AIM Insights

Beyond Belief:
The Management Reality of Generational Thinking

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Discussion Paper

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FOREWORD

The Australian Institute of Management (AIM) has put the spotlight on the generation debate and found that many of the claims about Generation Y are simply beyond belief. A veritable industry has been built around the supposed generation clash, enthusiastically offering solutions to the very discontent and disconnection that it creates.

In preparing this Discussion Paper, AIM is saying 'Enough's enough'. The Institute believes that Australian managers are more sophisticated than this. If they acknowledge the nonsense of running a business by the daily star signs then managing a workforce according to generation stereotype is no less problematic.

AIM's vision is "Better Managers and Better Leaders for a Better Society". Insights from this research deliver on this vision by providing clarity and encouragement to adopt a more sophisticated approach to accelerating the development of superb young managers.

Beyond Belief: The Management Reality of Generational Thinking:

- Punctures nine behavioural stereotypes that perpetuate poor management practices

- Identifies nine leadership perspectives to incorporate in management development programs, and

- Highlights five leadership practices young managers find most challenging.

Providing comments

AIM welcomes comments on this Discussion Paper.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Beyond Belief:
The Management Reality of Generational Thinking

Key
message

The Australian Institute of Management is concerned that poor management practices arising from the Generation Y stereotype is impacting the development of young managers. Within this context, research by the Institute sought to identify the perspectives and practices that will:

- assist young managers to more effectively manage people of the same age or older; and
- accelerate their development as effective leaders.

Research findings reveal that much of what has appeared in public discourse lacks substance. Those promulgating the 'generational divide' are contributing to the lapse in more sophisticated approaches to management. Rather than focusing on the generation cohort, the development of young managers should instead leverage the qualities and capacities of the individual.

What this
report provides

Most approaches to the Generation Debate frame their case around how to manage Generation Y; as if something were wrong with them. Here is the heart of the problem.

This research explores a number of practices and perspectives that will assist young managers (and people of all ages) to achieve their true potential. Open minds and intelligent communication are foundational to this.

The first section of the report examines the common stereotypes and reveals a number of insights:

Respect
Everyone wants respect. Problems arise when individuals fail to interpret situations in a way that others perceive as being appropriate.

Values
Values guide motivations that drive behaviour. Good communication, rather than basing decisions on behavioural reactions, will facilitate greater cohesion in the workplace.

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Motivation

Every person is motivated by work/causes/interests that appeal to them. The challenge is to understand how to tap into the motivations around matters that are shared in the work people do.

Commitment

Commitment has many measures. The legitimacy of hours or attendance at work is being challenged by output and outcomes. The psychological contract between employer and employee should reflect a mutually negotiated agreement based on a candid two-way conversation.

Experience

Stage in career and life expands an individual's experience but the adhocracy of this is often very inefficient. Senior management has a vital role to play in mentoring and structuring developmental roles to accelerate a young manager's acquisition and application of experience.

Entitlement

Most people are enthusiastic to do their best. In pushing forward, interpreting this behaviour as entitlement may cloud the underlying motivation; simply wanting to excel in the shortest possible time.

Communication

Senior managers set the standard of communication behaviour that serves as a benchmark for managers with less contextual experience. Candid communication requires respect, skill and courage such that technology should give way to more effective face-to-face interaction.

Work/life balance

Work/life balance is a matter that can't be abrogated by the individual and should be the result of candid and negotiated agreement of the standards that are deemed appropriate.

Retention

Most people achieve personal wellbeing through having a positive impact in the work they do. Maintaining meaning is a function of ongoing skill development to enable people to deliver on their commitment to the purpose and vision of the organisation. When this deteriorates so does the reason to stay.

In approaching the second research question, accelerating young managers' development as effective leaders is both situational and dynamic. Every organisation will have different strategic imperatives for sustaining competitive advantage, reflected in the emphasis to be placed on leadership development. One constant is that, in transitioning to leadership positions, young managers are required to make a progressive change in professional identity, moving from personal performance to seeing success as an outcome of team performance.

The agility and resilience of young managers relies on developing a repertoire of management responses appropriate to emerging situations. Purposeful exposure to developmental experiences, backed by mentoring from senior managers is welcomed by participants to this research.

In shaping the expectations and outcomes of developmental programs, young managers highlighted five leadership practices they found most challenging:

Career management

Using professional relationships and networks to manage own career.

Self-awareness

Recognising strengths and weaknesses; seeking corrective feedback.

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Change management

Using effective strategies to facilitate change; overcoming resistance to change.

Participative management

Using listening skills and communication to involve others; building consensus.

Leading employees

Broadening direct reports; being patient and fair; setting clear performance expectations.

Development of programs that will accelerate a young manager's effectiveness will exhibit a dynamic tension between evaluating the contextual opportunities that provide depth of experience and the natural impatience of young managers to accelerate their careers. This research confirms the value of customising development to the individual's capacities and capabilities. Leveraging the deep knowledge and wisdom that experienced managers possess through mentoring young managers is a process on which they place high value.

AIM encourages professional managers to ignore generational stereotypes. Focusing instead on an individual approach will accelerate the true potential of young managers as they develop the perspectives and practices that matter.

ACRONYMS &
ABBREVIATIONS

AIM	Australian Institute of Management (AIM Group)
Baby Boomers	Baby Boomer Generation: Birth cohort 1946-1964
Gen X	Generation X: Birth cohort 1965-1980
Gen Y	Generation Y/ Millennial: Birth cohort 1981-1999
P	Participant in the AIM research

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RESEARCH FOCUS

The Australian Institute of Management's focus is to develop "Better Managers and Better Leaders for a Better Society". The Institute is concerned that poor management practices arising from the generation gap stereotype are impacting the development of young managers.

Within this context, AIM wanted to know:

- What perspectives and practices will assist young managers to more effectively manage people who are the same age or older than them, and

- What perspectives and practices will accelerate young managers' development as effective leaders?

Research process

The insights contained in this Discussion Paper are based on a combination of:

- Depth interviews with 12 Generation Y managers aged between 24 and 33 years from AIM's Young Manager Advisory Board and AIM30

- Research literature published primarily in peer-reviewed tier one journals reporting results from over 315,000 respondents

- Doctoral dissertations

- Generational themes in popular media

Research considerations

Research is a term loosely used and rarely cited by those seeking to promote a particular point of view. Such is the case with much of the popular discussion about the 'generational divide'. In reviewing extant research the Institute highlights a number of considerations that are pertinent to evaluating the generalisability of results for Australian businesses:

- Significantly the samples 'tested' by popular writers have argued that there are large and dramatic differences among youth cohorts in different generations. These samples are often selective or non-representative, use retrospective comparisons and/or use single-point-of-time data. (Jorgensen, 2003, p.47).

- Cross-cultural dynamics are at play both within industry (Real et al., 2010) and across countries (Ng et al., 2010).

- Data samples in the research literature are predominantly of US employees.

- Due to lack of empirical research it is difficult to disentangle the effects of age from generation from life stage from all other possible environmental factors that affect people's behaviour experience and cultural context (Deal et al., 2007, p.197).

- Analysis based on age cohorts will inevitably miss variance within the cohort.

- Level in the organisation of a generation being studied will skew attribution of longer working hours. Older people typically hold high positions in organisations and typically work longer hours (Deal et al., 2010).

- Pulse surveys with one item measures are both blunt and unsophisticated leading to misleading interpretation by practitioners.

- When thinking about generational differences, individual behaviour is a result of an interaction between an individual's predispositions and what behaviour the environment encourages and discourages (Deal et al., 2010).

- There may not be measurement equivalence of items across generations as survey items may not mean the same thing to all respondents which can result in faulty conclusions (Meriac et al., 2010).

PARTICIPANT INTERVIEWS

Methodology

The value of depth interviews is that the conversations reveal deeper issues that may be explored more fully through testing as hypotheses in larger quantitative research. In using depth interviews for this research the following protocols were adopted (Benjamin & O'Reilly, 2011, p.454):

- Send discussion topics to review prior to conversation

- Single interviewer embeds consistency

- Open-ended questions to describe career path since graduating

- Recount most challenging leadership issues – focus on the specific situation, management dilemmas, and personal issues found most challenging, surprising or difficult

- Ask what they have taken from their experience (perceptions and reflections)

Participants

Participants to the research were drawn from Generation Y members of AIM30 and the AIM Young Manager Advisory Board. Comprising five women and seven men, participants hold a range of responsible management roles, the majority of which are in the private sector.

INTRODUCTION

The efficacy of a young manager is buffeted by many variables, but none more debilitating than the negative effects of generational stereotypes. A veritable industry has built around the generation gap, seeking to offer solutions to the discontent and disconnection that it creates. As these generational narratives were explored, AIM became increasingly concerned that the ready acceptance of comments curated as 'truths' is not supported by research evidence.

The attraction of generation stereotypes is to reduce the complexity of human interactions to more simple terms. The lack of substantive thinking however is causing a range of problems in business. Much like making business decisions based on star signs in the daily newspaper, the profile of 'generational behaviours' is contributing to biased and unhelpful responses to issues that have no place at work or in society more broadly. Little wonder that many people across all age groups are starting to challenge the disrespectful treatment and unintelligent management practices that have emerged.

Research has highlighted that the generations are in fact more similar than they are different. While the following quote is lengthy it is provided in full to underscore the issue:

" *Given the small, sometimes-negligible per cent of variance accounted for by generations in the work attitudes studied, HR professionals, leaders, and managers would be better served by identifying individual differences, including age, which might explain the discordance they* *are witnessing in their workforce … The conflict that leaders, managers and HR feel within their organisations is real, but attributing the conflict to generational differences may mask the true cause."*
(Kowske et al., 2010, p.276-277).

It is human nature for individuals to search for explanation relating to other people's behaviour (Heider, 1958). Specifically, people tend to attribute others' behaviour to internal causes (i.e., there is something wrong with them) while attributing one's own behaviour to external causes (i.e., blaming poor performance on an external event). Further, there is a pervasive tendency to see unique qualities within one's own group while viewing others through stereotypical lenses (Masi Jr, 2010, p.28).

Negative perceptions of people of a different age group have been traced back to the time of Socrates (Trzesniewski & Donnellan, 2010). This doesn't make stereotype threat acceptable. The psychological threat of confirming or being reduced to a negative stereotype held about one's group (Steele et al., 2002) is at the very least unhelpful in eliciting productivity from a diverse workforce. In a work environment, stereotype threat results in poorer performance when people attempt difficult tasks in areas in which they are negatively stereotyped (Nguyen & Ryan, 2008). Overt discrimination is not necessary for employees to feel stereotype threat. Simply being aware that they might be evaluated on the basis of a generational profile gives rise to stereotype threat (Von Hippel et al., 2011). This frequently leads

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people to disengage, feel dejected and lower their career aspirations (Davies et al., 2005).

Beyond Belief: The Management Reality of Generational Thinking has been written to stimulate more informed discussion in the workplace so that young managers (and people of all ages) can achieve their true potential through more sophisticated and appropriate management practices.

RQ1:
What perspectives and practices will assist young managers to more effectively manage people who are the same age or older than them?

● ●

Popular generational literature with its caricatures, exaggerated to engage popular interest, is lacking in scientific rigour (Sackett, 2002). Caricatures also introduce negative stereotypes that are unhelpful in the workplace.

Stereotypes are largely based on the notion that key differences exist in the work values and beliefs of employees from different generations. This premise has contributed to misunderstanding and miscommunication resulting in conflict in the workplace, lower employee productivity, lower employee wellbeing and reduced organisational citizenship behaviours (Wong et al., 2007).

In addressing the research questions, perspectives were examined from a number of sources including popular media, research papers, and depth interviews with Generation Y managers. In examining the substance of the claims and counter-claims, a number of themes emerged from research to assist young managers to more effectively manage people who are the same age or older.

Indeed, there is a body of research that indicates the beliefs about younger generations entering the workforce have remained remarkably stable over the past 40 years (Deal et al., 2010). Furthermore most of the research of employed adults that examines attitudes at work among generations of the same age finds a few small statistical differences, but the differences are modest at best (Gentry et al., 2011; Kowske et al., 2010; Smola & Sutton, 2002).

Popular
perspectives

Based on birth-cohort it has become popular to attribute certain values and behaviours to different generations (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002).

Baby Boomers are perceived to:

- value job security and a stable working environment

- remain loyal and attached to the organisation

- be idealistic, optimistic and driven

- be more diligent on-the-job

- value having a high degree of power in the organisation

- focus on consensus-building

- be excellent mentors

Generation X are characterised as:

- cynical, pessimistic and individualistic

- comfortable with change and diversity

- unlikely to display loyalty to the organisation

- more independent and self-sufficient than Baby Boomers

- likely to leave one job and seek out more challenging options, higher salary, or improved benefits

- sceptical and unimpressed with authority

- keen to receive continuous and immediate feedback

- concerned with achieving work-life balance such that personal values and goals are as important as work-related goals

Generation Ys (or Millennials) are perceived by others as:

- having technology become a large part of their life

- being comfortable with change

- less reliant on job security

- valuing skill development

- enjoying the challenge of new opportunities

- being driven and demanding in the work environment

- more likely to be optimistic

- displaying a high level of confidence

- enjoying collective action

- highly socialised

- valuing responsibility and having input into decisions and actions

- living highly structured and scheduled lives with many extracurricular activities (Raines,

2002; Weston, 2006)

- being quite family-oriented and open-minded. They tend to overlook differences among people and treat everyone the same, deeply committed to authenticity and truth telling, extremely stressed, and believe to live in a "no-boundaries" world where they make short-term decisions and expect the outcome to be rather grandiose (Leo, 2003; Raines, 2002)

- preferring a fun working environment, non-monetary perks as well as flexible hours (Cole et al., 2002)

Reflecting on your birth cohort, and the ascribed behaviours, can you see yourself evidencing any of these statements? Could the same be true if you read the attributes of another generation? Do you think others are responding to you through the prism of generation stereotype?

Next, what incentive do the more extreme proponents hope to achieve in advocating there is a generation gap? Cutting to the chase, this type of thinking induces a sense of comfort that managerial problems are the result of others' behaviour and attitudes rather than perhaps the more challenging question that ineffective practices may lie within. Hyperbole that suggests a 'clash of generations' serves to heighten the emotional intensity of the debate but reduces clarity of thinking.

