't be encouraged** to do that."

— Female, 24, Musician

"There is a lot **more to be done to have more diverse crews** when executing a project, people of different cultural and racial backgrounds and ages and experience. A lot of times when we would love to have more females in certain positions on the crew, **oddly, there's so few in the team's roster.**"

— Male, 32, Producer, Interactive Digital Media

<sup>2</sup> Ontario Creates x VMG, Gen Z: The Culture of Content Consumption, 2020

# THE FUTURE OF THE CREATIVE WORKFORCE

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As more young people take on creative and behind-the-scenes roles across cultural industries, there are many opportunities to attract and support this emerging talent. Employers should consider the following when building up the workforce of the future.

- In job postings and recruitment outreach, communicate the ways young people can integrate their passions and values into different positions, especially those of personal growth and the ability to make an impact.
- Hold information sessions on job networking sites, social media and at schools to increase awareness of the different types of job opportunities and sectors available across creative and behind-the-scenes roles.
- Recruit and promote awareness in behind-the-scenes roles, especially among young women. Meet them where they are already seeking these positions - job listing sites and social media - and use formats like online videos to attract their attention.
- Actively recruit young people who have a mix of different world experiences, across cultures and lifestyles, to foster a culture of inclusivity and understanding.
- Champion community for both creatives and behind-the-scenes positions. Create spaces - on and offline - for these groups to find support from their peers.
- Offer accessible educational resources. For creatives, focus on business skill development and personal skill enhancement for those behind the scenes.
- Provide flexible ways of working to avoid burnout and provide programs that support positive mental health practices.