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# GenY

## How Boomer Babies are Changing the Workplace

*By Cathy S. Cruz*

As four generations co-exist at work, local managers say companies need to enter the mindset of Gen Y. "Considering the population influx in the job force, we have to adapt to keep Gen Y around," says Craig Carapello, president and chief executive officer of Team Vision and vice president of marketing and creative services for Genergraphics. "There's no way we can bypass this group. Gen Y has to be dealt with."

Here are some experts' suggestions on how to understand Gen Y:

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**OLD MENTALITY:** Stay with the company for 30-plus years. Collect pension and other lifetime benefits.

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if I'm lucky," he says.

In their lifetimes, Gen Y workers will change careers 10 times. A 2004 study by the nonprofit Families and Work Institute found that Gen Y workers were 70 times more likely to leave their jobs than workers their ages in 1977. Gen Y kids are cynical about job security because they saw their parents receive pink slips.

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**OLD:** Please don't call my landline at home after 8 p.m.

Don't be surprised when a 22-year-old employee walks out the door at 4:59 p.m. Says Okinaga: "They're not ashamed. They go, 'I signed up for 40 hours. I'll put in 40 hours.'" The line between work and nonwork life is blurred for Gen Y. This is the age group that text messages friends en route to staff meetings and logs onto MySpace during lunch breaks. What's cool is they're always attached

## Characteristics of Four Generations

	TRADITIONALISTS 1915-1945	BABY BOOMERS 1946-1964	GENERATION X 1965-1976	GENERATION Y 1977-1994
<b>Other Names</b>	Silent or Forgotten Generation, 1936-1945	None	MTV Generation, early to mid-1970s	Millennials, Echo Boomers
<b>Approximate Age</b>	62 and older	43 to 61	31 to 42	30 and Younger
<b>Life Changing Events and Technology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• World War II</li> <li>• Roaring Twenties</li> <li>• Great Depression</li> <li>• Korean War</li> <li>• GI Bill</li> <li>• New Deal</li> <li>• Radio</li> <li>• Refrigerator</li> <li>• Washing machine</li> <li>• Record player</li> <li>• Motion picture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civil Rights Movement</li> <li>• Sexual Revolution</li> <li>• Bay of Pigs</li> <li>• Kennedy assassination</li> <li>• Rock 'n' roll</li> <li>• Space travel</li> <li>• Cold War</li> <li>• Clothes dryer</li> <li>• Television</li> <li>• Music tape</li> <li>• Phone ext. in the home</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenger explosion</li> <li>• High divorce rates, "latchkey kids"</li> <li>• Women's Liberation</li> <li>• Fall of Berlin Wall</li> <li>• Watergate</li> <li>• CD/VCR</li> <li>• Atari</li> <li>• Microwave</li> <li>• Pager/cell phone</li> <li>• Personal computer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School shootings</li> <li>• Enron scandal</li> <li>• Sept. 11, 2001</li> <li>• Clinton/Lewinsky</li> <li>• Child-focused rearing</li> <li>• Laptops</li> <li>• You Tube and MySpace</li> <li>• Text message/IM</li> <li>• Digital camera</li> </ul>
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SOURCE: INSIGHT CONSULTING AND TRAINING

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# We Ask:

## "What aspect of your job motivates you?"

to technology and can be reached anytime.

"If you call a baby boomer on the weekend, it's an intrusion," Okinaga says. Not so with Gen Y.

Most Gen Y workers don't flee their cubicles at 5 p.m. to watch TV anchor Joe Moore at home. They're active: they hit the gym after work, hang out with family or volunteer. Professional growth and mission-based programs rank high on their list. Desiree Yamamoto, 24, a client service/planning executive at Red Rover Creative, was last year's Cherry Blossom queen. When she wasn't making public appearances in Japan and on the Mainland, she gave up weekends to volunteer. "I was able to apply [the experience] to my professional career in terms of public speaking, giving presentations and organization skills," Yamamoto says.

**3 NEW:** Hey (insert boss' first name), how am I doing?  
**OLD:** Mr. or Mrs. (insert boss' last name), please don't tell me what to do.

