



## Leading the Multi-Generation Work Force An Investigation

The challenge for organizational leaders today is to motivate and to inspire a workforce that includes [individuals from several generations](#).

Generation	Born Between	Core Characteristics	Presence in Work Force
<b>Silents</b>	1925 and 1946	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Highly dedicated</li> <li>2. Risk adverse</li> <li>3. Committed to teamwork and collaboration</li> <li>4. Share common values of family and patriotism</li> <li>5. Most affluent part of elderly 'retired' population</li> </ol>	Rare
<b>Baby Boomers</b>	1946 and 1964	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Generation for whom work life more important than personal life</li> <li>2. Optimistic and open to change – civically minded</li> <li>3. Dot.com bust and 2008/9 recession decimated retirement savings</li> <li>4. Many planning to continue to work at least part time or never retire</li> </ol>	Declining, but likely to increase on a part time basis at least
<b>Xer's</b>	1965 and 1980	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Question authority figures</li> <li>2. Created and spread concept of work / life balance</li> <li>3. Have strong technical skills</li> <li>4. See careers as 'personal' and independent of organizations</li> <li>5. Adaptive to job instability in post downsizing environment</li> <li>6. Willing to take on challenges and develop skills sets when 'personally' motivated</li> </ol>	Core
<b>Y's or Millennials</b>	1981 and after	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. First global centric generation – impacted by growth of Internet and global terrorism</li> <li>2. Most educated generation of workers because of spread of education / Internet – tech-savvy</li> <li>3. Most team centric since the SILENTS generation</li> <li>4. Interested in / motivated by music, sports, recreational activities as important part of overall life</li> <li>5. Willing to work hard to achieve lifestyle goals they want</li> </ol>	Up and coming



## Leading a Mixed Generation Work Force An Investigation

Technology is, and has for the last 2 decades, steadily reduced the number of “routine, repetitive” jobs in offices and factories in North America. This trend will now spread into the 3<sup>rd</sup> world. Its lower standard of living initially resulted in lower wages for equivalent routine, repetitive jobs. This economic disparity will erode over the coming decades.

Jobs will more and more focus on interpersonal contact and non-routine decision making. ‘Routine and repetitive’ work, requiring standardized decision making, will be done by structured, software-based decision algorithms embedded in either automated business applications or semi-smart machines. The ability to make sound, non-routine judgments based on partial or incomplete data will become a more and more important work place skill set.

In the past 2 decades, organizations also have moved away from hiring and retaining Baby Boomers in their work forces, largely for ‘perceived greater cost’ reasons. The demographic trends are against them. As the number of available workers decreases, organizations will need to engage those Baby Boomers still willing to work as part of their work forces. Paradoxically, the work experience of some of these Baby Boomers is precisely what will allow them to handle the non-standardized, judgement-based nature of remaining work well.

Given these trends, organizational leaders will need to inspire, to motivate, and to lead a ‘mixed’ workforce of Baby Boomers, Xer’s and Y’s. They face challenges in role design, work assignment, compensation patterns, and professional development.

This investigative project has 3 main research goals.

1. Determine the extent to which the current generation of organizational leaders is aware of these trends and dynamics.  
Investigate the extent to which they think it will affect the future of their organizations.
2. Get insight into the role design, motivation, compensation, and professional development practices they intend to use to lead and to manage this ‘generationally mixed” work force.
3. Investigate and outline the ‘characteristics’ the current cadre of organizational leaders sees as necessary of the next generation of leaders who will replace them.

Interviews will be done over Internet video conferencing, so that they can be recorded. The results will be ‘coded’ to document patterns in the results. The identity of individuals who are interviewed will be kept confidential, although general patterns about their industries and personal career histories will be reported as part of the final results. Explicit permission will be sought to identify specific individuals and to quote from their interviews when appropriate.

The research work will be led by Roelf Woldring, Founder and CEO of The-Right-Talent.ca. Roelf will generally conduct the interviews. Interviewees will receive a copy of the working and the final results.

For more information, or to participate in the project, please contact Roelf Woldring at  
[Roelf@The-Right-Talent.ca](mailto:Roelf@The-Right-Talent.ca) 1-416-427-1567