

CHARACTERISTICS OF GENERATION Y AND ITS FUTURE OCCUPATION – COMPARISON OF OPINIONS

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Abstract

Considering the working performance management of a cohort denoted as generation Y it is more than obvious that the cohort analysis obtains substantial importance nowadays. The youngest and at the same time the most numerous of three generations of people in productive age entered the Slovak labor market a few years ago. The hierarchy of values of its members differs markedly. It distinguishes from older generations X and Baby Boomers especially in the need of permanent change, the search for entertainment in all the areas of everyday life, excessive payment expectations, the requirements for fast career growth and promotion, excellent exploitation of digital interactive technologies and permanent but preferably impersonal communication.

The authors focus their attention on Generation Y members and their personal features shaped in the times of their childhood and youth. They as well stress the importance of the aspects influencing potential employer selection, the characteristics of their working behavior and the recommendations for employers which may help them develop the young employees' potential so that the potential serves this or that company and its needs. The research was realized on a sample of younger generation Y group at the Faculty of Economics of Matej Bel University.

Key words: cohort, generations, generation Y, working performance, working behavior.

JEL Classification: M12 Personnel Management

1. Introduction

In recent years a number of scientific studies aimed at the research of needs, values and opinions of particular cohorts appeared. From demographic point of view a cohort represents a group of people born in a specific time-limited period related to a certain demographic event. The starting point for specifying particular cohorts is a belief that there exists a generation experience shared to some extent by peers who formed their value orientation at the same period of time. Consequently, any cohort is influenced by the period in which it has been created as well as by such circumstances like e.g. political situation, culture, literature, cinematography, music, etc. The members of a particular cohort share the same important social, cultural, political and economic experience and they hold similar opinions and values. As in many cases this is experience that shapes the overall function of a society, the experience as a rule contributes to the creation of similar needs, group identity and a personality formation.

In the area of management such cohort analyses contribute to simple demographic market segmentation. Simultaneously, age limits define the limits of a market segment and the emphasis put on certain brands, products, services, specific needs, values, life-orientation and activities. Marketing managers thus have a chance to understand different age groups behavior on the market and, consequently, apply some adequate marketing mix tools in order to influence specific segments. The applied marketing communication tools are frequently used to address „a specific cohort by using symbols evoking their experience“, (Kotler, Keller, 2007, p. 292). The demographic notion cohort very rarely appears in marketing practice.

It has been replaced by the notion generation which will also be used in this article. An interest in particular generations of people has already over-ranged marketing borders and became the topic for personnel and line managers as well. Personnel managers have to find serious approach to both demographic development analyses and changes in particular generations structures. At the same time line managers are obliged to be aware of their

employees' characteristics and consequently adjust their behavior, managerial styles, communication, motivational factors, etc in an effort to comfort the characteristics.

The article deals with the most numerous contemporary generation denoted as Generation Y. For the first time the term Generation Y appeared in the editorial of an American journal *Advertising Age* in August 1993. The journal concentrates on marketing and advertising communication and the term Generation Y has been introduced here to denote the generation of children born after the year 1981. It is necessary to say that the age spread of the discussed generation is not exactly specified by the authors who focus their attention on this particular generation. This article covers the most frequently used age spread between the years 1978 – 1994.

Elderly members of Generation Y have already entered job market and younger ones will enter it in following years. Generation Y is basically different from their predecessors from Generation X and Baby Boomers Generation. A new type of employee – the one who is flexible, an employee requiring feedback and permanent communication, someone who is a team-player and who is skilled in using advanced communication technologies – has entered the world of jobs. At the same time it is a type ignoring established principles and perceiving everybody as a peer. For managers it is absolutely inevitable to get familiar with the new type of employees. Managers also have to be able to forecast the impact of the phenomenon on a company culture, working environment, working procedures, leadership styles and motivation together with the future orientation of personnel matters.

2. Contemporary generations in Slovakia and their size

When dividing the population of Slovakia born in the 20th century into generations the procedure applied in the process of American generations characteristics described in the publication by P. Kotler and K. L. Keller (2007, p. 291) has been used. In order to define the size of generations in Slovakia the data published in the Slovak Bureau of Statistics information portal have been used. As the data covering the year 2010 will only be published in August 2011, present article uses the already published data (Table 1).

