

Investigating the State of Happiness of Generation Y/Millennial Members: Insights into Engaging the Unique Cohort

Case in focus: The Dilemma of the Young Project Manager

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Literature Review

Myths & other Researches on Gen Y/Millennial

There are varied myths and partial projections that have been propagated about the nature of Gen Y. It is perceived that Gen Y delay making major decisions, like having children or buying a home (Taylor). Generation Y, the Millennial, are knocking on our doors. They are educated, connected, technologically advanced, and productive. However, they come with an unprecedented sense of entitlement and self-worth that existing field managers and employees find exasperating (Herbison & Boseman, 2009). Gen Y are also seen as not saving enough for retirement, not know where to begin the saving s process, and they are seen as finding the process confusing and difficult (Bridgeford). The stereotype propagated of Gen Y as workers racing home at five in the evening and working late at night from their Blackberries is but a tired caricature. The truth is, a higher percentage of Gen Y workers strive to impress the boss, arrive earlier, work later, and take on extra responsibilities than their older peers (Laff). Again, Gen Y employees have often been negatively identified as demanding and self-serving, but research shows that if managed well, they can be a rich source of high-performing talent with the added ability to use technology like a second language. They can perform myriad tasks across a number of business disciplines, and many are willing to live just about anywhere as long as the job and company are 'fun' (Schnorbach).

Gen Yers have been accused of having a misguided notion of superiority; one who look at work-life balance with less of former and more of latter; a generation that has outrageous sense of dressing and least respect for timeliness; one who are naturally skeptical, always believing that can do anything; and the ones who are too busy watching MTV, tweeting, blogging, and texting, all at the same time (COLLINS, 2010). While in reality, Generation Y is highly responsive to experiential strategies (Sullivan and Heitmeyer). Though individuals within generation Y may have different traits, the shared experiences of its members impact attitudes and perspectives across the group (Yeaton). It's also been studied that Generation Y is particularly vulnerable to the future economic downturn (Lim). Millennial employees 'job hop' because of attitudes and ideals shaped by their upbringing. Gen Y have parents taught them they're special, that they can do anything, and as such should not settle for any less than what

they deserve (Pace). Millennials on their part have grown up at a time when the future of social security benefits has been in doubt. In addition, they've also heard their parents 'generation express anxiety about saving enough for retirement. In short, they struggle with the problem of how to make a living, live a satisfying life and save for the future, all at the same time (Willmer).

Gen Y's story is not all irritation and conflict. The generation is also heralded as smart, eager and technologically savvy (Williamsan, 2010). In characterizing Gen Y employees, they are seen as smart, opinionated, and have grown up with a multitude of choices. They aren't afraid to challenge management and are willing to confront the status quo (Walen). Gen Y also seeks the best health care and retirement benefits employers can provide, as well as defined career paths (Isom-rodriguez). The traditional perception that Gen Y is only money driven has been proved to be a myth. Generation Y'ers have an aggressive approach towards pay packages, expectations of a work/family life balance, quick rise up the corporate ladder, and lack of employer loyalty (Conference & Incentive Travel, 2008). Most Gen Y members tend to believe their time is their money (Butler). Management wants more and better work out of every Gen Y-er and for their part. Gen Y-ers are looking to earn more of what they need and want (Tulgan, Managing in the new workplace, 2009). For Gen Y, remuneration isn't the only important consideration they weigh while accepting a job. The key features that attract Gen Y are listed as professional growth and development, work-life balance, variety, social interaction, responsibility, input and reward, and recognition (Twyford). Gen Y also place higher value on the opportunity to build trust-based relationships, the potential to work flexibly, and career development over steady employment (Read). Gen Y employees interviewed opine that a flexible work schedule was one of their top requests when applying for jobs (Robbins). Gen Y demand work/life balance, are technologically savvy and competent. They also know how to get the job done anywhere, anytime (Levine). Gen Y places a high value on having enough flexibility to pursue hobbies and interests outside of work (Downs). Gen Y wants to have the best of both the worlds – a promising career and a social life and believe it is possible to have a social life outside of one's work life without a compromise on career (Sokolowski).