Silence is threatening to Gen Y employees and can be mistaken for disapproval. While Generation X was the "leave me alone" worker, Gen Y likes feedback, collaboration and coaching. They're not afraid to approach higher-ups, and experts say that's because Gen Y kids have closer, coddled relationships with their baby boomer parents.

Adults are not scary. Adults are friends. "Gen Y has no problem looking at their executives on a casual, first-name basis, none of the necessary protocol boomers are used to," Okinaga says. And the EVP-CFO-COO-CTO chain of command at your bank? Generation Y is unimpressed. That's a boomer thing.

Lee and Silverstein at Accuity noticed this attitudinal shift about three years ago when hiring recent college grads. They constantly were at Silverstein's door seeking face time. That's also when company executives realized Gen Y likes to be coached and mentored. "Young employees are not here to picket. They want to learn more and become better professionals," Lee says. His advice to employers is to set the bar high, give deadlines, provide coaching and "give Gen Y a sense of ownership" with projects. Don't underestimate this age group, he says.

Chalk that up to Gen Y and their hyper-involved baby boomer parents who scheduled ballet, Kumon, hula, soccer and other coach-led activities for their tots. Structure (without micromanaging) is crucial to a Gen Y employee. "Things like, 'Don't stand around,' we have to reiterate that sometimes," says Dean Nakamura, general manager of the OHANA Waikiki Beachcomber. "We have to recognize and provide them challenges when they have down time, versus expecting them to know what to do."

Nakamura, a baby boomer, recalls when his college-age son and daughter were little. "Between sports and music and hula and all the traffic and after-school activities, you got home by 6:30," he says. "It was pretty much a 12-hour day." Nakamura joined Outrigger properties 10 years ago after working for the Halekulani group, Hawaii Prince Hotel and Sheraton properties. While growing up, his children sometimes gave him unsolicited feedback about his company.



### MEANINGFUL WORK

"Two of the three jobs I've held since moving back home have been at non-profits. I think a big motivating factor for me has been being able to accomplish something more than making a living with my jobs."

- Aaron Yoshino, 26,  
I.T. coordinator, Native Hawaiian Health Scholarship Program



### MEANINGFUL WORK

"I'm motivated toward excellence in my practice, knowing that the work I do with my clients has a direct impact on their own lives, which I take a personal interest in."

- Clifton M. Yasutomi, 25,  
financial adviser, Merrill Lynch



### FEEDBACK

"I've had days when a senior leader who has never talked to me would come by and say a simple, 'Good job today,' which gives me 100 times the confidence that I might actually be able to do this."

- Claire Tokunaga, 24  
designer, Wimberly Allison Tong & Goo



### MORE FEEDBACK

"Knowing that I'm working hard every day to fulfill our commitment to our clients. If the client is happy, I'm happy."

- Huy Vo, 24  
account coordinator, Bright Light Marketing Group



### COLLABORATION

"My motivation stems from being a part of a team that makes decisions that I stand by, and that has values that I believe in."

- Desiree Yamamoto, 24  
client service/planning, Red Rover Creative



### WORK-LIFE BALANCE

"I feel empowered, motivated and rewarded that my employer trusts my abilities and personal character. Receiving a fair salary, benefits and a healthy work-life balance makes me feel that my employer respects and appreciates me not only as an employee but as an individual."

- Alyssa Murphy, 28  
Web producer, Trouvé Media



### PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

"At this point in my career, my focus is on learning and personal growth. Not on my income or job perks."

- Todd Fujie, 25  
sales associate, Towne Island Homes Ltd.

## When targeting teens, target their parents. And vice versa

**H**eather Olsen, 24, never uses the word “keiki” when speaking about her young clients. The Halekulani concierge – who joined the luxury resort four years ago to serve the 18-and-under set – prefers “Young Master” and “Young Miss.”

High on her recommended list for teens: Surfing lessons in the morning with pro Ty Gurney. Glow-in-the-dark golf in Waikiki. And perhaps an afternoon at the SpaHalekulani, which last year introduced a teen menu touting temporary tattoos, nail care, makeup lessons and a three-step facial dubbed, “Here’s Looking at You, Kid.”

The menu targets teenagers ages 13 to 17. But it’s not unusual to see a girl and her mother sporting matching pedicures.