Table 1: Age structure of population in the Slovak Republic and its division into generations using American generations characteristics

Years of birth	Generations denotation applied worldwide	Population size	
		Absolute size n_i	Relative size f_i (%)
1995 – 2009	Generation Z, Millennials, iGen	831 320	15.32
1978 – 1994	Generation Y, Echo-Boomers-I, Generation Next, Downloading generation, Internet generation	1 432 474	26.41
1965 – 1977	Generation X, MTV Generation, Boomerang Generation	1 056 570	19.48
1946 – 1964	Baby Boomers, Jones Generation	1 393 258	25.68
1925 – 1945	Silent Generation, Generation of Builders	653 668	12.05
1901 – 1924	GI generation, World Wars Generation	57 635	1.06
Σ		5 424 925	100.00

Source: Slovak Bureau of Statistics, 2010, adapted by the authors

Generation Y represents the demographic summit in Slovakia. By 31 December 2009 it formed more than a quarter of Slovak population (26.41%). With this size it approaches the Baby Boomers generation the elder members of which have already reached the retirement age while the younger ones are still employed. Their positions are subsequently occupied by the people

belonging to Generation Y. Previous Generation X, which is all in productive age currently, is in fact by more than a quarter (26.25%) smaller in size when compared to Generation Y. Significant size disproportion can be noticed in the generation of young people, teenagers and children who are gradually approaching productive age. The youngest generation of so called **Millennials** represents only 58% of the older Generation Y. Because of the aging population and the decreasing number of people in productive age Slovakia is expected to face serious economic and social problems in the future.

As it can be seen from presented data, Generation Y will gradually but permanently and significantly change surrounding world by means of its attitudes and behavior. They are supposed to influence the worldwide social development by means of their value orientations. Its appearance, size and potential has long ago been noticed by marketing managers for whom the generation has already become a desired target group. Changes which will inevitably have to be realized in order to adjust to the needs of the generation are expected in the personnel area as well. Managers can hardly expect that young people will get adjusted to the existing corporate culture. Its change and adjustment to the needs of Generation Y representatives is becoming inevitable. In the opposite case they will probably leave the company and find a new employer. Therefore the identification and analysis of their system of values, features of character and behavior may become the starting point for the introduction of the most suitable strategy of changing corporate culture and the ways of managing young people.

3. Research results

The research was realized at the beginning of April 2011 and its purpose was to define both inside and outside characteristics of younger and still studying group of Slovak Generation Y as well as to specify their attitudes toward expected conditions of their future occupation. The research was stimulated by the fact that enormous changes in the behavior of younger group of Generation Y members – university students born after the year 1988 – have been noticed especially when comparing the group members with their older colleagues. During the research personal experience obtained in the process of monitoring their behavior, attitudes to study and authorities has been exploited together with the direct information acquired from the discussions at Human Resources Management and Marketing Strategies seminars.

Not only personal experience but the material entitled *Intelligent Dialogue: Millenium Generation* published in 2008 by one of the most reputable PR agencies in the world – Porter Novelli – was also used so as to specify the characteristics of Generation Y members. In the year 2008 the agency did a research aimed at finding out about the experience employers all over the world had with the first Generation Y members of their staffs. The research results have been published in the complex material presenting opinions, remarks and advice of the agency members – line and personnel managers from a number of countries – the USA, Mexico, China, Singapore, Great Britain, Hungary and some other countries. As a rule the managers belong to Generation X and they provided information about the characteristics of their newly hired junior employees.

On the basis of their opinions, remarks and experience it was possible to elaborate a profile of a Generation Y employee composed of more characteristics (Generation Y and their attitude to the time that formed them in their childhood, criteria for the selection of an employer, attitudes to digital interactive technologies, characteristics of working behavior, aspects needed to reach higher performance at work, etc).

3.1. Research sample

The research sample serving to confirm the statements of Porter Novelli managers included the students of both levels of study at the Institute of Managerial Systems in Poprad which is a

branch of the Faculty of Economics of Matej Bel University. The overall number of students who participated in the research was 107, were 51 students were of a bachelor degree and 56 students of an engineer degree. The youngest respondent was born in 1992 and the oldest one in 1983. The average age of respondents was 22 years, i.e. they were all born in about 1989. The respondents expressed their opinions (full agreement, agreement, disagreement, full disagreement) concerning 47 statements aimed at the main characteristics of Generation Y in their relation to the period which might have influenced the formation of their values, as well as to the attitudes and expectations of their future employers.

3.2. Characteristics of Generation Y related to the time of their formation

The members of Generation Y in Slovakia differ substantially from their predecessors especially in the most important aspects. They are the first who did not perceive the division of world into communist and capitalist ones. They have nearly no memories of such events as a split-up of communist systems in Central and Eastern Europe, the fall of the Berlin Wall or the Velvet Revolution of 1989. They did not know political persecution, repression of the freedom of expression, censorship or the shortage of goods. In their childhood they could already have enjoyed the freedom of travelling as well as the free movement of ideas, money, culture or goods across borders. They were surrounded by unlimited possibilities, love and support from their parents in fulfilling their dreams. Their parents permanently try to maintain the safety which has been obtained with such a difficulty. They also attempt to secure the realization of the dreams that they could not have realized in the past. The young generation can perceive the borders to be open for anyone not only in the geographical sense but in the sense of possibilities to change educational institutions or jobs if people are not satisfied with them. They appreciate such values like money, change, entertainment together with the courage to face challenges even without the support of older generations. They also try to be as independent as it is possible. In the Table 2 personal characteristics of the Generation Y members formed in peaceful and calm times of their childhood are presented.

