

making weconomy

COLLABORATIVE ENTERPRISE MAGAZINE

a cura di Logotel

11

QUID NOVI? GENERATIONS WORKING TOGETHER

The eleventh edition of Making Weconomy looks at the universe of collaborative organisations through the generational lens, and in two sections: the first examines what generations are, describing them in detail and highlighting how they affect organisations and broader society; the second section turns the lens on the interaction between different generations. The issue closes by looking at generations from five different vantage points: language, motivation, relationships, space and time.

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WHY

ARE NEW FORMS OF COLLABORATION POSSIBLE? AN INVITATION TO INCREASE BIODIVERSITY.

Class of 74. The transition generation. Our X factor is our awareness of the transition between living in an analogue world to living in an analogue and digital reality. I read my email via Outlook, I rarely use the Cloud, and try to avoid Whatsapp as a work tool. In current jargon, I'm a digital immigrant; for my children, the ultimate progeny of Generation Z, I'm merely "slow". I work in the here and now but I also have an eye on the future. Why am I telling you this? Because every time we try to pin down something as elusive as understanding the other, the people we work with (and for) we always run the risk of a one-sided point of view. I should explain that better. Generations are not new, but we're only just beginning to understand how complex they are and realize more than ever before, given the current speed of change, the huge cultural "divides" we face. There are six different generations (or five if two are lumped together) currently in the world, out on the street, crossing paths in the underground: the "Reconstruction" generation (born between 1926 and 1945), baby boomers, split into leading edge (born from 1946 to 1955) and trailing edge boomers (born from 1956 to 1965), the transition generation, also known as Generation X (born from 1966 to 1980), and the famous Millennial Generation, otherwise known as Millennials or Generation Y (born from 1981 to 1995). Finally, we also have the net generation, aka Generation Z (born between 1996 and 2015). Four generations are currently working in today's organisations but before long there will be more, partly because of the rising pension age and average lifetimes. This won't be the first or only news item about the generational gap. A few weeks ago there was a story in the news about a group of pensioners who clashed with some young people in the post office. The latter had used a time-saving app (probably designed by a millennial UX designer) to skip to the front of the queue. It is equally interesting to see that organisations, a mirror image of society, are breeding grounds for countless misunderstandings and clashes between generations. We expect staff to be motivated to stay with the organisation

on the basis of our own experience without considering that Millennials have other interests that we have completely overlooked. The upshot is that turnover increases dramatically and not everyone identifies with the organisation.

I met with a client recently and listened to how chatbot programmes (literally an algorithm which conducts a conversation between a robot and customers) will need new roles to be added and cause others to disappear. In our planning for the future we never once imagined such "techno-discrimination", a phenomenon which, in addition to affecting older sections of the population, also impacts a sizeable portion of the more disadvantaged Millennials, the ones without the means to keep up with the "flow". Indeed, these days it's interesting to see how we do "old things" in new ways, from buying tickets to doing the grocery shopping, moving around the city and work. Imagine what it will be like for Generation Z in 2030 when, with the help of robots (another generational species), they will also do things in new ways. At that stage, the transformation of habits on one hand and business ecosystems on the other, will be even more disjointed and rapid. That's not all: if the primary objective of an organisation these days is to sell goods, in the future it will increasingly be to sell the use of, or time with, products and positive experiences of every kind. This will alter the situation dramatically. "Contact" with customers will be increasingly a continual exchange of value, and therefore, of service delivery. Unfortunately, the planning process in many organisations is still anchored to old methods and the rigidity of their organisational structures, which assign generations to restrictive vertical categories, inhibiting the development of new ways of interacting, and thwarting relationships which could be dynamic, vibrant and, by definition, in constant evolution. Providing a service means responding to people's lives. Not from the outside, but from within. Mutating continuously, in every direction. Such mutation requires a special kind of always-on responsiveness because standard and manual modes are no longer enough. People change, their needs and their

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interpretation of them change, as do their actions and the contexts in which they are deployed. What will Generation Z be like in 50 years? Will Gen Z'ers have to work with machines? What will Millennial grannies and grandpas be like? Outlooks, thoughts and action must remain plastic and pliant, with a view, in particular, to honing the ability to deploy new generation "solutions". In order to do this, we must become people experts, well-versed in people's needs, behaviours and emotions; we must become collectors of their stories and of the ways they interact; we must broaden our outlook, make it sharper, more inclusive and capable of that rare quality that is interpretation. These are difficult skills to develop and practice in organisations. Which is why it is imperative that we use generations as an additional filter to gain a clearer insight, and to explore the preferences, motivations, aspirations and fears of, sizeable portions of the population. People who share the same times, places and activities but with different mindsets and outlooks, who need to find a way of advancing together despite their different backgrounds. Watch out, though, there's always the danger, as I mentioned earlier, of which point of view to choose. If you ask a baby boomer from the 46-55 period, they'll tell you that the younger generations are incapable of going beyond appearances. But did we when we were young? Millennials won't be young for ever. What's the limit? We all wear our generation like a tattoo and see others in terms of how they differ from ourselves, often flattening out the nuances and emphasizing only the extremes, the light or shadow. Reality is rich with nuance. Reality is multifarious, it's "multiverse". Understanding generations is an excellent starting point that will help us to better comprehend our colleagues and our children, but it's not enough. Our only chance is to make sure we also offer environments, spaces, times and opportunities in which generational biodiversity is assured, where collaboration between generations can occur. Environments in which each person, with their own individual experiences and characteristics, are part of the process. It's the only way to

avoid single points of view which exclude rather than enhance, the beauty of reality. So no more interfaces designed by young people for young people, no more executive boards open to top managers but not to conversation with other generations. Just as organisations can age, with the right mix and in the right hands, they can also rejuvenate. Biodiversity must be increased to bring into action new generational species. More than ever before, a balance has to be struck between generations that is not only pacific but also productive. The 11th issue of Weconomy has this issue as its theme: "Quid Novi? - Generations Working Together", literally "what's new?" The issue aims to start a broad conversation, specifying who exactly we are talking about when we talk about generations, and outline the similarities and differences between them. We have tried to inject the highest degree of biodiversity into the conversation, mixing up different skills and professions to assure multiple perspectives and vantage points: you will hear from someone who works with younger generations on a daily basis (a psychiatrist), someone who works with corporate managers (a professional trainer), someone who plans and creates services (an interaction designer), a designer of Made-in-Italy products for all generations, someone paid to imagine the future (a futurologist), someone who invents the future, working with AI (IBM research centre director), someone who makes cultural change happen in the workplace (HR manager and personnel recruitment and management director), someone who takes change to the world (Global HR Manager), someone who experiences change first-hand as an entrepreneur, someone who trains and teaches the new generations (a university professor) and someone who has just embarked on their corporate career. Collaboration between generations is an opportunity. The risk though is that the degrees of separation between motivation, types of relationship, language, and management of time and space, are so huge that there is no meeting point between them. Let's at least do what we can to set up a first date. Enjoy!

GENERATION MAP

Long-term savers. They work hard, have a sense of duty, and are loyal to the company. They are motivated by the sense of self-esteem they get from having a successful career. They earn in order to build up long-term savings.



Reconstruction agents. These are today's senior citizens, the last generation to have lived through the war or experienced the immediate aftermath. They had no access to mass education.



**RECONSTRUCTION
1926-1945**



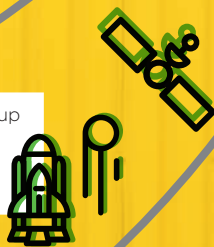
BABY BOOMERS

Techno-luddite. They are nervous about technology, learning the basics but only because they feel they have to, to keep up with society at large.



Experience trusters. They accept, respect and trust authority and experience. They will cooperate if planned from above.

Baby boomers. This generation grew up with television, the Cold War, student activism, feminism, youth culture and space travel.



Basic users. They spend 76% of their time online and most log on via home ADSL broadband rather than wireless, mainly to write emails, browse health-related sites and do home-banking.



Hard workers. They value reputation, recognition, competition, independence and hard work. At work, they are motivated, enjoy teamwork and don't want to be too closely controlled. They often work late. Their preferred rewards are promotion and pay rises.



LEADING-EDGE BOOMER 1946-1955



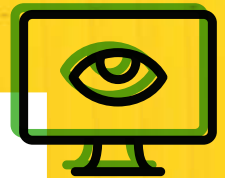
Carefree consumers. They keep doing what they've always done, but with higher expectations and a higher standard of living, age not slowing them down. This means they are consumers with considerable savings and considerable time on their hands.



World-changing warriors. This generation was instrumental in the many battles for social justice and cultural change in the 1970s.



Digital learners. Technology and innovation are seen as useful or necessary tools, to be adopted with an associated learning curve. Some contributed to forging the contemporary digital age.



Team players. They are more than happy to work in teams when they recognize the shared goal.



Critical late adopters. They're never the first to try out new technology but when it becomes mainstream, they possess the volume (purchasing power and quantity) to drive product growth significantly.



Engaged individualists. They are politically active and also driven to achieve personal goals.



High-salary optimists. Having grown up in a period of post-war optimism, they were able to put recession behind them and become a powerful force for the advancement of the consumer society.



Collaboration exploiters. They are more focused on themselves and their desire to climb the career ladder makes them increasingly competitive and less eager to collaborate with others, unless they see the collaboration itself as a means of advancing their career.



TRAILING-EDGE BOOMER 1956-1965

GENERATION MAP

SANDWICH Gen x 1966-1980

Digital adopters. They are confident in the use of the latest digital devices. They spend 96% of their time online and are multi-tasking web users, not just for social networking but also to visit governmental and institutional sites, to search for financial and economic information, book travel and take care of their health.



Work-life balancers. They value flexibility, honesty, and a good work-life balance. They are independent, self-sufficient, do not recognize authority and are focused on personal growth. They work to live. Their preferred reward is free time.



Invisible few. Born in a period of fewer births after the baby boomer generation. They grew up through the energy crisis, the first wave of new technologies, the fall of the Berlin Wall, Aids, working mothers (latch-key kids), and the rise in divorce.



Collaboration individuals.

They are comfortable working in teams, provided their individual contributions are recognized and rewarded.



Cautious savers. Given the new types of flexi hours and job insecurity they may have encountered on entering the labour market, their attitude towards money is one of saving rather than spending.



Inspiration hunters. They are easily bored if the surrounding environment is not stimulating, inspiring and responsive enough.



Technoholics. Referred to as digital natives, this is the first generation that has never known a world without internet; they are technology-dependent and have limited knowledge of any other non-digital alternative. They use mobile devices and chat technology to communicate, using short-form, symbolic language due to their being reluctant readers.



Collaboration natives. From as early as their school days, they have known that their success depends on the value of the people working with them and the quality of their interaction.



Digital socialites. They grew up surrounded by technology. They spend 95% of their time online; they use the web for almost all their communication needs, interacting through social networks, searching, studying, working, gaming, watching videos and listening to music.



Competent optimists. They value strong leadership, sharing and community spirit, fair play and diversity. In the workplace, they have faith in their own abilities: they are optimistic, straight-talkers and cooperative.



Transformation experts. Born and raised in a constantly changing world that was dramatically different from the one their parents knew, at the peak of the consumer society. They experienced the explosion of technology and the media, multi-culturalism and non-traditional families.



MILLENNIAL Gen y 1981-1995

Extended-present dwellers. They live in an extended present with fewer opportunities to plan and build a secure future. They earn but don't save.



Collaboration seekers. They seek out situations that encourage a cooperative culture. They use technology to communicate and cooperate on open-access projects.



Pragmatic superheroes. They want to save the world from the chaos created by previous generations but, having seen the financial and economic difficulties of their parents and older siblings, they often have a plan B.



iGENERATION Gen z 1996- ...

Cultsumerists. In terms of purchasing habits, they adhere to very strict value maps which guide their everyday decision-making. They are more conservative than millennials when it comes to spending.



NEXT GENERATION MAP

Warning. This text wasn't written by Narrative Science software, and no, it isn't the product of artificial journalism or automated storytelling. It was written by a real person, Thomas Bialas. Enjoy it while you can, because in 2030, 90% of general information found on the web will be software managed, without a human finger going anywhere near a keyboard.

Gender. What will the human race be like in the artificial world? Gender neutral, of course. So it is hardly surprising that National Geographic dedicated a special issue to the gender revolution in January, but without fully addressing the technology aspect. Digital and artificial civilization, with its fluid aesthetics and society, is gender neutral to the core.

Body hacking. Seeing ourselves as a "code" which can be programmed and changed, just like software. Body hacking as an accepted and perpetuated practice to alter our performance and manipulate in order to break down barriers between people and objects.

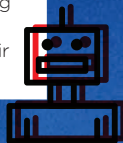
Post. In this post-demographic era, the new generation is constructing its identity free from the ties of age, sex, income, geographic and gender status. Not only gender neutral but a neutral human race in general, resulting in a melting pot of behaviours.

Co-evolution. We're no longer competing against machines. We've now teamed up with them to progress together. Previous generations swallowed the new wave of technological development, primarily the notorious artificial intelligence, albeit begrudgingly, with horror, fearing for their jobs. But Gen Alpha doesn't see it that way. Co-evolution is the new status quo. And redefining the concept of the human race or species is the goal, including genetically modified children.

ChatBot. The "robotisation" of chat turns software into future life companions who take us by the hand as we make our decisions at home and at work. These personalised Bots, or, better still, intelligent agents, grow up and grow old with us. And they'll probably know us better than our partners, children and work colleagues.

Community. The new generation is getting used to living in communities where the car is no longer a simple means, or enabler, but a familiar friend that interacts on an equal footing with people in the community.

2020. Or thereabouts, but maybe they have already come into the world in the last two or three years. "Real, virtual or artificial, it's all the same to me," say the artificial generation, as long as we get brain and body upgrades, too. Interacting and collaborating with machines is normal for them. Nothing frightens them, not even (perhaps) machines that read their feelings or detect their lies.



Gen Alpha overturned. As a countertrend or counter generation, we also have to reckon with sceptics and the suspicious who maintain their own human diversity aware of the fact that if machines take over our thoughts and actions, our qualities will fall into decay, ever chipped away with disastrous effect by technology.



Interacting. with holograms and configuring objects like Tom Cruise in *Minority Report* or Tony Stark in *Iron Man* is no longer an illusion but an ongoing new experience. Take the HoloLens, for example, the wearable holographic computer from Microsoft, or all the new voice-activated devices (voice Interfaces). The new generation transforms accessing information (typical of the Internet) into accessing an information experience that engages as many senses as possible. This could also radically change day-to-day working practices: being immersed in a three-dimensional workplace that is more like a game.



Symbiosis. Between man and machine. Sensing the computer or Internet inside you. Not a hallucination, but a real possibility. Give it ten years and the mind-controlled tablet could become a gadget of everyday use (or misuse). The future Generation Alpha will thrive on addition to technology. What could be more normal than being connected to a thousand devices from head to toe?