Rolf Dobelli (2013, p.14), has highlighted how social proof (herd instinct) dictates that individuals feel they are behaving correctly when they act the same as other people. The attraction of generational stereotypes performs a similar function in seeking to reduce the complexity of behaviours and attitudes to simpler narratives (as a form of social proof).

In exploring the perspectives and practices that will assist young managers to more effectively manage people who are the same age or older,

this Discussion Paper will examine the stereotypes attributed to Generation Y managers so that a more informed view may emerge when engaging individually with high-potential people in your workplace.

Research
perspectives

A most compelling observation from Cogin (2012) highlights the gulf between rhetoric and truth.

"Much of the work on generations has been based on observation rather than large-scale empirical findings, and very little academic research has been done on the characteristics and expectations of generations and their implications for the workplace. A lack of attention to multigenerational research has resulted in decisions being made by HRM practitioners based on claims in the popular press whose underlying assumptions have been largely permitted without scrutiny."
(Cogin, 2012, p.2269).

If the foundational premise of research is framed around the generation paradigm, the analysis and subsequent reporting of results embeds the stereotype. Research by Van Velsor and Wright for the Centre for Creative Leadership (2012) captured the perceptions of managers about what excites and concerns leaders most about the next generation. In providing these comments, were leaders of today simply reporting the popular stereotypes back to the researchers?

What excites leaders most about Generation Y?

- Their comfort/skill with technology and social networks for information/connectivity

- They are creative, open, and bring fresh ideas

- Their multi-cultural/global awareness and tolerance of difference

- They are adaptable, learning-oriented, and used to the pace of change

- Their confidence and willingness to take a stand; challenge the status quo

- Their energy, enthusiasm, dedication and work ethic

- They are collaborative, team-oriented and work across boundaries

- Their service-oriented leadership and desire to make a difference

Reading this list, there are a number of impressive aspects which behoves well the future of leadership. For those reading this Discussion Paper, consider these attributes as they may have applied to you as you embarked on your professional management career. How many of these attributes did you possess at the time and evidence now? In light of this, how relevant are the stereotypes that are promoted today?

What concerns leaders most about the next generation?

- They have an unjustified/unrealistic sense of entitlement, need for instant gratification and affirmation

- They lack the ability to communicate effectively face-to-face and are over-dependent on technology

- They lack a strong work ethic, focus/commitment/drive, and are not self-motivating.

- They lack learning opportunities (mentoring, positive role models, and training) adequate for the future challenges they will face

- They need decision-making skills, long-term perspective, and ability to understand complexity

- They lack a strong sense of values, ethics, and social responsibility

- They lack reflection/self-awareness/maturity

- They are overconfident/not open to input or feedback; their view is the only view

If you are reading this Discussion Paper as an older manager, how many of these comments were attributed to you (perhaps incorrectly) when you commenced your career? Or are the stereotypical comments arising from jealousy or the need for self-assurance by others?

Many of the comments made of each generation by those who precede them are somewhat similar. Through the prism of extensive commercial or professional experience the assessment of a younger person's current ability will inevitably fall short. With time and intentional exposure to growth experiences the one constant that gives confidence is the human spirit and the desire to succeed. Responsibility for this rests with both senior management and the young manager.

What is at play is life-stage development which underscores the vital contribution that senior leaders can make to develop people within their organisations. Reluctance to engage in such activity has been attributed to a reluctance to share power, a common theme reflected in Shakespearean plays and other writings over the millennia. Is the intergenerational conflict a construction of older leaders seeking to diminish or erode the challenge from younger leaders as they begin to make their mark?

The value of using research published in peer-reviewed journals is to provide a solid foundation upon which more informed discussion should occur:

" *It is important to researchers and practitioners to respond assertively to the misinformed promulgation of unsubstantiated information about generational differences ... There is more variability within a generation than*

there is between generations. Tension among generations is primarily a result of a combination of a lack of data and an overreliance on opinion rather than empirical results. If we collectively did a better job of shining a light on data rather than simply relying on ill-informed opinion, generational conflict and misunderstanding that exists in the workplace would diminish ... And we would all be beneficiaries."
(Deal et al., 2007, p.198)

Stereotypical themes

The objective of the first research question is to identify what perspectives and practices will assist young managers to more effectively manage people who are the same age or older. In the discussion that follows, some of the negative stereotypes or perceptions have been put to research participants to gauge their response. A review of relevant research is then provided followed by reflections from young managers.

Respect perception

People in the Generation Y stereotype have been criticised for wanting it now, being disrespectful of authority, and that they should listen to their elders. They are perceived to be over-confident, not open to input or feedback; their view is the only view.

Response

The following verbatim responses were provided by participants to the research:

" *I don't believe we are disrespectful of authority, but I think people may see that we are as we try to push the boundaries and try to show people what we are capable of. I think older people don't trust us to make decisions, so we need to*

" *push the boundaries to show our capabilities."*
(Male, Professional, 28 years, Public Sector, #11)

" *I believe … that we are raised to question everything in life and not to blindly follow orders. Just because we question something doesn't mean that we are being disrespectful. … I think we expect everyone to earn their respect regardless of age, gender or position."*
(Male, Professional, 28 years, Private Sector, #10)

" *My perspective is that younger people have developed a very discerning critical lens of the world (perhaps due to growing up with such a plethora of information to navigate on the internet) … therefore we do not accept something as right simply because someone told us. Critical thinking is our default position and I understand that this may indeed be perceived as disrespectful or overconfident. I see it as an evolutionary 'coping' mechanism. To navigate all of these messages requires adaptation and I believe critical thinking and cutting through it all is that."*
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #8)

Research

In contrast to the negative perception, research has identified that individuals value formal authority equally, regardless of their generational cohort (Lester et al., 2012, p.351).

In her landmark work, Deal (2007) identified that everyone wants respect. What is different is how people characterise it in a practical sense. Older people see respect evidenced by people giving weight to their opinions and in having others action what they've been asked to do. In contrast, younger people view respect from others as having been listened to and paying attention to what they've said.

By expressing things differently, behaviours can lead to mistaken conclusions that reinforce generational stereotypes (Lester et al., 2012;

Jorgensen, 2003; Deal, 2007). Behaviour is more likely to be affected as a result of maturation, life-stage, the economy, or other environmental factors rather than some fundamental shift in generational attitudes or behaviours (Deal, 2007, p.197).

In managing people who are the same age or older, young managers need to prove that they value and respect the older subordinate. This can be demonstrated by openly seeking the input of older subordinates although relatively few employees are willing to speak freely with their younger boss (Cherkasky, S. President, Gunneson Group International; as cited by Zetlin, 1992, p.10).

Showing you care about them as individuals and respecting the valuable contribution of others applies to people of all ages.

Reflections

Reflections from young managers enrich these research insights:

" *Ask what support staff think, listen to their solutions and including their suggestions generates respect."*
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #8).

" *Some subordinates will seek to take advantage of a younger manager's more relaxed style by attempting to delegate their work upwards."*
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #8)

For this younger female manager, the protagonists of disrespectful behaviour were women in their mid-40s. In contrast, the same manager found men far easier with her collegial approach.

" *Intentional language and a deliberate approach will convey your professionalism and might encourage reciprocal respect from employees who are subject matter experts."*
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #8).

" *Managing up in age is difficult. Older women can make it harder for younger women due to jealousy and threat. It's sad because younger women adore and admire older women so it's a real problem. You do learn to be resilient from these situations."*
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #2).

Values
perception

Generation Y lack a strong sense of values, ethics, and social responsibility.

Response

The following verbatim responses were provided by participants to the research:

> *I strongly disagree with this one. I, and my husband and my group of friends are materially more philanthropic than my parents or what I see in my older colleagues. I left a previous place of employment (a not for profit at that) due to activities I perceived to be immoral and not in keeping with my values."*
> (Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #8)

> *We try to look after ourselves and loved ones before caring about others as we have all experienced being stabbed in the back in today's cut-throat environment. I do not agree with the ethics and values stereotype, these traits come with age and experience."*
> (Male, Professional, 28 years, Private Sector, #10)

> *I personally do not agree with this stereotype. I was raised with a very strong sense of personal values, ethics and loyalty. I have always had a strong sense of social responsibility and have demonstrated this in my community involvement. I believe this is the same for most in my social group."*
> (Female, Professional, 30 years, Private Sector, #6)

Research

Research by Twenge and colleagues (2010) identified that there are no differences among the generations in altruistic work values.

Deal (2007) confirms by highlighting that all generations share similar values. In particular, family is the value most frequently nominated by people and discussions about work/life balance are a natural progression of this. Other common values include integrity, achievement, love, confidence, happiness, self-respect, wisdom and responsibilities.

While values are the same across the generations, the behaviours that accompany these values may be very different. Deal encourages people to look beyond the behaviour to the underlying motivation. People may be working long hours and be considered as workaholics by some but the underlying motivation may be to provide a good and stable financial life for their family. Others may not work the same hours and be considered as lazy yet the real motivation may be to spend more time with their family. Clarifying the underlying motivation will shed light on how a person expresses their values in the workplace and whether it aligns with agreed behavioural standards.

Where conflict seems to occur based on generation-based values, the explanation may be found to be either differences between individuals or differences in behaviour. Good communication, rather than basing decisions on observing behavioural reactions, will facilitate greater cohesion in the workplace.

Reflections

- An older subordinate constantly wanted to increase the scope of her work but in the process was becoming antagonistic toward the member of staff whose role she was undermining.

> *Wanting to be respectful to this older person was a deeply held value but the behaviour was so disruptive that a very directive style was required to rectify the situation."*
> (Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #2).

- A partner in a professional service firm expressed managerial behaviour that could be interpreted as commercial bullying. Taking advantage of the commercial

inexperience of the younger partner, the older partner forced the sale of the practice to the younger partner and then proceeded to approach clients to move to his new firm. In hindsight it emerged that the older partner had done this before.

> *The lesson; undertake extensive due diligence rather than rely on (the limited) perspective gained from having worked in the firm since completing high school."*
> (Female, Professional, 31 years, Private Sector, #4)

Trust and professional respect were the casualties of this older manager's behaviour.

Motivation
perception

Generation Y lack a strong work ethic and are not self-motivating.

Response
The following verbatim responses were provided by participants to the research:

> *I think Gen Y entered the workforce looking for a challenge and to use the skills we have obtained from university to make a difference straight away. As such they come in with hugely high expectations, but in reality they start at the bottom and need to work their way up the food chain. If Gen Y aren't challenged though, they get bored and slack off. But when challenged, I reckon we rise above it and are awesome workers who will do anything to get the job done."*
> (Male, Professional, 28 years, Public Sector, #11)

> *I have worked in organisations where a labour intensive manual process has not been updated for 10-20 years. I tried to do the task differently and quicker with the exact same outcome and was frowned upon for being lazy and wanting to take shortcuts. Improving a process and increasing productivity [should] not always be seen as a shortcut due to laziness."*
> (Male, Professional, 28 years, Private Sector, #10)

> *Strongly disagree with this [stereotype]. I have just nearly killed myself studying an MBA and [other] things whilst working so as to 'get ahead of the rat pack'. There is more competition in this modern day, given the globalisation of workplaces, and to work hard is the only way to 'get ahead' in my opinion. Whilst clearly not all Gen Y are this way, my circle certainly is. I would suggest that there are plenty of folk in those generations that have come before us and will come after us that lack a strong work ethic."*
> (Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #8)

Research

Motivational drivers that energise, direct and sustain behaviours are identical across the generations and include: stable and secure future, high salary, chance to learn new things, and variety of work assignments (Wong et al., 2007; Masi Jr, 2010).

As has become clear, no significant differences between the generations were found for a range of motivational factors including: immersion (motivated to work beyond normal hours), ease and security (motivated by pleasant work environment and job security), and personal growth (motivated by opportunity for further training and development and acquiring new skills) (Wong et al., 2007).

Reflections

> *Motivation requires purpose, and it's my belief that managers who criticise Gen Y for being lazy haven't adequately communicated what that purpose is. [Furthermore] with any generation, there are self-starters and there are those who need ongoing encouragement and guidance. Managers need to work out who's who and adapt their approach accordingly."*
> (Male, Entrepreneur, 25 years, Private Sector, #1)

• Managing people of the same age has its issues. P's response was to work seriously between 9-to-5 but outside work hours he

forgot about it. His support staff (of the same age) sees work as a social forum in which to have fun and enjoyment; now P has the challenge to improve their productivity and effectiveness. (Male, Professional, 28 years, Public Sector, #11)

" *I find the Gen Y friends and colleagues that I employ in my company to be intrinsically motivated to succeed and consistently want to better themselves. In my experience, there is always a will where there is reward and Gen Y are some of the best workers when it comes to achieving milestones, accolades and material rewards. Understanding the key drivers and motivations of every individual in your team, regardless of age or experience, is essential to building an environment where everyone can succeed individually and together.*"
(Male, Entrepreneur, 26 years, Private Sector, #7)

" *I have always had to work extremely hard to achieve my goals. After leaving school I went to work full-time immediately. I then completed my undergraduate degree with a double major part-time, whilst working full-time, and progressing through my organisation. Being from the regions, I have also had to self-motivate in order to gain experience in order to become a leader in my field. I have continued to work extremely hard in order to progress through my organisation, surpassing others with longer tenure and/ or 'years of experience'. I believe work ethic and self motivation is up to the individual and what is important to them. It is not defined by generation.*"
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Private Sector, #6)

" *I agree that motivational drivers are the same across generations. I believe that these may alter across the lifecycle though. I wonder if there is often an interesting motivation in younger people associated with seeing more/alternate situations, cultures and scenarios through social media; Does this increase motivation to 'keep up with the Joneses'?*"
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #8

Commitment
perception

Generation Y lack focus, commitment and drive.

