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IN THIS ISSUE

APRIL - JUNE 2024



26



42

08



COVER STORIES

26 The TikTok Finfluencer
BY EXCEL V. DYQUIANGCO

34 Adulting for Gen Z:
Steps to Building a Solid Financial
Foundation While You're Young
BY CARLA CONCEPCION

42 Career and Business Guide for Gen Z
BY CARLOS GONZALES

52 Psychology of Spending: Understanding
Gen Z's Relationship with Money
BY ANDY CRUZ

PLAN

08 How to Get a Student
Loan for College
BY CARLOS GONZALES

10 Best Personal Finance Apps
BY CARLOS GONZALES

12 Freelancing vs. Employment
BY ANDY CRUZ

16 Primer: Savings Strategies
BY EDMUND LAO, RFP®

“You will win with *money* when you believe that your family's *future* is more *important* than any new toy you want to buy.”
— DAVE RAMSEY

“Money *grows* on the tree of *persistence*!”
— JAPANESE PROVERB

“The slightest *adjustments* to y our daily *routines* can dramatically alter the *outcomes* in your life.”
— DARREN HARDY

“*Savings* is a commitment not an *amount*.”
— TODD R. CHRISTENSEN

“Before *borrowing money* from a friend, decide which you *need* most.”
— AMERICAN PROVERB

18



56



60



18 My Money Story: Navigating the Fintech Revolution at Coins.ph BY JEN BILANGO AS TOLD TO EXCEL V. DYQUIANGCO

20 My Money Story: Diversity, Inclusion, and Women Empowerment BY ADDIE LUMBRES AS TOLD TO EXCEL V. DYQUIANGCO

24 My Money Story: The Art of Trading BY FQ FARNACIO AS TOLD TO EXCEL V. DYQUIANGCO

INVEST

56 Stock Market 101: Order Types in the Stock Market BY CARLOS GONZALES

58 Real Estate 101: Renting Your First Condo Unit BY CARL DY

SPEND

60 Thrifty Travel: Budget-Friendly Tips for Gen Z Explorers BY JANICE SABITSANA, RFP®

MoneySense

SAVE, SPEND, AND INVEST WISELY

Chairman of the Board DR. ROBERTO DE OCAMPO, OBE

Publisher ALEX TORRIJOS

Editor-in-Chief HEINZ BULOS

Creative Director WILLIAM DIZON

Contributing Writers

CARLA CONCEPCION

ANDY CRUZ

CARL DY

EXCEL DYQUIANGCO

CARLOS GONZALES

EDMUND LAO

JANICE SABITSANA, RFP®

MONEYTREE PUBLISHING CORP.

Chairman of the Board DR. ROBERTO DE OCAMPO, OBE

President ALEX TORRIJOS

General Manager RHODA JIMENEZ

Advertising and Special Projects Director CRISTINA SAYON

Advertising Account Manager ELENA DURAN

Account Executive MERCY ANDAL SANCHEZ

Production Supervisor ALEX AUSTRIA

Executive Assistant EDLEN VANEZZA BAYATON-OBISPO

Legal Advisor ROBERT A. ABADILLA

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MONEYTREE PUBLISHING CORP. Unit 206 Great Wall Bldg. 136 Yakal Street, San Antonio, 1203 Makati City Telephone : (02) 8844-2868 E-mail : info@moneysense.com.ph Web : https://www.moneysense.com.ph Facebook : MoneySense Magazine Twitter : MoneysensePH Instagram : Moneysenseph

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Gen Z and Money

I have a teenage daughter who belongs to Gen Z. As a dad who wants the best for his kids, I am excited about the opportunities for her. She has access to more tools, apps, and resources to help her grow and manage her money when she comes of age. On the other hand, I am also worried about the threats from AI that could make her skills obsolete, the global workforce she needs to compete with, and the explosion of misinformation online.

Here's my advice to her and to everyone who is part of Generation Z:

1 Make the most of technology, but beware of its dangers: Go ahead and use budgeting and investing apps. Automate your savings so you don't have to think about it. Invest in global stocks and funds. But be wary of how some of these apps are designed to keep you addicted or to make impulsive decisions.

2 Educate yourself, but use your best judgment: Vast amounts of financial information and personal finance advice are available at your fingertips, from websites and blogs to YouTube and TikTok. Just know that there is also a lot of misinformation, bad advice, and conflicts of interest out there. Use critical thinking, double-check sources, and, yes, ask your dad and the people you trust.

3 Create, don't just consume content: It's okay to spend time watching videos, playing games, and scrolling through social media. But it's even better to put yourself out there. Teach what you know online and share your creative work. It could just be a hobby, side gig, or potential full-time career.

4 Spend wisely, and give generously: Your generation tends to prioritize experiences and ethical consumption over material possessions. That's great, but remember to also give to and volunteer for causes you believe in.

5 Don't overwork, but don't be lazy: Foregoing the hustle culture for a simpler, less stressful life can make sense. However, your responsibilities will pile up. You might one day have your own family to support. And a reality check will set in – you need money and you need to work hard to earn it. You just need to find the right balance between working too much and too little.

6 Be open to alternative investments, but also be careful: Cryptocurrencies, NFTs, and other digital assets are available to you. Fractional shares, even for physical assets like real estate, are becoming more common. Don't be scared to put in a little money you can afford to lose. Just don't go all in. Diversification remains key.

7 Upskill continuously: If you want to freelance or run an online business, you will compete with professionals and entrepreneurs all over the world. Whether you want to work for yourself or for a company, AI could take over your job. Invest in skills that can't be easily made obsolete. Master the use of AI tools so you become more valuable.^{MS}

Heinz Bulos

Editor-in-Chief
hbulos@moneysense.com.ph

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How to Get a Student Loan for College

By CARLOS GONZALES

Pursuing higher education is a significant milestone in one's life, but the cost can be a substantial barrier for many families in the Philippines. Fortunately, student loans offer a viable solution to finance your college education.

Understanding Student Loans. Student loans are financial aid that helps students cover their educational expenses, including tuition fees, books, supplies, and living costs. In the Philippines, these loans can come from various sources, including government agencies, private banks, and non-profit organizations.

Who Can Apply for a Student Loan? The eligibility criteria for student loans in the Philippines can vary depending on the lender. Here's a general overview:

- **Citizenship:** Most lenders require you to be a Filipino citizen or a permanent resident.
- **Age:** You'll typically need to be at least 18 years old.
- **Enrollment Status:** You must be enrolled as an undergraduate or graduate student in a recognized college or university in the Philippines. Some lenders may have specific partner schools they work with.
- **Academic Standing:** While some lenders might not have a minimum grade requirement, good academic performance can strengthen your application.

Types of Student Loans

1. Government-Sponsored Loans. The Philippine government offers several loan programs to assist students. These include:

- a. CHED Student Loan Program for Tertiary Education-Short Term Basis (SLPTE-ST):
- 0-6% interest rate
 - Immediate repayment; must be paid in 12 months
 - Up to P 60,000.00 loanable amount
 - Requires parents' income tax return and other government documents

- b. SSS Educational Assistance Loan Program (EALP):
- 0% interest on National Government portion, 6% per annum on SSS portion
 - Loanable amount varies based on degree program (up to 200,000 for 5-year programs)
 - Eligibility: Members below 60 years old, income P25,000 or below, with at least 36 posted monthly contributions

- c. GSIS Education Loan and Computer Loan Programs:
- 6% interest rate per year
 - Education loan: Up to PHP 100,000 per school year, 10-year term with 5-year grace period
 - Computer loan: Up to PHP 30,000, 3-year term
 - For active GSIS members with permanent status and at least 15 years in government service

- d. Pag-IBIG Multi-purpose Loan:
- 10.5% interest rate per year
 - 24-month term with 2-month grace period
 - Up to 80% of member's Pag-IBIG regular savings
 - For active Pag-IBIG members with at least 24 paid contributions

- e. AFP Educational Benefit:
- Free tuition and miscellaneous fees, monthly stipend, and allowances
 - For dependents of soldiers

- f. Philippine Veterans Affairs Office:
- Up to P 40,000 per year for school fees
 - For WWII Veterans, PEFTOK or PHILCAG Veterans, surviving spouses, or direct descendants

2. Bank Loans. You can apply for a personal loan from any bank, as this is a multi-purpose loan, which means you can use the proceeds for paying for tuition. A couple of banks offer loans specific to educational purposes:

- a. LandBank of the Philippines I-STUDY Program:
- 5% interest rate per annum fixed for the entire term
 - Maximum loan amount of P150,000 per student (up to P300,000 per borrower)
 - Includes option for gadget financing up to P50,000 per student

- b. BPI SIP Loan for School:
- 16.22% to 31.32% interest rate per year
 - Three to 12-month term
 - Up to available BPI credit card limit
 - For parents with BPI credit cards whose children are enrolled in BPI's partner schools

3. Other Financial Institutions. You can also tap lending companies that focus on providing student loans:

- a. Bukas.ph:
- 1.5% monthly interest rate
 - 3% origination fee
 - 12-month installment plan
 - Up to 100% of tuition and other fees
 - For Filipino undergraduate and graduate students in partner schools

- b. InvestEd.ph:
- 27% to 35% interest rate per year
 - Customized repayment plan
 - PHP 10,000 to PHP 100,000 loan amount
 - For Filipino students 18 years and above in their last two years of college

4. Universities. Some universities offer their own student loan programs with specific requirements and benefits.

These loan options provide students and their families

with various choices for financing education in the Philippines. Each has different terms, eligibility requirements, and application processes.

Eligibility Requirements. Eligibility criteria for student loans can vary depending on the lender, but generally include:

- **Filipino Citizenship:** The applicant must be a Filipino citizen.
- **Enrollment Status:** Must be enrolled or planning to enroll in an accredited college or university in the Philippines.
- **Academic Performance:** Some loans require a minimum grade point average (GPA).
- **Financial Need:** Proof of financial need may be required, especially for government-sponsored loans.
- **Co-Signer:** Many lenders require a co-signer with a stable income and good credit standing.

Securing a student loan for college in the Philippines involves careful planning and research. By understanding the types of loans available, meeting eligibility requirements, and following a structured application process, you can finance your education and achieve your academic goals. Always remember to manage your loan responsibly to ensure a smooth repayment journey after graduation. Investing in your education is a step towards a brighter future, and with the right financial support, you can make your college dreams a reality.^{MS}



Best Personal Finance Apps

By CARLOS GONZALES

Financial management can feel overwhelming, especially in today's fast-paced world. But in the Philippines, where Filipinos are known for their resourcefulness, there's a growing wave of personal finance apps designed to simplify money matters. These apps empower you to track your expenses, set financial goals, and make informed decisions about your finances – all from your smartphone.

What to Look for in a Personal Finance App in the Philippines.

With a multitude of apps available, choosing the right one depends on your specific needs and preferences. Here are some key factors to consider:

- **Features:** Do you need basic budgeting functionalities or advanced features like investment tracking or bill reminders?
- **Security:** How secure is the app with your financial data? Look for strong encryption and user authentication measures.
- **User Interface (UI):** Is the app easy to navigate and understand?
- **Offline Functionality:** Can you access some features even without an internet connection? This can be helpful for tracking expenses on the go.
- **Integration with Philippine Banks:** Can you seamlessly connect the app with your existing Philippine bank accounts for automatic transaction syncing?
- **Free vs. Premium Features:** Many apps offer basic features for free, while premium upgrades provide additional functionalities.

Top Personal Finance Apps in the Philippines. Here's a breakdown of some popular personal finance apps in the Philippines, highlighting their strengths and target users:

1. GCash

Overview. GCash is more than just a mobile wallet; it has become a comprehensive financial tool for many Filipinos. Developed by Globe Telecom, GCash allows users to perform various financial transactions, from sending money to paying bills and even investing in financial products.

Key Features

- **Expense tracking:** GCash offers a feature that categorizes your spending, making it easier to see where your money goes.
- **Bills payment:** You can pay over 400 types of bills directly through the app.
- **Investments:** GCash Invest Money lets users invest in UITFs (Unit Investment Trust Funds) with low initial investment amounts.
- **Savings account:** GSave, a partnership with CIMB Bank, provides a digital savings account with competitive interest rates.

Benefits. GCash's multifunctionality makes it a one-stop shop for financial management, suitable for both basic and advanced users.

2. Maya

Overview. Maya, another popular mobile wallet in the Philippines, offers a range of financial services that simplify money management for its users. It is particularly favored for its ease of use and wide acceptance.

Key Features

- **Expense monitoring:** Maya provides insights into your spending patterns, helping you manage your budget more effectively.
- **Virtual and physical cards:** Users can request a Maya card, which can be used for online and offline purchases.
- **Investments:** Maya gives you access to local and international funds and cryptocurrencies. As it's also a digital bank, you can have a Maya bank account and even borrow with a credit card or personal loan.
- **Bills payment and load purchases:** Similar to GCash, Maya allows users to pay bills and buy mobile load directly through the app.

Benefits. Maya's user-friendly interface, extensive network of partners, and more comprehensive financial products make it a versatile tool for everyday and long-term financial transactions.

3. Moneygment

Overview. Moneygment is a financial management app designed to cater to the needs of freelancers, small business owners, and self-employed individuals in the Philippines. It offers a range of features aimed at simplifying complex financial tasks.

Key Features

- **Tax and government contributions:** Moneygment helps users compute and pay taxes, SSS, PhilHealth, and Pag-IBIG contributions.
- **Bills payment:** Users can pay utilities, credit cards, and other bills directly through the app.
- **Insurance:** The app offers access to various insurance products.

Benefits. Moneygment's focus on simplifying tax and contribution payments makes it a valuable tool for those with irregular income streams.

4. Coins.ph

Overview. Coins.ph is a mobile wallet that combines traditional financial services with cryptocurrency functionalities. It is popular among tech-savvy Filipinos and those looking to venture into digital currencies.

Key Features

- **Money transfers and payments:** Users can send money, pay bills, and purchase mobile load.

- **Cryptocurrency transactions:** Coins.ph allows users to buy, sell, and store various cryptocurrencies.
- **Remittances:** The app supports international and domestic remittances, making it a convenient tool for OFWs and their families.

Benefits. The integration of cryptocurrency features sets Coins.ph apart, making it ideal for users interested in digital currencies alongside traditional financial management.

6. Spendee

Overview. Spendee is a budgeting app that offers a colorful and engaging way to manage your finances. It is well-regarded for its ability to connect with multiple bank accounts and provide a comprehensive view of your financial health.

Key Features

- **Bank integration:** Spendee can connect to various banks to automatically track transactions. In the Philippines, you can connect your BPI, PayPal, or Payoneer account.
- **Shared wallets:** Users can create shared wallets for joint expenses with family or friends.
- **Financial insights:** The app provides detailed financial reports and insights to help users understand their spending behavior.

Benefits. Spendee's ability to sync with bank accounts and its visual appeal make it a favorite among those who prefer a dynamic approach to financial management.

Beyond the Apps: Additional Tips for Financial Fitness.

Personal finance apps are powerful tools, but they're just one piece of the puzzle. Here are some additional tips to manage your finances effectively:

- **Set SMART financial goals:** Make your goals Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound.
- **Create a budget:** Track your income and expenses to identify areas where you can cut back and save.
- **Automate your finances:** Set up automatic transfers for savings and bill payments.
- **Learn about investing:** Explore investment options to grow your wealth over time.
- **Seek professional financial advice:** Consider consulting a financial advisor for personalized guidance.

Personal finance apps can be a game-changer in your journey towards financial wellness. By leveraging these tools alongside responsible financial habits, you can take control of your money, achieve your financial goals, and build a secure financial future. Remember, the best app is the one that works best for you. Explore these options, find the one that suits your needs, and empower yourself to take charge of your financial well-being.^{MS}



Freelancing vs. Employment

By ANDY CRUZ

The Philippines is one of the biggest sources of freelancers worldwide. There is also a growing trend among the younger generation to ditch the traditional 9-5 employment for the freedom and autonomy of freelancing. But is freelancing really all that it's cut out to be? Or should you stick with the employee route?

Each path offers unique advantages and drawbacks, and the best choice depends on your individual goals, skills, and personality. Both freelancing and employment offer unique benefits and challenges, making it crucial for job seekers and professionals to weigh their options carefully.

The Filipino Context. Before we delve into the pros and cons of freelancing versus employment, let's take a look at the state of freelancing in the Philippines.

- **Growing freelance market.** The freelance market in the Philippines is growing, driven by a skilled workforce and increasing access to global clients through online platforms like Upwork, Freelancer, and Fiverr. The lower cost of living compared to Western countries also makes freelancing financially attractive for many Filipinos.
- **Government support and regulations.** The Philippine government is recognizing the potential of the gig economy and is taking steps to support freelancers. Initiatives include legislation to protect freelancers' rights and access to social security benefits. However, freelancers still face challenges in accessing affordable healthcare and other benefits typically provided to employees.
- **Cultural and social considerations.** Cultural factors, such as the importance of family and community, can influence the choice between freelancing and employment. The flexibility of freelancing can help Filipinos meet their family obligations, but the stability of employment can provide the financial security often valued in Filipino households.

Freelancing: Freedom and Flexibility. Freelancers, also known as independent contractors, work for themselves on a project-by-project basis. They have the freedom to choose their clients, set their rates, and manage their own work schedules. This flexibility can be highly attractive, especially for those who:

- **Value work-life balance:** Freelancers can structure their



workdays around their personal commitments, allowing for travel, family time, or pursuing hobbies.

- **Crave variety:** Freelancing exposes you to diverse projects and clients, keeping your work dynamic and stimulating.
- **Are self-motivated:** Success in freelancing hinges on self-discipline and the ability to manage your time effectively.

Benefits of Freelancing. There are distinct advantages of becoming a freelancer. For example, you can enjoy:

- **Flexibility and autonomy:** Freelancers have the freedom to choose their projects, set their schedules, and work from any location. This autonomy allows for a better work-life balance and the ability to pursue personal interests alongside professional commitments.
- **Diverse income streams:** By working with multiple clients, freelancers can diversify their income sources. This diversification can provide financial stability and the potential for higher earnings compared to a fixed salary.