The Gen Y Imperative

'A BPW Foundation's Gen Y study published in April 2011 also noted that by 2025, Generation Y will make up roughly 75% of the world's workforce. With this many millenials making up the majority of the workforce by 2025 — only 13 years away — employers can't afford not to take notice' (Dhawan, 2012). More than one-in-three American workers today are Millennials (adults ages 18 to 34 in 2015), and in 2015 they have surpassed Generation X to become the largest share of the American workforce, according to new Pew Research Center analysis of U.S (FRY, 2015). Census Bureau data. From an organizational perspective, engaging with a workforce means engaging Gen Y. For managers though, engaging Generation Y could be an immediate challenge, this imperative operates within an ability to adapt to a flattening and

increasingly connected world (Reynolds, Bush and Geist). Gen Y can't be just counted in a limited fashion as the next generation of workers, as they also double up as the next generation of consumers, and more importantly they will be the key to determining whether businesses succeed or fail. Any short-sightedness in the approach to engaging Gen Y can affect a business firm in the long term (Sheahan). Whether they are employees or consumers, many companies think that Gen Y is a powerful segment and engaging them & capturing them is very important (Ochalla, 2009). Research also points to the fact that many are oblivious to the changes in the workplace due to the change in the composition in the workforce and that there is renewed need to understand the new workforce (Gen Y) to engage them better. As the economy recovers, however, companies will return to the challenge of winning over enough highly capable professionals to drive renewal and growth. Only then will they realize that the rules of engagement have changed – that the landscape of talent management has been transformed (Hewlett, Sherbin, & Sumberg, How Gen Y and Boomers will reshape your agenda?, July–August 2009). Successful leaders have determined that the need is not for the new workers to conform to management's previous ideals of the perfect worker, but instead for managers to raise the bar of their own capabilities to adjust their standards to fit this generation (Allen & Syfert, DECEMBER 28, 2009).

Research Objective

Investigate the state of happiness of Generation Y in India and draw insights into engaging this cohort.

Methodology

This work is based on Qualitative Research. Qualitative methods are generally used to address questions about the way people organize, relate and interact with the world. In order to investigate the happiness and unhappiness elements present in the life of Gen Y it was necessary to understand how Gen Y organizes its thoughts, perceptions and feelings and how they relate to happiness. Hence it was necessary to choose qualitative research method for conducting this particular research. This research is based on the 'text as a proxy of experience' and has used depth-interview to capture free-flowing text. Learning how individuals experience and interact with their social world and what meaning they derive from it is considered as interpretive qualitative approach (Walsham, 1993). Interpretive qualitative approach is further categorized into grounded theory, phenomenology, narrative, ethnography and case study (Ridder & Hoon, 2009). This research is descriptive in nature and uses interpretive qualitative research, using the narrative approach. Narrative Analysis approach uses stories, first hand experiences, using the perspective of the story teller individually as compared to a set of the subject.

Unit of Analysis & Unit of Observation

In this research the Unit of Observation is individual (depth-interviews). The Unit of Analysis is at a group level (the Gen Y cohort).

Sampling Design

Purposive sampling was used for the purpose of this research. The population selected for the purpose of study was Generation Y. Among them Gen Y who were either at a post-graduate level of education or those who had completed their formal education were selected for the purpose of the study. All the respondents were graduates belonging to engineering, pharmacy, computer science, commerce and arts disciplines. The respondents were both male and female and in the age group of 21-25 years. The work experience of the respondents ranged from 1 to 5 years.

Qualitative research normally is inappropriate for estimating quantities. Hence the old familiar reason for increasing sample size does not apply in qualitative research. Most research literature on ideal sample size in qualitative research indicates that *'qualitative sample must be big enough to assure that we are likely to hear most or all of the perceptions that might be important.'* N of 30 respondents is considered to be a reasonable starting point for deciding the qualitative sample size. *'An N of 30 reduces the probability of missing a perception with a 10 percent-incidence to less than 5 percent, and it is the upper end of the range found by Griffin and Hauser'* (DePaulo, 2000) (Baker, et al., 2012).

For the purpose of this research a sample size of 36 Gen Y respondents was selected. In-depth interviews were conducted with all the respondents and their narratives were recorded and documented.

Data Analysis

Narrative is considered to be a *'powerful tool in the transfer, or sharing, of knowledge, one that is bound to cognitive issues of memory, constructed memory, and perceived memory'*. In the book *'Acts of Meaning'* (1990) by Jerome Bruner he considers the narrative form as a non-neutral rhetorical account that aims at "illocutionary intentions," or the desire to communicate meaning (Bruner J. S., 1990).

The data was analyzed using the following steps:

- a) The research question was further divided into two questions: What factors or elements does the participant consider integral to his/her cause for happiness? What factors or elements does the participant consider causal to his/her cause for unhappiness? Further probing questions were asked during the in-depth interviews to understand the happiness and unhappiness factors for Gen Y.

