

SECTION: STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

THE POWER OF PASSION OR HOW TO HAVE ENGAGED EMPLOYEES IN THE DIGITAL ERA

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Abstract:

The 21st Century brings with it new approaches to organizational management. We all are witnessing the emergence of new business models, new collaborative working environments that require new forms of learning, new forms of communication through the introduction of artificial intelligence and augmented reality into our day-to-day life.

Today, more than ever, different generations - X, Y and Z generations- are in a position to interact directly or indirectly, to work practically together - which is not easy at all, given that we are talking about values, principles, different or even totally opposed expectations.

This paper aims to investigate and discover how the company can employ X and Y generations engaged in day-to-day work in a multinational company, human resources department.

Key words: employee, digital era, engagement

JEL Classification: J24, M12, M14

1. Introduction

In a collaborative work environment where new technology contaminates almost all employee generations, the focus is on the speed of response and on the ability to work online and offline.

Using social networks, smartphones, traditional email, company's internal networks, tablets, and other technological environments have become common practice.

Today, more than ever, different generations - X, Y and Z generations- are in a position to interact directly or indirectly, to work practically together - which is not easy at all, given that we are talking about values, principles, different or even totally opposed expectations.

Building a harmonious working relationship between Generation X and Generation Y is the current challenge for organizational management. We are witnessing the emergence of multigenerational leadership.

Multigenerational Leadership (Bolser and Gosciej, 2015) is that style of leadership that understands that the Y generation has a different style of work and a different approach to professional development versus X or the newer generation Z.

It realizes that it has about two learning cycles to support and form the Y generation, two learning cycles to capitalize on the expertise of the X generation, who still has 17-18 years of work experience.

If Generation Y puts more emphasis on experiential learning and on the job, being familiarized and comfortable with the digital environment, Generation X is said to be a multitask generation -skill developed during work-that wants to have control over its own work, and is making a learning effort to assimilate new technology to help her in her work, while Generation Z is native to the digital environment.

2. Multigenerational challenges

We live at a time when different generations are at work together, each with its aspirations and visions, and the challenge for the organization's management is to find the balance that everyone can integrate as best as possible, harmonize.

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Specialty studies that analyze the behavior and attitude of three generations (X, Y, and Z) shows that the way in which these generations cohabitate and influence the nature of work and the organizational culture, needs to change (<https://universumglobal.com/millennials/>).

Petter Nzlander, CEO of Universum, explains: "The moment Generation Z will enter the labor force, the organizational culture will undergo significant changes and the situation will not be the same as we know it now. That is why it is good to understand that a team of representatives of several generations needs a totally different approach " He points out that by 2020, the Z generation representatives will represent 20% of the labor force, so every employer must still think about how it will manage the situation and what changes it will have to make to the organizational culture in order to adapt (18,000 students and employees from 19 countries participated in the study and was supported by specialists from the INSEAD Emerging Markets Institute, the HEAD Foundation and the MIT Leadership Center).

According to the study, interesting job information, career development opportunities, employer profile from the perspective of the three generations were identified: X, Y and Z. Thus, in terms of workplace, representatives of all generations appreciate a job that gives them the opportunity to develop while being encouraged to take the initiative, all at the same time.

If generation X (born 1965-1983) wants to work in a team that encourages risk-taking, those in Generation Z (1997-2002) are less interested in a culture of integrity, but appreciate the existence of a clear hierarchy.

Regarding the professional future, more than 60% of the representatives of all generations view this aspect positively.

But there are some nuances. If for employees of Generation X, employability is perceived negatively, being more pessimistic, for Y-Generation individuals (Millennials - 1984-1996), employability is perceived with optimism and start positive on this line.

Interestingly enough, for both categories, there was the same fear when they first engaged: that they would work too much, that they would not find a job that would match their personality and that they would not be able to combine work with personal life. So, different generations, different perceptions.

Different perceptions, different processes. Hence the different visions of employability among the three generations. Each generation in turn embarks on a set of qualities that can make it employable.

Psychological literature suggests that members of generations X and Y have higher perceptions of employment than Baby Boomers (1946-1964). Compared to Baby Boomers, individuals in the X and Y generations are seen as people who need more feedback, spend less time in a job, and feel a lower commitment to the organization. These factors are closely related to the perceptions of employability.

In this respect, Zemke and his collaborators (Zemke et al, 2013) suggested that Generation Y individuals, who now complete their studies and enter the labor market, adapt more easily than individuals in Generation X and Baby Boomers. Moreover, literature shows that Y Generation puts a much greater emphasis on inner focus on personal careers. With the globalization and upward trend in technology, Y generation members are considered to be more performing in technology than other generations.

	BABY BOOMER	GENERATION X	GENERATION Y
VALUES	Personal development Team work Unique Personal gratification	Confident Autonomy Independence Entrepreneurial spirit Diversity	Honesty Integrity Diversity Responsibility Team work
CHARACTERISTICS	Individualist Competitive Material Focused on relations Team player Sensible to feedback Respect for the position Superiority	Comfortable with change Cynic Pragmatic Flexible Multifunctional Creative Autonomy Resourceful Specific goals	Sociable Confident Optimist Accomplishment oriented Cooperative Educated Technologized Socially aware Altruistic Multifunctional Practical Team worker
WORK PLACE PREFERENCES	Concentrated "Living at the workplace" mentality Safety Power Progress in career	Career oriented Work life-personal life balance Lack of safety Informal approach	Significant work Flexible job Feedback/ Mentoring Career oriented

Source: Processing after Zemke et al, 2013

It is obvious that in order for generations to engage, so that they reach performance, a process of awareness of all involved must be undertaken. The first steps have been taken.

