Clarion Review

Fuse: Igniting the Full Power of the Creative Economy
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Mary Gavin
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The twentieth-century workplace meets the twenty-first-century workforce in this examination of the mashup between Boomer employers and Millennial employees that Jim Finkelstein and Mary Gavin say will ignite the full power of the creative economy.

Twenty-first-century business requires the skill and experience of Boomer managers and CEOs, but also the "technosmarts," wide-ranging creative thinking, and consensus-based work style of Millennials, the 80 million Americans born between 1975 and 1995. But while 64 million skilled Boomers will retire by the end of the decade, the Millennials set to replace them are finding corporate life alien to them, resulting in an 80 percent job-dissatisfaction rate, the authors write; the high rate of turnover costs businesses about $75k per incident.

Millennials are different from other generations in their attitudes, work styles, ability to take risks, and the ways in which they process information and are motivated. "They do not perceive boundaries of time, space, age, gender, race, ownership, or country of origin," say the authors, and the failure to take these differences into consideration will be costly to American business.

Described as the first "post-literate" generation, Millennials, though highly educated, are often faulted for their lack of written communication skills and are best reached and trained through animated, interactive, short presentations. Highly visual, they respond better to video than to text, have their own language, and will not stay long with organizations that don't offer them rapid professional growth, personal satisfaction, recognition, respect, and rewards both monetary and otherwise. Millennials will leave jobs, not because there is a compelling reason to leave, but because they see no compelling reason to stay. With little fear of authority and a heightened sense of risk-taking, they will say what they think, and are not averse to advising their social networks, with the click of a mouse, that a particular company is not a good place to work.

Finkelstein and Gavin discuss these differences with understanding and good humor.

They honor Boomers for bringing enormous strength to the new creative economy: “They provide knowledge, resources, stability, and implementation skills. They model behaviors for Millennials from customer service to corporate responsibility. They are passionate about the social causes they embrace, as well as their generation’s conviction that each person can make a difference.”

Boomers have, in fact, changed the world: they ended the war in Vietnam, pioneered racial parity, opened universities and workplaces to women, and explored outer space; now they have to come to grips with the ways in which technology has changed that world.

Finkelstein and Gavin bring their considerable skills and training in communication, strategy, and business and organizational development to this practical and enjoyable resource. Fuse will equip employers with the skills and strategies to attract and retain the new breed of employee, and help Millennials navigate corporate life. Enabling these two generations to work together may well result in powerful change to the American workplace and the creation of an economy characterized by innovation, energy, and productivity.

Kristine Morris