

Gen Trends

December 2008

Catching the Wave of the Generations to Come!

Invasion of the Whippersnappers

The Wall Street Journal reports that a number of “active adult” developments are rethinking their minimum age requirements due to deteriorating house sales within their communities. As economic conditions have slowed, the number of those aged 55 and over seeking to live within a community of their peers has slowed as well. In one New Jersey development, for example, only 32 of 175 planned homes have been built and occupied. Residents there are surrounded by the open foundations of unfinished homes. Even those living in the development are falling behind on homeowners association dues.

Community leaders are now beginning to look for ways to fill up vacant houses with younger residents. As might be expected, however, disputes are breaking out between residents over this issue. One faction typically places their emphasis on the practicality of maintaining house sales. Occupied houses, they argue take priority over maintaining the integrity of age limits. “Phooey!” have exclaimed some fellow residents. “Keep those 40-something whipper-snappers out of here.” They complain that community leaders would be breaching the covenants under which they moved in.

In some cases, this situation has been having an impact on surrounding municipalities. Historically, some towns have worked to attract senior living developments to ease tax burdens since the residents of these communities tend not to use as

many services and don’t require schools. Adding these services would boost property taxes substantially along with violating other laws and regulations at the Federal level.

A final consideration is that aging Baby Boomers don’t identify themselves as aging. In one recent AARP survey, more than nine out of ten people say that they plan to “age in place.” But with many Boomers finding themselves with a retirement shortfall, any thoughts of spending days poolside with a cocktail are fast evaporating anyway. Can I show you a lovely two bedroom casita right on the golf course? It’s on special.

Save 20% on Two of Our Most Popular Resources and Get a Third One as Our Gift!



As a way of saying “thanks” to all of our readers during this holiday season, The Center for Generational Studies is offering 20% off on a package of our two most popular resources. This special consists of the Center’s acclaimed video program, *Leadership and the Emerging Generations* and a copy of *I Remember When*, the entertaining electronic training game that pits cross-generational teams against one another to promote laughter and learning on the job. And if you purchase this special package, we’ll throw in an autographed copy of Robert Wendover’s highly praised book, *Two Minute Motivation: How to Inspire Superior Performance* as our gift. [Click here](#) to get an immediate \$75 savings on these three resources which you can use to build productivity between the ages in your workplace. If you’d like to learn more about these resources before you buy, [click here](#).

“GenTistics”

In the past year, 30% of U.S. high school students have stolen from a store, 64% have cheated on a test, and 80% lied to their parents about something significant.

-The Josephson Institute 2008

Check out [Bob's blog](#).



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To Ponder...

The careful reader of *X Saves the World* might be prone to point out that the book contains its fair share of generalizations. (Pretty big ones, in some cases. Maybe even whopping.) The author is aware of this, and while he assures the reader that plenty of tireless leg-work and traditional research have gone in the production of the work at hand, he concedes, too, that he has, yes, here and there, taken what we call attitudinal liberties. Are all Boomers venal sellouts? Are all Millennials spotlight-craving airheads? (For that matter, are all GenXers nobly ironic individualists?) Well, of course not, even though the reader will notice that these generalizations do ring true on many surprising levels.

And that said, the author does not happen to agree with the gentleman from the *Washington Post*—a Boomer, of course—who, in the spring of 2006, suggested that such generational generalizations are “baloney.” The author prefers to think that the generalizations in *X Saves the World* are more along the lines of mortadella, which is that really expensive and delicious baloney they make in Italy.

To Read...

X Saves the World: How Generation X Got the Shaft but Can Still Keep Everything from Sucking. Jeff Gordinier, 2008. Viking Press, New York. ISBN: 978-0-670-01858.

Gordinier has written a satirical little gem of a commentary on why his generation seems to be lost in the shuffle between Boomer neuroses and Millennial entitlement. The book is both delightfully irreverent and spot on in its observations.

Case Study Corner

I work for an armored car service managing about 30 employees, of all ages. We tend to match a long-timer with a newcomer in each vehicle. While we hope the younger ones learn from the older ones, it is also creating some awkward situations. The older employees start telling their stories which irritates the younger people. The young people spend most of their time in the vehicle monitoring their cell phones and texting others. In a few cases, we've had young people answering a call from a girlfriend or boyfriend while carrying a large sum of cash into or out of a bank. While we have rules against such things, the older employees are reluctant to tattle on their partners. Besides, recruiting reliable young employees is a challenge in itself. Your thoughts?

You've identified a few different issues:

1) Old-timers telling too many stories; 2) Young people buried in their technology; 3) The flouting of safety rules by answering cell-phone calls; 4) Recruiting young people into the jobs you offer. I'll deal with them in that order.

First, the story situation. The older we get, the more we use stories to illustrate our points. While these long-timers may think of this as training, the young people may view it as a nuisance. A short conversation with each long-timer about the place of stories in training will help the situation. A word about this to young people is also a way to encourage them to be more patient about their partner's stories.

Second and third, young people and their technology. Forbidding the use of such personal devices on the job is an impossible task. Unfortunately, some young people have not grasped the sense of courtesy expected by others. A better overall strategy is to reinforce the responsibility every guard has for the safety of the vehicle and each other. Provide illustrations, simulations and case studies that demonstrate what they need to remember.

continued in next column

Case Study Corner, continued

You might also re-think your approach as to how you select guards in the first place. Some of these unwanted behaviors are readily apparent if you look for them.

Fourth, recruiting young people. To begin with, who says you need them? While the natural tendency is to look for strong young people for this type of position, there is a wide variety of people who might be interested. Consider other labor sources you can target. Remember, you are competing with many other employers for young people and these young people know it. For a more in-depth examination, consult our book [Smart Hiring.](#)

This Month in History

DECEMBER 10TH 1948

The United Nations adopted the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, the first global recognition after World War II that all humans have rights and freedoms. Following this, the General Assembly of the UN required that all member countries publicize the text.

DECEMBER 24TH 1968

Commander Frank Borman, Command Module Pilot Jim Lovell and Lunar Module Pilot William Anders became the first humans to orbit the Moon. In their live TV broadcast, The Apollo 8 crew showed pictures of the Earth and Moon as seen from the vessel. They ended their message with the crew reading from the book of Genesis.

DECEMBER 21ST 1988

Pan Am Flight 103, was bombed over Lockerbie, Scotland. 243 passengers and 16 crew members on board were killed along with 11 pedestrians. 189 people were Americans. It took more than 11 years to bring suspects to trial.