Engineering Management
Field Project

Understanding and Managing Generation Y

by

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Executive Summary

There are four generations in the workplace today; they consist of the Silent Generation, Baby Boom Generation, Generation X, and Generation Y. Generation Y, being the newest generation, is the least understood generation although marketers, demographers, recruiters, and other groups have formed initial impressions and continue to refine them.

The majority of managers in the workforce come from the Baby Boom generation and they are accustomed to managing other Baby Boomers or Generation X members. The generational gap poses challenges for supervisors and managers to effectively motivate and inspire Generation Y members whose workplace values and beliefs differ from that of their elders.

A literature review provided background on all of the generations but focused on Generation Y. Managers and supervisors of Generation Y employees who have formed their own impressions were provided the opportunity to validate their impressions against that of other sources. The literature review did not provide information on effectively managing this new group of individuals.

The project validated the literature review with my personal observations as a manager of Generation Y employees. Additional research focused on examining established management and leadership theories and determining their applicability to managing Generation Y members. The models analyzed were successfully applied to managing Generation Y employees with minor provisions and included the Hierarchy of Needs, Situational Leadership, the Empowerment Continuum, and Cultural Intelligence.

Methods of communication and training, and Generation Y norms were also reviewed. Of particular note, technology has an integral role in Generation Y life and there is an expectation to use the latest technology in the workplace. However, technology is not a substitute for face-to-face training, interaction with co-workers, and communication with supervisors and managers.

Table of Contents

Figures

Tables

Introduction

General perception is that employees leave companies not because they dislike the work, the people they work with, or the benefits, but based on their relationship with the first line supervisor or with other management with whom they regularly interact. Since supervisors and managers play such a large role in employee morale, it is important for these groups to understand how to interact with and manage employees.

The concept of generations is well known. Much of today's talk revolves around the passing away of the Silent Generation and pending Baby Boomer retirements. The number of highly experienced individuals in the workforce will rapidly decline as Baby Boomers retire; a recent news clip showed the first Baby Boomer applying for government Social Security benefits. Generation X, which succeeds the Baby Boomers, has completely entered the workforce.

There has been little talk of the newest generation to the workforce, popularly called "Generation Y." Just like the Silent Generation and Baby Boomers are known for certain work attributes, Generation Y has developed its own. In order for companies to effectively maintain positive employee-management relationships it is important for managers at all levels to know the characteristics of Generation Y and understand how to best work with them. Simple strategies can be devised to keep employee morale and retention high when managers are aware of inter-generational differences and can use that knowledge to their advantage.

I first realized the need for increased understanding of the generations after receiving diversity awareness training at work. The training focused on increasing racial diversity by recruiting and retaining African Americans, Hispanics, Asians, and other races into the workforce. I observed during training that despite the fact that there are low numbers of minorities in my office, people are diverse in many other ways. The workforce was diverse by religious affiliations, private or public school educations, age group, one or two parent households, and other characteristics.

As a Generation X supervisor for ten employees that are mostly from Generation Y, I felt it beneficial to focus on understanding Generation Y and developing new skills to manage them effectively. Generation Y will force other Baby Boomer and Generation X managers to consider whether it is the Generation Y employee that needs to change, or whether the manager needs to adapt to new workforce demands with things like flexible work hours and relaxed dress codes.

Literature Review

The current labor force consists of a mix of several different groups in the workforce that are banded into "generations." We're all familiar with the terms the Silent Generation or Baby Boomers, but the latest generation, and possibly the least understood generation to enter the workforce, is the "Millennial Generation," "Baby Boom Generation," or "Generation Y." This generation includes individuals born from 1982 to 2005 and will be referred to singularly as Generation Y. The start and end dates of generations varies from source to source; Figure 1 graphically shows how the durations of the generations differs. The dates 1982 to 2005 are used by Neil Howe in a recent article in the Harvard Business Review.
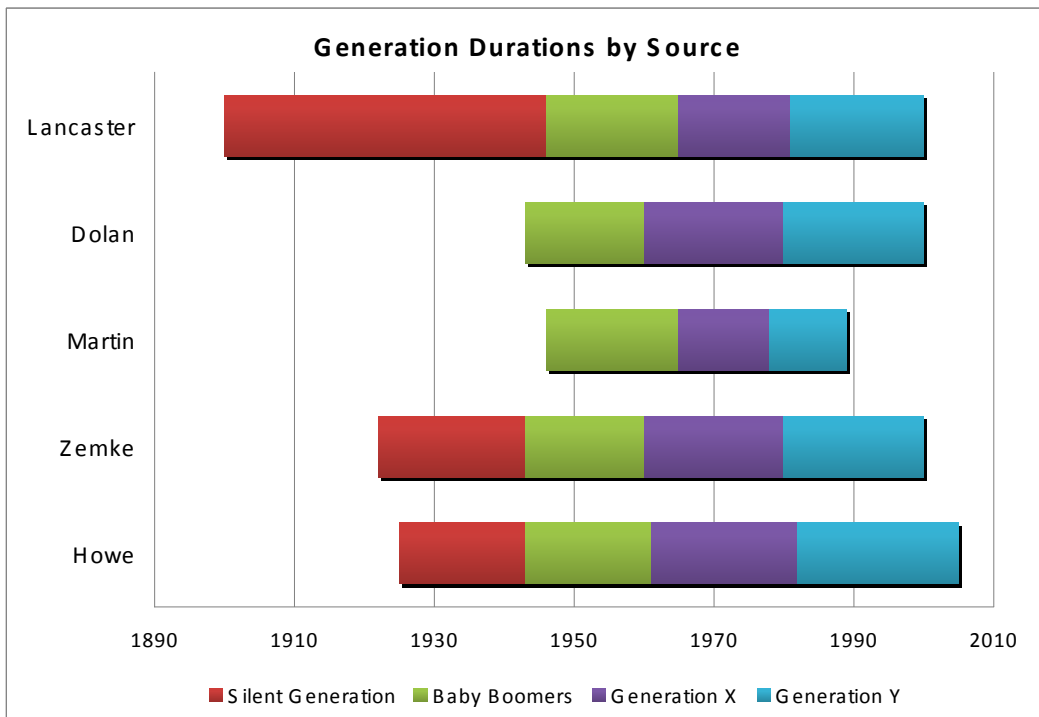

Figure 1. Generation Durations by Source

The term Generation Y dates back to an August 1993 editorial in the magazine Advertising Age (AdAge) that names Generation Y as the successor to Generation X. AdAge probably came up with the term for defining a then young/teenage group for marketing purposes that was different from Generation X. Generation Y is also referred

to as Generation Why, called so because Eric Chester, a motivational speaker, felt the generation wants to know the "why" before they will do the "what" (Chester). Another reference for Generation Y is the Millenials; this is likely because some sources consider the end of the age group for Generation Y to be the end of or near the end of the millennium. The generation is sometimes referred to as Echo Boomers or Boomlets because they are the children of Baby Boomers. The Net Generation is called this since their generation has grown up the entire time with computers and net (short for internet) access. There are still more terms for Generation Y such as Generation Next, Nexers, Digital Generation, Gaming Generation, Baby Busters, I Generation, and Netizens (Deloitte).

