

JUMP Corporate Hub

14st November 2017

Managing gender and generations: *The end of “careers” as we know them?*

Summary of the session

1. Introduction

Today’s workforce spans four generations. Technology and this broad age range have changed the work environment and impacted job performance, communication, and office dynamics. A multi-generational workforce creates challenges related to diverse perspectives, priorities, and work styles. And when you add gender into the equation, it gets even more complex.

Twenty-two people from fifteen different companies gathered at Procter & Gamble (P&G) to participate in this session dedicated to gender and generations.

Thank you to our hosts: David Ingram, Director R&D – Packaging Development, B.I.C. Site Leader - Procter & Gamble and Laure Waegemans, R&D, Section Head in Process & Formula design at Procter & Gamble.

2. Guest speaker: All “leaders”!: On the cooperation between four generations

Saskia Van Uffelen, CEO Ericsson Belux, Digital Champion Belgium

How to tackle the challenge of managing and working with different generations? Ericsson is a traditional company that builds and management the mobile telco pylons and network. Saskia had the intention of making her company Ericsson more attractive towards the younger generations, “sexy and cool” in her words, and started to reflect on the issue of generations at work. This ended with her book “Tous “Patron”! De la coopération entre quatre générations.” (*cf. toolbox for details*)

1. Four generations in the workplace

① Boomers (born 1946-1964)

- Study in the area that they plan to work in, then start to work at the bottom of the company, and work their way up to the top, for as long as possible until they leave on pension.
- Love to work for power, prestige and money
- Management style: team manager, like meetings, look for consensus, like to tell their team what to do

② **Generation X (born 1965-1980)**

- Ambitious and work for progress in life. Less loyal to companies compared to Boomers, job-hoppers, always looking for more. Has self interest at heart rather than the interest of the organisation.
- Management style: flexible, adaptable, problem-solvers.
- Better at technology than boomers (digital-capable)
- Try to be perfect both at work and at home, therefore most at risk from burnout

③ **Generation Y (born 1981-1994; a.k.a. millennials)**

- No coherence between studies and work, like to do different things in life. This is important to be considered in the process of recruitment: for instance, it might not be wise to look at only majors to find the right candidate since what generation Y studied does not mean the same as what boomers studied.
- Will not wait until they get pension to enjoy life. They want to enjoy life now!
- Assertive, innovative, speak up and express themselves and issues. Hate meetings. Modern, digital approach to cooperation.
- Good at digital technology

④ **Generation Z (born 1995- present; a.k.a. millennials)**

- Very smart and fast
- Real digital natives. If Ys will adapt to companies, for them this is not negotiable (i.e. companies will have to adapt).

2. How to manage four generations that need to work together?

- ① **Speak their language:** Different generations mean different things even when they say the same words. You need to know the language of that generation, even write your job offers in different ways - e.g. to meet the needs of women and the interest of millennials.
- ② **Adapt your way of working:** You need to understand the way the different generations are “wired” and adapt your management style and way of communicating with them.
- ③ **Know what they want as their compensation:** Different generations want different rewards (e.g. contract vs. emotional reward) for hard work. If we understand these differences, we could coach and motivate them better.
- ④ **Put the right person in the management position:** A senior engineer might not be the best to promote into a management position, will lack the management skills.
- ⑤ **Work-life balance** is important to all – but each generation has different ways of managing it.
- ⑥ **It takes time to see the change** you wish to make: diversity management is changing the culture of the company and introducing a new way of thinking. It might take up 3 to 5 years. So, do not blame your tool or infrastructure for not seeing the effect right away. Tools and infrastructure are just a part of the change.
- ⑦ **Right balance between different generations** is important since the old version of management does not work any longer.
Example: grandfather- grandson model. Match boomers and millennials so that millennials can learn a lot from boomers and millennials can teach/provide boomers technology and give an innovative idea.

3. Company Testimonial: Best practices from P&G

David Ingram, Director R& D Packaging Development, B. I. C Site Leader, Procter & Gamble

Laure Weagemans, R & D, Section Head in Process & Formula design, Procter & Gamble

Gender equality is one of P&G's five citizenship priorities (ethics and corporate responsibility, community impact, diversity and inclusion, environmental sustainability and gender equality). Specifically, P&G strives to leverage the voice of girls and women in advertising and media; address the barriers to education and economic opportunities of girls and women through programmes and advocacy efforts and to achieve equal gender representation in all P&G structures to foster an inclusive environment.

Some examples of best practices shared by P&G that touch different generations:

- ① **A video addressing gender stereotypes** by creating new emojis of women. (Watch the video [here](#))
- ② **Programme to encourage more girls into STEM and ensure the pipeline of the future**
 - Global partnership with Greenlight-For-Girls (international NGO which encourages girls to study STEM subjects/areas). The programme started in Brussels in 2013 with an event with more than 200 girls of 11-15 years old from The International School of Brussels (ISB) and 10 volunteers. The global partnership was signed in 2015 and since then they have a yearly event with girls from Brussels (up to 300 girls, 3 workshops in 3 languages with 20 volunteers). This event was expanded to Barcelona in 2016 and to Cincinnati in 2017 (350 girls, 80 volunteers, 14 workshops).
- ③ **Achieve equal gender representation in P&G, and managing 4 phases of generations in women's careers**
 - P&G is committed to achieving 50/50 representation of men and women throughout the company in all levels. So far 45% of employees are female and 45% of scientists in R&D are female.
 - P&G was inspired by the JUMP Forum 2016 workshop by Avivah Wittenberg-Cox on the four phases in women's careers and started to examine the different phases of women's careers, why and when some female employees and managers had left, for what reasons, and how to retain them.
 - They found they lost women in their 30s, when trying to manage careers and children, and when these women were ready to re-enter the workforce, it was difficult to get them back.
 - They proposed a programme to better support women in their career paths, with a coordinated and accountable approach (with numbers and figures). They identified "Hi-Potential" women and key talent getting close to the next level of seniority, flagged these women, followed their performance in monthly

discussions, actively got their feedback and included them in the discussions. In addition, they provided sponsorships from directors.

