



SPB Organizational Psychology

Business – minded psychologists

# Intergenerational Challenges in the Workplace

2007

# Presentation Plan

- Current situation, perspectives and anticipated challenge
- Generation classification
- Profile of Generation X & Y
- Main intergenerational challenges



# Purpose of the Presentation

- To give you an overview of the values and needs specific to each generation
- To make you aware of the management/leadership challenges associated with the interaction between the various generations
- Top 6 critical leadership behaviours to manage the workforce of tomorrow



# Who was impacted by...

- Elvis joins the army
- Jimi Hendrix dies
- Beatnicks
- Four dead in Ohio
- Kurt Cobain dies
- MTV debuts
- Bay of Pigs



# Context

- Quebec will soon experience a shortage of workers
- Quebec is heading straight for a crisis that could paralyze its economy in less than 10 years
- As of 2011, according to the Institut de la statistique du Québec, there will not be enough new arrivals on the labour market to replace those who are retiring. Struck full force by the aging of its population, Quebec will have a shortage of workers. According to one pessimistic scenario provided by Statistics Canada, the decline in the active population of Quebec could occur as early as 2009.



# Context

- 31.5% of the population is 45 years old and over
- Over 107 million, or 34 percent of the country's population, will be aged 50 and older in 2015
- 56% of organizations will “lose” their president within the next 10 years
- Quebec has almost no “boom” of people between 15 and 25 years old (no millennia's)
- Key cities in Canada and USA enjoying a next baby boom
- Succession is a priority for most board of directors
- What are we going to do with those aging Boomers!



# Context

- Job market resembling that of the 1950s
  - A market of “sellers” not “buyers”
- Turn over is mainly a soft issue



# Context

- The different generations (according to surveys) have different expectations with respect to:
  - How to do their work
  - Their relationship with hierarchy
  - How they express work dissatisfaction







# Caution

- This classification and the generation profiles are:
  - Approximate
  - Generalized description rather than accurate or specific to all individuals belonging to a given generation
  - Taken from David Foot's books, Royal Bank publications, a Dr. Pareto conference, various books on the subject and clinical observations



# Generation Classification

	Silent generation	61–71 years
	Boomers	42 – 60 years
	Generation X	30 – 41 years
	Generation Y	15 -29 years



# Silent Generation

## 61 to 71 Years



- Dedicated workers:
  - Prepared to suffer to “earn” their gratification
  - Do not pamper themselves easily
- Marked by the war:
  - They know what “going without” means
  - Careful not to waste, thrifty, cautious with their money
- Less connected in terms of information/communication
- More docile with respect to authority and the clergy
- Optimistic with respect to the future
- Strong moral obligations and a pronounced sense of duty
- More limited life choices



# Boomer Generation

## 42 to 60 Years



- Exceptional employment opportunities when they arrived on the market
- Once very idealistic: “Peace & Love”
- Concerned about family and traditions, but . . .
- . . . several divorced and separated individuals, and single-parent families
- Torn between parental values and “self” satisfaction
- Life is work; ego = career/profession for many
- More respectful of authority
- Power to buy nice things (think about the marketing campaigns that target them)
- More life choices and more “vertical opportunities” to grow



# Boomer Generation

## 42 to 60 Years



- A fruitful period that lasted 19 years!
- Refuse to grow old! Actuarial life expectancy of 82.5 years!
- They want to be cured but not grow old!
- A life path that is much more cyclic than linear! They reinvent themselves every 5 to 6 years. Therefore difficult to predict



# Generation X & Y (BUST) 15 to 41 Years



- Rather self-centered, cynical and sarcastic
- Seek immediate gratification
- Like to experiment
- Criticize and question authority, but . . .
- . . . more dependent on their parents, remain at home longer
- Live in the present and for the present
- Life is not just work



# Focus on Generation X & Y



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# What “X & Y” Appreciate

- “Horizontal” growth and challenges
- Primarily friendly working environment that is somewhat free from formal tenure and strict compliance to bureaucratic rules, policies and procedures
- An organizational culture that will favour collegiality as a prime communication strategy in work relations.



# What “X & Y” Appreciate

- A sense of belonging to a community of values in which they will fully invest themselves
- An environment with cutting-edge expertise and technology



# What “X & Y” Appreciate

- A work environment that promotes new ideas and is not scared of continuous change
- An environment where managers influence more through the authority of their arguments than through the argument of authority
- An environment that frequently acknowledges individual contributions as well as teamwork



# What “X & Y” Appreciate

- An environment where the people in charge consult, ask for opinions and make their decisions mostly through consensual leadership practices
- An environment that emphasizes significant contributions rather than career planning and corporate tenure
- An inspiring boss that links everything together and provides meaning



# How to Mobilize “X & Y”?



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# Managing

- Go from *boss* to *coach* :
  - One that enables and is a “bug remover”
  - Leads by example
  - Co-development (buddy system)
  - Favour the Chinese model for learning
  - Feedback is in real time and frequent



# Managing

- Promotes a sense of community:
  - Walks the talk when displaying core organizational values
  - Invests in organizational social activities and participates actively
  - Shows transparency in communicating current and future business results



# Managing

- Participation
  - Involves them in goal setting
  - Financial transparency
  - Overall big picture
  - Input on ideas
  - “X & Y” want to influence decisions



# Managing

- Balance work and family
  - Equity does not mean equality
  - “X & Y” expect their boss to be understanding and aware of their life conditions
  - Challenges that take into account particular individual talents
  - Displaying empathy for employee’s well being



# Managing

- Motivation & Empowerment
  - Hands out work assignments like missions or challenges
  - Promotes autonomy
  - Inspires
  - Work has to be linked to:
    - Increased revenues
    - Client satisfaction
    - Employee satisfaction
    - Bottom line/productivity
    - Ingenuity
  - “X & Y” want to interact directly with the client



# Managing

- Recognition & acknowledgement
  - Increase social recognition
  - “Pit stop” every three months
  - Acknowledgement good performance frequently
  - Flexible compensation packages such as “pay for performance”
  - Double your investment in social activities (office parties, etc.)



SLA1

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**SLA1**

Si on suit la règle de l'American Psychological Association pour les références, on remplace le prénom de l'auteur par son initial. J'ai suivi les règles du norme APA pour tous les références.

Shannon Armstrong, 25/05/2004

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