

MANAGING THE GENERATION Y

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Abstract

The paper seeks to study the impact of Generation Y that comprises of those particular groups of people, who are born between the Year 1980 – 2000 and their age is ranging from 19 – 30 Years and contribute a major part of our able population. These Gen Y people are highly Energetic, Practical, Motivated have different value system.

The biggest divide facing our society is not a gender divide, racial divide, income or technology divide but it is the generational divide. For those of us involved in engaging young people, it must be remembered that the gap between them and us is constantly growing: school students are always aged 5-18 but we are getting older, so we must work harder to understand them and so remain relevant.

We can well define these generations by the parameters like:-1. Their Status Description like:- Seniors, Builders, Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y, & Generation Z, 2. The underlying years in which these status of people born, 3. Their different Age Parameters, 4. Their approximate Population in Million, & 5. The different levels of Population Rate.

Our Research shows that the third strongest felt need Indian Teenagers have is for guidance & or direction in their life that is trustworthy. The further relevance of the study will encompass the underlying facts and will surely try to bridge the gap between Generations from an altogether new prospective.

Key words: Generation X & Y, Factors, Effectiveness

Introduction

Businesses continue to be challenged with workforce diversity and how to best manage the differences that exist in race, religion, gender, disability, sexual orientation, color, etc. The general theme is that managers should focus on minimizing tension that exists resulting from generational differences. Unfortunately, there is more agreement and discussion as to how generations are different than there is on how to manage these differences.

There is general agreement that India's workforce is aging and can be divided into four distinct groups. There is also agreement among experts as to how each group has developed its

values, attitudes, and expectations toward work. There is, however, an absence of agreement in the published literature regarding strategies and techniques for managing generational differences. Our paper will discuss India's workforce in the future with special attention given to the absence of relevant information for practitioners resulting from generational differences. First, we must recognize that most experts divide the workforce into the following six basic generational groups:

Generation X has been synonymous with young people since the name was first coined by Douglas Coupland in 1991ii. However many Xers are now in their 30's and when it comes to understanding school students we are talking about Generation Y.

DESCRIBING ABOUT GENERATION CATEGORIES:

TRADITIONALISTS Traditionalists, born between 1926 and 1945, were BUILDERS raised in homogeneous families and neighborhoods.

This generation witnessed the rise of the white collar job and a strong commitment to higher education. Traditionalists have a respect for authority and place a lot of value in receiving financial rewards and having security. A good example of the focus on security needs can be seen in how important health care is to this generation.

BOOMERS The baby boom generation, born between 1946 and 1964, was shaped by the Vietnam War; the Civil Rights movement; and the assassinations of Martin Luther King, John F Kennedy, and Robert Kennedy. Boomers are more suspicious of authority than their parents as a result of events like Watergate and Unpopular wars. Boomers are competitive by Nature, but they do show some commitment to making a better world.

GENERATION X Generation X'ers were born between 1965 and 1979- the oldest Gen X's are in their early 40s now. This generation saw the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Berlin Wall. They were the first to experience high divorce rates amongst their parents, and most had some exposure to parents or relatives losing jobs to the recessions of the 1980s and 1990s. The growth of the Internet and

global access to information created a generation that is information rich. Generation Xers asked the question, “Where can I get the information?” Generation Xers are self-reliant and have clear tribal affiliations. Generation X, born from 1965 to 1979, are the children of the workaholic Baby Boom Generation and tend to feel overlooked and less appreciated. These latch-key kids were taught to be self-reliant individuals. Generation X tends to desire more of a balance between work and life and has been referred to as the me generation. Somewhat mistrustful of corporations, Generation Xers are less loyal than their Veteran and Baby Boom counterparts. However, this lack of loyalty is not all negative. They tend to embrace change, particularly as it relates to technology; and, since they are more outcome/results focused, they expect specific constructive feedback on their performance.

GENERATION Y Generation Y, born in & after 1980, is challenging traditional hiring and recruiting practices. Companies don’t have a lot of experience with this generation and are still figuring out what motivates this group. There will be a struggle for some time as to how to manage Generation Y, which comprises not only the largest consumer group but the largest employee group as well. Gen Y’s are the children of the Boomers and the siblings of Generation X.

Generation Y’s are very upbeat and optimistic despite having been exposed to routine violence in schools and terrorism. Events such as the Columbine school shootings and September 11th terrorist attacks created an almost constant state of vigilance for many of these young people. Generation Y is the most educated, well traveled and technologically sophisticated generation that we have ever had. They live in a world of computers, the Internet, DVDs and cell phones. This group seems to be less process or outcome focused. Generation Y has a sense of morality and civic duty, but making a lot of money is less important to this generation. Their contributions to society and their role as parents are equally important to them.