Welcome Roboteenager. Dreaming of becoming an artificial robot? After Generation X (the Neglected), Generation Y (Millennials) and Generation Z (Native Digitals), back we go to the first letter of the alphabet, this time the Greek alphabet, almost as if to usher in a new age: Generation Alpha (the artificial actives). Robotics, artificial intelligence and of course the internet will be the most influential technology in shaping the decades to come. It is entirely plausible to picture this generation growing up surrounded by robots and smart devices at home, school and out and about. And artificial sex which, just like virtual sex, seems to us now what online sex did in the past: deviation and not what you would wish for. From sexbots (android escorts?) to sex toys controlled remotely from computers and smartphones, the future Generation Alpha will be very different from an anthropological viewpoint.



Co-techno. Today's technology platforms are highly participatory and open to social interaction. Artificial ones even more so. Collaboration with gender neutral technology is the new frontier. Forcing us to work in a team with bolts and intelligent sensors. Forcing us to talk over our decisions with artificial intelligence sites and adaptive robots. Collaborating not with humans but with artificial resources will be a part of everyday life for Generation Alpha. And who's to say that humans will be the ones making the decisions? Who'll be taking the orders - computers or humans?



Brainternet. I think, therefore I am online, the ethos of Generation Alpha. From the web of things to the web of thoughts. Surfing the net purely by the power of thought is the next breakthrough heralded by brain interface devices. So from Facebook to Brainbook: in other words, posting pictures directly in our brains?



QUID NOVI?

IMAGINARY DIALOGUE ABOUT GENERATIONS WORKING TOGETHER

Generations: are we talking about grandparents, parents, children and grandchildren?

Not specifically. When we talk about people, we inevitably think of grandparents, parents, children and grandchildren, but generations are more than this. The great thing about the concept of “generation” is that it contains something in which we can all see ourselves.

Are generations basically containers then?

No, I didn't explain that very well. Generations are not containers. Quite the opposite, they are complex aggregations of indicators which help to define and interpret how specific groups of people will behave. Each one has the fuzzy edges of a tennis ball rather than the sharp, well-defined edges of a box. Individuals will see themselves in several common traits associated with their respective generation but not necessarily all of them. They will also possess characteristics which might relate more closely to other generations they are not part of. The boundaries are much less marked than those of a container.

Because obviously we are all different from one another...

Exactly! Regardless of the generation we belong to, at the personal level we are all different. Two people born on the same day, in the same place, will obviously have different ideas and feelings about things and their lives will move in different directions; nevertheless, they will be exposed to the same historical, cultural, and social events and will use the same channels to interact with them. This means they are likely to have similar approaches to similar dynamics. Take how a 15-year-old communicates, for example, compared to a 51-year-old. They have the same tools but different ways of using them.

Isn't there a risk of over-generalising?

There's no doubt this is a risk and a mistake people often make when talking about generations. The important thing is not to make sweeping statements but to refer to the indicators mentioned above. They can be used to understand the attitudes of sections of the population born in a given period. Although, clearly, not all Italian millennials are influenced in the same way by the economic and financial crisis, most of them don't have a particularly rosy vision of their futures.

I've heard lots of talk about "Millennials".

But what about the other generations?

Millennials are the ones who attract the most attention from the media and marketers but they are obviously not the only generation. The Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) recently published a report, for instance, describing Italy through the generational lens. Six generations are named, starting with the "Reconstruction" generation (people born between 1926 and 1945) through to the iGeneration or Generation Z (born from 1996 and 2015). The four other generations are: baby boomers, split into leading-edge (born from 1946 to 1955) and trailing-edge boomers (born from 1956 to 1965), the sandwich generation, also known as Generation X (born from 1966 to 1980), and the famous Millennial Generation, otherwise known as Millennials or Generation Y (born from 1981 to 1995).

It's important to remember that the number of generations depends on where we are talking about and who is talking about them, and also that some definitions survive and go global (see Millennials) while others disappear.

Ok, let's take these as a general framework.

What characteristics do each of them have?

Well, we're lucky to have someone from each generation here with us today. Let's hear from them.

Who wants to go first?

iGeneration: Sorry, I was posting a photo on Instagram, I didn't quite get your question....

Reconstruction: You're all the same! My grandson is always on the Internet too.

Leading-edge baby boomer: At least we had ideals when I was young.

Millennial: But it was your generations who left the world in this state!

Trailing-edge baby boomer: Well, at least we made money, all you do is hug trees.

Sandwich: I have nothing to add.

Maybe it's better if you and I just chat...

Yes, let's do that. In any case, you'll find a table in the next few pages telling you a bit more about each generation.

Great! One last question: what's all this got to do with Weconomy?

Modern organisations have at least four of the six generations we've been discussing and each one, indubitably, has its own needs and interests which the organisation has to find a way of fulfilling and satisfying; each will also come up against difficulties which have to be overcome. Consequently, all organisations must be able to manage diverse requirements.

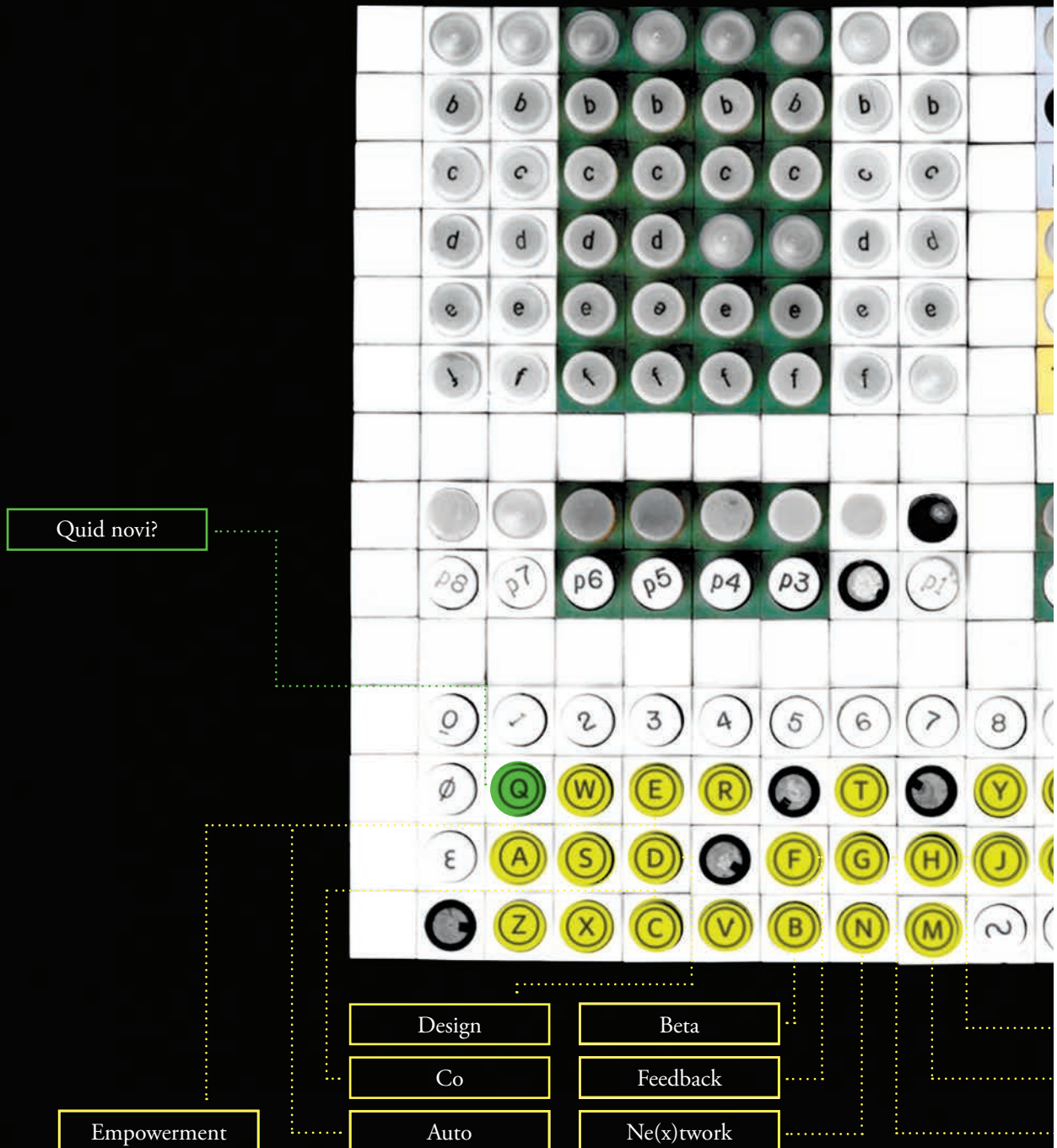
Section two of this file doesn't see age diversity in organisations merely as something to be managed in order to limit any potential damage, it also explores the opportunities it provides to enhance group dynamics. Generational gaps don't have to be a source of conflict and tension. Encouraging individuals from different generations to collaborate can often lead to greater success.

That's all good and well, but isn't it a risk...

We said it was the last question. If you want to know more, you can read more of this file!

Previously on Making Weconomy:

- **01.** Auto, Beta, Co: (re) writing the future
- **02.** Design: (re)shaping business
- **03.** Empowerment, Feedback, Gamification: once upon a time in retail
- **04.** HR: Human (R)evolution

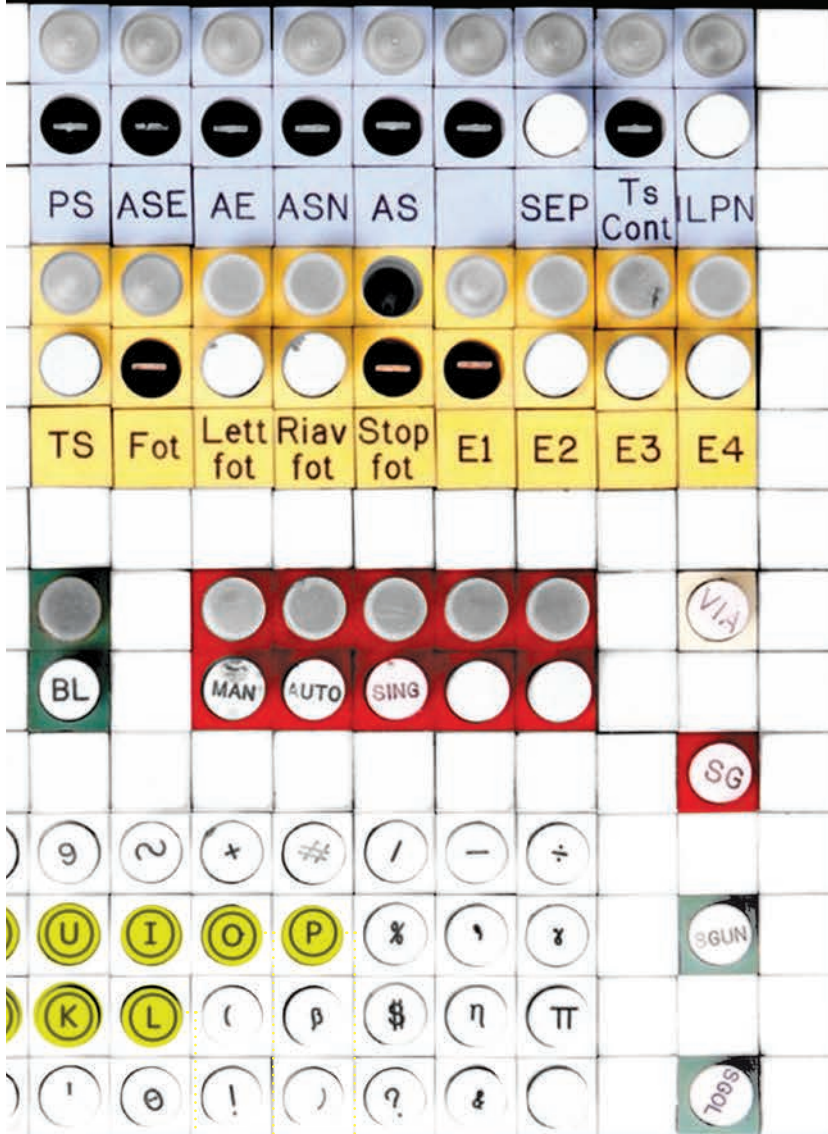


- 05. Info, Indie, Inter:
renewing innovation
- 06. Local: Talent,
Community, Making

- 07. Management: Cross, Self,
Content
- 08. Ne(x)tnwork: Flow,
Amplified Identity,
Common Environment

- 09. OOPS, OR, OK - the
paradox of continual
choice
- 10. P.O.P. collaboration -
Point of presence

- 11. Quid novi? -
Generations working
together



Hr

Management

Gamification

Local

Oops, or ok

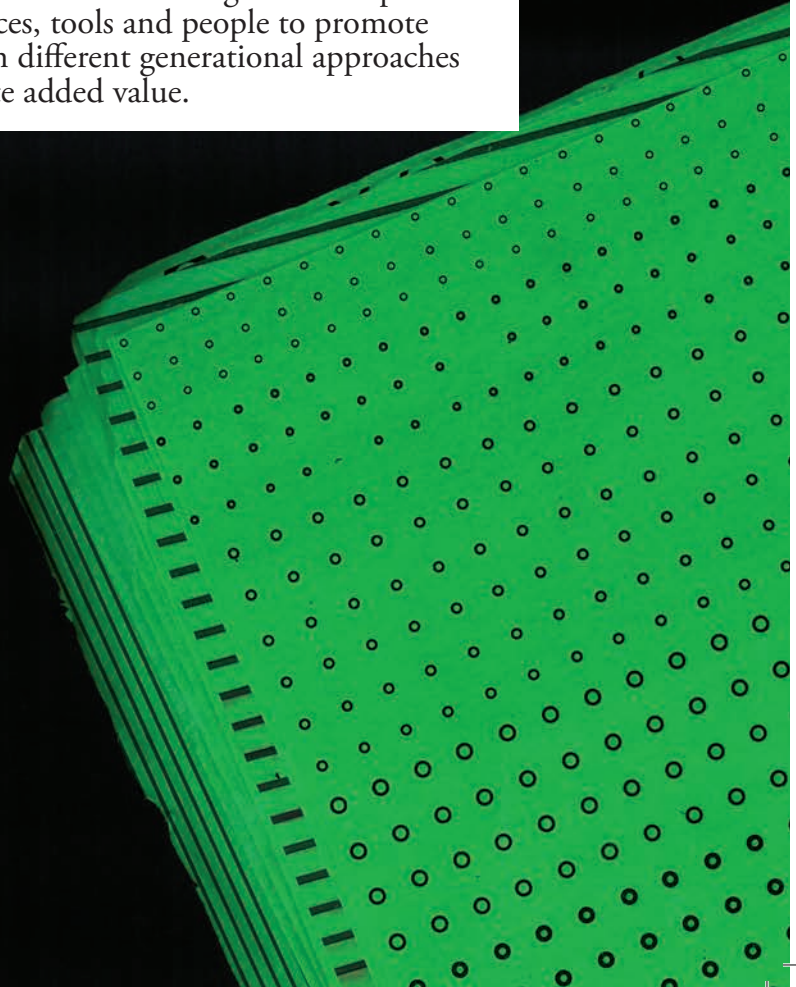
P.O.P.