- **Skills development:** Freelancers often work on varied projects, which can enhance their skills and broaden their expertise. This continuous learning can make freelancers more competitive in the job market.

Challenges of Freelancing. Despite its perks, freelancing presents some challenges:

- **Income instability:** Freelancers don't have a guaranteed income. Finding consistent clients and projects requires effort and networking. Freelancers may experience fluctuating incomes due to the project-based nature of their work. Periods of high demand can be followed by dry spells, making financial planning challenging.
- **Benefits burden:** Freelancers are responsible for their own health insurance, retirement savings, and other benefits. Unlike employees, freelancers do not receive benefits such as health insurance, paid leave, and retirement plans. Freelancers must manage these aspects independently, which can be costly.
- **Self-discipline:** Managing your workload, setting boundaries, and staying motivated can be difficult without a structured work environment. Freelancing requires strong self-discipline and time management skills. Without a structured environment, it can be easy to procrastinate or overwork.

Note, however, that you can gain a level of income stability from freelancing by working with a few select clients that pay you a fixed monthly retainer. You can also find remote part-time jobs on a freelance basis. This means you don't have to bid for projects or seek new clients while enjoying the predictability and security of regular income.



Some freelancing clients do require you to log in your hours, set strict deadlines, attend regular online meetings, and have someone supervise your work, providing more structure to your work. But generally, you have more flexibility that requires you to be disciplined and focused.

Employment: Structure and Security. Traditional employment offers a structured work environment with a fixed salary and benefits like health insurance, paid leaves, and even retirement plans. Employees typically work regular hours under the supervision of an employer.

This structure can be appealing for those who:

- **Value stability:** A fixed salary provides financial security and predictability.
- **Prefer clear structure:** Defined roles and responsibilities provide a clear direction for your work.
- **Thrive in collaboration:** Working alongside colleagues fosters a sense of community and facilitates learning from others.

Benefits of Employment. Here are some specific benefits of being an employee:

- **Mandatory benefits:** Employers are legally mandated to provide benefits like social security, PhilHealth, and Pag-IBIG. Unlike with freelancers that cover their entire monthly contributions, employees share contributions with their employer.
- **Career growth opportunities:** Employees can benefit from training programs and advancement opportunities provided by the company. Employment often offers opportunities for career growth through promotions, training programs, and professional development initiatives. Employees can climb the corporate ladder and achieve long-term career goals.
- **Structured environment:** A structured work environment with set hours and clear responsibilities can enhance productivity and reduce stress. Employees benefit from established workflows and support from colleagues and supervisors.

Challenges of Employment. While employment offers stability, it can also come with limitations:

- **Limited flexibility:** Fixed schedules may not be ideal for those who value control over their time. Employees typically have fixed schedules and less control over their work hours and tasks. This lack of flexibility can make it challenging to balance personal and professional responsibilities.
- **Commuting and office hours:** Balancing work-life can be challenging, especially with long commutes in urban areas.

- **Limited income growth:** Salary increases are typically based on company policies and may not reflect your individual contributions as readily.
- **Dependence on employer:** Job security in employment is tied to the employer's stability and performance. Economic downturns, company restructurings, and other factors can lead to job loss or reduced job satisfaction.
- **Potential for burnout:** The demands of a traditional job, including commuting, long hours, office politics, and workplace stress, can contribute to burnout. Employees may struggle to find time for relaxation and personal pursuits.

The lack of flexibility and work-life balance may not be a big drawback anymore as more companies now allow work-from-home or flextime arrangements, requiring workers to report to the office a few days a week or even a month.

Getting burned out can happen whether you're an employee or a freelancer. However, you don't have to deal with office politics, workplace bureaucracy, and long commutes if you freelance.

Making the Right Choice. There's no one-size-fits-all answer. Consider these factors to choose the path that aligns with your priorities:

- **Skills and experience:** Freelancing requires strong self-marketing and business management skills alongside your technical expertise. Employment leverages your skills within a defined role, with opportunities to learn and grow within the company structure.
- **Financial goals:** Consider your income expectations and risk tolerance. Employment ensures a fixed salary, while freelancing requires you to manage your income stream.
- **Personality and preference:** Do you thrive on variety and

autonomy, or do you prefer a structured environment with clear guidance?

Hybrid Approach: The Best of Both Worlds. For some, a hybrid approach might be ideal. You could explore part-time employment while taking on freelance projects on the side. This allows you to enjoy some stability with a base income while leveraging freelancing to explore new opportunities, increase earnings, or gain additional skills.

Or you can also start off as a full-time employee as you build your skills, knowledge, and savings. When you are confident about getting clients on your own, already have a high-demand skillset, and have saved enough to tide you over for several months, you can consider quitting your job and going all-in as a freelancer.

Taking the First Step. Whether you choose freelancing or employment, thorough research is crucial. For freelancing, explore online platforms, build a strong portfolio, and market yourself effectively. If employment is your path, research companies that align with your career aspirations. Remember, this is not a permanent decision. You can always revisit your choice as your career goals and circumstances change.^{MS}



“Freelancing requires strong self-marketing and business management skills alongside your technical expertise.”



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Savings Approaches

By EDMUND LAO, RFP®

Savings refer to a portion of your earned income you set aside for uncertain future use instead of spending immediately on discretionary expenses. Essentially, it's the portion of income you don't spend on current consumption needs or non-discretionary expenses but reserve for emergencies, investments, or planned future expenses such as education, buying real estate, or retirement.

You can hold savings in various instruments, such as savings accounts, certificates of deposit (CDs), and retirement accounts like PERA, or invest them in stocks, bonds, real estate, and other assets. Saving is a fundamental financial discipline that helps you build wealth, achieve financial goals, and maintain financial stability.

An insightful perspective on savings is to view it as an expense that buys into your future. Similar to any other expense, allocating money toward savings requires discipline and careful planning. By consistently setting aside a portion of your income for savings, you're essentially investing in your future financial security and well-being.

Whether for emergencies, retirement, education, or other long-term goals, saving money now can provide a safety net and enable you to achieve your aspirations. Conclusively, cultivating a saving habit can be a safeguard against relinquishing control over your life during a crisis.

There are various approaches to savings, and different methods work for different people depending on their financial goals, lifestyle, and preferences. Here are some common approaches to savings:

Debt Repayment. Although this isn't strictly a savings approach, paying off high-interest debt (such as credit card debt) can effectively free up more money for saving in the long run by reducing interest payments. It will be hard to

start saving if you have debt. You better pay it up before starting to save. Interest saved equates to money that can be converted into savings.

Budgeting. Creating a budget to track your income and expenses is a good practice. By creating a budget, you allocate a portion of your income towards savings regularly, treating it as a needed and non-negotiable expense. You're simply telling yourself where your money should be allocated by making a budget.

Automated Savings. This is a painless way to save money. You can set up automatic transfers from your payroll account to your savings account regularly. This ensures that you'll be consistently saving without manually moving money around. It's also better to have it via a passbook or ATM (but keep the ATM away from sight).

Pay Yourself First. This popular savings technique involves prioritizing savings by setting aside a portion of your income before paying for any other expenses. The idea is to treat savings as a non-negotiable expense, similar to paying bills or rent, and allocate money towards it as soon as you receive it. The logic behind this is that you worked very hard, and you (as the employer) must pay yourself (as the employee) and come first before anything else.

Envelope System. This budgeting technique allows you to allocate cash into separate envelopes for different spending categories, including savings. Once an envelope is empty, you can no longer spend money in that category; you must wait until the next budgeting period. This is an excellent strategy to eliminate unnecessary spending.

Track and Reduce Expenses. Nowadays, you can use apps or software to keep track of expenses. By having a database of your monthly expenses, you can track your spending habits and identify areas where you can cut back and redirect the money saved toward your savings.

Set Specific Goals. It's a good idea to define clear savings goals, whether for building an emergency fund, saving for education or a vacation, or even investing for retirement. Specific targets can help you stay motivated and focused in regularly building up your savings.

Use Bonuses Wisely. Whenever you receive unexpected money, such as a tax refund, incentive, or bonus, consider setting aside all or a portion of it towards savings instead of immediately spending it. This strategy can help you build your savings faster.

Shop Smart. Drop shipping has significantly changed the landscape of e-commerce over the past decade. With drop shipping, you can look for discounts, use coupons, and compare prices before purchasing to save money on everyday expenses. Just make sure you're buying your needs, not your wants. Buying via drop shipping can help you save lots of money without going to a physical store. Always check for vouchers and promos to ensure you get good value for money. Make sure not to spend recklessly. By spending less, you can have free money to save up. Always remember to pay less than what you earn.

Limit Impulse Spending. Always pause before making impulse purchases. Ask yourself if they align with your budget and financial goals. It's best to consider implementing

a waiting period before buying non-essential items. Remember that haste makes waste, and most of the time, it pays to wait.

Review and Adjust. Regularly review your savings plan and make adjustments as your income may change or there might be changes based on expenses or financial goals.

Ultimately, the key to successful savings is to find an approach that works for you and consistently follow it over time. ^{MS}

“Buying via drop shipping can help you save lots of money without going to a physical store.”



Navigating the Fintech Revolution at Coins.ph

By JEN BILANGO as told to EXCEL V. DYQUIANGCO

Ever since high school, I've had a passion for finance. Numbers always fascinated me, and I excelled in all my math subjects. Alongside this, I harbored a deep curiosity about cognitive psychology, constantly wondering how decisions are made and why people make their specific judgments. I was one of those peculiar kids growing up.

Thus, it became clear that these two fields' intersection lies in corporate finance or business analysis. Fortunately, I joined a Boutique investment bank specializing in mergers and acquisitions. There's no other industry where finance and cognitive science intersect dynamically in a high-stakes environment. I thrived in investment banking and was instrumental in helping one of our clients pivot to the fintech space. Witnessing the exponential growth of fintech adoption in the Philippines was my "aha" moment, like what tech entrepreneurs experience.

A key experience that led me to pursue a career in fintech was witnessing the inefficiencies and barriers in traditional banking. With all the available technology, I wondered why things weren't easier. For instance, the high costs and slow transactions in current remittance channels deeply affected OFWs and their families. Having an OFW father myself, I was acutely aware of these pain points. Stablecoins emerged as a solution, significantly reducing cross-border transfer costs and making remittances near-instant and available 24/7.

This career path naturally led me to Coins.ph. Being deeply invested in finance, I was drawn to the opportunity because I knew Coins.ph was one of the country's largest crypto platforms licensed by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP). Their mission to provide financial inclusion for Filipinos through blockchain technology resonated with me, marking an important step in the finance industry.



Strategy, People, and Process. Joining Coins.ph came with its challenges. The company was in flux, under new ownership, undergoing a major tech migration and upgrade, pivoting to cater to more web3 native products and users, facing regulatory headwinds, and dealing with the deepest bear market. It was an uphill battle, but I focused on what needed to be done. Building a successful enterprise revolves around strategy, people, and process. We had a strong conviction in our strategy, revamped processes with a first-principle approach, and hired great people. It took several months to assemble the team we needed, but it was the most crucial component of our revamp.

As the Country Manager of Coins.ph, my primary responsibilities include supervising new product initiatives,

overseeing daily operations, setting strategic direction, and ensuring we meet our growth targets. It is paramount to understand our users' needs and provide them with the best experience possible. I also manage and nurture relationships with stakeholders, partners, merchants, regulators, and traders. I also look after our culture and people, fostering a high-trust, high-performance team in a fast-paced environment like fintech.

A typical day for me involves a mix of strategic planning and operational oversight. As an early riser (sometimes starting my day at 3:30 am), I accomplish most tasks in the morning, resonating with the army slogan: "I do more before 9 am than most people do all day." Once the official workday starts, I'm often in back-to-back meetings—sometimes up to 20 meetings a day. Multitasking without compromising the quality of decisions is a skill I've honed.

The fintech sector is highly competitive and constantly evolving, requiring agility and forward-thinking. Balancing the need to be tech-forward while addressing operational challenges is one of the toughest aspects of my role. Being a woman in a male-dominated industry presents its own challenges and opportunities. While often the only woman in the room, overcoming preconceived notions about gender has been gratifying, especially when exceeding expectations.

In a rapidly evolving industry like fintech, I approach problem-solving with a combination of data-driven analysis and collaborative brainstorming. I gather nuanced insights through direct discussions with our CX agents, analysts, and users. Staying informed about industry trends and anticipating changes is crucial. Decision-making involves



Fintech Career

For those aspiring to pursue a career in fintech, Coins.ph Country Manager **Jen Bilango** has some tips and pointers.

Stay curious and informed. The fintech industry is constantly evolving, so staying updated with the latest trends, technologies, and regulatory changes is crucial. Continuous learning will keep you ahead of the curve.

Embrace challenges. The path to success in fintech is filled with obstacles. Embrace these challenges as opportunities to learn and grow. Resilience and adaptability are key traits in this industry.

Build a strong network. Surround yourself with mentors, peers, and industry experts who can provide guidance, support, and insights. Networking opens doors to opportunities and helps you stay connected with the industry's pulse.

considering short- and long-term impacts, consulting with experts, and maintaining a customer-centric focus to meet real user needs.

Driving Greater Financial Inclusion. The most fulfilling aspect of my work at Coins.ph is seeing the tangible impact of our services on people's lives. Hearing stories of individuals and businesses gaining financial independence through Coins is incredibly rewarding. It's a reminder of why we do what we do and motivates me to push for greater financial inclusion. Recently, we've been focusing on cross-border flows, further driven by my personal connection to the OFW experience. This motivates me to improve our services, helping our *kababayans* build a better future for their families.

We measure our impact through various metrics, including user growth, transaction volumes, and customer feedback. We also assess broader indicators, such as the number of unbanked individuals gaining access to financial services and the overall growth in digital transactions in the country. Collaborating with external researchers and organizations helps us evaluate our social and economic impact.

Looking ahead, I aim to drive greater financial inclusion through blockchain technology, not just in the Philippines but globally. As a firm believer in this technology, I hope to encourage more users to start their crypto journey with Coins and demonstrate its positive impact on their lives. Personally, I aspire to mentor the next generation of fintech leaders, particularly women, and contribute to building a more inclusive and equitable industry. **MS**

Diversity, Inclusion, and Women Empowerment

By ADDIE LUMBRES as told to EXCEL V. DYQUIANGCO

After graduating from high school, I was looking for a pre-law course that would allow me to take different exams from some of the top universities in the Philippines. Upon hearing that I passed the exam at De La Salle University, my mom, a frustrated accountant, convinced me to take up accounting with the promise that this would open opportunities for me and that I wouldn't have difficulty looking for a job after university. That was indeed good advice, and I would always say that part of the reason I feel blessed now is that I was obedient to my mom.

She was right. Accounting firms approached me, and early on, I told myself that if I passed the Certified Public Accountant (CPA) licensure exam, I would join an accounting firm and at least stay there for six months. I was fortunate enough to join SGV & Co./EY Philippines, which remains one of the best choices I've made in my professional career.

Starting my career. I remember my early days as a staff member, honing my audit skills and experience in various sectors. I even ventured into consulting engagements that challenged and expanded my expertise. During these formative years, I learned the importance of commitment and the power of seizing opportunities, big or small.

An example of this was an opportunity to immerse myself in Wealth and Asset Management (WAM), a sector I knew little about then. With a book on hedge funds in one hand and a relentless spirit to learn, and if I'm being honest, fearful that I must do well not to disappoint my mentor, I accepted a rotation offer in Hong Kong.

There, I delved into the sector's intricacies, seeking guidance from seasoned professionals and dedicating weekends to mastering the subject. This dedication paid off as I gained the trust and confidence of my clients and the WAM leaders at that time, allowing me to continue this work upon my return to Manila.

This experience was more than just a professional milestone; it was the catalyst for establishing the Asia-Pacific Talent Hub, which started with a team of 50 and grew to a thousand in nine years. Little did I know then that this would be the groundwork for establishing EY Global Delivery Services (GDS) in the Philippines, an organization that is currently almost 5,000+ strong.

Growing EY GDS. As the EY GDS Audit Leader for Asia Pacific, I collaborate closely with EY audit leaders across Asia-Pacific to support them in their strategic initiatives. One of those initiatives is to reduce the delivery cost by having a team of highly talented resources in the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and India under an extended teaming model to help deliver audit support work across certain countries and regions.



We now have close to 1,400 resources doing this. I am also the EY GDS Philippines Assurance Leader, overseeing nearly 2,000 resources that deliver work to EY member firms across Asia-Pacific and the US.

One of the challenges we continue to encounter is attrition, but it has reduced significantly over the last two years. Attrition for us means our employees are leaving EY GDS to join other Big Four professional member firms outside of the Philippines and other shared services and technology firms in the Philippines.

I would like to think that, with the excellent training and employee experience that we provide our employees, they can find opportunities outside the country that would not only help their careers but also financially help their families in the Philippines.

Love for coaching. Aside from this, I have always been passionate about coaching, and I believe I am where I am now because of the coaching and mentorship that I also received from my leaders in SGV and GDS.

EY GDS allowed me to be trained and become a certified coach. I believe I have coached my staff in the past, but I did it by listening to them and sharing insights from my experiences. Through formal training and following the GROW model, I am now better equipped for coaching.

I've learned that coaching starts with agreeing on what one wants to achieve through coaching, what their goals are (both short-term and long-term), then having an honest discussion of what the coach sees as their current reality, and

“As a woman leader, I was privileged to have worked with senior leaders who mentored and coached me and ensured I had a voice and that my voice mattered.”



asking the right questions, help them reflect and see what are the options available to them. Once they have clarity on their options, the next step is to work with them to define their way forward or specific actions to help them meet their goals.

I've realized that I've been doing informal coaching with employees even before. I believe that at the heart of coaching is proactively listening and being compassionate about what they are going through. I have always felt that to be a successful coach, one must be sincere and have the best intentions to help others achieve their full potential.

I have retained several senior managers (who started as a staff or supervisor more than eight years ago) by coaching them through their career challenges and opportunities. After two years as a certified coach in EY GDS, I now have coached three senior managers who were promoted to executive director level within one year of going through our coaching journey.