- b) The raw data was captured in the form of interview transcription.
- c) Bruner's functional approach was used to organize the data. This approach focuses on what roles narratives serve for different individuals. In this approach, '*narratives are viewed as the way in which individuals construct and make sense of reality as well as the ways in which meanings are created and shared*'. The focus of this form of analysis is on the interpretations of events related in the narratives by the individual telling the story (Bruner J. , 1991).
- d) The data was interpreted using interpreting qualitative approach. The data was interpreted for patterns, themes, and regularities as well as contrasts, paradoxes, and irregularities (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996).

Analysis of Findings

Jenny's Story

Jenny is a young MBA, fresh out of the college, working, independent and a gadget-addict. She works as a marketing manager with a reputed brand and loves to flaunt her professional status. Financially she is secure and despite being a fresher feels she has career security. However by her own confession she leads a 'Calendar Life'. She no more has enough time for herself, her friends and family. Birthdays, festivals and even calling home have to be accommodated during weekends, since the 'calendar' simply does not allow anything except work schedule. Nobody to go back to at home, not enough social bonding with friends make loneliness a habit for Jenny.

Is this only Jenny's Story or is this more endemic with Gen Y's new state of happiness?

Analysis of the findings involving considerable in-depths with Gen Y shows the emergence of a paradox that permeates throughout the happiness quotient of Gen Y and paradoxes are spun in all these wellness parameters (emotional, physiological, material and social) comprising the happiness quotient.

Paradoxes dotting Material Wellness

Security-Stability paradox: Gen Y has more career security as compared to Gen X. However while Gen X had more stable jobs, Gen Y, despite having high career security, have high degree of job instability and financial insecurity. This instability stems from the environmental uncertainty and also from the fact that this generation is highly aspirational & not averse to taking risks. '*Generation Y are more career savvy they know what they want, they believe they can achieve it and they are actively planning to do just this. They are optimistic about the future and while the recession may have dented their confidence slightly they don't intend on letting it keep them down*' (Deloitte, 2011). The top three factors that lure them into a company are money, benefits and growth. If Gen Y sees an absence of a career-path they prefer to quit. At

the same time, job stability remains one of the top three career concerns of this generation, along with financial security and career satisfaction (RobetHalfInternational, 2008).

Income-Maintenance paradox: Gen Y is financially prosperous. However they also have high maintenance cost and cost of living as compared to Gen X, primarily because of rising inflation and peer pressure. The peer pressure on lifestyle and high maintenance cost is magnified by the intervention of social media. A survey by American Express Business Insights found that Gen Y is the most materially-endowed generation ever at the same time Gen Y-ers like to spend money. The survey also found that there was shift in the consumer demographics making-up the luxury market customers. Before recession the 'old people' making only 10% of the luxury market did 70% of the spending. However the recession has moderated this self-indulgent group. And post-recession most the luxury spending is done by Gen Y consumers (AmEx, 2011). 'A recent survey from the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants shows that over three quarters of millennials want to have the same clothes, cars and technological gadgets as their friends, and that around half of them have to use a credit card to pay for basic daily necessities such as food and utilities' (Cussen). According to marketing research firm Kelton Research, Gen Y's spending power is almost \$200 billion a year. Recession has not dampened the spirits of Gen Y in terms of spending (Aquino, 2012).

Paradoxes dotting Physiological Wellness

Pace-Time paradox: The pace at which Gen Y operates is very high, yet they have less time as compared to Gen X. Many respondents have said that they many times feel that 'it's a race'. As per the recent household survey by the Directorate of Census Operations, Bangalore (India) around 0.35 million people eat-out every day in this city alone, mostly out of necessity. Gen Y are multi-taskers and generally use three devices at a time, out of which at least two are communication oriented e.g., phone, email, Facebook, or other IM (Trendspot, 2012). According to a study by ASSOCHAM¹, no fixed meal hours and non-stop telephonic sessions are causing gastric problems, together with fatigue and headaches that might have detrimental consequences on the health in the long run.

Opportunity – Health paradox: Gen Y has far greater opportunities, especially on the professional frontier, like global postings, development & learning avenues etc. than Gen X. However the cost of prosperity & a rush to make most of these opportunities in as less time as possible has meant greater health scares, obesity problems and stress-related symptoms in Gen Y. Many Gen Y respondents told me that they find it 'difficult to relax'. Gen Y has been found to be the most stressed generation ever, showing signs of irritability, anger, anxiety and depression. Many of them already suffer from diabetes, and high blood pressure, making them

¹ ASSOCHAM is a not for profit organization, facilitating reach of India to all businesses around the globe. It is also referred to as the "Chamber of Chambers" having in its fold more than 400 Industry Chambers, Trade Associations and serving more than 4,50,000 Corporate Members from all over.

four times as likely to die from strokes and three times as likely to contract heart disease (CASTILLO, 2013) (Guerin, 2013).