Generations Other Than Y

To have a feel for how Generation Y differs from the other generations in the workplace it is necessary to have a short discussion on the attributes and characteristics of the Silent Generation, Baby Boomers, and Generation X. There are still other generations that have a minor presence in the workforce, they are the GI Generation and the Homeland Generation. The GI Generation and Homeland Generation will not be discussed. Table 1 shows each generation, the years of birth, and the ages of its members.

Table 1. The Generations by Year (Howe)

Generation	Timeframe	Age	Size (Rank)
GI Generation	1901-1924	83-106	
Silent Generation	1925-1942	65-82	
Baby Boom	1943-1960	47-64	1
Generation X	1961-1981	26-46	
Generation Y	1982-2005	2-25	2
Homeland Generation	2005-2025	Under 2	

The Silent Generation is also called Traditionalists, GIs Mature, World War II Generation, Veterans, and Seniors. Their generation was largely shaped by wars World War II and the Korean War, and events such as the Great Depression, and the New Deal. The core values of the Silent Generation include dedication/sacrifice, conformity, law and order, respect for authority, duty before pleasure, adherence to rules, and patience. For

the majority of their careers, Silent Generation members wore conservative, formal clothing consisting of a coat and tie and had neatly trimmed hair. Their beneficial work style has been characterized as detail oriented, thorough, hard working, loyal, and stable. However, their drawbacks on the job have been declared as unable to deal with change or ambiguity, not likely to challenge inefficient processes, and uncomfortable with conflict (Zemke).

The Baby Boomers are those people who were born between 1943 and 1960, according to Zemke. Baby Boomers are basically the children of the Silent Generation following the end of hostilities and uncertainty during World War II. Their core values differ from their parents and include optimism, team orientation, personal fulfillment, and health and wellness. In the workplace Baby Boomers are known for being service oriented, driven, wanting to please, and good team players. Some workplace criticisms that Baby Boomers receive are that they are self-centered, overly sensitive to feedback, uncomfortable with conflict (similar to their parents), and concerned with the process more than the result (Zemke). Based on W. Edwards Deming's quality standards, I disagree that being process oriented is somehow worse than focusing on the product. Baby Boomers began the switch from conservative clothing to that of designer clothes and popular fashion of the day (Zemke).

Generation X are the children of Baby Boomers. Job performance in Generation X is markedly different from the prior two generations; amongst their positive attributes, they are considered technology literate, not intimidated by authority, creative, independent, and adaptable. Workplace damaging attributes are that Generation X members are impatient, lack experience, are cynical, have poor people skills. At work, you will see members of this generation with body piercings (male and female) in places other than their ear and numerous tattoos visible outside of their clothing. This generation makes a clothing shift to functional styles of clothing to items like cargo pants (Zemke). It is no surprise that Generation X lacks experience, other than Generation Y, they have been in the workplace less time than the other generations. Although they lack

experience, their command of technology has placed an infinite amount of information at their fingertips through the World Wide Web. Some core values of this generation are diversity, global thinking, embracing technology, balance, fun, informality, self-reliance, and pragmatism (Zemke).

Generation Y in Depth

Today's managers have had experience working with older generations but depending on the industry little experience with Generation Y. Retail and fast food establishments are usually the first to employ the youngest members of our society, but for professions that require higher educations, such as engineers, architects, scientists, etc., they enter the workforce late in comparison to their peers. The wise manager will realize that there is a so-called generation gap where there is a difference in social values, behavioral attitudes, and personal aspirations of one generation and that of the next generation often seen between parents and their siblings. By understanding the core values and work attributes of the Silent Generation, Baby Boomers, and Generation X, it is easy to see how a manager of those people will require an understanding of Generation Y to properly manage them.

To begin to gain an understanding of Generation Y, it is beneficial to look at the world in which they grew up. Generation Y grew up during a time of technology, when items such as pagers, cellular phones, fax machines, telephone answering machines, notebook computers, and "Walkmans" were available. Other things such as cable TV and dedicated content channels such as CNN for news, MTV for music videos, and ESPN for sports have been readily available. In addition, technology items such as automatic teller machines and videocassette recorders have also been a part of their upbringing (Chester).

Generation Y had several notable life events that have helped to shape who they are as people today. Domestic and international terrorist attacks within the continental United States occurred during this generation, such as the Oklahoma City Federal Building bombing, World Trade Center parking garage bomb detonation, and the total

destruction of World Trade Center Towers I and II on September 11, 2001. Ethical/financial indiscretions led to the collapse of major companies such as Enron and WorldCom. This generation witnessed the economic and military development of countries such as China and India, multiple United States military led operations in the Middle East, and the student shootings at Columbine High School in a Colorado suburb (Deloitte). Also of importance is the pace of life, as many Generation Y members grew up with numerous after-school activities that required planning their schedules.

The core values of Generation Y continue to show a shift from that of previous generations. Generation Y members are said to be optimistic, confident, sociable, moral/ethical, possess street smarts, civic duty minded, focused on achievement, and find value in diversity. Based on the life events of Generation Y, these core values are directly related. The emphasis on morality is due in part to the major scandals that occurred during their upbringing such as the previously mentioned Enron and WorldCom, but also the events surrounding Dennis Kozlowski at the Tyco Corporation and President Clinton's inappropriate relationship with intern Monica Lewinsky. Diversity is important to Generation Y because of the relative ease of inter-continental travel and instant forms of communication around the world (i.e. e-mail, telephone) allows members of the generation to communicate with anybody, anywhere, in real time. The so-called "melting pot" in America also places a focus on diversity as the percentage of minorities' increases.