Promoting diversity. Diversity, equity, and inclusiveness are core to EY GDS's identity and how it works. The organization is committed to fostering an environment where all differences are valued, practices are equitable, and everyone experiences a sense of belonging. I believe diverse viewpoints are the catalysts that lead to better questions and better answers. That's when creative ideas flow, igniting innovation and inspiring more effective solutions.

► Turn to page 29

The Art of Trading

By FQ FARNACIO as told to EXCEL V. DYQUIANGCO

My financial management journey began at Saint Louis University. We learned the fundamentals: par value, common shares, company analysis – everything except the practical side of trading. Professor Viray, wanting us to experience it firsthand, made investing in the stock market a semester requirement. As a class, with zero real-world knowledge, we pooled our money and ventured to a traditional broker in Baguio City (online brokers were unheard of back then!).

Our goal? To make a profit and, more importantly, pass the class. Clueless, we relied on the traders' recommendations. Bombarded with "buy this, buy that," we nervously placed our bets on a familiar name: URC. We were graduating seniors, desperate for this stock to be our saving grace. Luckily, it was at a low point and slowly recovering. Pure luck propelled us – we passed the class and even made some money!

That semester involved constant trips to the broker. Unlike today's online platforms, monitoring and transactions required physical visits. Witnessing people withdraw profits solidified the power of investing—the potential to multiply wealth significantly.

This experience, though based on chance, ignited a passion for understanding the intricacies of the stock market. It showed the potential rewards, but more importantly, the importance of knowledge before diving in.

Old school investing. Our first encounter with the stock market came through a traditional broker. Back then (pre-YouTube learning days!), there was no clear guidance, just speculative whispers from exchange floor traders. We couldn't tell who to trust with real investment advice.

However, the experience did spark curiosity. We started asking "why" – what factors drove prices up, and what influenced investment decisions? If I recall correctly, it was



just after the 2008-2009 global financial crisis that so many investments were recovering. Relying on the advice of strangers in the exchange wasn't ideal, but for the sake of our grades, we had to navigate this uncertainty.

Thankfully, we passed that semester. Our professor, impressed by our success, encouraged us to participate in the PSE Stock Trading Game, an intercollegiate virtual trading competition. This introduced us to the power of online research. Armed with internet data, we revisited our old traditional broker, still seeking some human verification in the absence of better options. The drive to multiply our virtual money fueled our hunger for learning about the market's potential. Imagine the thrill, even with virtual funds, of seeing your money grow! Thanks to our research, we landed a top 10 spot in the competition. This experience transformed our perception of trading – it wasn't just luck but a combination of the recovering market, our growing knowledge, and the realization that trading could be a tool for personal growth.

Developing the right tools. When I got married, trading remained our go-to investment strategy. My wife, an accountant, shared my approach. Back then (2011-2012), we focused on companies with good book value, like those recovering from the 2008-2009 financial crisis. We saw this as a chance for growth, similar to the experience I had in college with URC. That investment grew by 200% by 2015!

However, with a growing portfolio came a growing ego. My wife and I discussed that we could have achieved more with a larger investment. This led to family involvement, and by 2015, we had gathered a seven-digit portfolio from them. 2015-2016 was a bull market – everything seemed to go up. While this period brought financial success, it also brought challenges. My father, skeptical of trading, became our biggest concern. Additionally, our lifestyle became lavish. We aimed for a Php90,000 monthly income, and I felt invincible. Unfortunately, this lavishness came at a cost – we weren't saving.

The 2016 market bubble burst hit us hard. I lost a significant amount across multiple portfolios. This humbling experience forced me to focus on education and develop the right trading tools. I enrolled in numerous courses, learning technical analysis, charting techniques, and trading theories.

From student to leader. My dedication led me to ZFT, an educational firm. As a student, I became part of their coaching and mentoring team due to my support for the community. Within eight months, I was the lead mentor, spearheading various programs.

My commitment to redemption fueled my success. ZFT saw significant results under my leadership, leading to interviews with publications, keynote speaker opportunities at events, and recognition from various brokers and even the PRC. My name was everywhere. This experience made me realize the importance of knowledge and proper licensing.

The market taught me valuable lessons. It humbled, challenged, and ultimately led me on a path of mentorship and leadership. Armed with knowledge and experience, I continue to choose the right path.



Getting into Stocks

With his vast experience in trading and the stock market, **FQ Farnacio** shares tips and advice for those who want to follow his path.

Commit to educating yourself. Even if you have money, the market will consume you if you don't know how to handle it correctly. As traders, we are not bottomless; we need a lot of practice to manage our finances effectively. The market will always be there, so learning how to navigate it properly is crucial.

Be patient. Like any good profession, trading requires years of study and experience to master. Trading is a skill, much like any game, with its own set of rules. Learning it the right way will always speed up the process.

Trading system. Based on these insights, I developed the Strong Point Program, a system for trading in the stock, forex, and cryptocurrency markets. This program aims to build your foundation as a trader over time. I believe trading is a mastery skill that requires gradual development; it cannot be learned in just an hour to the level of a professional. The program combines system, mindset, reflection, and exposure to market trends. Achieving a balance among these elements is essential for effective money management and application. I designed the program to navigate challenging market conditions and steer my portfolio toward consistent growth.

I stay current with market trends by closely monitoring price movements and understanding the factors behind them. I can make informed predictions about future market behavior by analyzing past events and relating them to present price actions. Trading involves focusing on the present, anticipating future price movements, and reacting accordingly. This is the essence of technical analysis, complemented by proper fundamental analysis.

Regarding the tools, platforms, or technologies essential for trading, a techno-fundamental approach is the most effective. Technical analysis is crucial as it reflects all market information in the price, while fundamentals help identify the underlying factors driving price movements. This combination, known as stimulus, indicates potential price directions. Proper charting platforms like TradingView, Investagram, and broker-provided data are invaluable for this analysis. For global market trading, terminal data from sources like Eikon or Bloomberg is critical, offering a vast resource of economic data, news, and other vital information to inform institutional and personal trading strategies.

Starting Vertex. Vertex started as a small community in the previous company where I worked. I spearheaded an accountability group of like-minded individuals because many colleagues asked me to share my market approach. Seeing myself in their struggles, notably lacking a solid foundation, motivated me to continue guiding them.

This experience inspired me to build a similar process, knowing firsthand how challenging and disorienting it can be to navigate the market alone. The vision for Vertex was to create a haven for traders, providing a straightforward and effective process for engaging with financial markets. That was our goal.

The initial challenge was starting as a one-person operation, with no duplicates or leverage for all the tasks the company needed to handle. The company grew significantly over the years through practicing trading and teaching it to our students. We achieved remarkable success, with students accomplishing incredible milestones.

One student opened a franchise business in a Metro Manila mall through trading profits, another used additional funds to set up a gasoline station, and another recovered from a Php1.2 million loss after completing the program. These successes didn't happen overnight but resulted from our consistent process. Over time, our students excelled; some even joined our coaching team, becoming guiding lights for other traders and students in our community.

We are now recognized by leading industry institutions, with brokers reaching out to us to enhance their clients' trading approaches. We even train institutional-level traders, including students from AP Securities, Inc. Our services include providing research and analysis for other communities and companies, conducting seminars, and

“We are now *recognized* by leading industry institutions, with *brokers* reaching out to us to *enhance* their clients' trading approaches.”

offering personal coaching to delegates. I have been highlighted as an ambassador for various local and international brokers, attracting attention from organizations that accredit trading practices in this industry.

We are now part of the Society of Technical Analysts, providing CTA licenses and partnering with organizations like the Junior Confederation of Financial Associates of the Philippines, Fed Center, Financial Educators Association of the Philippines, and AAPOC Consultancy. We also accredit and certify university and college students, which they can use professionally. We have partnered with hundreds of universities to teach capital markets and trading professionally, enhancing the financial education provided by these institutions. Additionally, we contribute to SEC's certification process for traders, ensuring that practices in the country are up to date and of high quality.

In the next five to 10 years, I envision Vertex/Ignite Marketing Resources Inc. becoming one of the Philippines' top financial institutions in education and trading practices. We aim to position the Philippines in the global spotlight by producing the best market technical research analysts and top profitable traders. To ensure our continued success, we plan to continuously update our approaches to align with the ever-changing market, both locally and globally, so our students can achieve the highest levels of success.^{MS}



Diversity, Inclusion, and Women... ▶ From page 25

Across EY GDS Philippines, women represent 61% of the organization's people, and 54% are senior managers and up supporting teams across geographies and service lines. In EY GDS, specifically in Assurance, we look at DEI in five pillars: 1) empowering women through our Amazing Women recognition program; 2) creating awareness and a safe environment for our LGBTQ+ community; 3) looking at creating opportunities to hire PWDs and looking at how we can help them through the deployment of the right tools; 4) although it is early days, we are also looking at neurodiversity which is hiring talents who are in the spectrum. For this, we want to understand specific job roles that are best suited and where these talents could grow; and 5) understand the different generations in our workforce and essentially help understand and appreciate our differences and what will make each employee thrive in our organization.

In EY GDS Philippines, specific examples highlight this commitment. The UNITY Network was established in 2019 to support LGBTQ+ employees and allies. This network conducts workshops on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE), discusses HIV/AIDS awareness, hosts Safe Space Conversations and participates in industry events to raise awareness.

We celebrated our DEI week last December, where we organized different forums and engagements that created awareness for our people. I moderated a session with five of our Amazing Women winners and heard their journey and their stories. We also invited one of the Philippine Financial and Inter-Industry Pride (PFIP) officers and demystified pronouns. I staunchly believe creating awareness and understanding is a good start. We need to ask the right questions to become compassionate leaders.

Women empowerment. Aside from being a co-sponsor of DEI across Assurance in EY GDS, I am also the Amazing Woman Champion Leader for our Assurance service line. This means that I, together with another partner in GDS who is our overall DEI leader, work with our Partners and Executive Directors to identify high-performing and well-rounded women leaders and recognize their efforts by featuring them on our internal employee engagement channel.

As a woman leader, I was privileged to have worked with senior leaders who mentored and coached me and ensured I had a voice and that my voice mattered. I was also very fortunate to have worked with like-minded leaders who, like me, have other priorities outside of work and understood that we must prioritize what we most value in life.



For me, that would be my family and friends. It is crucial to integrate one's work and personal lives. As a daughter and sibling, I must also give time to my responsibilities and cherish those moments with my family. Spending quality time with my husband is my sanctuary, and I look forward to traveling with him and our friends. Traveling rejuvenates me, giving me the energy to give my 100% to my team again and work. Moreover, spending time with my team and getting to know them, allowing them to get to know me, is vital. Lastly, do what you love to do because if you do that, it will not be work - it will just be another exciting day in your life.^{MS}

Leaning In

MY MONEY LESSONS

EY GDS Philippines Assurance Leader and EY Asia-Pacific Audit Leader **Addie Lumbres** shares how women should stand strong and high.

Make each opportunity count. There are no small or big opportunities in life; just make sure that you take them and make each of them count.

Make your voices heard. Whether you are an introvert or are in a sea of men, make sure that you make your voice heard, stand for the right things, and always stick to your values.

Know your priorities. Know your priorities and know that there is no such thing as a perfect work-life balance. You must make each day count and make daily decisions that you know are right for you. There will be days that you will have to prioritize your family over work, and you should be happy with that, but there will be days when you may need to miss out on some family events, and again, you should not feel guilty about that. Life is short; hence, make sure you make the most of it.

The TikTok Finfluencer

How Antonette Aquino's path led her from teen entrepreneurship to personal finance social media influencer

By EXCEL V. DYQUIANGCO

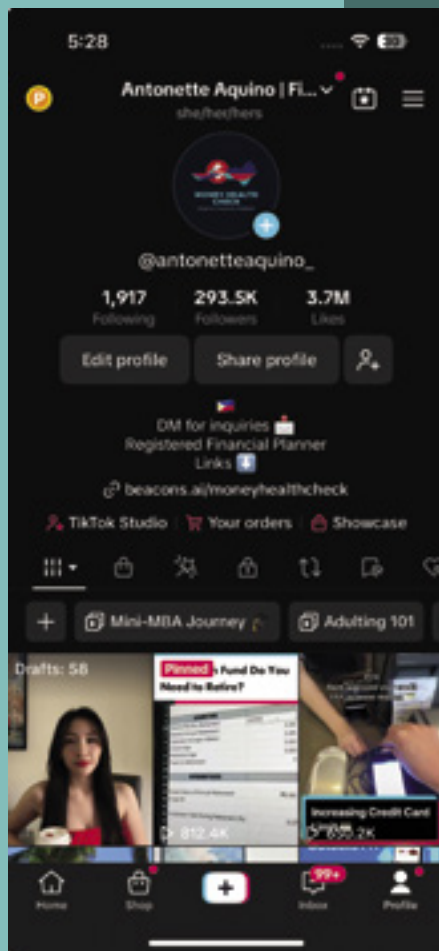
From juggling part-time jobs as a teen to becoming a TikTok personal finance sensation, Antonette Aquino's journey in the finance industry is a masterclass in turning adversity into achievement.

Born and raised in Manila, she faced the harsh realities of adulting at just 16 years old. Coming from a family of four, she began juggling part-time jobs as a sales consultant, advertising model, and event host during her senior year in high school. This early exposure to work was driven by necessity – her family's financial struggles, including her father's business bankruptcy, profoundly impacted her outlook on money and money management.

Reflecting on her formative years, Antonette shares, "My perspective on money developed when I experienced firsthand all the financial mistakes my family was making." This challenging period in her life, marked by the fear of not graduating due to unpaid tuition, was a pivotal moment that pushed her to earn for herself.

It wasn't until she read T. Harv Eker's book, *"Secrets of the Millionaire Mindset,"* that her approach to money and investments was transformed. "The Php400 book I bought drastically changed my perspective on money, investments, and the power of having multiple streams of income," Antonette recalls.





Despite her degree in Political Science from De La Salle University, her career trajectory took a turn toward finance. Her first job in the finance industry was in marketing at a major company, where she simultaneously worked part-time in the insurance sector. With over five years of experience in mutual funds, insurance, and financial planning, she quickly made a name for herself. "It shocks a lot of people to discover I didn't study finance," Antonette notes, emphasizing her unconventional path to success.

With this, her advocacy for democratizing financial education has made her a sought-after speaker at top universities and business conferences in the Philippines, establishing her as one of the youngest thought leaders in the finance industry. Her passion for financial education and empowerment is deeply rooted in her own experiences and the lessons she learned along the way.

When asked about her biggest inspirations in the finance industry, Antonette cites Warren Buffett, the most successful investor in the world and one of the richest. "Warren and I share certain values. His commitment to generosity and social responsibility is a powerful reminder that success should be shared and leveraged for the greater good," she says. From Warren Buffett, she learned valuable lessons about long-term thinking, the power of compound interest, and focusing on intrinsic value rather than stock market fluctuations.

Antonette also credits her first mentor, a respected advisor in the insurance industry, for playing a crucial role in shaping her career. "She taught me the importance of giving back to others and the significance of mentorship," she explains. This mentor not only helped her develop technical skills and improve her communication but also emphasized the importance of building a professional network. "I am grateful for her guidance and support, and I know that I would not be where I am today without her," she acknowledges.

To Internet Stardom

With her success in the financial industry, it wasn't long before she took a deep dive into social media, which she considers a testament to innovation and adaptability. As a prominent figure in the personal finance industry, she has turned her personal experiences and professional expertise into engaging content that educates and inspires her growing audience.

The journey began during the pandemic, a time when many people reevaluated their careers and business strategies. "The pandemic was the great equalizer," Antonette reflects. "People changed the way they did business, the way they marketed themselves and their services." It was during this period that she began exploring the idea of personal branding, asking herself how she could draw attention and build a following. Observing the success of influential personal finance experts in the Philippines, she noticed a common thread: they all made videos. This realization led her to upload her first video on TikTok.

Antonette's initial motivation to share personal finance content came from a desire to document her learning journey rather than positioning herself as an expert. "When I posted my first video, I realized my job is not to play the role of the expert. That's the end goal, but I know I'm not there yet. My job is to play the role of a learner," she explains. This approach resonated with many viewers, as it made her content relatable and accessible.

Her TikTok account grew rapidly, amassing 200,000 followers within the first five months, entirely through organic growth. Today, Antonette's videos have garnered over three million likes, with many reaching hundreds of thousands or even millions of views. Her content strategy, which positions her as both a teacher and a student of finance, has been key to her success. "Nobody likes an agent. Nobody likes a salesman, but we all love teachers," she notes.

Antonette's videos cover various personal finance topics, including tips on improving financial habits, investments, credit scores, and budgeting. She also delves into setting realistic financial goals, evaluating potential stock purchases, and understanding the differences between cash flow and investing. Her content has had a significant impact on her followers, many of whom have taken tangible steps towards financial empowerment. "Because of my content, I've effectively influenced my viewers to jumpstart their investment journey, start businesses of their own, and join the finance industry as well," she shares. In addition, her influence has encouraged other financial planners to post content for their own businesses.

The transition to becoming a prominent personal finance influencer has brought about profound changes in her life, both personally and professionally. Antonette emphasizes the importance of being skilled in a field and leveraging social media to establish credibility. "Posting valuable content that helps solve people's problems will make you more credible as a financial planner," she says. This credibility can open doors to numerous opportunities, such as speaking engagements, book deals, and high-profile clients, she says.

Discussing personal finance can be challenging, but Antonette has mastered the art of making her content engaging and easy to understand. She believes that authenticity is crucial on social media. "The more you show who you are and the value you provide, the more authentic you seem," she advises. Her content strategy includes a balanced mix of educational material, personal insights, and entertaining elements like memes and comedic skits. "It's important that your channel is both creative and relevant without being overly promotional at all times," she adds.

In addition, she founded Money Health Check, a social network brand that advocates for financial empowerment among Filipinos. Her growing influence has earned her features in several prestigious news publications, including

CNN, GMA News TV, and Inquirer Business. Plus, she co-founded two media production startups, Macanne Group Limited and HeySunday, further diversifying her professional portfolio.