Paradoxes dotting Emotional Wellness

Contacts-Friends paradox: Gen Y has swelling number of virtual friends but they have very few people whom they can call friends. Most of these friends are contacts on social media platforms. Those Gen Ys who had 400+ friends on Facebook were asked to identify friends out that list who they think will be with them in every thick and thin. Many participants could name only one and some none out of their list of Facebook friends. In contrast Gen X has fewer friends but they are friends for life. The emotional security hence that Gen Y has is quite low as compared to Gen X. Facebook friends might not be real friends for various reasons – one Facebook puts all types of relationships in a single category of friends; second that despite ‘to friend’ being a verb, it is a fairly passive activity on Facebook. Whereas in real life, making someone one’s friend is hugely active incident; and finally, the personal investment in friending or unfriending people on Facebook is extremely less. Implications of doing same in real life is very high and consequently the stake of the subject (URIST, 2015). Many young people have literally hundreds of Facebook friends but confess to having only a couple of real friends, who are mostly from childhood or school. A survey of British women showed that most on an average have 338 Facebook friends but researchers found that the average number of true friends came out at just five, with some women admitting they have only one. True friends were classified as those one turns to in emergencies (KIRKOVA, 2014).

Space-Loneliness paradox: Gen Y has definitely greater space for themselves that they love too at times. In fact interestingly one of Gen Y female participant was quoted as saying during one of the in-depth interview sessions that – *“I want my parents to be near me but not with me.”*, indicating that they prefer their space non-trespassed till they permit it to be. Despite this they suffer from prolonged loneliness. ‘Organization’s Relationships Indicators Survey 2011’ showed that most of the Gen Y felt extremely lonely, much more frequently as compared to other generation members. Despite being heavily networked over social media, they were lonely. Social networking such as Facebook didn’t necessarily alleviate loneliness. Lack of meaningful connections and interactions with people seems to be the cause behind their loneliness (Choahan, 2011). In his book ‘Loneliness’ John Capcioppo had shown how loneliness negatively affects human physiology and emotionally disconnects them from others. Loneliness is not being alone. Being surrounded with people, however not having meaningful relationships, connections and interactions could severely impair one’s companionship and consequently make him/her lonely. Loneliness is more like a survival response, like hunger or thirst, urging one towards finding a companion. However if that fails, loneliness has tremendous negative impacts on a person. The blood pressure climbs and gene expression falters. Cognition dulls; immune systems deteriorate. Aging accelerates under the constant, corrosive presence of stress hormones (Gibson, 2010).

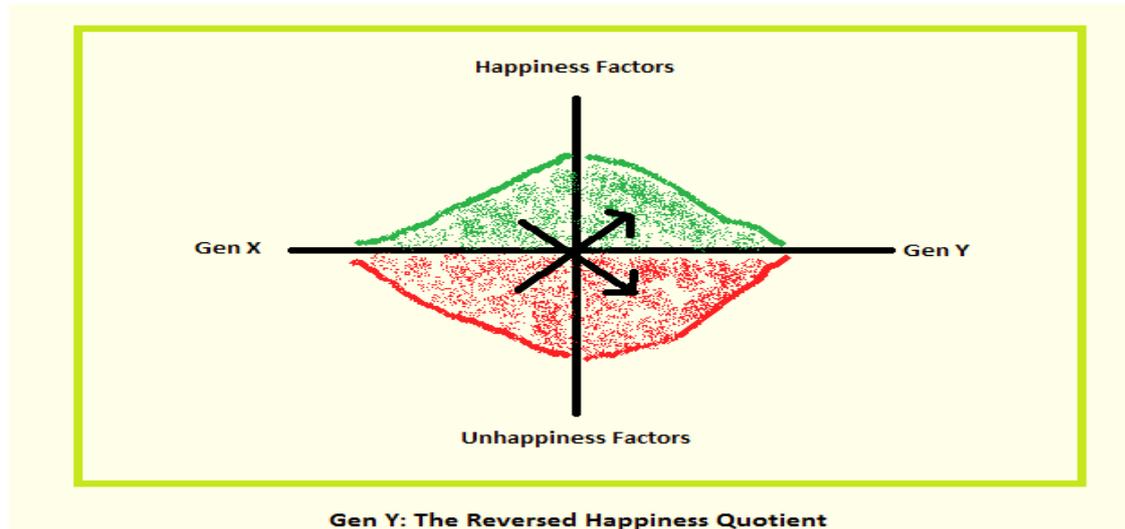
Relationships-Bonding paradox: Gen Y has comparatively more relationship choices like 'Single', 'Live-in', 'LGBT' etc. than Gen X, yet they have far less cohesiveness and bonding in most of their relationships. Break-ups are too common among young. Gen Y is said to be redefining the boundaries of dating. They are more flexible and do not mind in trying relationships and see if they work. For them it is important to determine if they can have a sense of self and their own freedom in a relationship before they make a commitment, and they do this much more compared to any other previous generation (Assimos). Even then, relationships seem to have a short shelf-life for Gen Y. Divorce rates are high amongst Gen Y couples. Lack of maturity as to how to maintain a functional family after marriages has been attributed as the biggest cause of divorces (Gross, 2012). Gen Y is also seen as those who delay marriages. In an U.K. study it was observed that there's been a steady increase in the average age of those joining together in matrimony. In fact many Gen Ys do not even want to marry ever (Goldhill, 2014).

