

4. Students will bring their analyses to a group meeting for discussion and to compare similarities and differences.
  - a. What are the criteria used in the different organizations?
  - b. What factors affect the end results?
  - c. What environmental forces are important for the various organizations?

#### A Learning Note

This exercise will require individual and group work. It should show that the ARDM model (Exhibit 2-1) can be applied to large, medium-sized, and small organizations.

## Application Case 2-1

### Gen Y Rocks the Business World

Nearly every businessperson over 35 has done it: sat in her office after a staff meeting and—reflecting upon the 25-year-old colleague with two tattoos, a piercing, a near addiction to checking his Facebook account with his smart phone, no watch, and a shameless propensity for chatting up the boss—wondered, What is with that guy!

At once a hipster and a climber, he is all nonchalance and expectation. He is new, he is annoying, and he and his female counterparts are invading corporate offices across America.

Generation Y: Its members are different in many respects, from their upbringing to their politics. But it might be their effect on the workplace that makes them truly noteworthy—more so than other generations of twentysomethings that writers have been collectively profiling since time immemorial.

They're ambitious, they're demanding in terms of the boss's time, and they question everything, so if there isn't a good reason for that long commute or late night, don't expect them to do it. When it comes to loyalty, the companies they work for are last on their list—behind their families, their friends, their co-workers and, of course, themselves.

But there are millions of them. And as the baby boomers begin to retire, triggering a well-publicized and feared worker shortage, businesses are realizing that they may have no choice but to accommodate these curious Gen Y creatures. Especially because if they don't, the creatures will simply go home to their parents, who in all likelihood will welcome them back.

Some 64 million skilled workers will be able to retire by the end of this decade, according to the Conference Board, and companies will need to go the extra mile to replace them, even if it means putting up with some outsized expectations. There is a precedent for this: In April 1969, *Fortune* wrote, "Because the demand for their services so greatly exceeds the supply, young graduates are in a strong position to dictate terms to their prospective employers. Young employees are demanding that they be given productive tasks to do from the first day of work, and that the people they work for notice and react to their performance."

Those were the early baby boomers, and—with their 1960s sensibility and navel-gazing—they left their mark on just about every institution they passed through. Now come their children, to confound them. The kids—self-absorbed, gregarious, multitasking, loud, optimistic, pierced—are exactly what the boomers raised them to be, and now they're being themselves all over the business world.

The workworld will be different.

"This is the most high-maintenance workforce in the history of the world," says Bruce Tulgan, the founder of leading generational-research firm RainmakerThinking. "The good news is they're also going to be the most high-performing workforce in the history of the world. They walk in with more information in their heads, more information at their fingertips—and, sure, they have high expectations, but they have the highest expectations first and foremost for themselves."

There is likely to be a cultural clash between the different generations in the workplace. The Generation Y tribe is offering some startling examples of changes at work. A Beverly Hills psychiatrist's office is an unlikely triage center for the mash-up of generations in the workforce. But Dr. Charles Sophy is seeing the casualties firsthand. Last year, when a 24-year-old salesman at a car dealership didn't get his yearly bonus because of poor performance, both of his parents showed up at the company's regional headquarters and sat outside the CEO's office, refusing to leave until they got a meeting. "Security had to come and escort them out," Sophy says.

A 22-year-old pharmaceutical employee learned that he was not getting the promotion he had been eyeing. His boss told him he needed to work on his weaknesses first. The Harvard grad had excelled at everything he had ever done, so he was crushed by the news. He told his parents about the performance review, and they were convinced there was some misunderstanding, some way they could fix it, as they'd been able to fix everything before. His mother called the human resources department the next day. Seventeen times. She left increasingly frustrated messages: "You're purposely ignoring us"; "you fudged the evaluation"; "you have it in for my son." She demanded a mediation session with her, her son, his boss, and HR—and got it. At one point, the 22-year-old reprimanded the HR rep for being "rude to my mom."

The patients on Sophy's couch aren't the twentysomethings dealing with their first taste of failure. Nor are they the "helicopter parents." They're the traumatized bosses, as well as the 47-year-old woman from HR who has been hassled time and again by her youngest workers and their parents. Now the pharmaceutical company that employs her has her in therapy, and she's on six-month stress leave.

