

*When I'm asked to work on an activity or task, I need to know who I'm working for, what the impact is, and why I was specifically asked to do it (as opposed to someone else). This is the difference between a boring, menial task and doing my part to positively affect the organization.*

*Consultant*

*Feedback is important. When I'm beginning an activity, I ask for immediate feedback to ensure that I'm on the right track. This practice saves everyone time in the end.*

*Associate Consultant*

## Training Generation Y

### *Best Practices*

#### **Explain the impact**

Simply telling someone to do something will not motivate them to success. This is especially relevant to the "What's In It For Me" (WIIFM) Generation. This is not always a selfish quality, it just means that this generation wants to know what their impact will be on the team/organization/world.

#### **Use blended learning techniques**

We're dealing with the "two-minute attention span." (This also applies to Gen X.) While not everything in our lives can be fun and entertaining, we can increase learning retention by varying training styles. Utilize the different media to break up a training program and keep participants engaged: instructor-led presentations, eLearning, books/self-study, hands-on activities, team exercises, etc. You can also create ownership of material by having participants teach each other.

#### **Provide clear, detailed instruction**

Giving detailed, step-by-step instruction for a task or activity may seem time consuming. Many of us think, "They need to figure it out like I did." However, Gen Y has never had to "figure out" the answers the way we did. They will learn much more quickly if they are given detailed information on what, how, and by when. And quite frankly, they will probably find a better way to do it!

#### **Celebrate behavior you want repeated**

Keep in mind that this generation is accustomed to instant information and feedback. Provide timely praise for achievements or behavior you would like to enforce. Plan ahead so that the feedback can be immediate. "Sandwich" feedback for improvement areas: praise, criticism, praise. The improvement feedback will not get lost in the message, like it may have with previous generations.

#### **Train them to get a job somewhere else**

Wait, what? To this group, security comes in the realization that they are developing a diverse set of useful skills that makes them marketable. By regularly evaluating a professional development plan that outlines a variety of skills, an individual will not feel as though he or she needs to go to another company to get those skills.

#### **Train the individual, not the generation**

With all of this said, remember that the generation in which someone was born is not the only factor that determines his or her personality and behavior. These best practices are designed to give us a kicking-off point.