The recent articles and books on Generation Y agree that their generation requires lots of feedback, and needs it on a continual basis. They grew up during a time of constant positive reinforcement. Their generation has been playing computer and video game consoles that provide instant feedback on status (Tyler). Even television is geared on providing constant status or feedback, while watching a sporting event the score, time remaining, and other facts are always on display, or while watching the news headlines are scrolled across the screen or maps are displayed of an impending storm.

Generation Y in the workplace is known for several characteristics: collective action, optimism, tenacity, a heroic spirit, multi-tasking, and knowledge of technology.

The generation is thought to require supervision and structure and lack experience (Zemke). Both are understandable, considering that Generation Y has not fully entered the workforce yet, and those that have have less than ten years of post high school work experience if they did not continue on to college. A future look at Generation Y in the next ten to twenty years will most likely have dropped any references for the need of supervision and lacking experience.

The financial instability of major industries such as airlines and automobile manufacturers as well as scandals at Enron and Arthur Anderson has resulted in Generation Y having no faith in the long-term stability of jobs. As such, Generation Y employees are accustomed to changing jobs in a matter of years versus in a matter of decades. That has also led to a demand in higher wages and increased benefits earlier in a job than in the past. Generation Y members are more likely to take their training and skills to another employer who has increased benefit packages if they don't have a feeling that there is a long term future with a particular company.

Generation Y is looking for something to fulfill their need to give back; there is a definite internal drive to volunteer their time or otherwise support causes that they feel are worthy. That also spreads to their choice of employers, Generation Y members are cognizant of company efforts to be environmentally friendly. Allowing paid time for employees to pursue social causes is a factor in choosing a place to work. Companies are making available increased matching charitable contributions in response to social consciousness of Generation Y.

Generation Y is looking for work-life balance. They are not interested in the forty hour work weeks their parents are commonly known for. However, if they see the need, they are more than willing to put in the time. More emphasis is being placed on personal time and enjoying life; and some members are sacrificing higher salaries for a better work-life balance. A sense of mortality has probably swept over the generation due to the number and magnitude of terrorist attacks and disillusioned school rampage shootings that they have seen or been personally affected by during their upbringing

(McCormack). Similar to desiring to have an optimal work-life balance, Generation Y members are looking for flexibility in their job schedules and where they work. Technology has made it so that a large proportion of white-collar work can now be done electronically/without the need for paper making it so that employees can work anywhere. Generation Y employees are likely to look for that flexibility to enable them to work from home while waiting for a repairperson to come. Even better to the employer's advantage, it allows employees to stay connected whether they are in the office or not and allows for continuity while people are on leave to start a family or care for older parents.

There are numerous attributes given to Generation Y, Table 2 contains a compilation of some of the attributes and their source. Additional fact sheets and comparisons of the generations are contained in the Appendix.

Table 2. Generation Y Attributes by Source

Attributes	Source	Attributes	Source
High performing but high maintenance	Hira	Entrepreneurial	Deloitte
Needy	Hira	Optimistic	Tulgan
Entitled	Hira	Educated	Tulgan
Require outside motivation and praise	Hira	Energetic	Tulgan
Technology savvy	Hira	Compassionate	Tulgan
Techno-savvy	Deloitte	Technology savvy	Tulgan
Connected…24/7	Deloitte	Impatient	Chester
Self-confident	Deloitte	Adaptable	Chester
Optimistic	Deloitte	Innovative	Chester
Hopeful	Deloitte	Efficient	Chester
Independent	Deloitte	Desensitized	Chester
Comfortably self-reliant	Deloitte	Disengaged	Chester
Determined	Deloitte	Skeptical	Chester
Goal oriented	Deloitte	Resilient	Chester
Success driven	Deloitte	Disrespectful	Chester
Lifestyle centered	Deloitte	Bluntly Expressive	Chester
Diverse	Deloitte	Tolerant	Chester
Inclusive	Deloitte	Committed	Chester
Global-, civic- and community-minded	Deloitte	Prefer instant gratification	Bridgeford
Pulling together	Deloitte	Favor high-tech media	Bridgeford
Service oriented	Deloitte	Financially savvy	Bridgeford
		Value work-life balance	Bridgeford

Procedure and Methodology

The project procedures and methods are multi-faceted. First, the project draws upon personal observations to provide limited research for Generation Y characteristics. Following the observations are discussions of various models already used in leadership and management contexts but are specifically analyzed for their applicability to managing Generation Y employees. Analysis is also made of Generation Y communication standards and generational norms.

Personal Observations

I am a Generation X first-line supervisor of seven Generation Y, two Generation X, and one Baby Boom generation employees. I have observed several things while working with my direct reports and other Generation Y employees in the office. The observations I have made about Generation Y employees are generally in agreement with information presented in the literature review.

❖ Relationships between Generation Y employees and Baby Boomer managers who rely upon position power are often strained. Managers who use position power are in essence using intimidation to motivate Generation Y employees.

❖ Flexibility in work schedules is highly desired by Generation Y employees. Almost all of my Generation Y employees work on a compressed work schedule where they work 80 hours in nine days.

❖ Select managers are inflexible and quick to dismiss suggestions of younger employees. There is an underlying attitude that the manager knows best based on real life experiences instead of academic learning.

❖ The Generation Y employees in my section regularly request technology upgrades. Each of my Generation Y direct reports has a desktop computer and a separate laptop computer. Three of seven had requests for new laptop computers in the last fiscal year and there were requests for new digital cameras and document scanners.

❖ Commitment levels are high amongst the Generation Y employees that report to me. Most will check e-mail, take online training, or complete other work outside of the office for which they receive no compensation.

❖ The Generation Y employees I work around are excellent multi-taskers. They have enough organization and planning skills to work on several different projects at once without missing deadlines or ignoring the details.

❖ E-mail is a primary means of communication. Employees send e-mails to co-workers, supervisors, and managers that sit within feet of each other and follow-up e-mails with a face-to-face conversation.

The small sample size of my observed group does not allow me to project broad conclusions to Generation Y as a whole, but does indicate a need for further research on leadership and management models to more effectively manage this group.

Models Overview

A review of existing models was completed to determine their as-is or modified applicability to managing Generation Y. There were three main areas that were reviewed: leadership, communication, and norms.

