

TIME WITH TINA

Enhancing the Effectiveness of Leaders & Teams

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Gen 2020 is coming to the workplace! Are you ready to lead 5 generations in the workplace?

August 16, 2011 //

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According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2014, we are about to experience a social phenomenon not yet witnessed: **five generations working side by side**.

The 5th generation, Gen 2020 (*also referred to as Gen Z*) includes anyone born between 1998-2010. So, in 2014 the oldest members of Gen 2020 will be 16 years of age and eligible to work. These newest employees entering the workforce will be joined by four other generations in the workplace and feasibly could be working with their parents, grandparents, and even their great-grandparents. How is this so?

The youngest members of the traditionalist generation will be 69 years young in 2014. Our country's economic recession and continued instability have forced many traditionalists back to work and many baby boomers to delay their retirement. Interestingly, the World Health Organization predicts that men and women who are healthy at age 60 will, on average, be physically capable of working until they are 74 and 77, respectively.

What is known thus far about the members of Gen 2020 and what might they be like in the workplace? Below are some facts and insights I discovered during my research. Be sure to send me a comment and let me know what else is on your mind relative to Gen 2020.

Who is Gen 2020?

- **23 million members and growing** — Yet, Gen 2020 is smaller in number than any other current generation. They are typically the children of older parents, born into small, dual income families. A higher attention span from their parents may be reflected in their behavior. Their friendships are quantifiable by Facebook. Their parent's read them bedtime stories on e-readers and iPads and they listened to nursery rhymes downloaded from iTunes. They endorse products with an effortless "Like" button.
- **The most technologically advanced generation yet** — This is the first group born into a full digital world. They have never known a world without technology so they are computer/tech savvy and spend a significant amount of time online.
- **Hyper-connected** — They are growing up in a world that is all about connecting through technology. They are constantly connected to multiple devices in order to know what and whom they need to know, including mobile devices such as cell phones and iPods. Many of them will have never sent an email when they get to the workplace, because who needs e-mail when you can text, instant message, tweet, or Facebook?
- **Prefer to text than talk** and communicate online rather than face to face — They rate everything and everyone online through "likes" and "following."
- **Prefer computers** to books and outdoor play activities
- **Growing up faster** due to ease of accessibility to more mature content on the internet via social

networking sites, YouTube, and online TV — Their first interaction with social networking starts on average at the age of 10-11 years.

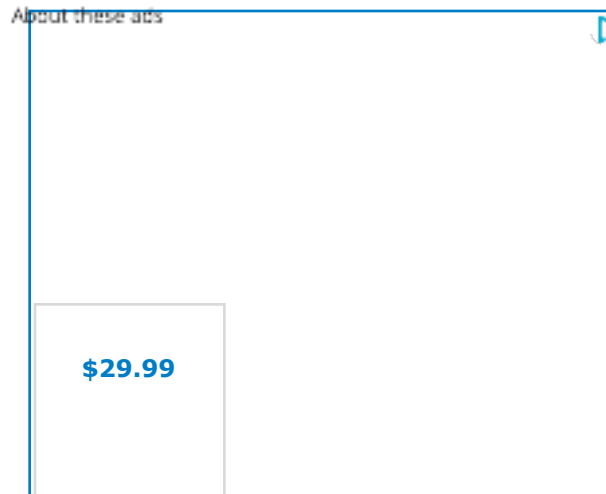
- **Process information at lightning speed and want and need to share information on-demand** — This segment lives for speed and will have little tolerance for sluggish technology. They have been exposed to a variety of activities and resources – information and data is at their finger tips. They share their likes and dislikes about brands and products through social media; they look to their friends as the authority on brands and products; and they curate brands.
- The most **multi-tasking** generation to have ever existed — They are comfortable with multiple information streams and activities running at the same time — having a number of browser windows open at once, chatting over IM, the TV on in the background while sending messages to friends and listening to music.
- **Conservative with spending** — After 16 years of economic prosperity, Gen 2020 will experience significant economic turmoil before they get to adulthood which will probably make them a little more cautious and conservative with their finances.
- **Change agile** — They accept that the world is constantly changing because that's the way it's always been for them.
- **Balanced focus** on work and personal life — They want balance in their lives—not having to sacrifice family for career or cut out time for other activities and interests. Yet they are expected to work longer and have an average of five careers and 20 different employers in their lifetimes, according McCrindle Research. They also believe in serving the community and the environment—thinking in terms of the 'greater good'.

What may Gen 2020 be like at work? They will...

- Work to live and not live to work
- Dedicate time for personal, family, and community interests and causes outside of work
- Value results over face time in the office
- Work untraditional hours
- Demand to be engaged (highly satisfied and able to contribute to their fullest potential)
- Be flexible and drive change
- Be loyal to self rather than loyal to their company
- Be highly collaborative and share best practices and information
- Expect their leaders to collaborate with them and will view them as equal partners
- Embrace diversity and inclusion
- Be straightforward in their communication about their likes and dislikes
- Want immediate and candid feedback

While we still have more to learn about Gen 2020, it's time to start thinking about these questions:

- Do you and your leaders have the skills and tools needed to effectively communicate and lead Gen 2020?
- How will your development and learning methodologies engage Gen 2020?
- How can your workplace culture be more collaborative?
- What is your company's social networking strategy for recruiting new talent?
- How does your company's brand appeal to Gen 2020?



Categories Uncategorized

4 Comments

Monica

August 17, 2011 at 12:56 am

Great article. However I have a couple of questions Tina! 1. how do we manage them? and 2. how do we train them? (not necessarily in that order)

Reply

Tina Smagala

August 18, 2011 at 12:08 pm

Great questions, Monica. Stay tuned for my next blog and I will offer some recommendations to answer your questions. Hope life is treating you well!

Reply

Nadine

August 10, 2012 at 2:58 pm

Very informative article. I am looking forward to reading your next blog. Although I am not in an office setting, it is very applicable as technology will be influencing this generation in the performing arts.

Olga

September 11, 2011 at 5:54 pm

Tina: Outstanding research and great information. Thank you for sharing, as I look forward to some upcoming training on this topic. Olga

Reply

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