GENERATION Z This Generation Z is including those born after 2000, i.e. in 2001 or beyond. As this includes yet an upbringing, unconscious & moreover an infant generation, thus it merely worth to comment this group.

Characteristics of Generation - Y.

Technology Oriented: Generation Y grew up with technology and rely on it to perform their jobs better. Armed with BlackBerrys, laptops, cell phones

and other gadgets, Generation Y is plugged-in 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This generation prefers to communicate through e-mail and text messaging rather than face-to-face contact and prefers webinars and online technology to traditional lecture-based presentations.

Work Time Attitude: The fast-track has lost much of its appeal for Generation Y who is willing to trade high pay for fewer billable hours, flexible schedules and a better work/life balance. While older generations may view this attitude as narcissistic or lacking commitment, discipline and drive, Generation Y legal professionals have a different vision of workplace expectations and prioritize family over work.

Achievement-Oriented: Nurtured and pampered by parents who did not want to make the mistakes of the previous generation, Generation Y is confident, ambitious and achievement-oriented. They have high expectations of their employers, seek out new challenges and are not afraid to question authority. Generation Y wants meaningful work and a solid learning curve.

Team-Oriented: As children, Generation Y participated in team sports, play groups and other group activities. They value teamwork and seek the input and affirmation of others. Part of a no-person-left-behind generation, Generation Y is loyal, committed and wants to be included and involved.

Requires Mentors: Generation Y craves attention in the forms of feedback and guidance. They appreciate being kept in the loop and seek frequent praise and reassurance. Generation Y may benefit greatly from mentors who can help guide and develop their young careers.

LETS BE SOME MORE SPECIFIC ABOUT GENERATION ‘Y’

If we want to understand Generation- Y up to some more extent, let’s stress upon the three effective features of this group, which can also be termed as 3Cs of GEN.Y:

Confidence:

- **Upside:** In general, Generation Y is more self-confident than any generation that preceded it thanks to the empowerment focused parenting styles of a large majority of Baby Boomers.
- **Downside:** They often lack the behavioral skills to back up their confidence.
- **Implication for you:** This generation is used to positive reinforcement, feedback in the moment and very specific and clear direction

at all times. What they may seem to lack in interpersonal sophistication they can make up for in effort, if they feel comfortable that they can learn safely. They are highly trainable. Make it easy for them to learn and don't make them feel stupid if they mess up. Just turn it into a learning experience. And yes, you will need to be patient.

Career Expectations:

- Upside: This is the generation that's aiming high and reaching for the stars. They're ambitious, but not at any cost. They've seen their parents get burned by a lack of work-life balance and/or get laid off at some point in their careers. Subsequently Generation Y has a maturity of perspective that the rest of us have had to gain the hard way.
- Downside: Their work ethic may not appear to match their aspirations.
- Implication for you: Don't whitewash a job or the requirements of it when you hire them. Be upfront and clear about what level of commitment you will need, right down to the hours they will need to put in and what they will and will not be compensated for. Make expectations clear and outline the potential career paths from the outset so that they know what they are working towards.

Capability:

- Upside: Gen Y have had instantaneous input into their decisions from trusted friends, parents and teachers their entire lives thanks to the plethora of technology like instant messaging, text messaging and cell phones. An opinion is never more than a few clicks or a quick dial away. This means that they are naturally pre-disposed to teamwork and collaboration.
- Downside: They can appear to lack independence of thought and initiative. It can be hard for them to solve problems/crises in the moment and by themselves.
- Implication for you: Set up the working environment so that teamwork is encouraged and rewarded. Set team goals. And put the more experienced members of your team in place as team leaders to help coach the newcomers in some of the trickier aspects of the job.

Now, while understanding the significant characteristics of 'Y'- group, their arises one more thing to inquire about, & that is "What are the factors

that influences the behavior of Y- Generation ??..":- The answer to this can be possible by focusing upon one more abbreviatory term, i.e. "PPP"- The 3-P terminology & the detailing to which is as follows:

Peers:

While the Builders/ Traditionalists' Generation are most influenced by authority figures and Boomers make decisions based on data and facts, post-modern youth are more likely to make a decision based on the influence of their own peers. Our research has further confirmed that the biggest factor determining the choice a teenager will make is the experiences of their core group of 3 to 8 friends. Rather than making independent decisions based on core values, they live in a culture encouraging them to embrace community values, and to reach consensus.

