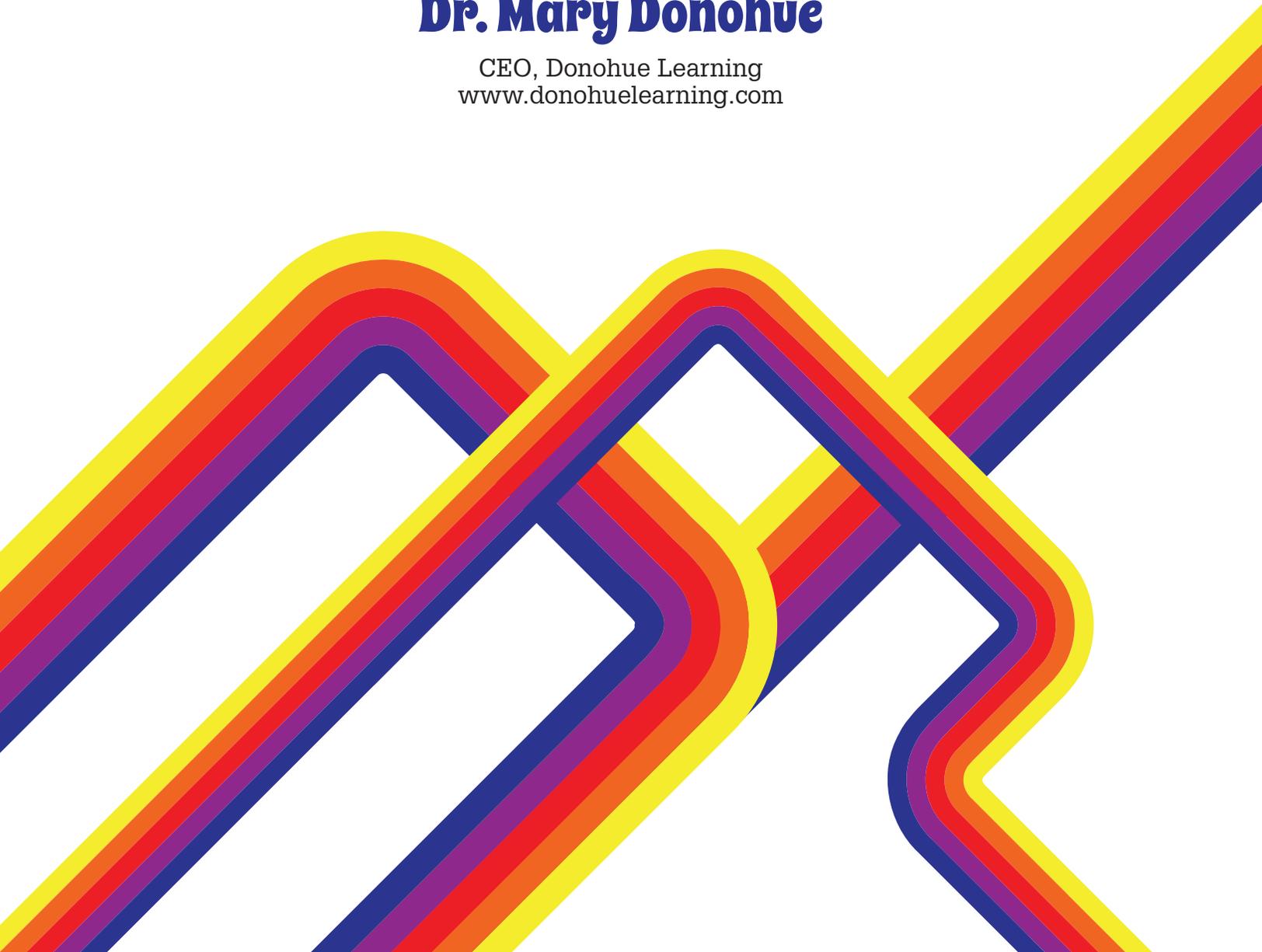


The Marcia Moment

The Death of the Manage-Me Workplace

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The Marcia Moment:

The Death of the Manage-Me Workplace

Introduction

We all feel like Jan Brady—underappreciated.