The fact that every generation, be it generation X, Y or Z, realizes that there is room for everyone, that each can bring with it more value, can only help to build a harmonious and efficient working environment, capable of progress and efficiency at organization level.

3. Case study: The power of passion. How to have engaged employees from the x and y generations dedicated in work

The case study aims to identify ways in which a multinational company in the Western Region of Romania can have employees from the X and Y generations involved and dedicated to day-to-day work.

The research method was the survey based on the questionnaire, the research tool used being the questionnaire. Number of respondents: 30 persons, which represent all the employees from HR Department from the multinational company. The questionnaire includes a total of 7 questions to identify the factors that motivate company employees, X and Y generation employees, and the organizational climate analysis of the business relationship between the two generations X and Y. Questionnaires and data interpretation have been facilitated by Google Drive Excel Sheets + Google Forms + Google statistics / graphs.

The most representative results of the study are presented below.

To the question of **generational representativeness within the company**, the results show that 43.3% of respondents are Y generation, 43.3% of the X generation, while 13.4% of the respondent is the generation of Zoomers (over 50 years).

Asked how to **characterize the relationship with members of X / Y generations**, respondents mostly responded as a balanced relationship (46.7%), motivating (36.7%) and only 16.6% consider this relationship a challenge.

In terms of identifying **motivation methods at the workplace**, more precisely, what are the factors that motivate the respondents, namely what they think motivates the members of

the X and Y generations, the answers obtained show that at this company the strongest factors motivating employees at work are: teamwork, professional satisfaction, workplace atmosphere, assertiveness and the challenge of new, complex tasks. To this is finally added salary and job security.

These results show that, in this company, the motivation factors prevail in the face of hygiene factors (Herzberg's theory), providing the company with unique experiences capable of capitalizing on talent, shaping and developing new skills and abilities. This is encouraging because it demonstrates that we are in the face of a company with a strong organizational culture where employees feel they have the company's support for professional development, which determines them to be dedicated and involved in work.

An interesting aspect of research is investigating the existence of differences of opinion between employees belonging to X and Y generations. These differences exist. Thus, pretensions of advancement, attitude towards work, communication at all levels, all are perceived differently by the subjects questioned in this study, made at this company. This is so natural as long as we have to deal with different generations that think, act and react differently.

However, we consider it useful to assume the answer to a legitimate question: Are these generations so different as they result from studies?

The answer is important to find because in the current context of collaborative work, a fundamental role lies with the management of the organization that needs to identify the most appropriate solutions to effectively manage the working relationship between employees belonging to different generations, otherwise we will witness a negative work atmosphere, conflicts that inevitably lead to unmotivated employees.

4. Considerations on managing different generations at work

The gap between generations is a real challenge for HR people. How can valid bridges be created between the visions of each person's life and work? How can everyone be motivated, what are the qualities or defects of some of them? When age differences are considerable, employees need to be managed differently.

Studies show that those in the Baby Boomers are productive and hard working, but they are harder to adapt and work better individually. Those in the X generation have the sense of management and find immediate solutions, but the relationship between the work done and the results obtained is not always the one expected by the employer.

Generation Y appreciates diversity, has distinct professional priorities and habits with respect to the other generations. Among the strong points of the Y generation, we find enthusiasm and entrepreneurship. Now getting to the labor market, Y Gen wants to learn, but he does not want to be told what to do and how to do it.

We are witnessing an agglomeration of ages and levels of personal development that create a social problem that is difficult to manage.

And yet ... is that right?

New collaborative environments require new forms of learning, new forms of communication. Different generations X, Y and Z are in a position to interact directly or indirectly to work together practically. Can we do that? Can we identify common points for these generations so different that we can work well or even very well TOGETHER?

Fortunately, we have an answer.

A study conducted by Sodexo Benefits and Rewards Services in 2016 shows that if we look closely, we see that X, Y, Z, and Baby Boomers have many things in common, especially in terms of quality of life expectations for work.

In fact, Sodexo Benefits and Rewards Services carried out a study (Sodexo, 2016) in five countries comparing Millennials and non-Millennials at work and found that the first six

expectations of each group (security and future protection, health and family, the balance between work and personal life, financial recognition for personal contribution, career development, regular and ongoing feedback, personal development both inside and outside the workplace) were exactly the same.

Researchers from University of North Carolina have come to the same conclusion when their study has shown that the generations of the Millennials, X and Baby Boomers are looking for all the integration of professional and personal life, the chance to work attractive projects, the opportunity to advance in their careers, fair and competitive compensation (https://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/200141/Resource_PDFs/Heart_of_Engagement_Ebook.pdf).

Similarly, an IBM Value for Business Value survey 2015 shows very small differences between generations, claiming that generations share the same motivational factors as workplace views - including an aspect that seems to bind everyone - generations and cultures - is the need for a balance between professional and personal life (<http://theirf.org/research/generations-in-the-workforce-marketplacepreferences-in-rewards-recognition-incentives/1427/>).

Final Conclusion

For a company with diverse generations to be truly successful, it has to go beyond stereotypes and get to know its employees, understand their expectations in terms of quality of life and discover what motivates them.

Finally, it is representative the opinion of Peter Cappeli, director of the Wharton School for Human Resources:

"Most importantly, if there were / although there were moderate differences between generations in terms of their values, they are irrelevant to employers.

Why?

Because average effects / statistics hide enormous variations within any age group.

Do you want something really worrying?

Think about the fact that we are very much focusing on the non-existent differences between the interests of young people while ignoring the interests of the older workforce that is growing ” (<http://www.hreonline.com/HRE/view/story.jhtml?id=533325364>)

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