Response

" *From my experience, I'd say the opposite. Often a bigger challenge is funnelling that enthusiasm into the right areas, not so much a lack of commitment and drive. Personally, I've witnessed first hand that drive to succeed amongst Gen Y.*"
(Male, Entrepreneur, 25 years, Private Sector, #1)

" *Incorrect. I believe there are more start-ups and small businesses today than what the previous generation saw. With today's tough job market and a degree not guaranteeing a job, one has to be committed.*"
(Male, Professional, 28 years, Private Sector, #10)

" *I strongly disagree with this. There are plenty of Generation Y who are focussed, committed and driven.*"
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #8)

" *I suspect this is a statement you could make about any generation and it will resonate with some, but there will always be a cohort that doesn't fit that mould. I think it has more to do with an individual's motivators than what generation they are.*"
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #2)

" *From an academic standpoint, I believe Gen Y is the most tertiary educated generation to date, often completing multiple undergraduate programs and additional postgraduate studies after entering the workforce. The commitment required to achieve this level education over many years is in clear contrast to the statement that Gen Y lack commitment, drive and focus. In an age where it is normal to have multiple careers or areas of discipline and new areas of expertise emerging every year, it's no wonder there's a negative stereotype about focus. I*

believe Gen Y are adapting to the rapid pace of change and their commitment to overall career success is stronger in many ways to those of other generations."
(Male, Entrepreneur, 26 years, Private Sector, #7)

" *There are many amazing Generation Ys who achieve great things. I often receive comments from others about my determination and energy levels to achieve what we do. This would not be possible without focus, commitment and drive."*
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Private Sector, #6)

Research

Drivers of engagement transcend the stereotype boundaries between the generations (The Conference Board, 2006). If measured by working hours, people overall are working longer hours than in the past but there are no differences between the hours worked by Gen Y or Gen X at the same age. The Families and Work Institute (2005) also found that in 2002 Gen X worked more hours than did Baby Boomers at the same age in 1977. Staff and Schulenberg (2010) found that the generations are remarkably similar in their work patterns during high school and that Gen Y do not work fewer hours than did Baby Boomers or Gen X at the same age.

Certainly, younger people are seeking a different psychological contract from their employers; they want to be treated as valued members of the organisation rather than as disposable assets. Without a believable commitment from their employers, workers are less likely to express the work values of earlier times (Smola & Sutton, 2002, p.379-380).

As a final comment on commitment, people of all ages can be productive and engaged. Lockstep career trajectories are faulty (Pitt-Catsouphes et al., 2008, p.218) and there need to be alternative pathways that engage the unique talents of all employees.

Reflections

- Being directive and task-oriented works well in a small organisation but as they grew the business, they had to add skills particularly in the area of emotional intelligence.

" *There are lots of different personalities. Put aside time for one-to-one conversations to try work out how to tap into the creative freedom and develop trust in what they do. Client satisfaction is the measure. Keep the goalposts clear within the bounds of agreed autonomy and enjoyable work. Tap into people's passion."*
(Male, Entrepreneur, 25 years, Private Sector, #1)

" *Even if you don't agree with a policy decision you have to present a united front to staff."*
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Private Sector, #6)

(The example given was the standard of professional attire where a manager didn't follow the policy; undermining self).

" *I always wanted to be more than an "employee" in all of the places I've worked. I guess I wanted to be valuable to my employers on a level beyond the dry ability to do my job. That was never really reciprocated and so now with my staff, I am acutely conscious of their level of buy-in and how I can harness it."*
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #2)

Experience
perception

They lack learning opportunities (mentoring, positive role models, and training) adequate for the future challenges they will face.

Response

" *Wouldn't this be an issue for the generation before us? If they treat us like crap employees, how are they meant to mentor and develop us successfully."*
(Male, Professional, 28 years, Public Sector, #11)

> " *I suppose less time is invested in training young staff today as the focus is the bottom line. Companies are making record profits and cutting costs at the same time. It is up to the individual to organise his/her own mentoring."*
> (Male, Professional, 28 years, Private Sector, #10)

> " *I have actively pursued these type of opportunities, so don't see that for myself, but I can understand this. I would suggest that in these dynamic times, the most important way one can prepare him or herself is to be adaptable and flexible, open-minded and yet discerning to the world around him/her. The way of the past is not necessarily going to help us navigate the future."*
> (Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #8)

> " *In my life it has made a world of difference having an employer who mentors you and one who doesn't. Early guidance and mentoring can make or break your career, and that is a really scary thought."*
> (Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #2)

> " *I have always actively found my own mentors and role models based on current development needs. There are so many inspiring people to learn from who are usually very pleased to assist. In my development I have always found that by listening to others and their experience/mistakes you don't need to make the same mistakes yourself."*
> (Female, Professional, 30 years, Private Sector, #6)

Research

In terms of experience, life-stage [evidenced through maturing perspectives], has an impact on decision processes and workforce interactions (Kovach, 1986, p.46). Weston (2006) asserts that each generation has its own way of carrying out a task. Familiar routines or precedents arising from similar events in the past may be behind the perspective. Notwithstanding, there needs to be conscious engagement to avoid the issue where

people of each generation seem to believe their values and expectations are universally understood (Weston, 2006, as cited by Fernandez, 2009, p.8).

The degree to which a person's experience fits the role is not so much a function of age. Rather it is one of moving from discrete work settings with specific performance expectations to more complex [and layered] environments [that demand more experience and an expanded management repertoire] (Kovach, 1986, p.47)

In assisting young managers to more effectively acquire the developmental experiences required of a leader in increasingly complex roles, informal mentoring appears to be very effective (Gomez-Mejia et al., 2004 as cited by Appelbaum et al., 2004).

Reflections

Reflections from experience gained in the following contexts were provided by participants to the study:

Issues arising when managing people of a different age

- One older person wasn't willing to change their attitude. "Showing this attitude up were the responses from other older staff who were more accepting, saying;

> " *It's clear you know what you're talking about."*
> (Male, Entrepreneur, 25 years, Private Sector, #1)

- To accelerate acquisition of experience, P set about understanding the higher-level deliverables. This resulted in using a weekly dashboard for deliverables and a timeframe to understand the process at a granular level. P then builds a repertoire of questions about how to improve deliverables so all are engaged in the process; recruiting the team as part of the solution. (Male, Professional,

28 years, Public Sector, #11)

> *Each generation is pretty much the same only they've forgotten because their experience has grown."*
> (Male, Professional, 28 years, Public Sector, #11)

> *Sometimes, in managing people of a different age, it gets to a point where it is like you are both speaking a different language and that is where you need patience."*
> (Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #2)

Challenges experienced in managing and motivating subordinates

- One younger person P has managed is a 100% extrovert, very focused on what was in it for her, and controlled people through manipulation and gamesmanship. P raised issue with his manager who was not responsive. On amalgamation of the business unit with another, this person left as P believed she realised 'the game was up'. (Male, Professional, 29 years, Private Sector, #12)

- Managing up-line bosses:

> *Reporting lines have changed over the years. Some have been micro-managers who have dived into the detail and hindered progress. One was a General Manager who became such a bottleneck it was discovered by more senior people and he was dismissed. He essentially reverted to his core accounting/consulting background which undermined his subordinates."*
> (Male, Professional, 33 years, Private Sector, #3)

> *The hardest thing is working out your own style as a boss."*
> (Male, Professional, 33 years, Private Sector, #3)

> *Working out a subordinate's motivation can be extremely difficult and frustrating. We always want to get the best out of people. I tried a number of different strategies and in the*

end realised, it wasn't that employees lacked motivation; it was that I was trying to put a square peg in a round hole. Sometimes that just happens."
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #2)

Entitlement
perception

Older managers believe the next generation of managers have an unjustified/unrealistic sense of entitlement, a need for instant gratification and affirmation.

Response

> *…why settle for something less than what you think you are worth? We spend a lot of money and put a lot of time into our education and expect an adequate return. If we demand too much then we won't be hired … our problem!"*
> (Male, Professional, 28 years, Private Sector, #10)

> *Overstating our skills is better than underestimating them. … I was brought up with my parents telling me anything is possible if you put your mind to it. Is that such a bad thing? … I believe my overconfidence allowed me to apply for jobs a lot earlier than I should have. And I was lucky to be in the right place at the right time and got those promotions I went for. However, over the last four years I have matured as a worker and now have a better understanding of skills and vulnerabilities and have lost a lot of that overconfidence. However, I always wonder if I had maintained that mindset, would I be in a better position? I seem to think I would be!"*
> (Male, Professional, 28 years, Public Sector, #11)

> *Sure – having grown up with parents who have driven us to believe we can do and go wherever we so desire probably contributed to this. I am likely guilty of such, yet on the other hand work incredibly hard to deliver for my work above and beyond [what] is probably required."*
> (Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #8)

" *I completely disagree with this statement on a personal level, but know it is applied successfully and extensively by many. That has less to do with the generation and more to do with the individual!"*
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #2)

Research

Often the complaint about "behaving as if they're entitled" (whether directed at the young or the old) may be masking fear of potential loss of clout, rather than reflecting significant fundamental differences among the generations" (Deal, 2007, p.13)

There have been suggestions that Generation Y are shown to be higher on positive traits such as self-esteem and assertiveness (Twenge & Campbell, 2001) as well as negative traits such as narcissism (Twenge et al. 2008). Much is made of these differences but as Trzesniewski and colleagues comment (2008), the increase in narcissism is based on data from college students in traditional four-year programs at American universities. Clearly this does not adequately represent other cultures such as Australia.

Reflections

" *The self-esteem and assertiveness of Gen Y can sometimes manifest itself as inflating abilities or over-estimating one's worth."*
(Male, Entrepreneur, 25 years, Private Sector, #1)

" *This research seemingly captures something which I do believe can occur in Generation Y in increased assertiveness. We have been taught that if you 'don't ask, you will never know.' We have also been exposed to social media which can clearly elicit more narcissist behaviours than have previously occurred in generations before us. Increased self-esteem and assertiveness, is not necessarily always a bad thing in my opinion."*
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #8)

" *As a young female manager, I actually suffered from low self-esteem. I had to work hard to build my confidence … [and that] I deserved to be in the role I am in. From where I sit in my organisation (responsible for People and Culture), I see many staff behaving 'entitled'; staff from all generations. I believe this has come from working for a generous employer with steady employment, and not based on generations."*
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Private Sector, #6)

" *Workplaces have adapted to rapid changes in technology over the past two decades which have, in many instances, given Gen Y a distinct advantage in that they have grown up as "Digital Natives". Even as a young manager myself, I have had to acknowledge and celebrate younger employees whose skills exceed my own in several areas. This isn't an easy thing to acknowledge but one that allows continued growth and improvement of the whole business, rather than simply protecting my pride. The Gen Ys who appear to have an entitlement mentality in my life usually deserve the entitlements! In my opinion, if you're very good at what you do and consistently produce great results, you should be remunerated and rewarded very well – irrespective of age, experience or education."*
(Male, Entrepreneur, 26 years, Private Sector, #7)

" *I would agree that younger workers do sometimes come across as entitled or overconfident, but no more than any other demographic. But that's where the role of management needs to step up and address the perception gap. When honest self-evaluation of skill is different from manager's opinions, that's where the work starts."*
(Male, Entrepreneur, 25 years, Private Sector, #1)

Communication
perception

They lack the ability to communicate effectively face-to-face and are over-dependent on technology

RQ1

Response

" *While we do communicate a lot using technology, I think this is hyped too much. I think Gen Y try to use the right communication channel for the task at hand. If it's only small, sure, use an instant messenger app. Need to ask something of someone, and you've dealt with them before, use email and phone. If it's a new stakeholder, or you need a favour, go face-to-face."*
(Male, Professional, 28 years, Public Sector, #11)

" *I personally believe that we have to consciously make an effort to communicate face-to-face. Too many Gen Y hide behind their emails and text messages."*
(Male, Professional, 28 years, Private Sector, #10)

" *I feel like face-to-face communication is OK, and if anything, something that with age and experience will improve."*
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #8)

" *It is very easy to send an email or text, it transfers this task to someone else and allows you to tick a mental box – "I've done that job, I will wait for a reply". I worry sometimes that this face-to-face disengagement will have negative effects on even younger generations who are being born into this environment. They don't stand a chance really. At least we knew life before SMS and Facebook."*
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #2)

Research

In research by Lester and colleagues (2012) all three generations do not express significant differences in the extent to which they value technology in general. All generations currently active in the workforce understand the value of technology when it comes to competing in today's business environment.

Understanding technology use and comfort with a technology is partially the result of age when exposure was most influential. Interestingly, email and social media communications are valued more by Boomers and Gen X than Gen Y.

Of significance, face-to-face communications do not reveal any significant differences between generation cohorts. In this regard it is worth noting that Boomers and Gen Y share a desire to operate in collaborative settings whereas Gen X craves more independence.

A major implication of this work is the importance of educating employees in ways to capitalise on the common value that all generations place on face-to-face communication while also embracing the benefits inherent in more contemporary forms of communication (Lester et al., 2012).

Reflections

" *Respectful communication and inclusive behaviours are powerful methods to build effective outcomes."*
(Male, Professional, 28 years, Private Sector, #10)

" *Communication needs to be at the top of the skill list, whether it is face to face, technological or telephonic. Being able to cater to other people's communication preferences and styles is half of what communicating is about! It does not matter how fantastic your strategy, marketing, finance or HR thoughts and plans are, if you cannot communicate in such a way that captures the hearts and minds of your employees."*
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #8)

" *In helping new staff with both the best methods and mediums of communication, we've designed a communication guide to help identify when it's appropriate to use certain forms of communication. I would also add that because of Gen Y's general level of comfort with technology, there is a tendency to 'fall back' on that when unsure."*
(Male, Entrepreneur, 25 years, Private Sector, #1)

" *Managers who have been in an accounting role have trouble adapting from the skill area. Most have trouble with communication skills."*
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Private Sector, #6)

> *"Subject matter experts can overcomplicate the detail. It is important to bring a broader perspective as part of inputs and outputs."*
> (Male, Professional, 31 years, Private Sector, #5)

> *"I strongly believe in the following quote, it's origin I'm not sure of:*
>
> *Face-to-face for things that are important,
> Follow up over the phone,
> Email only for an audit trail.*
>
> *While I also struggle with consuming the volume of instantaneous communication and find it increasingly easy to avoid face-to-face encounters, I don't attribute this at all to a particular generation, it's just how things are these day.*
>
> *I believe those who intentionally standout as the minority by developing outstanding interpersonal skills and high EQs are the ones who usually succeed. Our business operates as a globally distributed workforce who sometimes only comes together once a year. Despite this, it's our experience that if something needs doing to a high standard and in a hurry, it needs to happen face-to-face."*
> (Male, Entrepreneur, 26 years, Private Sector, #7)

> *"In our organisation we have some brilliant young communicators who are comfortable talking directly with clients and also presenting to groups. I actually find that sometimes I will witness ineffective communication from older staff that are technically great, though they have limited experience managing people and interacting with clients.*
>
> *With advances in technology, I do believe that most people in the workforce have grown a tendency to become over-reliant on technology. It is good to 'digitally detox' every so often."*
> (Female, Professional, 30 years, Private Sector, #6)

Work/life balance
perception

A common view about work/life balance is that employees entering the workforce today are

seeking more balance. Their definition of success is balance between work, rewards, family, and fun (Wiant, 1999, p. 52; O'Bannon, 2001, as cited by Masi Jr., 2010, p.75).

