

Millennials in the Workforce: Gen Y Workplace Strategies for the Next Century

Alicia Jerome
Richard Stockton College of New Jersey

Michael Scales *
Richard Stockton College of New Jersey
Email: Michael.Scales@stockton.edu
(* corresponding author)

Cliff Whithem
Richard Stockton College of New Jersey

Bill Quain
Richard Stockton College of New Jersey

Abstract

Purpose: This paper investigates the impact of Generation Y individuals on the workforce in the USA.

Design/methodology/approach: The paper employs a discourse approach to the analysis of the changes reported in the literature regarding the organisational responses to deal with the Generation Y behaviour and attitudes. Generation Y is the age group which consists of individuals born between 1979 and 2002, they are more diverse, technologically reliant, and individualistic than any previous generations (Erickson, 2008).

Findings/results: Generation Y individuals currently represent more than 1/3 of the US workforce (Miller, Hodge & Brandt, 2013). As such, this working age population of Americans has shifted to a new generation of high school and college graduates, the workforce is reshaping organizational profiles to adapt to the different demographics entering the business world (McCrindle, 2006). In general, each generation responds to different management styles, work environments, and motivational techniques which directly affect an employee's overall performance. Managers are developing strategies that from a human perspective are important to identify as the strengths and abilities of the new working generation. These strategies are essential in order to attract and recruit talented individuals whose workplace behaviour and social interaction is far different from any previous generation.

Keywords: Generation Y; management strategies; workplace behaviour

JEL Classification: M12; M50
PsycINFO Classification: 3600; 3650
FoR Code : 1503

Introduction

Debates about Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) can be considered in terms of the profit-oriented and/or ethical (i.e., moral) consequences (Brønn and Vidaver-Cohen, 2009). Although Friedman (1970) initially argued that the corporation's sole social responsibility was to generate profit for shareholders, it is now generally accepted that organisations have a responsibility to a much broader range of stakeholders (Freeman, 1984; Mitchell, et al., 1997). In other words, organisations have an ethical responsibility for their Corporate Social Performance (CSP).

Generation Y (Gen Y) individuals are graduating from college and entering the labor pool as a large and influential group. As the oldest generation of employees (Baby Boomers) are retiring, the majority of the workforce is Generation X individuals; many managers are noticing the need to attract and retain this new Gen Y pool of talented workers (Miller, Hodge, Brandt & Schneider, 2013; McCrindle, 2006). The workforce has been transitioning from a traditional hierarchy attitude, to a more diverse and wide spread set of independent, capable individuals. A corporation or even small business must understand the immense demographic change in the workforce's personality traits, attitude shifts, and social trends in order to successfully adapt to this new wave of individuals as well as customers (McCrindle, 2006). "A greater understanding of the desires, requirements, and work-related values of the newest generation of individuals may provide a win-win opportunity where both the employers and employees benefit" (Van Ness, Melinsky, Buff, Seifert, 2010).

Historically and chronologically, according to Mark McCrindle (2006), a Generation Y researcher, there are four big shifts that have "radically redefined the workplace". These four shifts are the aging population, the transitioning generations, the more available options for workers, and the changing tenure. The population is considered to be aging because the Baby Boomer generation makes up the largest generation in America. These "Boomers" are gradually entering retirement, and the median age of the workforce has increased as a direct result. Managers have been focusing on attracting and retaining new individuals who make up the Generation Y age bracket, in order to make up for the future loss of a large population of workers who will soon be retiring (McCrindle, 2006). Currently it is expected that there will be about 38 million workers of the new generation employed in the U.S. In order to create a work environment where they will thrive, policies and procedures need to be changed to raise productivity in preparation for the future (Ferri-Reed, 2010). The values of the workforce are changing and the human resource policies are likely to need to adapt and adhere to different principles if we wish to attract, develop, maintain, and satisfy the Generation Y individuals (Van Ness, Melinsky, Buff, Seifert, 2010). In fact in the research of Alexander and Sysko (2012, 2013), although self-reported data, the authors detail evidence of "entitlement" and other behavioral attitudes of ambiguity of thought, and expectations for "accommodation" as relevant examples of the needs of this workgroup.

Generational Differences

Over the past 60 years of employment history a three-generational workforce has evolved; baby boomers, generation X, and now the dramatic emergence of generation Y. The generational difference between individuals is that they have grown up in various time periods that ultimately influence their behavior in the workplace. It is important to understand the characteristics of individuals in the different age groups, because work performance is contingent upon the personal development and interaction among the working relationships of individual employees. If workplaces ignore the importance of the age transitioning of the workforce, unfavorable consequences in performance and cooperation can occur. Each generation has different attitudes, ideals, and behaviors that are central to their work performance (Van Ness, Melinsky, Buff, Seifert, 2010).

