

Highlights from EY's Generations research

The generational management shift and related perceptions

- **Management is evolving quickly.** In the past five years (2008 through 2013), both during and coming out of the recession, there has been a significant shift in Gen Y and Gen X moving into management roles: 87% of Gen Y managers surveyed moved into a management role during this period vs. 38% of Gen X and 19% of boomer managers.
- **Gen X leads the pack** when it comes to positive perceptions of both the management skills as well as the characteristics of each generation. Members and managers of Gen X were perceived favorably on nearly every characteristic in the survey. In addition, Gen X was viewed as the generation best equipped to manage in current economic conditions as well as in 2020.
- Expectations that **Gen Y will manage effectively in the future** nearly double (from 27% now to 51% in 2020).
- Three quarters (75%) of survey respondents who identified as managers agree that **managing multi-generational teams is a challenge**. Different work expectations (77%) and a lack of comfort with younger employees managing older employees (72%) were the leading challenges identified.

In terms of the work environment, what do the different generations value?

- **Cash is still king among all the generations** and ranked first by nearly half of all respondents (49%), while benefits such as healthcare and retirement ranked first by 22%.
- **Flexibility is the most important workplace perk among the non-cash/benefits perks**, with 18% ranking it first. Gen X said they would be more likely to walk away from their current job in the absence of day-to-day flexibility (38% vs. 33% of Gen Y and 25% of boomers).
- While women (20%) across all generations valued flexibility slightly more than men (16%), surprisingly **men were more likely to say they would “walk away” from a job if day-to-day flexibility was not offered** (34% men vs. 30% women). Gen X men (40%) were most likely to leave if flexibility was not offered.
- Respondents anticipate a **shift to more flexible hours**, as 62% of all respondents currently work during standard office hours and only 50% expect to do so in five to 10 years.
- Examining another perk, **Gen Y respondents were significantly more likely to rank promotions first** (13%) over Gen X (5%) and boomers (4%).
- Across all generations, women (8%) and men (7%) nearly equally valued promotions, with **Gen Y women (16%) valuing them the most**, followed by Gen Y men (10%).

Positive and negative characteristics of members of each generation

- Compared with other generations, members of **Gen X achieved the top scores in being considered a “productive part of my organization”** (73%), a “team player” (65%) and “nurturing and essential for development opportunities” (56%).
- Members of Gen Y were viewed as the **“best” at being “tech savvy”** (78%) and being social media opportunists, or leveraging social media beyond marketing (70%). Gen Y also scored higher than boomers for being the “best” at “collaboration” (27% vs. 20%), “adaptability” (41% vs. 10%) and being “entrepreneurial” (29% vs. 15%).
- **Gen Y also scored highest in three out of four negative traits** in the survey, such as being perceived as “difficult to work with” (36%), “entitled” (68%) and “lacking relevant experience” (59%).
- **Gen X (70%) is best equipped to manage teams effectively overall.** Regarding managerial skills, **respondents overwhelmingly favored Gen X** (considered the “best” on nine of the 11 attributes).
- **Gen Y (69%) just surpassed Gen X (68%) in displaying “diversity” skills**, or the ability to build culturally competent teams and to not discriminate based on race, gender, sexual orientation, age, physical abilities, etc., including taking measures to avoid unconscious bias.

To review the full EY Generations research findings, visit [ey.com/US/generations](https://www.ey.com/US/generations)