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Y so different?

By Felicia Wong



Other Generation bosses believe that it is more important to be competent, honest and forward-looking, indicating that more task-oriented qualities are valued. -- ST FILE PHOTO

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A RECENT study of over 2,600 young Singaporeans has revealed some significant cross-generational differences between younger workers and their more senior colleagues, highlighting lingering stereotypes held by both groups.

The younger workers, dubbed 'Generation Y', refer to those born in 1981 or later, whereas the more senior colleagues, referred to as 'Other Generations', are those born in 1980 or earlier.

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Jointly-conducted by human resource consultancy The GMP Group and Temasek Polytechnic's School of



Humanities and Social Sciences, the study revealed that the Other Generations perceived Generation Y to have a poorer work ethic and spent less time at work, charges which Generation Y refuted in their self-perceptions. Generation Y, however, viewed the work ethic of their more senior colleagues more favourably than vice versa.

Adding to the gulf in values, Generation Y differed from their more senior colleagues in their expectations of leadership: They wanted their bosses to be caring, inspiring and competent, the first two qualities between more relationship-oriented attributes.

On the other end of the spectrum, Other Generation bosses believe that it is more important to be competent, honest and forward-looking, indicating that more task-oriented qualities are valued.

Echoing the emphasis on relationship-orientation, Generation Y cited career advancement opportunities, good work-life harmony and good relationships as incentives to remain in an organisation. Bosses from the Other Generations, however, named career advancement opportunities, emphasis on learning and development and good compensation as the most-utilised retention strategies, omitting relationship-oriented values.

The findings could suggest that the methods adopted by organisations may not be effective in retaining Generation Y workers due to the disparity in values and expectations.

'A shift in mindset is the most effective way to resolve issues. Generation Y should adjust their expectations and not expect employers to accommodate their every point of view,' said Mr Josh Goh, senior manager of The GMP Group, in response to the findings. 'Ultimately, nothing beats keeping the doors of communication open,' he added.

The study, which polled 2,610 working adults and students from Singapore's four universities and five polytechnics, was carried out last November and December.

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well this is interesting we as an older generation taught our younger generation for the values to have and look out for about which the genY talks about in this study, and in the end we as an older generation now are telling them well forget all about that and now adopt to our old ways, the attitudes change from generation to generation and the wise thing to do is always to change to the current demand of times not the old or get ready to be on your marry way of dinosaurs

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