Paradoxes dotting Social Wellness

Freedom-Support paradox: Gen Y has far greater individual freedom & autonomy than Gen X but they also have less support system than the latter. The social & family support systems for Gen X were better & stronger than for Gen Y. Gen Y has high desire for freedom and flexibility. A 2013 study by Millennial Branding and ODesk found that over half of the working Gen Ys surveyed had quit their jobs to pursue independence and work for themselves (Voice, 2015). Research has also indicated that Generation Y has more freedom and job options than any other group in history (PrincetonOne). Social support has been described as "support accessible to an individual through social ties to other individuals, groups, and the larger community" (Lin, Simeone, Ensel, & Kuo, 1979). In the absence of real friends and meaning connections and relationships, Gen Y has poor social support system. Social isolation and low levels of social support have been shown to be associated with increased morbidity and mortality in a host of medical illnesses. In contrast to low social support, high levels appear to buffer or protect against the full impact of mental and physical illness (Ozbay, Johnson, Dimoulas, Morgan, Charney, & Southwick, 2007).

Festivals-Celebration paradox: Gen Y has far more festivities & special days on offer to celebrate than the counted festivals for Gen X. However for Gen Y the scope to celebrate these festivals & special days is limited. Festivals, birthdays, anniversaries, friendship day etc. all get relegated to already crowded weekends. No wonder Gen Y value control over their time and a flexible work environment that allows for work-life balance (KellyServices). A joint study by PricewaterhouseCoopers, University of Southern California, and London Business School on millennials revealed that a majority of them are unhappy with long work hours and felt that work interfered with their personal lives. Many of them also want to work from home or shift their work hours (Meglio, 2013).

Overall it shows a depth-deficit for Gen Y & although their material wellness has improved, their physiological, emotional and social wellness has drastically declined. This has resulted in a reversed happiness quotient for this generation. In other words, whatever were unhappiness factors for Gen X has transformed into happiness factors for Gen Y and vice-versa.



Case in Focus - Dilemmas of the Young Project Manager

Neil Philip worked as Senior Project Manager in VT Info Solutions² Ltd. He has been with the company for the last four years. He has been consistently receiving highest performance ratings for the last three years and this year he even received 'Star Performer of the Year' award for his outstanding contributions. Prior to joining VT Info Solutions, Neil has worked with another top-notch IT firm. Age notwithstanding, his ability to learn fast, take leadership initiatives and high performance saw Neil rise through the ranks quickly in his not so long but eventful career. Despite having an impeccable performance record, Neil often found managerial roles and responsibilities difficult to handle. Often he had no clue as to how he should approach certain situations, especially when it came to dealing with his team members. This was compounded by the fact that the company changed to a new project management approach under pressure from the client that changed the role of a project manager and of the team members. Cost-pressures from the client were also making things difficult. Neil had however performed well in his project manager role and his team was happy with him as their manager. He had even been patted on his back by his superiors at VT Info Solutions and their on-site client managers. Neil considered himself to be lucky.

² VT Info Solutions is an alias for the actual mid-sized Indian IT Services Company that was the focus of the case study.

VT Info Solutions

VT Info Solutions is a mid-sized IT services company and a wholly-owned subsidiary of diversified business conglomerate. VT Info Solutions which was established in 2000 is one of the fastest growing IT services companies in India.

VT Info Solutions is committed to deliver end-to-end IT solutions and services to its customers worldwide. It provides solutions across industry verticals that include:

- Banking, Financial Services & Insurance (BFSI)
- Retail
- Travel
- Consumer Packaged Goods (CPG)
- Manufacturing
- Media & Entertainment
- Hospitality
- Transportation & Logistics

VT Info Solutions primarily operates out of Bangalore from its sprawling campus that accommodates around 4,000 people. It also has around 650 employees in Kolkata, the headquarters of its parent ITC.