Response

> *"True and this is good. Why live to work when you can work to live!"*
> (Male, Professional, 28 years, Private Sector, #10)

> *"I don't believe in work/life balance. My work and life are one. I work on weekends, nights etc., and will take some flexibility if it is required during the working week."*
> (Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #8)

> *"100%, I don't want to be at my desk all day living to work. I want work to supplement my life. I need income to support my lifestyle. I want to have the weekend to go have fun with my fiancé and friends and enjoy life while we are young. I want to go out and be able to have dinner with my friends during the week. I don't want work to get in the way of my private life. Balance is important. No use having millions of dollars but no friends."*
> (Male, Professional, 28 years, Public Sector, #11)

Research

In reality, differences in work/life balance (i.e., focus on life outside work) is more a function of life-stage and individual differences than it is one of generation.

Practitioners are likely to get more traction out of the policies if they focus work/life initiatives on life stages (which can come at any age) rather than on generations (Deal et al., 2007, p.196). People starting a second family later in life will return to the dynamics that these responsibilities present.

A fresh perspective entering the workforce is that younger managers are seeking to find a good

balance between doing a good job and maximising their own individual goals. Scandinavian and many European countries put a premium on family time and help employees balance personal and work lives (Smola & Sutton, 2002, p.379-380).

Achieving better balance may result in higher productivity during the time spent at work, less burnout, and fewer deleterious effects from stress. Indeed, a more flexible workplace that facilitates better work/life ambitions is often as important as salary (Wiant, 1999, p.52).

Reflections

" *The 9-to-5 is gone. It's all about flexibility. An employee who deals with an urgent client issue at 8pm at night expects, and should be given, that flexibility back in return when a personal issue comes up during business hours."*
(Male, Entrepreneur, 25 years, Private Sector, #1)

" *The phrase 'work/life balance' has lost its currency. I think 'flexibility' is the new way of achieving what was work/life balance; Everything in the right proportion."*
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #2)

" *I also believe work/life balance has lost its currency. No doubt, achieving better balance will maximise productivity and overall wellbeing. I am unsure how many large employers really live this nowadays though. There are forever budget cuts, redundancies and the need to do much more with much less. I am however, beginning to tire of this though and will be looking elsewhere at employment opportunities as it is terribly fatiguing."*
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #8)

" *My people are more interested in a flexible work location and hours than they are about pay and other benefits. Those who value this the most are Gen X mothers who like to work flexibly around their family commitment. Those who are focused on work/life balance are in the wrong career."*
(Male, Entrepreneur, 26 years, Private Sector, #7)

" *I believe that advances in technology can allow for a more flexible and perhaps even more productive work environment. We have been*

able to retain many high performers at all life stages by implementing flexible work practices in our firm. These include remote access, home offices, health and wellbeing initiatives, community involvement and flexible working arrangements."
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Private Sector, #6)

" *This one is also on the individual. I have a personal rule that I won't miss my sporting commitments each week because of work. Even if a company doesn't pressure it, some people still work themselves too hard because they haven't set their own boundaries. Being a business owner, that onus is completely on me."*
(Male, Entrepreneur, 25 years, Private Sector, #1)

Retention
perception

As long as employees are challenged and rewarded, they will remain. When another company offers new challenges and more awards, they will leave.

Response

" *This is market efficiency in my view – a supply and demand issue. It is just the way the world works now; it is not necessarily an issue specific to Gen Y."*
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #8)

" *I would say if you know Gen Y are looking around and moving for challenges, give them the opportunity to do that within your organisation. For instance, I have been in X for seven years now, but have been able to have seven to eight completely different jobs here; All with a new perspective and challenge. Now I am seen as a well-rounded employee in the organisation as I understand how all the different components work together and function to get us the results we need. I am now motivated to be a senior leader in my own organisation to put my skills to use."*
(Male, Professional, 28 years, Public Sector, #11)

> *We leave because we feel we aren't being invested in and merely being used as a tool. If someone else offers us a better deal then we will leave; this [has] become easier through a more transitional workplace. I think employers have created this environment themselves [by] placing increased emphasis on contracts, part-time and casual positions. We have therefore adapted to being able to move from job-to-job easily; one has to be flexible to survive. Five years at a company is considered to be a very long time. One has to be ahead of the curve and live by the motto: "Try moving to the next position before they make your position redundant (in the finance sector anyway)."*
> (Male, Professional, 28 years, Private Sector, #10)

> *In my experience, retention comes down to the level of engagement that staff have with the organisation. Challenge and reward only contributes slightly to engagement levels, though perhaps these are used as 'excuses' for staff who leave."*
> (Female, Professional, 30 years, Private Sector, #6)

Research

Statements that resonate with today's generation are "pursue our corporate goals and your own goals at the same time" and "seek out as much knowledge and as many skills as you can". As long as employees are challenged and rewarded, they will remain. When another company offers new challenges and more awards, they will leave. The last generation took company loyalty to the workers for granted. The Generation Xers want evidence that individual loyalty is rewarded by the company (Wiant, 1999, p.51). Expressed as 'contingent loyalty', they are less likely to make assumptions about their value to the organisation.

Today's entry-level employees grew up with the concept of free-agency. They are not willing to trust employers to be fully responsible for their wellbeing as their parents and grandparents once did. They have been raised to be self-reliant and independent and to question the status quo. That profile is probably no better or worse than that of previous generations - just different (Wiant, 1999, p.52).

Generation Y employees are significantly more focused than earlier generations on finding work that allows them to make a meaningful contribution and which is more closely aligned to their values (Galpin et al., 2006).

Both older and younger workers have indicated similar perceptions of key elements in recruiting and retaining employees across the lifespan and in developing meaningful work for employees of all ages (Smyer et al., 2007).

An organisation that balances its talent management efforts will help young managers succeed and in turn help retain them for the organisation. It does this by broadening the pool of candidates considered "qualified" for key opportunities. Such an organisation should experience improved employee engagement, retention, and job satisfaction by creating a more inclusive workplace. To promote and retain talent, organisations might consider the following recommendations articulated by Pauliina Swartz (as cited by Penney & Neilson, 2010, p.124):

- **Provide opportunities to young leaders to prove themselves.** Provide young leaders with challenging job assignments, access to training and development opportunities, exposure to different types and levels of people in different parts of the organisation, and non-job specific leadership roles.

- **Promote a culture that celebrates true diversity.** Differences should be seen as a source of strength as opposed to a threat or a compliance exercise. Dedication to diversity needs to be driven from the top of the organisation.

- **Provide access to committed mentors.** Young professionals – young leaders – benefit from mentors. Skilfully navigating an organisational landscape is particularly important when organisations do not actively promote emerging talent.

- **Foster a performance culture.** Young leaders have a great deal to offer. High performance should be rewarded.

- **Promote collaboration as the best way to get things done.** Collaboration is a skill that young leaders can bring to the organisation. Collaboration is in the best interest of all stakeholders but often becomes a casualty of egos, turf battles, distrust and disrespect.

Young professionals lean more toward a collaborative style. Authoritarian and top-down management styles are not for them. They welcome and want to hear many points of view. Dissent and discussion are not seen as negatives.

Many are looking for mentors and Baby Boomers can often fill that role. Experience has benefits and needs to be valued as part of an inclusive strategy. Indeed, older workers show greater resilience in recessionary times, and because they can draw on similar experiences in the past, they can be of help to others (Penney & Neilson, 2010, p.130).

Reflections

" *For those Gen Y staff you want to retain, keep it simple. Ask them 'what will make you leave?' and 'what will keep you here?' Get specific, be open and honest. If you can deliver it, do it. If not, then be honest about that and come up with some other options."*
(Male, Entrepreneur, 25 years, Private Sector, #1)

" *I strongly agree with the keenness to pursue company and personal goals concurrently, whilst offering more challenges and reward. There is a fine balance to strike in there so as to strike at the heart of work/life balance."*
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #8)

" *Some Gen Y members of my team are on their 5th career change by the age of 26. The barriers-to-entry have reduced greatly in a number of fields and a greater focus is placed on results than years of experience or formal education.*

" *If we don't continuously provide interesting challenges, growth opportunities and skills development for our team, why should we be surprised if they look for someone who will? Gen Y want to make a difference, leave a lasting impression and gain multiple skills. If we leverage this to align with the company goals then everyone succeeds."*
(Male, Entrepreneur, 26 years, Private Sector, #7)

" *I have been with my organisations for over a decade. In that time I have had six different positions, ranging from junior receptionist to my current 'C-Suite' role. I have not had the need to change 'jobs' as I have had many different 'jobs' all with the one employer. I have been fortunate to have support, development opportunities, challenges, a wide range of experiences, a good team, brilliant managers and flexibility. In exchange, I have worked extremely hard and have a sense of ownership/responsibility for my organisation."*
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Private Sector, #6)

OBSERVATIONS

Open minds and intelligent communication may overcome many of the issues attributed to generational differences. From an examination of the stereotypical perceptions, participants were candid in expressing their views. As individuals, their views were understandably disparate, underscoring the importance for up-line managers to avoid preconceived notions of how young managers in their organisations are likely to respond.

Insights derived from research and participant reflection serve to clarify and enhance practical management of the following:

Respect

The interpretation of personal interactions is foundational to subsequent behaviours. Everyone wants respect. Problems arise when individuals fail to interpret situations in a way that others perceive as being appropriate. Trying to see the situation from the other person's perspective is an enduring life strategy.

Values

Values guide motivations that drive behaviour. Good communication, rather than basing decisions on behavioural reactions, will facilitate greater cohesion in the workplace. Take time to look beyond the behaviour to the underlying motivation. Behind this lies the value framework that guides the individual.

Motivation

Every person is motivated by work/causes/interests that appeal to them. The challenge is to understand how to tap into the motivations around matters that are shared in the work people do. Motivation is reflected in the level of engagement that people have to the task. As such 'engagement' is an outward measure of something much more significant; that of alignment where people feel they can achieve aspirations that are personally relevant through the work they do and with clear line of sight to the organisation's purpose.

Commitment

Commitment has many measures. The legitimacy of hours or attendance at work is being challenged by output and outcomes. Flexible work practices change the relevance of the traditional metrics as they should. Being 'present' should be more about focus and delivery of outcomes rather than physical presence. Where work arrangements permit, flexible work practices provide a powerful demonstration of trust in and commitment to employees. The reciprocation is evidenced in quality and timeliness of output. Thus the psychological contract between employer and employee is undergoing subtle changes wherein candid and honest commitment is a

two-way conversation, a negotiated agreement on what matters most to both parties.

Experience

The question of experience revolves around the relevance of what has been learnt and can be applied to the task at hand. Stage in career and life expands an individual's experience but the adhocracy of this is often very inefficient. Senior management has a vital role to play in mentoring and structuring developmental roles to accelerate the acquisition and application of experience. The measure of experience gained is in direct proportion to the leadership provided by senior management in assisting young managers.

Entitlement

Self-assurance can be misunderstood as arrogance that also conveys a sense of entitlement. As experience rounds the edges of this self-assurance, the issue of entitlement diminishes. Most people are enthusiastic to do their best. In pushing forward, assumptions can be made about opportunities and resources that should be readily forthcoming. Interpreting this behaviour as entitlement may cloud the underlying motivation; simply wanting to excel in the shortest possible time.

Communication

Behaviour more than language is the loudest part of communication. Technology is both an inhibitor and facilitator of communication behaviour which is dependent on the context and importance of the situation. Candid communication requires skill, respect and courage such that technology should give way to face-to-face interaction. This is an individual challenge irrespective of generation but behoves senior managers to set a standard of appropriate communication behaviour that serves as a benchmark for managers with less contextual experience.

Work/life balance

The flip side of commitment is burnout. Work/life balance is a matter that can't be abrogated by the individual and should be the result of candid and negotiated agreement of the standards that are deemed appropriate. That there is ebb and flow in work/life balance is a function of business activity as much as the demands of life-stage. A more useful framework is to consider the extent and direction of work/life or life/work integration. Back of this should be a strategy to position work as a vehicle through which personally important aspirations may be achieved.

Retention

We live and work in a democracy. Retention is a term that captures the redundant perspective that there is something wrong or disloyal about people seeking to move their career beyond their current employer. A better measure would be 'maintenance of meaning'. As people's careers evolve over the life-span, the relevance and meaning of the position and work they do will change. Most people want to make a positive contribution and have impact in the work they do; this is a major aspect of achieving personal wellbeing. Maintaining meaning is a function of ongoing skill development to enable people to deliver on their commitment to the purpose and vision of the organisation. When this deteriorates so does the reason to stay.

Generation or birth cohort has no place in any of these discussions. These are matters that require individual attention and a more sophisticated approach in management.

RQ2:
What perspectives and practices will accelerate a young manager's development as an effective leader?

In addressing the second research question, insights from Dries and Pepermans (2006), should assist organisations to assess the leadership potential of a young manager. As each organisation will have different strategic imperatives for sustaining competitive advantage, organisations are encouraged to consider how these imperatives influence the extent (and weighting) of traits evidenced by young managers:

1. The extent to which they can deal with increasingly complex information, decisions, and problems

2. The degree to which they are willing and able to learn from experience, and

3. Whether they exhibit an emphasis, tendency, or attraction toward leadership.

In equal measure, young managers might assess their employer's ability to provide the experience and mentoring support that will accelerate their development as an effective leader. This two-way discussion would logically occur in the development of action plans that follow performance appraisals, but should also occur informally and more frequently.

