

Advances in Strategic Human Resource Management

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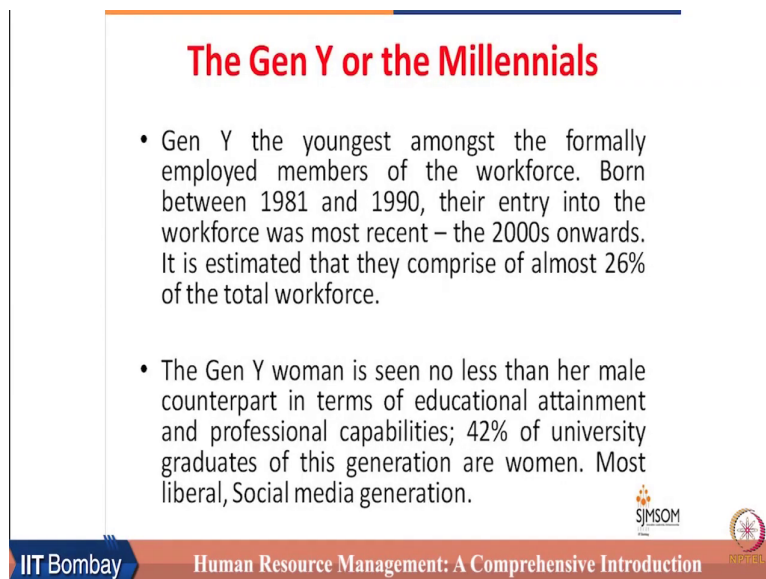
Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay

Multiple Generations at Workplace

Lecture - 06 D

Ways of Synergizing Across Generations

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The Gen Y or the Millennials

- Gen Y the youngest amongst the formally employed members of the workforce. Born between 1981 and 1990, their entry into the workforce was most recent – the 2000s onwards. It is estimated that they comprise of almost 26% of the total workforce.
- The Gen Y woman is seen no less than her male counterpart in terms of educational attainment and professional capabilities; 42% of university graduates of this generation are women. Most liberal, Social media generation.

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Gen Y or Millennials. So, Gen Y are the youngest amongst the formally employed members of the workforce. Born between 1981 to 90, their entry into the workforce was most recent. So, they entered in 2000. It is estimated that they comprise of almost 26 percent of the total workforce. In some of the companies, this percentage is much higher. And we are going to discuss about one of that company in the later part of this lecture.

So, Gen Y woman are seen no less than her male counterpart in terms of educational attainment and professional capability. Because 42 percent of university graduates of this generation are women. Most liberal, most social media savvy generation is Gen Y or Millennials.

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Attributes of the Gen Y

- Favor of flexibility
- Disposable jobs
- Sceptical about corporate lives.
- in general techno brilliant and carry global mindsets
- Value diversity
- Good taste in experimentation
- Preference to pursue portfolio careers and explore different avenues in the process.

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The attributes of the Gen Y are their law for flexibility. They are the first generation who have questioned the one question about the one stable job. They look at job as disposables as well. So, in this generation, the emergence of the independent professionalism started, the independent professionals who provide their service based on their expertise to multiple employers. So, this disposable job phenomena started with this generation mostly.

Is they are skeptical about the corporate life because we have, they are the people who have seen the debacle of the corporate financial sector or they have seen the subprime crisis. In

general, they are more techno brilliant. They carry the global mindset. This generation values diversity the most because of the global exposure, because of the liberal thinking. They have good taste in experimentation and they are the people who wish to take risk.

Because their parents are much better off in comparison to the previous generation. So, that comfort provides them opportunity to be more experimental in nature. Their preference is to pursue portfolio carriers and explore different avenues in the process.

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Two Points of Focus

- Generation gap
- Unique contributions

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We will focus our discussion now on the two points, generation gap and unique contribution. So, based on our discussion on the different features, the specific features generally found in particular generations. We can see that generations vary according to their temperament, according to their worldview and their aspiration. So, what is the way out? Generation gap is

a natural thing, but generation intergenerational communication is also a reality that also happens.

In that communication, we can create a synergy across the generations and that is the reason why this topic is being discussed in the HR course. We also need to recognize that different generations at workplace not only bring differences, they also bring unique contribution.

But that unique contribution can become organizational advantage, can give competitive edge to organization, can add to the productivity and efficiency of the organizations and institutions only if their unique contributions are acknowledged and synergized across the levels.

So, now onwards in this session, we will look at how to enhance the intergenerational communication and how to synergize the unique contribution and unique capabilities being brought by different generations at workplace.

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Way of Synergizing Across Generations

- Building collaborative relationship: Ex arm forces
- Study the demography of workforce to know what matters to the set of employees
- Create opportunity to cross generational mentoring using mixed age teams
- Consider life paths for facilities and incentives
- Organize Wisdom talks
- Recognize wisdom workers: E.g. P&G Master program
- Creating employees resource groups

Knight, R. (2014). Managing people from 5 generations. *Harvard Business Review*, 25(9), 1-7.
Conley, C. (2018). Four ways to help the different generations to share wisdom at work, HBR

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These are some of the ways of synergizing across generation. First is building collaborative relationship. Finest example of this method or this approach are the arm forces. In arm forces, generally a lieutenant of the 20 year old leads a group of Javaans and other arm force other armed forces professionals who are in their 40s and that is happening.

How they do how they do it? They do it by showing the example; they do it by taking their opinion and respecting their opinion. So, this is first way of synergizing across generation. Another way is study the demography of the workforce to know what matters to the set of employees.

If organization is deciding about financial incentive or non financial incentive, they need to study the demography of their workforce, because different generations can value different

type of financial rewards. For example, a old generation, the generation of baby boomer may like to have a financial rewards in the monetary terms.