Navigating Social Media

However, the world of personal finance social media influencers, dubbed "finfluencers," is not without its challenges and controversies. Antonette firmly believes that platforms like TikTok are effective tools for educating Gen Z about personal finance. "One of the best ways to handle your finances better is to learn from credible experts and follow the journey of those who are on their way to financial freedom," she says. The accessibility of social media allows financial influencers to share their knowledge and experience for free, making it a valuable resource for young people who might not otherwise have access to this information, she says.

Despite the advantages, Antonette acknowledges the pitfalls that come with the territory. There have been instances where some influencers have promoted scams or given poor advice, which has sparked controversy and skepticism. "When listening to financial influencers, don't act like a sponge that indiscriminately absorbs all the information. Instead, be a filter that carefully discerns the insights," she advises. She emphasizes the importance of critical thinking and encourages her followers to take financial advice carefully. "Some of their advice may not be applicable to you, so always take their word with a grain of salt," she adds.

Antonette believes that maintaining the accuracy and trustworthiness of her content is paramount. She understands that financial topics can be complex and intimidating, so she prioritizes research. "High-quality, well-researched, and accurate financial content helps to establish trust and credibility among my viewers," she explains. Antonette supports her claims with relevant statistics and data from reputable sources, often including internal and external links within her content for further verification.





To ensure the reliability of her advice, Antonette takes several steps. She reviews and edits her work meticulously and often has it reviewed by peers to catch any errors. She is also committed to continuous learning. “It also helps that I am continuously investing in my own education to be able to produce valuable content for my followers,” she notes. This dedication to ongoing education ensures that she remains knowledgeable and up-to-date with the latest financial trends and information.

Financial Planning and Gen Z

Understanding and managing money requires clear direction and planning. Antonette believes that financial planning is important because if you don’t have a plan for your money, then you’ll never really shift your financial situation. For her, financial planning involves setting goals, understanding one’s motivations, and diligently tracking finances. She emphasizes the importance of having a clear goal, which helps her make disciplined decisions, such as cutting back on luxury expenses. “Spend less on fancy dinners or on travels. The power of habit. Once I got used to it, it became as natural as breathing. It became a lifestyle,” she explains.

Another piece of advice Antonette offers to Gen Z is not to rush into finding their calling or purpose. “In fact, your 20s is the best time for you to figure out what you don’t want to do in life,” she says. She encourages young people to embrace their unique advantage of being able to take more risks without the heavy consequences often faced by older adults.

She has observed several common financial mistakes among young people and offers strategies to avoid them. One major pitfall is the tendency to keep up with others’ lifestyles. “You’re not buying something because you want it—you’re buying it because someone else has it,” she notes. This behavior can lead to unnecessary spending and financial strain. She advises focusing on personal needs and goals rather than trying to match others’ spending habits.

“Spend less on fancy dinners or on travels. The **power** of habit. Once I got used to it, it became as **natural** as breathing. It became a **lifestyle**.”

Another critical mistake is paying oneself last. Antonette stresses the importance of prioritizing savings and investments before any other expenses. “Before you start paying for bills, commit to setting a percentage of your income to savings or investments,” she advises. Waiting too long to start investing is another common error, she says. “The longer you put off investing, the harder you’ll have to work to get to the same level of financial freedom as someone who starts investing earlier,” she explains. Starting early allows the power of compound interest to work in one’s favor, making it easier to achieve financial goals over time, she adds.

Antonette Aquino’s journey from financial struggle to becoming a leading personal finance influencer is a testament to resilience, dedication, and the power of education. Through her personal experiences and practical advice, she has inspired a generation of young people to take control of their financial future. Her story reveals the importance of financial planning, the value of early investing, and the impact of social media in democratizing financial education. As Antonette continues to educate and empower others, her influence will undoubtedly help shape a financially savvy and responsible Generation Z. [MS](#)

Adulthood for Gen Z: Steps to Building a Solid Financial Foundation While You're Young

By CARLA CONCEPCION

Congratulations, Gen Z! You've graduated (or are on your way to), landed your first job, and are ready to conquer the world. But with newfound independence comes a new set of responsibilities: adulthood. This includes managing your finances, a skill that can feel overwhelming at first. This guide equips you with the knowledge and tools to build a solid financial foundation while you're young, setting yourself up for a secure and prosperous future.

In case you're not familiar with the term "adulthood," it's used to describe the behaviors and responsibilities associated with being a grown-up. Here are some core aspects of adulthood:

Financial Responsibility

- **Managing your money:** This includes budgeting, paying bills on time, saving for the future, and making smart financial decisions. It's about living within your means and taking control of your finances.
- **Building credit:** Establishing good credit is crucial for renting an apartment, buying a car, or securing a loan. This involves responsible credit card use and timely payments.

Taking Care of Yourself

- **Maintaining your health:** This means developing healthy habits like eating nutritious food, exercising regularly, getting enough sleep, and managing stress. It also involves preventive healthcare like regular check-ups and responsible health insurance management.

- **Independence and self-reliance:** Learning to cook, clean, and take care of your living space are essential life skills. It's about being resourceful, solving problems independently, and not relying on others for basic needs.

Building a Life

- **Education and career:** While not everyone pursues a traditional four-year degree, adulthood involves investing in your education and skills to build a sustainable career path. This can involve vocational training, online courses, or certifications relevant to your chosen field.
- **Relationships and community:** Adulthood involves nurturing healthy relationships with family, friends, and romantic partners. It also means being a good neighbor, contributing to your community, and potentially starting a family of your own (if that's your choice).

Overall, adulthood is about taking responsibility for your life. It's about managing your finances, taking care of yourself, building a career, and contributing to your community. It's a journey of learning, adapting, and becoming a well-rounded, responsible individual.



Challenges for Gen Z

There are several reasons why adulthood can be particularly challenging for Gen Z:

Economic Factors

- **Rising costs:** The cost of living, including housing, education, and healthcare, has been steadily increasing, making it harder for Gen Z to establish financial security compared to previous generations.
- **Wage stagnation:** Starting salaries haven't kept pace with the rising cost of living, putting a strain on young adults' finances.

Shifting Job Market

- **The gig economy:** The rise of the gig economy offers flexibility but often comes with lower pay and fewer benefits like health insurance or paid time off, making financial planning more complex.
- **Automation:** Automation, including artificial intelligence (AI), threatens some jobs traditionally held by young adults, creating uncertainty about future career prospects.
- **Job hopping:** While Gen Z may value flexibility and purpose in their work, frequent job hopping can make it harder to build a strong resume and secure benefits like pensions.

Social and Cultural Factors

- **Comparison culture:** Social media can create a distorted perception of reality, with constant exposure to lavish lifestyles that can lead to feelings of inadequacy and pressure to spend beyond their means.
- **Lack of financial literacy:** Many Gen Z haven't received adequate financial education, leaving them unprepared to handle real-world financial challenges like budgeting, saving, and investing.



- **Delayed independence:** Due to economic factors and cultural norms, Gen Z may stay in their parents' homes longer, delaying the development of independent living skills and financial responsibility.
- **Mental health concerns:** Rising financial stress, coupled with social and academic pressures, can contribute to increased anxiety and depression in Gen Z, impacting their ability to manage finances effectively.

Despite these challenges, Gen Z is a resourceful and adaptable generation. With the right knowledge, tools, and support systems, they can navigate the complexities of adulthood and build a secure financial future for themselves.

Why Financial Planning Matters Now. Financial planning might sound like something for your parents or grandparents, but it's crucial for Gen Z too. Here's why:

- **Develop healthy habits early:** Starting young allows you to build good financial habits that become second nature as your income grows.
- **Prepare for the future:** The sooner you start saving and investing, the more time your money has to grow through compound interest.
- **Manage unexpected expenses:** Life throws curveballs. Having an emergency fund helps you weather unexpected costs like car repairs or medical bills without derailing your financial goals.
- **Achieve your dreams:** Whether it's traveling the world, owning a home, or pursuing further education, financial planning helps you turn those dreams into reality.
- **Taking Control:** Essential Steps for Financial Fitness

Here are some practical steps to get you started on your financial journey:

- **Track your income and expenses:** Awareness is key. Use budgeting apps or a simple notebook to track your income from your job, side hustles, or allowances. Categorize your expenses (rent, food, transportation, etc.) to identify areas where you can cut back.
- **Create a budget:** Based on your income and expenses, allocate funds for essential needs, savings, and even a little fun money. Remember, budgeting is a flexible plan, not a rigid restriction. Adjust it as needed.
- **Prioritize saving:** Aim to save a portion of your income—even a small amount is a great start. Explore different savings options like traditional bank accounts, digital banks with higher interest rates, and savings programs from government agencies like Pag-IBIG and SSS.
- **Start an emergency fund:** Set aside a specific amount to cover unexpected expenses. Aim for 3-6 months' worth of living costs to provide a safety net in case of emergencies.
- **Embrace delayed gratification:** Don't fall prey to instant gratification purchases. Learn to prioritize long-term goals over fleeting desires. Ask yourself if you truly need an item, or if it's just a temporary want.

Building Your Financial Arsenal: Beyond Savings.

Saving is essential, but there are additional strategies to strengthen your financial foundation:

- **Explore investment options:** While saving is crucial, consider investing a portion of your savings in low-risk options like mutual funds, UITFs, and VULs. This allows your money to grow over time, potentially outpacing inflation. Seek professional guidance if needed.
- **Pay down debt strategically:** If you have student loans or credit card debt, prioritize paying them off. High-interest debt can cripple your financial progress. Focus on paying down the debt with the highest interest rate first.
- **Consider insurance:** Explore health insurance and consider life insurance as your financial situation allows. Insurance provides peace of mind knowing you and your loved ones are protected in case of unforeseen circumstances.

► Adulting Hacks: Money-Saving Tips for Gen Z.

Living in the Philippines comes with its own set of financial realities. Here are some money-saving hacks:

- **Utilize public transportation:** Jeeps, buses, and trains are affordable ways to get around, especially in urban areas.
- **Embrace “baon” culture:** Pack your lunch instead of eating out every day. Preparing meals at home allows for healthier and more budget-friendly options.
- **Seek free entertainment:** The Philippines offers many free or low-cost entertainment options like parks, museums (on free entrance days), and cultural events.
- **Shop around:** Compare prices before making a purchase. Explore local markets for fresh produce and groceries at a lower cost. Utilize online shopping platforms for deals and discounts, but be mindful of shipping costs.
- **Embrace second-hand:** Thrift stores and online platforms offer affordable clothes, furniture, and other goods. Consider buying pre-loved items in good condition.
- **Beware of “salo-salo” culture:** Filipino gatherings often involve shared meals. While contributing is a nice gesture, be mindful of your budget and avoid overspending to keep up with others.
- **Harness the power of technology:** Utilize online banking apps to manage your finances conveniently and track your spending effectively. Several e-wallets offer rewards and discounts for cashless transactions.

Beyond Money: Building Life Skills for Financial Wellness.

Financial well-being is more than just saving money. Here are some additional life skills to cultivate:

- **Negotiate your salary:** Don't be afraid to negotiate your salary or compensation package when starting a new job. Research salary benchmarks for your position and industry to be prepared.

- **Develop multiple income streams:** Explore freelance work, online businesses, or side hustles to supplement your main income and achieve financial goals faster.
- **Live below your means:** Avoid lifestyle inflation. Just because your income increases doesn't mean you need to spend more. Focus on saving and investing instead of accumulating unnecessary expenses.
- **Beware of scams:** With the rise of online transactions, be cautious of investment scams or get-rich-quick schemes. Do your research before investing in anything.
- **Prioritize mental and physical health:** Taking care of yourself is vital. Mental and physical health can impact your ability to work and manage your finances. Invest in healthy habits, manage stress, and prioritize your well-being.

Seeking Help: Financial Resources in the Philippines.

Financial literacy is key to adulting successfully. Here are some resources available in the Philippines to help you on your journey:

- **The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP):** The central bank offers financial literacy resources and educational campaigns.
- **Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC):** The SEC provides investor education materials and safeguards against investment scams.
- **Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE):** The PSE offers resources for learning about investing in the stock market.
- **Government Financial Institutions:** Government institutions like Pag-IBIG and SSS offer investment and loan options for Filipinos.
- **Financial Blogs and Websites:** Numerous blogs and websites in the Philippines cater to financially savvy Filipinos with practical tips and guides.



Building a Strong Support System.

Financial planning doesn't have to be a solo endeavor. Here's how to build a support system:

- **Talk to your parents or mentors:** They've likely navigated some financial challenges themselves. Seek their advice and learn from their experiences.
- **Connect with financially savvy friends:** Surround yourself with friends who share your financial goals and can support your efforts.
- **Seek guidance from financial professionals:** Consider consulting a Registered Financial Planner (RFP) who can provide personalized advice based on your specific circumstances and goals.
- **Remember:** Building a solid financial foundation takes time and effort. Don't get discouraged by setbacks. Be consistent with your savings habits, adapt your strategies as needed, and celebrate your achievements along the way. Embrace the journey of adulting, and remember, Gen Z, you have the power to build a bright financial future for yourselves!

Buying Your First Condo

The dream of condo ownership can be particularly strong for Gen Z, offering a sense of independence and stability. However, it can be daunting. Here are some tips to make informed decisions and achieve your dream condo:

Financial Readiness

- **Assess your financial health:** Be honest about your financial situation. Do you have a steady income and a good credit score (at least 700)? Owning a condo comes with ongoing costs beyond the down payment.
- **Budget for more than just the down payment:** Factor in closing costs, monthly condo fees, potential repairs, and property taxes. Ensure you can comfortably manage these expenses on top of your regular living expenses.
- **Save aggressively:** Saving for a down payment (typically 20% or more of the condo price) takes time and discipline. Explore high-interest savings accounts or consider short-term investments to accelerate your savings goals.
- **Consider co-ownership:** Teaming up with financially responsible friends or family can help with the down payment and monthly expenses. However, establish clear agreements regarding responsibilities and ownership rights.

Research and Location

- **Define your needs:** What kind of lifestyle do you envision? Consider factors like proximity to work, access to public transportation, amenities like gyms or swimming pools, and security features.
- **Research the market:** Explore different areas and condo developments. Research current market trends,

Buying Your First Car

Buying your first car as a Gen Z can be exciting, but also overwhelming. It's also most likely your first substantial purchase. Here are some tips to navigate the process and make a smart decision:

Before You Start Shopping

- **Define your needs and budget:** What will you primarily use the car for? Daily commute, weekend trips, or hauling cargo? Set a realistic budget considering not just the purchase price, but also gas, insurance, maintenance, and parking costs.
- **Do your research:** Research car models based on your needs and budget. Check online car selling platforms, car review websites, and consult car-savvy friends or family. Explore both new and used car options.
- **Consider fuel efficiency:** Gas prices are a major concern in the Philippines. Prioritize fuel-efficient vehicles to save money on gas in the long run. Financing and Dealership Strategies
- **Explore payment options:** Cash purchase is ideal but may not be feasible for everyone. Research bank loans or financing options offered by dealerships. Compare interest rates and terms to secure the best deal.
- **Negotiate the price:** Don't be afraid to negotiate the price, especially for used cars. Research average market prices and be prepared to make a counteroffer.
- **Beware of hidden fees:** Be mindful of additional fees associated with car purchases like registration, insurance, and processing costs. Factor these into your overall budget.

Inspecting the Car (New or Used)

- **Get a pre-purchase inspection:** Don't rely solely on the seller's word. Get a licensed mechanic to inspect the car thoroughly, identifying potential issues and repair costs.
- **Check the car's history:** For used cars, verify the car's history for accidents, repairs, or outstanding loans. This information can be crucial before making a purchase. Insurance and Maintenance
- **Get the right insurance coverage:** Explore car insurance options like comprehensive and third-party liability. Compare coverage and choose a plan that fits your needs and budget.
- **Consider maintenance costs:** Factor in regular maintenance costs like oil changes, tire rotations, and potential repairs. Research the typical maintenance costs for the car model you're considering.

► Additional Tips for Gen Z

- **Beware of online scams:** Be cautious of online car sales that seem too good to be true. Verify deals and sellers before making any advance payments.
- **Prioritize safety:** Safety should be paramount. Look for cars with good safety ratings and essential features like airbags and anti-lock brakes.
- **Consider long-term ownership:** Think about how long you plan to keep the car. Choose something reliable and fuel-efficient that can serve your needs for several years.
- **Don't rush the decision:** Take your time researching, comparing options, and negotiating before finalizing the purchase.
- **Remember:** Buying a car is a significant financial decision. By being informed, setting a realistic budget, and prioritizing your needs, you'll be well on your way to cruising confidently into your car ownership journey!

compare property values, and understand potential future developments in your chosen location.

- **Beware of location hype:** Don't get swayed by trendy areas solely based on popularity. Consider your long-term needs and the long-term value of the property.
- **Talk to residents:** Connect with current residents of the condo development to get firsthand insights about living there, the building's management, and potential concerns.

The Buying Process

- **Find a reputable real estate agent:** Having a qualified agent can guide you through the process, negotiate on your behalf, and ensure you understand the legalities involved.
- **Understand the documents:** Don't hesitate to ask questions about contracts, sales agreements, and other documents. Ensure you understand all terms and conditions before signing anything.
- **Get a pre-approval:** Securing pre-approval for a mortgage from a bank clarifies your borrowing limit and strengthens your negotiating position when making offers.
- **Negotiate the price:** Don't be afraid to negotiate the price, especially in a buyer's market. Use your research and pre-approval to leverage your position.
- **Conduct a thorough inspection:** Schedule a professional inspection to identify potential structural issues, plumbing problems, or electrical concerns before finalizing the purchase.

“Revisit your *budget*, factor in all potential *expenses* (rent, utilities, groceries, transportation), and set *realistic* spending limits.”

► Additional Tips for Gen Z

- **Beware of hidden costs:** Investigate potential renovation costs or furniture needs. Consider the cost of furnishing and personalizing your condo space.
- **Think long-term:** Buying a condo is a long-term commitment. Consider if your lifestyle or career plans might change in the next few years.
- **Don't rush the decision:** Take your time to research, compare options, and consult with professionals before making a final decision.
- **Remember:** Condo ownership can be a rewarding experience, but it's a significant financial commitment. By prioritizing financial preparedness, doing your research, and having a clear understanding of the process, you can navigate the condo market confidently and make informed decisions to secure their dream property.