How then are young managers assessing their leadership development experience? This paper looks first at the perspectives from research and comments from study participants. After this the paper examines sixteen leadership practices and the importance the study participants placed on

each as they responded to the depth interview questions (Attachment 2). Both perspectives and practices should provide good insights for both organisations and young managers to accelerate their development as effective leaders.

Leadership perspectives

Transformational tasks

Accepting responsibility as a young manager brings with it four core tasks:

1. Learning to be a manager

2. Developing interpersonal judgement

3. Gaining self-knowledge

4. Coping with stress and emotion

Added to this, a crucial indicator of leadership potential is how effectively a young manager will transform increasingly complex information into action as they progress into more senior roles (Silzer & Church, 2010).

It is in the ebb and flow of the tasks and myriad of detail that evidence of performance is assessed. How well is the young manager performing? What are they doing exceptionally well, where initiative and insights are producing unexpected results?

What impediments within self or the organisational environment are hindering this adjustment? Here's what young managers think:

> *Personally I believe it starts with gaining self-knowledge. Until you work yourself out, forget trying to manage others."*
> (Male, Entrepreneur, 25 years, Private Sector, #1)

> *Young managers taking responsibility for complex tasks or projects is typically the fasted way to learn and grow. In a sink-or-swim environment, individuals show their true colours when it comes to handling stress, managing others and aligning resources. It takes leadership to accept the responsibility of the task upfront and then empower their team to successfully deliver it."*
> (Male, Entrepreneur, 26 years, Private Sector, #7)

> *This is great. I agree. The other consideration I would comment on is the need for feedback through this phase of your career. If you aren't provided feedback, how do you know if you need to tweak aspects of your management? It also prompts the reflection and self-knowledge."*
> (Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #8)

> *I agree that there is a defined transition from 'employee' to 'manager'. Self-awareness and the development of emotional intelligence, I believe are key areas of focus to ensure a successful transition."*
> (Female, Professional, 30 years, Private Sector, #6)

Transitions

What do young managers find most difficult? With promotions comes a progressive shift from technical performance to team performance. Hill (2004) describes this adjustment as a transformation of professional identity. Moving from personal performance to seeing success as an outcome of team performance is at the heart of the transition. Related to this is the ability of a young manager to create the context in which others are willing to learn and change; a context that

enables direct reports to capitalise on their unique talents within the strategic vector of organisational objectives.

> *This is a material shift in perspectives and one that does require serious reflection as it occurs. It is no longer about the excellence of your technical work, but eliciting the performance of a group in the best way possible."*
> (Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #8)

> *Transitioning from a technical worker to a manager is a difficult task and one that should be carefully managed. All too often a high-performing individual struggles to make the leap to a managerial role when they can't differentiate between personal success and team success. Sharing responsibility, empowering others and succeeding together is where true leaders emerge."*
> (Male, Entrepreneur, 26 years, Private Sector, #7)

> *In my experience, they struggle from going from an "I" mentality to a "we" mentality. This is also about realising that their 'performance' is more about their team's performance rather than themselves."*
> (Male, Entrepreneur, 25 years, Private Sector, #1)

> *Initially it is hard stepping back from the day-to-day tasks, and utilising the strengths (or potential strengths) of your team. It is a learned skill that pays dividends once mastered."*
> (Female, Professional, 30 years, Private Sector, #6)

Exercising influence beyond position title comes from understanding and negotiating the interdependencies and influencers that exist in every organisation.

> *In relation to the influence beyond title, I have my network that both inform me and I can use to spread ideas."*
> (Male, Entrepreneur, 25 years, Private Sector, #1)

> *As a Certified MBTI practitioner, I use my knowledge of stakeholders' preferences to present information in a way that they*

understand and relate to. I find I am more successful at influencing when I adjust my methods to suit the person I need to influence."
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Private Sector, #6)

Situations that may lead to a conflict in values tend to arise in strategic differences with a boss, navigating and correcting ethically questionable practices, integrating work, life and family demands, and dealing with professional setbacks. Such occurrences typically arrive in the wake of major setbacks or mistakes that challenge the limits of experience. They can act as career derailers if mentoring and wise counsel is not readily available. The heart of the issue is both developing judgement and integrity such that the young manager can stay true to themselves (Hill, 2004) and having solid foundations arising from honest reflection of ability.

This is very true and a great example of where I believe external mentoring, coaching and support is necessary. If a young manager can't find the appropriate guidance internally due to a conflict or other challenge, having the support of someone externally can make the difference when assessing complex situations without undue emotion."
(Male, Entrepreneur, 26 years, Private Sector, #7)

I strongly value the relationship I have with my Board and Senior Partners and will often seek counsel in situations that I may not have directly experienced. I also find talking through any difficult situation with trusted and respected people allows for a more considered and rounded approach."
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Private Sector, #6)

Learning agility

Assessing the effectiveness of a young manager's leadership performance is difficult when, in the early phases of a management career, they really cannot demonstrate advanced leadership competencies. Their leadership potential can

however be identified by assessing their learning agility evidenced through their willingness and ability to learn from experience (Spreitzer et al., 1997).

I think this is super easy to spot. When something goes wrong for a manager, do they a) identify it's happened and why; and b) learn from it so they don't make the same mistake again?"
(Male, Entrepreneur, 25 years, Private Sector, #1)

This same level of scrutiny seems sound and I would suggest, should be applied across all generations of management. Learning from mistakes and that feedback loop is constant and important in all aspects of life, not just management."
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #8)

Some people are just natural leaders, and these abilities shine through even if they are not in a defined leadership position. However when given the opportunity to lead, identifying further potential can definitely be assessed in their willingness to learn from both their experience and the experience of others."
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Private Sector, #6)

Emphasis

Not everyone who is able to be a leader is willing to make the sacrifices that come with leadership. A young manager's focus on results, perseverance and dedication are behavioural traits that are underscored by personal sacrifices, long hours and stepping up to increased responsibilities. Talented people vary in terms of the centrality they attribute to the work role (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2006). This question places focus on the extent to which people emphasise the direction of integration between work/life or life/work. It is a personal decision that requires candid discussion and responsible agreement in the workplace.

" *I see my contribution to my employer and career as a bank account. I have made many deposits (overtime, putting work first, hard work, going above and beyond) to secure the respect and trust of managers, peers and subordinates. It is my hope that when I need to make a few withdrawals (i.e., when starting a family) that these deposits will be remembered. The work/life, life/work integration changes at life stage."*
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Private Sector, #6)

" *Agree. Some can't adapt to a role where it's not about what they produce, but also their attitude. [Further] some won't put in the professional development effort either."*
(Male, Entrepreneur, 25 years, Private Sector, #1)

" *There are material personal sacrifices to be made in today's world should you wish to make it to the top of a large company. As with the above, it is important to make sure you are constantly reflecting and 'opting in' to this, and not just on the rat wheel as can easily happen and just like that, you have a life you didn't ever purposefully intend."*
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #8)

Experience

A pervasive model of leadership development, '70-20-10', refers to the gaining of experience from challenging assignments (70% weighting), input from other people (20% weighting) and formal programs (10% weighting). The original authors (McCall et al., 1998) comment the broad application of the model to all forms of leadership education is flawed. Application of all three components of learning is valid [only] in the specific context of on-the-job leadership development (McCall, 2010). It does not universally apply to all aspects or modes of knowledge acquisition. Further, not all experiences are equal; not all senior managers will be good coaches or mentors, some experiences matter more than others, and different types of experiences provide different lessons. As McCall observes, matching developmental needs

to developmental opportunities is a matter of intentionality, understanding that learning will take place over time and is dynamic.

" *I think this is the key to this statement. Training, skill development and leadership must be intentionally pursued otherwise the individual won't value the growth, or won't recognise it."*
(Male, Entrepreneur, 26 years, Private Sector, #7)

" *How wonderful (yet rare!) to be able to purposefully plan your experiences. My career and life is less structured and I take it as it comes. I have been in some pretty deep ends and feel that is when I have been able to rise to the occasion. As someone fiercely determined, competitive and reasonably resilient, I do whatever it takes to deliver what needs to be whether it is in or out of my capability zone."*
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #8)

" *Knowledge acquisition also varies by each individual. Two people can have the same experience, yet still take two different types of learning out of an opportunity. An example is with every bulk graduate intake we have, with similar experiences provided, there will always be a variance in progression based on the individual."*
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Private Sector, #6)

Management repertoire

Jobs and assignments can intentionally be made more developmental. In the quest for near-term results, organisations are at risk of deferring to experienced managers rather than utilising the opportunity for a young manager to learn from the experience. Intentionality requires organisational courage where experience provides boundary conditions to manage the downside risk for the organisation. In the absence of intentionally framing the development experience, a number of outcomes may arise. The result of unguided experience may be that inaccurate information and ineffective work practices become so ingrained that they are virtually impossible to unlearn.

Rather than "practice makes perfect" it is more accurate to say that "practice makes permanent" (Kerr, 2004). The experience can be so negative that people are destroyed. Where evidence of 'sink-or-swim' is at play, the higher the risk of the assignment (and visibility to senior management) the less willing some young managers may be to use the assignment as a vehicle for development.

> *In contrast, some young managers will intentionally seek out these opportunities in order to demonstrate their ability where it is highly visible. This of course takes courage and is one reason why some young managers progress so quickly."*
> (Male, Entrepreneur, 26 years, Private Sector, #7)

> *I like 'sink-or-swim' provided there is support in place and failure is accepted as a learning moment for the firm and its people."*
> (Male, Entrepreneur, 25 years, Private Sector, #1)

A distinguishing attribute of the best-practice or leading firms is that they measure their training and development efforts. For example, they measure the quantity of leadership talent for specific roles. They measure the attrition rate of their leadership talent. They develop a catalogue of jobs, assignments, and bosses that are more developmental in nature. They then make strategic use of this knowledge by moving managers into these roles and under these supervisors to ensure development (Conger, 2004, p.137).

> *I am a believer of playing to a person's strengths and potential, especially for people who are a good fit for the organisation. We have had a lot of success with allowing people to 'evolve' into higher duties through opportunity to 'have a go'. I currently have a highly motivated and capable HR coordinator in my team who started as a PA. I was able to identify her ability and passion and provide the opportunities for her to grow."*
> (Female, Professional, 30 years, Private Sector, #6)

Career derailment

Working against leadership development are forces such as competing organisational demands and shifting priorities, misaligned and poorly utilised systems, outmoded assumptions about how leaders develop, and shortcomings in selection and development processes (Conger, 2004). The dynamic interplay of these forces will vary by situation and within an organisation but they will coalesce to reduce the effectiveness of leadership development initiatives.

The universal default leadership development model prescribes leadership competencies which do not vary by level or function. These normative models of leadership, such as charismatic leadership, emotional intelligence-based leadership, and transformational leadership assume a unitary approach across all levels and situations.

Reflecting on leadership capability, are organisations sowing the seed for their demise by prescribing cookie-cutter approaches to situations rather than instilling a capability of leadership versatility? Leadership approaches should be contingent on a given situation and arise from a broad repertoire of appropriate leadership responses. Greater leadership versatility is central to this outcome. Conversely, narrowing the scope of leadership experience also places a ceiling on both vertical career progression and lateral movement across sectors/industries.

> *In my experience, the best leaders are developed on the job with high variability and changing circumstances."*
> (Male, Entrepreneur, 26 years, Private Sector, #7)

At the same time, 'forcing' people with an expert career orientation into leadership based on their performance or ability is likely to be counterproductive (Dries & Pepermans, 2012) and lead to career derailment. This is likely to be

exacerbated when self-identity and role-identity are not aligned.

> *We try to educate key staff on the difference between being a 'technical expert' and a 'manager'. Once they understand that and work out where they want to head, a personalised professional development plan is put in place."*
> (Male, Entrepreneur, 25 years, Private Sector, #1)

Mentoring and support

During the transition of young managers to more senior roles, organisations might consider articulating an explicit set of leadership competencies required in the new roles along with action learning and executive feedback forums (Conger, 2004) A further step is to offer personal coaching from both professional coaches and peers (who are in non-competitive roles) during the transition process.

Not everyone feels able to be a coach. Other than the availability of time, Deal (2007) identified that many felt they needed more knowledge, greater experience, better political acumen, better communication skills, and training to be a coach. Interestingly, professionals were found to be least likely to say they have the skills to be a coach. Identifying who is best able to coach is a critical assessment.

> *I think there is another factor with coaching and mentoring, and that is a natural fit between the individuals. I have been put with coaches and mentors who I have gained very little from (despite them being fantastically qualified and experienced) as we just haven't 'jelled' well. They seemed to be there because they wanted it on their resume and there was an absence of candour and humility from both parties and all-in-all was a waste of time."*
> (Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #8)

It is clear that greater sophistication in leadership development for young managers is required such that versatility in behavioural repertoire enables an effective shift in leadership styles under changing

circumstances. Coaches and mentors can provide a valuable 'risk-free' sounding board in shaping perspectives and responses as situations emerge that are beyond the experience of the young manager.

> *They can also bring greater clarity to the decision making process and help distil complex situations that can seem overwhelming at first."*
> (Male, Entrepreneur, 26 years, Private Sector, #7)

> *I would agree, but in my experience it is rarely one coach, but the establishment of a network of trusted advisors."*
> (Male, Entrepreneur, 25 years, Private Sector, #1)

Young managers are particularly interested in coaching that focuses on their career and on leadership development from a senior colleague. Preference is for face-to-face coaching on a regular basis, weekly to monthly.

> *Personally, I prefer a professional external coach rather than an internal senior colleague. This is more comfortable for me and I get more out of it."*
> (Male, Entrepreneur, 26 years, Private Sector, #7)

> *I find coaching invaluable in my role. It can be formal and informal. The same goes for mentoring. I also broaden my experiences through extensive reading, which in most cases is like having a mentoring experience with the author."*
> Female, Professional, 30 years, Private Sector, #6)

The value of coaching and mentoring is reinforced in situations where leadership skill development begins to diminish when experiences move beyond an optimal level of difficulty (DeRue & Wellman, 2009). When there is little access to quality feedback, or when an individual lacks the necessary learning orientation, the risk from personal failure may be magnified for the organisation as the situation goes unchecked.

