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HUMAN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT



Connections

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Issue #3

Welcome!!!

Happy New Year!!

I'm Jason Boltax, President of JHB Human Capital Management. This month I have the privilege of speaking at the HR Execusmmit, where I will moderate a panel discussion on "The Future of HR" to uncover the faces of change within the HR field in the new millennium.

In this issue of Connection's, you will learn about one topic that already has folks talking; the generational shift in the workforce.

Read this month's issues for tips and recommendations to help you bridge the generation gap in the workplace.

Enjoy!!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jason Boltax".

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Generations at Work: Boomers, GenXers & Nexters

Never before in the history of the workplace are so many different age groups working together in such close quarters. Veterans, Baby Boomers, GenXers and now the Nexters are working shoulder to shoulder, cubicle to cubicle.

As profitable businesses strive to run leaner and meaner, diversity issues of people under stress can slow down productivity, affect customer relations, increase employee turnover, and cause retention of good employees to be a costly problem.

Merit is overcoming longevity in the deciding factors that contribute to promotion. Sometimes the person in charge may be younger than those he or she manages. But as younger employees compete for the same jobs as older senior employees and often get them, there is strife in the workplace.

There are three very distinct generations vying for positions in a workplace of shrinking upward opportunity. There is now a fourth generation joining them. The Veterans, the Baby Boomers, and Generation X are encountering the youngest sector of the job force: the Nexters, or Generation Net.

In a recent web poll taken by Fast Company magazine, 69% of respondents answered "yes" to the question, "Does your workplace suffer from a generation rift?"

One outcome of this generational blending can be creativity. People who come together from different perspectives always have the potential to bring different thoughts and ideas to problem solving. The potential for positive creative synergy is immense.

Unfortunately, other outcomes of this generational mixing is conflict, differences in values, worldviews, ways of working, ways of talking, thinking, even dressing, which can set people in opposition to one another.

Social demographers use the term "cohort" to refer to people born in the same general time span who share key life experiences. Members of cohorts who come of age in lean times or war years tend to think and act differently than those born and raised in peace and abundance.

How Generations Are Defined

When we look at the four generations who are working together, there are:

Veterans, those born between 1922 and 1943 (52 million people). This cohort was born before or during World War II; their earliest experiences are associated with that world event. Some also remember the Great Depression.



Generations at Work: Boomers, GenXers & Nexters

The Baby Boomers, 1943-1960 (73.2 million people). These people were born after World War II and raised in an era of optimism, opportunity, and progress. Boomers usually grew up in two-parent households, safe schools, job security and post-war prosperity. They represent about two-thirds of all U.S. workers. On the job, they value loyalty, respect the organizational hierarchy, and generally wait their turn for advancement.

Generation Xers, 1960-1980 (70.1 million people). They were born after the Boomers into a rapidly changing social climate and economic recession, including Asian competition. They grew up in two-career families with rising divorce rates, downsizing, the dawning of the high-tech age, and the information age. On the job, they can be fiercely independent, like to be in control, and want fast feedback.

Generation Nexters 1980-2000 (69.7 million people to date). Those born of Boomer parents and early Xers into our current high-tech, neo-optimistic times. Although the youngest workers, they represent the most technologically adept. They are fast learners and tend to be impatient.

Perhaps the biggest differences in the worldviews of these generational cohorts are their attitudes toward authority. In the workplace, this shows up in either accepting or questioning, or even rebelling, against traditional viewpoints and orders handed down from above.

Boomers have traditionally been brought up in a work environment that respected authority and hierarchy. Loyalty to the company was rewarded through promotions based on seniority. However, things have been changing and along with them, Boomers have too. Because of a rapidly shifting work force and corporate restructuring, many Boomers have changed jobs much more frequently than their parents.

This has meant that they are looking at their own career loyalty, rather than company loyalty. They have learned to question their superiors on the job, rather than blindly accepting that what's good for the company should also be good for them. Boomers brought up in an era of self-help are now turning to coaching for personal and professional development.