There is an iconic moment in the '70s TV show *The Brady Bunch* when the middle sister of six kids, Jan, yells, **MARCIA, MARCIA, MARCIA!** in her frustration at all the attention her perfect older sister gets. She can't figure out why no one appreciates her.

This paper deals with **Marcia Moments** that team members experience in the workplace. A root cause of workplace frustration is training programs that end up crippling sales productivity and causing turnover because these programs fail to help managers understand that people *need to work to learn and not learn to work*. In other words, learning is what inspires, and engages, employees.

In a study we conducted throughout 2016 with five thousand participants from across North America, we found that:

- **77% of activities and initiatives organizations are undertaking to engage their leaders, develop future leaders, and recruit emerging leaders are simply wrong, according to data.**
- **23% of our participants felt they were learning from or engaged with other generations at work.**
- **70% of workforces are disengaged from their colleagues and their work. That means that fewer than three people in a meeting of ten participants are not thinking of work and nor do they really care.**
- **7% were fully engaged and really enjoyed their jobs and reported no problem with generational communication.**

Companies have to find a solution to the cohort that is having its **Marcia Moment**.

The High Cost of Your Marcia Moment in 2017

Gen Xers make up 43% of most workforces and many are in leadership positions. Millennials make up 44% of most workforces and are close on Gen X's heels as leaders. Gen Xers, who are now the reigning minority of the workforce, are having their **Marcia Moment**, and in 2017 you will see this play out in the workforce in terms of cost:

- PWC, in *Pulse of the Profession* (2013), stated that 56% of a projected budget is at risk due to ineffective communications.
- Our investigative research presented with Purdue University in November (2016) indicated a slightly lower number. In our research, we identified that disengagement is costing companies \$2600 per employee per month, which for a typical Fortune 500 company can run upwards of \$200 million, and that may be a conservative number.

In the face of these statistics, our research and work with organizations has led us to conclude that companies need to shift their training from a **manage-me** to a **develop-me** culture that allows team members to appeal to and communicate effectively with all generations in the workplace.

The workplace needs to provide the tools and ways to measure outcomes for each employee so that he or she can create their own “bespoke” or personal learning ecosystem in a supportive environment using technology. Such an ecosystem can be developed within a company’s existing learning management system. It enables team members to specialize in soft skill development, including how to influence and motivate each generation. Hard skills can be taught using a learning ecosystem as well; however, our study only investigated the value of teaching the generational soft skills mentioned previously. The outcomes that were achieved are:

Personal results: Our students were 34% happier at work, earned 15% more income, and were delighted to discover that three hours per week were freed up, which many of them used to do something that was fun.

Enterprise results: An 11% increase in productivity and a 34% increase in engagement scores over a one-year period, and a 50% reduction in the turnover of high-potential Millennials, as well as a general lessening in their desire to leave.

The Research

Over the course of the last 24 months, we were hired to speak or provide programming across North America to over 6500 people, including chiefs of police, *Fortune 500* employers in the retail, banking, mining, health care and transportation sectors, and to gaming companies.

Our quantitative study was based on a mixed-method approach to research. A survey including one short-answer question was sent to a sampling of one thousand people we engaged within the last twelve months. All had identified an interest in understanding the generations.

We had a 20% response rate, with a margin of error of 5%, and a confidence level of 95%. Our qualitative study was based on information focus groups and biographical research with students who volunteered.

Definitions

We chose to define generations in the context of technology:

Boomers:

born between 1945 and 1960
are audio-techs

Gen Xers:

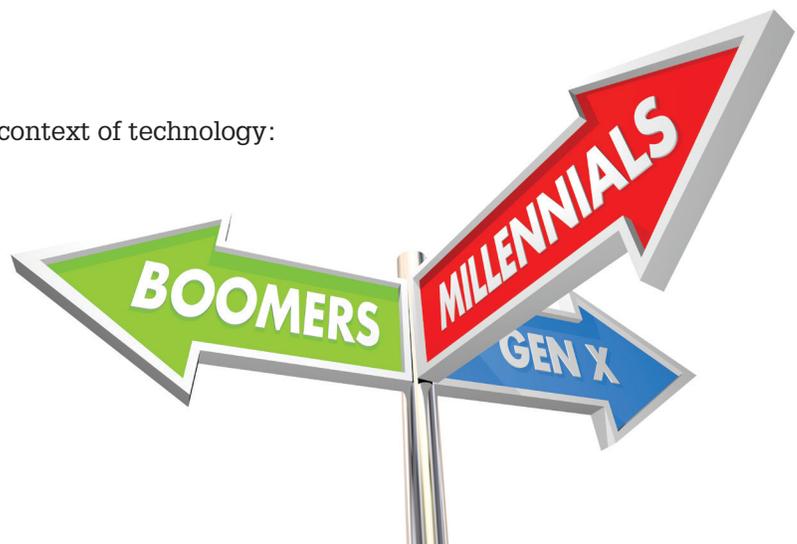
born between 1960 and 1980
are digital-techs

