

# 9 Myths and Truths About Gen Yers

## ***Characteristics of Gen Y Employees***

Read each statement below and determine whether you agree or disagree that the statement describes Gen Y employees. In addition, if the statement describes **any** of your employees, check “agree”.

- |   |              |                 |
|---|--------------|-----------------|
| 1. They want the top job on Day One.              | Agree: _____ | Disagree: _____ |
| 2. They want work to be fun.                      | Agree: _____ | Disagree: _____ |
| 3. They're arrogant.                              | Agree: _____ | Disagree: _____ |
| 4. They won't do the grunt work.                  | Agree: _____ | Disagree: _____ |
| 5. They want to be left alone.                    | Agree: _____ | Disagree: _____ |
| 6. They are disloyal.                             | Agree: _____ | Disagree: _____ |
| 7. They think only short-term.                    | Agree: _____ | Disagree: _____ |
| 8. They want to learn <i>only</i> from computers. | Agree: _____ | Disagree: _____ |
| 9. They don't respect their elders.               | Agree: _____ | Disagree: _____ |

## **Myth #1 - Gen Yers Want the Top Job on Day One**

### ***What's the truth?***

They don't want the top job on Day One, but they do want to:

- Make an impact on Day One.
- Prove themselves on Day One.

**In what ways have your Gen Y employees tried to make an impact in your organization?**

*Answers will vary. For example: first week on the job, an employee wanted to revamp the sales floor to improve the power aisle potential.*

## Myth #2 - They Want the Work to Be Fun

### *What's the truth?*

Work doesn't need to be fun, but Gen Yers want work that helps them:

- Make an impact.
- Get taken seriously.

**What kind of work can you give your Gen Y employees to help them feel they are being taken seriously?**

## Myth #3 - They're Arrogant

### *What's the truth?*

Most Gen Yers aren't arrogant, but their enthusiasm and self-confidence can be misconstrued as arrogance.

They believe in themselves. They're ready to prove themselves, and they'll push for the chance to do so. Their confidence, energy and enthusiasm can be easily misconstrued as arrogance.

## Myth #4 - They Won't Do the Grunt Work

### *What's the truth?*

They will do the grunt work under certain conditions.

They will do the grunt work, but not for vague promises. They will do the grunt work, but they want credit for it and the acknowledgment that they are working toward a more interesting task.

**What kind of long-term or vague promises does your company offer?**

*401(k) vesting after five years? Promotions from within?, etc.*

**Consider your Gen Y employees. What do they really want?**

*Flexible hours? Longer breaks?, etc.*

**What tangible rewards can you provide?**

## **Myth #5 - They Want to Be Left Alone**

### ***What is the truth?***

When they are out of sight for too long, they feel out of mind. They feel forgotten.

This generation of workers wants to know they are being noticed. They need to know they are on the top of your mind. They want you to keep score.

**What can you do to ensure you show your Gen Yers that you notice them and their work?**

*Check in with them at regular times? Acknowledge their work at the end of the day? Acknowledge them in staff meetings? etc.*

## **Myth #6 - They're Disloyal**

### ***What is the truth?***

They're not disloyal, but they are loyal in a free market.

**They are quick to say they are loyal. But what does loyalty mean to them?**

*Loyalty that can be negotiated. This for that. Loyalty in exchange for the best deal.*

**What kind of transactions have your Gen Y employees tried to negotiate?**

**What tangible rewards can you provide? What small transactions or rewards are you willing to negotiate?**

*A later start time the day after a sales goal is met? A longer lunch if they start earlier?*

## Myth #7 - They Think Only Short-term

### ***What is the truth?***

They think short-term, but not all the time. They can become long-term employees if:

- They are taken seriously.
- They can make an impact.
- They are learning.

**Your Gen Y employees have the potential to be superstars, high performers. They can't wait to prove themselves. *What kind of manager do they need?***

*Managers need to be hands-on and highly engaged.*

## Myth #8 - They Want to Learn Only from Computers

### ***What is the truth?***

They want to learn from computers only what is easy to learn from computers.

### **Why is this a common misconception?**

*They're computer savvy. They have grown up on and dependent on technology.*

### **What can you teach them that they can't learn from computers?**

- Context
- Experience
- Wisdom

## **Myth #9 - They Don't Respect Their Elders**

### ***What is the truth?***

They are the over parented generation. In fact, most Gen Yers love grown-ups.

### ***Where does this myth come from? Why is it easy to assume these young employees don't respect their elders?***

- They have been raised exchanging information and opinions with grown-ups.
- They've had a casual rapport with grown-ups, including their parents, and engage in that same kind of rapport with older people at work. That is sometimes misconstrued as disrespect.

***Gen Yers are very VALUABLE.  
They believe they can do ANYTHING.  
Put that fact to WORK for you!***

### **About Bruce Tulgan**

Bruce Tulgan is highly sought after as a keynote speaker and leading expert on management, including managing the younger generations entering today's business sector. He is founder of RainmakerThinking, Inc., and he has written or co-authored 16 books, including *Managing Generation X*, *Winning the Talent Wars* and *Not Everyone Gets a Trophy*.

This excerpt is used with permission. © 2010 Media Partners Corporation. It is part of the video program, ***Not Everyone Gets a Trophy***, which can be found, along with 1000s of others, at **[OnlineBusinessLearning.com](http://OnlineBusinessLearning.com)**