Managing and motivating direct reports

The mentoring and support of a young manager translates to the success they have in managing and motivating direct reports. A common tendency of young managers, especially high achievers, is to assume that others share their values and motivations. Assuming they can use themselves as a role model to predict the behaviours of others also doesn't work (Benjamin et al., 2011; Hill, 1992).

" *I agree and think this is very evident in a lot of young managers I know. A lot of them got there by working very hard and typically overachieving. The assumption that everyone is motivated in the same way is very dangerous."*
(Male, Entrepreneur, 26 years, Private Sector, #7)

Human nature being what it is, no one model works to motivate all people. Yes, a manager might galvanise people to the 'cause' but the question becomes how sustainable is this over time? Essentially, young managers can't project their level of motivation onto others. Different personalities, different aspirations, different attitudes all impact how direct reports respond to the strategic agenda. In a very practical sense, the purpose of leadership is to help individuals find ways to channel their motivation toward personal meaning and contribution to the greater good of their unit and organisation (Raelin, 2004, p.133).

" *I think this is the main point. A great leader will know and identify the intrinsic motivations of everyone on the team and set each person up to succeed in their own way, as well as achieving together."*
(Male, Entrepreneur, 26 years, Private Sector, #7)

" *I agree – leadership is finding what works for different people and how to put together and manage a team which will best complement the differing levels and types of motivations, competencies and skills."*
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #8)

In taking the important step to listen to what direct reports are saying or raising as questions, it is tempting to offer solutions. Often people just want to be heard; to talk things out and bounce ideas. Offering solutions denies the growth opportunity for an individual or a team.

Dealing with poor performance requires immediate action. It is common for managers of all ages to delay doing this (Gentry et al., 2011, p.48) but all this does is provide more oxygen for the problems to grow. Ensuring the necessary information is obtained, followed by acquiring skill and mentoring advice are vital prerequisites.

" *Put in a lot of leg work at the beginning. Ask what support staff think and then listen to their solutions and include their suggestions. Being considerate of suggestions and collaborating where possible is respected. It prevents acting out (misbehaviour)."*
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #8)

" *The best thing I did when taking over my team was to address poor performance/behaviour immediately. Early on I tried to take the softer approach, though found that subordinates would try to test the boundaries. Once I was clear about my expectations, the respect and performance of my team increased significantly."*
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Private Sector, #6)

Leadership practices

Comparing the generational differences in endorsement of leadership practices, Gentry and his colleagues (2011, p.44) examined 16 leadership practices (Appendix 3) of which 10 were found to be statistically significant. With small effect sizes, indicating no practical difference, they concluded that the generations were more similar than they were different. Table 1 provides the priority that Gentry's Gen Y managers attributed to the leadership practices (Column 1).

The Australian experience is quite different. In the AIM research, the frequency of responses to the leadership practices highlights a very different emphasis that these young managers place on practices they see accelerating their development as effective leaders (Column 3):

It is evident from participants in the AIM research that career management (20%), self-awareness (12%), change management (12%), participative management (9%) and leading employees (8%) are leadership practices that are the most immediate priority in their journey as young managers. Their responses to the research questions should assist organisations and young managers alike to identify where pre-emptive development efforts will be most valuable.

Table 1: Leadership practices

Gentry's priorities	Leadership practices	AIM participant priorities
1	Resourcefulness	T11
2	Leading employees	5
3	Straightforwardness and composure	T8
4	Building and mending relationships	T11
5	Doing whatever it takes	7
6	Change management	T2
7	Decisiveness	T8
8	Participative management	4
9	Being a quick study	T11
10	Self-awareness	T2
11	Balancing personal life and work	16
12	Confronting problem employees	6
13	Career management	1
14	Compassion and sensitivity	15
15	Putting people at ease	T11
16	Differences matter	10

RQ2

What are the most stressful challenges you have dealt with so far in your career?

Career management
Setting boundaries and expectations of what P's staff wanted from her; specifically, the direction of their careers and to be on the same page.
(Female, Professional, 26 years, Public Sector, #9)

Three years out of university the most stressful challenge so far is becoming skilled in a specialist area and being able to network /speak with clients. Universities don't teach you how to deal with people and 90% of doing business is about how to deal with people. What motivates them is the key to success. Being involved in clubs has helped to build skills. Executive coaches have helped and how to motivate people, to understand how to link their goals to your goals. P has presented to UQ young alumnus, helping to give them a few tips. In Australia it's very important to know networks; who you know is more important than in Germany where a degree matters. The biggest challenge is in knowing how to network.
(Male, Professional, 28 years, Private Sector, #10)

Change management
It was extremely difficult to initiate change in the organisation so you need to be very good driving change management, process management and project management.
(Male, Professional, 28 years, Public Sector, #11)

Participative management
Being materially younger than most subordinates, P felt a strong need to be liked. P preferred to act collegially but some situations required a more directive approach. Where collegiality is used 90 % of staff respond well although two 'pushed back'. These staff wanted P to do the work, shirking responsibility. The lesson from this was sometimes being laid back is not respected. Both of the protagonists were women in their mid-40s with

young families, and quite disparaging towards her. P found that men are far easier with collegiality. The strategy P now uses is reflective thinking to assist discussions, supported by intentional language and a very deliberate approach to discussing the matter at hand.
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #8)

Confronting problem employees
P inherited a team comprising two generations, possessing deep knowledge and long-standing loyalty to the firm. One of the team thought he should have been appointed to P's role. Both reported to the Board but P had all staff reporting through her. Respect was a major task P had to work on with this manager. Weekly and fortnightly meetings were becoming confrontational so P moved to one-to-one meetings with the manager away from the team.
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Private Sector, #6)

As the State President of a women's organisation P was criticised and bullied due to jealousy from the National President. Promises made by this person were not honoured and caused significant damage to the confidence members had of this person's leadership. P reflected on how sad this was because young women adore and admire older women. P has learnt resilience from this tough situation.
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #2)

In dealing with a staff problem P would be comfortable being directive if the person was younger. With a subordinate who was older, P wanted to be respectful of the person yet there was constant undermining by this person of another member of staff. Managing up in age is difficult.
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #2)

Having joined the firm as a school junior P was eventually admitted as a solicitor and took an equity position. The older partner saw the new equity participation as his exit strategy. P was hungry, eager to take the practice forward, but the older partner did not want to invest to improve

efficiency or growth. Due to the influence of the older partner's wife, P was excluded from participating in the management of the practice. P didn't get to share the financials as the older Partner's wife was the practice manager. At the age of 25 P's partnership was dissolved after the older partner threatened to bring in the receiver unless he was bought out by P. After P's full acquisition of equity it surfaced that the older partner had done this type of thing before.
(Female, Professional, 31 years, Private Sector, #4)

Most stressful challenge was becoming a team leader with older staff (late 40s) who were underperforming. Wasn't sure what to do to manage the issue but knew that 'winging it' wasn't an option. Now P is really well prepared, outlining very clearly what is expected of them.
(Male, Professional, 28 years, Public Sector, #11)

Decisiveness
Learning to separate self from work and disconnecting the emotional side is stressful. During the GFC, P had to make two people redundant the day after P's spouse had also been made redundant from another organisation. P had to learn to leave things at work. In making the redundancies P received coaching; the figures were clear that the people had to leave for the greater good. It helped that the people involved also saw the reason why. The redundancy process had been mapped so the uncertainty was quelled for those who remained.
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Private Sector, #6)

Straightforwardness and composure
Having to choose between loyalty to P's boss or loyalty to the firm P put too much trust in the boss and on reflection realised that this was not reciprocated in terms of appropriate behaviour. His intentional manipulation put P's reputation at risk.
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Private Sector, #6)

Building and mending relationships.
Focus has been on building relationships with people who are generally older than P; listening skills; confining energy and direction in getting the job done right the first time; and using mentoring has helped.

(Female, Professional, 26 years, Public Sector, #9)

What challenges have you experienced in developing a manager's mindset?

Career management
People are promoted on subject matter expertise; it is rare to be promoted on ability to lead. What is needed is more generalist management skills to connect the dots between the fields.
(Male, Professional, 29 years, Private Sector, #12)

Working with people to take them along the journey of change; explaining rationale, creating a sense of urgency.
(Male, Professional, 31 years, Private Sector, #5)

Doing whatever it takes. Accepting accountability for real P&L outcomes rather than being directionally correct.
(Male, Professional, 31 years, Private Sector, #5)

Self-awareness
Understanding one's strengths and embracing them. Having confidence in one's abilities.
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Private Sector, #6)

How have you coped with setbacks and disappointments?

Career management
How you cope with setbacks and disappointments is important; take it as an opportunity to improve the next time. You need to desensitise to learn; sit down, reflect, then develop a plan to get back on track.
(Male, Professional, 31 years, Private Sector, #5)

Self-awareness
Think about the bigger picture/take a walk around/ is it worth dwelling on the issue? Most of the time, it's not that important. Detach and put it into perspective.
(Male, Professional, 28 years, Private Sector, #10)

When you have less experience you should expect to be challenged and to challenge; try to create a learning opportunity for others.
(Male, Professional, 31 years, Private Sector, #5)

Change management
Dealing with setbacks P has had to show persistence and not to take things personally. P offered health and wellbeing programs for staff that included Pilates, fruit, and monthly wellbeing events. Feedback was that some people will always be miserable so don't take it personally. People don't like change but now all are participating in the program.
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Private Sector, #6)

Communicating or speaking to a manager two steps higher would help as your immediate manager is probably caught up in the issue.
(Male, Professional, 28 years, Private Sector, #10)

P and immediate manager were not on the 'same page'. P had to respect her boss and found herself in the position of trying to mediate an impasse between an internal client and her boss;

people didn't respect her boss. P couldn't move the project forward because the impasse wasn't resolved. Her boss has transferred to another role due to business integration.
(Female, Professional, 26 years, Public Sector, #9)

Participative management
Feedback is always constructive. If you allow emotion, you get poor feedback. People always want to do a good job and they arc-up when their professionalism is challenged.
(Male, Professional, 31 years, Private Sector, #5)

Decisiveness
It took three years to get a coffee machine through the reception staff. The issue was who was going to clean it. P broke through the issue by being directive rather than seeking collaboration.
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Private Sector, #6)

Putting people at ease
Sometimes spend more time with the younger guys so they feel in touch. Older people will want to know why; the big picture. Spending one-to-one time is important.
(Male, Professional, 28 years, Private Sector, #10)

RQ2

In your first role as a manager, what transformational tasks were most challenging?

Career management
Personal transitions into higher roles were facilitated by:
1. Likeability,
2. Support from heads of department and general managers.

(Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #8)

Gaining self-knowledge was the most transformational task. P is being guided by the observations from his business partner.
(Male, Entrepreneur, 25 years, Private Sector, #1)

Self-awareness
Overcoming self-doubt has been the hardest thing. It takes courage to back yourself.
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Private Sector, #6)

When you're a high achiever you become a productivity junkie. You want to achieve more and do more. When you're not you become restless; it's in energy thing. Most young managers don't have family responsibilities so it's easier to focus very much on work. It's important to have patience to cover gaps in development; so you can succeed in the longer term.
(Male, Professional, 28 years, Private Sector, #10)

Clients realised there was a young bloke in a senior position and tried to take advantage by fast-tracking the detail in pipeline testing. P pushed back which resulted in a number of heated meetings. P has subsequently learnt to control his emotions and is now seen as more poker-faced, more controlled. His own staff saw the heat and saw that he can't be pushed around or rushed. This has gained their respect and become a positive benefit in subsequent interactions with staff.

(Male, Professional, 33 years, Private Sector, #3)

It's not personal when people vent; staff feel they can let down their guard when they talked to P. On the other hand, P felt she could not let down her guard; she couldn't melt down. You only have a few chances to create the right professional impression.
(Female, Professional, 26 years, Public Sector, #9)

Being a quick study
The most transformational tasks have been coping with stress and emotion, and reflective thinking self-awareness/feedback. P suffered the imposter syndrome but overcame this by working hard to learn from others. Asking both subordinates (who felt good to be in the loop) and more senior managers (They liked that she checked in with them, so they could become mentors).
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Private Sector, #6)

Did you receive any preparatory training?

Resourcefulness
It's not about your qualifications; it's about what you do. Realistically there are lots of on-the-job things that matter. The key approach and attitude to have is to be enthusiastic and put care and attention into the work rather than take shortcuts.
(Male, Professional, 28 years, Public Sector, #11)

On-the-job training and learning on the 'go'; P gained insight by utilising contacts and networks to gain experience.
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Private Sector, #6)

Being a quick study
Executive MBA proved very formative through peers sharing their experiences.
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #8)

What skills have been most beneficial in your current role?

Self-awareness
Only recently has P realised that having an air of confidence and competence has enabled her to create some hustle and energy, eliciting more help and assistance for her projects.
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #8)

P's ability to respond and not react to situations is very important.
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Private Sector, #6)

Being a quick study
The skills found most beneficial were P's technical ability and ability to synthesise information, distilling critical insights quickly.
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #8)

How helpful was your boss in transitioning to your current role?

Building and mending relationships
P's managers have always identified further opportunities to broaden her experience, and have been understanding of P's development needs.
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Private Sector, #6)

In transitioning to the new role her boss (previously an investment banker) provided no performance reviews, no positive feedback, and no catch-ups to see how she was tracking. In a recent bullying case her boss simply did not understand the people dynamics at play; He has no emotional intelligence. As a result she receives greater assistance from her boss's boss.
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #8)

Have you sought advice from others?

Self-awareness
P seeks advice by sharing primarily with his fiancé who is a senior manager with a multinational. He also has a full-time coach at 65 years who has been running leadership courses with the organisation. The coach's job is to ask lots of questions.
(Male, Entrepreneur, 26 years, Private Sector, #7)

Change management
P had mentoring from senior managers to work through simmering personal issues within the team that were impacting performance. They recognised they could handle the issue and over 12 months the high-pressure process worked. P couldn't replace the two team members in the current environment as the budget would have been withdrawn.
(Male, Professional, 28 years, Public Sector, #11)

Differences matter
New boss was P's mentor; has helped to change P's perception of things. External perspectives from her boss came from previous experience with PWC and News Corp.
(Female, Professional, 26 years, Public Sector, #9)

Resourcefulness
P has not had any mentors as such other than a former campaign manager who was previously a politician. It has been a steep learning curve.
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #2)

Many people have been mentors. P has a formal mentor and strong relationships with senior people across a wide range of service lines (HR, Marketing, Business Development) who P touches base with regularly. As P's firm is a national network, she also shares knowledge with peers in

other offices.
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Private Sector, #6)

What particular approaches/styles have been successful?

