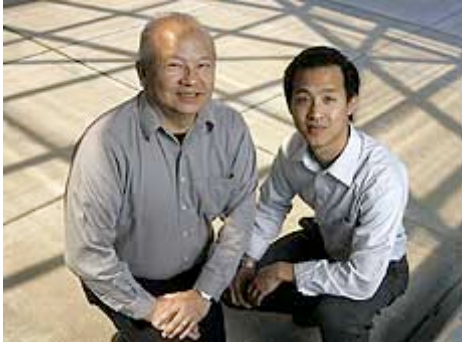


This is a printer-friendly version. The navigation and other unnecessary elements have been removed.



BOEING ENGINEERS: Henry C. Loo, left, has been an engineer scientist at Boeing for the past 35 years. Jason Wu, right, a structural analyst has just finished his first year as an engineer at Boeing in Huntington Beach.

MARK RIGHTMIRE, THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

[MORE PHOTOS](#)

Gen Y

More than 70 million people are part of Generation Y. Born from 1977 to 1994, the peak of this group is 22 years old and entering the workforce. Here are some important facts to know about them:

Numbers: They make up more than 20 percent of the U.S. population, the largest generation since the baby boomers.

Upbringing: Raised by "active parents," who gave children lots of attention. Today, they need lots of feedback.

Make-up: The most ethnically diverse generation to date.

Work style: Independent, because of their background: time spent in day care; one of four comes from a single-parent household; three of four have working mothers.

Outlook: Optimistic about the future; a sense of empowerment.

Source: NAS Recruitment Communications, 2006

What employers want

The top 10 personal qualities/skills employers seek, according to the Job Outlook 2007

survey by the National Association of Colleges and Employers:

1. Communication skills (verbal and written)
2. Honesty/integrity
3. Interpersonal skills (relates well to others)
4. Motivation/Initiative
5. Strong work ethic
6. Teamwork skills (works well with others)
7. Computer skills
8. Analytical skills
9. Flexibility/adaptability
10. Detail-oriented

What grads want

Students responding to the 2006 Graduating Student & Alumni Survey by the National Association of Colleges and Employers listed their criteria for choosing an employer as follows:

1. Enjoying what I do
2. Integrity of organization in dealing with employees (treats them with honesty and fairness)
3. Ethical business practices (no cutting corners or breaking laws)
4. Good benefits package
5. Stability (provides secure future)
6. Opportunity for advancement
7. People you will work with
8. Continuing education/training opportunities
9. Location
10. High starting salary

What are the top jobs and how much do they pay?

Top Jobs for 2006-07 Grads

Job Function, Average Salary Offer

Accounting, \$47,975

Consulting, \$51,120

Management trainee (entry-level management), \$41,894

Sales, \$39,316

Accounting (public), \$46,289

Financial/treasury analysis, \$50,476

Project engineering, \$52,258

Design/construction engineering, \$48,731

Teaching, \$32,488

Software design & development, \$54,624

Source: Spring 2007 Salary Survey, National Association of Colleges and Employers. All data are for bachelor's degree candidates. Ranking is based on number of offers reported.

Sunday, May 20, 2007

Gen Y floods the workplace

Get ready for Generation Y: impatient, with a purpose.

By MICHELE HIMMELBERG
The Orange County Register

This weekend, the oldest members of the biggest population bubble since the baby boomers are graduating from college. It's the start of a generation-long transition that figures to touch everything from economics and politics to family life.

But first up for Gen Y, as the 70 million Americans born between 1977 and 1994 are known, is getting a job. And if early stereotyping is at all accurate (don't count on it), the whole job thing could prove tricky for employer and employee.

Yes, Gen Y is well educated, technically savvy and perpetually curious. And, yes, employers need to hire (particularly for software design and physical therapy) a lot of Gen Y workers.

But, no, these new hires don't plan to be loyal to anybody but themselves. And they might be rude. And – hey, boomers, does this remind you of anybody? – Gen Y workers might not totally respect their elders.

Got a problem with that? Read more on page XX.

The graduates of 2007 march into the workplace over the next few months. Can you hear them coming?

They're chatting on cell phones, pounding out text messages and tapping keyboards.

They're impatient, leaping to replace the first wave of baby boomers, now hitting their 60s.

They're demanding. They slurp up feedback and they're nearly insatiable.

They're narcissistic. And, the moment they get bored, they're out the door for something fresh.

True or not, that description is the stereotype of Generation Y, the 70 million people born between 1977 and 1994. The apex of that group comprises much of this year's college graduating class.

How they behave on the job will produce mightier waves than the prior generation, X, because of sheer size. Gen Y makes up 20 percent of the U.S. population, and it supplies a labor pool that soon will grow old and thin as 78 million boomers begin to retire.

Already, this year's graduating class is in high demand. Employers plan to hire 19.2 percent more new graduates this year than in 2005-06, reports the National Association of Colleges and Employers. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics shows the hottest careers for graduates include computer software engineer, dental hygienist, physical therapist and database administrator.