Living on Your Own

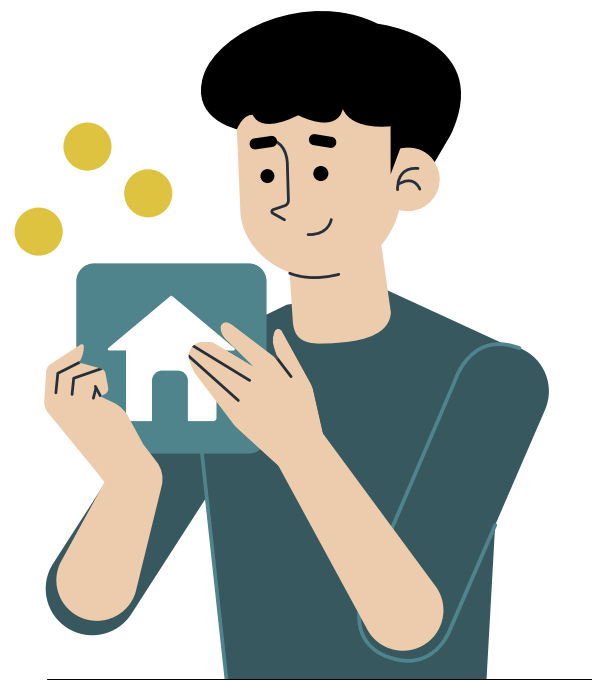
Stepping out on your own and living independently can be both exciting and daunting for Gen Z. Here are some tips to navigate this new chapter and thrive in your solo living adventure:

The Planning Phase

- **Budgeting basics:** Living independently means managing your money on your own. Revisit your budget, factor in all potential expenses (rent, utilities, groceries, transportation), and set realistic spending limits.
- **Finding your abode:** Explore different housing options like apartments, studio units, or shared living arrangements. Consider your budget, location preferences, and desired amenities. Utilize online platforms and property listings to compare options.
- **Furnishing your space:** Prioritize essential furniture like a bed, a table, and a chair. Explore second-hand stores or online marketplaces for affordable options. Remember, you can personalize your space gradually.
- **Learn basic maintenance:** Living alone means handling minor repairs and maintenance tasks. Learn basic plumbing fixes, light bulb replacements, or how to unclog a drain to avoid relying on external help for everything.

Settling In

- **Utilities and subscriptions:** Set up essential utilities accounts like electricity, water, and internet. Consider bundling services for potential discounts. Choose internet plans based on your usage needs.
- **Grocery shopping and cooking:** Master basic cooking skills. Plan your meals and shop for groceries on a budget. Visit your local *palengke* for fresh produce and explore bulk buying options for staples like rice or cooking oil.
- **Safety and security:** Invest in basic security measures like a sturdy door lock and window grills. Consider getting renters insurance to protect your belongings. Inform a trusted friend or family member about your whereabouts,



especially if you're traveling or working late.

- **Building a community:** Living alone doesn't mean being isolated. Connect with neighbors, join social groups related to your hobbies, or find roommates who share similar interests.

Thriving in Your Own Space

- **Embrace the responsibility:** Living independently teaches responsibility. Managing bills, cleaning your space, and taking care of daily chores becomes your domain. Embrace the challenge and develop a healthy routine.
- **Learn to say no:** While being social is important, learn to prioritize your needs and budget. Don't feel pressured to attend every social event or spend excessively to keep up with friends.
- **Schedule "me time":** Living alone allows for more self-discovery. Schedule time for hobbies, relaxation, or simply enjoying your own company.
- **Open communication with landlord:** Maintain clear communication with your landlord regarding repairs, rent payments, or any concerns about the residence.
- **Remember:** Living on your own is a learning experience. There will be challenges and unexpected expenses. Don't be afraid to ask for help when needed, and be resourceful when facing problems. Most importantly, celebrate your independence and enjoy the unique freedom of creating your own little haven.

► Bonus Tip: Utilize Technology!

- **Budgeting apps:** Many budgeting apps help track income, expenses, and set financial goals.
- **Online grocery delivery:** Online grocery delivery services can save time and money, especially in urban areas.
- **Online repair tutorials:** Numerous online resources offer tutorials on basic repairs and maintenance tasks.

By planning, adapting, and embracing the learning curve, you can navigate the exciting journey of living independently and build a fulfilling solo living experience.

Renting Your First Condo Unit

Leaving your family home to live on your own is a rite of passage. For most Filipinos, however, they go off on their own once they get married. Whether you're single, engaged, or married, here are some tips for navigating the world of renting your first condo unit:

Finding the Perfect Place

- **Location, location, location:** Proximity to work, school, and desired amenities (gyms, pools, convenience stores) is crucial. Consider factors like noise levels, safety, and access to public transportation.
- **Online savvy:** Utilize online platforms like condo listing websites and social media groups to search for rentals. Filter options based on your budget, location preferences, and desired features.
- **Virtual tours:** Many landlords offer virtual tours, allowing you to explore the condo remotely before committing to an in-person viewing.

Beyond the photos: Don't rely solely on photos. Read condo descriptions carefully and ask specific questions about the unit's condition, amenities, and any restrictions (pets, smoking).

Budgeting and Affordability

- **Know your limits:** Be realistic about what you can afford. Rent should not exceed 30% of your gross monthly income. Factor in utilities, transportation costs, and potential association fees.
- **Beware of hidden costs:** Ask about additional fees like association dues, parking charges, and security deposits. Factor these into your overall monthly budget.
- **Negotiate the rent:** Especially in a renter's market, don't be afraid to negotiate the rent, particularly if you're a reliable tenant with a good credit score.

Securing the Unit and the Legalities

- **Read the lease agreement carefully:** Understand your rights and responsibilities as a tenant. Pay close attention to terms regarding rent increases, lease duration, pet policies, and maintenance procedures.
- **Meet the landlord:** Get a sense of the landlord's personality and communication style. Discuss expectations for repairs and maintenance.
- **Prepare documents:** Have your government-issued IDs, proof of income, and any guarantor documents readily available to expedite the application process.
- **Security deposits:** Understand the terms regarding security deposits, including the amount, deductions allowed, and the return process upon move-out.

Settling In and Living Comfortably

- **Inventory check:** Conduct a thorough inspection with the landlord before move-in. Document any pre-existing damages and have them acknowledged by the landlord.
- **Know your rights:** Familiarize yourself with Philippine tenant rights, including laws regarding repairs, security of deposit, and eviction procedures.
- **Building a community:** Introduce yourself to neighbors and building management. Consider joining condo resident groups to stay informed and build a sense of community.
- **Be a responsible tenant:** Pay rent on time, maintain the unit in good condition, and communicate any maintenance concerns promptly.

► Bonus Tips for Gen Z

- **Consider furnished rentals:** If you're on a tight budget or plan to move soon, furnished rentals can eliminate the upfront cost of buying furniture.
- **Explore co-living:** Sharing a condo with responsible roommates can help split rent and utilities, making condo living more affordable.
- **Utilize technology:** Many property management companies offer online portals for rent payments and maintenance requests, simplifying the process.

By being a smart renter, you can find a comfortable and affordable condo unit that fits your lifestyle and budget. Remember, don't hesitate to ask questions, negotiate terms, and prioritize clear communication with landlords and property managers. Enjoy your first condo experience!

“Solo female travelers may want to research destinations with good reputations for safety.”



Traveling on Your Own

Traveling on your own can be an incredibly rewarding experience, but it also comes with its own set of challenges. This is probably your first real “adulting” experience. Here are some tips to help you navigate your solo adventure:

Planning and Preparation

- **Destination research:** Dive deep into research! Choose a destination that aligns with your interests, budget, and safety considerations. Solo female travelers may want to research destinations with good reputations for safety.
- **Be flexible:** While having a loose itinerary is helpful, embrace flexibility. Be open to spontaneous changes, unexpected adventures, and adapting to travel hiccups.
- **Budgeting for solo travel:** Factor in solo traveler surcharges, like single supplements for accommodation, and prioritize activities you can enjoy independently. Utilize budgeting apps to track expenses.
- **Learn basic phrases:** Learning a few key phrases in the local language goes a long way. It shows respect for the culture and can help you navigate basic interactions.
- **Pack light, pack smart:** Focus on versatile clothing and prioritize comfortable shoes for exploring. Consider a travel backpack for easy movement and security.
- **Digital nomads:** If you plan to work remotely while traveling, ensure you have reliable internet access and a portable workspace setup.

Safety and Security

- **Inform loved ones:** Keep someone you trust informed about your travel plans, itinerary, and accommodation details.
- **Stay connected:** Invest in a portable charger or a local SIM card to stay connected and manage bookings or access maps on the go.
- **Accommodation options:** Consider hostels with social areas to meet fellow travelers, or choose guesthouses in safe neighborhoods. Look for properties with security features like lockers or security guards.
- **Trust your gut:** Be aware of your surroundings, trust your instincts, and avoid isolated areas, especially at night.
- **Photocopy important documents:** Make photocopies of your passport, ID, and travel insurance documents in case of emergencies. Keep a digital copy as well.

Embracing the Solo Experience

- **Join tours and activities:** Group tours, walking tours, or cooking classes are great ways to meet other travelers and experience the destination with a local touch.
- **Strike up conversations:** Don't be afraid to strike up conversations with locals or fellow travelers. You might make unexpected friends and discover hidden gems.
- **Embrace downtime:** Solo travel allows for self-discovery. Schedule moments for relaxation, reflection, or simply enjoying a good book at a local cafe.
- **Solo doesn't mean lonely:** Download apps specifically designed for solo travelers to connect and potentially meet up with others on the same journey.
- **Document your journey:** Keep a travel journal, take photos, or even start a blog to capture your experiences and memories.

► Bonus Tips for Gen Z

- **Travel hacking & budget airlines:** Utilize travel hacking strategies like credit card points or loyalty programs to score deals on flights. Explore budget airlines for affordable travel options, but be mindful of baggage fees.
- **Workation options:** Some hostels or co-living spaces cater to remote workers. This can be a great way to extend your trip while staying productive.
- **Sustainable travel:** When possible, choose eco-friendly transportation and accommodation options. Be mindful of your impact on the environment and local communities.

Remember, solo travel is about stepping outside your comfort zone and creating unforgettable memories. By planning, prioritizing safety, and embracing the experience, Gen Z can embark on a solo adventure that is both enriching and empowering.

Making Your First Investment

Spending comes naturally but investing makes you a more responsible adult. The world of investing can seem complex, but Gen Z has a unique advantage: time! Here are some tips to get you started on the right foot with your first investment:

Start Small, Start Smart

- **Define your goals:** Are you saving for a car, a down payment on a house, or a comfortable retirement? Knowing your goals will guide your investment choices and risk tolerance.
- **Baby steps:** You don't need a huge sum to begin. Many investment platforms allow for small, regular contributions.
- **Automate your savings:** Set up automatic transfers from your checking account to your investment account. This ensures consistent saving and removes the temptation to spend that money.

Do Your Research (But Don't Get Overwhelmed)

- **Investment options:** There are various investment vehicles like stocks, bonds, mutual funds, and VULs. Research each option and understand the associated risks and potential returns.
- **Start simple (and consider low-cost options):** Index funds, which passively track a market index, can be a great low-cost starting point for beginners.
- **Beware of get-rich-quick schemes:** If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Avoid investment opportunities promising unrealistic returns. Reliable sources like financial planning websites can be helpful.

Embrace the Long Game

- **Don't panic sell:** The market fluctuates, so don't get discouraged by short-term dips. Stay focused on your long-term goals and avoid emotionally driven decisions.
- **Rebalance regularly:** Review your portfolio periodically and rebalance allocations if needed to maintain your desired risk level.
- **Invest for the future, but live today:** Investing is for the future, but don't forget to live in the present. Budget appropriately and prioritize your current financial needs as well.

► Bonus Tips for Gen Z

- **Utilize technology:** Many investment platforms offer user-friendly apps designed for new investors. These apps give you access to stocks and funds in the U.S. and beyond.
- **Fractional shares:** Some investment platforms allow investing in fractions of shares, making expensive stocks like Amazon or Tesla more accessible for smaller investors.
- **Learn from others:** Listen to podcasts, watch educational videos, or follow financial influencers (but do your own research before acting on their advice).
- **Remember:** There's no one-size-fits-all approach to investing. The key is to educate yourself, understand your risk tolerance, and start small. With time and discipline, your first investment can blossom into a secure financial future. ^{MS}

Career and Business Guide for Gen Z

By CARLOS GONZALES

Generation Z, those born from the late 1990s to the early 2010s, is entering the workforce and business world at a time of rapid technological advancement, shifting economic landscapes, and evolving workplace cultures.

If you belong to Gen Z or are a parent of one, this guide to career and business for Gen Z will help you navigate the unique challenges and opportunities ahead.

Understanding Gen Z. Every generation has unique characteristics. While not applicable to every individual, these traits are generally applicable to Gen Z:

- **Digital natives:** Gen Z has grown up with technology, making them highly proficient with digital tools and platforms. This digital fluency enables them to adapt quickly to new technologies and leverage them for career and business success.
- **Socially conscious:** This generation is deeply concerned about social and environmental issues. They prioritize working for companies and brands that align with their values and are committed to making a positive impact.
- **Entrepreneurial spirit:** Gen Z is entrepreneurial and innovative. Many members of this generation aspire to start their own businesses or engage in side hustles to diversify their income streams.
- **Desire for flexibility:** Gen Z values work-life balance and flexibility. They prefer work arrangements that offer autonomy, remote work options, and the ability to manage their schedules.
- **Continuous learners:** Lifelong learning is a hallmark of Gen Z. They are eager to acquire new skills and knowledge, often through online courses, workshops, and hands-on experiences.

Understanding Yourself: Your Skills and Values. Before diving into specific careers or businesses, take a moment for introspection. Identifying your strengths, interests, and values is crucial for finding a fulfilling career path. Here are some questions to get you started:

- **What are you passionate about?** What ignites your curiosity and motivates you?
- **What are your natural skills and talents?** What are you good at, and what do you enjoy doing?
- **What kind of work environment do you thrive in?** Do you prefer a collaborative setting, a fast-paced environment, or independent work?
- **What are your long-term career goals?** Do you desire financial security, creative freedom, or a career that makes a positive impact?

Career Pathways for Gen Z

Traditional Employment

Advantages:

- **Stability and benefits:** Traditional employment offers stability, regular income, and benefits such as health insurance, retirement plans, and paid leave.
 - **Structured growth:** Many companies provide clear career progression paths, training programs, and mentorship opportunities.
- Challenges:
- **Rigid structures:** Traditional employment can come with fixed schedules and limited flexibility.
 - **Corporate culture:** Navigating corporate hierarchies and politics can be challenging for those who value independence and creativity.

Strategies for Success:

- **Leverage internships and apprenticeships:** Gain practical experience and build professional networks through internships and apprenticeships.
- **Seek mentorship:** Find mentors within your industry to provide guidance, support, and career advice.
- **Pursue continuous learning:** Stay updated with industry trends and continuously enhance your skills through courses, certifications, and workshops.

Freelancing and Gig Economy

Advantages:

- **Flexibility:** Freelancing allows for greater control over your schedule and work environment.
- **Diverse opportunities:** Freelancers can work on a variety of projects and with different clients, which can be enriching and help build a broad skill set.

Challenges:

- **Income instability:** Freelancing can come with fluctuating income and lack of job security.
- **Self-management:** Freelancers must handle all aspects of their business, from marketing to client management and financial planning.

Strategies for Success:

- **Build a strong portfolio:** Showcase your skills and experience through a professional portfolio that highlights your best work.
- **Network actively:** Join online communities, attend industry events, and connect with potential clients and collaborators.
- **Manage finances wisely:** Budget carefully, save for periods of low income, and consider working with a financial advisor.

Entrepreneurship

Advantages:

- **Autonomy:** Entrepreneurs have the freedom to create and manage their businesses according to their vision and values.
- **Unlimited potential:** The potential for growth and financial success is often higher than in traditional employment.

Challenges:

- **High risk:** Entrepreneurship involves significant financial risk and uncertainty.

- **Time-consuming:** Starting and running a business requires a substantial time commitment and effort.

Strategies for Success:

- **Conduct market research:** Understand your target market, competition, and industry trends to make informed business decisions.
- **Develop a solid business plan:** Outline your business goals, strategies, financial projections, and marketing plans.
- **Seek funding and support:** Explore funding options such as loans, grants, and investors, and consider joining business incubators or accelerators.

Skills and Qualities for Success

Digital Literacy

Importance: Digital literacy is crucial in the modern workplace. It includes proficiency with various digital tools, platforms, and technologies.

How to Develop:

- **Take online courses:** Enroll in courses on platforms like Coursera, Udemy, and LinkedIn Learning to enhance your digital skills.
- **Stay updated:** Follow industry blogs, attend webinars, and participate in online communities to stay current with technological advancements.

Communication Skills

Importance: Effective communication is essential for collaboration, networking, and client relations.



How to Develop:

- **Practice public speaking:** Join groups like Toastmasters or take public speaking courses to improve your presentation skills.
- **Enhance writing skills:** Practice writing regularly, take writing courses, and seek feedback from peers.

Adaptability

Importance: The ability to adapt to changing circumstances and learn new skills quickly is vital in a rapidly evolving job market.

How to Develop:

- **Embrace change:** Stay open to new opportunities and challenges.
- **Seek feedback:** Regularly seek feedback from colleagues and supervisors to identify areas for improvement and adapt accordingly.

Emotional Intelligence

Importance: Emotional intelligence (EQ) involves understanding and managing your emotions and those of others. It is crucial for teamwork, leadership, and client relations.

How to Develop:

- **Self-reflection:** Regularly reflect on your emotions, behaviors, and interactions to increase self-awareness.
- **Practice empathy:** Make an effort to understand others' perspectives and emotions.