Career management
Give people opportunities for professional development. Understand what would make them leave and understand what would make them stay. Provide shadow equity where there is value on sale that executes when they sell in 11 years from now.
(Male, Entrepreneur, 25 years, Private Sector, #1)

Currently undertaking post-graduate study to broaden experience in technical areas needed
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Private Sector, #6)

Learning what you say and do around the office is critical. Encourage people to work at a level above current role; it's about behaviours rather than the technical side of the work. If you're serious about your career progress everything you do has to be top-shelf. Venting just demonstrates a lack of trust Self-awareness. Hold yourself accountable to delivery in even the smallest things. You need to be very rigorous in the quality of what you deliver; no quick flicks that can be wrong.
(Male, Professional, 31 years, Private Sector, #5)

Self-awareness
The most transformational aspect was in developing interpersonal judgement. This was suggested by her informal mentor; having confidence in her judgement.
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #8)

Skills most helpful have been people management and technical skills. People management must-haves include communication to understand what they're saying and to provide feedback of negative; having those difficult conversations is important. Personal organisation; so staff aren't waiting for you to make a decision. Supporting

staff; you always have their back. Their mistakes are your mistakes. People do trust each other's outputs and peer-review sessions before a project is delivered to the client are an important part of it.
(Male, Professional, 28 years, Public Sector, #11)

Change management
Be patient in implementing new systems. An older member of staff was not ready to change to the new ways; it was just different to what had done before. It was critical to help that person understand that it was an improvement. Provide support; encourage them not to take it personally. Instead appreciate having their experience on the team. The person's mindset was fine; she just wanted to know she was appreciated and that change is not an attack.
(Male, Professional, 28 years, Private Sector, #10).

Observe and try to assimilate first before making changes. Lots of managers don't do this and they fail.
(Male, Professional, 28 years, Private Sector, #10)

Dashboard to share performance data is located on a wall in the office. Plasma screens display real-time data for feedback on performance; financials are not fully shared. One example where performance data was highlighted came with the closure of the UK office. All staff could see the numbers falling but the closure should have been more of a shock; it didn't feel real to those who remained employed.
(Male, Entrepreneur, 26 years, Private Sector, #7)

Participative management
Unleashing talent as an approach to managing a team was supported by: ensuring resources are available; having weekly catch ups to track work progress; knowing interdependencies; being clear about outcomes, risks, rewards, urgency; and supporting individual 'calls' by project managers.
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #8)

P introduced a two-day off-site workshop incorporating team exercises: assured everyone that they were part of the business; that everyone

can contribute. Staff members are more engaged because they have seen how bad it is elsewhere.
(Male, Entrepreneur, 26 years, Private Sector, #7)
Show appreciation for those who are working at a fast pace; helping us get to out of a pickle. Explaining the situation gives them the ownership to work on something they would not usually work on; this appeals to them as it provides meaningful work. The reward for them is to let them talk directly to the internal client; let them shine in team meetings; send flowers as a sign of appreciation or lunch out.
(Female, Professional, 26 years, Public Sector, #9)

Ask them if they have capacity to help. Provide an end-to-end process which gives them a sense of satisfaction, purposeful and meaningful work being done. This builds their reputation.
(Female, Professional, 26 years, Public Sector, #9)

Leading employees
Communication is critical so that people understand the 'why' behind decisions.
(Male, Professional, 28 years, Private Sector, #10)

P would help new people to acquire knowledge by explaining the 'grey' to a situation rather than 'black or white'. Talk to people. Ask lots of questions. Check in with them a lot.
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Private Sector, #6)

Not being rewarded on short-term profitability objectives; take a 12 month view. This is so they don't under-resource teams and burn them out. It also assures people that management aren't looking to take shortcuts to 'trick up' their bonuses. It encourages smart long-term decisions.
(Male, Entrepreneur, 25 years, Private Sector, #1)

Managers have deep technical skills that are being enhanced by management skill development. Candid 360° surveys provide unfiltered comments. There is a massive culture of trust when you open up the financial books and encourage people think like a business owner.
(Male, Entrepreneur, 25 years, Private Sector, #1)

Let people preserve face and discuss with them after in one-to-one conversation that respects them. Think about how you would feel. Do a 'Plus-Delta' in person.
(Male, Professional, 31 years, Private Sector, #5)

Doing whatever it takes
Achieving now is so important. It is tempting to take good progress as the norm and to move on rather than dig deeper. By doing so you don't get the grassroots skills that matter at an executive manager level. P considers the gaps in knowledge and experience are much like a tree. When the tree trunk doesn't get thick enough to handle the wind when tough times happen, the tree will fall.
(Male, Professional, 28 years, Private Sector, #10)

Develop a thick skin, continue to grow, learn from formative experiences.
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #8)

Taking responsibility for managing teams and their profitability; up-skilling finance skills; decision-making, and making the call.
(Male, Entrepreneur, 25 years, Private Sector, #1)

Decisiveness
Have a bias for action; be in front of people to discuss things. Have checkpoints and real-time project management that draws on subject matter expertise. Have regular touch points with bosses to discuss thought processes and what is being done. Frequent recalibration as soon as possible builds credibility.
(Male, Professional, 31 years, Private Sector, #5)

Managing requests laterally, up or down; take it seriously as people requesting see it as important.
(Female, Professional, 26 years, Public Sector, #9)

Straightforwardness and composure
Become humble, reconsider, and come back with suggestions rather than advice or directions.
(Male, Professional, 28 years, Private Sector, #10)

The biggest lesson is to let everyone know

along the way. A lot of value comes out of communicating negative as well as positive.
(Male, Professional, 31 years, Private Sector, #5)

Differences matter
Always be respectful of your elders; there is great expertise.
(Male, Professional, 28 years, Private Sector, #10)

Understand your client base. In P's case all engineers like to have different versions of things and like to consider and discuss with others. The way they typically explain things is not how external clients need to hear the solution.
(Female, Professional, 26 years, Public Sector, #9)

Putting people at ease
Have a warm and caring style. Care about the work but also supporting your people along the way.
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #8)

Learning the personality of people through role-play with different people from different industries helps a lot. Run weekend workshops to see how people grow and evolve; personalities unpack over time.
(Female, Professional, 26 years, Public Sector, #9)

Compassion and sensitivity
Being seen to as the 'go-to person' when there are setbacks. P builds up people's confidence when they've been sidelined.
(Female, Professional, 26 years, Public Sector, #9)

What perspectives and practical skills do you think you need for your next role?

Skills most beneficial in the current role will be further qualifications in project management. There are so many tools available. P encourages you put to your hand up, be proactive to get the skills in any area where you don't feel comfortable.
(Male, Professional, 33 years, Private Sector, #3)

The organisation has become very political now; it's a huge multinational with restructures and power-plays. He hasn't yet got a mentor in the political sphere but is keen to get one. P recommends a personal board of advice; this can be people above or below who you can ask for input.
(Male, Professional, 33 years, Private Sector, #3)

Going forward people many still see P as the 20-year-old who started. The skill-set going forward is to very much focus on language and interaction; to be professional not a friend; stepping up. Based on a five-year strategic plan P is absolutely clear on where she is heading. P took initiative through seeing gaps opening up, brought definition to the issues and how the problems would be solved, and put herself forward.
(Female, Professional, 26 years, Public Sector, #9)

Fast track; It's not about the time so much as about ensuring the team is recruited, fully integrated and performing, and having a successor in training.
(Male, Professional, 33 years, Private Sector, #3)

What aspects of the work environment have helped your personal growth as a manager?

Career management
Aspects that have helped P grow as a manager in the work environment have been feedback from staff and informal mentoring.
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Private Sector, #6)

P has learnt from coaching sessions. Try to be a leader and coach with subordinates; come to them with the right questions. Having mentors from all walks of life provides the diversity of opinion and experience. Jobs are so diverse these days with organisation change that having a diverse group of mentors across a range of fields is incredibly valuable.
(Male, Professional, 28 years, Private Sector, #10)

It is hard to get an environment to test, trial and allow a level of risk to learn.
(Male, Professional, 31 years, Private Sector, #5)

Participative management
P likes being part of bigger conversations and plans.
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #8)

Leading employees
No carrot or stick, just influence without power.
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #8)

Doing whatever it takes
P encourages people to think like a business owner; for example, passing information on.
(Male, Entrepreneur, 25 years, Private Sector, #1)

Decisiveness.
Significant experience was gained as a result of having to make a person redundant. The issue was theoretically a structural one but in reality it was about performance. P found that people think they can hide their sub-optimal performance but this is a mistake and a poor reflection on the individuals involved.
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #8)

Straightforwardness and composure
Digital industry has latitude more so than other industries. In London you need to do your time and so P gets asked once a week how old he is. Credibility is everything.
(Male, Entrepreneur, 25 years, Private Sector, #1)

What aspects in the work environment have hindered your personal growth as a manager?

Career management

The issue of age simplifies perspectives but it doesn't capture the issues. It's really broader about management including aspects of respect
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #8)

Aspects that have hindered P's growth have come from not being in another industry. Joining the YMAB and being deputy-chair of a not-for-profit has provided the experience she has needed.
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Private Sector, #6)

What advice would you give to other young managers?

Career management

Advice to others is when stepping up you can be too ambitious, cocky and will be pushed down. P has overcome this by firstly sharing his intentions, ambitions and goals. He plants seeds respectfully; older people will reach out and clear a pathway as long as it's within the organisation. People like to help; to share their passion. It builds trust. He has also found that actions without explanations can be perceived negatively; he now explains the 'what' and 'why' to garner support.
(Male, Entrepreneur, 26 years, Private Sector, #7)

Get more involved. Participate in events to network. Ask questions and be open to criticism.
(Male, Professional, 29 years, Private Sector, #12)

Get a mentor; it is absolutely invaluable. P is

passionate about having young women lawyers on staff. She loves the opportunity to be a mentor and believes that technology can help women to be both a professional and have a family.
(Female, Professional, 31 years, Private Sector, #4)

To be perceived as a credible professional is quite a milestone.
(Female, Professional, 26 years, Public Sector, #9)

Self-awareness

Attitudes for others to emulate include always being positive; everyone should feel a sense of welcome; always try to be a problem solver.
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #2)

As people grow in their careers they should still be prepared to learn. Challenges have arisen because they are evolving so quickly, they need to pause and listen. P pitches in a way to get their attention and approval, over and above the urgent matters they have at hand. This is important so that her team is not held up. She has frequent conversations with her manager as to what she should expect from meetings.
(Female, Professional, 26 years, Public Sector, #9)

Change management

Advice to newcomers is to take time and start to understand the office and how it works.
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #2)

P emphasises the importance of managing expectations and sharing the plan. Include people to smooth the implementation. He recalled: "Those who plan the battle don't battle the plan." He encourages people to sit down with the team for their input and buy-in so execution becomes part of them; it reflects on them.
(Male, Entrepreneur, 26 years, Private Sector, #7)

Leading employees

Young managers need to learn from good leaders; very intentional leadership. Lead by example, lead everyone; but they need to manage the

relationships and their people's emotions.
(Female, Professional, 26 years, Public Sector, #9)

Being intentional about management regarding procedures and structures; People had been seeking greater structure as there was no clear delegation prior.
(Male, Entrepreneur, 26 years, Private Sector, #7)

Confronting problem employees

At exit interviews P spends time to discuss their behaviours. Some people get it, but most don't realise when they are getting passed over. Candid feedback is important.
(Male, Entrepreneur, 25 years, Private Sector, #1)

Problem people have left with intellectual property not being documented. The lesson going forward is to mitigate key-person risk by capturing knowledge in documented procedures and files.
(Male, Entrepreneur, 26 years, Private Sector, #7)

Doing whatever it takes

Even if you are privately suffering, you need to be upbeat in public and to the staff.
(Female, Professional, 31 years, Private Sector, #4)

What success stories would you like to share?

Career management

Success that stands out includes doing significant change management programs. Doing projects that can be outside typical scope for example across all the businesses; this provides good exposure and personal branding perspective. As a result he is considered an equal on the lead team.
(Male, Professional, 31 years, Private Sector, #5)

In managing change, a number of middle management executives in her team were made redundant. Good communication during this time enabled the remaining members of her team to understand that the number of middle managers was too high and that change was inevitable.
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #8)

Participative management

Success stories include wins with department heads; two ladies in their early to mid-40s. They have been in the business seven years and have close and friendly relationship with each other and the board. P won their support by asking for their help as he shared more of himself and the plans and issues they were confronting as a business. He slowly got more buy-in and celebrated success with them.
(Male, Entrepreneur, 26 years, Private Sector, #7)

Meetings with the team have been set up to help celebrate wins as opposed to being workflow type meetings.
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Private Sector, #6)

A growing part of the role is motivating people outside the direct hierarchy. In learning how to motivate project teams, what hasn't worked is the 'hardline' superman approach. What has worked is appreciation of what they know; facilitate an outcome through them; co-create through

bouncing ideas.
(Male, Professional, 31 years, Private Sector, #5)

Leading employees

Think about things as a team. See success as a team and ensure that others are being supported.
(Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #8)

Doing whatever it takes

Success is to be a role model for staff; empowering them, driving them and motivating them. Become living proof that success can be achieved through passionate focus on helping and positively impacting others.
(Female, Professional, 31 years, Private Sector, #4)

Straightforwardness and composure

As a manager, success comes from building rapport, showing credibility, building respect at a one-to-one level and how you conduct yourself in a wider context.
(Male, Entrepreneur, 25 years, Private Sector, #1)

Differences matter

In the organisation, creating a new function in a new industry has taken two years to recruit team to hit targets. In the one team he has a mixed skill-set of lawyers, property economists and farmers in an age range early 20s to late 50s. It is important to respect their long careers and background.
(Male, Professional, 33 years, Private Sector, #3)

Resourcefulness

Think carefully about how to resolve difficult relationships so that all parties are happy; at the Board and team levels.
(Male, Entrepreneur, 26 years, Private Sector, #7)

Building and mending relationships

A major objective has been to break down stigmas and barriers in the 50+ club. "They are looking for a catch or political hook but in reality it is about making genuine relationships. Put yourself in the way of having a conversation."