Members of Generation Y spent their childhood and youth in a peaceful post-revolutionary atmosphere, surrounded by the care of their parents who wanted to give them the chances they themselves did not have in their childhood. Since the end of World War II there has not been noticed any event that could have had any worldwide impact on Generation Y. The most important events that the Generation Y members in Slovakia could have experienced were the terrorist attacks of the 11 September 2001, the war against terrorism, Slovakia joining the European Union, bird's and pig's flu, natural disasters and continuing world financial and economic crises. Nevertheless, the events have not significantly influenced the formation of their values and attitudes. Therefore optimism is the feature that is shared by young people not only in Slovakia but throughout the world. As much as 94.64% of the respondents expressed their agreement with the statement. They grew up in the situation of possibilities of choice excess – starting with the favourite brand of drink to the possibilities of studying all over the world.

Slovak Generation Y represents a part of a global world in which differences between continents, countries, regions, values, habits and behavior of people, cultures and religions are gradually being broken down, language barriers are being removed, people are not limited by geographical latitudes, distances in young people's minds are being shortened. Nearly all respondents (98.21%) consider change as a kind of life attitude of their generation and **perceive it as a challenge**. Mobility, for example, does not represent any problem for the young generation. Their parents are more likely to perceive such changes as studying abroad, changing educational institutions, changing specialization in the course of study or frequent changes of jobs even if the change brings no chances for promotion or higher salary as a problem.

Table 2: Characteristics of Generation Y related to the time of their childhood formation

Statement	Relative size (%) f_i			
	Agreement, from that:	full	Disagree- ment, from that:	partial
		partial		full
Change is a life position, flexibility is reflected into all life situations	98.21	48.21	1.79	1.79
		50.00		0.00
They are optimistic – growing up in relatively peaceful social conditions	94.64	37.50	5.36	5.36
		57.14		0.00
They tend to exploit the services of their parents as long as possible	78.57	44.64	21.43	21.43
		33.93		0.00
They need to be „cool“ in the sense of „an easy ride“ throughout life	77.57	24.30	22.43	17.76
		53.27		4.67
Money is perceived as a means, i.e. they tend to incur debts	75.00	17.86	25.00	25.00
		57.14		0.00
They are not able to follow one task only, they want to free themselves from responsibilities	73.83	27.10	26.17	24.30
		46.73		1.87
They are self-confident and wish to win the world	70.09	21.50	29.91	26.17
		48.60		3.74
They are self-focused, „ME“ (they are the target themselves)	70.09	17.76	29.91	26.17
		52.34		3.74
They have a low level of frustration tolerance	68.22	10.28	31.78	27.10
		57.94		4.67
They need parents care throughout their life	51.40	12.15	48.60	42.06
		39.25		6.54
„Long-term planning“ represents the period from a couple of months to one year	39.25	8.41	60.75	28.04
		30.84		32.71
They got used to the idea that their parents spend a lot of money	33.64	7.48	66.36	47.66
		26.17		18.69

Source: own study

They are just egocentrism and egoism that belong to their important features of character. They feel like they were somewhere in the centre of world and events. They want to be the most important people and in the epicenter of everyone's attention. According to M. Košťálová (2008) politics is boring for young people and they are not „willing to realize more deeply what everyday life brings. The first place in their perception is occupied by the need to satisfy their own needs and they carefully protect their “territory“ to avoid its violation by anybody else.“ They are strictly self-orientated and when they realize the activities aimed at fulfilling of their personal individual needs they are stimulated by their ambitiousness and self-confidence many times – either consciously or unconsciously – supported by their parents. The opinion has been confirmed in the research by majority of respondents (70.09%). They consider the fulfilment of their dreams and dreams of their parents as something absolutely natural. Generation Y members as a rule have very close relationships with their parents and they are relatively dependant on them. Although on the one hand young people declare independence as one of their priorities (48.60%), on the other hand they like to use the advantages (free of charge living, food, laundering, ironing, spending holidays) of living together with their parents (78.57%).

They are the generation for whom mutual communication is immensely important. Exploiting modern information technologies, mobile phones, the internet they can be in a close

contact with their friends, relatives and parents. The trend of influencing children through their parents has also been noticed at the Faculty of Economics of Matej Bel University and parents are regularly invited to be present at entrance exams where they can get immediate information about the institution their children chose, they are offered to watch the presentation about the faculty and are invited to participate in a follow-up discussion as well. It is very important for the faculty management that the faculty has been chosen not only by students but by their parents as well. At some British universities have already been established positions for the contacts with their students' parents. In this respect, there appeared a new term „helicopter parents“. Parents represent the interests of their children not only during their study at primary and secondary schools or at universities but as a rule after graduation they actively participate in finding a suitable job for their children, they communicate with potential employers and negotiate the conditions of a potential job for their children.

