

Managing the Net Generation

One of the greatest challenges of the skilled leader is to seamlessly blend work teams of mixed generations by enhancing the strengths of each generation. The new wave of professionals entering the workforce has had lifelong exposure to the Internet which has worked to shape unique expectations, needs, and definitions for success. This group of new professionals was labeled the “Net Generation” by Don Tapscott in his 1997 book, *Growing Up Digital: The Rise of the Net Generation*.

A new government study outlines the work characteristics and expectations of the Net Generation:

GENERAL NET-GEN CHARACTERISTICS *

The Net Generation can be generally characterized as the most demanding generation in history, demanding challenge, meaningful work with impact, committed coworkers, and the ability to reach personal and financial goals. While recognizing that Net-Geners prefer to be viewed as individuals as opposed to “a group,” managers can benefit by understanding where this generation is coming from and where they want to go.

Many Net-Geners are products of hectic, dual-career families and grew up during a time of significant economic prosperity when Boomer parents were able to bankroll their technology-driven lifestyle. Additionally, this was a generation exposed to a concerted, nationwide movement by parents, teachers and counselors in the 1980s to build their self-esteem. During this time, they were encouraged to be recognized for achievement, and to be paid

to minimize their time, particularly with parental work priorities themselves. They believe they can

achieve their goals. In a January 2007 report from the Pew Research Center, getting rich is their generation’s most, or second

communications. Older managers will need exposure to the greater efficiencies from text messaging and wiki orsa