It is looking at significantly expanding its capacity to prepare itself for the future demands. The company, which employs around 7,000 people across all its centres, is looking at trebling its headcount in the next four-five years. The firm is now establishing new buildings in its Bangalore campus, which can accommodate around 10,000 people in Phase-I, which is expected to be completed towards the end of 2016. In Kolkata, its parent company ITC was allotted 17 acres of land, a part of which is being converted into an IT park. On the phase slated for completion in 2017, VT Info Solutions is looking at creating a capacity to accommodate around 5,000 people in Kolkata.

Outside of Bangalore and Kolkata, VT Info Solutions has already established its presence in Pune and Chennai. “

The company is also considering few more locations such as Vizag, Chandigarh and Indore for its future expansion plans.

The Client

Neil handled one of the most important and elite client accounts – a premier international bank from Europe. The client had been quite pleased with the way Neil had handled various assignments. However times were changing for the client. Europe was going through a bad economic situation. The cost pressures on the bank was weighing heavier day by day. Added to this the bank had committed a strategic blunder on their home turf. In a bid to assign higher priority to premium customers they had ignored the small retail customers. The bank decided to discourage small value transactions by levying certain extra-processing charges on them. The client banks' larger customer base came from medium and small customers. They saw this as a motive to discourage them to continue being banks' customers. Although the strategy of the bank was not able to achieve what it had intended (i.e. to attract high net worth customers) but they definitely lost a lot of medium and small customers, who were disillusioned by then non-preferential treatment meted out to them by the bank. The strategy had backfired and bank's customer base had undergone a heavy depletion. Its image amongst the customers and general public was now of a high brow bank that cares only for the elite. This image that they had earned recently was not helping them either. The bank had undertaken damage control measures but the results were very slow to come by. Meanwhile depletion of customer base had worsened the banks' position, already suffering blows of recession. There was heavy pressure on the bank to cut cost and it was looking at various avenues to do so. An extremely painful but pragmatic decision of cutting jobs & laying-off some of their European employees and transferring those roles to their Indian software vendor – VK Info Solutions was also on the anvil.

New Project Management Approach

As a part of their cost-cutting move the bank was keen to transfer the delivery responsibility to VK Info Solutions. Neil had been impressive with the way he hand handled past projects for the client and the bank was keen that Neil takes over the delivery role as well. Neil saw this as a challenge primarily from his role as a manager. Two years back when Agile methodology (a new project management methodology, different from the earlier waterfall methodology) had been implemented in the company, his role as a project manager had undergone a drastic change. From a more directing, controlling function, Neil's role became more of a facilitator. Now with delivery responsibilities coming in his role would change again and become more involved in the day to day things. Neil was not sure how his team members would react to this change. The delivery responsibilities would mean that degree of his involvement with team members will increase. It would require him to do more than just facilitation and guidance. However from his own career perspective, Neil also saw delivery role as an opportunity to further consolidate his position. The company was also planning to send him on-site for few weeks.

During the visit among all other project managers, Neil appeared most keen. Neil made no attempt to hide his keenness.

Pressures of the New Role

One month into the new role, Neil was feeling the pressure that kept mounting. The complexities were far greater than Neil had anticipated. He was being held accountable by the business side for the deadlines that had been promised earlier by someone else, prior to Neil taking over the delivery. Anyways he was trying to cope-up with the pressure. The pressure was on Neil's team as well.

Christmas was around the corner. Most employees took vacations during this time of the year. Neil was forced to turn down leave requests from some of his team members as the first delivery schedule was by end of January. The entire team worked through Christmas and New year. As a sign of solidarity, Neil also did not proceed on his annual vacation.

The first delivery schedule was nearing. Everything was on schedule. The progress was satisfactory. Two days were left for the implementation. Neil checked into the office as usual. Browsing through the mails, one mail in particular caught Neil's attention. The mail had a subject line reading 'Resignation'. Neil feared the worst! Any resource leaving the team at this juncture would be catastrophic. Neil's fears were proved correct. Pankaj a senior resource in the team had put down his papers citing personal reasons. Neil was worried. How would the Development Manager and the System manager, at the clients' end, react to this news? – Neil thought in his mind. Besides getting a new resource of equal caliber would not be easy. And even if he gets a replacement then too bringing up the new resource at Pankaj's level of performance would take time. After the January delivery the next delivery was scheduled for mid of April. That was just two and half months away. *'It would not be easy...'* thought Neil. What bothered Neil more was the fact that Pankaj had chosen an e-mail to communicate his decision rather than speaking one to one with him.

Later in the day, Neil spoke to Pankaj and tried to explore ways to retain him. However, after speaking to Pankaj, Neil got a feeling that he had made up his mind and would not change his decision. The only consolation for Neil was the fact that Pankaj would have to serve one month notice period. Hence he will still have Pankaj for the next 30 days.