Generation Y representatives matured at the times when entertainment, the easiness of existence, living styles and branded goods became a magic formula for marketing managers. As many as 77.57% respondents feels **the need to be „cool“**, i.e. enjoy a kind of an „easy ride“ through the life. They are not accepted by the members of some specific fellowships until they wear branded clothes or react flexibly to new trends. Belonging to a chosen group and concentration on permanent communication with its other members using several means of communication simultaneously many times detracts them from their responsibilities. Consequently they are not able to concentrate on one activity (73.83%).

Up to three fourths of respondents reacted positively to the statement that money is a means of living and therefore they often run into debts. However, they disagreed with the statement that they got used to the situation that their parents earn and spend a lot of money (66.36%). There has also been noticed some dissonance with their foreign peers' opinions in the matter of their orientation on the nearest future and their place in it. Nearly two thirds of respondents (60.75%) declare that they plan their future in a more long-term horizon.

3.3. Criteria of Generation Y for the choice of their employer

Every generation has its own special characteristics of work and their work performance. Table 3 brings the opinions of respondents concerning the criteria that should be authoritative for their generation when choosing a potential employer.

Table 3: Criteria of Generation Y for the choice of their employer

Statement	Relative size (%) f_i			
	Agreement, from that:	full partial	Disagree- ment, from that:	partial full
They react very positively to money	95.33	71.03	4.67	4.67
		24.30		0.00
They need enjoyable, creative and flexible job	95.33	57.01	4.67	3.74
		38.32		0.93
They flexibly change places, require their job to be interesting and ask good reward for it	94.64	76.79	5.36	3.57
		17.86		1.79
They require employers equipped with the latest technologies	92.52	42.99	7.48	6.54
		49.53		0.93
They require balance between job and private life	92.52	26.17	7.48	5.61
		66.36		1.87
They expect appealing and interesting working	90.57	38.68	9.43	9.43

environment		51.89		0.00
Conflict: expectation of easy earnings and reality of working positions for people without practice	85.05	33.64	14.95	14.02
		51.40		0.93
They are impatient, at work they require a good position with fast promotion and privileges	77.57	28.04	22.43	20.56
		49.53		1.87
Overall image of an employer is important	75.00	21.43	25.00	25.00
		53.57		0.00
They do not expect „lifelong job“	71.96	29.91	28.04	20.56
		42.06		7.48
Self-employment means boredom and enslavement for them	8.41	2.80	91.59	47.66
		5.61		43.93

Source: own study

C. Gillies (2010, p. 21) remarks that Generation Y is not familiar with „the economic pressure“. Many of the Generation Y representatives were educated in well-off families, many times in the situation of an only child. The most important role for young people in the situation when they choose an employer is played by the level of their salaries because money occupies the first place among their values. Up to 95.33% of respondents involved in the research declared their positive attitude to money. As it emerged from personal interviews with respondents, they wish to find well-paid job with not too many responsibilities. The attitude was confirmed by 85.05% of respondents. They also have to face relatively high rate of unemployment as a result of world economic crisis. Just the personal confrontation with unemployment might possibly influence the consideration of establishing their businesses. In this particular criterion we noticed a high level of inconsonance between the opinions of developed countries Generation X representatives and the attitudes of Slovak Generation Y representatives. Only 8.41% of respondents share the opinion that self-employment means boredom and enslavement.

Generation Y flexibility can be explained by the fact that its representatives came into conclusion that no one job can become a long life one. Therefore 71.96% of respondents even do not pretend that they are interested in it. Up to 94.64% of respondents assume that in the future they will flexibly change both employers and working positions. They expect their employers to provide them interesting job and high reward for it. Generation Y representatives are ambitious and full of hope but at the same time they want to reach everything very quickly. They are interested in the **possibilities of fast promotion** (77.57%). Not only in the media but in their immediate neighborhood they can see the examples of unorthodox and relatively young entrepreneurs who got very rich. There is a number of shows on TV where young people compete to get a lucrative job. They are convinced neither in the necessity of starting their working career from the lowest levels in a company hierarchy nor in the necessity to work hard in order to deserve a higher position in a company. As a compensation for the working capital they brought in a company they expect good position, interesting salary, many attractive benefits, more responsibility and a lot of recognition in a short time. In case that the reality in a company does not meet their expectations, they do not hesitate to change employers. Changes of both employers and jobs are perceived by them as a sequence of interesting experiences and acquirement of experience and inspiration.

If an employer wants to get closer to the members of Generation Y, he/she has to have the right image. From the marketing point of view we can speak about the attempts *to create a kind of an employer's brand-name*. The process of creating such an employer's brand-name is sometimes wrongly interpreted as personal marketing. The building up of an employer's brand-name does not merely mean becoming more famous as an employer. The objective is to reach the balance between the desired and really perceived positioning in the minds of both current and potential employees. Well-known German entrepreneur W. R. Krieger warns that „in the process

of creating an employer's own brand-name the attraction of as many applicants as possible is not a priority. The priority is to attract the right ones – i.e. anyone who is able to identify himself/herself with corporate culture. Companies have to state clearly what they really need and what could distinguish them from the other employers“ (Walther, 2010, p. 13). One of the priorities of branded employers should also be the attempt to demonstrate clear and distinguishable positioning in the minds of potential employees, to create a concise employer's slogan, to offer young employees their unique employer's profile and thus become a preferred employer's brand. An employer's offer, his/her values and mission have to be clear and obligatory.