GENERATIONS

The concept of generation equates to a series of key factors which delineate differences between different sections of the population. It draws attention to the contrasting expectations, fears, needs, interests and challenges that people working together bring with them.

COLLABORATIONS

Differences between generations don't necessarily produce conflict. Collaborative organisations provide the necessary places, tools and people to promote synergies between different generational approaches and thereby create added value.



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PERCEPTION



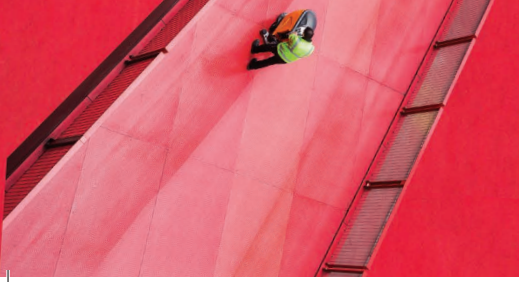
BACKGROUND



IDENTITY



SOCIETY



WIKI GENERATIONS

Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia, defines generation on its Italian page as "all of the people living at about the same time and exposed to events which shape their customs, values and behaviour." So it's more than just an age thing. In fact, a generation encompasses all of the people who experienced and were influenced by the same historical, cultural, social and economic events. More than a mere container, generations are multi-layered but when these layers are pulled apart, they reveal how people from different places and of different ages can have different ways of perceiving and interpreting the world, which are, nonetheless, related. People of any given generation are not identical; they have their own identities and aptitudes but, collectively, tend to have a similar approach to the media or shopping, for example, having been shaped by the same dynamics and trends, absorbed through the same channels and at similar ages.

Looking at things through the filter of generation can therefore help us understand better and predict the preferences, motivations, aspirations and fears of signification portions of the population. Portions of the population inhabiting the same times and places, involved in the same kinds of activities but with different mindsets and outlooks, but who need to find a way of advancing together despite their different backgrounds. This can be seen both from a market point of view and also within organisations, where it is becoming increasingly important to establish an inter-generational balance which is both peaceful and constructive. To do this, we first have to explore exactly what generation, as a concept, means overall.

BELIEVE IT

CREATIVITY

BETWEEN INDUSTRY, ORGANIZATION,
CITY AND... GENERATIONS

Mario Abis
Prof. at Iulm
President of Makno



The idea of generations is inextricably linked to both time and space. New generations of spaces enable new generations of both enterprise and people. Mario Abis talks to us about it.

Creativity, industry, organisation...and cities

Seoul's thirty-five-year strategic plan focuses primarily on investment and growth of the city's creative industries. The same applies to similar plans in London (50 years), Australian cities like Melbourne, and many US cities, such as Indianapolis.

The creative industries are key to development and to how development is perceived in cities, because cities, more than nations, are the main drivers of the economy (they will be home to two thirds of the world's population by 2050). The creative industries are not to be confused with the cultural industry. Operating independently of sectors and markets, creative industries pursue innovation in two ways: radical innovation (overturning or dismantling conventional paradigms and ideas, by discovering a molecule, for example, or inventing reality shows, introducing car sharing) or through small and incremental innovations (of which the digital world is full). What is business creativity like? Is it a conglomeration of individual talents feeding into the business chain or is it an organisation model in itself, hence a collective, cooperative system within the company? The former is not to be ruled out: geniuses who invent new things do actually exist, only there are fewer and fewer of them these days. Finding new collective, cooperative ways of encouraging innovation which are themselves creative structures, is the issue currently gripping the business world. Among the many different visions, there is some key common ground:

1. Vertical, hierarchical organisations are the least creative structure imaginable. Talent residing within the company is suffocated by process: this is the exact opposite of a creative environment.
2. Destructured, horizontal and randomised organisations

provide a different kind of climate which encourages creative communication.

3. The key is to adopt mixed mechanisms (for functions and knowledge), allowing them to cross-contaminate and stimulate each other in building a common framework of differentiated resources.

4. The physical environment (beauty + environmental sustainability) is both the mood and the context within which creativity is triggered.

5. Building open spaces where people can move freely and meet each other while enjoying destructured working times has been found to be conducive to creativity (un-surprisingly, ideas often emerge during coffee breaks or around the coffee machine).

6. The metropolitanization of organisations and offices (leaving aside remote peripheral units which are, however, digitally-linked) is the new breeding ground for businesses which need to "feel" their context, exposing them to the energy and challenges - also sensory - of the city. Cities are, in themselves, the most fascinating and unpredictable creative factory of all.

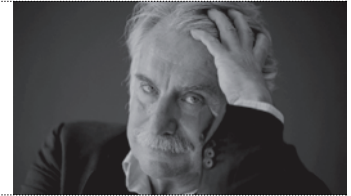
Around the world, the regeneration of industrial areas is engendering aggregations of businesses and workshops stimulating each other in an emerging creative meta-world.

By destructuring organisations, the serendipity model creates open processes which can easily communicate with those of other organisations. The "creative districts" concept feeds into the idea of a collective something: new organisations and shared projects born of the sharing of experiences and visions that takes place within a physical context. We already have multiple examples of design mixing with multimedia, and audiovisual content merging with service projects. As French mathematician Poincaré said more than a century ago, the unexpected links between the things we already have provide the stimulus to create those which as yet we don't.

BELIEVE IT

CULTURAL STRENGTH AND HUMILITY THE INGREDIENTS FOR GOOD INTERGENERATIONAL COOPERATION AND CO-WORKING

Paolo Crepet
Psychiatrist



What talents, visions, experiences and life events do the different generations have?

The relationship between generations is essentially a competitive one. More than ever before, this is also the case in the workplace. But it's more a financial than a power struggle now, or rather, it's a struggle to secure purchasing power. My father managed to buy two houses through honest, hard work. Doing the same thing, my daughter will be lucky to secure half a garage. Leaving aside rising house prices, the younger generation also faces radically different economic circumstances. There has been a lot of hype about start-ups but young people would never get credit now without the backing of their parents or grandparents. This is a problem that might be here to stay. **Collaboration at work between generations varies from group to group and sector to sector.** In the farming and food sectors, interaction between generations is widespread. This also happens in the fashion industry where the bosses prefer to hire their stylists young. Unfortunately, this is not the case in the public sector. It couldn't be, on account of all the red tape and restrictions on employee turnover. The fashion world, on the other hand, looks to young people for their fresh, innovative thinking. At school, new staff are expected to stick to tradition. And the school system gets progressively more decrepit in the process. Italy has many young mayors but they are prevented from injecting youthful spirit into the office because of rules and boundaries. To go back to the economic gap, **values have changed and behaviours also, as a result.** Today people buy phones that cost 1,800,000 lire, the equivalent of a month's salary for previous generations. Beware: this is fact, an objective observation, not a judgement. We now have mobile phones, holidays, pizza nights and designer outlets. Previous generations didn't. They didn't worry about such things. They didn't need Black Friday to buy a jacket. If they needed a jacket, they saved up and they bought one when they had enough money. Nowadays, we use Black

Friday to buy our third or fourth jacket. As I said before, I'm not judging: life has changed. Take the people who cross hazardous seas to get to Italy: they have nothing, except a mobile phone, a device no one can be without these days.

What changes are younger generations bringing to and taking away from organisations? Can the new generational mix be harnessed to engender new ways of working?

For me, the positive effects of intergenerational interaction outweigh the adverse ones. But the change is cultural. In the past, we used to study then do the job for which we'd studied. Nowadays, we jump from one non-occupation to another. Before, if you started out as a joiner's apprentice, you'd be a joiner for the next fifty years, and everyone saw you as a joiner. Work completed your identity, it made it real and recognisable. These days, if you're lucky, over fifty years you'll go through six or seven jobs. Some will be unsuitable, you won't collect any kind of identity, in fact, you'll collect nothing at all. **To work out who you are, you need to look elsewhere. That's another reason we rely so much on digital platforms: to find ourselves.** We would be wrong, though, to think that young people differ more from the generation that precedes them than that generation differed from its parents. It's not the digital revolution that brought real change to relationships between generations in Italy. **Here, real change came with the transition from a hungry generation to a replete one. This transition - traumatic in a sense - is not a recent one. From shortage to surplus,** we're still dealing with the consequences. For this reason, it is wrong to generalise when we talk about different generations in the workplace. **Cultural strength and humility are what's needed if coexistence and collaboration are to be successful.** Italy is lucky to have a rich fabric of small enterprises which, we hope, could provide the breeding ground for this kind of micro-climate. Which leads us to another delicate topic - generational turnover in the managerial class - but we won't go into that.

BELIEVE IT

NEW GENERATION BUSINESSES

HOW TO GET YOUNGER AS YOU
GROW OLDER

Andrea Boldrin
*HR Director
Decathlon*



There's no doubt that we need to be thinking about generations within organisations. But I think talking about different generations of an organisation is an equally important conversation to be had. For me, when I talk about the business generational phenomenon, what I'm actually thinking about are all those organisations that have shown they can evolve, transforming and reinventing themselves in a constantly changing environment.

An organisation can age, it can remain in the past, it can stay anchored in a different generation, or it can constantly adapt, rejuvenate and keep fulfilling its customers' and its employees' needs. The key word here is "constantly". Change shouldn't be pursued only when something's gone wrong or stopped working; it should be running behind the scenes - constantly. Because to remain stationary is to die.

There's a saying that fits the Decathlon approach quite well: "Fix the roof while the sun is shining." Even when things are going well, there's no need to be scared of change; it's important to make it happen across the company, while anchoring it to the core values of the organisational culture. Such far-reaching change can only be achieved if each layer of the organisation is empowered to make decisions, without fear of error or failure. Rigid box-like structures have to be replaced with more permeable action areas into which workers are invited to take part in the business, in both its internal and external lives, in the most fluid of ways.

At Decathlon, we follow the subsidiarity principle, according to which decision-making has to be brought as close to the point of impact as possible. To achieve this, we took a number of steps. We structured things so that everyone can play an active role and contribute to the

process; we ran workshops that could be attended physically and virtually to give everyone the chance to make their voice heard on a range of organisation-wide issues; we redefined the whole management concept, seeing it more as a T in which the leg is each individual's specific role and the horizontal bar the contribution that each person can make to the company, that something extra to share with everyone (talent, knowledge, passion).

After all, we live in an increasingly social world. Every morning, the first thing people do when they wake up is pick up a smartphone - always on, never off - and take a photo of their breakfast, or like a friend's photo, or tell the world how they slept. We share our feelings, our wishes, our opinions constantly, so it goes without saying that we all want and need to have our say at work. The upshot is that any business that wants to be part of the new generation, needs to be able to adapt, to liberate itself, to change, and to help its people change, giving them the chance to express their ideas.

Freedom of expression needs to be encouraged, and employee initiatives facilitated, to create a culture which celebrates the right to fail. The purpose of this is not just to exorcise the fear of failure and nurture the enterprising spirit of employees, but to allow them to learn from the mistakes of others. The more people in an organisation are empowered to innovate from the inside, the more the company will be able to adapt to changes on the outside, and move from one generation to another with skill and consistency.

Decathlon is like the marathon runner of innovation; it is always on the move, revitalizing itself in small, steady steps, with perseverance and a game plan, updating it constantly. Why? To be, and to continue to be, a new generation business.

BELIEVE IT

DESIGN AND GENERATIONS

A COMMON LANGUAGE IN A CHANGING
CONTENT

Enrico Baleri

Art Director
Centro Ricerche Enrico Baleri



Designers coin new languages to create new products and services. But do new designs take into account the generational gap? Is there a common design language understood by all or does each generation need its own translator, automatic if necessary?

There are no new design languages which vary from generation to generation! There is one, single industrial design language which satisfies enough of the design values to render the product eternal and headed for the international marketplace, save any changes to its functions along the way. Respect for product functions is essential; designers must recognize that functions change and they must change accordingly. Some functions are obsolete these days so the relative objects have been suitably modified: old-style straight sofas for conversation only have been replaced with multifunctional ones for sleeping, making love, dreaming, watching television, chatting, and so forth. The function of the home has changed too, including its role as a place to entertain; the famous "front room" is essential but as it has shrunk in size, the idea of what it should do as a living area has altered. Moreover, the main meeting space in the home is no longer the lounge but the kitchen, currently the Italians' favourite room of the house, thanks to a media push for which Scavolini was also partly responsible. Adverts shifted popular attention away from the "front room" to an American-style kitchen, often cold-looking and outwardly minimalist, stainless steel a go-go, expensive and manufactured by an international brand. I'm aware what I'm about to say might be considered controversial, but if we were to remove the authorship of every decent design project between the 1950s and 1980s, up to the present day, no doubt we'd no longer know the names of the individual designers but the projects themselves could all still be traced to a single author. Take Braun or AEG, for example. Despite the almost hundred years separating, on comparison, them they could both have been authored by Mari or Sapper or Cas-

tiglioni or Zanuso or Magistretti or Caccia Dominioni. The language is the same; it's international.

In your experience as a business leader, how have intergenerational dynamics and relationships between organisations and designers changed?

Several things have changed since the 1950s: 1- The consumer goods industry started to shrink, long-term, after the post-war boom. This was caused by differing economic and financial situations in international markets. Wealth was replaced with sobriety, the middle classes grew poorer, the need for functionality became the prerogative; meanwhile, the market for contemporary objects opened up to a less cultivated, genteel section of the population and this drove up sales of kitschy consumer goods that were both meaningless and worthless. 2- There was no real renewal of the management classes because schools failed to do anything other than teach forms and languages, and failed to focus in any way on product history or the necessary use of modern technology. Perhaps no more than ten people were behind the entire history of Scandinavian, Italian or American design and when they passed away, there was no younger generation ready to replace them. 3- There are no strong cultural background or business models to look up to. Very rarely are today's entrepreneurs the product of experience, as some of us were, thanks to the great mentors we had. The business leaders of old, like the Cassinas, were born of the Cassina family, Gavina emerged from the union of the Gavina family with Carlo Scarpa (who was responsible for the company's intellectual transformation.) If you take these examples, one by one, the lineage and ties are patently clear to see. Business leaders nowadays are often arrogant, have no sense of history, have no interest in exploring the quality of products from the past, and have no understanding of how to choose a talented designer, merely chasing "big names" without first verifying if they are worthy of the job.