Millennials:

born between 1980 and 2000
are online-tech



“If you have an idea, just shout it out.”

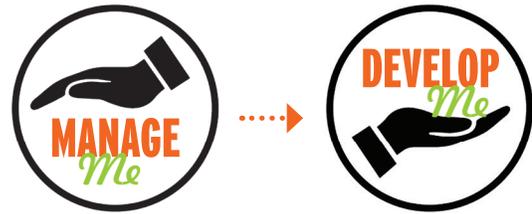


Other Terms and Definitions Used in This Paper

- ✿ **Marcia Moment:** an individual's detachment that manifests depression. This drives lack of engagement in the workplace.
- ✿ **Manage-Me Training Culture:** a task-focused traditional type of training intended to educate i) leaders who operate in silos; and ii) high-potentials.
- ✿ **Develop-Me Training Culture:** bespoke personal learning system that is part of a teaching culture that focuses on soft skills and engagement. Aka silo-busting cohort training, focused on building intellectual, cultural and communication capital.
- ✿ **Me-time** and **Me-time Evaluation Tools:** Millennials crave time with their manager. Managers will migrate from annual evaluations to scheduling short bursts of time with their team.
- ✿ **Problem-presenting meetings** and **problem-solving meetings** are meetings that will replace the PowerPoint deck and allow people to talk to each other and apply their insights and solutions to the project at hand. Data will be fluid on Google docs. Clients won't be walked through a PowerPoint; rather, they will be walked through an *experience* or a story.
- ✿ **Generational Literacy:** understanding the shift from task to technology and how it affects each of the generational cohorts in the workplace.
- ✿ **Work Moms and Dads:** what Millennials demand in order to navigate their careers and workplace culture. These terms are replacing "work husband" or "work wife."
- ✿ **Enterprise Learning Ecosystem:** a learning ecosystem that enables team members to connect with each other through a video-based learning environment.
- ✿ **Personal Learning Ecosystem:** online testing and learning material that enable an individual to connect the links between an organization's culture and its heroes, and has the effect of limiting the natural prejudice one generation feels for the other that reduces engagement.
- ✿ **Communication Capital:** an aspect of a Millennial's skill set that enables them to get the message out (be it brand, team or internal messaging) using the new currency, social media. Used to generate sales and attract and retain new employees.
- ✿ **Intellectual Capital:** an aspect of a Gen Xer's skill set that enables them to understand the value of your business and your people, and how this relationships works with both internal team members and external customers. Gen Xers use this skill to build strategies and tactics that move the organization through change.
- ✿ **Cultural Capital:** an aspect of a Boomer's skill set that is underpinned by their knowledge of how the organization developed and what makes it tick. Boomers use this knowledge to build Millennial teams and create a sustainable leadership development.
- ✿ **I-Workplace:** a workplace where we communicate through i) the *Internet* (email, text, etc.) and ii) *information* downloads (for example, long, long meetings and conference calls); and iii) with *investors* who want their returns.
- ✿ **Predictable Learning Engagement:** understanding how engaged employees retain information and relate it to other employees.

The Marcia Moment

People may laugh at the analogy of characters in a sitcom, but the overwhelming response to our travels across North America that provided me with the opportunity to speak to and with over five thousand people across North America confirmed that the **Marcia Moment** was very much in evidence. All seemed to be suffering from this malaise. Everyone seemed frustrated and upset over not being understood or appreciated, and the target of the frustration was “coworkers in the other generations.” The failure of generations to connect with each other was creating a detached psychological state. This state, according to the tenets of group therapy, can cause depression. We see this depression manifested in lack of engagement in the workplace.