The majority of managers and supervisors in the workforce are members of the Baby Boom generation. This is because most people become managers and supervisors in the later portion of their career and because the Baby Boom Generation is the largest generation represented in the workforce. Baby Boom mangers have already gained certain leadership styles but can adapt their methods to work with the newest generation in the workforce. Communication models are also helpful in learning new ways that Generation Y is communicating amongst themselves and with others. Generation Y is setting a new set of norms, it is important to not impose will as a manager or supervisor but to understand expectations of Generation Y and change work processes to cater to those norms where possible instead of maintaining the status quo.

Leadership Models

There are several existing models that can be applied when leading and managing people. The methods used encompass a broad array of topics to include communication, human resources, and leadership. Examining these models provides supervisors and managers tools when interacting with Generation Y employees. The knowledge of multiple tools provides advantages by allowing supervisors and managers to choose or modify a model according to specific situations that are encountered.

Ingrid Bens Empowerment Continuum

The Silent Generation is known for working in a hierarchal command structure. According to the Empowerment Grid of Figure 2 and Empowerment Continuum of Figure 3, hierarchal command structures would fall under a directive philosophy, or Level 1. The Empowerment Grid and Continuum are from Ingrid Bens, a consultant and trainer in various topics, one of them being Facilitative Leadership. The directive philosophy involves managers making decisions without seeking input from employees, decisions are made and employees are expected to comply (Bens 2005). It is inadvisable for any manager of Generation Y employees to solely or mainly rely on this empowerment level; members of Generation Y do not respond well to this type of style because they are likely to question taskings (Armour).

The better option for managers to take is to provide the employee with increased control using a participative or delegative approach on the right half of Figure 2 and Figure 3. By giving the employee some control in decision-making and making them accountable for work, it gives the employee a sense of ownership and pride that will likely lead to increased productivity. Using a high employee control empowerment level has other benefits such as increasing the speed of work completed; managers can be at fault for not providing input or making required decisions in a timely manner. In addition, Generation Y employees are known for working well in group environments (Deloitte). If Generation Y members work on projects as a group and gain consensus it serves as its

own check and balance that enables managers to trust the collective thinking of their

employees and use less of a directive or coaching style.

Four-Level Empowerment Grid

			Staff Role
Management Role			
Level I: Directive Style	Level II: Consultative Style	Level III: Participative Style	Level IV: Delegative Style
Management decides and then informs staff	Management decides after consulting staff	Staff recommend and act after receiving approval	Staff decide and act (preapproval)
Appropriate situations			
Information is sensitive, staff lack skills or experience, or accountability can't be shared	Accountability can't be shared but management wishes input from staff	Staff ideas and active participation are desired, but risk is high or members lack experience to go it alone	Staff have the needed skills and can assume full accountability for outcomes
Effect			
Management control and accountability; staff are dependent	Management benefits from staff ideas; staff are more involved than at level I	Staff take initiative and implement outcomes; management and staff are interdependent	Staff take responsibility and are independent

Figure 2. Four Level Empowerment Grid (Bens 2006)

The Empowerment Continuum

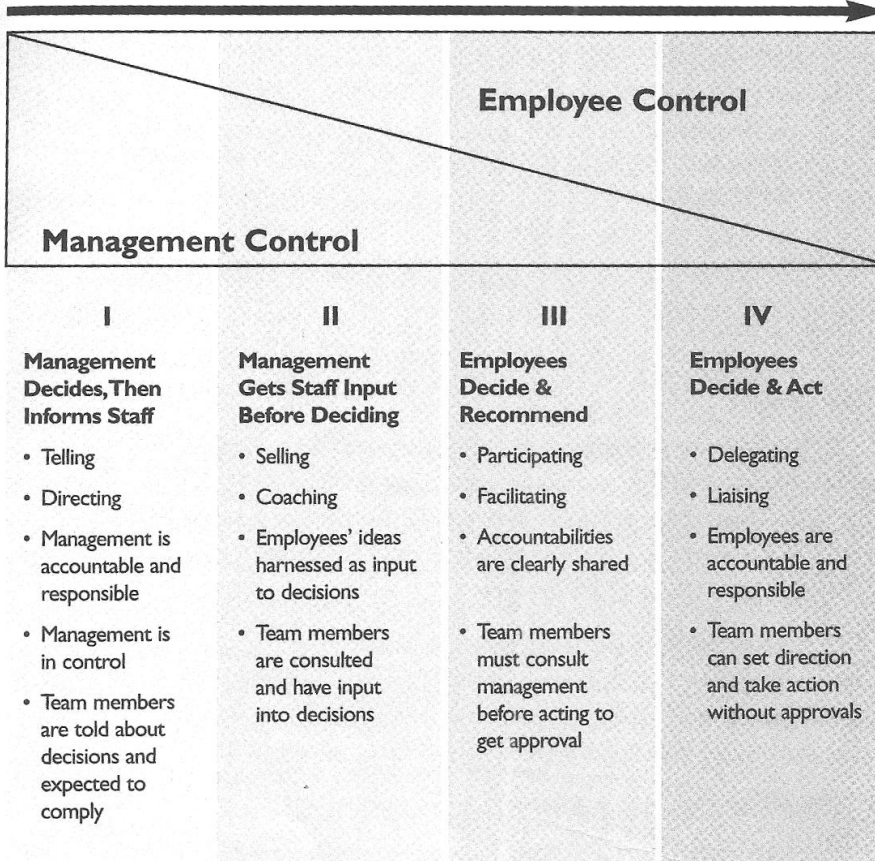|			
Management Control		**Employee Control**	
I	**II**	**III**	**IV**
Management Decides, Then Informs Staff	**Management Gets Staff Input Before Deciding**	**Employees Decide & Recommend**	**Employees Decide & Act**
• Telling	• Selling	• Participating	• Delegating
• Directing	• Coaching	• Facilitating	• Liaising
• Management is accountable and responsible	• Employees' ideas harnessed as input to decisions	• Accountabilities are clearly shared	• Employees are accountable and responsible
• Management is in control	• Team members are consulted and have input into decisions	• Team members must consult management before acting to get approval	• Team members can set direction and take action without approvals
• Team members are told about decisions and expected to comply			

Figure 3. The Empowerment Continuum (Bens 2005)

Dr. Abraham Maslow Hierarchy of Needs

Dr. Abraham Maslow is responsible for developing a concept called the Hierarchy of Needs. In his concept, a pyramid graphically depicts that people have levels of needs ranging from basic to self-actualization and that to reach the highest level, Self-Fulfillment, people must satisfy their needs on each lower level first. Maslow also contends that if a lower level need previously attained is no longer attained, people are motivated to meet the lowest unrealized need. The model is built upon a principle of employee motivation.

