

Diversity Leadership Guide

Generation Y

In 2006, our third issue of the Diversity Leadership Guide focused on Generations in the Workplace. It was there we introduced some differences in the work habits, expectations, and management opportunities of the Millennials, now widely referred to as Generation Y. Perhaps you will recall:

Sometimes called "Generation Y" or the "Echo Boomers," these individuals were born between 1979 and 2000. The earlier Millennials are the newest members of our workforce and are often the children of the Baby Boomers. Many of these workers grew up in dual-working households, so they became independent at an early age. They have been exposed to a technologically advanced society and recognize that they are citizens of the world, not just their city, state or country. "They see their jobs as a means of earning an income TODAY, not as a calling or devotion," says Cam Marston, author and speaker on generational workplace issues. They do, however, want to feel that their jobs have meaning. They want to know how what they do affects the bigger picture and benefits society. Climbing the corporate ladder for its own sake doesn't appeal to the Millennials, but staying challenged does. It is critical for employers to engage these workers in the company's mission and help them understand where their contributions fit in the overall scheme of things.

Millennials have grown up multi-tasking – their schedules as children were often more demanding than their parents' schedules. They are easily bored and have minimal loyalty, so keeping them in your company requires that you keep them motivated and busy. They also tend to be entrepreneurial, so give them opportunities to plan, build and experiment with new methods.

Though managing them may be a challenge, not managing them effectively could be a disaster. Don't expect them to become Boomers or Matures. They won't be. Engage them, give them consistent feedback and direction, take advantage of their energy levels and entrepreneurial attitudes.

In this current issue, we have the opportunity to hear directly from Generation Y in the words of NASA Employees. It's critical that we listen.

Please click on the following link and read the presentation from NASA Gen-Y'ers.

http://colab.arc.nasa.gov/files/NASA%20Comm_%2030Jan2008-rev11.ppt

Ideas for Dialogue

1. Do you work with, live with, have any interaction with Generation Y-ers? If so, what about this presentation rings true to you and what does it mean in the workplace? What strengths do Gen Ys bring to GRC from which we could **immediately** benefit?
2. Generation Y is currently 25% of the workforce and is projected to be 47% of the workforce by 2014.
 - a. Based on the information presented in this document what does this mean to NASA's mission, message, and leadership strategy?
 - b. What does it mean to be a Baby Boomer when Gen-Ys begin to infiltrate the upper echelons of the organization?
3. What organizational support needs to be in place to best manage the Gen-Y career trajectory? What resource investments are required to accommodate Gen-Ys?
4. Is your organization lacking the voices of any generation currently in the workforce? What might this mean to the organization's creativity, innovation, process, service, product, and customer?