

The (Untouched) Power of Generations X & Y

by Kate Berardo

The U.S. must tap into the energy of these generations before it diffuses into mainstream melancholy.

Clichés aside, generations X and Y are our future. They have the power to create change and need the tools and the passion to make these changes. They are already facing our country's biggest problems and will continue to do so. They have the challenges of undoing a rather unpleasant American reputation and changing the way we think and do business.

Look at what the latest generation has brought to the business playing field alone: dotcoms, web surfing as a pastime, revolutionized workplaces where toys and pool tables are sources of inspiration, family games like Cranium®, peer to peer networks for music and digital media exchange, and so on.

Add ten years, global knowledge, technological advancements, and a commitment to better the world, and then imagine the potential.

Recent college graduates leave with fresh ideas in their minds, cutting-edge theories in their heads, and an energy that has the power to explode or diffuse. Labeled one too many times as idealistic for daring to care, many give in to the apathy of mainstream America.

If we expect these generations to take hold of an increasing global world, they will need more than corporate America and its losing grip on maintaining America's strength as a nation.

What we need are global citizens: people from diverse backgrounds who can work with people from *other* diverse backgrounds. We need people who can speak many languages—people who can communicate virtually, interculturally, and effectively. We need people who understand the cultural nuances that can only be gained through firsthand experience with other cultures.

Consider this

- The next generation of workers will have dynamic roles in an increasingly international world.
- Individuals who don't have the ability to work with a diverse group of people and in a number of environments will limit their ability to succeed.
- We are only starting to see how a number of factors (including immigration, globalization, communications, terrorism, and technology) will change the way we live and work.
- These changes will be major and ongoing. People who think and plan for these realities put themselves ahead of the learning curve and well-positioned in the increasingly global job market.

Guiding Next Generations

Given this reality, what young generations in the US need is experience that will prepare them for the international world we already live in. These opportunities include:

- Study and Work Abroad
- Volunteer Programs
- Socially responsible jobs
- Clear career options beyond corporate careers
- Resources to find unconventional career paths
- The tools to turn opportunities into personal growth
- Knowledge of how to market a global skillset
- Mentors that understand the future direction of America

These opportunities result in essential skills, including:

- Intercultural Awareness
- Cultural competence
- Communication skills
- An open mindset
- The ability to think
- Global perspectives
- Concern for world affairs
- A sense of responsibility for the welfare of the world

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