Neil communicated the bad news to both the managers on the client side. The managers sounded worried but did not say too much about the issue.

More Attrition

The first delivery went without much glitch. Neil's happiness was however short-lived. Bhasker was Neil's colleague and Project Manager in another account. Bhasker and Neil met over lunch and Neil came to know that Pooja, a key resource from his team, had applied for a new role in Bhasker's account through the internal job board. Neil obviously did not know about this as according to the company rules whenever a resource applied on the internal job board then

his/her manager would not be intimidated about the same till the person has been found fit for the new role and has been finalized for the same. This rule had been put in place to prevent managers from pressurizing their resources to desist from seeking transition in roles or projects. Such incidents had happened in the past and therefore in order to make internal job postings truly democratic and meaningful the rules was brought into effect. However this rule did not prevent the manager of the applied account or team to know about such applications. This is how Bhasker came to know about Pooja's application. It was a common informal practice among managers to quietly alert each other about such applications.

This news disturbed Neil. Pooja had recently moved into his team through the internal job board itself and since then had proved to be a really useful asset for the team. When she had joined his team, Neil had promised a better and a more challenging role soon. But Neil had not been able to deliver on his promise as yet primarily because of the spate of changes that had taken place since Pooja had joined the team. Neil felt a bit guilty about the whole issue. Pooja's application on the internal job board meant that she would move out of the team sooner or later.

Neil thanked Bhasker but he knew he could not approach Pooja directly on this issue. Neil could hardly recover from the shock when news of another senior resource's resignation rocked him. This resource too had communicated his decision through e-mail and had cited personal reasons for quitting.

Neil was under severe pressure. Development and System Managers expressed serious concern over key resources leaving the team. Neil felt that somehow indirectly they were holding him responsible for the resignation. Neil thought this was unfair as he could not control most of the things happening in the team. Additionally the market for business analyst was really picking up and they were being poached by rival companies. VK Info Solutions was also not the best pay master in the industry. All this was compounding the issue of attrition. However Neil had no way to communicate this to the client. Neil worried how the managers would react when they hear about Pooja decision to move out of the team.

Neil was himself quite distressed over the developments and if things kept moving in this direction then the next delivery schedule would be in jeopardy.

Dilemmas

The client was interested in moving the 'product-owner' role offshore. Cost issues were definitely ruling the decision. It costs almost one-third in India to hire a resource of that stature as compared to hiring a similar resource in Europe. Neil also knew that the European Product Owner Stephanie was not in very good terms with the System Manager. Neil's relationship with Stephanie was however quite good. In fact Neil had grown quite close to Stephanie since he

had taken the 'delivery' responsibility. Neil had faced a lot of challenges since then and Stephanie had helped him sort out a lot of things and put the house in order.

The transfer of 'product-owner' role to India in all likelihood would mean that Stephanie would lose her job. Neil's liking for Stephanie was not lost on the client. In one of the meetings the Development Manager had directly asked Neil if he had any problem in transfer of this role to India. Perhaps he had read Neil's emotions showing on his face. Neil could only recover quickly from the momentary lapse in attention and promised to prepare for the transfer of 'product-owner' role.

'Product-owner' was someone who interacted with the business for its requirements and negotiated on the deadlines. Neil had to identify one of his team resources to take over this role. Neil remembered that Tincy one of his team's resources had expressed desire for a similar role in the past.

Neil called for a one-to-one meeting with Tincy. When Neil mentioned about the product-owner role to Tincy, she seemed excited about the prospect but seemed unsure whether she could handle the responsibility. Perhaps the gravity of the role was now growing up on her! Neil however ignored her nervousness and reluctance to take up the role and somehow persuaded Tincy to take up the product owner role. Tincy reluctantly agreed.

Neil did not waste any time and called up the Development Manager and told him that Tincy had agreed for taking-up the 'product-owner' role the same day. The Development Manager Gerard asked Neil whether he was sure about Tincy, to which Neil replied in affirmative. Gerard sent an e-mail message to the entire off-shore team communicating that Tincy was the new product owner and necessary knowledge transfer would be given to her to help her transition into the new role. Neil was relieved that something was working at last.

Next day an early call from Gerard surprised Neil. Gerard was quite upset. It seems that Tincy had called up Gerard and told him that she did not want to take up the product owner role. Neil made all attempts to explain that Tincy had indeed said yes to him for the new role, but Gerard was unimpressed. Neil was clueless as to how to resolve the situation. He and Gerard would have major loss of face if Tincy did not accept the role of product-owner. What would the team think of him as a manager? What would client think of him as a manager? Neil felt that the ground was slowly slipping under his feet.