A company's top management should be able not only to reward the employees for perfectly done job but as well to offer the employees an interesting and enjoyable job, friendly working environment, wide selection of attractive benefits, modern computer technologies, and available internet network. Young people are first of all interested in their **immediate gains and profits**. The job fulfilling their needs and expectations should not be excessively monotonous. It must be enjoyable and giving chances to present one's creativity and flexibility. The statement has been supported by 95.33% of respondents.

Employers should set up such conditions for Generation Y representatives that will balance their work and private life (92.52%). Young people value their free time and ask their employers e.g. for more holidays. More holidays, unexpected days off, possibility to buy more days off all belong to really strong motivators. Besides higher financial rewards Generation Y representatives thus expect their employees to provide the already mentioned interesting and challenging job and a wide selection of benefits.

If to find the company that is perceived by young people as a model of preferred and branded employer – then it is unambiguously Google. This is not only the perception of a younger generation but the opinion of older generations as well because one of the key points in the company's philosophy is the support of diversities in age, nationalities, races and languages. Since the early steps in a hiring process the company's management tries to avoid discrimination through preferring abilities to experience. The company purposefully looks for people able to get identified with the idea of perfect services creation and provision. After hiring an employee the company managers try make the job meaningful for the employee. New employees are given chances to develop their potential and creativity and they also can better cohere their private and professional lives. The employer supports the creation of free groups of employees working in different jobs and sharing the same interests. Thanks to such approaches as diversion strategy, **an excellent motivation program**, the acceptance of individual needs of employees and creation of perfect working environment the company occupies the highest positions among the best employers not only in the USA but in Europe as well. Videos presenting the working environment in the company Google become available for the public thanks to social networks. As a result young people in Slovakia can see only the advantages that the company offers and they do not realize that in order to be desired by the company they should at least present some extraordinary talent.

The introduction of digital interactive technologies is considered to be the most important worldwide change which The Generation Y representatives have been influenced by. A job with an employer disposing of the newest technologies is preferred by 92.52% of respondents. The most significant difference between Generation Y and other generations is that Generation Y children were the first to have been grown up in the internet era. Therefore they are also denoted as digital youth. They all actively use mobile phones, computers, ICQ communication, chat or Skype, they send SMS, MMS, and e-mails and social networks, such as e.g. Facebook serves to share their ideas and feelings. The above mentioned means of communication significantly save time of their users when they need to communicate with their relatives, friends, colleagues or

business partners on a daily basis. Time is very frequently the factor influencing the decision of some young people to apply for a job. On the basis of the interviews with students J. Miller (2006, p. 14) warns that „if an online application process took longer than five minutes, they gave up on it. They felt an employer using a highly controlling and restrictive application process doesn't demonstrate the values they are looking for their career“.

Such young people are known as so called digital natives. They operate all the communication technologies intuitively and thus obtain an important advantage over their more experienced colleagues. Their attitudes to the exploitation of digital interactive technologies are presented in the Table 4.

Table 4: Generation Y and its attitudes to digital interactive technologies

Statement	Relative size (%) f_i			
	Agreement, from that:	full	Disagree- ment, from that:	partial
		partial		full
They like to present their personal information and photographs on web/ social network	82.24	47.66	17.76	12.15
		34.58		5.61
They are imprisoned in the world of electronic communication, they do not like personal contacts	56.07	20.56	43.93	37.38
		35.51		6.54
It takes them ages to call back but have no problem to react to a message/an e-mail immediately	55.14	22.43	44.86	40.19
		32.71		4.67

Source: own study

The results of a research aimed at the attitude of younger Slovak Generation Y representatives toward digital interactive technologies do not match with the opinions that they have about their peers in more developed countries. Nevertheless, nearly 45% of respondents confirmed that they do not live absolutely impersonal lives. The tendency toward the preference of impersonal non-verbal communication is indicated here.

Digital information technologies exploitation may also have some unpleasant consequences. In the process of their growing up the Generation Y representatives were not protected from antisocial information, pornography, weapons, violence, misinformation or verbal internet communication. The negative aspect can also be seen in excessive penetration of digital interactive technologies into our everyday lives leading to the appearance of so called „virtual lives“. That is why young people often have problems with face-to-face communication. With their friends and acquaintances they commonly communicate in a kind of a cyberspace and as a result they do not feel the necessity to meet the friends, colleagues at work or business partners personally. As it can be observed, Generation Y representatives have lost the border-line between the private and the public, the personal and working life, the job and the entertainment. Up to 82.24% of respondents do not consider the presentation of their personal opinions, attitudes or photographs in social networks as a threat or even something that can possibly be misused. Revealed personal life details of officials and famous people became very common for the representatives of Generation Y, it is in general perceived as a part of their lives. They support transparency and consequently they have no problems to speak about their personal or professional matters in public or even make their photographs or personal videos public. Many times young employees even do not realize that their on-line activities may be used against them in the future. Messages transmitted via internet spread very quickly and exponentially. At the same time any internet communication participant leaves some tracks behind him/her and thus his/her activity **can easily be revealed**.