PRESENT STORIES

FROM COMPETITIVE EXAMS TO THE RECRUITING GAME

NEW APPROACHES TO RECRUITMENT AND GENERATIONAL MANAGEMENT

In this interview, the head of Personnel Management and Selection at Intesa Sanpaolo, Roberto Cascella, talks to us about the difficulties the generational issue poses for recruitment and management.

What does the generational issue mean for you?

The generational issue poses two major issues for me: how I attract people and how I manage them. Starting with the former: **the main obstacle banks have to overcome at the recruitment stage is how to appeal to professions which are not usually associated with banking. To attract professionals from other fields, it goes without saying that you have to compete with names in which are better known and more popular in that field.** So, competition is much fiercer because it also comes from non-financial fields. Take information technology for example, where the dynamic described above is even worse. Banks are not seen as cutting edge when it comes to IT (which I don't fully agree with) because finance is seen as more traditional, not particularly technological and more tied to the physical than the digital. This is not true now and will be even less so in the near future. These days, younger generations prefer to work in start-ups (other even start one up themselves) or in a large digital firm because they feel a stronger sense of belonging in that world and see more opportunities in it. **A second obstacle, as noted in numerous studies, stems from the tendency of new generations to seek experiences, often disjointed ones, rather than pursuing a permanent job in a single organisation.** Banks are typically seen as a place in which to embark on a long and stable career and this clashes, clearly, with the aspirations of a millennial who would rather collect diverse and different experiences.

Is there any way of overcoming these obstacles?

The answer may be to find **new recruiting techniques which have a stronger experience-based dimension. At Gruppo Intesa Sanpaolo, we developed a Recruiting Game comprising a series of full-immersion, participatory recruitment events. Candidates taking part are asked to compete in team games and undertake a number of technical tasks.**

The aim of this new kind of recruitment is to attract new generations, and take advantage of their readiness to give new things a go and their search for new experiences and things which challenge them. The Recruiting Game has proved to be a success, putting the banking world on the radar of younger generations by offering them something they could only have imagined before and introducing them to a world they might want to enter. The event has turned into an opportunity to meet and overcome stereotypes and prejudice. The laid-back atmosphere, the collaborative spirit with potential "future colleagues", and the informal nature of the encounters, combine to provide unique opportunities to get to know each other, and to learn or propose new things. Everyone contributes something of themselves to the event, and take away just as much.

A brand-new experience for a bank...

Recruiting Game represents a quantum leap for the bank. In the past, hundreds and thousands of people were herded into school gyms and subjected to all sorts of tests, from attitudinal to accounting. In those days, a candidate's main objective was to secure a stable job. The Recruiting Game turns this approach completely on its head. The underlying idea is that

Roberto Cascella
*Head of Recruitment
and Management
Intesa Sanpaolo Group*



a stable job is now less of an attraction than a job in which the occupant can learn, try new things and have fun. The selection process itself gives candidates the opportunity to challenge themselves, to learn and to embark on a series of tasks with a variety of different people, and to ultimately produce something. The selection process has become an experience. An organisation, or service provider, like Intesa Sanpaolo, must build its approach to recruitment, starting from the scouting stage, on the concept of experience. The more positive a candidate's experience, the more likely the organisation is to attract talented people. By extension, the more the positive impression we make on current and potential future customers, the more successful we will be in increasing the prestige of the brand as a service provider.

What lies in store for the Recruiting Game, what will Recruiting Game 2.0 be like?

Organisations have so many touchpoints these days that they can't control access to each and every one of them, especially when it comes to recruiting. The main working model these days is multichannel, with the widespread use of social media (primarily LinkedIn), the "Work with us" page on our website, Career Days and the Recruiting Game, to name but a few. These tools all bring people into contact with the company and allow them to experience it, in both positive and negative ways.

Of these touchpoints, the Recruiting Game is the one that gives people the most powerful experiences but can only reach a limited number of people. The intention is therefore to develop a digital version, allowing us to extend the unique and original experience to as many people as possible. Digital recruiting

techniques will therefore combine the selection of the right people for the organisation with an ever more positive experience for everyone interested in contacting us. The biggest challenge we face is therefore to become ever more social in our approach while offering new generations increasingly personalized experiences.

Moving on to the next major issue, how do you manage the generational mix within the organisation?

We are addressing the issue through a robust change management project which, in an organisation like ours, can't just be rolled out in a blanket fashion given that number of people from younger generations varies from area to area within Intesa Sanpaolo.

The generational issue was initially experienced in a few specific areas, such as the IT sector. In just a year, the overall composition of the division changed radically with 25% of new employees now aged under 32. It goes without saying that human resource management techniques need to be adapted in response to such changes and new leadership tools and models introduced accordingly.

The main challenges we face concern management, professionals and new employees. How are we dealing with them? To begin with, we introduced an onboarding stage that comprises both conventional classroom and on-the-job training. The key measures addressed teaching techniques and the tools used by the people responsible for transferring content to new employees; two new roles were instituted: a specialist tutor and a job mate, whose job it is to sustain new team members in both "head and heart", namely on both the technical part of their new job and also the emotional aspects of joining and learning about the organisation.

Further initiatives targeted management, with emphasis on how to fit leadership style to the generation being managed. **We gave our managers tools to help them produce maps in which leadership style is directly correlated with employee behaviour, the aim being to find links between motivational aspects and subsequent leadership style to allow everyone to express their full worth.**

The motivational drivers clearly vary from generation to generation, both in terms of context and working methods. When faced with a millennial who is more innately attuned to a managerial style that is less hierarchically entrenched, the style used in practice must clearly allow for this type of self-determination rather than enforcing an order-driven style that simply commands obedience. If we don't leave any room in the relationship between manager and staff member for the positive, defining traits of the generation, we fail to lay the basis for the cultivation of their entrepreneurial independence and miss out on an amazing opportunity. **Our chief task, therefore, is to imagine the things driving each generation then, case by case, continually expand our portfolio of managerial and leadership styles in order to have the right one to harness the full potential of each generation within the organisation.**

A tool which I find extremely effective and which should be more widely used these days, is the reverse coaching system. It enables younger generations to work alongside, and in turn influence, the people around them in a mutual sharing of skills and knowledge.

This is an extremely pertinent issue and will become even more so, given that millennials will account for 75% of the workforce by 2030; we must stop underestimating its importance (along with gender diversity) because if we fail to manage it properly we risk not harnessing their full potential.

*The new generations are the managers of the future.
What will they be like, these managers?*

They will be very fluid, in the sense that they will be a lot less tied to, and reliant on, hierarchical roles, but also more limited by "what they know how to do" and the tools (gained through experience) in their personal toolboxes. They will focus more on what they can personally contribute to a task on which sev-

eral people are collaborating. In this regard, organisations will be flatter, less tied to roles and seniority levels because, as mentioned earlier, hierarchy holds no value for the new generations. Circular models will be used.

WECONOMY INSIGHT

TRAINING AND DIFFERENT GENERATIONS

HOW TO ABSORB THE FULL SCOPE OF INTENTIONS

Laura Bartolini
Education Strategist
Logotel



Diversity enriches life; interestingly, a powerful form of diversity, worthy of further attention, emerges when different generations meet and must get along in the workplace in order to plan the future, generate value, and generally exist in uncertain times characterised by events which for the most part are predictable yet not always certain.

Organisations nowadays are faced with the task of managing an ecosystem which is much more complex than in the past, even the recent past: people are retiring much later and young people joining organisations bring with them revolutionary new ways of thinking, working and of handling information due to the technological skills they possess and use regularly, almost instinctively.

For the first time in history, organisations are populated by four different generations: baby boomers, Generation X, Millennials and Generation Z. People from four different eras feed into a company's creative processes despite occasional frictions which can occur when mental maps, organisational models and values metabolized in completely different ways, clash. But if a way can be found to amalgamate and harness the value in each different approach, the result could easily be one step closer to triggering innovation. Having multiple generations in the same team has the potential to be a huge advantage for the organisation.

HR these days deploys resources to attract new employees, using traditional recruiting channels to source senior candidates with proven experience and new channels like social media and apps to fill junior positions. Team managers must be ready to lead groups of individuals using different languages and forms of communication, and with differing habits and ways of thinking. They must make sure the generational gap does not hinder collaboration, turning it into the

starting point for the creation of value added, a point which is often left unexplored.

We hear stories of a world in which sixty-year-olds have the same energy as teenagers and attend university, while thirty-year-olds flit from one job to another and young people manage to find work online in a matter of weeks.

Organisations need to pay close attention to the characteristic traits of the people working for them, and turn the differences in skills between generations into competitive advantage.

Something that hasn't changed over the years are the problems businesses continue to face: how to keep their people motivated? How to reinforce loyalty and sense of belonging to the organisation? And how to improve relations between managers and staff? How should leaders behave knowing they have increasingly less control over information and less able to predict levels of understanding and participation with people from different generations?

Such requirements are radically changing people's work-life balance. If adult training is to have any sense in current society, in the pedagogical sense at least, it will come from the indissoluble link between training, learning and the individual. In particular, it has an essential role to play as a means of personal growth for individuals at work and as a strategic factor in the organisation's success.

We need to ask ourselves what job training can and must do to help both men and women with experience as well as young people from the new generations.

Anyone working in the field of adult training will agree that the sector must seriously reinvent itself because of the apparent dissatisfaction there seems to be with activities professing to be professional training but which fail to live up to expectations.

I'm referring specifically to training which is found to

have had positive results when measured on traditional scales but failed to generate the change expected by those promoting or funding it. Such unfulfilled expectations lie in the differences between the problems the training claims to be able to solve and the solutions offered. The resultant experiences seem to pursue problems rather than prevent them and are more anchored to the individual rather than the hierarchical dimension. **We need to think about what job training means for these generations and what they expect from professional training courses and programmes.**

Baby boomers, born between 1946 and 1965, believe in the motto, “success comes through hard work and study”. Training means professional growth for them. Generation Xers, born between 1966 and 1980, will stay with an organisation if there’s an opportunity to learn and grow. They demand training on innovative topics to have the liberty of knowing in advance what others will catch up with later.

Millennials (or Generation Y or Echo Boomers), born between 1981 and 1995, see lifelong learning as a lifestyle and they are ready to invest their own time and money in specialist courses which increase their visibility and employability potential in the labour market. Their motto is “invest in mobile professional skills.” They want to work with an expert team, developing projects they are passionate about. Their motto is “multitask or die!”

Generation Zers are not quite twenty yet. For them, training means nothing unless it is delivered online and relevant to their direct experience.

In response to these differing requirements, which stem from different underlying beliefs, themselves the result of the varying lifestyles and ways of thinking of the different generations, we are now seeing solutions which aim to offer, and to be, a “school of working life”. This is a definite “change of gear”, a broad restyling even, in order to manage change, that the training sector has been pursuing for some time. In teaching terms, the use of the word school assures the required consistency with the life-wide dimension, the idea of lifelong learning, because education seems to be taking on, and cementing for itself, an increasingly strategic role in present society, not just to tackle the many changes encountered, but also to manage and steer actions, objectives and goals to reinforce new personal visions.

The words “working life” refer to the life experience inherent in the multitude of meanings on which the

idea of training is based: work as cohabitation, participation, sharing, collaboration, cooperation, from which self-awareness and identity-building derive, bringing the “individual” to the centre of the training process.

“Training is an educational practice that stimulates individual identities, calling upon them to reflect on their interaction with the many fields of human experience and in which a middle ground is sought in the processes of differentiation and integration with a view to restructuring the self productively.”

(Gian Piero Quaglinò, 2011)

Experiences which are therefore educational, formative and able to act as a “school of working life”, facilitating the meeting of different generations and absorbing from each of them the full scope of their intentions.

WECONOMY INSIGHT

ARE DIGITAL NATIVES REALLY THAT DIGITAL?

GENZ IS GEARED UP TO GO BUT COULD DO WITH SOME GOOD COACHING

Jurij Bardini
Trainer e Coach
Logotel



27 February 2015. IlSole24ore.com exposed the younger generation and the "digital natives" fallacy: almost 50% of young people don't know how to use the internet." Could this be just another case of sensationalist journalism? No, not really. It's actually the outcome of an ECDL Foundation study which stated, "It's time to debunk the fallacy that digital natives, simply by being born in the digital age, intuitively know how to use the web: 42% of young people are not aware of the security risks that can be involved in unsecured wireless internet access, 40% of them do not protect access to their phones and as many as 50% 'don't bother controlling permissions that applications require before installation." These results are surprising and force us to take off our rose-tinted glasses when we think about young people and put our phenomenological ones on instead. **Today's Generation Z are the clients and prospects of the current business world but they will be its protagonists in the future.** That's why I decided to observe young people born in 2000 from a different vantage point, namely through the lens of the Alternanza Scuola Lavoro work placement project, coordinated with Intesa Sanpaolo, which helps bring everything into focus. I saw their fingertips tap with lightning speed on displays but then witnessed the most alarming silence when they were asked, "What's your favourite website?" Gen Zers are experts at tapping, swiping and scrolling, but when it comes to the hard and software behind their online browsing experiences, they know next to nothing. Even the simplest of questions can throw them: "Where does a file go when you save it to Dropbox?" Silence. The same thing happens when they're asked to search the web: their efforts are cursory at best, as they go no further than the first links returned by the search engine. There's no depth to their analysis, no thought about their sources or method to their thinking. When studying a brand, is it enough just to browse the brand's own website? Or should we also be asking ourselves how consumers and customers describe it, what competitors or research agencies

have to say, and what the general feeling about it is on social media? Don't worry, this isn't a forty-something spouting some of Cicero's 'Oh the times! Oh the customs! What it is, is a host of wonderful, bright and curious young people who are eager to dive into the fray of society, a job and an adult life. The question we should be asking is: what could we be doing to help them bring out the best in themselves? I've had a think about this and have come up with the following: **1. Questions. Let's train young people, raise them and nurture them with questions.** Questions that provoke reactions, that spark imaginations and encourage enterprise. And we must never settle for their first answers. Far more 20th century than we could ever have imagined. If we start asking them "why", that why will be the trigger of their creativity. By developing analogue thinking they'll have the necessary hardware to back up their link-driven, digital approach to the world. **2. Be a good example. They need an example to follow, a strong personality to emulate.** It will help them to find their place in an adult world that still has something important to say and the ability to put into practice. It would be wrong to do nothing, mistakenly believing that digital natives are some kind of new generation 2.0 which inherently possesses the necessary cognitive and emotional intelligence to leave its mark on the world. To do this would be to rob them of a sense of responsibility: they need us as much as we need them. **3. Encourage them. Support them. Involve them. Adolescence knows no age. As in: there are a lot of similarities in the teenage experience between generations.** Generation Z'ers have many of the same teenage fears as X'ers and Y'ers. Fear they don't know what to do when they grow up, fear they won't find a job, or find their way in life. These fears are aggravated by the economic instability we are witnessing, not to mention the increasing uncertainty of life. What Generation Z needs, therefore, are meaningful experiences that add consistency to their lives as well as the practical and intellectual tools they need to build themselves a future.