And she's going to have plenty of company. Managers and their companies will have to deal with the 76 million children of baby boomers, born after 1978, who have started pouring into offices across the land. Four generations are being asked to coexist at once: traditionalists (born before 1945), boomers (born 1946–1964), Generation X (1965–1977), and Gen Ys. Managers will be challenged to minimize the friction and maximize the assets of four distinct sets of work values and styles simultaneously.

The generation Ys are disruptive not only because of their size but because of their attitudes. Speak to enough intergenerational experts who study such things (and we spoke to more than a dozen of them), and you begin to get the picture: Generation Ys aren't interested in the financial success that drove the boomers or the independence that has marked the Gen Xs, but in careers that are personalized. They want educational opportunities in China and a chance to work in their companies' R&D departments for six months. "They have no expectation that the first place they work will at all be related to their career, so they're willing to move around until they find a place that suits them," says Dan Rasmus, who runs a workplace think tank for Microsoft. Thanks to their overinvolved boomer parents, this cohort has been coddled and pumped up to believe they can achieve anything. Immersion in PCs, video games, e-mail, the Internet, and cell phones for most of their lives has changed their thought patterns and may also have actually changed how their brains developed physiologically. These folks want feedback daily, not annually. And in case it's not obvious, Gen Ys are fearless and blunt. If they think they know a better way, they'll tell you, regardless of your title.

Meet any of the Generation Ys now embarking on their careers, and this picture comes to life. Impatience with anything that doesn't lead to learning and advancement? "Nothing

infuriates us more than busywork,” says 24-year-old Katie Day, an assistant editor at Berkley Publishing, a division of Penguin Group USA. Fearlessness? “I don’t have time to be intimidated,” says Anna Stassen, a 26-year-old copywriter at the advertising agency Fallon Worldwide who treats her bosses like “the guys.” “It’s not that I’m disrespectful; it’s just a waste of energy to be fearful.” Permanently plugged in and juggling? “I’m constantly playing video games, on a call, doing work, and the thing is, all of it gets done, and it gets done well,” says Beth Trippie, 26, a senior scheduling specialist, aptly enough, at Best Buy’s corporate offices who’s also finishing her MBA. “If the results aren’t great, then fine; but if not, who cares how it gets done?”

Can some of this be chalked up to simple naïveté and brio, hallmarks of every generation in its youth? Sure. But experts believe that this won’t wash away with age. “It’s not a case of when they grow up, they’ll see the world differently,” says Joseph Gibbons, research director at the FutureWork Institute. “These values don’t change over time.” So if companies want to attract, retain, manage, and motivate the next generation of workers, they’re going to have to adapt.

## Discussion Questions

1. What will organizations have to do to adapt to the influx of needed Generation Y individuals?
2. Is Generation Y really that different than previous generations that entered the workforce in large numbers? Explain.
3. Will Generation Y individuals have to make adjustments in their style, preferences, and interests to be successful in their careers?

## Notes

1. John M. Ivancevich, Robert Konopaske, and Michael T. Matteson (2008), *Organizational Behavior and Management* (Burr Ridge, IL: McGraw-Hill/Irwin), pp. 12–20.
2. Ibid.
3. Susan Adams (April 2010), “Women’s Work,” *Forbes*, p. 52.
4. U.S. Department of Labor estimates per telephone discussion (October 10, 2007).
5. Ruth Milkman and Kim Voss (2004), *Rebuilding Labor: Organizing and Organizers in the New Union Movement* (New York: ILR Press).
6. Allen Smith (April 2011), “Stay the Course Advised on Health Care Reform,” *HR Magazine*, pp. 13–14.
7. Ibid.
8. “French Unions Set New Protests Over Higher Retirement Age” (September 8, 2010), *The Wall Street Journal Online* (accessed on April 5, 2011).
9. K. Lesli Ligomer and Todd S. Liao (November–December 2010), “Unionization and Collective Bargaining New Tools for Social Harmony,” *The China Business Review*, pp. 28–32.
10. Javier Espinoza (September 7, 2010), “World News: Londoners Copy with Transport Disruptions,” *The Wall Street Journal*, p. A19.
11. Diane Brady (March 24, 2011), “DeMaurice Smith on the NFL Labor Dispute,” *Bloomberg Businessweek* (accessed on April 5, 2011).
12. “Sparring Unions Now Working as One” (February 24, 2011), *The Wall Street Journal Online* (accessed on April 5, 2011).
13. <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/prod2.toc.htm> (accessed on October 1, 2007).
14. Ibid.