Pragmatism:

It is understandable that young people today are less idealistic than generations past due in part to the media and pop culture that fills their life. The most popular song of the 1940's was Bing Crosby's "White Christmas" (1942), for the 50's it was "Rock around the Clock" (Bill Haley and his Comets, 1955), and the 60's it was the Beatles' "I want to hold your hand" (1963)vi. A quick listen to the music of choice for Generation Y reveals what different times they live in. Much is made of the dark lyrics of Eminem and Marilyn Manson, but these are just public examples of the popular and pervasive genre. The influence of music is second only to the influence of TV and movies in Gen Y culture. George Barna has found that when teenagers were asked, "What/who has a lot of influence on your thinking and behavior?" one quarter of the influence on their lives is from TV and movies.

Teenagers are now spending more time watching TV today compared to four years ago, up from 2 hours 16 minutes per day to 2 hours and 20 minutes, a growth of 3.6%. In addition to the growing Internet and video games use, they are now approaching 4 hours screen time per day.

At the same time Generation Y are increasingly worried by an array of factors from youth unemployment rates and increasing housing costs, to body image and crime rates. The result is that they have an increasingly short-term focus. Our research shows that their top life expectation is to complete their education (94%) with not too many plans after this.

Preference:

For previous generations, the modernism

mindset ruled and so people grew up believing that technology was good and to be trusted, medicine could overcome any problems humanity faced, and together we could create a great future. However in these postmodern times, technology is often not trusted let alone held up as the answer. AIDS and other pandemics continue to defy the experts, and the scientific method has given way to virtual reality. The concept of absolute and inherent truth has been banished as truth is deemed to be relative to one's own background and understanding. The culture today asserts that any philosophy, religion, or practice is as valid as any other as long as it doesn't hurt anyone else, and it is tolerant of the beliefs of others.

If we want to establish the healthier & constructive (productive) association with this 'Y'-Generation society, it is better to consider the following four essentials while engaging with today's youth:

Real:

Not only must our communication style be credible, but we must be also. They don't expect us to know all about their lifestyle, nor do they want us to embrace their culture. They are simply seeking understanding, and respect. If our communication has a hidden agenda, or we are less than transparent, it will be seen. This generation can sniff a phoney from a long distance.

Raw:

Today's youth have access to the most advanced technology, movie special effects, and video games with which we can never compete. But the good news is that they are not impacted by slick presentations. They don't want a rehearsed talk, or a manufactured spiel. The more spontaneous and interactive we are in the classroom, the less intimidated, and more open they will be.

Relevant:

Obviously what we are communicating has to fall within their area of interest. But the style, as well as the content of our message must be relevant to a generation who are visually educated and entertained. There is no point in giving music to a friend on a cassette tape if they only have a CD player, or on CD if they only use MP3. Similarly we must research in the most appropriate format for those we are reaching. So in understanding the communication styles of our target cohort we will be better equipped to reach them.

Relational :

There is an old and true saying in education circles: "They don't care how much you know until

they know how much you care!" Communicating to this generation requires openness, vulnerability, and genuine interest in those we are trying to teach, and above all else, understanding. The more relaxed the environment, and the more socially conducive to discussions; the better will be the quality of the learning.

Generation Y: employees or volunteers ?

"How would you manage your staff differently if, instead of being paid employees, they were volunteers"?

I count myself lucky that as president of my local branch of a national charity I get to 'manage' volunteers. Reflecting on how I work with these volunteers compared to how I used to manage my staff I've identified some key differences:

1. People have much more flexibility around what they do and when they do it.
2. I thank and praise people much more often.
3. I spend significantly more time with our new 'recruits' exploring what motivates them - what their specific interests are, what type of work they feel they are most suited to, etc.
4. I spend more time discussing with people how important their work is, highlighting the value of their contribution in light of what we are aiming to achieve.
5. I use a more collaborative decision making process - all decisions are joint decisions in our group.

Conclusion

The past two decades have seen a trend toward less hierarchical employer-employee relations along with a move away from long-term employment relationships and toward more demanding work. This means both employers and employees are less loyal to one another. Generational differences do exist but more research is needed. With today's bottom line focus, companies are not likely to change age-old practices without being convinced of solid reasons to do so. Even before the economic crisis that occurred during the fall of 2008, employees tended to have less confidence in long-term rewards. Whether we are involved in educating youth, or in a leadership role, a quality outcome is dependent on our understanding of them. Once we have a foundational grasp of their characteristics, communication styles, and social attitudes, we will be well equipped to effectively impact this enormous and emerging generation. At last but not the least, we can say that Generation Y is generally idealistic, confident and brighter than they might sometimes

come across. They can appear to lack what many of us would call “common sense”. Well, as it turns out, it’s not so common, and it’s not always the only way that makes sense. Be sure to tap into the energy, creativity and enthusiasm of your young talent. They might just teach you a thing or two. Imagine that.

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