WECONOMY INSIGHT

4 GENERATIONS 4 QUESTIONS

THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE OF THE GENERATIONAL ISSUE

We asked the 4 generations working alongside and with each other at Logotel the 4 questions below:

1. Are there significant differences between the generations and are these noticeable in day to day life? If so, in what way? What type of impact, tension, challenges, opportunities for collaboration do they generate?
2. How significant are generational differences in company life today? Do they generate opportunities, create risks?
3. Have you started using emoji in your work emails :)? The world of work has indeed changed, from approaches to communication, to motivation and ways of relating to others. What was company life like when you first started? What is it like today?
4. Sitting behind a desk, always travelling around the world, in a meeting with a robot, at the port-hole of a spaceship: where do you see yourself at work in 20 years' time? And what will companies be like 20 years from now?

This is what they replied:

Antonio Russo (aged 60-something, Leading-edge boomer)

I've probably gone over the word limit, but that's kind of how my generation communicates :), the generation that predominantly doesn't use twitter as the main entertainment tool. I'm not used to using characters sparingly (making me verbose in the eyes of millennials and later generations).

1. I'm pleasantly surrounded by generations different from mine, mainly younger than mine. I've got two children and loads of colleagues who are millennials.

The first difference that emerges is the speed of interaction and of sharing everything: multitasking is a must.

While one of the mantras of our generation (borrowed from the East) was: do one thing at a time, devote yourself completely, stay in the here and now...

2. **My generation had to go out and find stimulation; millennials are bombarded with it from all sides.**

It is easier for my generation to stay focused on one thing, to move upwards, to go into greater depth, and as a side effect, we are less multidisciplinary, more fragmented. I find that millennials are more skilled at demonstrating associations between entities, facts, ideas... they are more open to a systemic vision. And this is fertile ground for nurturing synergies and collaboration.

3. I've used emoji everywhere since the moment they came into existence, and on Facebook since 2007 ;) I started my working life in the ICT sector, so I've been using email since the 1980s, but now the speed of communication and being online 24 hours a day has completely transformed the way we work. **For example, there used to be a clear and "spontaneous" divide between private life and work, but now we have to manage this divide consciously in order to keep a balance.** The work-life balance is an increasingly vital

Gabriele Buzzi
Maria Grazia Gasparoni
Nicole Rigatti
Antonio Russo
Giuseppe Schiavone

issue and becoming more and more challenging.

4. In 20 years' time I'll be 80-plus. No-profit is the way forward for me ;) I'll be playing with my grandchildren, travelling for pleasure and helping those who see me as a coach or adviser.

Overall sustainability is the asymptote towards which companies and the global economy will converge: fair distribution of resources between people, sustainable use of resources, more for economic than for moral reasons. I'd like to be optimistic, in 20 years' time, a vast majority of Fortune 500 companies will propose a vision closely tied to values of sustainability and fairness (in many shapes and forms).

Maria Grazia Gasparoni (aged 50-something, Trailing-edge boomer)

1. In my day-to-day life, I identify tension and synergies, between me and those belonging to my social network, with the degree of similarity of the respective cultural imprinting and "university of life" outlook (values, ambitions, priorities, ...). When these maps are similar, regardless of differences in opinions and between generations, even the fieriest confrontation activates synergies or points at the desire to create them. Just as in a textured painting, different ingredients and techniques create a vibrant, harmonious, meaningful whole. Without these subtle connections, it is not impossible to work together to rise to the same challenge, but more monitoring is required and the synergies that are activated run the risk of being tactile, situational and, therefore, unstable.

2. It depends on how self-aware the people from the different generations are and on their ability to distin-

guish between objectives and intentions, in relationships and confrontations. To my way of thinking, in a workplace with several generations, greater value is created when more senior colleagues offer their experience as inspiration but without imposing their solutions or asserting themselves through their seniority. On the other hand, the temptation of more junior colleagues, which creates the risk of conflict, is to disparage everything "done in the past" a priori, giving precedence to innovative ideas and solutions. By doing this, the different generations lose sight of the added value of the "alchemy" between experience and innovation, which is only triggered when objectives and intentions dovetail. It could help to see ourselves as many-sided, unique people, stereotypes of opposing generations.

3. I don't use them a lot, only in informal emails when I don't have time to use words to express myself fully. I've worked mainly at start-ups, so perhaps that is why I don't see many differences with the kind of interpersonal relationships I have within the company today. My work takes me to companies that I would have considered "fossilised" even 25 years ago, and to others that appear as fluid and passionate as the best companies of their times. The ingredients for good communication and motivation are always the same, like the trusty ingredients of a good cocktail: clear objectives, meritocracy, mutual trust and passion. I think a company that knows how to fuel these elements is irresistibly exciting and attractive for a talented individual, whether junior or senior. It generates a sense of belonging and will ensure that the company becomes an integral part of the person and not just something written on their CV.

4. I will be no spring chicken at work in 20 years' time, but I think that I will be facilitated by precious technology that will be on my side to help me access places,

spaces and people more quickly, cutting costs and hard work and increasing opportunities for inspiration, exchange and collaboration. I reckon that companies will have improved in this way. In 20 years' time, I predict that they'll be created even more by people for people, with a pace more in tune with a high quality of life. Technology will help us to break down the barriers we often contribute to creating, both outside and within companies. In 20 years' time, it will still be up to us. Even more so.

Gabriele Buzzi (aged 40-something, Generation X)

1. It depends a lot on the setting: at work, for example, differences are "mitigated" by common goals and a cross-cutting lifestyle ("creative", dynamic urban setting). Paradoxically, I feel more distance between me and my friends of the same age who live in provincial towns and have a different lifestyle and mentality from mine (and this city/provincial divide is a recent trend, but that's another matter...). It's different with Generation Z, who I've influenced through the work experience project for schools. In this case the differences are more visible even within a uniform setting: I understand them less, but I guess that's life, after all, I'm getting old too!
2. Opportunities, definitely. Differences (except in extreme cases) enrich.
3. Emoticons ruled :), perhaps in text messages. Otherwise, the world of work appears to have improved from where I'm standing: the new generations seem more serious, motivated and competent than mine. Probably because they know life's no laughing matter (the 1990s fooled us into thinking that we could allow ourselves the luxury of being perpetual losers).
4. I hope I'll be increasingly able to manage my time and decisions. I hope robots will be understanding and "human" bosses. 🤖

Giuseppe Schiavone (aged 30-something, Early Millennial)

1. I notice them and they're significant. Every day, on

public transport, even in the queue at the supermarket. To give you an example, I find it hard to imagine what goes on in the minds of pensioners who go to the post office at 8:15 in the morning on a weekday. Sometimes these difficulties turn into mild suffering. I think it has to do with the somehow unexpected reduction in social mobility (which means less fair distribution not only of resources, but of opportunities, too) that I bear witness to and that my peers have ended up being personally affected by. The probably somewhat vague impression I have is that the very idea of what working means is radically different for the new generations: to give you an example, there seems to be a gradual blurring of the divide between private life and work, between the professional's story and the private individual's story. It's a double challenge for me: on the one hand I have to learn to be patient (I know it's a cliché, but I am actually used to receiving my shopping in two hours flat on Prime Now); on the other, I want to make sure I don't miss out on or waste the wealth of expertise and skills of previous generations, especially when it comes to interpersonal skills.

2. As I was saying, there is no longer a clear divide between private and professional life, so if differences are important in the outside world, they are also important in the company. As with any difference, generational differences create a distance, thus opening the way for comparison. There is therefore an opportunity for dialogue, mutual learning, that form of mutual education that is a bit like a love affair (Carmelo Bene said, disparagingly, and this is not something I agree with, that love is a form of mutual plagiarism). The big risk, or at least in my opinion, is that of speaking through channels, using language and pace that young people will find outdated and remote, and old people, incomprehensible. In short, there's the risk of not falling in love.

3. I began working at the company not long ago (3 years; before that I devoted myself purely to my studies) and I've never allowed myself to use emoji in work emails with people older than me, unless they started using them first. While I haven't experienced the pre- and post- of it, I think that the introduction of 'asynchronous' digital tools (such as email, chat, etc.) has created a fairly radical difference. Today there are people (including me, but not necessarily my generation) who enjoy managing notifications, interruptions, work flow, without ever taking their eyes off the screen. It gives me the sensation of being able to decide

whether to put something off or ignore it. But I notice that the less young often make phone calls, meet up or have a business meeting, all of which are synchronous interaction methods that require each person to be there at the same time as the others.

4. They guaranteed that we would see the back of work as many as 2 generations ago. Fortunately, I'd say, this guarantee has been systematically unfulfilled for now. But this time it seems that we really are close to this happening and I think that any profession (in the truest sense of the term) will be gradually replaced: from legal advisory to weight loss surgery. However, I think there will still be a market for what I do. I think that I'll be doing the only activity in which humans won't be able to be replaced (it's something very similar to my role at Logotel today): devoting my attention and time to caring for others. The fact that I can choose at any time to do something different makes my time and attention unique in a way. And I believe that as long as other people are the ones choosing what to buy, how to spend money, there will always be demand for special things.

Nicole Rigatti (20-something, Late Millennial
[Logotel's youngest employee])

1. Personally I don't detect huge generational differences between the people I deal with. Or rather, it depends on the settings in question and how interested people are in developing certain skills and knowledge. I see the most marked difference from a technological viewpoint, with my parents, who are over 60. I'm aware that actions I find mundane and take for granted are extremely difficult for them to fathom and they have a completely different way of approaching the new. [What we manage to learn in no time at all takes them much more effort, but I would like to emphasise that I'm only speaking from a technological viewpoint. It's an entirely different matter when it comes to manual work, which young people my age think they're too good for to a certain extent.]

From where I stand, relating with people from different generations becomes an everyday exchange of experience and fresh ideas, of reasoning and instinct.

2. In corporate life, generational differences are significant to a certain extent, at least in my point of view.

In a constantly evolving world each and every one of us needs to adapt, some by increasing their knowledge (as in my case), by building a rapport with more experienced people, others by conforming to new ways of approaching everyday challenges.

I think that opportunities and risks go hand in hand. If you don't take a risk, you miss out on an opportunity. And investing in fresh new ideas can of course be risky but also offers a great opportunity to grow.

3. Yes, I have to admit that I have. When I first started, I avoided using emoji in email correspondence at work, but as you create longer-lasting relationships, you pop in emoji without even thinking, even just as a simple thank you or in response to a compliment. Almost as if to create a closer bond. Having been at the company only a short time (almost a year), I haven't noticed any great changes in corporate life, apart from an increasingly receptive attitude towards young people.

4. The world of work is evolving continuously, it's hard to say what you'll be doing in 10 years' time. I could be where I am now, I could actually find myself dealing with robots, instead of people, but who can say? My ambitious self and my desire to attain ever bigger and better results lead me to hope that in 20 years' time I will have the chance to manage a team at work, even if it's already hard to imagine well-defined roles today: everything is changing and everyone needs to know everything (or almost). The generations to come will always have something to teach (but something to learn especially!).



WIKI COLLABORATIONS

What are new generations bringing to the organisation and what are they doing away with? What's the best way to manage and harness the full potential of the new generational mix?

The generational issue should not, and must not, be limited to the compartmentalised management of one-off situations; instead, it should be exploited to forge synergies between generations which can, in turn, increase connections between integrated selves. By leveraging the different approaches, new working methods can be invented, and drawing on the variety of differing experiences and skills, new learning and skill-sharing opportunities created. Opportunities such as this to collaborate - which the Italian Wiktionary defines as "making it possible for a positive intention to be achieved and creating opportunities for it to happen" - must therefore be triggered both to expedite the task in hand but also to capitalise on opportunities to create new pathways on from constructive conflicts which, instead of holding up the system, propel it forward. Businesses, and their internal organisations, are increasingly called upon to deploy tools capable of promoting the integrated management of individual needs and those of the 'community'. Groups with different cultural backgrounds, different ages and historical references, and different emotional maps, when required to share the same space, time and task, collaborating in different ways, spark something special, an alchemy with the potential to mix, distil and hybridise their different 'ages' and create new value in the process.

BELIEVE IT

HYPER-SENSES AND HYPER-EXPERTS

MAN AND TECHNOLOGY WORKING
TOGETHER, ARTIFICIALLY

Pietro Leo
IBM Italy CTO

Big Data Analytics e3 Watson



When you think about it, the main thing technology has done through the centuries is come up with one way after another of interacting with us humans. Basically, the main objective has been to enhance our abilities and help us to exceed our natural limits. From as early as the invention of the plough, man and machine have been pursuing an inevitable artificial interaction.

The glasses I'm wearing, one of the earliest examples of wearable technology, you could say, are merely a form of technology that works closely with me, day in, day out, all of the time. They help me to overcome the limits of my astigmatism.

This opportunity to enhance or amplify our senses as individuals, or to have access to more professional business acumen in order to see, analyse, hear or assess the world around us, is essentially the result of an inevitable collaboration between man and technology. In all forms and substance, it is a mechanical system, an electronic device, a robot or information system, and achieved increasingly with the use of AI devices.

IBM Research recently published a fascinating, prospective study entitled, "The invisible made visible" (<http://www.research.ibm.com/5-in-5/>) outlining five technologies which could, in the next five years, change society. They are also an example of how, through interaction with AI, we can now see what was previously invisible.

The article makes the collaboration between man and technology its premise (based on concrete objects as well as algorithms, digital data, devices and automatic learning). If the five technologies listed develop as expected, they will enable us to see and understand the world around us in different ways, to some extent how the telescope, centuries ago, even allowed Galileo to disprove a

general theory: the one that said that the Earth was at the centre of the cosmos. In the next five years:

- Through artificial intelligence, language, namely the words we use and the way we write and speak, will become a means of gauging mental health, like a new kind of stethoscope for mental illness.
- Hyper-imaging, combined with artificial intelligence, will result in devices that enable us to see things not normally visible to the human eye. In short, with our new super vision, we'll be able to see the nutritional value of the food we eat or if a pharmaceutical drug is fraudulent or not.
- Macroscopes will help us to understand the complexity of our planet and its ecosystems. Following the digital transposition of people and relationships, it's the turn of the physical objects around us. The macroscope will enable us to systematically analyse the properties of a complex physical system by combining multiple variables.
- Veritable labs-on-a-chip will be tasked with identifying and analysing biological markers in nanoparticles (DNA, viruses, exons) in bodily fluids, allowing us to detect illness or infection before the symptoms emerge.
- Intelligent sensors, acting like super-noses, will be able to detect environmental pollutants at the speed of light.

