

## **Giving Your Organization a Boost of “C”**

by Lori A. Hoffner

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As the parent of three Gen-Y's, I watch and listen to their work experience with some fascination, some frustration and certainly with awe. Most often I am tremendously proud of the way they approach their full time careers or even the part-time work. There are, however, those other times that I cringe when I hear how they have solved a problem or even their attitude about work. That cringe is a result of a 'baby boomers' perspective, one that is still shaped by the “live to work” mentality. I have to remember that the Gen-Y's perspective is very different; it is steeped in the “work to live” attitude. As baby-boomers, we might be thinking – “How does this impact my employer and the business?”, however, the Gen-Y's are thinking - “How does this job make a difference for me and my life?”

When working with a staff of multiple generations and in particular the Gen-Y, we have to ask ourselves; “Where's the compromise, the cooperation and the commitment?” Those “Power C's”, as I like to call them, come from a willingness to understand the generational values that our workforce is bringing with them regardless of the life experiences they've had thus far.

**Compromise – “A compromise is when two sides give up some demands to meet somewhere in the middle.”** Your Dictionary.com

Let's face it, the Gen-Y's have been raised in a world of compromise and choices, and that's what they are looking for in the workplace. Is there a compromise regarding the hours to work, the work that is expected and how that work gets done? If there is an opportunity to meet in the middle, you both have a win-win situation. If there isn't a compromise, that's okay; it's the responsibility of the supervisor, however, to say so and to be explicit with the information. The most successful relationship with a GenY employee comes when we are very clear with expectations, and it's not just “implied” or that they should have known it somehow.

**Cooperation – “Cooperation describes people working together to achieve results or people helping each other out to achieve a common goal.”** Your Dictionary.com

When the common goal has been clearly identified, communicated and steps to attain that goal are reasonable and achievable, you will have the cooperation of your workforce. The challenge comes when “individuals” get in the way. If members of your staff are not willing to find a way to work together due to generational value differences, it doesn't matter what your goal is because that goal is stuck in personality conflict. Encourage your seasoned staff to mentor by sharing institutional knowledge, and find ways to make sure the younger staff are a part of the team. Working in teams is something very familiar to the Gen-Y's. In fact, because of this familiarity, they believe that a team can accomplish much more and achieve a successful outcome. When your staff works well together they are likely to be happier, more productive and better ambassadors for your business. Teamwork, cooperation and a cohesive staff equals accomplished goals and success.

**Commitment – “A commitment is a promise or agreement to do something.”** Your Dictionary.com

The commitment from the older workforce is that they are sticking around in the job market a lot longer than originally expected. The economy, longer lifespan, health related changes and that ‘live to work’ mentality is keeping them there. The commitment that the Gen-Y is making is to their résumé. They are skill seekers with a very strong entrepreneurial spirit. They want to learn something new, be challenged in their work and their ideas heard and hopefully implemented. Like many of their Baby Boomer parents, Gen-Y’s see themselves as change agents. As an employer, we want our staff to make a commitment to the organization and the work to be done. For Gen-Y’s, if you can’t teach them something new, they will go someplace else to learn it. The up and coming workforce will have an average of eight jobs by the time they reach the age of 30 and consider that job change acceptable because it makes them marketable. So what does that mean for you and your organization? Ideally it says that you and older staff have got to let go of the reins a bit and be willing to consider a new and different way. The 9 most dangerous words in business is; “That is the way we have always done it.” To the Gen-Y, that translates to stagnate, boring or stuck. Again, if there’s a reason that you continue to do certain aspects of your business the same way that you have for years, be willing to explain it. If, however, you can allow someone to look at doing it a different way, be willing to explore it. That type of commitment from you ensures a commitment from the Gen-Y that they will be that successful and dedicated employee.

Gen-Y’s... the name of that generation conjures up many different responses, but one thing is for certain, they are the up and coming workforce and industry leaders. It makes sense for all of us to take a large dose of the “Power C’s” for success!

*Lori A. Hoffner, Professional Speaker ~ Trainer ~ Consultant, draws on years of experience of leadership in both the for-profit and non-profit business world. She can offer staff-development programs helps promotes a cohesive internal team and positive culture of support within your organization that helps benefit your bottom line. Please share this article as long as the information above and Lori’s contact information is included.*