The five needs in order of fulfillment are Physiological; Safety and Security; Love and Feelings of Belonging; Competence, Prestige, and Esteem; and Self-Fulfillment. The Hierarchy of Needs pyramid is illustrated in Figure 4. At the lowest level, basic/physiological, people must meet their needs for those things necessary to live such

as food, water, and shelter. At the second level, people must obtain a sense of safety and security; these needs are mostly psychological in nature. According to the concept, a person living in a high crime area may not have a sense of security in their neighborhood and cannot move up to the next level of needs, Love and Feelings of Belonging. In the third level, people have a desire to feel like they are part of a group, to have a feeling of acceptance. The need for belonging could be as simple as having strong family ties to feeling like a needed member in a complex work group. The next level of the hierarchy is the need for one's ego or status to be achieved and realized. In the fourth level (Competence, Prestige, and Esteem), people have a desire to become proficient at a task and to be recognized for their proficiency. At the highest level of motivation, Self-Fulfillment, also referred to as self-actualization, people reach a point where they have reached their full potential.
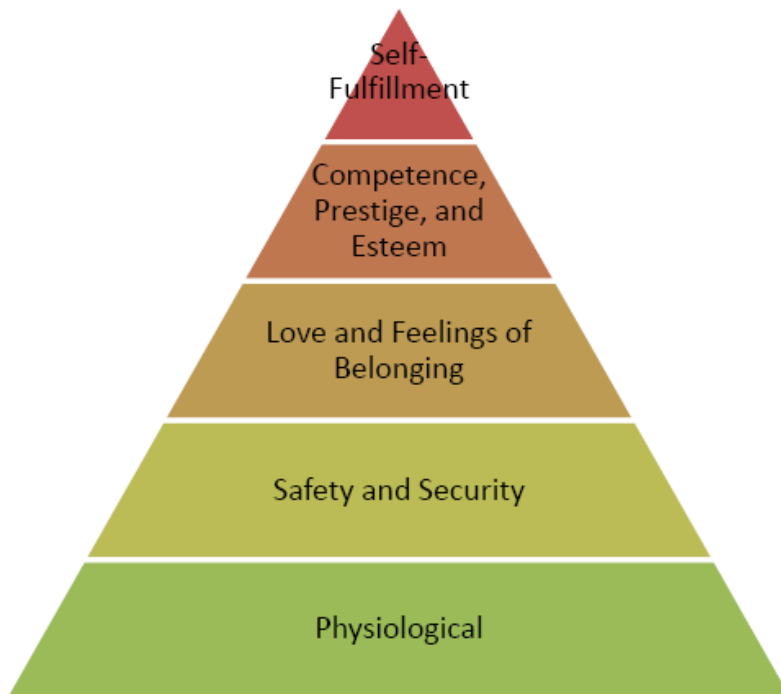

Figure 4. Hierarchy of Needs

The hierarchy can be separated into needs at work and needs outside of work, although the two will have some relationships to each other. Supervisors and managers will have a direct impact on the needs at work and will possibly focus on the levels of

Love and Feelings of Belonging and Esteem. The highest level of need is probably outside the scope of the workplace and the two lowest needs are too basic in nature that employees will strive to fulfill them with little or no assistance from anyone in the workplace.

It is possible to apply the Hierarchy of Needs model to Generation Y employees, considering that the higher up the pyramid a Generation Y employee can attain at a certain company or working for certain manager or supervisor, the higher the probability that the employee will be happy/satisfied and will stay with the company. Starting with the lowest level of the pyramid, managers and supervisors provide for the basic physiological needs by providing a decent salary for Generation Y members to attain meals, clothing, and housing on their own. Reportedly, Generation Y members are not totally driven by salary. If this is true, it further highlights the need for supervisors and managers to help Generation Y members achieve the higher needs.

The second level of needs, Safety and Security, can be provided by managers with consideration for meeting those needs at the workplace. Having a security guard who controls access to a building is one method of providing a sense of security for employees while at work. In other instances, providing personal protective equipment such as hard hats, safety boots, and hearing protection for junior engineers that may travel to a construction site or manufacturing area will provide a feeling of safety and security.

Love and Feelings of Belonging are important for managers to consider after helping to provide a feeling of safety and security. The desire for belonging starts with day one for a new Generation Y employee and continues throughout his or her career. From the first day, managers need to make sure employees have the opportunity to meet with other employees and gain the sense of acceptance into the community; placing a new employee in a cubicle with handouts from Human Resources destroys the initial excitement of starting a new job and sets a negative impression. As Generation Y employees continue working, him or her should be placed within formal workgroups and

provided with meaningful work. Above all, create a sense of belonging for Generation Y employees by being accessible and available.

The Esteem need is directly attributed to work. There is an outside of the workplace component where Generation Y employees will seek self-respect and a feeling of prestige for activities outside of work such as participating on a club soccer team. At work, managers and supervisors can provide timely recognition of employee accomplishments to let employees know they are respected for their accomplishments.

The highest level of the pyramid is probably not attained by most people. It is not the responsibility of a manager or supervisor to help employees reach self-fulfillment, but rather is a personal goal for a Generation Y employee and involves activities outside of the workplace.

It is easy to see the impact that the workplace has on an employee's motivation levels according to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and the constant need for managers to help employees achieve and rise to each higher level. As a manager or supervisor helps a Generation Y employee to reach each higher level of need, the motivation and dedication of the employee to the manager and company will thrive. Each Generation Y member will likely have different needs at different times.

