

# Bridging the Generation Gap

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**O**ver recent years there has been a lot of talk about the generation gap and its impact on our workforce. What are the myths and what is reality?

Your 'generation' is determined by year of birth, and an emerging trend is the number of jobs and careers common to each group.

- Baby boomer - (1946 - 1964) having up to 3 jobs and 1 career
- Generation x - (1965 - 1981) having up to 8 jobs and 3 careers
- Generation Y - (1982 - 2000) having up to 15 jobs and 5+ careers

This snapshot highlights some core differences between groups. The challenges that my clients raise is not only managing, but retaining staff in another generation.

Recent studies by Global Leadership (a leadership and coaching firm) debunk some of the myths, their interviews found that generation Y-ers actually want the same things as the older generation. The key difference is they are not willing to wait around for them to happen.

Have you ever thought the following about the 'younger' generation? They think it's all about them.

This may appear to be the case because the communication habits of younger people show they have large but hidden social networks, (think facebook, myspace, msn, pda's etc) and are more likely to reach out to peers than strangers or authority figures such as their manager or supervisor.

**They ask for more money than I did at that age**

They have better access to immediate market information so they know who earns what and where. If your employee knows what

they are worth and are not getting it, they may go elsewhere.

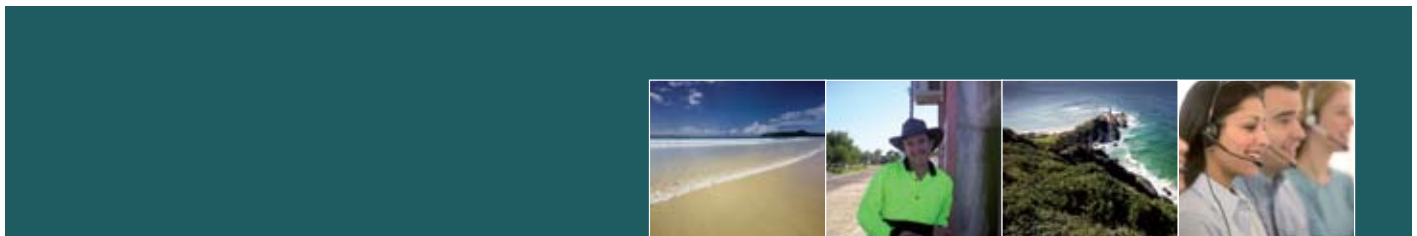
**They don't have the same work ethic as I did at that age**

Gen Y-ers like to work collectively, and won't tend to stand for bureaucracy. Their communication network is wide so they are tuned into where workplace conditions are better - potentially your competitors.

They are impatient and want to know what you, the employer, can do for them now. However, the environment they thrive in is not dissimilar to what their older peers also desire. Gen Y-ers seek immediate and constructive feedback; leaders that are caring and aware; to be continually informed about the business and have personal goals linked to business goals. They love new experiences, being coached and like to be included.

So are Gen Y-ers too impatient, or has the older generation been too patient? Listen to the different generations in your workforce and you might be surprised by the similarities that arise and what can be learned to improve the business and retain staff.

*If you would like an opportunity to gain feedback from your staff JHA are offering a free online Staff Engagement Survey for NRBM readers for more information go to: [www.jharecruitment.com.au](http://www.jharecruitment.com.au)*



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