Such an easy access to information causes that people become curious. They are not only relatives or friends who, using the internet, may wish to learn something about the communicating person but potential employers can also learn a lot about the interests and opinions of their potential employee. P. Jeewan (2010, p. 15) introduces six most frequent mistakes that people make in their on-line behavior. If a person wants to get higher in a social hierarchy he/she should follow his recommendations: „Use it (carefully) or lost it. Leave on-camera appearances to Hollywood. Be ready to be surprised. Banish casual language from your Professional vocabulary. Stay in control (or at least avoid getting tagged). Don't share TMI (too more information).“

Search for information about the applicants tends to replace traditional interpersonal relationships. Young people should be aware of the fact that personnel managers planned to screen job applicants via the internet. C. Stamper warns (2010, p. 14) that „managers who judge potential hires too harshly based on what they find about them online run the risk of unintentionally eliminating superb candidates. They forget that social networking profiles are not resumes“.

In the area of working relations employers get more and more afraid of excessive directness of their young employees and consequently of possible information misuse. They expect their young employees to keep in secret both the content of their job and the information that they dispose of. Employers will probably have to reconcile with this instinctive need of young people to be transparent.

In the process of choosing their future job young people are interested in the companies which besides having their own web-site used as the means of addressing their job applicants also have their profiles published in social networks. The results of research carried out at Wiesbaden Commercial School and published in the journal *HR_manage* under the title „Nur Geringe Effekte im Employer Branding“, with a subtitle „Social Media“ prove that among Generation Y applicants „can also be popular companies that besides the information about job vacancies and applicants communicate both company mission and company strategy using social networks. They as well require reports presenting experience of their colleagues“, (2010, p. 7).

3.4. Characteristics of working behavior and aspects needed to high performance

Each generation has its specifics connected with the perception of both job and job performance. Personnel managers should be aware of the Generation Y representatives' needs and values and they should analyze their working behavior and elaborate the adequate managerial strategy conception for line managers. The aspects of working behavior of Generation Y representatives on their workplace together with the factors influencing their job performance are introduced in Table 5.

Young people are not afraid of changes or experiments and they demonstrate their willingness to change things in their immediate environment (98.21%). But at the same time, they require structure, guidance and extensive orientation. They want to challenge and change things, but they also require personal feedback. They seek out internships, self-improvement opportunities, formalized coaching and mentoring programs and work flexibility. If their needs are not met, they will leave for a new opportunity somewhere else“, (Zaporzan, 2010, p. 13). The positive attitude to the stated job challenges (94.39%) together with the willingness to take responsibilities are both closely connected with the **need for permanent change and experiments**. In the given sample of students the need has been admitted by 71.03% of respondents. They are likely to be afraid of taking full responsibility and therefore managers should supply them with necessary advice or help.

Table 5: Characteristics of working behavior and the aspects needed to reach high performance

Statement	Relative size (%) f_i			
	Agreement, from that:	full	Disagree- ment, from that:	partial
		partial		full
They are progressive, open to experiments	98.21	64.29	1.79	1.79
		33.93		0.00
They expect and need recognition	95.33	44.86	4.67	3.74
		50.47		0.93
They need to know their manager's expectations and consequences of their behavior	95.33	39.25	4.67	4.67
		56.07		0.00
They need to feel that they are an important part of some entity	94.39	57.01	5.61	3.74
		37.38		1.87
They are open to „new challenges“	94.39	39.25	5.61	5.61
		55.14		0.00
They can fulfil more tasks simultaneously (multitasking), IT exploitation is obvious	93.46	48.60	6.54	5.61
		44.86		0.93
They like asking „why?“ and their performance grows with project realization and they trust in it	93.46	48.60	6.54	5.61
		44.86		0.93
They are pragmatic in decision making	91.07	26.79	8.93	8.93
		64.29		0.00
If they are given „space and freedom“, they are able to exceed their performance expectations	90.65	37.38	9.35	8.41
		53.27		0.93
They are keen team-workers, like to get experience from superiors – are sociable	86.92	39.25	13.08	11.21
		47.66		1.87
They have a strong feeling that they have to belong somewhere (to some group)	86.92	31.78	13.08	13.08
		55.14		0.00
They need to know the sense of their job and its contribution to fulfilling a company's mission	85.98	40.19	14.02	13.08
		45.79		0.93
They are used to permanently running environment	77.57	20.56	22.43	21.50
		57.01		0.93
They expect working environment providing immediate feedback on their performance	77.57	20.56	22.43	22.43
		57.01		0.00
They need permanent communication and strong interconnection with the manager (mentoring)	75.70	16.82	24.30	24.30
		58.88		0.00
They expect constructive criticism	72.90	20.56	27.10	26.17
		52.34		0.93
They like to bear responsibility	71.03	22.43	28.97	26.17
		48.60		2.80
They like further education	57.94	12.15	42.06	35.31
		45.79		6.54

