NOT EVERYONE IS A WINNER

MARY LEAH COCO, PH.D.
College Class of 2015

• Born just as the Internet became “commonplace”
• Amazon began its rise in the online marketplace
• First generation defined by digital research and information
College Class of 2015

• The only significant labor disputes in their lifetime have been in major league sports
• Their schools’ “blackboard” have always been getting smarter
• LBJ stands for LeBron James
• Dial-up, what dial-up
College Class of 2015

• Andy Warhol is a museum in Pittsburgh
• McDonald’s coffee has always been too hot to handle
• Making change, no need for change when you use a debit card
Population by Generation

- Traditionalists: Born prior to 1946, 46 million
- Baby Boomers: 1946-1964, 78 million
- Generation X: 1965-1976, 50 million
- Generation 2020: Born after 1997, 41 million
Traditionalists

- Also called the Silent Generation, the Veterans, and the Greatest Generation
- As of 2010 they were all over the age of 64
- Defining events were World War II and the Korean War
- Major Trait = Loyalty
Baby Boomers

• Also called the Cold War Generation and the Growth Economy Generation
• Between their mid-forties and sixties
• Defining events were Watergate, Women’s Rights, Woodstock, and JFK Assassination
• Major Trait = Competition
Generation X

• Named after the title of 1991 novel by Douglas Coupland, *Generation X: Tales for an Accelerated Culture*
• Between their thirties and early forties
• Defining influences were MTV, Gulf War, 1987 Stock Market Crash, Fall of Berlin Wall
• Major Trait = Self-Reliance
Millenials

• Also known as Digital Natives, Generation Y, the Net Generation, and the Google Generation
• In their twenties and early thirties
• Defining influences are Google, Facebook, 9/11, election of Barack Obama
• Major Trait = Immediacy
Generation 2020

• Oldest Gen 2020 is 14 years old and will enter the workplace as college graduates in the year 2020

• Defining influences have been Social Games (World of Warcraft), Iraq and Afghanistan Wars, Great Recession

• Major Trait = Hyperconnectedness
What We Know

- Traditionalists and Boomers are as likely to be web contributors as Millennials.
- Boomers and Generation X look for a work life/home life balance, while Millennials see work as part of life.
- Millennials and Generation X place a high importance on working for a company that develops both their career and life skills.
What We Know

• Millennials are likely to select an employer based on the ability to access the latest tools and technologies at work

• Both Traditionalist and Boomers place high importance on a manager who understands age and diversity in the workplace
What We Know

• At least 50% of our organizations’ leaders will be eligible to retire in the next five years
  • Problem is their successors are also Baby Boomers and they will be retiring as well.
• Millennials are the most socially and diversely tolerant generation in history, most educated, and most technologically savvy generation.
Communication Across Generations

- Traditionalists
  - Formal
  - Detail; prose-style writing
  - Relevance to personal security; historical perspective
  - Accepting and trusting of authority and hierarchy
- Print; face-to-face; conventional mail; some online information/interaction
Communication Across Generations

• Baby Boomers
  • Semiformal
  • Scale it down but give me everything
  • Relevance to the bottom line and “my” rewards
  • Accept the “rules” as created by the Traditionalists
• Print; conventional mail; face-to-face; online tools and resources
Communication Across Generations

• Generation X
  • Not so serious; irreverent
  • Get to the point – what do I need to know?
  • Relevance to what matters to “me”
  • Openly question authority; often branded as cynics and skeptics
  • Online; some face-to-face; games; technological interaction (chat)
Communication Across Generations

- **Millenials**
  - Eye-catching; fun
  - If and when I need it, I’ll find it online
  - Relevance to now, today, and my role
  - OK with authority that earns their respect
  - Online; wired seamlessly connected through technology
Myths for Millennials at Work

• They are disloyal and unwilling to make real commitments to their employers
• They won’t do the grunt work
• They don’t know very much and have short attention spans
• They want the top job on day one
• They need work to be fun
Myths for Millennials at Work

• They want to be left alone
• They want their managers to do their work for them
• They don’t care about climbing the proverbial career later
• Money and traditional benefits don’t matter to them
Myths for Millennials at Work

- Money is the only thing that matters to them
- They don’t respect their elders
- They want to learn only from computers
- It’s impossible to turn them into long-term employees
- They will never make good managers because they are so self-focused
Bringing out the Best in Millennials

• Get them on board fast with the right message
• Get them up to speed quickly and turn them into knowledge workers
• Practice in loco parentis management. Take a strong hand
• Give them the gift of context. Help them understand their role in your organization and where they fit in that picture
Bringing out the Best in Millennials

- Get them to care about great customer service
- Teach them how to manage themselves
- Teach them how to be managed by you
- Retain the best of the Millennial generation one day at a time
- Build the next generation of leaders
Predictions for 2020 Workplace

- You will be hired and promoted based on reputation capital
- Your mobile device will become your office, classroom, and concierge
- The global talent shortage will be acute
- Recruiting will start on social networking sites
Predictions for 2020 Workplace

• Web communities will force corporate offices to reinvent themselves
• Companies will hire entire teams
• Job requirements for CEOs will include blogging
• Corporate curriculum will use video games, simulations, and alternate reality games as key delivery modes
Predictions for 2020 Workplace

• A 2020 mid-set will be required to thrive in a networked world
• Human Resources’ focus will move from outsourcing to crowdsourcing
• Corporate social networks will flourish and grow inside organizations
• You will elect your “leader”
Predictions for 2020 Workplace

• Lifelong learning will be a business requirement
• Work-life flexibility will replace work-life balance
• Companies will disclose their corporate social responsibility programs to attract and retain employees
Predictions for 2020 Workplace

• Diversity will be a business issue rather than a human resource issue
• The lines among marketing, communications, and learning will blur
• Corporate app stores will offer ways to manage work and personal life better
• Social media literacy will be required for all employees
Predictions for 2020 Workplace

- Building a portfolio of contract jobs will be the path to obtaining permanent, full-time employment
What Can We Do?

• Understand the generational balance of the workplace is shifting
• Recognize the distinct characteristics of each generation
• Learn to communicate in different ways to reach different employees
• Take steps to bridge the gap in managing employees of different generations
What Can We Do?

• Plan now for the upcoming workforce; be proactive rather than reactive
• Drive systems thinking
• Emphasize learning agility
• Champion openness and transparency
• Get started NOW
Conclusion

• The message is simple: If you want high performance from the Millennials and Gen 2020, you must commit to high-maintenance management. Whether we like it or not, these two generations need help to form bonds in the organization, their new roles, new colleagues, and their leaders. They need their leaders to guide, direct, and support them. In return, you will get the highest performance workforce in history.
References


References