- The programme is still in its early days and results will be shared in the future.
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4. Managing gender & generations: key issues in summary

Christine Cecil, Strategy & Business Development at JUMP

Different generations have different needs and expectations at work. Even though we need to avoid generalisations, some studies have identified diverse preferences of each generation, which Saskia described well.

When you add the “gender” factor to the “generations” factor, several issues emerge for each generation:

- **Boomer women:** They worked in an age where it was not given that they should have jobs, it was their choice to work or not. They fought for their rights. They had to adapt to very traditional workplaces and make their way up “like a man”. Their concerns today might be more about age discrimination than gender.
- **Generation X women:** Strongly motivated by work life balance, autonomy and time off. Expected to have it all, but struggling to have it all! Many end up taking career breaks or working part-time, resulting in issues with returning to work after long career breaks.
- **Millennials:** Female millennials expect dual careers and sharing family responsibilities with partners. But seeing the previous generations struggle with work-life balance, they are concerned about whether they’ll have to choose between career and family. At the same time, older generations often expect from the younger generations to drive the changes that they could not make.

There are some communalities among the different female generations. All generations of women may prefer (or understand) feminine ways of working and leading, they also all wish to manage career and personal life. They tend to get disappointed and discouraged by the reality of their lives when they realise the existing gender inequalities. Tensions appear as well between the different generations of women in the workplace, mainly linked to the lack of understanding of each other’s work ethics. Also, many millennials do not relate to the existing older generations of female leaders or role models.

Since the millennial generation is projected to be 50% of the global workforce by 2020, it is important to understand how to attract talented millennials and how to maintain them. One of the most important criteria for millennials is diversity in the organisation. 30% of millennials said they have already left a job for a more inclusive culture at another organisation.

However, data shows that traditional gender roles are still present in younger generations and that women and men have different perceptions about what is being done in their companies to address gender inequality. This implies that millennials still carry gender biases as the previous generation do.

Some final remarks:

- The importance of developing an inclusive corporate culture which would attract young talents
- Age and experience are not the same. For example, depending on the task of the team, some millennials might have different experience and more appropriate or innovative skills than older team members. Therefore, teams where different generations are present can benefit the projects.
- Identify future talents and sponsor them.
- Most importantly, treat persons as unique individuals and do not rely solely on stereotypes.

Note: See PPT for studies referred to.

5. Discussion & Best Practices Sharing Session

The discussion and sharing of experiences during the session covered the topics below:

① Rethinking career paths and life stages in companies

- Sharing experiences of career customisation: A participant introduced their system. Employees are asked to share their expectations for next year (e.g. if they were willing to move abroad, if they were willing to work more ...). In this way, the company can adapt the career paths to the needs and expectations of each individual, rather than relying on stereotypes.
- Another participant noted that it is a manager's role to raise questions on the issues that could affect one's long-term career path.
- Life stages should be taken into account when planning and supporting employees and managers' career.

② Identifying women HiPos

- Questions were raised on how to identify female HiPos, and whether this may lead to negative reactions by men in the company. One organisations confirmed they identify their HiPos by objective results and achievements, through a systematic performance rating, as well as a focus on potential. Negative reactions from men can be countered by engaging them in the company's diversity efforts.

③ Accommodating millennials' expectations and needs

- Many have encountered difficulties in managing millennials' expectations, such as their desire to change roles quite often, their hunger to learn. One cannot expect millennials to stick around for many years.

④ Creating generationally inclusive teams

- Multigenerational teams and advisory bodies should be developed more frequently: each generation can contribute differently, and it is enriching.
- How can you value older generations in the workplace, especially women? This is an issue of concern. It is important to ensure that older generations are not left behind, by listening to their specific needs and adopting programmes

that are also suitable for them (e.g. forcing older generations to use an app might not work).

- Programmes of reverse mentoring and transfer of knowledge across generations can ensure benefits and good teamwork across generations.
- It is important to acknowledge that changes take time and the results and impact of such programmes are not immediate, focus should not be on immediate ROI.

⑤ Education vs field of work

- Younger generations are studying in a specific field, but it does not mean that they will work on the same field. We need to change the way we recruit based on CVs and education.
- Indeed: 65% of the jobs we know now will disappear by 2040. The younger generations cannot be expected to study for jobs that might not exist any longer. What is important is the level of studies and academic excellence, not the field of study.

⑥ New trends: digitalisation and other trends to watch out for

- Transfer of knowledge from millennials and Z to older generations on digital;
- Developing the digital skills, especially for women;
- Recruitment should be more focused on skills than experience or education;
- Saskia referred to the increasing phenomenon of young generations that work for two different companies (might be even competitors) at the same time. Reflection that this might not be always bad, new ways of working are being developed.

Thank you to all participants!

Don't miss the up-coming [JUMP Forum on the 8th March](#) in Brussels, hosted by Mercedes: "**Redefine power: it's time to share the power between men and women to transform the practice of leadership**"

Don't miss the up-coming Corporate Hub on "**Agile and flexible work models: how to make them sustainable**" (date TBD).