All these examples are simply a new wave of, or new forms of interaction with, artificial intelligence, the purpose of which is to give us humans, or professionals, new ways of solving problems, or to put it another way, the chance of seeing the invisible

BELIEVE IT

GENERATIONAL MIX AN ANTIDOTE TO CONFORMITY

Simona Cuomo

*Leadership Professor, Lead Coach,
Diversity Management Lab Coordinator
SDA Bocconi School of Management*



This issue of Weconomy focuses on something which is as important as it is inevitable: generational diversity. We explore the problems faced by individual generations in their current organisational contexts and also those faced by companies having to tackle organisational restructuring, job hunting, recruiting, the choice of university course and, above all, the generational mix.

a) In your experience meeting organisations (and also students taking their first steps, as the new generations, in organisations) what state are they in, in your opinion?

Contemporary organisations, unlike Fordist factories, urgently need to tackle the issue of worker age. The primary issue is ageing as a result of demographic trends and political decisions which have stopped older workers applying for early retirement or job assistance. A further age-related dynamic concerns the ability of each organisation to harness the real benefits of an increasingly multi-generational workforce. Nowadays they have four or five different generations working for them, each with potentially different drives, abilities, skills and aptitudes.

Management must rise to the challenge and develop practical, inclusive strategies to manage this generational mix and help different generations work together in ways that are conducive to the overall performance of the company. A sustainable balance must be established between young people entering the labour market and the longer working lives of those already in it.

b) What risks and opportunities does this mix create?

Undoubtedly there are opportunities, but they need to be recognized first. The current challenge is to take a more global approach to managing the workforce in order to harness the full range of skills and abilities people acquire over time.

Groups of different ages often end up quibbling because of their differing values, habits, and motivation; there are positive effects to be reaped but only if correctly managed. Talking about age diversity means rewriting the HR policy "rules of the game" to start building an inclusive workplace. As a prerequisite, the employee career path and professional development system adopted must provide scope for the evolution of skills, needs and the multiple requirements people have throughout their life cycle (personal and professional). The problem is that organisations tend to resist change and prefer uniformity. Our lab ran a series of studies and found that only 21% of the organisations contacted were actively dealing with diversity, and of this 21%, only 10% had introduced new roles in the organisation to manage diversity dynamics effectively. The statistics produced reflect diversity in all its nuances: age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, health, disability, etc. Age is, without doubt, the issue that most concerns organisations because policy-makers know that, sooner or later, it will end up on their desks. Age is the one personality trait that is most penalized. The ideal worker is thought to be male, reasonably young (30/40), in excellent health, no children, heterosexual and white. Age is even more of a restriction for women. Irrespective of sex, though, you either have a job in which seniority is accepted as part of the role or you risk being considered a burden once you get past a given age. Heterogeneity is an initial antidote to conformity. A varied mix of preferences, affiliations, attitudes, ways of thinking and interpreting the world is more cognitively enriching and triggers greater innovation. If we judge the opinions of young people as coming from individuals of no experience and the ideas of older people as being out of date, having meaningful conversations is not going to be easy. We need to let go of stereotypes and prejudice, and

invest our resources in constructive exchanges and the sharing of opinions between generations.

*The generational mix should be managed, harnessed even, through diversity management.
What are the general rules for this type of management?*

Stereotypes and prejudice are part of the cognitive maps we use to understand reality and uprooting them won't be easy. The organisational structure and associated people management processes should help to ease the wheels of change. In most organisations, age management policies tend to focus on bright new entries (aged 30/35) or a select group of more senior workers who have built up sizeable experience in a given field and are considered old hands. Most organisations tend to respond with retention programmes to retain the high potential youth (training, job rotation, etc.) and programmes to assure critical know-how, the mix of core skills that are not always coded but critical for the company's continued success, is passed on by senior staff members. Moreover, cross fertilization initiatives are often introduced between generations to facilitate the sharing of skills (mixed-age working groups, mentoring and reverse mentoring etc.).

You mentioned that the generational question raises the need for "a new career development paradigm." Career is a key concept for you in efforts to tackle the generational challenge. Do you mean brand-new careers or a new way of thinking about (and offering) careers in organisations?

Organisations need to redraw their internal career development, salary and appraisal paths to make them reflect the progressive loss of relevance of traditional career-based status symbols (job titles, managerial positions, promotions, etc.) and increasing importance of new dimensions to the building of a successful career: time for ourselves, a challenging job, security and social interaction. Careers should become paths drawn by employees themselves to reflect their changing needs and aspirations throughout their professional lives. They are no longer a one-directional pathways mapped out by the organisation and on which an employee's reputation depends and without which, access to the labour market would be lost.

Can you explain what diversity management is and why

SDA Bocconi sees it as so important, to the extent that an entire LAB has been dedicated to it?

The Diversity Management Lab has been tackling, since 2000 and through rigorous scientific study, the issue of managing diversity in organisations. It provides the necessary skills and tools to manage all stakeholders (employees, suppliers, host area, shareholders), outlining the most appropriate ways to turn diversity into a source of opportunity. In particular, the Lab addresses age and intergenerational relationships, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity/culture, disability, maternity/paternity, health and wellbeing, work-life balance. Diversity Management means the policies, processes and actions introduced specifically to manage individual and/or social group diversity within workplaces. The purpose of Diversity Management is to improve the quality of the working environment and, by extension, the performance of the people within it as well as that of the organisation as a whole. Differences between workers are not seen as a problem but as a value to be turned into an advantage for the organisation. The Diversity Management Lab advocates a responsible approach to Diversity Management, based on finding the right balance between a rights-centred and a profit-centred approach.

PRESENT STORIES

EXCHANGE, CONNECTIONS AND INTERACTION NEW TOOLS FOR DESIGNING ENGAGEMENT EXPERIENCES

Chiara Scalcon
*HR Global Retail Manager
Diesel*



We live in an age of radical change: speed, fragmentation, the arrival of disruptive technologies, the breaking down of boundaries, loss and polarisation of value; conflict and collision not only between generations, but between ideologies, too, and the onset of new trends that change the economic landscape and upset the balance between players. All this drives companies to identify new paths, tools and ways to steer organisations into the future. Against this backdrop, companies need to change their management approaches and modus operandi, be more agile, more fluid and organic and less structured. They need to work in cells, not boxes; but this also means that the people working in them need to acquire new skills, develop and consolidate new expertise, work on new jobs and experiences.

The company is therefore faced with the challenge of rethinking and redesigning the way of sharing, learning and imparting information (or telling its own story) and of giving shape to Corporate Knowledge, to stimulate and guide a swift change.

The real challenge facing those who find themselves designing People Management systems is therefore not only the need “to get people on board” when it comes to change, but to do it consistently and quickly, with limited resources, and to keep those people engaged. Especially in companies where millennials are in charge.

Nowadays, the problems we face at work are complex and the new generations have different ways of focusing their attention. They think laterally, by working with images and constantly “surfing” (an instinctive way to survive hyperstimulation, the overload of information and the multitude of channels through which this information reaches us). This prompts organisations to devise new communication and training processes, doing away with courses where “I’m the

trainer” and “you’re the learner”, in favour of constant exchange, connections and interaction with others, courses whose content and form have to be designed and structured in a whole new way. The new generations live in organisations, spend their lives on social networks and inhabit fluid environments.

Spaces are opening up, frontiers being pushed back, geographical borders no longer stand in our way. The unsustainable is now sustainable, far-flung cultures and societies are now geographically close, in a dynamic universe that is continuously interconnected, where the new generations travel at unthinkable speeds.

The perception of time and sacrifice have changed and the new generations need instant gratification, favouring small tasks over big projects whose results are seen only in the long-term. New tools are needed to facilitate engagement, motivation and gratification systems. The new generations need customised gamification systems.

The new generations communicate by images. The use of interactive maps is born from the need to:

- break down problems, without losing sight of the overall picture;
- “surprise” themselves by stumbling across unexpected links between different elements of a problem;
- keep track of the emergence and evolution of ideas, as well as the need to share and co-produce with others.

All this triggers a sense of urgency to change the way we communicate and give form to knowledge and to develop new “forms of knowledge”! In today’s chaotic universe, where it is no longer possible to work only with sequential models that fossilize knowledge, meaning (content) cannot be separated from the meaning-

ful (form). Context is fluid, complexity liquid, and knowledge the result of dynamic, permeable and interactive models. The company's goal, therefore, is to develop a constant stream of micro experiences that draw on new methods and tools, to support understanding and facilitate collaboration.

When we plan experiences where the trainer/coach classroom setup is transformed, spreads out of its traditional setting and becomes a continuous flow of physical and digital experiences with different ways of "experiencing and participating in the content", individuals, the community and the company can play their part in the change by enabling and steering it day in, day out. But that's not all: providing dynamic communications systems that mix ever-interconnected top down and bottom up approaches, propels all participants into a global system that maximises motivation and engagement.

In light of this, DRES, the business community built by Diesel in partnership with Logotel, was created and developed.

DRES is a Retail Education, Empowerment and Engagement system for Store Managers and staff members of the single-brand (outlets, full-price stores) and department stores of the Diesel world, in North America, Europe, China, including Hong Kong, and Japan. It was created in order to:

- bring practices into line with brand expectations worldwide
- improve the sense of belonging and attachment to the company and to the brand
- develop the technical, behavioural and interpersonal skills of shop assistants
- engage the people in sales points systematically and sustainably,
- by harnessing the potential for collaboration between people all over the world

With a common goal: to provide Diesel Customers with a unique, innovative and powerful customer experience.

A Business community that embraces collaboration between the Store Teams in 20 countries on 3 different continents. Different nationalities, different languages, different cultures, different approaches. But what they have in common is age: the average age of the reference population around the world (including managerial roles) is 27.6.

The new generational profile therefore had to be kept in mind when designing and implementing the system. By logging on to DRES, Diesel's people can interact with a variety of learning objects with a modern off line – on line – off line style training approach, supported by infographics, cartoons, videos and dynamic role plays. They can complete tests to check what they have learnt about both general topics and Diesel products. They can use teamwork support tools and put themselves to the test by achieving KPI targets, thereby improving their interpersonal and coaching skills, as well as their sales techniques.

But they can also share Store experiences by sending social-style messages and posting photos in a dedicated photo gallery accessible 24 hours a day; they can play an active part in company life by using forums and interactive walls, and compete against their colleagues from all over the world in global challenges. This is Dres in a nutshell.

Work and an approach based on a continuous flow of information and no longer on one-off events offers an evolved experience of collaboration and engagement with the great mantra of:

SMILE, LOVE, SHARE

WECONOMY INSIGHT

GENERATIONAL DIMENSIONS

WHO WILL TAKE UP THE BATON?

Monia Rende

*HR Director
Logotel*



Just like the classic Cartesian coordinate system with three axes, contemporary businesses can also be mapped on the X, Y and Z planes. X, Y and Z are the same three letters used to identify the last three generations of workers who, similarities and differences included, represent the future of every business; they are the individuals who will steer the business system as it evolves.

Nevertheless, we still need to better understand the complexities of each generation and ask ourselves if, for example, enough is being done inside organisations to manage the integration of private and personal lives effectively, and to recognize the value of generational, gender, ethnic, ability and sexual diversity, issues which are increasingly important to younger generations. Every generation has a different perception of these worlds and the organisation's task is to enable employees to see empirical differences as opportunities.

Let us just briefly characterise the sub-categories of the population we're talking about: Generation X is the one which straddled the new millennium, the children of achieving parents, tempered by cultural transformation and great social struggles. This is the generation of new managers, eager to work together and for whom relations are built in person, not online; Generation Y was born into the EU and is the one currently paying the biggest price for the economic crisis; Generation Z is populated by people born into technology, who make friends, get together and split up online.

At present, Generation X represents the decision-making layer of organisations, the people who climbed the career ladder, specialized and earned themselves a managerial position; the generation that wants to collaborate to offer its support and be supported. By nature and by education, Gen X gained its knowledge from books at school and in the field. It valued the spirit of sacrifice and decision-making ability, struggling, at times, with the making of intercultural bonds (there was an era of military service

for boys, the first time away from mum, and in which the parent-child relationship was more authoritarian). Information came from books, newspapers, and the television. There was no ambiguity in the content, it was easier to form an opinion based on a documented situation and draw one's own conclusions by comparing reputable sources. Nowadays, things have changed: the information sources of the younger generations are new media which bombard their users with contradictory messages, one negating the other. Facts turn into opinions and decisions are inevitably shaped in the short term, given the instability of the facts on which they are based. For the young people making up these generations, the world is a global economic crisis that has robbed them of occupational stability. By contrast, Generation Y seems to have internalized this situation. Their résumés include a section on "professional experience" which increasingly overlaps with "hobbies", a plus point for their self-realization but which often belies an inclination to pursue, from one organisation to another, their personal passions, with no strategic plan for the development of their career within a specific company (or even within a specific industry). The general impression is that it is much more difficult, nowadays, to pick out the decision-makers within this section of the workforce. It should be said, though, that a horizontal approach of this nature brings with it a predilection for interdisciplinarity and inclusion, which is precisely the kind of transformation we should be nurturing. It is key to fostering dialogue and facilitating a business culture in which success is talent-based. What we need, then, is for the different generations in the business universe to work closely together, so that their respective qualities can all feed into the value-creation process and, above all, so that each can benefit from the differences of the other, learning new skills and discovering new horizons. If this doesn't happen, who will today's managers pass the baton to?

WECONOMY INSIGHT

IPSE DIXIT.