Generation Y or the "Millennial" Generation contains the most significant behaviors when compared to any other generation in the workforce so far. While there is some question to the exact range of birth dates, the millennial age group consists of individuals born from 1979

through 2002 (Erickson, 2008). These millennial (gen Y) individuals are considerably more diverse than any other generation, one example on a very basic level of diversity is that for the first time in history the majority of the US workforce is not Caucasian. The Millennial Generation is characterized as very motivated, ambitious, and entrepreneurial. They are also characterized as growing up with technology and of having become masters of the internet (Shaw, Fairhurst, 2008). They are called the "digital" generation. Most Millennials are constantly available digitally through the use of cell phones, email, and social networks which have become a part of everyday life. From all these sources of connection, their mindset has become globally oriented and has given them the skills to perfect multitasking. The internet is their main resource of information, and they are very experienced with finding the right sourcing of reliable information (Erickson, 2008). In fact, most millennials do not see their employers as content experts any longer because they can find the content information they seek on the web. Therefore the role of manager or supervisor in the contemporary workforce must evolve into something more closely related to that of coach, mentor, or facilitator (Miller Hodge & Brandt, 2013). These new individuals are capable of handling challenging tasks because a significant portion of them are familiar with handling a large amount of stress from their higher education experiences. More Millennials than any previous generation are seeking higher education and wish to seek white collar jobs after graduation (Shaw, Fairhurst, 2008). More of them than any generation before possess graduate degrees and because of that have expectations that employers will value the degrees and in return for such value, millennials display greater job loyalty and tend to stay with their organizations much longer than those without advanced degrees (Kaifi, Nafei & Nile, 2013). Since the generation is self-reliant and individualistic, the majority of the group seeks to set their own schedules and thrive in a flexible environment. They wish to find a balance between their social life and their work life by setting their own work pace (Shaw, Fairhurst, 2008). They prefer to work collaboratively on team-based kinds of projects and assignments after assigning the work and developing the details, in addition, for the most part they need to have constant positive feedback and evaluation of their individual progress in the workplace (Miller, Hodge & Brandt, 2013). While technology has given them the ability to work faster with less effort, they also now have to compete internationally with outsourcing employees and global organizations (Dwyer, 2009). Indeed, generation Y individuals need to be able to access social media and electronic devices while at work in order to remain happy and productive. More than half of them say they will not be able to accept jobs where they are not allowed to do so. Further, about a third of them report that they will share opinions about their employment over social media (Miller, Hodge & Brandt, 2013). The new workforce has greatest learning development and personal expectations compared to other generations because of their digital mindset and backgrounds (Shaw, Fairhurst, 2008). Generation Y is most likely to have the mantra: "I need to live life now and work toward long-term shared goals" (Erickson, 2008). Modern American workplaces would be wise to develop policies and procedures that more closely fit this new generational element of the workforce, from the way they use social media and electronic devices to how they work inter-generationally with others around them who may or may not be as familiar or understanding of their need for such accommodations in the workplace. Indeed, Miller, Hodge & Brant (2014), put it even stronger when writing about these individuals, they insist, that from a human resource perspective it is the best way for a company or organization to stay out of court. Employers do however, need to remain vigilant to the greater nuance involved when individuals often consumed with the need to inform social media of their every endeavor, not violate sexual harassment and age discrimination laws for example (Miller, Hodge & Brandt, 2013).

The Baby Boomer Generation have a very different workplace perspective from that of Generation Y. "Boomers" consist of a group of people born between the years 1946 through 1964. They have lived through the Vietnam War, Civil Rights, the Women's Movement, and Aids- all of which have influenced their social and work lives. They seek to form groups and build lasting interpersonal relationships (Erickson, 2008). This is very different from the Millennial Generation who tends to prefer physical isolation and seek strong, stable mentors and not personal friends at their workplace. The Baby Boomers mantra would most likely be: "I want to help change the world, but I also need to compete to win" (Erickson, 2008). They see Generation Y as knowledgeable, yet self-centered. They try to support them in a parental or nurturing way. They recognize that they are the age of the parents to these generation Y individuals. This makes for an interesting workplace. This is why boomers would become the best mentors for the millennial individuals who are seeking guidance. These Baby Boomers also have an ambiguous

mindset toward the Generation Y individuals, because they both “admire and resent them” being there (Erickson, 2008). They are aware that the younger generation is competitive and will contribute to an organization, but they don’t understand why they seem “unwilling to play by the rules that they had to play by” in an earlier century (Erickson, 2008). The Baby Boomer Generation was already older when significant advancements in technology took hold. While they have been able to familiarize themselves with cell phones, digital TV, and the Internet, they are still not as dependent on technology as the Millennials are. This is why they do not see technology as a major component of “optimizing the workplace” (Simons, 2010). Millennials on the other hand, view technology as the major essential to optimizing the workplace. Yet another chasm.