Source: own study

Question „why“ is very important for Generation Y. The representatives of the Digital Youth declare that they are ready to do their best if it is meaningful for a company (93.46%). Students appear to be the most effective when they understand a project purpose and if they trust in it. They do not like performing commands without knowing the context. They need to know exactly where their place in fulfilling a company mission is and they also need to feel that they

represent an important part of a company (94.39%). It is also very necessary for them to understand the purpose of the job that they are going to perform (85.98%). If a manager sets a task with an adequate explanation, they „follow the commands more easily, needless mistakes can be avoided and the relationships may remain on a good level“, (Švec, 2008, p. 60). However, many times they need a kind of stimulation to take some initiative.

The provision of sufficient space for the freedom of behavior also belongs among the important motivational factors for young generation which was proved by 90.65% of respondents. If managers ensure the restriction of traditional job performance limitations, e.g. regular formal evaluation and replace it with the provision of immediate feedback with concrete directions, employees will be able to exceed their job performance expectations. Previous generations were often guided by the motto that „no feedback means that everything is in order“. Generation Y representatives do not wait for the annual evaluation of their performance. They require **a continuous personal evaluation** of partial results of their efforts instead. Social networks as well as on-line purchases enable them to insert immediate reactions to realized transactions, their own contributions or evaluation of both contributions and statuses of their friends in the form of stars, insert verbal evaluation or confirmation by pressing the Like button. Young people prefer if success factors such as turnover, sold quantities etc. are submitted in a real time.

Generation Y – they are the people used to being in the centre of attention. To manage such young people means first of all a huge amount of work. Managers are expected to explain the tasks exactly and at the same time clearly specify the targets which have to be defined in both time and financial sense. After defining the limits managers should apply a more moderate approach because it is typical for Generation Y that they hate micro-management. C. Gillies (2010, p. 21), using the results of the research done in German companies says that „they have to find the way themselves – this is their highest maximum. They expect managers to state the targets and provide all the means necessary to reach the targets but nothing more. Naturally, it does not mean that the members of Generation Y can solve all their tasks themselves and without any problems. On the contrary – they deal with many things connected with formal education in much worse way than previous generations“. Young employees should be offered continuous but unobtrusive help and support. Instead of the imperative tone of an utterance, e.g. „do it in this way“ a very mild and peaceful expression should be used, e.g. „so far we were used to doing the things in this way but you might have some better ideas“ as the above mentioned author writes. Young employees may also appreciate to be given face-to-face personal commands. They should also be informed about the expectations of their managers and they should as well **understand the consequences of their behavior**. Non-existence of „the exact conception of what they can expect“, (Bednařiková, 2007, p. 9) may become one of the reasons why young people leave their companies. These expectations have been confirmed by 95.33% of respondents. They believe in principles of functioning and they also require evaluation – provided that feedback is sufficient and effective. J. Miller (2007, p. 15) emphasizes that „you can never give enough praise, feedback and constructive criticism. People thrive on being recognized and valued for their contributions“.

Generation Y is considered to be progressive, technological generation. Its representatives understand new technologies very well and are very skilled in operating them. The ability of young people to use enormous sources, extract necessary information from the sources and process it is undoubtedly their advantage. As a rule they are used to doing more things simultaneously and can easily cope with so called multitasking. Up to 93.46% of respondents declare that exploitation of information and communication technologies is absolutely natural for them because they use them in their everyday life. The problem that can be observed when students elaborate their final works consists in the fact that when using the internet sources they are not able to select relevant information. The negative aspect of students' multitasking is that

while listening to lectures or participating at seminars they have no problem to send e-mails or even chat.

Permanent exploitation of interactive technologies may probably enable the representatives of Generation Y to satisfy one of their most important needs – the need for continuous communication. **Communication represents a lifestyle** for young people. More than two thirds of respondents regularly check their messages and look through their statuses or comments from their friends in social networks. If it is possible they are practically continually on-line connected with the world. The aspect should also be taken into account by employers themselves. Many new employees require the possibility of permanent on-line connection from their employers. For young people it is common that they are permanently ready to chat with their friends even at work. Nowadays there are more and more cases when employees are punished or even fired for so called improper on-line behavior (e.g. chatting, googling, e-mail writing, blogging about their superiors or the situation in their company, etc.) not only during their working hours but even in their spare time.

