

Cross Generational Management

Baby Boomer retirement, lower fertility rates, brain drain and sea changers - the impact of these major demographic upheavals is rumbling through the workplace. The demographic upheavals facing the population are not passing trends. Organisations can't change the learning styles, work patterns or employment attitudes of an entire generation, but they can position themselves to understand and so better engage with each new generation. Applying this knowledge about the cross generational workforce will be critical for future business success. Stephen Hinch of Manpower Australia / New Zealand, believes a major rethink needs to take place. "It's a global issue and there will have to be fundamental shifts in the ... way people work to improve productivity. We haven't got to the point where we're really utilising technology to provide smarter working and better output - we still work the same way we worked a decade ago before we had the technology."

Source: www.hcamag.com July 2007 and "New Generations at Work" by Mark McCrindle, Director of McCrindle Research, www.mccrindle.com.au/	Baby Boomers Born 1946–64 Current Age: 40s and 50s Australian Population: 5.3 m	Generation X Born 1965–79 Current Age: 20s and 30s Australian Population: 4.4 m	Generation Y Born 1980–94 Current Age: Teens and 20s Australian Population: 4.2 m
Values at work:	Work ethic; industry focus	Achievement; company-centric	Ownership; individuality
Motivations for work:	Financial security; responsibility	Career progression; opportunity	Job variety; creativity
Influences over career choice:	Parents; authorities	Careers advisors; experts	Internet; peer groups
Shapers of perception and views:	Tradition; reputation	Observation; recommendation	Perception; experience
Key management tools:	Recruiting; supervising	Training; promoting	Innovating; empowering
Key communication tools:	Technical data; evidence	Visual examples; demonstration	Hands-on training; participation
Typical training style:	Formal monologue	Programmed dialogue	Interactive multi-modal
Typical leadership style:	Control; thinkers	Coordination; doers	Consensus; feelers
Influencers and values:	Local; long-term needs	Regional; medium-term goals	Global; short-term wants
Management approach:	Telling; "Yes boss"	Selling; "What's in it for me?"	Involving; "Here's what I think"

According to McCrindle Research, Gen Y is open to flexible approaches to work. "They're certainly flexible in how they approach work and many are used to telecommuting or working from home – so give them the project, give them the resources and they'll get it done. They work well in self-directed teams, but they still want feedback and guidance, they want leaders to be involved rather than just delegating. They're quite proficient at using technology to get the job done." Technology has opened the door for a new phenomenon, which gained momentum in the late 1990s and continues at pace today. Given the massive changes in store, employers need to act now in terms of technology improvements and talent management action plans if they wish to remain competitive.