Today's graduates bring superior technical skills and an attitude that demands attention, experts say. They don't expect the "company" to take care of them, but they do crave opportunity and knowledge. They know what they want. Now.

They've been driving some college professors mad, and now they're streaming into the workplace.

"Grades in my classes have been dropping, attitudes of entitlement skyrocketing and common decency disappearing," said Robert Davis, a film professor at Cal State Fullerton for 20 years. The past three years have been the scariest, with a "precipitous decline" in already poor performance and behavior.

"These days students think nothing – nothing – of walking in and out of classrooms during

lectures, answering their cells, text-messaging, eating full meals, chatting (during class)," Davis said.

And then there are graduates like Kelsea Ballantyne, who leaves Chapman University with degrees in sociology and business, headed to Calcutta, India, with a Fulbright grant. She plans to research the effects of globalization on Indian women.

She reflects Generation Y's sense of purpose: "I really focused on leadership, and I see a demand among my peers for vision and purpose. The curriculum we had growing up had that goal mentality."

Research by NAS Recruitment Communications reveals more Gen Y traits. They feel crunched for time. They want good relationships with co-workers and the boss, flexible schedules and opportunities to show off their skills.

Kate Mossbarger, a recent graduate from UC San Diego, is with her second employer, Porter Novelli, a public-relations firm in Irvine. She's organizing a meeting for business professionals to examine Generation Y's effect on the marketplace.

"We're not looking for loyalty or the best salary. We want the best opportunity," Mossbarger said. "We want a job that challenges us."

In some ways, today's graduates think like any other generation in its 20s: Life is full of promise and they're invincible. Money is the No. 1 motivator. But in many ways they're different. They crave feedback constantly and they want to be fully engaged in their work. If that doesn't happen, they move on quickly, redefining career progression.

"Their loyalty is to themselves, not to any company," said Stephen Thomas, vice president of Nation Hire, an Irvine staffing company. "That's not a bad thing, but it's important to understand if you're building a company."

Thomas, who places workers in permanent positions, coaches employers to think from the Generation Y perspective. He tells this story.

"I went to work at Procter & Gamble right out of school in the early '80s," he said. "About a year into it, I got an offer from a software company. I talked to my grandfather. He said, 'Procter & Gamble's spent a lot of money training you, didn't they?' ... Yes ... 'And did they do everything they said they'd do?' ... Yes... 'Then I think you should pay them back.'

"The next day I turned down the offer. That's a perspective I didn't have. And today's 20-somethings don't have it either. They think, 'I'm here 10 hours (a day), plodding along, making \$50,000 a year. I'm worth more than that. They don't see it as building a strong foundation for a career.'"

That could describe young people of many eras, Thomas admits. What makes Gen Yers unique is the information they have at their fingertips, more than any generation before them. In minutes, if not seconds, they can tap into the Internet for an answer to just about anything.

"That's what makes them think, 'If this doesn't work out, I'll go somewhere else,'" Thomas said. "Rather than go through the character-building adversity with one company, they just switch."

That's a scary thought, Thomas said. If he had jumped after that first year, he realizes how much he would have lost. To this day, he relies on the fundamental sales techniques that were ingrained in him at Procter & Gamble. That kind of high-level training – nonexistent at smaller companies – was worth plodding for a few years. He's not sure today's graduates will be that patient.

For Todd Ensley, a recent USC graduate, it's worth jumping if he's not learning.

In two years at Boeing, Ensley has worked on one "boring" project, one "semi-boring" job that became worthwhile because the group intrigued him, and his current "interesting" assignment as an engineer with the secure border initiative.

"You can only spend so long doing something you don't like," he said. "It's not worth it to stay."

Jason Wu, an engineer, joined Boeing a year ago. Typical of his generation, he wants "significance" from his career.

"In the past, I think people were driven to meet income needs," he said. "I want to know I made a difference."

Generation Y has that luxury, perhaps, because our culture has changed, with people marrying later and living with their parents into their 30s. Stephen Petrilla, a senior engineer and a 45-year veteran at Boeing, said his generation buckled down after high school.

"You were expected to be on your own," he said. "You had to get a job or go in the military."

As much as Gen Y is different, some things remain constant.

Henry Loo has worked as an engineer at Boeing for nearly 35 years. When he graduated from USC in 1972, his parents gave him a trip to Hong Kong, to visit his grandmother and see another world. When Wu graduated from UCLA in 2004, his parents gave him a trip to Taiwan, an opportunity to explore new horizons.

Ensley graduated in 2005 and his father bought him a four-year-old Jeep Wrangler, a practical gift for getting to work. Petrilla graduated from the University of Detroit in 1962 and his father helped him buy a car, a new Ford convertible, ideal for driving to California for his first – and only – job.

Petrilla, a boomer nearing retirement, has one last child in college. A skateboarder.

"They're a little different," Petrilla said, "but he'll be OK."

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