The Baby Boomer’s values are extremely different than Generation Y. For yet another example, if there were a choice between a prestigious position on Wall Street and a position at a small company with flexible hours and no dress code the two would react very differently. The Baby Boomer Generation would see no contest between the two and choose the Wall Street position. However, a Generation Y employee would have trouble deciding between the two, since they both have attributes that are attractive to them, they would more likely choose the flexibility over salary (Erickson, 2008). The majority of Baby Boomers like flexible work schedules, but most importantly strive to incorporate quality of life issues into their lives, they mostly want the time to engage in their personal hobbies and relaxation (Kaifi, Nafel & Khanfar, 2012).

Generation Xer’s endure as the bridge for the contemporary workforce; in the middle. It is between the baby boomers and generation Y, that generation X individuals are clearly situated,. X’ers as they are commonly referred to be born in the years ranging from 1963 and 1979, and are in between the two other age groups. They are also technologically educated and comfortable with email, fax, cell phones, and emerging technology. However, they are affected by the economic state of low job security, and therefore they are less willing to make personal sacrifices at work (Erickson, 2008). They are also somewhat resentful of the Baby Boomers for depleting Social Security System (Erickson, 2008). It is important to consider Generation X when studying the new generation of Gen Y individuals, because as the workforce ages, Generation X will become the managers and Generation Y will be their subordinates (McCrinkle, 2006). “The workplace begins to reflect these variations in attitude” (Nicholas, 2009). Generation X’s motto most likely will be: “I can’t depend on institutions, and I need to keep my options open” (Erickson, 2008). This generation X views Gen Y employees as inexperienced, and they are not sympathetic to the new workers’ viewpoints. “They can be threatened by Generation Y’s technological sophistication, and resentful that they are candidates for the good jobs” just as Generation X is beginning to open up to new job advancements (Erickson, 2008). While Generation X grew up with technology and they are capable of managing technological systems, Generation Y is slightly more advanced because of their unique inseparable relationship with the digital world (Simons, 2010). The Millennial individuals are likely to send e-mail or instant messages to coworkers as normal communication with colleagues, however different generations can perceive this as a nuisance. For example, Generation X is likely to see this as “disruptive and inconsistent with the way employees usually do work” (Erickson, 2008).

Attracting and Retaining Gen Y in a Workplace

Although the economy has led to a decrease in the employment rate, the amount of retiring Baby Boomers is steadily increasing and creating new employment opportunities. The supply of talented workers will soon become less than the demand, and eventually there will be a need for Generation Y to fill the available positions (Dwyer, 2009). The steady increase in the retirement rates of baby boomers indicate a shortfall in employees needed throughout North America to fill that gap. Companies want to attract new individuals because they want to replace the retiring segment and are seeking creative ideas and innovation to give their company a competitive advantage. Organizations are looking to the new generation to fill this gap, which is why it is in their best interest of everyone concerned to attract these new entrants. Organizations have started to redesign their corporate culture and shift their managerial styles in a way that appeals to the younger generation and will attract talented individuals. An example of an organization redesigning specifically for Generation Y is Best Buy (Fenn, 2010). Donna Fenn (2010), author of *Upstarts*, suggests that human resources should shelf their previous practices of

recruit, train, and retain to a new model that idealizes the Millennials. The new model of initiate, engage, collaborate, and evolve is geared directly towards the generations needs and reflects Generation Y's culture (Fenn, 2010). Many companies seek to adapt their recruitment strategies in ways that better embrace the entitlement mentality of this Y generation (Alexander& Sysko, 2012).

In a 2013 study with almost 300 undergraduate generation Y business students from 2 different universities, (Alexander & Sysko, 2013) the authors found many supportive consistencies from other studies with Gen Y individuals. Gen Y individuals were found to be very loyal to organizations that they felt shared their values, but felt that the company should then revolve around them. Therefore, it is important for a company to have the right image when recruiting so that talented applicants get a good first impression when applying for a position. Companies can recruit and attract these new individuals with exposure from school functions and advertising on social network websites, such as Facebook (D'Aprix, 2009). After engaging a talented individual, an organization should be upfront about their company culture and policies to create an agreeable job fit between the company and the employee. A Generation Y employee might be attracted to the casual dress and relaxed atmosphere for example. Organizations should take steps to actively manage their employees to retain the most talented workers (Yamamura, Birk, Cossitt, 2010). Some steps may include enhancing communication with a qualitative and quantitative understanding of the different generations (Van Ness, Melinsky, Buff, Seifert, 2010).