People felt that they had no influence over their teams. One Gen Xer said, “Why can’t they [Millennials] just listen to me? Why do I have to explain everything? Why do they need me all the time?” Conversely, a Millennial asked me to teach him “more tools to keep the attention of my manager, who never listens and is always too busy.”

Technology Accountability, Motivation and Learning

Dr. John Dewey, a famous psychologist and education reformer, said that the driver of human nature was the desire to be important. The poet and playwright George Bernard Shaw said if you teach a man he will never learn, but if you allow a man to do it he will master it. The biggest learning gaps we found were between Gen X and Millennials; therefore, the biggest gap concerning accountability and motivation exists between Gen X and Millennials. This is because each generation has a significantly different relationship with technology.

The differences are fascinating. Gen X became accustomed to technology at work through digital access, meaning full electronic participation in the Internet, but this was accomplished through programs like PowerPoint and Word and accessing file folders online; some even remember when data was stored on discs. The Internet was an individual experience. Work and training were individual experiences. Managers managed you and you managed your tasks. This is called “manage-me.”

Millennials are accustomed to online access, meaning the Internet is a group activity used to engage and communicate with thousands of people. It allows them to be approachable and to share online. This experience is called “develop-me.”

From manage-me to develop-me: This is what is driving the shift from manage me – an independent self-driven learning culture of Gen X – to the develop-me culture – a community-focused sharing-based learning culture embraced by Millennials.

It is worth noting that Millennials crave development more than money. Being associated with a large firm and maybe having a big salary are fun, but these are not key factors in what Millennials say they need or want.

The new leadership buzzword will soon be “me-time.” “Me-time” is defined as short bursts of time with a leader or team mentor who will walk you through your tasks and deliverables. Unlike an annual 360 review, “me-time” is a concise and current discussion of how you are feeling and the status of your projects. Me-time can be scheduled weekly, daily or bi-monthly. This shift in

management reflects the Millennials' need for continuous feedback that was gratified in their youth by teachers, parents and technology, but at work this need isn't being met.

The Gen X beloved standard of PowerPoint will vanish. Instead, you will see *problem-presenting meetings* and *problem-solving meetings* where data is fluid on Google docs. Clients won't be walked through a PowerPoint but rather through an experience or a story.

We have found that annual evaluations don't work with Millennials or Gen X. This is primarily because of the fact that technology is giving us constant feedback, even though our boss may still be attached to the old way of giving feedback. Millennials want a "me-time evaluation." We found in our research that the following questions work well for 87% of the population studied when you are executing with a monthly calendar. To do this, embed the questions in your calendar with a memo to follow up with your team members.

Questions for "Me-Time Evaluations":

1. *What are you most proud of? Why?*
2. *In which area(s) would you like to improve? Why?*
3. *How do you learn from mistakes? Please give an example.*
4. *Do you have the resources and tools you need to perform your job? If not, how should we be investing in you?*
5. *What have I done to help you do your job better?*
6. *What have I done to hinder your job performance?*
7. *How do you learn? Provide an example.*
8. *What are your goals for the next six months/year?*
9. *How do you like to be rewarded? Conversely, what should happen if you don't reach your goals or a team member doesn't reach their goals?*
10. *How have you moved sales forward? Have you directly brought in a new lead or have you supported new leads or client care? Please provide an example.*
11. *What do you think I will say your strengths and areas of improvement will be?*
12. *Do you have any concerns?*

Generational Literacy

The generation gap has been building since the Great Vowel Shift in the 1400s. Michael Skapinker, a columnist with the *Financial Times*, wrote:

We are probably in the midst of a vast generational change, where instead of the majority aspiring to traditional literacy and a skilled minority attending to the computers, it will be the other way around. It could be the literary equivalent of the Great Vowel Shift of the early 1400s. As author David Crystal explains in The Fight for English, before the shift “loud” would have been pronounced “lood” and “leaf” would have been “layf”.

Michael went on to say that “Grandparents and grandchildren in 1450 probably had considerable difficulty understanding each other,” which sounds familiar.

To be engaged you have to know with whom you are working. We found that less than 23% of the population we interacted with understood that they had a problem with generational communication, and 83% couldn't or wouldn't identify where the communication bottleneck was occurring (i.e., between Gen X and Millennials). In the face of statistics, 70% of the participants felt that they were well versed in understanding how the different generations in the workplace process communication. This is a common bias. Poor engagement levels run counter to this common belief.