Navigating the Job Market

Job Search Strategies

- **Leverage online platforms:** Use job search platforms like LinkedIn, Indeed, and JobStreet to find job opportunities and connect with employers.
- **Tailor your resume and cover letter:** Customize your resume and cover letter for each job application to highlight relevant skills and experiences.
- **Network:** Attend industry events, join professional associations, and connect with industry professionals on social media.

Preparing for Interviews

- **Research the company:** Understand the company's mission, values, products, and services.
- **Practice common interview questions:** Prepare answers for common interview questions and practice with a friend or mentor.
- **Showcase your skills and experiences:** Highlight your relevant skills, experiences, and achievements during the interview.

Negotiating Job Offers

- **Know your worth:** Research industry salary standards and understand your market value.

“Regularly seek feedback from colleagues and supervisors to identify areas for improvement and adapt accordingly.”

- **Consider the entire package:** Evaluate the job offer based on salary, benefits, work-life balance, and growth opportunities.
- **Be confident:** Negotiate confidently and professionally, and be prepared to discuss your contributions and value.

Starting and Growing a Business

Identifying Business Opportunities

- **Market research:** Conduct thorough market research to identify gaps, trends, and opportunities in the market.
- **Assess your skills and interests:** Consider your skills, interests, and passions when identifying business opportunities.
- **Test your ideas:** Validate your business ideas by seeking feedback from potential customers and conducting small-scale tests.

Developing a Business Plan

- **Executive summary:** Provide an overview of your business, including your mission, vision, and objectives.
- **Market analysis:** Analyze your target market, competition, and industry trends.
- **Marketing strategy:** Outline your marketing and sales strategies, including your target audience, pricing, and promotional tactics.
- **Financial plan:** Include financial projections, funding requirements, and a break-even analysis.

Funding Your Business

- **Personal savings:** Use your savings to fund your business initially.
- **Loans and grants:** Explore loans and grants from banks, government programs, and non-profit organizations.
- **Investors:** Seek funding from angel investors, crowdfunding platforms, or even family and friends.

Building a Strong Team

- **Define roles and responsibilities:** Clearly define roles and responsibilities for each team member.
- **Hire for cultural fit:** Hire individuals who align with your company's values and culture.
- **Provide training and development:** Invest in training and development to enhance your team's skills and performance.

Marketing and Growing Your Business

Online Presence

- **Website:** Create a professional and user-friendly website to showcase your products or services.
- **Social media:** Use social media platforms to engage with your audience, build brand awareness, and promote your offerings.
- **Content marketing:** Develop valuable content, such as blog posts, videos, and infographics, to attract and retain customers.

Customer Relationship Management

- **Customer service:** Provide excellent customer service to build trust and loyalty.
- **Feedback and improvement:** Seek feedback from customers and continuously improve your products or services based on their input.
- **Loyalty programs:** Implement loyalty programs to reward repeat customers and encourage referrals.

Scaling Your Business

- **Assess market demand:** Ensure there is sufficient demand for your products or services before scaling.
- **Optimize operations:** Streamline your operations to handle increased demand efficiently.
- **Expand your reach:** Consider expanding to new markets, launching new products, or forming strategic partnerships.

Work-Life Balance and Well-being

Importance of Work-Life Balance. Maintaining a healthy work-life balance is crucial for overall well-being and productivity. It helps prevent burnout, reduces stress, and allows time for personal interests and relationships.

Strategies for Achieving Work-Life Balance

- **Set boundaries:** Establish clear boundaries between work and personal life. Set specific work hours and stick to them.
- **Prioritize self-care:** Make time for self-care activities, such as exercise, hobbies, and relaxation.
- **Manage time effectively:** Use time management techniques, such as the Pomodoro Technique, to stay focused and productive.

Continuous Learning and Professional Development

Lifelong Learning. In a rapidly changing world, continuous learning is essential to stay relevant and competitive. Pursue opportunities for learning and development throughout your career.

Professional Development Strategies

- **Online courses and certifications:** Enroll in online courses and obtain certifications to enhance your skills and knowledge.
- **Attend workshops and conferences:** Participate in industry workshops, conferences, and seminars to learn from experts and network with peers.
- **Join professional associations:** Become a member of professional associations to access resources, training, and networking opportunities.

With their digital fluency, entrepreneurial spirit, and commitment to social and environmental causes, Gen Z bring unique strengths and perspectives to their careers and business ventures.

By leveraging your skills, embracing continuous learning, and adopting effective strategies, you can navigate the world of work and entrepreneurship with confidence and success. Whether pursuing traditional employment, freelancing, or starting their own business, you have the potential to shape the future of work and create meaningful and fulfilling professional lives.^{MS}

“With their digital fluency, entrepreneurial spirit, and commitment to social and environmental causes, Gen Z bring unique strengths and perspectives to their careers and business ventures.”

Top Employment Opportunities for Gen Z

The Philippines offers a diverse range of employment opportunities for Gen Z, who are entering the workforce with unique skills and preferences. As the economy continues to grow and evolve, certain sectors and roles are becoming particularly attractive to this tech-savvy and socially conscious generation. Here are some of the top employment opportunities in the Philippines for Gen Z:

1. Information Technology (IT) and Software Development

- Why It's Attractive:**
- **High demand:** The demand for IT professionals and software developers continues to rise as more businesses digitize their operations.
 - **Competitive salaries:** IT roles often come with attractive compensation packages and benefits.
 - **Remote work opportunities:** Many IT jobs offer flexible working arrangements, including remote work.

Key Roles:
 Software Developer
 Web Developer
 IT Support Specialist
 Cybersecurity Analyst
 Data Scientist

2. Digital Marketing and E-Commerce

- Why It's Attractive:**
- **Growing industry:** With the rise of online businesses and social media, digital marketing and e-commerce are booming fields.
 - **Creative opportunities:** These roles often involve creativity and innovation, appealing to Gen Z's strengths.
 - **Flexibility:** Many digital marketing positions allow for flexible work environments.

Key Roles:
 Social Media Manager
 Digital Marketing Specialist
 Content Creator
 SEO Specialist
 E-commerce Manager

3. Business Process Outsourcing (BPO)

- Why It's Attractive:**
- **Major industry:** The BPO sector is one of the largest employers in the Philippines, offering numerous job opportunities.
 - **Career growth:** Many BPO companies provide clear career paths and extensive training programs.
 - **Diverse roles:** From customer service to technical support, there are various roles available.

Key Roles:
 Customer Service Representative
 Technical Support Specialist
 Sales Representative
 Data Entry Specialist
 Quality Assurance Analyst

4. Healthcare and Medical Services

- Why It's Attractive:**
- **Essential sector:** Healthcare is a critical sector with a continuous need for skilled professionals.
 - **Rewarding careers:** Many Gen Z individuals are drawn to careers that offer the opportunity to make a difference in people's lives.
 - **Job security:** The healthcare industry often provides stable employment and growth opportunities.

Key Roles:
 Nurse
 Medical Technologist
 Pharmacist
 Healthcare Administrator
 Physical Therapist

5. Creative Arts and Design

- Why It's Attractive:**
- **Passion-driven:** Many Gen Z individuals are passionate about creative fields and seek roles that allow for artistic expression.
 - **Freelance opportunities:** There are numerous freelance opportunities, providing flexibility and autonomy.
 - **Diverse fields:** This sector encompasses a wide range of specialties, from graphic design to animation.

Key Roles:
 Graphic Designer
 Multimedia Artist
 Animator
 Fashion Designer
 Interior Designer

6. Education and Training

- Why It's Attractive:**
- **Impactful work:** Education roles allow Gen Z to make a significant impact on future generations.
 - **Innovation:** There's a growing emphasis on innovative teaching methods and e-learning, areas where Gen Z can excel.
 - **Job stability:** Education is a stable field with consistent demand for qualified professionals.

Key Roles:
 Teacher
 Educational Content Creator
 E-learning Specialist
 Academic Advisor
 Corporate Trainer

7. Finance and Accounting

- Why It's Attractive:**
- **Lucrative careers:** Finance and accounting roles often come with high earning potential and good benefits.
 - **Professional growth:** These fields offer clear paths for career advancement and professional development.
 - **Diverse opportunities:** From corporate finance to auditing, there are various specialties to explore.

Key Roles:
 Accountant
 Financial Analyst
 Auditor
 Investment Analyst
 Compliance Officer

8. Engineering and Architecture

- Why It's Attractive:**
- **Infrastructural growth:** As the Philippines continues to develop its infrastructure, there's a high demand for engineers and architects.
 - **Problem-solving:** These roles often involve complex problem-solving, which can be intellectually rewarding.
 - **High demand:** Engineers and architects are consistently in high demand across various sectors.

Key Roles:
 Civil Engineer
 Mechanical Engineer
 Electrical Engineer
 Architect
 Project Manager

9. Tourism and Hospitality

- Why It's Attractive:**
- **Vibrant industry:** The Philippines is a popular tourist destination, making tourism and hospitality a thriving sector.
 - **Dynamic environment:** Jobs in this field are often dynamic and interactive, suitable for those who enjoy working with people.
 - **Growth opportunities:** There are numerous opportunities for career growth and advancement within this industry.

Key Roles:
 Hotel Manager
 Tour Guide
 Event Planner
 Travel Consultant
 Food and Beverage Manager

10. Renewable Energy and Environmental Science

- Why It's Attractive:**
- **Sustainability focus:** Gen Z is particularly concerned with environmental issues, making this sector highly appealing.
 - **Innovative field:** Careers in renewable energy and environmental science involve cutting-edge technologies and solutions.
 - **Growing sector:** As the world shifts towards sustainable practices, this sector is expected to grow significantly.

Key Roles:
 Environmental Scientist
 Renewable Energy Engineer
 Sustainability Consultant
 Environmental Policy Analyst
 Wildlife Conservationist

11. Logistics and Supply Chain Management

- Why It's Attractive:**
- **Critical sector:** The logistics and supply chain industry is essential for global and local commerce.
 - **Technological integration:** This sector is increasingly incorporating technology, appealing to Gen Z's digital skills.
 - **Career stability:** There is a steady demand for logistics and supply chain professionals.

Key Roles:
 Supply Chain Analyst
 Logistics Coordinator
 Inventory Manager
 Procurement Specialist
 Operations Manager

12. Legal Services

- Why It's Attractive:**
- **High earning potential:** Legal careers often come with lucrative salaries and benefits.
 - **Diverse specializations:** There are various areas of law to specialize in, from corporate to environmental law. Impactful work: Legal professionals can make significant impacts through their work in justice and advocacy.

Key Roles:
 Lawyer
 Paralegal
 Legal Analyst
 Compliance Officer
 Legal Consultant

You have a wealth of career opportunities across various sectors. By leveraging their unique skills, values, and preferences, you can find fulfilling and rewarding careers that align with their goals and aspirations. With the right approach, you can make significant contributions to your chosen field and build a successful professional life. [MS](#)

Top Freelancing Opportunities for Gen Z

Freelancing has become an increasingly popular career choice among Gen Z in the Philippines due to the flexibility, autonomy, and diverse opportunities it offers. Here are some of the top freelancing opportunities for Gen Z:

1. Content Creation and Copywriting

Why It's Attractive:

- **Creative outlet:** Allows for creativity and self-expression.
- **High demand:** Businesses need content for websites, blogs, social media, and marketing materials.
- **Flexible work:** Can be done remotely and on a flexible schedule.

Key Roles:
 Blog Writer
 Copywriter
 Content Strategist
 Technical Writer
 Scriptwriter

Platforms to Use:
 Upwork
 Fiverr
 Freelancer
 ProBlogger

2. Graphic Design

Why It's Attractive:

- **Creative field:** Offers opportunities to create visually appealing designs.
- **Diverse projects:** From branding to web design, there are various niches to explore.
- **High demand:** Businesses need visual content for marketing, advertising, and branding.

Key Roles:
 Logo Designer
 Web Designer
 Illustrator
 Social Media Graphics Designer
 UI/UX Designer

Platforms to Use:
 99designs
 Behance
 Dribbble
 DesignCrowd

3. Digital Marketing

Why It's Attractive:

- **Growing field:** As businesses shift online, the need for digital marketing increases.
- **Dynamic work:** Involves various aspects like SEO, social media, and email marketing.
- **Results-oriented:** Provides measurable results through analytics and data.

Key Roles:
 Social Media Manager
 SEO Specialist
 Email Marketing Specialist
 PPC (Pay-Per-Click) Specialist
 Content Marketer

Platforms to Use:
 Upwork
 Fiverr
 LinkedIn
 Hubstaff Talent

4. Virtual Assistance

Why It's Attractive:

- **Diverse tasks:** Involves administrative tasks, customer support, and more.
- **Growing demand:** Many businesses and entrepreneurs need virtual assistants to manage operations.
- **Flexibility:** Can work for clients worldwide from home.

Key Roles:
 Administrative Assistant
 Customer Support Specialist
 Data Entry Specialist
 Personal Assistant
 Project Manager

Platforms to Use:
 Upwork
 Freelancer
 OnlineJobs.ph
 Zirtual

5. Web and Software Development

Why It's Attractive:

- **High demand:** Essential for businesses in the digital age.
- **High paying:** Often commands higher rates due to specialized skills.
- **Variety of projects:** From website development to mobile app creation.

Key Roles:
 Front-End Developer
 Back-End Developer
 Full-Stack Developer
 Mobile App Developer
 WordPress Developer

Platforms to Use:
 Toptal
 Upwork
 Freelancer
 GitHub Jobs

6. Video Production and Editing

Why It's Attractive:

- **Creative work:** Involves creating and editing video content.
- **High demand:** Increasing need for video content in marketing, entertainment, and education.
- **Variety of projects:** From YouTube videos to corporate videos.

Key Roles:
 Video Editor
 Motion Graphics Designer
 Animator
 Videographer
 Post-Production Specialist

Platforms to Use:
 Upwork
 Fiverr
 Behance
 ProductionHUB

7. E-commerce Management

Why It's Attractive:

- **Growing industry:** E-commerce is booming, especially in the wake of the pandemic.
- **Diverse roles:** Includes managing online stores, customer service, and digital marketing.
- **Remote work:** Can manage stores from anywhere.

Key Roles:

E-commerce Manager
 Product Lister
 Customer Service Representative
 Dropshipping Specialist
 Inventory Manager

Platforms to Use:

Shopify Experts
 Upwork
 Freelancer
 Fiverr

8. Translation and Transcription

Why It's Attractive:

- **Language skills:** Utilizes language proficiency.
- **High demand:** Needed for content translation and transcribing audio/video.
- **Flexible work:** Can be done remotely with flexible hours.

Key Roles:

Translator
 Transcriptionist
 Subtitler
 Localization Specialist
 Proofreader

Platforms to Use:

Upwork
 Gengo
 TranscribeMe
 Rev

9. Online Tutoring and Education

Why It's Attractive:

- **Educational impact:** Helps students learn and succeed.
- **Flexible schedule:** Can tutor students from around the world at different times.
- **Diverse subjects:** From academic subjects to music and language lessons.

Key Roles:

Online Tutor
 ESL (English as a Second Language) Teacher
 Course Creator
 Educational Consultant
 Academic Coach

Platforms to Use:

VIPKid
 Preply
 Chegg Tutors

10. Financial and Business Consulting

Why It's Attractive:

- **Professional expertise:** Uses financial and business acumen.
- **High earning potential:** Often commands high fees for expertise.
- **Diverse clients:** Works with various businesses and industries.

Key Roles:

Financial Consultant
 Business Analyst
 Tax Consultant
 Bookkeeper
 Management Consultant

Platforms to Use:

Upwork
 LinkedIn
 Toptal
 Freelancer

Conclusion

By tapping into these top freelancing opportunities, you can create diverse income streams and enjoy the freedom to work from anywhere. Whether through content creation, digital marketing, software development, or online education, the key is to stay updated with industry trends, continuously hone skills, and actively network to secure new projects and clients.^{MS}



Top Business Opportunities for Gen Z

As digital natives with a keen eye for innovation and trends, Gen Z is uniquely positioned to take advantage of various business opportunities. Leveraging technology, social consciousness, and their entrepreneurial spirit, you can explore several promising avenues. Here are some of the top business opportunities for Gen Z in the Philippines:

1. E-commerce and Online Retail

Why It's Attractive:

- **Growing market:** The e-commerce sector is rapidly expanding in the Philippines, fueled by increasing internet penetration and mobile usage.
- **Low barrier to entry:** Starting an online store requires relatively low initial investment compared to brick-and-mortar stores.
- **Flexible operations:** Online retail allows for flexible work arrangements and the ability to reach a broader market.

Ideas to Explore:

Niche Online Stores
(e.g., eco-friendly products, pet supplies)
Dropshipping Business
Fashion and Apparel Boutique
Health and Wellness Products

2. Digital Marketing Agency

Why It's Attractive:

- **High demand:** Businesses are continually looking for ways to improve their online presence and reach more customers.
- **Scalable model:** Digital marketing services can scale with client needs and growth.
- **Diverse services:** Offers various services like SEO, social media management, content creation, and PPC advertising.

Services to Offer:

Social Media Management
Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
Content Marketing
Email Marketing
Pay-Per-Click (PPC) Advertising

3. Freelance Services Platform

Why It's Attractive:

- **Remote work trend:** The rise of remote work increases the demand for freelance services.
- **Talent pool:** The Philippines has a large pool of talented professionals in various fields.
- **Flexibility:** Allows freelancers to work on their own terms while providing businesses with needed services.

Services to Focus On:

Writing and Editing
Graphic Design
Web Development
Virtual Assistance
Digital Marketing

4. Food and Beverage Business

Why It's Attractive:

- **Evergreen industry:** The food and beverage sector remains a staple with consistent demand.
- **Innovation opportunities:** There's room for innovation in delivery services, healthy options, and specialty foods.
- **Local flavor:** Highlighting local ingredients and traditional dishes can attract both locals and tourists.

Ideas to Explore:

Cloud Kitchen (delivery-only restaurant)
Specialty Coffee Shop
Healthy Meal Prep Services
Food Truck Business
Artisanal and Gourmet Food Products

5. Sustainable and Eco-Friendly Products

Why It's Attractive:

- **Rising consciousness:** Consumers are increasingly prioritizing sustainability and eco-friendly products.
- **Government support:** There's growing support for green businesses and sustainable practices.
- **Market differentiation:** Offering eco-friendly products can set a business apart from competitors.