Generation Y possesses a different attitude than their predecessors. Companies can change their human resource policies to adapt to the new workforce in order to draw in and retain the most talented college graduates (Ferri-Reed, 2010). In order to maintain a committed workforce from the new generation, company policies need to be more flexible; this is because Generation Y individuals are very focused on a balance between their personal lifestyle and professional career. A good work-life balance could include hybrid roles for new employees or flexible work hours (Ferri-Reed, 2010). An interview of a group of Generation Y individuals showed that "these individuals would prefer short-term rewards in comparison to long-term rewards. Additionally, the majority of interviewees desired immediate pay increases, as well as other incentives to maintain high levels of productivity, morale and retention. Furthermore, employees relate better to the supervisor, when supervisors spend more time understanding individuals" (Dwyer, 2009).

In fact, money and prestige, the primary perceived workplace attraction of the baby boomers fall short in the face of what Gen Y individuals find attractive about work. Generation Y employees seek flexibility, relaxed dress codes, acceptability of tattoos and body piercings, and the use of social media and personal computing as necessary components to employment (Miller, Hodge & Brandt, 2013). Creating this new work life balance could be more sustainable for individuals who want to feel like they make a difference with their work. Millennial individuals are very concerned with making societal contributions and being indispensable to their organization. Human resources can retain employees by empowering the staff to make societal contributions to causes they support in order to allow employees to create their own values. "Increased commitment from Generation Y staff often comes directly by achieving congruency with the values and significance of their causes" (McCrindle, 2006).

Training Generation Y

Another recent article found differences among generation Y individuals with regard to social-media usage. (Bolton, Parasuraman, Hoefnagels, Migchels & Kabadayi, 2013) It's a generation that fully expects to be able to incorporate social media usage into their chosen workplaces.. "While workplace diversity adds depth, breadth, and scope to organizations, it also has the potential to adversely affect individual and group performance, thus creating obstacles, which may impede the attainment of broader organizational goals and bottom line results" (Dwyer, 2009). Leadership from the organization is critical in managing the generational differences in the workplace. The disparity needs to be recognized by all employees in order to have individuals express their age diversity as a positive effect on the organization (Dwyer, 2009). Once Generation Y enters the workplace, the culture will inevitably be altered, which may cause apprehension from the Baby Boomers who are reluctant to change and may resent the

new individuals' ideals or attitudes. Human resource managers can respond to the changes by holding training meetings that allow the Boomers to convey their concerns, while showing the benefits that the changes directed toward Generation Y will make. Educating and communicating through participation and cooperation can give the Baby Boomers a chance to accept the changes in a positive way. Instead of resentment, the older generation would learn to support and value the new generation's contribution to the organization; and once change is accepted, the Baby Boomers may be willing to learn new practices that improve the quality of work performance. Training all employees on the generational differences will help make communication flow more smoothly between individuals. Also, once workers bridge the generation gap, they will be able to share job experiences and build work relationships that will create stronger teams because of the different perspectives (Dwyer, 2009).

Computer based training reduces travel, class size limitations, and can be less expensive depending on the material. Since the 1980's, video games have been used as a tool for training for younger generations of workers. Generation Y usually seeks instant satisfaction, because they are accustomed to high-speed internet connections where information is available in nanoseconds. The emerging technologies and the internet are transforming the business world as well as organization's cultures and structures (Walker, 2001). For a Millennial employee, video games would most likely be the best type of training, because learners can control their speed at which they learn and have the ability to control when and where they practice (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, and Wright, 2010).

When using this type of instruction, the trainees are able to get immediate feedback for their abilities, which is attractive to the Generation Y personality traits. Learning is also more engaged with interactive simulation, and it is more flexible from the ability to practice at any time. The video, graphics, sound, and interactive experience is appealing to the Generation Y individuals, compared to traditional classroom learning (Shaw, Fairhurst, 2008). Some companies that already use video games as a source for training are Cold Stone Creamery, Cisco Systems Inc., and V-Bank (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, and Wright, 2010). Training Generation Y with video games can be cost effective, because there is no need to hire a trainer, pay individuals' travel, or schedule multiple training sessions. Employees would be able to play/practice training materials in their own homes. Video games are relatively inexpensive to make, and younger workers showed at least a 5% improvement compared to traditional techniques. It is an entertaining way to continuously improve employee skills without individuals feeling uninterested (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, and Wright, 2010).