The correlation between generational communication and engagement should not be a surprise. Why do teenagers run away? Because no one understands them.

Why do employees leave? Because no one understands them. Here are emails from participants in our research:

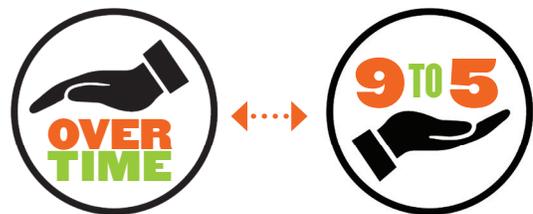
Jane, Millennial participant, 2016: *“I spend my days in work meetings, whether I am working remotely or in the office. Then they expect me to spend my evenings doing the actual work. My manager doesn't understand. Nothing we start ever seems to get finished and more just gets piled on.”*

Mike, Gen X workshop participant, 2016: *“How do I drill into Millennials' heads the concept of accountability? We can't all just leave at 5:00. There is a lot of work to be done.”*

Organizations have to stop treating their workforces as if they are one generation. The same old carrots aren't motivating anyone; to the contrary, they are alienating people. To turn this around the data suggest you should implement the trends of 1) Work Moms and Dads; 2) Learning Ecosystems; and 3) the I-Workplace.

Trend 1: Work Moms and Dads

Gen X is throwing up their hands in frustration. Gen X pioneered the concept of work wives and husbands, defined as colleagues who share the craziness of work. Gen X is task obsessed. They can't even think about leaving work until the job is done.



Millennials demand that their managers – Gen X – become work moms and dads and help them navigate the workforce and achieve success in their careers. Millennials think about the job as one part of their life, not their *entire* life.

Gen X has to *manage up* and satisfy their *Big Thinker Boomer Bosses*. Think of Boomers as the Marcia Brady's of the corporate world. They were smarter and prettier and got all the attention primarily because the size of their cohort allowed for it. Stuck-in-the-middle Gen X also has to *manage down* and develop the brilliant Millennial generation. Think of Millennials as the lovely spoiled Cindy, always the focus of attention who secretly solves problems with Alice for the benefit of the family.

Gen X is the smallest cohort in the workforce and has been tasked with negotiating the shift from the "manage-me workforce" to the "develop-me workforce."

Being generational literate is not about understanding the differences; it's about understanding the stress triggers and how to reduce them. Stress triggers constrain motivation, trust and loyalty.

We found that less than 25% of leaders felt they or their companies were generationally literate. Less than 20% understood the financial consequences of treating the workplace as if everyone was one homogeneous generation.

A generationally literate leader understands the motivators that build loyalty, and they report that their teams thrive whether they are in the office next door or in a country across the pond. Generational leaders also understand that the psychological contract (the unwritten rules of the team) between leadership and its followers is rooted in technology anchors and stress triggers. Full disclosure: we just launched a first-of-its-kind certificate program with Schulich Executive Education Centre (SEEC), Schulich School of Business, York University, to do this.

2. Learning Ecosystems: Stop Treating Everyone the Same

1. *A Personal Learning Ecosystem* is composed of online testing and learning material that enable an individual to connect the links between the organization's culture and its heroes, and has the potential to mitigate the natural prejudice one generation feels for another that reduces engagement.
2. *An Enterprise Learning Ecosystem* is community of team members who interact through a technology platform. It is designed to enhance and transfer cultural capital. Outcomes include coworker engagement, the definition of cultural heroes and rebels, and the sharing of the ethics and morals and drivers of success of the corporation.

To begin building your eco-system, it is always advantageous to understand the strengths of what each part of the system brings to the table. Each generation's hidden talents are discussed below.

Millennials: An Organization's Communication Capital

- Millennials compose 44% of your workforce.
- Millennials are your Communication Capital. These are the people whom you want in your workforce to invigorate others with excitement for new ideas. They drive engagement when you motivate them, and because of the Internet they are motivators. They know how to get people to move from one action to another using the new currency – social media.
- They are trendsetters. They understand people and what makes them feel good.
- They align with the ethics and morals of the organization.
- They are charmers – the people who sail through any corporate event.
- They are motivated by action – don't ask these people to sit through long meetings.

