

HOW TO MANAGE GEN X AND GEN Y

by **David DiStefano**

Last month I had the pleasure of sitting down with Gerhard Gschwandtner, Editor of Selling Power Magazine (<http://www.sellingpower-magazine.com>) as part of his Video Daily Report to discuss the challenges that today's manager faces with the younger demographic in the employee base. The percentage of Generations X and Y employees in the total workforce continues to increase, with the bulk of the Gen Y (over 60 million) yet to come. There is no side-stepping the challenge organizations face – prepare now to meet the needs of these Gen X and Y employees. Much has been written and discussed about the differences in attitudes, behaviors, and values of these younger employees from those generations, like the Baby Boomers, that preceded them.

The Selling Power video segment was one of the most viewed segments (nearly 5x the average) done to date. The topic obviously struck a chord as expected. At Richardson, we have been supporting our clients by providing customized training solutions that enable their managers to assess and develop their coaching skills to manage a diverse team.

Four generations of workers exist in today's workplace. Each possess different views about what they want out of a job and expect from the company for whom they work. The typical manager/boss in today's workplace is likely a Baby Boomer - proud of his/her strong work ethic, likely measured by the countless hours worked, as well as his/her dedication and tenure. In comparison, Gen X and Y employees are not likely to stay with one job/company throughout their career--nor can organizations expect them to sacrifice their family for their job. They grew up seeing their parents laid off, as latch key children or in divorced families. Thus family is a core value. They have an insatiable appetite and proficiency for technology and learning. They also need to see the "big picture" and how they fit into the plan. Personal acknowledgement, feedback on performance, and recognition are essential to the Gen X and Y employee.

Of course there is no one magic solution to developing and retaining employees in this rapidly changing workforce. It is up to each organization to make

a commitment to establish a culture where coaching is paramount. It starts with a vision and a deep commitment to developing your employees, a framework to ensure consistency and a core set of skills managers can learn, refine and role model.

The bottom line for any organization - possess a genuine interest in knowing your employees on a deeper level, demonstrate the desire to help them succeed and continuously strive to find the most effective way to make it happen for your team.

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