Products to Consider:

Reusable Household Items (e.g., bamboo straws, eco-bags)
Organic and Natural Personal Care Products
Sustainable Fashion
Eco-Friendly Packaging Solutions

6. Tech Startups and Innovation Hubs

Why It's Attractive:

- **Innovation potential:** The tech sector is ripe for innovation, with opportunities in software, apps, and hardware development.
- **Funding opportunities:** There are various funding programs and incubators supporting tech startups.
- **Global reach:** Tech products and services can easily scale and reach a global audience.

Focus Areas:

Mobile App Development
Fintech Solutions
Healthtech Innovations
Edtech Platforms
Smart Home Devices

7. Education and Online Learning Platforms

Why It's Attractive:

- **Educational gaps:** There's a need for accessible and quality education, especially in remote areas.
- **Tech integration:** Online platforms can leverage technology to provide interactive and flexible learning solutions.
- **Growing market:** Increasing demand for upskilling and continuous learning creates a robust market.

Ideas to Explore:

E-learning Platforms
Online Tutoring Services
Language Learning Apps
Vocational Training Programs
Test Preparation Services

8. Health and Wellness Industry

Why It's Attractive:

- **Growing awareness:** There's a rising focus on health and wellness among Filipinos.
- **Diverse opportunities:** The sector encompasses a wide range of products and services.
- **Lifestyle integration:** Health and wellness businesses can integrate seamlessly into daily life.

Ideas to Explore:

Fitness and Yoga Studios
Organic and Health Food Stores
Wellness Coaching
Mental Health Services and Apps
Telemedicine Platforms

9. Tourism and Hospitality

Why It's Attractive:

- **Tourism appeal:** The Philippines is a popular tourist destination with rich cultural and natural attractions.
- **Post-pandemic recovery:** As travel resumes, there's potential for growth in the tourism sector.
- **Unique experiences:** Offering unique and tailored experiences can attract both local and international tourists.

Ideas to Explore:

Boutique Hotels and Hostels
Eco-Tourism Ventures
Adventure and Sports Tourism
Cultural and Heritage Tours
Travel Concierge Services

10. Freelance and Remote Work Platforms

Why It's Attractive:

- **Remote work growth:** The shift towards remote work has created a demand for platforms connecting freelancers with employers.

- **Talent utilization:** Helps Filipino freelancers find work with international clients.
- **Skill development:** Provides opportunities for skill enhancement and career growth.

Focus Areas:

Specialized Freelance Platforms
(e.g., creative arts, tech)
Remote Job Boards
Skill Development Courses
Project Management Tools
Freelance Community Building

11. Gaming and Esports

Why It's Attractive:

- **Growing industry:** The gaming and esports industry is booming worldwide, including in the Philippines.
- **Youth engagement:** Appeals to the interests of the younger generation.
- **Monetization potential:** Multiple revenue streams through sponsorships, streaming, and tournaments.

Ideas to Explore:

Game Development
Esports Team Management
Gaming Cafés
Streaming Services
Esports Event Planning

12. Real Estate and Property Management

Why It's Attractive:

- **Growing urbanization:** Increasing urban development creates demand for real estate services.
- **Investment opportunities:** Real estate remains a solid investment with potential for appreciation.
- **Service diversification:** Offering a range of services from property management to real estate consulting.

Focus Areas:

Real Estate Brokerage
Property Management Services
Real Estate Development
Rental and Leasing Services
Real Estate Investment Consulting

As you can see, you have a vast array of business opportunities to explore. Whether venturing into tech startups, digital marketing, e-commerce, or sustainable products, the key is to stay informed, adaptable, and customer-focused.^{MS}

The Psychology of Investing: Understanding Gen Z's Relationship with Money

By ANDY CRUZ

In today's consumer-driven society, understanding the psychological factors that influence spending behaviors is crucial. This is especially true for Generation Z (Gen Z), the cohort born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, who are coming of age in a rapidly changing economic landscape. We'll delve into the psychology of spending and explore how Gen Z's attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors shape their relationship with money.

Introduction to Gen Z and Money

Gen Z is often characterized as tech-savvy, socially conscious, and financially aware. Growing up in the digital age, they have unprecedented access to information and resources, which has shaped their views on money and spending. However, their unique upbringing and experiences have also influenced their attitudes towards finances in distinct ways.

The Influence of Social Media

Social Comparison. Social media plays a significant role in shaping Gen Z's spending habits. Platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube are inundated with content showcasing luxurious lifestyles, influencer endorsements, and product promotions. As a result, Gen Z often engages in social comparison, comparing their own lives and possessions to those of their peers and influencers.

The constant exposure to curated images of wealth and success can create unrealistic expectations and pressure to keep up with peers, leading to increased spending on material possessions and experiences.

Fear of Missing Out (FOMO). The fear of missing out (FOMO) drives many spending decisions among Gen Z. They don't want to feel left out or excluded from experiences, trends, or social gatherings showcased on social media. Consequently, they may prioritize spending on experiences, fashion, or technology to maintain social relevance and status.

Instant Gratification vs. Long-Term Goals

Impulse Spending. Gen Z's inclination towards instant gratification often leads to impulse spending. The convenience of online shopping, coupled with peer influence and targeted advertising, makes it easy for them to make impulsive purchases without considering the long-term consequences.

The dopamine rush associated with making a purchase provides immediate satisfaction, but it can lead to overspending and financial stress in the long run.

Delayed Gratification. On the flip side, Gen Z also values experiences and possessions that provide long-term satisfaction and fulfillment. They are willing to delay gratification and save up for meaningful purchases, such as travel, education, or investments in personal development.

By setting clear financial goals and exercising discipline, Gen Z can resist the temptation of instant gratification and prioritize long-term financial well-being.

Financial Anxiety and Uncertainty

Economic Challenges. Gen Z has come of age during times of economic uncertainty, including the global financial crisis of 2008 and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. These experiences have instilled a sense of financial anxiety and insecurity, prompting Gen Z to adopt cautious spending habits and prioritize financial stability.

The unpredictability of the job market and the rising cost of living contribute to feelings of uncertainty, making Gen Z more conservative with their spending and savings habits.

Financial Education. The lack of formal financial education in schools often leaves Gen Z ill-equipped to manage their finances effectively, leading to feelings of stress and overwhelm.

By advocating for financial literacy initiatives and seeking out resources to improve their financial knowledge, Gen Z can gain the skills and confidence needed to navigate the complexities of personal finance.

Ethical and Sustainable Consumption

Social Responsibility. Gen Z is renowned for its commitment to social justice, environmental sustainability, and ethical consumption. They are more likely to support brands and businesses that align with their values and contribute positively to society and the planet.

Conscious Consumerism. The rise of conscious consumerism among Gen Z has led to a shift towards eco-friendly, ethical, and sustainable products and services. They prioritize quality over quantity and are willing to pay a premium for products that are ethically sourced, environmentally friendly, and socially responsible.

By voting with their wallets and supporting companies that prioritize sustainability and ethical practices, Gen Z is driving positive change in the marketplace and promoting a more sustainable future.

Influence of Peer Groups and Family Dynamics

Peer Pressure. Peer groups play a significant role in shaping Gen Z's spending behaviors. They often seek validation and approval from their peers, which can lead to peer pressure to conform to certain spending norms or lifestyles.

Family Influence. Family dynamics also influence Gen Z's attitudes towards money and spending. Whether it's observing their parents' financial habits, receiving financial support or guidance, or inheriting generational wealth, family upbringing plays a pivotal role in shaping their financial values and behaviors.

How to Counter These Influences

If you belong to Gen Z, you can address or combat the influences that shape your spending behaviors. You can take proactive steps to empower yourself and make informed financial decisions. Here are several strategies that you can implement:

Develop financial literacy: Education is key to combating the negative influences on spending habits. Get educated on personal finance topics such as budgeting, saving, investing, debt management, and financial planning. Leverage online resources, attend workshops, read books, or take courses to enhance their financial literacy.

- Take advantage of online resources, podcasts, and mobile apps dedicated to personal finance education.
- Attend workshops, webinars, or seminars on budgeting, investing, and debt management.
- Read books or follow reputable financial blogs to gain insights into various aspects of money management.
- Consider enrolling in formal courses or certifications in finance or economics to deepen understanding.

Practice mindful spending: You can cultivate mindfulness in their spending habits by pausing and reflecting before making purchases. Ask yourself if the purchase aligns with their values, if it is a necessity or a want, and if it fits within their budget. Setting spending limits, creating shopping lists, and avoiding impulse purchases can help curb excessive spending.

- Create a monthly budget outlining income, fixed expenses (e.g., rent, utilities), and discretionary spending categories.
- Set spending limits for non-essential purchases and stick to them.
- Prioritize needs over wants and differentiate between essential and discretionary expenses.
- Wait at least 24 hours before making non-urgent purchases to avoid impulse buying.
- Use cash or debit cards instead of credit cards to limit spending and avoid accruing debt.



Limit social media exposure: While social media can be a source of inspiration and connection, it can also fuel comparison and FOMO. You can limit your exposure to social media or curate your feeds to follow accounts that promote positive messages and values aligned with your own. You can also set boundaries around screen time and prioritize real-life experiences over virtual ones.

- Curate social media feeds to follow accounts that promote positive messages and values.
- Set time limits for social media usage to prevent excessive scrolling and comparison.
- Practice digital detoxes or social media fasts periodically to reset and focus on real-life experiences.
- Unfollow or mute accounts that trigger feelings of inadequacy or comparison.

Set clear financial goals: Setting clear and achievable financial goals can provide you with direction and motivation. Whether it's saving for an emergency fund, paying off student loans, or investing for the future, having specific goals in mind can help prioritize spending and make informed financial decisions. You can break down their goals into smaller milestones and track their progress over time.

- Define short-term, medium-term, and long-term financial goals, such as saving for an emergency fund, paying off debt, or buying a home.
- Make goals specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) to increase motivation and accountability.
- Break down larger goals into smaller milestones or tasks to track progress and celebrate achievements.
- Use tools like goal-setting apps or spreadsheets to monitor financial goals and adjust strategies as needed.

Build a support system: Surrounding yourself with supportive peers, mentors, or family members can provide you with encouragement and accountability on their financial journey. You can seek out mentors or role models who demonstrate healthy financial habits and seek advice or guidance when needed. Joining online communities or forums dedicated to personal finance can also provide valuable support and insights.

- Seek guidance from financial advisors, mentors, or trusted family members who have experience in managing finances.
- Join online communities or forums dedicated to personal finance to connect with like-minded individuals and share experiences and tips.
- Attend local meetups or networking events focused on financial literacy and wealth-building.
- Form accountability partnerships with friends or family members to support each other's financial goals and progress.

Practice ethical and sustainable consumption: You can align your spending habits with your values by supporting ethical and sustainable brands and businesses. You can research companies' practices and initiatives related to social responsibility, environmental sustainability, and ethical sourcing before making purchasing decisions. By voting with your wallets, you can contribute to positive social and environmental change.

- Research companies' ethical and sustainability practices before making purchasing decisions.
- Support brands that prioritize fair labor practices, environmental sustainability, and social responsibility.
- Choose products made from eco-friendly materials or produced using ethical manufacturing processes.
- Reduce waste and promote recycling by opting for reusable products and minimizing single-use items.
- Educate others about the importance of ethical consumption and advocate for responsible business practices.

Advocate for change: You can use your collective voice to advocate for systemic changes that promote financial literacy and economic empowerment. You can support initiatives to integrate financial education into school curricula, advocate for policies that address student debt, and promote financial inclusion and accessibility for marginalized communities. By advocating for change at both individual and societal levels, you can create a more equitable and financially literate society.

- Participate in campaigns or initiatives that promote financial literacy and education in schools and communities.
- Support legislation or policies that address student loan debt, promote financial inclusion, or improve access to banking and credit services.
- Volunteer with organizations that provide financial education or assistance to underserved communities.
- Use social media platforms to raise awareness about financial issues and advocate for systemic change.
- Engage in discussions with policymakers, educators, and community leaders to highlight the importance of financial empowerment and economic justice.

Overall, by taking proactive steps to address the influences on their spending behaviors, you can empower yourself to make informed financial decisions, cultivate healthy spending habits, and achieve greater financial well-being.

Navigating Gen Z's Financial Landscape

Understanding the psychology of spending is essential for Gen Z individuals to make informed and responsible financial decisions. By recognizing the factors that influence your spending behaviors, such as social media influence, instant gratification, financial anxiety, ethical consumption, and family dynamics, you can develop healthier attitudes towards money and achieve greater financial well-being.^{MS}

Veterans Bank Partners with Palawan Group for POS Cash Withdrawal Service

Aiming to expand its footprint nationwide and thereby reach a wider market with its banking services Philippine Veterans Bank has partnered with the Palawan Group of Companies to enable ATM cardholders to do cash withdrawals from Palawan Pawnshop and Palawan Express Pera Padala branches with the use of Point-of-Sale (POS) terminals.

Veterans Bank has already deployed POS machines to 300 branches of the Palawan Group nationwide that allows Veterans Bank ATM cardholders to conveniently withdraw funds from the nearest Palawan branch. This has made it very beneficial and safer for PVB clients in areas where there is no nearby Veterans Bank branch to access their accounts and get much-needed cash. Even non-Veterans Bank ATM cardholders can avail of the POS withdrawal service as long they have a BancNet-linked ATM card.

The Veterans Bank and Palawan Group partnership was forged last year through a Memorandum of Agreement signed by officials from both companies. Signing for PVB

were President and CEO Renato Claravall signed the MOA along with FVP Charina Balanquit, Chief Digital Marketing Officer; VP Geraldine Romano, Head of Branch Banking Sales; and AVP Julius Marquez, Area Head of South Luzon Area. On the other hand, the Palawan Group of Companies were represented by Ms. Lisa Lou Castro-Sabado, Vice President for New Products and Services; Ms. Missy Baldemor, B2B Department Head; and Ms. Rona Juan, Key Account Manager.

According to President Claravall:

“This service, in partnership with the Palawan Group of Companies, will allow Veterans Bank to expand its network and customer touchpoints through the use of technology-based innovations. It will also enable the Bank to serve our clients in areas where we do not have branches, especially our veterans and their families.”

Additionally, President Claravall expressed his optimism for the success of the project and hopes for the eventual deployment of the service to even more Palawan Pawnshop – Palawan Express Pera Padala branches nationwide.

To know which Palawan Pawnshop or Palawan Express Pera Padala Branches offer the POS ATM withdrawal service, interested individuals may visit the Veterans Bank website at www.veteransbank.com.ph.^{MS}



PVB and Palawan Sealing the Partnership: (From left) PVB South Luzon Area Head Julius Marquez, PVB Chief Digital Marketing Officer Head Charina Balanquit, PVB Branch Banking Sales Head Geraldine Romano, PVB President and Acting CEO Renato Claravall, Palawan Group Vice-President for New Products and Services Lisa Lou Castro-Sabado, Palawan Group B2B Department Head Missy Baldemor, and Palawan Group Key Account Manager Rona Juan.

Order Types in the Stock Market

By CARLOS GONZALES

The Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) offers a dynamic platform for investors to buy and sell securities. However, understanding different order types is crucial for maximizing your returns and managing risk beyond choosing which companies to invest in.

Order by Price Execution

Market Order

Pros: It ensures the fastest possible execution of your trade. It is ideal for situations where immediate purchase or sale is paramount, regardless of price.

Cons: Price execution is not guaranteed. You might buy at a higher price than the current ask or sell at a lower price than the current bid, especially during volatile markets.

Best Use: When you prioritize getting into or out of a position quickly, even if it means sacrificing some control over the price. This could be applicable in highly volatile situations where you want to capture a sudden price movement or escape a rapidly declining stock.

Limit Order

Pros: Offers greater control over the price you pay or receive for your shares. You set a specific price limit, and the order will only be filled if the market price reaches your desired level.

Cons: There's no guarantee your order will be executed, especially if the stock price doesn't move in your favor.

Best Use: When you have a specific price target in mind. This could be for buying a stock at a discount or selling it at a profit margin you're comfortable with.

Order by Time Validity

Day Order

Pros: Simple and straightforward. The order automatically cancels at the end of the trading day (3:30 PM) if not filled.

Cons: Limits your flexibility if the stock price doesn't reach your desired level within the trading day.

Best Use: Suitable for day trading or situations where you only want to buy or sell within a specific timeframe.

Good-Till-Canceled (GTC) Order

Pros: Offers more flexibility. The order remains active until you cancel it manually or it gets filled, even if it takes several days.

Cons: Requires monitoring if market conditions change significantly. The order is likely to be filled at an unfavorable price if the stock price fluctuates greatly.

Best Use: Ideal for long-term investment strategies or when you're not actively monitoring the market but have a set price target in mind.

Advanced Order Types

Stop-Loss Order:

Pros: Protects your profits by automatically selling a stock if the price falls below a predetermined trigger price. This helps limit potential losses.

Cons: There's a chance the order might be triggered due to temporary price fluctuations, leading to an unwanted sale.

Best Use: To safeguard your investment when a stock price reaches a point where you want to exit the position and minimize losses.

Stop-Limit Order

Pros: Combines the features of a stop-loss and a limit order. It sets a trigger price to activate the order and specifies a limit price for the actual sale. This offers more control over the execution price than a basic stop-loss order.

Cons: More complex to set up and carries the risk of the order not being filled if the market price gaps significantly.

Best Use: Provides a safety net while ensuring a minimum selling price when the stock price falls. This is useful when you want to avoid selling at a price much lower than your desired level.

Market-on-Open (MOO) Order

Pros: Attempts to fill your order at the stock's opening price. This can be beneficial if you anticipate a stock price increase at the market open.

Cons: There's no guarantee the order will be filled at the opening price, especially for high-demand stocks.

Best Use: When you believe a stock will open significantly higher and want to be among the first to buy at the opening price.

Market-on-Close (MOC) Order

Pros: Attempts to buy or sell a stock at the trading day's closing price. This can be useful if you want to ensure your order is filled before the market closes, regardless of the specific price.