- Millennials need to learn how to take charge of any situation and how to make people feel at ease in a meeting.
- Texting is the new watercooler chat. Millennials grew up on gossip (*ET Tonight*, *People*, *US Magazine*); if anything is happening in the organization, they know about it and are texting their friends about it.
- Physical traits: big hand movements; their head tends to look down to the right or left when they are composing an answer to a question. They are note takers. When speaking, they will often touch others to emphasize a point.

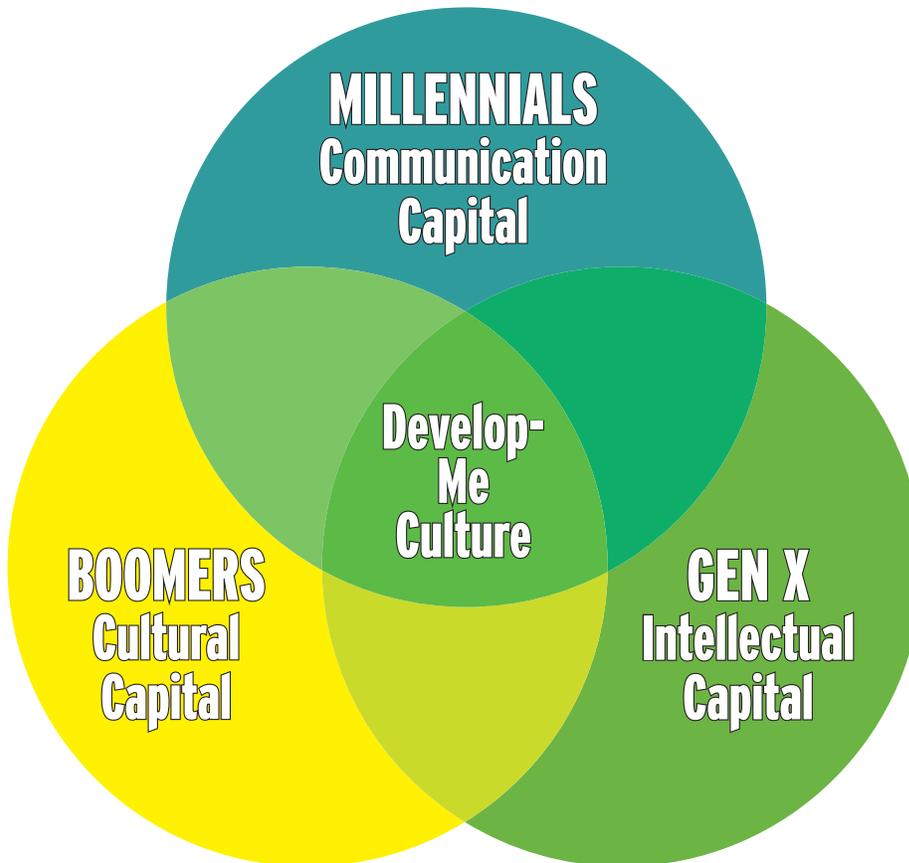
Gen X: Your Intellectual Capital

- Gen X composes 43% of your workforce.
- They are your Intellectual Capital. They are the heart of your organization. They understand the value of your business and its people, and how these relationships have worked with customers both internal and external.
- They are motivated by how they see themselves in the organization. They align work to the vision of the organization.
- They often have higher concentration levels and can put their heads down and avoid gossip (think engineer, techie and mathematician).
- They often think through their answers before they speak.
- One example of how they use their strengths is this: they are the problem solvers in your organization. They have the answers, but don't have to broadcast it.
- *Don't push them too far on time lines, because they will shut down, and don't break your word to them or they will shut down entirely.*
- *Don't withhold information – without information their actions will seem pointless.*
- Physical traits include small hand movements and are kept close to the chin; their head tends to look up to the right or left when composing an answer to a question. When they speak with others, they often look away, often preferring technology for communicating because it gives them time to form their response.