Although Generation Y and Generation X individuals would easily learn from this type of training, it may be a problem for Baby Boomers who grew up with little technology. Generation Y will respond most to training that is relevant, conducive to their skill sets, and entertaining. However, managers need to accommodate all employees into training, and may have trouble finding common ground between all three generations. Baby Boomers may have trouble accepting the new generation's differences, because they are only familiar with their own experiences of traditional classroom learning techniques (Shaw, Fairhurst, 2008). To Generation Y, technology is effortless. "The new generation workers, working in the technology-driven industry and tagged as high contributors to the economy, have an elevated platform to deal with" (Poornima, 2009).

Creating Generation Y Leaders

The variety of values in the modern workplace has caused anguish from the gap in ideals between the three generations. Each generation has a different mindset and different preference for culture or interactions that need to be facilitated between the young and older employees (McCrinkle, 2006). Employers must prepare for these emerging trends and shifts in work practices (McCrinkle, 2006). Managers can adapt to the shift in the workforce by designing and implementing human resource policies that reflect the differences in the new generation (Shaw, Fairhurst, 2008). It is important to create a cooperative environment by understanding generational differences and reduce misunderstandings in values and expectations (Nicholas, 2009). Identifying factors of organizations that have been subdued to the new generation may include casual dress, flexible work hours, and loss of formalities. If employers embrace the

differences than the culture of an organization can become enriched by being open to new technologies and practice, and adding value to a work life balance (Shaw, Fairhurst, 2008).

Employers need to meet individuals' expectations of the workplace. For example, Generation Y views traditional approaches to the workplace as tedious, since they could have most likely performed the task more quickly and with less effort. These generational preferences can affect work dynamics and hinder the productivity and effectiveness, which is why it is important for managers to integrate processes that enhance generational differences into their strategic plan (Shaw, Fairhurst, 2008). Generation Y individuals are seen as the "Trophy kids", since their progression through life included everyone in a competition receiving a trophy. There are expectations of reward for participation-not just winning (Kaifi, Nafel, Khanfar & Kaifi, 2012).

One step that managers can implement is to develop baby boomers as mentors to Generation Y employees. The older generation has more of an obligation to the younger individuals due to the transitioning workforce generations. "There is a need to both fill the ongoing labor demands, as well as replace retiring staff. At a strategic level of human resource management, there is a need to ensure that the knowledge and leadership of the Baby Boomers is effectively transferred to the emerging Generation X and the commencing Generation Y employees" (McCrinkle, 2006). Mentors are extremely important to Generation Y. They help develop the individuals' creative ideas, and they can direct individuals in the right direction. Older generations of workers, such as Baby Boomers, are the most helpful as mentors, because they can give the Generation Y individuals examples of life experiences that are relevant to the personal development of their work lives (McCrinkle, 2006).

Generation Y has more options than any other generations have had in the past. They are highly encouraged to seek higher education, and they have the options to travel abroad and train for multiple careers. Since the state of the economy has demolished job security and increased competition in the labor pool, the individuals ages 20-24 are likely to change jobs about three times in one year. Human resource management must respond to the high turnover rate in order to reduce costs associated with turnover and retain talented employees. In order to improve employee loyalty, managers can try to understand individual's needs, motivate, reward, or assign a mentor. By recognizing the Generation Y's significance, managers can vastly change the young individuals' career expectations into a new sense of belonging (McCrinkle, 2006).

Millennials want more out of their careers than just a paycheck. The new generation is about fun, social interaction, personal development, and continuous training in order to get a greater sense of fulfillment out of their work environment (McCrinkle, 2006). "The factors that motivate the present day employee are the social, self-esteem, and self-actualization needs" (Poornima, 2009).

Once management understands the generational differences, they can adjust their policies and structures to support the new generation and enhance their skills and abilities that enable an organization to reach its objectives. "Each generation is at a different point in their life" (Dwyer, 2009) and wants something different out of their work environment. Without knowledge of the different values, management will not be able to fully motivate and or get full use of each generation's personal knowledge. Flexibility is important for all individuals, especially Generation Y who value time-off with respect to their personal life. Management can use flexible work hours and bonus pay as motivation, because these rewards significantly influence their individual performance. Essentially managers should try to "revise and retool recruitment, retention, and development strategies with respect to the integration of various generations into the workforce environment" (Dwyer, 2009).

