

Change your opinion of a younger worker

by Eric Papp

Is it possible to change your opinion of a younger employee? The good news is, it is possible. There are around 32 million General Y workers in the workforce today and this is only increasing. Generation Y not only is one of the biggest generations, with around 78 million members, but also is the most demanding generation. Now they are bringing their demands into the workforce. Many managers and employers are viewing Generation Y as a "me" generation. Former manager, "This younger generation is concerned about themselves and wants to know what you can do for them" Sound familiar? Although this statement may be true, the fact of the matter is, what are you going to do about it? How are you going to deal with them in order to maximize the talents of this younger generation for the benefit of your workforce? Here are some helpful hints that can change your paradigm or belief system about a younger employee.

What you expect is what you get. If you expect them to show up late and give you a hard time as a employee, then this is usually what you will encounter. You have to seek out what you expect for your company. What standards are you holding your younger employees accountable for? Are there, clearly defined goals for your younger employee to attain? Remember, this is the goal seeking generation, and they operate best when they know why they are doing something and the overall goal. Also, what you expect is what you get in terms of productivity. Some workers entering the workforce do not have a clearly defined definition of a good work ethic. Your definition of a work habit might be vastly different from theirs. A great way to overcome this miscommunication and making sure your message gets across is to pair them up with someone from either the traditionalists' generation or, a senior person of the baby boom generation. The reason is they can learn hands-on, what is expected and the type of work ethic that gets rewarded. Senior level people tend to have the strongest work ethics across all four generations.

Let go of fear. Generation Y is full of optimism and drive. Do not let this be a negative. They don't want your job; they want to know how they can contribute right away. It is up to you to harness this positive energy and drive and channel it to projects that serve the company. The reason behind this drive, optimism, and wanting their voice to be heard, can be contributed towards their upbringing. They have grown up where they have contributed in the family's decision-making process. Anything from where should they go to eat, vacations, car and home purchases. Their parents have encouraged them to speak up. An example is 30 yrs. ago going out to eat was a big deal for most families and usually the parents made the decision. Today going out to eat happens regularly and the children make the decision.

Leverage their skills. Leveraging their skills might be with computers or technology. Another skill that Generation Y might possess is the ability to embrace life-long learning. In order for us to change our mindset of a younger employee, we must see them as a valuable asset to the team. See how they can perhaps teach other employees or perhaps find more efficient ways of doing tasks with their technology skills. In return, have managers mentor them and share stories of on the job experience. If you get a sense that they are willing to learn, use that. Many workers are burned out and don't want to learn anything. Use their spark to light a fire in your department. Give them the resources they need to benefit the company and themselves. Infuse their energy and drive with your team's experience.

Listen to them. One of the five practices in "leadership challenge" is challenge the process. Look at what you're currently doing and see how you can somehow make it better. This is where generation Y comes in; they are full of creative ideas and are willing to take the time to

brainstorm ways of creating a more efficient system. Lack of Experience in this manner is a good thing, because they have not been subject to the same job for a number of years and are not traditional thinkers. They are not thinking inside the box, because they don't know what the box is yet. Not only will you get new ways of doing your system, but your mindset of a younger employee and the value they bring will change the dynamics of your company. Have a clear understanding of the type of employee you want on your team. You might even write down some characteristics. It can be easy to find fault with this generation or any generation that you don't belong to. Look for the skills that this generation possesses and see how to blend it in your company's culture.

Speaker, Author, Consultant

Eric Papp travels the country speaking to business leaders and organizations. He helps them understand Generation Y employees and customers.

To sign up for his free newsletter and read his blog visit www.ericpapp.com

copyright 2007 Eric Papp. www.ericpapp.com; 813-846-0345
Voice Of Generation Y 1242 Kingsway Rd. Brandon, FL 33510