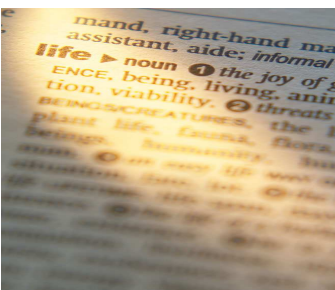
In contrast to the Boomers, the GenXers tend to want a more collaborative work environment, to share in developing goals and strategic planning. They want opportunity, flexibility and training. They expect immediate recognition through title, praise, promotions and pay. And they want a life outside of work - they won't sacrifice theirs for the corporation.

Boomers have adopted a team-based approach to business, because they have been eager to shed the command-and-control style of veterans. However the Nexters, the children of Boomers and older GenXers, may well thrive in a workplace that resembles what has been rejected. Some researchers speculate that Nexters will resemble the veterans in many ways. They tend toward a belief in collective action, optimism about the future, and a trust in centralized authority.

Bridging the Generational Gap

Learning to accept and appreciate another's perspective means understanding what that person is all about. Nothing distills conflict faster than sitting down and talking, asking questions, and inquiring with an open mind. Here are some suggestions when working with younger workers in order to bridge the generational gap.

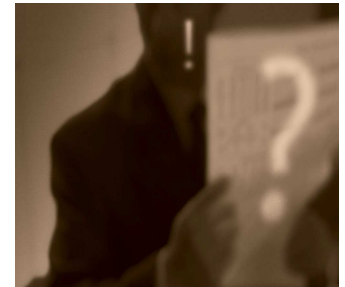
"People who come together from different perspectives always have the potential to bring different thoughts and ideas to problem solving. The potential for positive creative synergy is immense."



Generations at Work: Boomers, GenXers & Nexters

1. Discuss expectations right way. "How do you see this project going?" "What are your expectations of yourself/me/our team in this project?"
2. Inquire about immediate tasks, and then link them into strategic goals. "How does your doing this get you to where the company/the project/you personally want to be?" GenXers in particular tend to focus on immediate tasks rather than strategic goals.
3. Look for ways to cut bureaucracy and red tape. Younger workers have no patience for unessential delays. If you talk about barriers, come up with solutions already in hand.
4. Don't be put off by overt ambition. Younger workers don't believe that good work is automatically rewarded, and they are open about their career plans for advancement.
5. Keep up with technology. GenXers have little patience or respect for the ignorant or those unwilling to learn.

Smart companies that really care about their people are attuned to bridging the generation gap in the work environment. They believe that employees of all generations, and especially younger workers, see their work as something to be enjoyed and cultivated, not something to be endured.



“Learning to accept and appreciate another’s perspective means understanding what that person is all about.”

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Events

NY HUMAN RESOURCES/HUMAN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT GROUP

The NY HR/HCM group creates an environment where HR professionals can turn for advice, best practices or to find a helping hand.

For complete event calendar and to join, visit www.jhbhcm.com and click events.

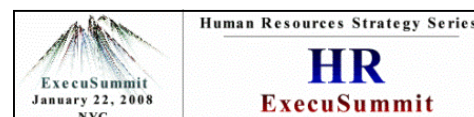


HR EXECUSUMMIT—2008

This all day conference brings leading HR leaders and professionals together for a day of sharing knowledge, trends and expertise.

When: January 22, 2008

Where: Club Quarters Downtown New York Hotel and Bull Run Conference Center.



Special 10% discount for friends of JHB Human Capital Management

For complete agenda and registration information, visit www.jhbhcm.com and click events.

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When: April 15-17

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About JHB Human Capital Management

JHB Human Capital Management is a human resources strategy consulting firm, specializing in HR management, organizational assessments and workforce development.

The mission of JHB HCM is to help companies succeed by providing guidance, advice, process, structure and strategy for their human resources needs.

If you would like to schedule a **FREE** consultation, receive more information about our services or have a question, contact us directly at:

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