Kenneth Blanchard Situational Leadership

The typical workforce has employees that encompass a number of different generations. Understanding Generation Y is just as important as understanding the other generations and the way that they interact with each other. Since managers may use different styles with different people, managers should be well versed in situational leadership principles. One of the work attributes for Generation Y is that they want to be accomplished and make the largest impact in the least amount of time. Considering Blanchard's four basic styles of leadership and literature research Generation Y members probably prefer a supportive or delegating leadership style where the directive behavior of supervisors is low, see Figure 5.
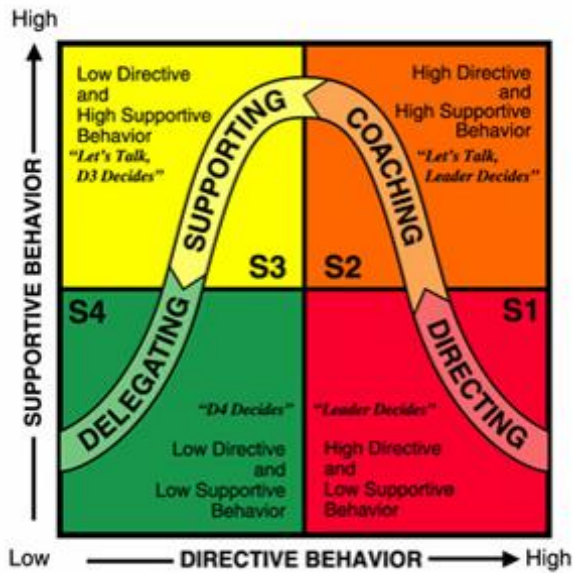
Figure 5. The Four Leadership Styles (Blanchard)

Since members of Generation Y are the newest to the workforce, supervisors will

probably want to have a directing or coaching leadership style based on the development

level of the employee. Blanchard's development level model would place Generation Y

members in the lower levels of development, D1 or D2 in Figure 6, because they have

lower levels of on the job competence. That would cause the supervisor to use a

directing or coaching leadership style. In order to transition from a high directive to a low

directive leadership style, supervisors need a training program that focuses on increasing

Generation Y employees' level of competence. Literature has shown that Generation Y

employees are committed to their work, which is the other half of the Blanchard
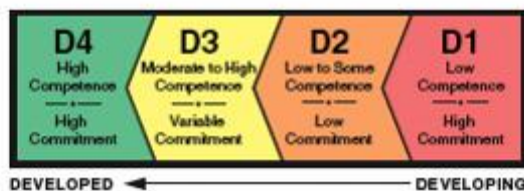
development model.

Figure 6. Development Level of Follower(s) (Blanchard)

Cultural Intelligence

Christopher Earley is responsible for developing the concept of Cultural Intelligence (CQ); it first appeared in a Harvard Business Review article in 2004 written by Mr. Earley and Elaine Mosakowski (Earley). CQ involves being perceptive to unfamiliar contexts and being adaptable enough to blend in. The three main components of CQ are cognitive, physical, and emotional/motivational. The cognitive component involves learning about the beliefs and customs of other cultures, someone with a high cognitive CQ will be perceptive to shared understandings. The physical component revolves around habits, mannerisms, and other physical attributes. Earley and Mosakowski believe that people become more trusting and open when the outsider is able to adopt habits and manners because of an increased awareness between the two parties. The last component, emotional/motivational, involves the amount of heart or dedication the outsider has to understanding a culture. There must be sufficient heart to overcome hindrances, setbacks, or even failures. Managers will most likely fall into one of six CQ profiles based on their ability to effectively use the three components of CQ. The six profiles of CQ are the provincial, analyst, natural, ambassador, mimic, and chameleon.

The Harvard Business Review article by Earley and Mosakowski says that any person who is reasonably alert, motivated, and self-assured can reach an acceptable level of CQ. To increase CQ, Earley and Mosakowski developed a six step approach summarized as examine personal strengths and weaknesses, select training to improve weaknesses, train, find resources within the organization, enter the setting focusing on strengths, and evaluate success or unsuccessfulness.

| Find Personal Strengths and Weaknesses | → | Find Training to Improve Weaknesses | → | Train | → | Find Organization Resources | → | Enter the Setting Focusing on Strengths | → | Evaluate Successes and Failures |

Figure 7. Steps to Increase CQ

Cultural Intelligence was developed with a focus on intercultural communication but its principles of diversity in the workplace, leadership, adaptability, communication,

and understanding cross-cultural differences can be applied to management of Generation Y. Substituting the use of foreign cultures as CQ intended with generations in the United States, CQ can be a tool that non-Generation Y supervisors and managers make use of. However, managers cannot apply the principles of CQ on a singular basis to a single Generation Y employee, CQ was developed with the mindset of cultures. A Generation Y manager would use CQ principles to learn about Generation Y as a whole and resist stereotyping, therefore, requiring a large number of Generation Y employees before using this model. If there is a sufficient quantity of Generation Y employees, the non-Generation Y supervisor or manager places him or herself in the position of the outsider viewing Generation Y members as the foreign culture.

Generation Y managers and supervisors can easily make use of the six step approach for training to improve their ability to interact with Generation Y. Caution should be used with the head and body components of CQ. The body component is used in the mimic profile but care should be exercised not to mock Generation Y members, which could be met with resentment. The body component also would appear insincere for a manager of Generation Y employees to abandon their style of dress and talk for that of a Generation Y employee, focus should be on understanding what is meant by Generation Y employees not on imitating them.

As applied to Generation Y, CQ can best be used to be perceptive of the differences between Generation Y employees and non-Generation Y managers, learning what the dissimilarities are between the generations and expected leadership styles, and adapting methods and approaches to reach the highest level of worker productivity.

Communication

Generation Y is known for it is technological capabilities with the widespread use of mobile devices with keyboards. Generation Y keeps in touch with their counterparts using tools such as Instant Messaging (IM) and using their cellular phones to send Short Message Service (SMS) text messages. The preferred style of communicating in IM or SMS messages is a short, abbreviated form that lacks any formality or cognizance of

normal sentence structure. Internet forums are also a means of keeping in touch with family, friends, and total strangers. All of these tools are very informal in nature and as a result, the writing capability of Generation Y has potentially suffered.

As a manager, be careful to watch for Generation Y members as their informal communication methods bleed into their formal workplace communication style. Managers will be well advised to invest in writing classes for employees and proofreading classes for managers to ensure that there is a high level of quality and professionalism in writing. The adoption of a standard style guide such as Franklin Covey's Style Guide used in many college classes or developing a company specific writing guide will assist the manager to set guidelines for what is expected in written communication while providing the employee with a standardized reference that is not based on subjectivity of a particular document reviewer.

Managers can also learn from the new Generation Y communication standards. Generation Y may set the trends for future collaboration on work projects using practices of communication in the workplace that are not yet widely accepted. Learning from Generation Y can result in increased workplace efficiency by increasing the ability and ease of sharing information with team members and other coworkers and shows a degree of flexibility on the part of managers.

Generation X and Generation Y are both competent and confident using the latest technology. In earlier generations, children and parents used to wait in long lines to purchase toys such as Cabbage Patch kids, but it is becoming more commonplace to see young people waiting in lines overnight to buy the newest piece of technology, most recently, the Apple iPhone.