Boomers: Your Cultural Capital

- Boomers compose 13% of your workforce.
- They are your Cultural Capital. They have all the knowledge about how the organization developed and what makes it tick, and can build trends for the organization.
- They are motivated by helping others and the organization; in other words, they work to the mission.
- They are team builders. They listen and are the people that others always look to assess the “real situation.”
- They are never afraid to have difficult conversations, give feedback or accept feedback.
- They need a lot of positive validation, that they are doing the right thing by building the team.
- They are talkers; these people walk and talk through the office.
- One example of how they use their strengths is to build social support pillars.

- Physical traits include very few hand movements, but when they do use hand movements they are forceful. Their head tends to look across to the right or left when composing their answer. They will remember what you say. When speaking with others, they will look directly at the speaker. They are frustrated by no eye contact.



3. The I-Driven Workplace: It Demands an Opportunity for Influence

We are in a multigenerational workforce, and like it or not you can no longer treat your workforce as one homogenous group. As team members and as leaders, you must learn to use your inner knowledge of generations to successfully negotiate the psychological contract that is at the center of the I-Driven Workplace.

The I-Driven Workplace is a workplace where we communicate with others through (Internet) email, text, etc. This workplace is characterized by information downloads and super-long conference calls with investors who are anxious about their returns. This workplace is creating a high stress rate among not just Gen X but Millennials, because in an I-Driven Workplace you have very little influence. Prior to the Internet and the technical marvel that is today's workplace, our influence was solely based on our relationships with people and how we responded to people and the written word; for example, newspapers and memos.

Overwhelming we found in the research that employee feel the I-Driven Workplace creates i) a lack of personal connection to the workplace; ii) reinforces the belief that management doesn't care – you are lucky to have a job; and iii) allows leaders who don't know how to manage people to hide.

To repair this the damage of the I-Driven Workplace, it is imperative to understand the different points of influence for each generation.

Generation	To motivate them, use the phrase/ ideas below:	To influence their ability to innovate, use the phrase/ideas below:	To influence productivity, use the phrase/ideas below:
Boomer	“Our leader needs you.”	Please share your knowledge.” Boomers are driven by legacy.	“Let’s review the numbers. Our leader needs to know.”
Gen X	“It’s important work. Only you can get it done.”	“We need you to help increase the team’s ability to get the job done.”	“Numbers are driven by the task.”
Gen Y Millennial	Convey to them that “team development is fun.”	Encourage them to discuss the problem with peers (they will do so anyway) and provide a solution.	Social media as conversation. Their key to interacting with people.

Conclusion: When We Learn at Work, We Thrive

Millennials, as we have established, would like a clear development roadmap and guidance system to navigate the organization. In other words, they want help. Gen Xers, on the other hand, feel you own your destiny. You “have to own” your own development.

They want to receive training, even when they are in a senior role and moving to a C-Level role. Learning is their socialization. Remember, this is the generation that was the first to have equal numbers of male and female students at university.

Gen X needs to figure out how to develop Millennials, because Millennials will eclipse them in due course. Millennials need to figure out how to inspire both Gen X and Gen Z. The key is don't train for task; train for intelligence.

Why is it that some companies can offer fair compensation packages and still have productivity issues, while other companies can offer \$25,000 or less a year and have very high productivity?

The answer is culture.

It's all about culture. And our culture is shifting. To be an engaged organization, the data suggest that you should focus on your people and soft skills. We found that when learning is delivered in both a personal learning and/or enterprise supported learning ecosystem, that for every ten students:

- On average, 1.5 students would not get involved
- 3.5 will retain and repeat the information learned to three people
- 5 employees will become cultural enthusiasts and share the information with three team members or other employees
- 1 employee will become the cultural trigger and share the information with 10 team members or other employees

These people began to shift the culture of disengagement and depression to a culture of learning and thriving, negating the **Marcia Moment** effect.

No matter how big your technology, advertising or lobbying budget, if your employees don't feel good (and data on low engagement levels tell us they are not happy), they are not going to make your customers happy and move product.

At the end of the episode, Mr. and Mrs. Brady teach Jan that you have to work hard to get recognition and success. Our job as leaders of Gen X and Millennials is to create the engagement tools and environment that allow everyone to be recognized, and we hope this paper has pointed you in the right direction to do that.

By the way, at the end of the episode Jan did get recognition and understanding, as did the participants who used these tools. In fact, they increased their personal income, found more time for themselves, and were far less stressed than their colleagues who continued to treat and communicate with each generation as they had always done.

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