In order to create new strategies for managing Generation Y, supervisors need to consider what values are important to them. They want their work to have a significant impact, they respect transparency from their managers, they need to know that what they are doing is relevant, they want a fun workplace, and they want to continuously develop their skills (Shaw, Fairhurst, 2008). Managers can use these attributes in creating strategies for motivation or retaining. For example, they could create a more informal dress policy, cafeteria style benefits

packages, or flexible work hours. When managing the new generation, executives should also consider tasks that are more project-centered rather than function based, since the age group works best when working toward short-term objectives that can be evaluated immediately. Since Generation Y prefers to be challenged and want to be creative with their jobs, managers can try an empowering management style that may increase satisfaction from employees who are able to contribute and be a value to their organization (Crampton, Hodge, 2007).

It is also important to remember that when implementing new policies that they must be used across the board, and not favor some individuals over another. For example, the Baby Boomer generation may not agree with the policy changes of a more informal workplace. Since the new generation is making changes to a workplace culture, this can harbor some resentment from the older generations who had to conform to the policies thus far. Human resources must manage these emotions, and focus the individuals on the benefits these changes are creating (Crampton, Hodge, 2007).

How Generation Y Contributes

In behavioral terms, Generation Y as a group act proactively to problems, are loyal to companies regardless of reward, and they are willing to work their way up the ladder to success for the right organization, (Alexander & Sysko, 2013). With technology in the workplace becoming more of an essential component to processes, organizations are starting to rely heavily on individuals who are capable of handling technology driven practices (Bolton, Parasuraman, Hoefnagels, Migchels & Kabadayl., 2013; Poornima, 2009). The new generation spends an average of 12.2 hours per week on the internet searching through social networks, videos, blogs, and interacting with others (Fenn, 2010). Businesses have now been adapting to Generation Y's networking sites, such as Facebook and Twitter, in order to market products and advertise their business online (Fenn, 2010). Organizations see the technological ideas that the new generation brings to the workplace as a retainable source of benefits. Technology can help a business network and communicate with the public, customize business systems, and improve on production and business practices (Fenn, 2010). Not only do websites such as MySpace have a large amount advertising possibilities from web traffic, but it also allows a business to have a chance to communicate with their customers and surrounding community while receiving reactions to their products (Fenn, 2010).

Donna Fenn (2010) goes on to describe Generation Y individuals as extreme collaborators, technology mavens, game changers, market insiders, brand builders, social capitalists, workplaces renegades, and morph masters. Not only do they contribute to organizations, but they contribute to society as well, since Generation Y is the most entrepreneurial generation so far. They believe in collaboration of all kinds, such as teams and social networks (Fenn, 2010). "Technology is like the air that they breathe, there is no learning curve" (Fenn, 2010). Technology is the main factor that distinguishes themselves from other generations (Fenn, 2010). Since Generation Y's are comfortable with working virtually, for example through telecommuting, organizations are able to cut back on fixed costs (Fenn, 2010). They are able to answer emails through Blackberrys on weekends and stay connected to their workplace at all times, since technology is so embedded in their everyday life. Generation Y's are comfortable with doing work at untraditional hours away from the office, as long as they get their necessary leisure time off (Fenn, 2010). While the new generation wants to be able to have a flexible schedule to balance their home and work lives, they realize that their work and home life are now intertwined into one.

Generation Y holds a different mindset than their predecessors which contributes to their organizations by finding faults with business models and strategies, and suggesting technology-driven substitutes for more efficient productivity (Fenn, 2010). They are self-aware and are able to identify what products will market best to their own generation. They are socially conscious and are committed to giving back to their communities as well (Fenn, 2010). They also believe in the reinvention of traditional processes. Millennial workers are very adaptive and open to change, with a high rebound rate. For example if they have failed at making a sale, they are able to bounce back quickly (Fenn, 2010). While they will conform to a traditional business model, they will push to reinvent an organization's principles to keep practices more modern (Fenn, 2010). They are constantly seeking to improve their productivity

and business practices, because more efficiency can create less work in the long run. Generation Y accepts change, because it creates a dynamic work environment that is perceived as exciting to these individuals (Fenn, 2010).