(Female, Professional, 30 years, Public Sector, #2)

Compassion and sensitivity

Success is not about the money. It's about making a difference to the lives of her clients; getting them out of domestic violence.
(Female, Professional, 31 years, Private Sector, #4)

Balancing personal life and work

Working in an agency environment there are multiple projects and clients. It is a fast turnaround which can block creativity. Their solution is to work strictly 8.30am to 5.00pm so people don't burn out. Client expectations have to be set early and it is a real discipline not to run past these timeframes. Be selective in choosing clients; ensure the timeframe is clearly understood and that the focus becomes one of demonstrating competency and depth of knowledge.
(Male, Entrepreneur, 25 years, Private Sector, #1)

OBSERVATIONS

Perspectives about what constitutes good leadership are both dynamic and situational. We know superb leadership when we experience it and we know it when it has catastrophically failed. Young managers are on a steep leadership learning curve. Transitioning to leadership requires a progressive change in professional identity, moving from personal performance to seeing success as an outcome of team performance. It is a mistake to believe that extroverted young managers will make good leaders; the reality is they may be challenged to listen to other people when things are going wrong. Conversely introverted leaders are more disposed to listen and consider other's input before taking action. The important developmental point is that both predispositions can be effective if the developmental programs internalise behaviours that enact good leadership.

Agility and resilience come from developing a repertoire of appropriate management responses. This should not happen by accident. Purposeful exposure to developmental experiences, backed by mentoring and debriefing with coaches is a valuable investment. Career derailment occurs when the leadership challenges expose the foundations as being too narrow or lacking in depth of experience.

As young managers the measure of success is gauged by how well they manage and motivate their direct reports; how well they emulate the investment by others in them.

Study participants underscored the importance placed on mentoring from above and respectfully listening to and learning from the experience of their older direct reports. The velocity and scope of work to a young manager committed to excelling can be overwhelming. Loath to raise this with up-line managers, for fear of being seen as lacking capacity, the risks are burn-out and career derailment.

Leadership development has a substantial informal component from up-line managers. It is understood that enduring lessons of how not to manage come from having an ineffective up-line manager. The risks are high for the organisation and it is a poor substitute for more sophisticated developmental programs. Leadership development is a two-way responsibility with senior managers investing time to develop superb young managers to take the organisation into the future. It behoves young managers to make the most of the opportunities by stepping-up and proposing initiatives that leverage what they can bring to the situation. That there will be problems is assured. How well they deal with them will be a function of practical insight, communication, personal application and resilience.

Study participants were asked a range of questions (Attachment 2) to identify issues or concerns they were confronting as they developed their management careers. Of the 110 comments, the highest numbers of responses (75%) were received for six questions. The responses

participants have kindly shared may serve as a useful guide to shaping expectations and outcomes of future developmental programs.

Table 2: Depth interview response profile

Priority	Depth interview questions	Responses received
1	What particular approaches/styles have been most successful?	29
T2	What success stories would you like to share?	13
T2	What advice would you give to other young managers?	13
4	What are the most stressful challenges you have dealt with so far in your career?	12
T5	How have you coped with setbacks and disappointments?	8
T5	What aspects of the work environment have helped your personal growth as a manager?	8

Looking more deeply, participants highlighted five leadership practices that were most challenging:

Table 3: Leadership practice priorities

Priority	Leadership practices	Responses received
1	Career management	22
T2	Self-awareness	13
T2	Change management	13
4	Participative management	10
5	Leading employees	9

Awareness of these matters may also provide a degree of comfort to those following that their experiences and concerns are to be expected and are quite normal. How senior management utilises this information will influence the successful development and retention of their future leaders.

CONCLUSIONS

In developing superb young managers for the future, AIM is concerned that poor management practices are arising based on generational stereotypes. This Discussion Paper sought to answer two questions:

1. What perspectives and practices will assist young managers to more effectively manage people who are the same age or older than them, and

2. What perspectives and practices will accelerate young managers' development as effective leaders?

Open minds and intelligent communication may quarantine organisations from the generational stereotype contagion. This is applicable for people of all ages, not just young managers, but does require people to pause long enough to consider the impact of stereotypical behaviour on others.

Confirming other research, everyone wants respect. Where values are shared in the workplace, motivation and commitment are outcome measures of this alignment and mutuality of purpose. Ongoing learning is captured by considered placement in roles that enhance the repertoire of management response. This is where diversity counts as rapidly evolving situations may require a unique response from the mosaic of experience within the management team. While young managers will have to rely more on this strategy, the benefit of co-creation is shared commitment to the solution.

Rapid prototyping of a young manager's career, evidenced through increased mobility, could be seen as having low commitment to the organisation. A more insightful perspective is that growing career capital is a shared responsibility between the organisation and the young manager. While the work remains meaningful and the mentoring supportive of deepening management skill, loyalty will be more secure. High performance and productivity is a reciprocal expectation. Moving up or moving out is now a mutually recognised strategy for both organisations and workers alike.

In so many ways, workers of all ages share the same perspectives although they may be manifested in different behaviours. Young managers are more likely to be overt about how they feel and behave but this does not diminish the reality that others may harbour the same sentiments but express them in different ways. It really becomes a focus on the individual rather than the stereotype.

Accelerating young managers' development as effective leaders is both contextual and intentional. Each organisation will have strategic imperatives for sustaining their competitive advantage. How effectively they do this is driven by the intentionality and commitment of senior managers to developing programs around quality leadership perspectives and practices.

CONCLUSIONS

Participants to this research were most responsive to sharing their views about successful management styles. Particular emphasis was placed on the leadership practices of participative management, leading employees, self-awareness, change management, and doing whatever it takes. Reflecting on the success they have achieved thus far in their careers, attention focussed on the importance of participative management using listening skills and communication to build consensus. In terms of the most stressful challenges they have experienced, a broad range of issues emerged including confronting employee problems, decisiveness, straightforwardness, participative management, change management and career management.

Development of programs that will accelerate a young manager's effectiveness will exhibit a dynamic tension between evaluating the contextual opportunities that provide depth of experience and the natural impatience of young managers to accelerate their careers. There is nothing new in this. What this research does confirm is the value of customising development to the individual's capacities and capabilities. Leveraging the deep knowledge and wisdom that experienced managers possess through mentoring young managers is a process on which they place high value.

We conclude that a focus on the individual rather than the stereotype will accelerate the true potential of young managers as they develop the perspectives and practices that matter.

ATTACHMENT 1: Definitions

Generation

A generation group is defined as, "a special cohort-group whose length approximately matches that of the basic phase of life, or about twenty-two years" (Strauss & Howe, 1991, p.34). Based on birth-cohort, the generation provides a frame of reference for how people are perceived to react to and deal with information and changes. It is the commonality of the 'culture' in which they live that influences their development (adapted from Masi Jr, 2010, p.16).

Heuristics

Heuristics are a mental shortcut that allows people to solve problems and make judgements quickly and efficiently. These rule-of-thumb strategies shorten decision-making time and allow people to function without constantly stopping and think about the next course of action. While heuristics are helpful in many situations, they can also lead to biases. [http://psychology.about.com].

Life stage

A life stage perspective suggests the existence of universal development sequence throughout the human life cycle (childhood, adolescence, early childhood, middle adulthood, and old-age). As people age, they become more collectivistic, conservative and self-transcendent, and less individualistic, open to change, and self-enhancing (Erikson, 1997; Smith & Schwartz 1997). O'Rand and Krecker (1990) argue that the characteristics of one's life cycle results in changes in an individual's needs over time. They endorse an understanding of life cycle in terms of stages of maturation rather than age; proposing that there is a 'time to sow' (25-44 years) and a 'time to reap' (45-65 years of age) (Cited by Cogin, 2012, p. 2271).

Mentoring

Mentoring is defined as a developmentally oriented relationship between senior and junior colleagues or peers that involves advising, role modelling, sharing contacts, and giving general support. It can be informal (voluntary) or formal (involuntary). Among the two types, informal mentoring appears to be more effective (Gomez-Meija et al., 2004; as cited by Appelbaum, 2004, p.15).

Values

Values remained relatively stable over the course of an individual's life, and while the importance of some values relative to other values may change during one's life, appreciation for a value does not change (Rockeach, 1973; as cited by Cogin, 2012, p.2279).

While an individual's personality preferences and motivational drivers are likely to be related to an influence by his/her work values it is important to maintain a distinction between these concepts:

- Personality is defined as an individual's preferred or typical way of behaving, thinking and feeling. Hence personality is likely to be a more direct measure of actual behaviour (Wong et al., 2008, p.880)

- Motivational drivers energise, direct and sustain behaviour for an individual. While very closely linked to values (Brown, 1976), motivation is more specific to the factors that drive actual performance. (Wong et al., 2008, p. 881)

Work engagement

As the Conference Board (2007) summarises, engagement is a natural extension of discussions on motivation, satisfaction, commitment and empowerment. With competing definitions of employee engagement that represent different theoretical points of view, and consulting firms creating employee opinion surveys that represent their own unique approach, 'conceptual bleed' has occurred. What is consistent is the assertion that employee engagement involves the interplay between three factors:

- Cognitive commitment (encompassing satisfaction and commitment),

- Emotional attachment (such as pride), and

- Behavioural outcomes (including discretionary effort and employee retention).

Employee engagement is a heightened emotional and intellectual connection that an employee has for his/her job, organisation, manager, or co-workers that, in turn, influences him/her to apply discretionary effort to his/her work (The Conference Board, 2007).

" *The extent to which employees thrive at work, are committed to their employer, and are motivated to do the best, to the benefit of themselves and their organisation."*
(Galpin et al., 2006, p.20)

Work values

Work values are the evaluative standards relating to work or the work environment by which individuals discern what is "right" or assess the importance of preferences (Smola & Sutton, 2002, p.366).

ATTACHMENT 2: Young manager depth interview questions

DQ 1: What are the most stressful developmental challenges you have dealt with so far in your management career?
(Examples include: unfamiliar responsibilities, high levels of responsibility, creating change, working across boundaries, managing diversity?)

- What practical insights did you learn from them?
- Have you applied them in more recent situations?
- What worked?
- What didn't work as well as you thought?
- What skills and approaches would have been helpful?

DQ 2: What challenges have you experienced in developing a manager's mindset?
(Examples include: understanding that individual skill and effort are no longer what makes you successful; developing others; being intentional; looking to solve problems – not just identify them?)

DQ 3: How have you coped with setbacks and disappointments?
(Examples include: maintaining poise and composure under pressure; being overwhelmed; balancing work and family pressures; understanding how you react to a setback?)

DQ 4: What issues have arisen when managing people of a different age?

- Younger age?
- Same age?
- Older age?

DQ 5: Which of the above groups have been the most challenging and why?

DQ 6: How well did you feel you managed the issues?

DQ 7: What challenges have you experienced in managing and motivating subordinates?
(Examples include: understanding others with different values and motives; appreciating the importance of all people on your team; listening to others rather than problem solving; establishing credibility – especially when others have more experience; being clear about you value add as a manager; dealing with poor performers and problem employees; setting clear expectations)

ATTACHMENT 2:

DQ 8: What challenges have you experienced in managing relationships with peers and bosses?
(Examples include: recognising the importance of relationships; an inability to resolve differences with a boss; the importance of understanding others' priorities; balancing competition and cooperation among peers; being right versus being effective?)

DQ 9: What success stories would you like to share?
- Unleashing the talent of those who work for them?
- Working with others across functions or divisions to be successful?
- Overcoming setbacks and resolving difficult relationships?
- Situations where intentional leadership achieved remarkable outcomes?

DQ 10: In your first role as a manager, which of the following transformational tasks were most challenging?
- Learning to be a manager?
- Developing interpersonal judgement?
- Gaining self-knowledge?
- Coping with stress and emotion?

DQ 11: Did you receive any preparatory management training for your current role?

DQ 12: What skills have been most beneficial in your current management role?

DQ 13: What additional skills would be beneficial and why?

DQ 14: How helpful was your boss in transitioning to your current role?

DQ 15: Have you sought advice from others?
(What was the issue, who helped you, when did this occur, and did the advice help?)

DQ 16: What particular managerial approaches/styles have been successful for you?
- At what management levels?
- Why were they successful?
- What would you do differently with the benefit of hindsight?

DQ 17: What perspectives and practical skills do you think you need for your next role
(Please specify next role)

DQ 18: What aspects in the work environment have helped your personal growth as a manager?
(Examples include: alignment; culture)

DQ 19: What aspects in the work environment have hindered your personal growth as a manager?
(Examples include: professional jealousy; toxic work culture)

DQ 20: What advice would you give to other young managers?

Priority	Leadership practice	Description
1	Resourcefulness	Being a flexible problem solver; being a strategic thinker
2	Leading employees	Broadening direct reports; being patient and fair; setting clear performance expectations
3	Straightforwardness and composure	Not blaming or abusing others; not being arrogant, cynical or moody; coping with situations beyond one's control
4	Building and mending relationships	Working hard to understand others; getting | cooperation of peers, clients; negotiating well; not alienating others
5	Doing whatever it takes	Persevering through adversity; taking full responsibility
6	Change management	Using effective strategies to facilitate change; overcoming resistance to change
7	Decisiveness	Displaying a bias for action and calculated risks; being quick and approximate when necessary
8	Participative management	Using listening skills and communication to involve others; building consensus
9	Being a quick study	Quickly mastering new technical knowledge and skills; learning the business quickly
10	Self-awareness	Recognising strengths and weaknesses; seeking corrective feedback
11	Balancing personal life and work	Balancing work priorities with personal life so that neither is neglected
12	Confronting problem employees	Moving quickly; not waffling; basing decisions on performance
13	Career management	Using professional relationships and networks to manage own career
14	Compassion and sensitivity	Caring about the hopes and dreams of others; providing wise counsel; being sensitive to signs of overwork in others
15	Putting people at ease	Having personal warmth and a good sense of humour
16	Differences matter	Respecting varying backgrounds and perspectives
Source: Gentry et al., 2011, p.44		

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