

## What Do Employees Want? By Deanne DeMarco

The workplace is very different today than it was twenty years ago. In the past, employees perceived their managers as heroes. These heroes were leaders who solved problems efficiently and created solutions effectively.

But today, things have changed. The workplace is a diverse and incongruous environment. The type of hierarchal management that used to be the accepted norm is disappearing as new generations emerge.

The generations within the workforce are divided into four groups: Traditionalists, Baby-Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y. The Traditionalists are those born between 1922 and 1945 and only make up three percent of the workforce. The Baby-Boomers, or those born between 1946 and 1964, make up about 40 percent of the workforce. Generation X consists of those born between 1965 and 1980 and make up approximately 44 percent of the workforce, and Generation Y, or those born after 1980, makes up about 13 percent.

With Generation X and Y-ers controlling over 50 percent of the workforce, new demands have surfaced; they are looking for a different kind of leader. Those born after 1965 are the avid users of Facebook and Twitter, iPhones and BlackBerries. They want a manager that doesn't dictate to employees, but instead coaches them. They are looking for a leader who is also a good mentor and is willing to listen. And most importantly, they want a manager that represents team collaboration.

Employees want to be recognized; they want to be invested in, supported and rewarded. Their behavior and work etiquette are asking, **"Do you want me?"**

Employees today expect their resume to be the foundation blocks of their future. They anticipate that each employer will help them grow and develop as a person, employee and asset to the company. The newer generations are not looking for a 9-to-5 in a cubicle; they want to multi-task, experience challenges and cultivate new opportunities within the organization.

An estimated 80 percent of the X and Y Generations agree that the best way for them to be satisfied in their career is to be involved in meaningful work. They want to know that what they are doing for a company makes a difference and they want concrete results. Only three to eight percent of traditionalists think that meaningful work is *still* important. What a generational difference!

The bottom line is that employees want good leaders. They want managers who are responsive to employees as well as the organization, leaders who are accountable, and supervisors who support and invest in their employees. The demands of today's employee have shifted from that of yesterdays. People want to work at a job that gives them purpose, that makes them a better person and keeps them reaching for new opportunities. Joseph Conrad from *Heart of Darkness* says it best: "I don't like work- no man does. But, I like what is in the work, the chance to find yourself."



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