“Their relationship with their parents is important,” Olsen says. “Once the parents feel comfortable, they tell their teens, ‘Go down to the concierge.’”

This generation of teens is closer to its parents than any other in U.S. history. Approximately 25 percent of trips in the U.S. in 2003 included children under 18, according to the Travel Industry Association. Last year, approximately 10 percent of business trips were with children under 18, says the National Business Travel Association. Teens are heavy consumers, too. They spent \$179 billion of their own and their parents’ money last year, according to the Mainland-based GTR Consulting, whose clients include Yahoo!, Microsoft Xbox and Nike.

Marketers have to be aware that kids impact their baby boomer parents’ spending habits. “A child of a boomer has the potential to stop a major purchase because boomer parents value their kids that much,” says Craig Carapello, president and chief executive officer of Team Vision and senior vice president of marketing and creative services for Genergraphics, a generational marketing firm founded by Phil Goodman from San Diego. “To reach the boomer market, you have to also consider marketing to their children. Treat them as equally as their parents when you’re selling a house or even a car. These two generations have a strong influence on each other.”

Treat teens with respect. Offer a wide array of choices that they can tailor to their liking. Teens, not the parents, will determine what’s hot or not. Genergraphics, whose clients include Castle & Cooke Homes Hawaii and Harrah’s Lake Tahoe Casino, uses a patented process to separate the generations and advise clients on how to market to specific generations for increase conversions: Seniors (1915-1935), the forgotten generation/silent generation (1936-1945) baby boomers (1946 to 1964), Generation X (1965 to 1976) and Generation Y/Echo Boomers/Millennials (born after 1976).

It’s the latter group that has marketers salivating. “Echo boomers are the next generation that everyone is trying to capture because it’s huge,” Carapello says.

After all, there are 72 million of them.

— CC



**PAMPERED TEENS:** Concierge Heather Olsen, 24, (middle) suggests the teen menu at SpaHalekulani.

PHOTO: OLIVIER KONING

“They spoke their minds, even about things that I did or things that I brought home that pertained to the hotel business. I never did that with my parents,” he recalls.

**4 NEW:** Before joining this firm, I interned in Shanghai and backpacked through Europe.

**OLD:** I joined this company 19 years ago out of college and spend summers playing slots at the California Hotel.

Experts say Gen Y is the sharpest, most globally aware group ever to enter the workplace, thanks to technology and shifting racial demographics. This group speaks the most foreign languages and appreciates diversity. “They’re smart and know what they want,” Lee says. This group also is more well-traveled than its predecessors.

When Claire Tokunaga, 24, was at the University of Southern California, she studied architecture for a semester at le Centre d’Etude d’Architecture et d’Urbanisme in Southern France and interned for one summer at a Hong Kong firm. She now is a designer at Honolulu-based WATG and recently went to Malaysia to see a project she helped to design.

Alyssa Murphy, 28, a former creative director at Cowabunga! Computers in Honolulu, graduated from The American School in Japan before majoring in elementary education at American University in Washington, D.C. She’s back in Honolulu as a Web producer for Trouvé Media – but not before teaching first grade on Saipan and working for Trouvé in San Francisco for the past few years.

**5 NEW:** The Golden Rule

**OLD:** The Golden Rule

As baby boomers and Gen Xers learn to decipher Gen Y, the Golden Rule still applies, and that is to treat everyone the way you wish to be treated – with respect.

Clifton Yasutomi, 25, a financial adviser with Merrill Lynch, assumed the generational gap between him and older clients would work against him but soon learned that “people are much more interested in character, industry knowledge and the ability to execute,” he says.

Another 25-year-old who works with older clients is Todd Fujie, a sales associate with Towne Island Homes Ltd. “Disagreements are hardly ever a matter of simply being right or wrong,” says the University of Washington graduate. He represents the boutique community, Ho’olu Landing at Makakilo. “It’s important to be flexible and to use different approaches to improve the way things are done.”

In a diverse place like Hawaii, where people are shaped by culture, family values and economics, sometimes age is just a number. “My mother jokes and calls me an ‘old soul,’” says Kristi Inkinen, a principal in Remedy Intelligent Staffing.

She’s only 28.

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