IT'S ALL IN THE INTERPRETATION

Simone Colombo

*Social & Business Community
Senior Manager
Logotel*



"They're so fickle! They don't take things seriously the way we do." I bet anyone who's worked with young people will have said, or heard, this before. This clash between generations is a global concern. Try googling #millennials or #generationZ # or #intergeneration. You'll be presented with Bureau of Labour Statistics, a study by Oxford Economics, the opinion of the SAP SuccessFactor president (yes, that's right, the German software giant), a Gallup report, and an interview with Simon Sinek (the know-why guru). There's even a tweet from Leah Nadeau, the 25-year-old artist from San Francisco who says we should be on our guard because, with or without President Trump, Millennials will take over the world. Apparently if only under-35s had voted, we wouldn't have Brexit or Trump. Perhaps it would be more revealing to break these votes down by geographical area, using a category we are more familiar with: city or country? But getting back to the fickleness adage. My younger colleagues and customers (I have lots) and members of my family who are under 35 (not so many) come to mind. Along with Deglassi: Next class or Josh from Please like me (both on Netflix). "I'm googling it". If you don't know something, look it up. Millennials are the first generation to reach adolescence with instant access to almost any kind of information. But there's a huge difference between knowing and understanding: the problem is in the interpretation. The transfer of experience. The narration that turns what I've just read into something I know then something I can do. That's why sharing what you learned in 20 years on the job, giving people a way of understanding what they see, engenders the kind of trust that makes for more meaningful relationships. Is it really that different from how it used to be with me and my dad? We all try to relate things to our own experience when trying to decide what we should trust. Are young people really so mercenary as to be willing to switch jobs every time something better comes along? Or should businesses and leaders start to

recognise the worth of what the younger generations can bring to the business? The US Bureau of Labor Statistics says that the average time under 35s stayed in the same job over the past three years was low (3.2 years) but was, however, relatively stable. In an interview for InsideQuest (a great new kind of learning community, more intimate than a Ted Talk because it gives people the time to share their own stories) Sinek said that Millennials will stay in a job if they feel it allows them to make an impact. Isn't that the case for everyone? More and more, it's not all about the job but life in general. There's a very fine dividing line now, and it's becoming increasingly fluid. For everyone. Sinek laughs about it then adds, "Whatever impact means." That's the real point. There is a difference and it's a big one. Younger generations feel they have no impact in "traditional" organisations, the kind that are still anchored in a world that is ceasing to exist. In 2030, according to the World Economic Forum, when we no longer have products, only services, there'll be no need to shop and we won't own anything, no houses, cars, or our privacy. And we'll never have been happier. Like every generational change, this one will be difficult to get used to. Admittedly, we've never had five generations in the workplace at the same time before, something that will happen in 2020 (Bureau of Labor Statistics). What we need to be thinking about are the industry leaders who will guide us into that future, that less formal and more "fun" collaborative space that new generations seek. A world in which we will be forced to keep learning and the ability to do this will be our means of making an impact. Leaders will have a difficult task: to go back to teaching the kind of perseverance and hard work we all have a habit of forgetting. They'll have to move away from the "instant gratification" approach and find the time needed to do things and to teach how to do them properly. Only experience can give us this. It is precisely this kind of interpretative insight that will become industry's most precious resource.

WECONOMY INSIGHT

WHY DO I NEED A PLASTIC ICON? TODAY'S GENERATIONAL UX

Ivan Falcone
Senior UX Designer
Logotel



Digital services are all the result of UX. Ease of use and device influence our opinion of the quality of the user experience. What about the generational factor? Is there such a thing as the “generational UX” given that the meanings people assign to symbols change from generation to generation? The “save” icon looks like a floppy disk. If you give a digital native a floppy disk, they’ll ask you why you’ve produced a 3D print of an icon. The purpose of codes is to interpret our relationship with the world. But if their meanings change so quickly, would it be possible to develop an inter-generational UX? If it’s well designed, yes. To understand how, we need to find out more about the relationship each generation has with the world and the specific things that distinguish them.

The “analogue” generation grew up with computers which took up entire rooms and produced perforated sheets. The “digital” generation interacted with the very first home computers, learned how to use programming lists in Commodore 64 and the first DOS commands in the 286 machines. For Gen Z, the digital generation, smartphones are a way of learning about the world, swiping the action that allows them to acquire that knowledge. Each generation has its percentage of “digital illiterates” and while they may be fewer and fewer, they still pose a challenge for design and bring limitations which must be taken into consideration. A functional, inter-generational UX must overcome these restrictions and aim to intercept intuition and imagination as the typical means people use to learn about the world. This attempt to simplify the process is not without surprises. Gen Z and analogue natives have a lot in common. They both seek, though for different reasons, easy-to-use interfaces, clear content and a shallower information architecture that satisfies their preference for horizontal navigation. Neither generation is used to having to search for content, and both tend to believe whatever appears first, without much critical thinking. They are more vulnerable to hoaxes because

they’re not used to digging deeper for sources. On the web anyway. Perhaps because early search engines were difficult to use or they were more used to searching DOS commands, but first wave Gen Z’ers are drawn more to subject areas which interest them. They are the simplest target audience, having experienced forms of navigation that were different and difficult to standardise.

Simplification is the only way to overcome such differences. Google gathered and analysed mountains of data to create the wizardry that allows us to interrogate search engines in speech form. Before that, some knowledge of programming language was required; every word had to be joined by an & or with a +. Early UX required letters to make the interaction work properly. Nowadays we can use icons, images and audio commands. Our devices now seek the same speech and human evolution that has been achieved with search engines.

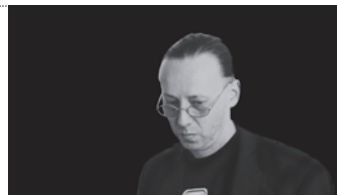
UX’s task is still to push for action, trigger a decision, obtain engagement. These will occur when the right balance of motivation and simplicity is achieved. In the Fogg Behaviour Model devised by Dr. BJ Fogg, the greater the motivation, the less careful we need to be about how difficult it is to obtain the information, and vice versa. This concept is helpful in UX design and information architecture.

All interaction is determined by ease of use: audio commands, video, silent video (a fusion of text and image). But making this ease-of-use meaningful is the hard part. UX, like all other interactions in the world, only has meaning within the context in which it occurs. The content and resultant experience combine in increasingly fleeting moments which make sense only when put in relation to each other. Interfaces change the way we encounter content but they are also the product of long-established habits and shared customs. Just like the save icon: very few people know where it came from these days, but they all use it.

FUTURE STORIES

FUTURE GENERATIONS ARTIFICIAL OR POST-FACT?

Thomas Bialas
Futurologist



I've been asked, quite rightly, to say something about future generations. I won't duck the question, and will try to share a few thoughts with you. I covered the gender generation in the last Weconomy file. National Geographic also devoted a special issue to it (January 2017), amid much controversy and debate. The same thing happened to me, in 2015, when an article I wrote exploring the gender revolution for the Dirigibile insert of Manageritalia's Dirigente magazine (see <https://www.manageritalia.it/files/17381/dirigibile-num-16-2015.pdf>) attracted several controversial reactions. It's an old issue to be contended with, in collaborative situations too. So, let's look at something else.

Artificial generation. The next generation will be the first one that will find chatting, flirting, arguing, debating and cooperating with artificial intelligence, via chatbots, cognitive computers, robots and gadgets of various kinds totally normal. **Organisations will not only have to get used to a complex, and above all complementary, shared cognitive existence between machines and humans (working in teams) but also to a completely new relationship with people whose identities will be, for the first time in the history of the world, integrated with that of machines.**

Post-fact generation. A generation unaffected by facts? Possibly.

The Oxford English Dictionary made post-truth (or post-fact) word of the year. The growing tendency of people to believe fake or heavily doctored news returned to the fore during the UK's vote to leave the European Union (Brexit) and after Trump's election to the White House.

In both cases, lies - told, spread and even laid bare - played a crucial role in the outcome. According to a long article published in the Economist, in recent

years we have become increasingly vulnerable to, and also less affected by, lies (true or false are now only alternative points of view in a world in which everything is relative). Inundated with real-time messages and contents which contradict each other, we no longer know what's real. **This also has repercussions (dramatic ones) for organisations.** Teaching employees to base their interactions on reliable facts will be one of the challenges of the future. Along with educating young people, numbed by the information bubble, to analyse facts rationally.

Generations with no future. Not in the sense that they don't have a future, only that they can't see one. There is a very good reason for such disenchantment, as you well know. Finding a job isn't easy, and keeping it is even harder. Motivating this generation requires a generous helping of Zennish "here and now". **No tormented and unreliable career paths for them, just instant opportunities and gratification in a welcoming and collaborative atmosphere.** Then there are the pioneers who think they can make their own future. It doesn't matter if they're young geniuses or small start-ups, the main thing is organisations looking for the sharpest of brains accept disruption in both their projects and collaborative processes. Not easy.

Integration generation. The German policy of integrating and including migratory flows, despite the many repercussions, is starting to show the first signs of success, particularly within organisations. As many of you will know, German organisations were very strongly "encouraged" to accept and integrate refugees into their businesses. How did it go? **The ones that completed the delicate integration process are now more willing to tackle new challenges.**

It's an exciting and collaborative time. A lesson, even for services like <https://www.refugeeswork.at>.

FINAL LAP

FROM PINK FLOYD TO YOUTUBERS CULTURAL ZIG-ZAGGING BETWEEN GENERATIONS

Nicola Favini

DG,

Manager of Communities

Logotel



Society is a mix of generations. We are all a mix. In the sense that we are all amalgamations, formed as we pass through different ages and periods of history, learning from and sharing with people who see the world through different eyes and whose mindsets were shaped in different times. In the 1970s, I wasn't yet 10 years old and Pink Floyd were a Sunday morning staple in our house. The vinyls were purchased by my father, Giuliano. For him, that music, long tracks which were at times sullen, at times harmonious and often lyrical, was the ultimate ownership of the times. For me, they were "cool" tunes on par with Brave Stallion and Space: 1999. An example of the exchange between two generations. At secondary school, I had the great "Catalucci", a Greek and Latin professor who changed my life. I haven't stopped decrypting derivations and reconstructing word roots since, or thinking that every historical cycle has its roots in the Polybius model (we're in the pre-Tyranny period now!) My conversations with her had a profound influence on me. If we weren't discussing Ancient Greece or films, I'd be in the Sempione Park with my friends from class 3F, or organising toga parties to the music of Duran Duran. I developed a political conscience at university, in the sense that I began to have ideas about the public sector and how it should work. I sought opportunities to interact with my elders, people only a few years older than me but whom I thought "had it sussed." The 1990s saw us dancing to the beats of house music and Italian disco tunes. I spent half my dissertation year on a regional Milan-Turin train (no high-speed railway!) in the company of "il Berchi". He was mentor for my thesis and systems thinking guru. On the outward journey, he'd explain the principles of system thinking and on sheets of white paper we'd map out the interactions and linkages of all kinds of systems (I remember the map explaining footballer motivation!); on the way home, we'd discuss the company in

which I was doing a work placement. I was 24 years old and spending time in a workplace for the first time. Roberto was thirty years older than me. He'd never seen Brave Stallion and for him, the revolution had started with the Beatles. Time flew past. Logotel brought me into contact with many worlds. I now interact with and learn from conversations with people who are younger than me. I have colleagues who were born in the early 80s and early 90s. Working with them opens my mind. In a recent school work experience project, I spent time with teenagers and their teachers. From the former, I learned how to reopen myself to debate, and from the latter, I learned what it means to live constantly in debate. Then there's Giacomo, my son, and his ten-year old friends. What wonderful, serendipitous encounters. After basketball practice, on car trips or afternoons doing homework together... they tell me their stories and I mine. Their stories begin with videos by famous youtubers although they still read Mickey Mouse comics. They build worlds in Mine Craft (which resembles a Commodore game!) on the Playstation while listening to 1980s hip-hop with me. You have to catch Pokémon on a virtual app but watch episodes of The Get Down and the genesis of Grandmaster Flash on Friday nights. And when one of them drops a clangar ...do a DAB! Wisecracks and laughter a go-go! Such riches. Finding a way to converse, to listen, to share ideas and inspiration brings personal growth. Generations mingle and multiply. Prejudice and restrictive convictions block this process. It's not easy. It's important to speak and to mix languages, always. Curious and courageous. Come on! N.B.

Ok, I'm 45 and going through an existential crisis. Which explains the highly personal, bio-vintage piece. I'm stuck between two generations! The young and the not-so-young. Neither fish nor fowl. A true surf and turf. A mixture. DAAABB!


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BSD root: disk0s2, major 1, minor 2
jnl: unknown-dev: replay_journal: from: 14287360 to: 14755840 (j
jnl: unknown-dev: examining extra transactions starting @ 147558
jnl: unknown-dev: Extra txn replay stopped @ 15612416 / 0xee3a00
USBMSC Identifier (non-unique): 20060413092100000 0xbda 0x181 0x
jnl: unknown-dev: journal replay done.
Kernel is LP64
com.apple.Launchd
[1] has started up. ***
1 com.apple.Launchd

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Several of the think-pieces in this issue dissect our notion of generations, breaking the concept down into several different dimensions. In the following section, we explore this universe from five different perspectives: language, motivation, relationships, time and space.

We do this by taking a closer look at each term through the generational lens, allowing ourselves to explore a few tangents in a relatively tongue-in-cheek sort of way, the aim being to call attention to the differences and commonalities between groups of people born in different periods of time.

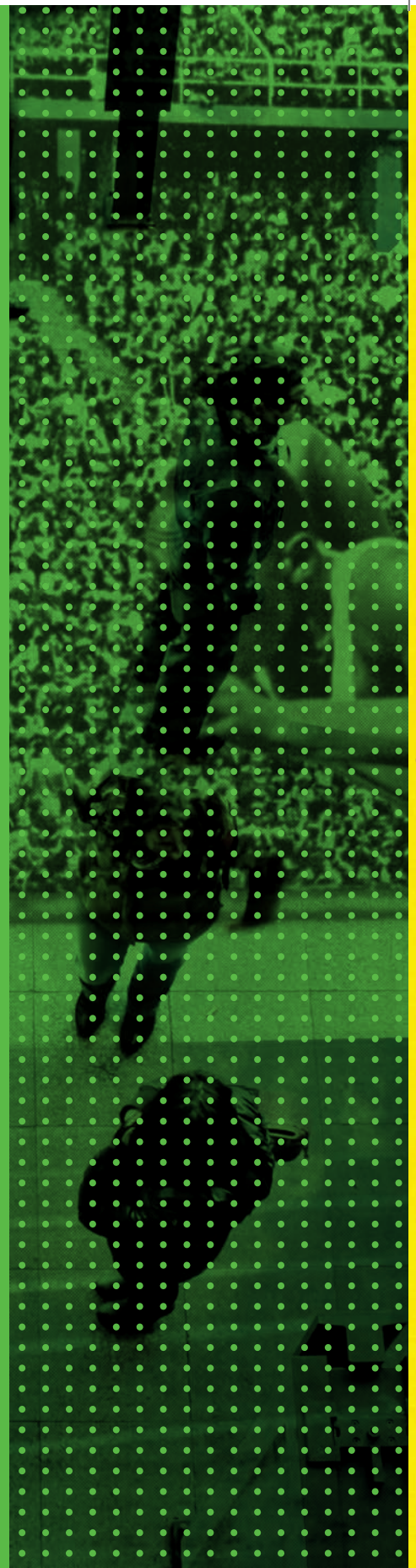
LANGUAGE

The long, rambling letters of old, declarations of love perhaps, have turned into 140 thumb strokes on a screen of new. A popular metaphor, this, for the way young people communicate. Clearly, the words we choose to express ourselves change, we make up new ones, we forget some and we get rid of others. The same can be applied to syntax.

Yet language is not just the means we use to convey it and our words don't come just from our mouths (or our thumbs), or from our minds either. As any anthropologist knows, our language is much more than the words we say and write (whatever the device).