They would like to have some tax saving; they would like to have some tax free incomes because they are more in the saving mode to protect their retirement life. They probably value the healthcare facilities more than the holiday as incentives. But the young people may value cash to spend on their education or they may value some holiday package which they can enjoy with their young families.

So, different workforce, different part of the workforce may value different things and they may value different kind of organizational rewards. Third way is to create opportunity to cross generational mentoring using mixed age teams. By making the mixed age team, we also create opportunity for the reverse mentoring. So, mentoring is understood to be a developmental conversation, the developmental relationship where mentor is like 2, 3 level above than mentee.

But in the cross generational mentoring team, even the young people can be the mentors of the old employees on various aspects, particularly technological aspects. Consider the life paths for facilities and the incentives. We discussed in the demographic, demography related point as well that we need to study demography to understand what percentage of the workforce may value what kind of facilities in the incentive and accordingly customizing those for the workforce.

Organizing wisdom talks, this is again Knight and Conley has suggested as an initiative. Wisdom talks means giving opportunity to the people in organization irrespective of their hierarchy or their age to speak up front of everybody. So, some organization follow this practice, this ritual of inviting one person who generally the person who is not communicating across the organization and giving them opportunity to speak up their mind, about the work about life a few minutes.

That can be a very useful initiative for people to understand each other for generations to understand each other. Recognizing the wisdom workers, in every organization we can

identify few people who have natural tendency to mentor others, who have natural tendency to articulate the world view communicate, across generations. These people must be identified and a systematic mentoring program can be set up in the organization and that can be very useful in synergizing across generations.

Creating employees resource groups within the organization we can identify resource groups; that means, group of people who are masters, who are expert in particular aspect some aspect of technology, some aspect of legal requirement, some aspect of managing finances etcetera. So, organization can identify what matters to their employees at work and beyond work.

Accordingly, they can set up, they can identify the resource groups that can be communicated across the organization and resource group can help other employees on certain aspects some certain developmental aspects. These are the ways of synergizing across generation.

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**Synergizing Across Generations:
McKinsey Study**

200 in-depth interviews with high potential young professionals and an additional 60 with talent professionals looking for ways to engage younger employees effectively. covers 120 companies, including 55 of the Fortune 500, across many industries.

The sample primarily draws from millennials in the United States but includes multinational perspectives: more than 40 percent of those sampled were immigrants from over 40 different countries or first-generation Americans.

Barsh, J., Brown, L. & Kian, K. (2016). Millennials: Burden, blessing, or both. McKinsey Quarterly, 1:5.

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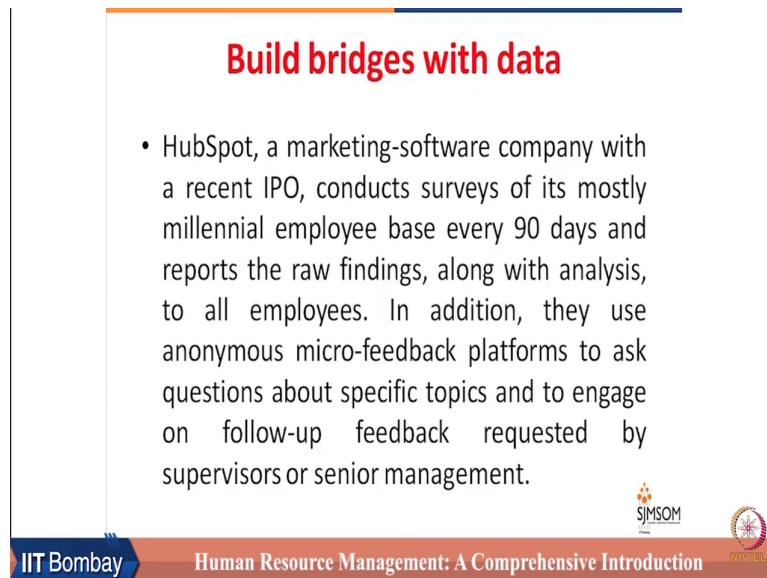
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I would like to quote a study conducted by a McKinsey which is based on 200 in-depth interviews with high potential young professionals and 60 with the talent professionals looking for ways to engage younger employees effectively.

This this question is important for India as well because India is the home of large percentage of the very young employees. So, average age of the workers in India average age of employees in India is 26 years. So, we can understand we need to have a better understanding about what is what young people value at work. So, that is why this is a useful study it covers 120 companies, includes 55 of the fortune 500.



Sample primarily draws from the millennials in the United States, but that includes the multiple perspective and 40 percent of the people who are sampled are immigrants from 40 different countries and they are the first generation Americans.

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Build bridges with data

- HubSpot, a marketing-software company with a recent IPO, conducts surveys of its mostly millennial employee base every 90 days and reports the raw findings, along with analysis, to all employees. In addition, they use anonymous micro-feedback platforms to ask questions about specific topics and to engage on follow-up feedback requested by supervisors or senior management.

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Based on this study authors identify certain initiatives, certain ways of enhancing the inter-generation synergy. First is building bridge with data. Data is a very important source for insight. So, they give example of HubSpot it is a marketing software company with recent IPO they conducted a survey mostly they are they have the millennials as their employees. They conduct a survey about the feeling of the employees, about the experience of the employees at work place in every 90 days.

And some anonymous micro feedback platforms are also being created where millennials which constitute the major portion of their major means 90, 80 percent of their work force, they can take up a specific topic, they can engage in the follow up, they can ask for the feedback and they can also give feedback anonymously on this platform. So, they that is one way they have created the transparency and the communication across generations.