Everyday life of Generation Y members has been connected with their ability to deal with authorities. They usually do not know the strict family hierarchy where father and mother decide about what should be done. Since their early childhood the members of Generation Y were taken seriously by their parents and children could participate in decision making. Therefore any commands at work, the expectations of obedience or submission appear to be a real shock for the young employees. Since the very beginning of their existence the Generation Y members are usually in the centre of attention not only as their parents' children but as consumers as well. Consequently they expect to occupy the same position in their jobs as well and they are very **reluctant about any rules or rigorous directions**. At school they also prefer discussion with their teachers rather than strict commands. Autocratic leadership style is definitely unsuitable when guide them at work. Without any doubt leadership styles should be brought up to date in companies. The employees refuse to respect authorities and at the same time their older and more experienced colleagues do not automatically become formal authorities for them. On the other hand, they are able to appreciate the colleagues who are able to persuade them with their results, experience and know-how (86.92%). They hope that these are the people able to listen to them, support them and offer them individualized assistance on their way to success and in their personal development.

The changes in generation structures within companies induced by the retirement of older employees and admission of the new ones both require the application of double-generation strategies in a company practice. F. Höfliger (2008, p. 39) warns that „on the one hand it is necessary to make a company attractive for young people who are educated and professionally efficient, on the other hand it is inevitable to support the motivation and efficiency of the senior employees. Within the frame of this double-strategy the relationships between the members of the junior and senior generations acquire special meaning. Younger employees may e.g. teach their older fellows how to operate modern technologies“. The ability to „combine the creativity and innovation abilities of younger employees with the experience and judgement of the older ones“, is considered to be a present-day challenge by the author. Young people feel a strong necessity to belong to a certain group (86.92%).

Managers should respect the opinions of their employees and let them participate in decision making process. On the other hand, Generation Y members fully accept the fact that final decisions must be made by managers. There is a task in front of employers – in the future they will have to concentrate on the elaboration of junior employees coaching and mentoring programs. The results of a research which was done in Germany prove that up to 58 % of young respondents – Generation Y representatives – are willing to accept advice from their more experienced colleagues while the mentor's age over 50 is preferred (Gillies, 2010, p. 21).

4. Conclusion

Personnel managers in companies have to get ready for the entry of younger employees which means that they should be ready to introduce changes in the area of human resources management. On their workplace the Generation Y representatives share some typical features: they are e.g. collective activities, optimism, persistence, hero spirit, multi-tasking and skills in operating new technologies. The generation is not only different from previous generations but at the same time it is rather numerous and rich in opportunities. With this generation companies face new challenges connected with its management. It represents the trends typical for global society. A. Leathwood (2008, p. 37) says that „the growing proportion of Generation Y workforce has its impact on working environment as a whole. Portfolio career, crossing branches, career breaks, flexi-time, more objective evaluation of any individual on the market“ – these are the factors defining the new world of work which is being created by the Generation Y. The combination of social, political and economic circumstances enabled the appearance of highly educated generation which is used to prosperity and was educated in the belief that they have a choice. Therefore it is not surprising that the generation representatives apply the same philosophy in their careers as well. Nowadays, however, a kind of an *internal conflict arises within the generation*. The Generation Y members are spoiled, ambitious, violent, hopeful and impatient. They have high demands and expectations which are currently hindered by the uncertainty caused by the economic crisis. Among the following negatives occurs excessive flexibility, short-term commitments, ignoring of out-of-time principles, the need in transparency as well as permanent need in contacts with surrounding world using information and communication technologies.

In comparison with previous generations they undoubtedly have some advantages. They are skilled in operating advanced technologies, they are ready to face challenges as well as look for new solutions and approaches. They are able to perform more tasks simultaneously, they are performance orientated, they are inter-connected, they like to communicate and prefer working in a team. On the other hand, in order to get identified with the task they necessarily need to have it explained in a detailed way and be aware of its planned outcomes. In order to keep young employees in companies managers have to make an effort to maintain the environment favourable for their creativity. J. Talbott et al. (2006, p. 16) confirm that informal discussions between a manager and an employee „may establish the environment for free exchange of opinions. It will also cause that an employee will regularly think about possible improvements and that the employee will not be surprised in the course of a progress interview. It will definitely contribute to feedback and as well it may support dialogue. They also require feedback and expect to be treated with nearly individual care by their managers. Very frequently they also share a strong feeling of self-importance.

That is why it is advisable to have some overview about the situation – to be aware of who works on a given project and what is his/her progress in it. Managers have to arrange regular meetings with their young employees to solve potential conflicts. In common contacts stated limits may help. It is also very important for managers to give their subordinates some freedom in their deciding on both workplace and working hours. At the same time the managers should insist on their requirement that employees should be available in agreed time. Free time during holidays and extra-holidays may also become a part of agreed conditions. Of course, the employee is expected to perform well to deserve the advantages. On the other hand excessive flexibility, short-time commitments, disregard for generally accepted traditional principles or permanent need of contacts with surrounding world via information and communication technologies may represent the negative aspects.

Managers do not necessarily have to meet all the requirements of their young subordinates. However, they should be able to find the balance and a kind of a system for optimal management of relationships within multi-generation teams and for the creation of double-generation strategies.

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