In managing Generation Y and knowing how technology plays such a central role in their lives, it is also important to make the latest technology readily available to them in the workplace. Devices such as smart phones should be available to more than just company executives but to younger employees as well. The majority of Generation Y

members probably own a cell phone, a computer with internet access, and a music player.

It would be undesirable as a manager for employees to complain that they are conducting business on their personal phones or that their home computer and software are more powerful and capable than what is provided in the office. Therefore, making sure that company computer systems are open to let employees install their favorite software (with limitations) and that they possess enough power to run all of the installed applications will increase the productivity and happiness of Generation Y members.

Simple things such as approving internet access in hotel rooms on travel will also keep Generation Y members connected to the office and serve as a necessary benefit for these employees who are accustomed to having continuous internet access at home, in restaurants, even embedded into gym equipment such as stationary bicycles.

Generation Y has several stereotypes and one is that they demand instant feedback. Since Generation Y has grown up with information readily accessible through cable television networks, internet, instant messaging, and cellular telephones they expect quick answers from their managers. The formal review system might encompass one or two reviews according to policy, if possible, work with Human Resources and other managers to decrease the periodicity of the review cycle to increase communication between the employee and supervisor. If it is not possible to change the formal review cycle supervisors can create an informal review cycle that meets once a month or as suggested by many of the sources, to provide feedback on a continual basis.

Providing constant feedback is a good management practice in general; the comments made during the formal review should come as no surprise to any employee if a supervisor is doing their job right. Waiting three, six, or twelve months to provide constructive feedback to an employee is harmful for both sides, the employee's negative behavior becomes partially endorsed by supervisors since the negative behavior is not addressed.

Training

Training is often brought up as a key item to consider when managing Generation Y employees but the topic is multi-faceted. Managers should consider the following with respect to training Generation Y, the mode of delivery, the amount and timeliness of training, and providing the company "know-how" that cannot be taught at any school. Since technology is changing so rapidly, it means that Generation Y (and other generations) will always be at risk of becoming outdated with software applications that they learned during school. For example, I learned AutoCAD as an undergraduate engineering student; however, the junior engineers that work for me now are familiar with AutoCAD but prefer to use SolidWorks for the increased ease of use and capabilities of the computer aided drawing tools.

Training also takes on many different forms, from the traditional classroom to the burgeoning amount of internet based training courses. In an article on increasing Generation Y productivity, Julius Steiner suggests that traditional classroom training is not the best way to train technology-savvy Generation Y members, rather, the use of "podcasts," cellular phones, laptops, and iPods are better methods (Steiner). Not every topic is suitable for web based training, procedures on how to fill out a travel claim or how to operate a simple piece of machinery are good uses of web based training. Topics that web based training is not suitable for are those where there is room for interpretation; when it is best that a student have the opportunity to question an instructor for things that are unclear. Suggestions by Steiner that Generation Y is so technology focused and technology savvy they should be trained using podcasts or by watching a computer screen should be met with the desire and advantages of getting employees outside of their cubicle and interacting with their co-workers.

Most members of Generation Y realize the importance of a college education and aspire to get an undergraduate degree, it seems increasingly more popular for students to stay an additional year in school and earn a post-graduate degree. For any amount of education that a Generation Y employee enters the workforce with, they will still lack work

experience in general and even more importantly, they will lack experience of company specific processes. A training program should focus on orienting Generation Y members to the business of the company. This might involve a mentoring program where a more experienced person at the company serves as a guide and outlet. Ideally, the mentor should be someone other than in the supervisory or managerial lines of leadership so that the mentee feels free to ask questions of their mentor that may otherwise cause alarm or panic, such as "you mean you don't know how to do that already."

Generation Y Norms

Generation Y is going to challenge the norm of what is acceptable clothing and appearance at work. Managers should be prepared with a dress code that is a part of the orientation program (and mentioned during recruitment) that sets expectations of what is and what is not acceptable. A dress code should focus on what it takes to get the job done, not necessarily what expectations were in the past. Generation Y will not understand why they cannot wear cargo pants, t-shirts, and beach style open toe shoes to work if they never come in contact with a customer or there are no safety hazards such as being on a manufacturing floor.

The dress code should not only address clothing but should address body art, even for those Generation Y members who wear professional clothing to work this generation is apt to have tattoos or piercings in their nose or tongue and multiple piercings in their ear. The dress code is not limited to keeping the Generation Y employee from digressing from workplace standards. A dress code also communicates to other employees from more traditional or formal generations that although Generation Y members may like to dress differently, it does not diminish their skills or abilities nor should it be a barrier to working with them.

To keep Generation Y engaged at work, it is best to place them on several different teams simultaneously, similar to a shared personnel resource in a matrix organization. Members of Generation Y are used to handling several things at a time, just look at the number of gadgets you can see them carrying around today; a cell phone,

a portable music player, a notebook computer, and personal digital assistants. They can be engaged in a meeting while sending text messages back and forth with colleagues from a cell phone or smart phone.

Generation Y also wants to complete meaningful work, do not assume that they are acceptable with being assigned "busy work" just because they are young. There is a need for their generation to make an immediate impact in the workplace. This is possibly a derivative of their lack of fear in changing jobs after a few years; they potentially do not have time to wait for longevity to gain seniority. Some of the benefits that were initially associated with longevity in a company have to be provided to Generation Y members earlier in their time at a given company.

Results

There are three main generations of Americans in the workforce today consisting of the Baby Boom Generation, Generation X, and Generation Y. The amount of Generation Y members place it a few million people behind that of the Baby Boom Generation. If ranking the Baby Boom Generation, Generation Y, and Generation X by their size they would fall first, second, and third, respectively. This ranking is slightly misunderstanding, the current ages of Generation Y members are between seven and twenty-seven, meaning that a large number of them are still in school. A focus on understanding Generation X is important, but by now, most managers have experience working with Generation X employees. The overwhelming volume of Generation Y employees, in comparison to that of Generation X, entering the workforce over the coming years creates an urgent need for managers to develop strategies to effectively manage Generation Y.

The generations have each experienced different events and upbringings that have influenced their character and workplace attributes. The core values amongst the Baby Boom Generation, Generation X, and Generation Y have similarities but also have sharp contrasts. Table 3 contains information about each of these generations and the Appendix contains additional comparative information. Every manager and supervisor will develop their own opinions about the characteristics and traits of Generation Y that will probably differ from those listed in Table 2 and Table 3.