In order to figure out how the new generation will react as future management it may be easily determined by their attitudes as individuals. There is not a lot of research to date on Generation Y managers. The management style that they seek as employees will most likely be their approach as managers themselves: honest communication, direct feedback, continuous training, and flexible incentives. While they will conform to a traditional business model, they will push to reinvent an organization's principles to keep practices more modern (Fenn, 2010). As managers, their characteristics would most likely reveal a "flexible, mission driven, employee-centric" environment where participative management styles are practiced (Fenn, 2010). They would have the "play hard, work hard" motto embedded in their attitudes. They are also more likely to be the ones who allow individuals to play video games during work hours but expect them to check their emails on their blackberry constantly during the weekend (Fenn, 2010). Generation Y managers will also most likely use web based recruiting and staffing techniques (Fenn, 2010).

Generation Y managers feel that they need to prove themselves as being capable of performing in positions of authority just as well as the older generations. These managers should be encouraged to use their background and personal values in their supervisory role. For example, they can use participative management and an open door policy in order to regularly communicate with the staff. Generation Y executives can develop confidence in their abilities from mentors in order to gain respect and earn the trust of subordinates. "A younger manager might be concerned with career advancement, future salary and bonuses" (Dwyer, 2009). Since older managers are reluctant to change their management styles, Generation Y managers will most likely be more willing to allow employee involvement regarding restructuring of policies and procedures (Crampton, Hodge, 2007).

Conclusions

As of right now Generation Y's career advancements are at a standstill because of the recession that has been deemed by President Obama as "the worst since the Great Depression" (Fenn, 2010). However, Donna Fenn (2010) believes that Generation Y's are up for the challenge, because they possess certain characteristics that give them the ability to overcome the harsh conditions. One of these characteristics is that they know how to be frugal, because their age suggests that they are less likely to be burdened with family financial responsibilities. Also, their technological ability will help them cut costs for organizations, for example they can possibly telecommute saving fixed costs. Another characteristic is that they are innovators, and companies will most likely make themselves responsive to Generation Y in the future. They are considered flexible as well, because they can reinvent themselves as the labor market changes (Fenn, 2010).

Generation Y's entrance in the workforce has been stunted by the recession, which is also causing the Baby Boomers reluctance to retire. These Boomers are taking extended careers, second part-time jobs, and have a longer life expectancy. In a recent survey, two out of five workers have said that they plan on working past the age of 65; and out of the percentage who said they would retire, they believe that if their work schedule is more flexible than they would most likely continue working (Perry, 2010). If management plans on making flexible work schedules to attract Generation Y, it may also retain their existing Baby Boomer generation to work well past the age of 65. And if the Baby Boomers are not retiring, then job opportunities for Generation Y will not be as plentiful as expected (Perry, 2010). In the future there will be no doubt that Generation Y will have trouble finding jobs because of the recession. However, many of them will start their own entrepreneurial companies that will most likely succeed from their creativity and innovation. Generation Y see creating their own businesses as a good start to a life long career where they can manage themselves. Also, they are aware that even if their business venture fails, they can use the experience on resumes for future job placement (Fenn, 2010).

Behaviorally and socially Generation Y is much different than any other age group of employees thus far (Alexander & Sysko, 2013). The generational differences in attitudes, ideals, and behaviors suggest that current managers should adapt their policies to create an environment that influences the potential for optimal performance (Van Ness, Melinsky, Buff, Seifert, 2010). The impact on the organizational world is creating a new opportunity for management to collect talented individuals that can contribute to their company's development.

The aging workforce is a trend in which managers are starting to recognize as a necessity for Generation Y to replace the positions of retirees, and changes are being made to adapt to the situation. Preparations in policies and procedures are also changing to accommodate human resource responsibilities of attracting, training, and retaining new talent (Miller, Hodge, Brandt & Schneider, 2013; Dwyer, 2009). It is important to notice the trend in the changing workforce, because "any company that doesn't attract a vital core of Generation Y employees will soon find themselves lacking in competitive vigor. In addition, the means for any organization to attract the most creative and innovative members of this generation is first to understand their expectations borne of their internet experiences and then to reinvent the organization's management practices accordingly" (D'Aprix, 2009).

Managers of a different generation may not feel as though they should have to change their whole work environment just to welcome the new workforce. However, these individuals will soon make up a large percentage of workers, and organizations that do not adapt will not receive the talent that others are searching for. Human resources can respond to changes by creatively training the Millennials and helping older generations transition to new policies in order to create a strong team of workers (Dwyer, 2009). Employers can also embrace a new organization culture by understanding employee values, creating incentives, assigning a mentor, and creating useful work that gives individuals a greater sense of fulfillment (Poornima, 2009).

