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Workforce Mosaic – The Changing Face of the Workplace and the Impact on HR

By Jacques Gaumont



The face of the workplace is changing. Today's organizations employ a workforce comprised of a variety of ages, behaviors, ethics, attitudes and beliefs. Traditionalists, baby boomers, Gen Xers and Gen Yers are working side-by-side – and relying on each other – to achieve the organization's goals. But how does this co-existence affect the HR function or the line manager? How should HR and managers approach talent management in the face of such a diverse talent pool? The answers to these questions are not simple; but what is evident is that HR has become an increasingly strategic force within organizations and the human factor plays a vital role in a company's performance.



Jacques Gaumont, VP Technomedia Training Inc.

Take a look around the average workplace today and you'll see a mix of ages and experiences. The attitude that each generation brings to the organization is a direct result of the experiences that have shaped their lives. Traditionalists and baby boomers grew up in an era where nuclear families reigned supreme and they bring that same loyalty to the workplace. These generations are team players, client oriented and accept longer work hours. In contrast, brought up in the digital age of cellular communications, video games and the Internet, Generation X and Y

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demand constant communication, continuous feedback and instant gratification. In the workplace, these individuals are independent, creative thinkers, tech-savvy and more likely to advocate for better work/life balance.

With such varying attitudes, is it possible to develop a unified, harmonious workforce? The short answer is yes. A diverse workforce is beneficial since different viewpoints, learning styles and attitudes towards work create a richer environment. Also, by creating intergenerational teams within the organization, an employer can take advantage of all of its resources and can focus on the strengths of each group.

Fusing the capabilities of a younger generation with those of a more experienced one can create certain challenges for an organization. Yet, if these challenges are managed appropriately, they can be rewarding instead of damaging. In this respect, the HR department and management play a pivotal role.

HR is expected to set up a model that provides managers with the necessary operational conditions to manage employee talent and aspirations, in line with company needs. No longer just hiring and firing, HR should provide team management coaching and train managers to mobilize, motivate and inspire employees of different ages, backgrounds and cultures. Additionally, HR is expected to articulate a global vision in the context of modern societal realities and translate this vision into a roadmap and concrete action.

With the expanded role of the HR Department, it is beneficial for organizations to implement modern talent management solutions. These solutions provide the organization with the efficient tools, systems and processes to function while freeing up time to allow for a more human connection between individuals and management. This outcome, given the reality of today's multigenerational workforce, is no longer a nice-to-have, but a business imperative.

Jacques Gaumond is the Vice President of Sales and Marketing for Technomedia Training Inc., the Canadian industry-leader in the design and implementation of web-based solutions for talent management.. Technomedia recently published a white paper entitled: The Mutidimensional Manager of Tomorrow that summarizes over 40 HR leaders' views on the changing nature of talent. A copy can be obtained from the company's website at www.technomedia.ca

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