Table 3. Generational Comparison (Dolan)

Generation	Born	Age	Millions	Core Values
Baby Boom	1943-1960	47-64	76.2	Optimism, team orientation, personal gratification, health and wellness
Generation X	1960-1980	27-47	51	Diversity, thinking globally, balance, techno literacy, fun
Generation Y	1980-2000	7-27	72.9	Optimism, civic duty, confidence, achievement

Today's managers and supervisors must realize the differences between the generations already established in the workplace and that of the emerging Generation Y workforce. There are a number of tools already at the disposal of managers and supervisors to effectively manage Generation Y. Those tools consist of but are not limited to Leadership Models, Communication Models, Training Theories, and Norms. Managers and supervisors who have read or received training on Cultural Intelligence, Facilitative Leadership, Situational Leadership, or The Hierarchy of Needs can adapt those methods to effectively work with the latest generation whose core values and expectations differ from those of their management.

It is also beneficial for today's managers to consider that the norms and expectations between the generations are different. The acceptable styles of workplace dress are changing, gone are the days of wearing a tie, they are replaced with more casual clothing and the increased acceptance of visible tattoos. Managers must consider these and other generational norms. Technology has played a very large role in making Generation Y who they are and is central to their ways of communication, Baby Boom managers can learn new communication and collaboration methods from Generation Y but still need to communicate the old-fashioned way with face-to-face contact.

It is important to consider that judging individuals based on what generation their age falls within is stereotyping. With that knowledge, the supervisor/manager must be aware of the individual differences in every person, not just the generations. Instead of relying on labels placed onto a group of people, managers must still determine individual strengths and weaknesses and cater to them for increased productivity. Looking at the aggregate, there are still general strategies on making Generation Y happy and productive employees.

Suggestions for Additional Work

The literature pertaining to Generation Y rarely discusses different segments of Generation Y, for instance some articles were related to journalists, others to financial institutions, and so forth. Additional work would try to find differences amongst the overall perceptions of Generation Y broken into smaller segments. The smaller segments could be based upon geographical location in the United States, socioeconomic status of their parents, profession (i.e. engineers), or education level. The increased use of statistically significant surveys of Generation Y members would provide the best information on the characteristics and attributes of Generation Y and allow for further study into subgroups of information.

The number of books written on the subject is very limited and amount to only a couple of books per year. The amount of new information that comes in based on actual experiences of Generation Y members in the workforce creates the opportunity for continuous additional work. Comparisons of initial impressions on Generation Y will probably change as time and new information becomes available. Future work should continue to validate current impressions of Generation Y and determine why impressions have changed over time.

Generation Y has largely been shaped on technology, the exponential advances in technology will have great impacts on this generation and generations to follow. There is no definitive guidance on the duration of generations but it appears the Silent Generation, Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y will last on average twenty years. Some sources have significantly decreased the length of generations. Future work on Generation Y would involve detailing the impact of technology on Generation Y and whether there is a correlation between the pace of technology changes and the span of a generation. Research could possibly conclude that Generation Y is comprised of two generations and that the beginning of the follow on generation is earlier than expected. Carolyn Martin and Bruce Martin in their book Managing the Generation Mix highlight this

as the Baby Boomers, Generation Next, and Generation Y decrease in generation

duration respectively from 18, 12, and 11 years opposed to some sources who show

straight 20 year durations. A graphical depiction of the decreased generation is shown in

Figure 1.

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Appendix

TABLE 1: Generational Comparison Chart		Attitudes and Influences of Adolescence	
TOPIC	BABY BOOMERS 1946-1964	GENERATION X 1964-1979	GENERATION WHY 1980-1994
The Future	Is ours!	Sucks!	Might not happen!
Television	Bonanza	Family Ties	Jerry Springer
Wealth	I'll earn it!	I don't care that much about it.	Gimme, or I'll take it!
Heroes/Role Models	Men of Character	Men and Women of Character	What's Character?
Kids Killing Kids	Unthinkable	It's possible	It's everywhere
For Kicks	Drive-Ins	Drive Thrus	Drive Bys
Employment for Teens	Hard to find	I'll work if I have to.	Jobs are a dime a dozen!
Loyalty to Employer	I could work my way to the top!	This could lead to the top!	If I can't take Saturday off, I'll quit!
Parents	Try to please them.	Try to put up with them.	Aren't around much.
Justice	Always prevails	Usually prevails	Can be bought
School/Training	Tell me WHAT to do.	Show me HOW to do it.	WHY do I need to learn this?
Respecting Elders	Is automatic	Is polite	Just because they're older? No way!
Credit/Borrowing	Only if I have to.	If I really want something.	How much can I get?
Environment	Don't litter.	Save the whales.	It's too late now.
Government	Is there dishonesty?	There is dishonesty!	Is there honesty?
Communication	Via parents' phone	Via personal phone	Pager/cell phone/E-mail/chat rooms
Shock Rock Icons	Little Richard	Boy George	Marilyn Manson
	Elvis Presley	Ozzy Ozborne	Nirvana
	Alice Cooper	Madonna	Eminem
Change	Dislike	Accept	Demand
Streetwise	Naïve	Aware	Experienced
Technology	Ignorant	Comfortable	Masters
Video Game	Pong	PacMan	Mortal Kombat
Pornography	In Movie Theaters	In Video Stores	On TV, or a click away online.
Promiscuity leads to	Mono	Herpes	AIDS

(Chester)

Generation Y at a Glance

Age
- This Generation includes people born between 1977 and 1994
- There are over 70 million people belonging to Generation Y
- Generation Y is more than three times the size of Generation X

Ethnicity
- Generation Y is the most ethnically diverse generation to date
- One out of every three Generation Y members is not Caucasian
- Nine out of ten children under 12 have friends outside their own ethnicity

Home
- One out of four lives in a single parent household
- Three out of four have working mothers
- The child is the center of the household

Money
- One out of nine high schoolers have a credit card co-signed by a parent
- Teens have an average of $100/week disposable income
- 40% of teens have a part-time job

Connectivity
- Generation Y seems to be less cynical and more concerned with social issues than Generation X, although whether to act on those feelings is always a question
- 75%-90% have a computer at home
- 50% have Internet access at home

Interaction
- They prefer directness over subtlety, action over observation and coolness over all else
- They are heavily influenced by their peers and the media
- Although technically advanced and saturated, they would prefer personal contact

Status
- They feel crunched for time, always in a hurry
- They have direction and know what they want

(NAS)