Cons: Similar to MOO orders, there's no guarantee the order will be filled at the closing price, especially for volatile stocks.

Best Use: When you prioritize having your order filled before the market.

Additional Considerations and Strategies

Order Size and Liquidity: The size of your order can also impact its execution. Large orders exceeding the standard board lot size (usually 100 shares) might be difficult to fill at your desired price point, especially for less liquid stocks. Consider breaking down your order into smaller chunks or using a combination of order types.

Combining Order Types: Seasoned investors often combine order types to achieve their trading goals. For instance, you might place a GTC limit order to buy a stock at a specific price while simultaneously setting a stop-loss order to mitigate potential losses if the price goes against you.

Technical Analysis: Technical indicators can be valuable tools for determining entry and exit points for your trades. Studying charts and using technical analysis in conjunction with order types can help you make informed decisions about when to buy or sell.

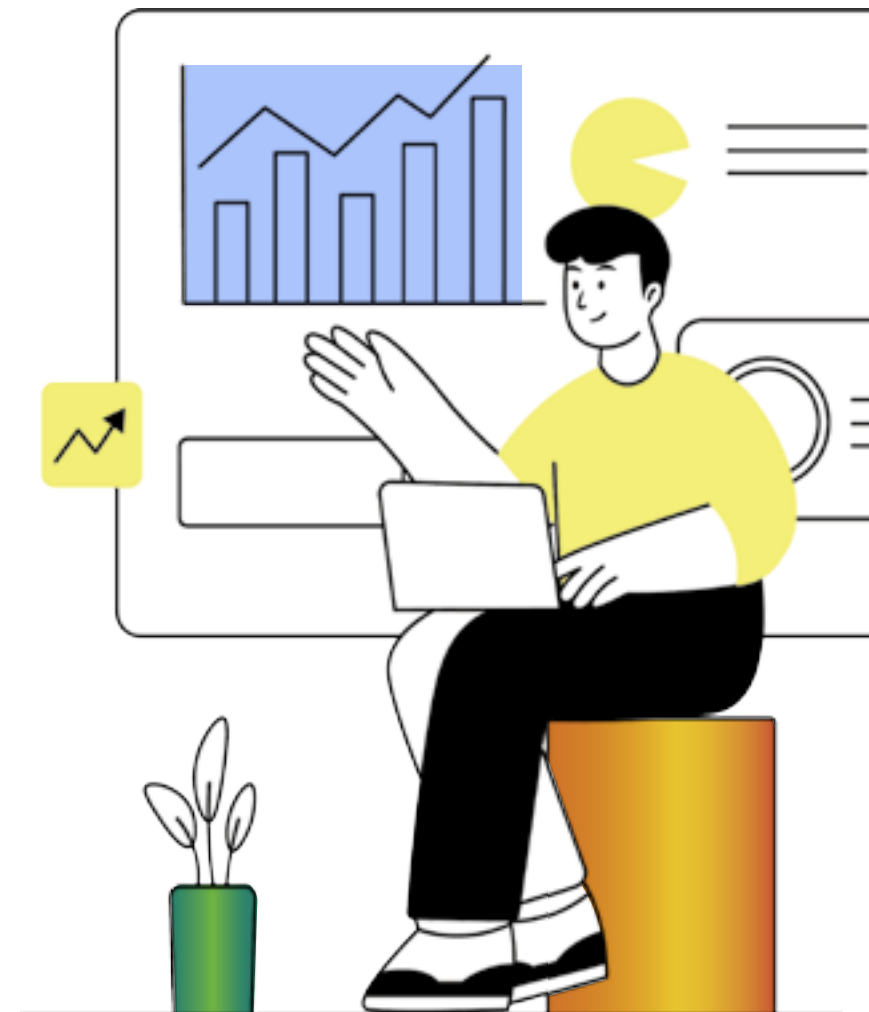
Risk Management: Always prioritize risk management. Regardless of the order type you choose, never invest more than you can afford to lose. Utilize stop-loss orders and maintain a diversified portfolio to minimize risk exposure.

Conducting Due Diligence: Research the companies you're interested in before placing any orders. Understand the company's financial health, future prospects, and industry trends. Order types are just tools; proper company selection is crucial for long-term investment success.

Staying Informed: The Philippine Stock Exchange website offers a wealth of information on listed companies, trading rules, and market data. Additionally, reputable financial news sources can provide valuable insights into market trends and individual stock analysis.

Consulting a Financial Advisor: Consulting a licensed financial advisor can benefit new investors or those with complex financial goals. They can help you develop a personalized investment strategy and recommend suitable order types based on risk tolerance and investment objectives.

Understanding the different order types available on the PSE empowers you to make informed investment decisions. By carefully considering each order type's pros and cons, investment goals, and risk tolerance, you can navigate the Philippine Stock Exchange with greater confidence. Remember, a successful investment strategy involves a combination of sound research, effective order execution, and continuous learning. ^{MS}



Newbie Renter?

Here Are 5 Pro Steps That Can Help You Get Started

By CARL DY

Congratulations on taking the exciting step of becoming a landlord and renting out your property for the first time! Renting real estate can be a rewarding investment opportunity, but it also comes with responsibilities and challenges. To help you navigate this new chapter successfully, here are six essential steps for first-time landlords and property owners to consider.

Step #1: Identify your tenant base. In any kind of investment, you should always realize who is the target for the products or services that they are offering. Is your target tenant a student from the province, a young single middle manager who wants to live independently from their parents, or maybe a family with two kids? It is very important that you have an idea of who your condo will appeal to the most.

Your immediate customers will be people from nearby offices, schools, malls, hospitals, etc. One of the most appealing reasons for anyone to rent a condo is proximity to their school or workplace. Your tenant base can be within a 1km walking distance or a far distance but one MRT ride away.

Step #2: Make your unit stand out.

You can make your unit stand out with two strategies. One is to lower your rental price so your unit stands out, or two is to design your unit so it is “Instagrammable.” A few techniques to make your unit stand out include hotel-like bedding, a themed room design, diverse textures, relaxing lighting, and soft plush area rugs. Adding accent walls, indoor plants, and antiques with a good story to tell can add to the homey feel of your unit.

Finally, statement items like a big screen projector and smart home features will capture a male market, while a customized cabinet that provides plenty of storage and a well-lit makeup table will surely make your unit attractive to the female market.

Step #3: Advertise to get eyeballs. If there is one step that lessors should not miss is to make sure they do everything to get the market aware of their rental property. Social media has made getting eyeballs easier than ever, and it's free! Promoting your property on socials has two critical components: enticing photos and an engaging description.

The goal of your social media posts is to reach your target tenants and entice them to click the inquire button. Once an inquiry is sent, you should respond promptly and invite the prospect to a site viewing of the property. It is also during this conversation that you can send more photos and short walk-through videos to reassure the inquiry that your unit is something that can be their future home.

Step #4: Prepare for viewings. After answering inquiries, the next step is to invite your prospects for a property walk-through. This is the stage where you will highlight the product being promoted. Your prospects, on the other hand, will use this time to decide if your property is a good fit for their preferences.

Some tips to prepare for viewings include the following:

- The property should be clean and ready to use with no broken items. It has to give good value in relation to the price.
- Remove personal items that may not be relatable for your tenants.
- Opening the aircon and all lights for viewing is recommended.
- Night viewing is also a strategy for units with fantastic night views.
- Put your best foot forward in showcasing all the features and comfort of the property.

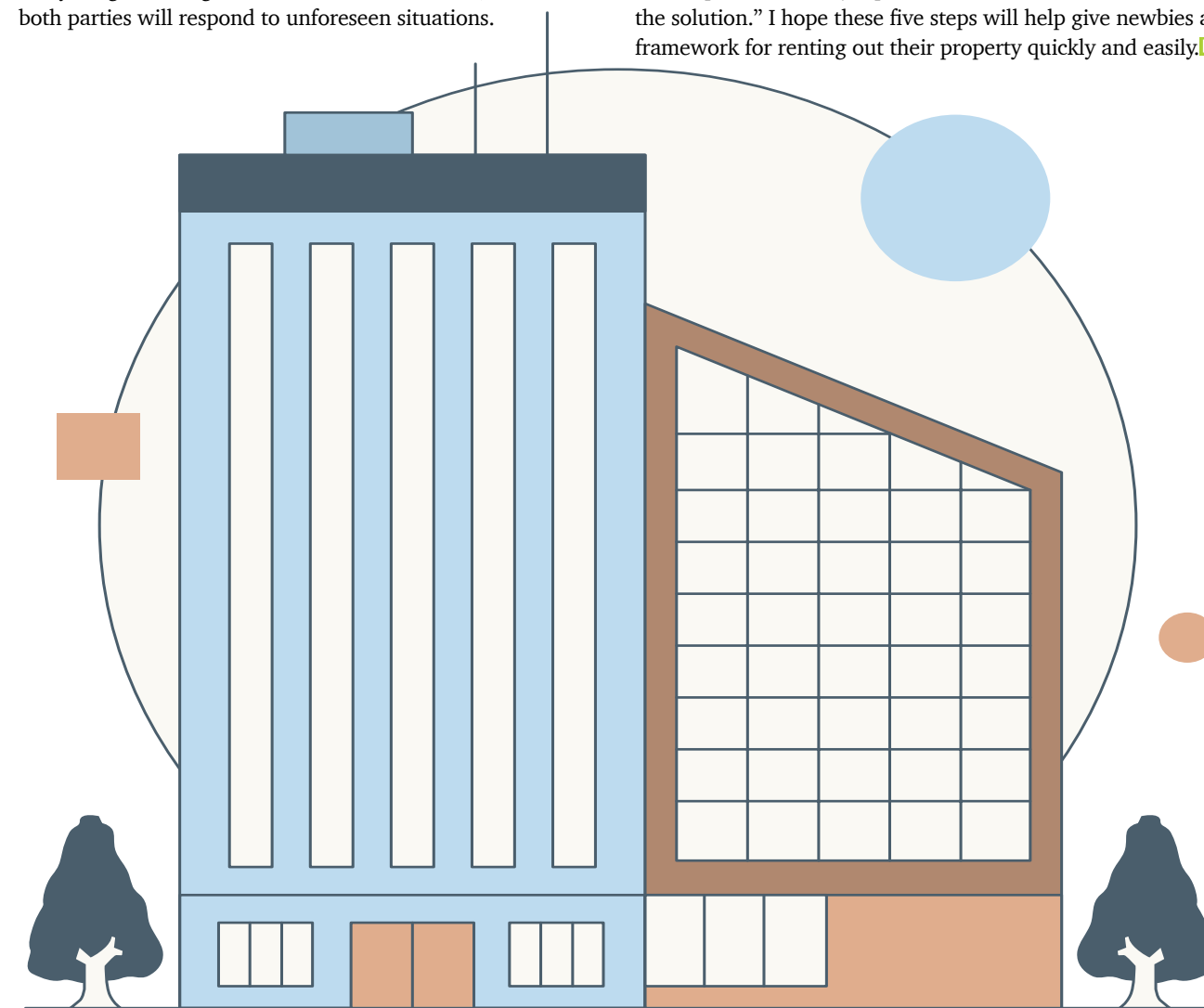
Step #5: Clear and complete the lease contract. The two main purposes of a lease contract are to put on paper everything that is agreed on and future “what ifs,” i.e. how both parties will respond to unforeseen situations.

For part one, important information includes the exact details of the property for lease, the owner's and tenant's names, the amount of the lease, the term of the lease, renewal escalations, the lessor's wishes, conditions, and rules on the usage of the property, etc.

The second part covers how both parties will respond to unforeseen situations like cutting short of the lease, who will pay for repairs and breakage inside the property, how nonpayment will be treated, how the lessor will handle it in case of abandonment, and other penalties and violations.

The goal of a lease contract is to ensure that both sides are in agreement on the conditions. Ideally, all conditions are put on paper and signed by both parties.

Rental passive income is one of the more effective wealth-creation techniques. A rental property also allows the investor to create multiple income streams through multiple rental units, especially if the investor is familiar with the steps to make this machinery work smoothly. Rental property investing is 90% passive and needs 10% active work, especially during the time of vacancy. There is a saying that “A problem is only a problem if one is not familiar with the solution.” I hope these five steps will help give newbies a framework for renting out their property quickly and easily.^{MS}



Hack the Travel Bug: Budget-Friendly Adventures for Gen Z Explorers

By JANICE SABITSANA, RFP®

Yo, globetrotters! Feeling the itch to explore the world but worried your bank account speaks a different language? Fear not, wanderlust-stricken Gen Z warriors! We've all seen the #travelgram dream – pristine beaches, ancient ruins, and enough avocado toast to fuel a small nation. But let's be honest, those trips can drain your wallet faster than you can say "flight delay."

Here's the good news: epic adventures don't have to equal epic debt. Ditch the travel agent and the luxury resorts; we're diving deep into the world of thrifty travel hacks that'll have you collecting experiences, not just receipts. So, grab your reusable water bottle, pack your phone charger (because #content, duh!), and get ready to explore the world without breaking the bank.

Tip #1: Leverage the Power of the Sharing Economy: From Couch Crashing to Carpooling. Forget fancy hotels – dive headfirst into the world of house-sitting and couch surfing! Platforms like Couchsurfing and TrustedHousesitters connect you with locals who need someone to watch their place (and sometimes even their pets!) while they're away. You get a free (or super cheap) stay in a unique location, and your hosts get peace of mind.

Bonus points: you score insider tips on hidden gems and local eats from your hosts, who are your free tour guides, too!

Speaking of getting around, ditch the rental car agencies. Ride-sharing apps like BlaBlaCar connect you with drivers heading your way who have spare seats. It's a win-win—you split the gas cost, meet cool people, and maybe even learn a few new travel phrases (pro tip: brush up on basic greetings in the local language—it shows respect and goes a long way!).

Tip #2: Work Your Way Around the World: WWOOFing, Volunteering, and Remote Work. Who says travel can't pay the bills (or at least some of them)? Websites like WWOOF (World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms) connect you with farms and eco-projects worldwide where you can volunteer your time in exchange for free accommodation and meals. Not only do you learn valuable skills about sustainable living, but you also get to immerse yourself in a new culture and potentially make lifelong connections with other travelers and locals.

For the digital nomads among us, remote work is a game-changer. Imagine working on your laptop with a view of the ocean in Bali or taking a coffee break in a Parisian cafe. Many cafes and co-working spaces offer free Wi-Fi so you can stay connected while exploring a new city.

Tip #3: Embrace the "Off-Season" Adventure: Cheaper Flights, Fewer Crowds, More Cultural Immersion. Forget the tourist traps! Peak season flights and accommodation can be brutal for your budget. Instead, be a travel rebel and explore destinations during their shoulder seasons or even the "off-

season." You'll be surprised by the hidden gems you discover and the genuine interactions you can have with locals who aren't overrun with tourists.

For example, visiting Europe in the winter can mean fewer crowds at iconic landmarks, cozy Christmas markets (think free hot cocoa and live music!), and potentially cheaper flights. Research festivals and events happening in your chosen off-season destination – you might stumble upon a unique cultural experience you wouldn't have encountered otherwise. Plus, off-season travel lets you experience a more authentic side of a place, away from the tourist facade.

Tip #4: Master the Art of Free Activities: From Urban Exploration to Local Festivals. Travel doesn't have to be about expensive tours and overpriced attractions. Many cities offer free walking tours led by passionate locals who can give you historical and cultural insight you won't find in a guidebook. Museums often have free admission days, and some offer "pay what you wish" options. Research and create your DIY itinerary filled with free or budget-friendly activities.

Embrace the power of free apps like Google Maps, Klook, and local public transportation passes to explore hidden parks, bustling markets, and off-the-beaten-path neighborhoods. Many cities also hold free events like street festivals, concerts, and cultural performances – check local event calendars and social media groups for insider tips on what's happening during your visit.


Tip #5: Be a Skill-Swapping Social Butterfly: From Language Exchange to Cooking Classes. Traveling solo can be daunting, but it can also be an opportunity to connect with people worldwide. Apps like HelloTalk and Tandem connect you with native speakers who want to learn your language in exchange for helping you with theirs. It's a win-win – you learn a new skill for free and gain a local friend to show you hidden gems and practice your newfound language skills.

Speaking of friends, websites like EatWith and Airbnb Experiences connect you with locals who offer cooking classes, workshops, and unique experiences in their homes. Imagine learning how to make traditional pasta from a nonna in Rome or mastering the art of Thai curry from a local chef in Bangkok – way more interesting than a typical museum visit, and you get a delicious meal included!

Bonus Tip: Pack Light, Travel Smart: The Minimalist Explorer. The struggle is real when cramming your entire wardrobe into a carry-on. But here's the secret: you don't need ten outfit changes for a weekend trip. Pack versatile pieces you can mix and match, and focus on quick-drying, wrinkle-resistant fabrics. Not only will you travel lighter and avoid baggage fees, but you'll also save precious time unpacking and re-packing.

Investing in a reusable water bottle and a reusable grocery bag is not just good for the environment; it also saves you money in the long run. Skip the overpriced airport water and fill up your reusable bottle before your flight. Embrace the local markets and grab fresh produce and snacks—it's cheaper, healthier, and gives you a chance to practice your bargaining skills.

The Takeaway: Travel is an Investment in Yourself. Traveling on a budget isn't just about saving money but a mindset shift. It's about pushing yourself out of your comfort zone, experiencing new cultures, and creating memories that will last a lifetime. You'll learn to adapt, be resourceful, and appreciate the simple things in life. Plus, you'll return home with a suitcase full of stories, not just souvenirs.

So, what are you waiting for? Grab your backpack, download some travel apps, and get ready to explore the world on your terms. Remember, the most breathtaking sights aren't always found in guidebooks; sometimes, the best adventures are the unexpected ones that unfold when you embrace the journey, not just the destination. Now go forth, explore responsibly, and most importantly, have fun! 



Janice Sabitsana is a Registered Financial Planner of RFP Philippines. For more personal finance tips, visit her blog at www.thepinayinvestor.com



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TIME
DEPOSIT 

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