Employers see the new employees as extreme collaborators, technology savvy, game changers, market insiders, and social capitalists that will contribute to the success of organizations and society (Fenn, 2010). Generation Y has recently been stunted by the recession and the older generation's reluctance to retire. The Millennials will now need to prove themselves capable to gain respect and reveal that they are able to "play hard and work hard" (Fenn, 2010). Essentially, once they force themselves into the workforce, they will reinvent the organizations they work for.

References

- Alexander, C. & Sysko, J. (2013). I'm Gen Y, I love feeling entitled, and it shows. *Academy of Educational Leadership Journal*, 17(4), 127-131.
- Bolton, R., Parasuaman, A., Hoegnagels, A., Migchels, N. & KABADAYI, S. (2013). Understanding generation y and their use of social media: a review and research agenda. *Journal of Service Management*, 24 (3), 245-267.
- Crampton, S., & Hodge, J. (2007). Generations in the workplace: understanding age diversity. *The Business Review*, 9 (1), 16-22.
- D'Aprix, R. (2009). Leadership: The perils of denial and gen F. *Strategic Communication Management*, 13 (6), 13.
- Dwyer, R J. (2009). Prepare for the impact of the multi-generational workforce! Transforming Government: *People, Process and Policy*, 3 (2), 101-110.
- Eddy, S., Schweitzer, L, & Lyons, S. (2010) New generation, great expectations: a field study of the millennial generation. *Journal of Business and Psychology*. 25 (2) 281-292.
- Erickson, T. J. (2008). *Plugged in: the generation y guide to thriving at work*. United States: Harvard Business School Press.
- Fenn, D. (2010). *Upstarts: how gen y entrepreneurs are rocking the world of business and 8 ways you can profit from their success*. United States: McGraw-Hill.
- Ferri-Reed, J. (2010). The keys to engaging millennials. *The Journal for Quality and Participation*, 33 (1) 1-33.
- Kaifi, B., Nafei, W., Khanfar, N, & Kaifi, M. A. (2012). Multigenerational workforce: managing and understanding millennials. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 7(24) 88-93.
- McCrindle, M. (2006). New generations at work: attracting, recruiting, retaining, and training generation y [McCrindle Research Online] Available from: <http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=ONdoBshH8IMC&oi=fnd&pg=PA4&dq=X,+Y+B oom:+Generation+in+the+Classroom&ots=Ubm7k029ky&sig=uydO5N9PyV6YE1ATK3pwLBjvFd8#v=onepage&q&f=false>.
- Miller, M., Hodge, K., Brandt, A. & Schneider, E. (2013). The young and the restless: Gen Y'ers in the workplace: are you prepared?, *FDCC Quarterly*, 63 (3) 226-250.
- Nicholas, A. (2009). Generational Perceptions: Workers and Consumers. *Journal of Business & Economics Research*, 7 (10), 47-52.
- Noe, R. A., Hollenbeck, J. R., Gerhart, B. & Wright, M. (2010). *Human resource management: gaining a competitive advantage*. 7th Edition, New York City, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Perry, L. (2010). The aging workforce. *Professional Safety*, 55 (4), 22-28.
- Poornima, S. (2009). Motivating through satisfaction: an ongoing effort of HR in organizations. *IUP Journal of Management Research*, 8 (5), 26-37.
- Shaw, S. & Fairhurst, D. (2008). Engaging a new generation of graduates, *Education & Training*, 50 (5), 366-378.
- Simons, N. (2010). Leveraging generational work styles to meet business objectives, *Information Management Journal*, 44 (1), 28-29, 31-33.

Van Ness, R., Melinsky, K., Buff, C., & Seifert, C. (2010). Work ethic: do new employees mean new work values?, *Journal of Managerial Issues*, 22 (1), 10-34.

Yamamura, J., Birk, C. & Cossitt, B. (2010). Attracting and retaining talent: the importance of first impressions, *The CPA Journal*, 80 (4), 58-60.

Brandished the work-shy generation of "snowflake" tendencies, millennials are said to expect too much freedom of their employers, and yet 84 percent report to experiencing burnout from their excessive workloads. However, the post-1980s cohort of employees is actually inspiring meaningful ideas that will change the future of work as we know it. Millennials and Gen Z currently account for slightly over a third of the workforce (38 percent). In the next decade, that figure is set to shoot up to 58 percent, making the youthful generations the most dominant in the workplace. With that will come a greater number of them in managerial positions, too. Already today, 48 percent of younger generation managers are director level or higher. According to Alicia Jerome, author of "Millennials in the Workforce: Gen Y Workplace Strategies for the Next Century," about half of Millennials would not take a job if the workplace did not allow access to social media or personal electronic devices. This is not entirely surprising when considering that the Millennial generation was raised on the Internet and social media.