

# the what and whys



By Diane Barron

**T**he *Y Generation* will comprise nearly 75% of the global workforce by 2025. It is likely this age group of approximately 77 million individuals born between 1977–1995 ranging between 18–35 years of age will make up the largest age group in your organization. Understanding their traits and different views will help meet their needs, develop their strengths, and utilize what they have to offer. It is important to be open-minded when attempting to generalize about an entire generation. A great amount of research has been done on this generation, so we will explore that research in this article. We want happy employees who are “all in” and move our companies forward, so let us take a look at some of the *Gen Y* traits, and what matters to them at work.

**Multi-taskers:** If there are multiple things that can be done at one time, they will try to multi-task.

**Family oriented:** They deeply value family connections and consider their parents their heroes.

## what do members of the y generation need at work?

- To be challenged and rewarded
- Meaningful work
- Promotions
- To be paid well
- Work/life balance
- Socially/environmentally conscious
- To be treated respectfully
- Communication using multiple channels
- Learning and training opportunities

## here are 10 “best practices and ideas” to help you achieve positive results with the y generation.

### 1. Make their first days unforgettable.

Present them with a welcome gift in the presence of their co-workers. This could include their staff T-shirt along with candy, treats, and a welcome letter from the owner or their department leader.

### 2. Map out their career path in your organization.

At their reviews, do not just review their past work, but give them a vision for their future. Provide them with opportunities that could be available to them and how they will be compensated. Allow all of the staff to develop curriculum and lesson plans. The *Y Generation* not only thinks outside the box, but they have no box. Take advantage of their fresh ideas, and the next leaders will rise to the occasion.





# of the *y* generation

### **3. Provide frequent acknowledgement and feedback.**

Communication is key. Use many forms of communication including emails, text messaging, Facebook, and weekly staff newsletters. Take advantage of webinars and online technology for training. Meet with the staff prior to each shift for a quick pow-wow. Provide an open door policy with their department leaders and supervisors. Consider reviews two to three times per year instead of annual reviews. There will be a better chance for accuracy and will allow for more frequent acknowledgement and feedback. Reward employees that show passion and loyalty.

### **4. Give detailed explanations and expectations.**

Have your job responsibilities detailed and easy to understand. The job responsibilities should be discussed and rated as a part of their review. If an area is lacking, put the responsibility on the employee to find a solution and

designate a specific time period you expect the issue to be resolved. How they respond to the conversation is extremely important. Make note on the review form not only what the content of the conversation was but also how they responded. Mistakes are going to be made but what level of responsibility and the attitude they have in regards to the concerns are most important.

### **5. Celebrations!**

Do you know what their favorite holiday is? Their birthday! Bring in a treat for all of the staff to enjoy. Give them a card and gift that has meaning. Announce their birthday to the students. During class warm up, involve the students in a fun birthday song.

Celebrate Employee of the Week. Designate who earned employee of the week with signage on their mailbox, as well as signage in the lobby and viewing area. Announce to the customers who is employee of the week and why. This is a great opportunity to educate

your parents on the accomplishments and strengths of your staff.

- Example: "Miss Ashley utilizes her education degree and experience as a former gymnast to teach her students using techniques to break down the skills for easier learning."
- Example "Mr. Nick is a high school honors student and competitive gymnast. He is not only dedicated at school but brings his dedication to the gym by teaching classes and working our camps and clinics."

### **6. Train.**

Make training sessions entertaining. Bring in guest clinicians and make the meetings interactive. Begin and end your meetings and training sessions with motivating and meaningful content. Turn your staff meetings into celebrations of both

individual and company accomplishments. Provide healthy food that is plentiful and delicious.

## 7. Entertain.

Host an annual party and consider inviting spouses or significant others. They need the support of their families in order to work. Show their families what a great company they work for and express to their spouses/significant others how grateful you are to have them a part of your organization. Avoid mixing work and play, and keep the party fun and lighthearted.

## 8. Reward with time.

Give your full-time employees flexibility with their administrative hours. Involve them in creating schedules for themselves and others.

For all your staff, allow for time off by make your subbing systems easy. Consider an extra teacher to act as a floater. In addition to increasing the value of your classes, it allows a built-in emergency

sub. The last thing a sick person needs to be doing is finding and worrying about a sub. For requesting time off have an updated sub list specific with name of employees, times available, and contact number. Provide a form that is easy to complete and is signed off by a department leader. Keeping it professional will avoid abuse of taking time of but still allow flexibility to take time of when it is appropriate.

## 9. Feed their social conscience.

Involve them in community programs. Be the workplace the community can count on for donations and a helping hand. Make an effort to recycle and avoid waste.

## 10. Be a coach, not a boss.

Motivate them and inspire them. Give them kind words. Talk to them, not at them. Listen to their ideas and concerns. Show them they are important to you and to the entire organization.

It is likely your company consists of a four-generation workplace. Employees ranging in age from 16 years to 69 years of age, each generation is defined by their formative years and shaped by parenting trends, life span, and technological changes. Our life experiences and exposures shape our character. It matters both how we are genetically wired and also what we have experienced in life.

We should involve all generations in creating our culture and producing our vibe. The blend of different generations can give us a competitive edge by capturing the strengths of all ages. Make it a priority to bridge the generation gaps, to utilize each of the generation's talents, and to build an all-inclusive environment where each generation has an understanding and respect for one other.

*"If you want happiness for a lifetime, help the next generation."*

—Chinese Proverb

