



channel to one of the reality shows — neither is new for them because they never lived without such programming.

Gen Y, as a group, has tremendous influence in our culture, with a powerful impact on the workplace. On the job, they are interacting with members of other generations — Gen X, Baby Boomers, and the Silent Generation. Each generation brings its own perspective and set of traits, but how do you bridge the ever-widening gap between so many interconnecting age groups?

That was the question that confronted us time and time again as professional coaches. As we explored the answer, we began to recognize a palette of intriguing characteristics that prevail among the Gen Y. Some of these traits presented a distinct advantage to succeeding in the business world. Their belief that anything is possible fuels their drive to be entrepreneurs, and they're starting their enterprises as early as grade school. Technology has been ingrained in their lives since birth, empowering them with an incredible access to and command of the latest advances, in contrast to other generations who are still struggling with the media that comes so naturally to Gen Yers.

We also discovered that the newest group of employees has been raised to feel entitled. Over-involved parents have given them such heightened self-confidence that they are completely unaware of certain realities. The reliance on the Internet and text messaging to communicate within their social networks has reduced many social and interpersonal skills. They have great expectations and an “I want it now” impatience that confounds their managers and employers.

As the issue of Gen Y's effect on the workplace appeared to fuel a chronic concern of Generation X, Baby Boomers, and the Silent Generation, we decided to take our professional interest farther. We began speaking with people who have focused their careers on generational studies. We contacted successful Gen Yers who are

making a difference in their worlds, using their passions and skills to be leaders for their peers.

As our stash of fascinating insight continued to grow, we saw the need to share it with others who have been unable to find a way to live, work, and play with these unique youth. In this book, we offer perspective on the upbringing that has created the Gen Y mindset by letting the experts speak for themselves. We deliver their knowledge and advice to help you grasp the core essence and unrealized potential of this segment of the population.

If you are a Gen Yer, you'll discover how to connect with your elders in the workplace. You'll learn what sets you apart from others and why your experience doesn't always meet your expectations. You'll hear from members of your generation who have turned their passion into a tangible result, and focused their enormous energy and spirit into transforming their lives into something more meaningful than a job. You will most certainly become less confused about colleagues and managers outside your generation; you might even uncover a new source of learning in their collective wisdom.

For our readers who belong to the other generations in today's workforce, you are about to learn that the young men and women from Generation Y are not intentionally trying to challenge you. They come from a totally different perspective, with mores that we — as parents, teachers, coaches, and bosses — instilled in them. Our efforts have given them their distinct character but we are left wondering how to effectively manage these individuals. As you read the commentary of seasoned experts on generational differences, you'll realize that you're not alone in your frustration and confusion. Join the rest of the country's employers who are struggling to fit these unique individuals into an outdated culture — and learn how to take a more productive route to finding, hiring, and retaining these job-hoppers.



Chapter by chapter, we will reveal more insight into the mindset of Gen Y. You'll learn what makes them tick, how to get into their network, gain their loyalty and respect, and why this generation can and will shift our culture. As the largest population of consumers since the Baby Boomers, Gen Y will soon dictate what products will be successful. They will influence the way businesses market their products and services, forcing a whole new advertising genre that has to deal with savvier, less loyal, and impatient consumers.

This book is about busting myths, not people. Gen Y has been accused of being self-serving, lazy, and disrespectful. We'll explore the realities of these myths, revealing a generation of young people who are dedicated to volunteerism and making a positive change in their world. We'll show you that these highly self-sufficient individuals welcome leadership and respect the value of older mentors.

Different times have made this generation remarkable in many ways. They're going to lead and respond in a manner that is foreign to people who have followed the traditional set of rules for workplace behavior and career development. We ushered in a new millennium. It makes sense that this new age brought with it a shift in the social currents. Call them Gen Y, Millennials, Connecteds, or Echo Boomers. The names vary but the tremendous potential of this generation demands consideration. As a business person, you can look back at the old days and the old ways, or you can lead in a brand new way from a position of understanding this next great generation.

The journey thus far has been enlightening, invigorating, and inspiring for us. We invite you to share these discoveries and experience so many of the "aha moments" that have shed new light on this intriguing shift in our world population.

» CHAPTER 2 «

“Generation Me”: Dr. Jean Twenge

“These kids didn’t raise themselves. They’re doing what they were taught to do — from parents, teachers, and a lot from media.”

A person can be defined by many factors. The science of genetics, the geography of your upbringing, and even the metaphysics of astrology contribute to who you are and how you are viewed. From a cultural perspective, the period in which you are born and raised makes a great impact on your being. The world changes from one generation to the next, with technology, events, and sociology shaping each group.

Gen Y is as unique as those generations that came before them and those that will follow. Dr. Jean Twenge has spent years studying the unique character of the Gen Y segment. Her research has appeared in *Time*, *the New York Times*, and the *Washington Post*.

As a professor of psychology, author of *Generation Me*, and a living, breathing Gen X/Y hybrid, Dr. Twenge is an authority on what makes a Gen Y tick. What causes them, as a group, to be impatient, overconfident, and to set unrealistic expectations? Why is it that Gen Y thrives on a social network that doesn’t rely on face to face relationships? Dr. Twenge has examined the parenting style that brought these young people to believe that anything is possible — even when it isn’t.