The pressure had also started mounting from the client side and on most occasions it was unreasonable. He was being held accountable for deadlines that had been promised by someone else before he had taken over the delivery responsibility. His company also kept quite as this particular account was the only major account that it possessed. Senior leadership of the company remained non-committal on such aspects. Late hours, weekend workings were becoming alarmingly common for Neil. His family life had taken a backseat. Neil's frustration

was rising. The fulfillment that Neil derived from his work was waning away. The thought of quitting his present company often crossed Neil's mind. Neil did not know where his exasperation was leading him to...

Discussion & Conclusion

This reversal of millennial happiness can have significant impact on engaging them as employees. Organizations engagement efforts tend to be skewed in favour of compensation, career issues of employees or in other words in further strengthening their already strong material wellness. Whereas what the Gen Y is really missing-out on is emotional, physiological and social wellness. There are bachelors/spinsters Gen Y – alone and lonely, no one really to go back home to, there are 'DINK' couples who earn a lot, have no kids and have hardly time for each other. Their emotional securities are low; they miss social & family support system and live under high stress. Engagement efforts of the organization should focus more on improving the emotional, physiological and social wellness of their employees rather than just concentrating on the material wellness.

The implications of the reversed happiness quotient of gen Y also means that organizations understand that there are controllable and uncontrollable aspects related to Gen Y engagement.

The uncontrollable like personal social media activity, 'my time', weekend time, social life, kind of personal relationships, holidays etc. are the areas that organizations should not even think of transgressing. Gen Y doesn't take to such trespasses very kindly. During one of my corporate speaking session one senior HR of an Indian IT MNC came over to me after the talk and shared that he now understood why he was not getting encouraging response & good registrations for the marathon-race event that the company had proposed to organize on one of the weekends. Companies organizing team-building activities, a marathon etc. on weekends is such a bad idea with gen Y.

The organizations should instead focus on the controllable aspects in their effort to engage gen Y. The controllable elements can further be classified as a) Design Issues; and, b) Relationship Issues.

a) **Design Issues:** Design issues are generally drawing board stuff. The design relates to organization structure, policies, norms, process and procedures. For example there is an Tata Consultancy Services has an initiative to educate the young mothers amongst their employees that how the first 1000 days of a baby are very important & why the mother should spend more time with their babies during these days. They also offer less demanding roles to such employees till the time they think that they can give work more priority. Engagement that results from such efforts is much more profound and sustainable & impacts the happiness quotient of the Gen Y significantly. During one my interactions

with a HR of a MNC, he told me that it was not easy to keep the Gen Y on bench for too long, despite the fact that they would put the benched employees on high-end training. Gen Y's career security, a belief that they would get a better job and the instability in the environment is what makes them impatient on the bench, that this gentleman was not able to comprehend. A leaner bench, with a re-look on hiring systems are currently working are some of the design issues that could work for this particular organization.

b) **Relationship Issues:** Relationship issues embrace all the touch-points for the Gen Y employee inside any organizations. These touch-points could be his/her supervisor/manager, senior leadership, HR, administration, peers, juniors etc. The reversed happiness quotient has even more necessitated the same as Gen Y scores very low on emotional wellness, as well as social wellness. An understanding supervisor could make a lot of difference. Many a times however the situation is quite converse, as some recent surveys have revealed. In a survey (ET, 2012) conducted by talent management expert DDI found that one in three employees do not consider their boss to be doing an effective job, while almost half of the workers think they could do their boss's job better than them. The research was based on surveys of more than 1,200 full-time employees from the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, China, Germany, India and Southeast Asia.

- a) Prominent reasons for such high levels of dissatisfaction with their bosses or supervisors were:
- b) Poor Motivators (Low motivation from their supervisors, to give their best effort).
- c) Poor listeners (Most bosses never or only sometimes listen to worker's work related concerns).
- d) Non-involvement (bosses do not involve their employees in to decisions that impact them).
- e) Non-respectful (damage self-esteem of employees).
- f) Temperamental (did not remain calm & constructive while discussing problems).
- g) Missing basics (low on courtesy, respect, honesty & tact).
- h) The study also found that most employees surveyed had left the job because of their supervisors.

Such responses make the touch-points as pain-points for the Gen Y employee. Seemingly, a lot needs to be done to improve the quality of relationships, most of that cultural and attitudinal.

New realities in the environment of Gen Y have reversed their happiness quotient. The answer to engaging them lies in understanding this reversal and identifying design and relationship issues that need alterations or tweaking to suit to Gen Y needs.

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