The trust we have in everything that has gone before us, our familiarity with and our judgement of it, is all condensed into our language. In a similar vein, our words and gestures create an echo; they resonate and reverberate further than we think.

But what happens when they encounter generations convinced they are living a revolution, part of epoch-making changes, an age in which there is little or no connection with what has gone before? What will they have to say, what words will these generations create? Disposable words? Words (or gestures) that run out too fast, like a phone top-up? The 'right' language might become merchandise: words and gestures to be patented, to be sold on the free market as quickly as possible in order to stay ahead of the competition, of other word producers, and of other types of narration, obviously. A bit like with operating systems. Or will new generations simply be the first to have a map of every word and symbol that has ever existed? And how they'll reprocess, interweave, exchange, confuse, contaminate them is something we can't even imagine.



Boston, Massachusetts, 1946

CV of a university student close to graduation and looking for a job in the 1950s.

Name: Charles [REDACTED]

Date of Birth: [REDACTED]

Height: 5 feet 10 inches

Weight: 170 lbs

Height/weight: characteristics which are no longer relevant.

Address: [REDACTED] Boston, MA

Telephone: [REDACTED]

Military: Honorable Discharge from U.S. Navy 1946

Education: Bachelor of Business Administration:

Northeastern University 1953

Hobbies: Weight lifting. Automobiles. Music.

In the 1950s and 60s, CVs became a standard job-hunting tool. They also highlighted characteristics which are now either seen as irrelevant or covered by data protection, such as height, weight, marital status, religion, etc.

Hobbies and interests outside of one's professional life were added during these years.

Houston, Texas, 1980

People began writing CVs
on the computer in standard
formats.

RESUME

DELL BULLER
11611 Spriggs Way
Houston, Texas 77024
(713) 465-0781

OBJECTIVE: To help teachers learn to use the computer in the classroom--to teach them how to evaluate the programs that are available and to teach some how to do their own programming.

EDUCATION: THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS, Austin, Texas
B.J., May 1948
THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON, Houston, Texas
Teacher Certificate in Math, August 1967
M ED in Teaching, July 1978
Courses in Computer Science for Teachers 1981,1982

WORK EXPERIENCE:

8/67 - 5/83 SPRING BRANCH ISD
900 Campbell Road
Houston, Texas 77024

CLASSROOM TEACHER of Mathematics at Spring Branch Senior High. Have taught most of the high school mathematics -- last speciality was math for students new to the United States (called ESL Math).

Have taught professional growth courses in 82-83 in teaching teachers to use computers and to write and execute programs of their own.

8/63 - 6/66 SPRING BRANCH ISD
(address above)

RECORD CLERK at Memorial Junior High -- was in charge of books, registration and withdrawal of all students, and receipting all Activity Fund monies.

8/48 - 8/50 THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS Athletic Office
(full time) The University of Texas
Austin, Texas

9/46 -5/48 General Office Clerk -- handling ticket sales by mail
(part time) and in person -- dispensing information on the phone
or in person -- making bank deposits of large amounts
-- other bookkeeping and office duties that arose.

References Available Upon Request

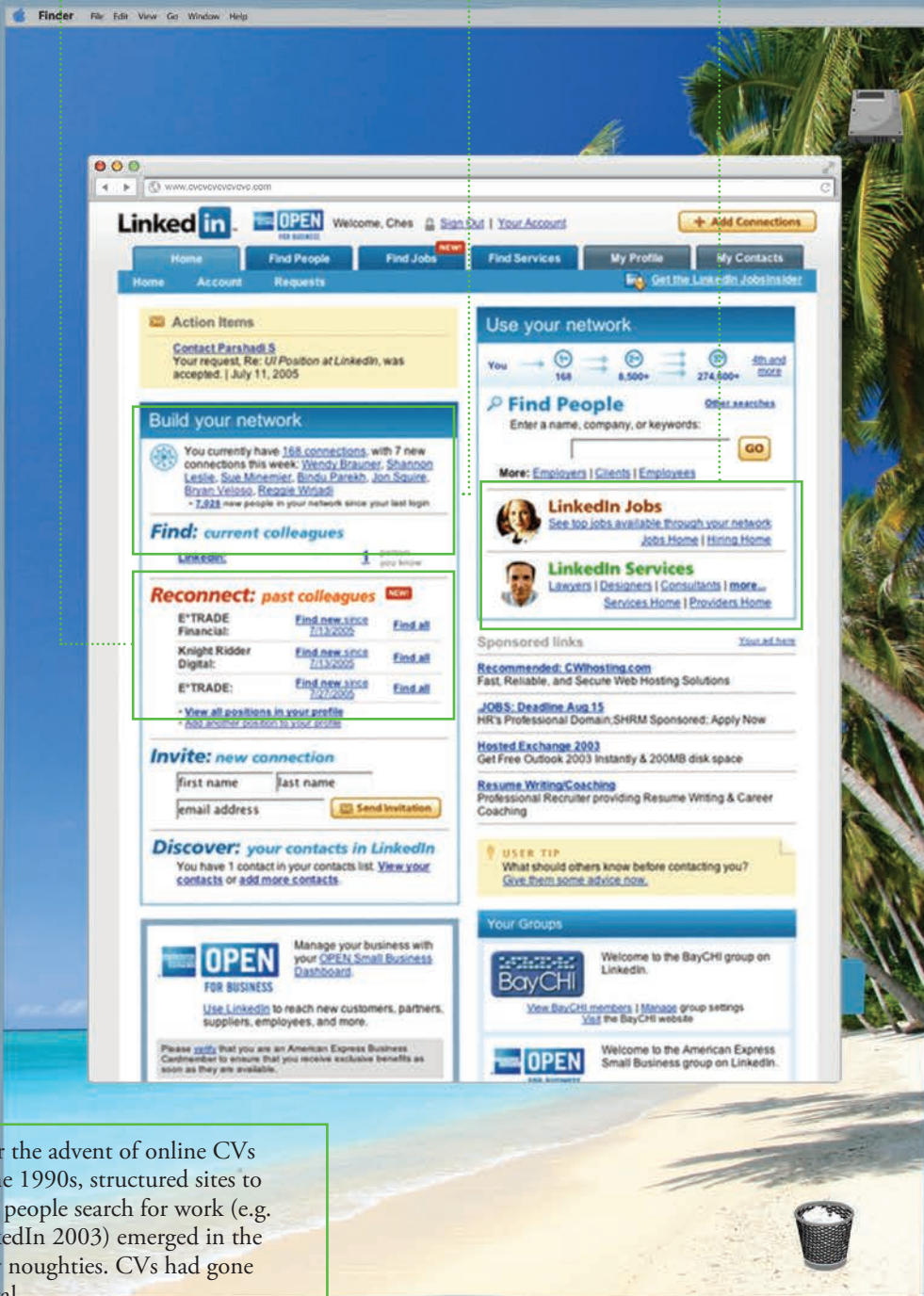
The CV of a high school teacher
looking for work in the 1980s.

London, Great Britain, 2004

Opportunity to network
with former colleagues.

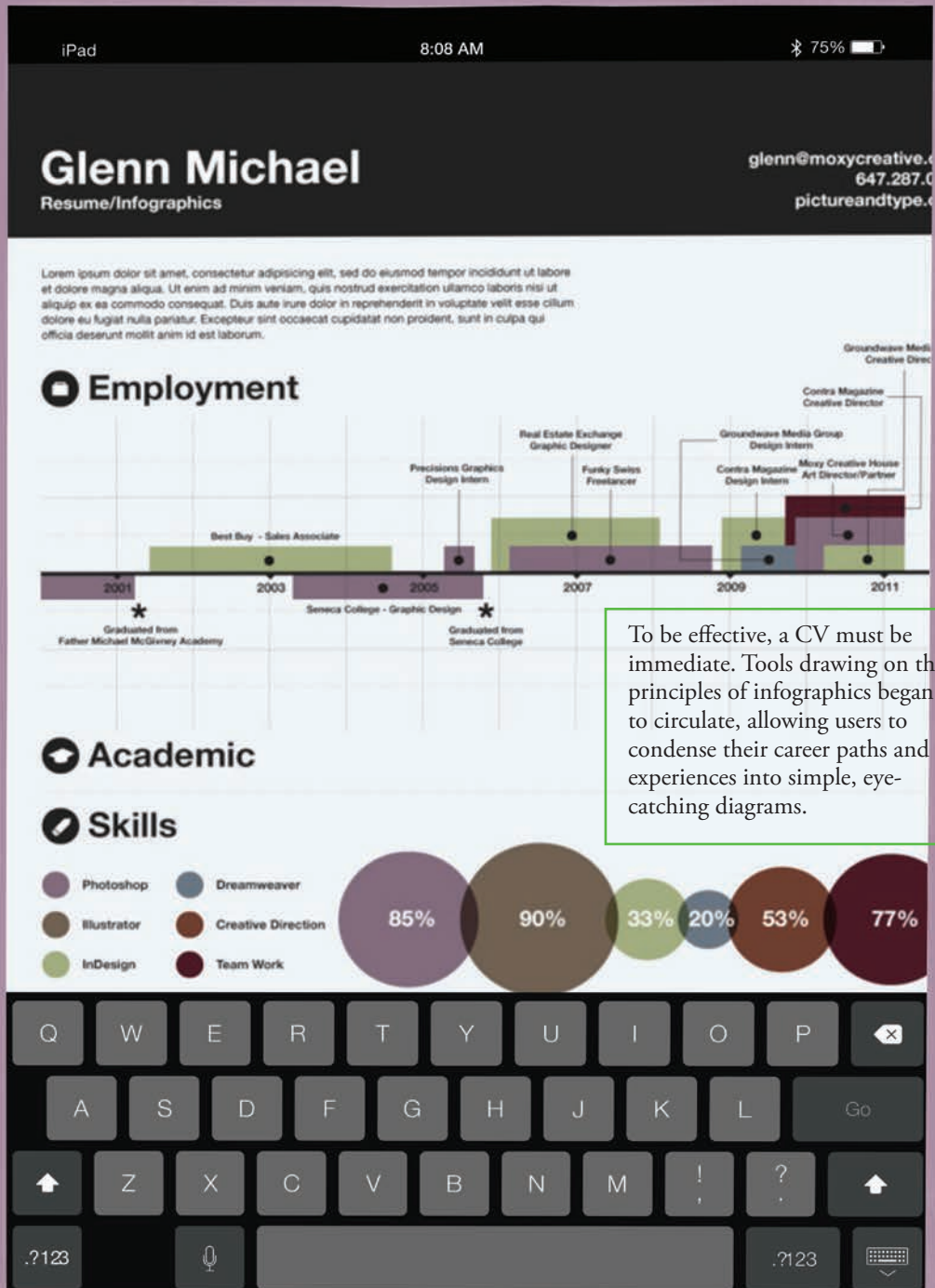
Professional
network.

Job vacancies.

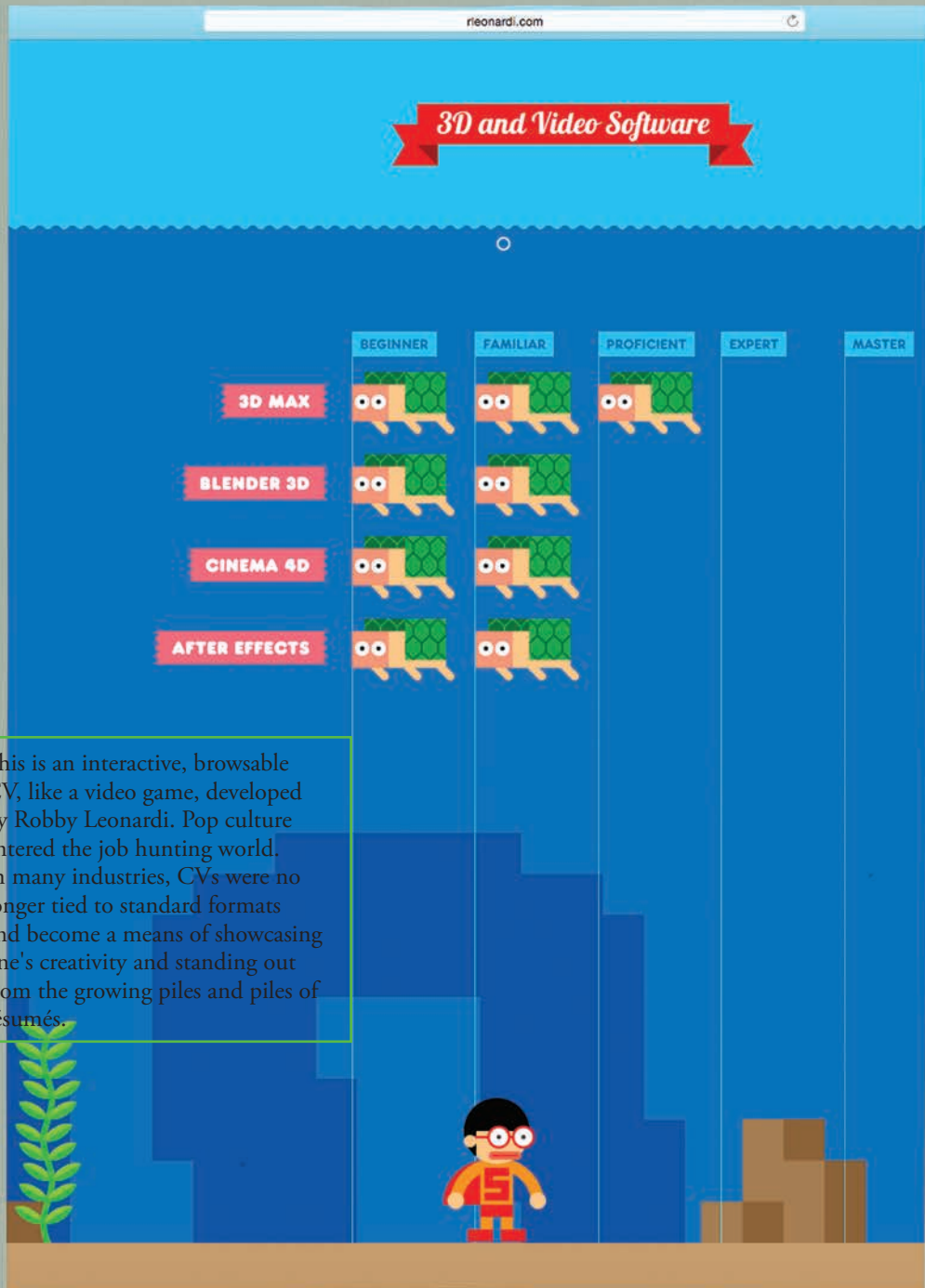


After the advent of online CVs
in the 1990s, structured sites to
help people search for work (e.g.
LinkedIn 2003) emerged in the
early noughties. CVs had gone
digital.

Miami, Florida, 2008



New York City, New York, 2013

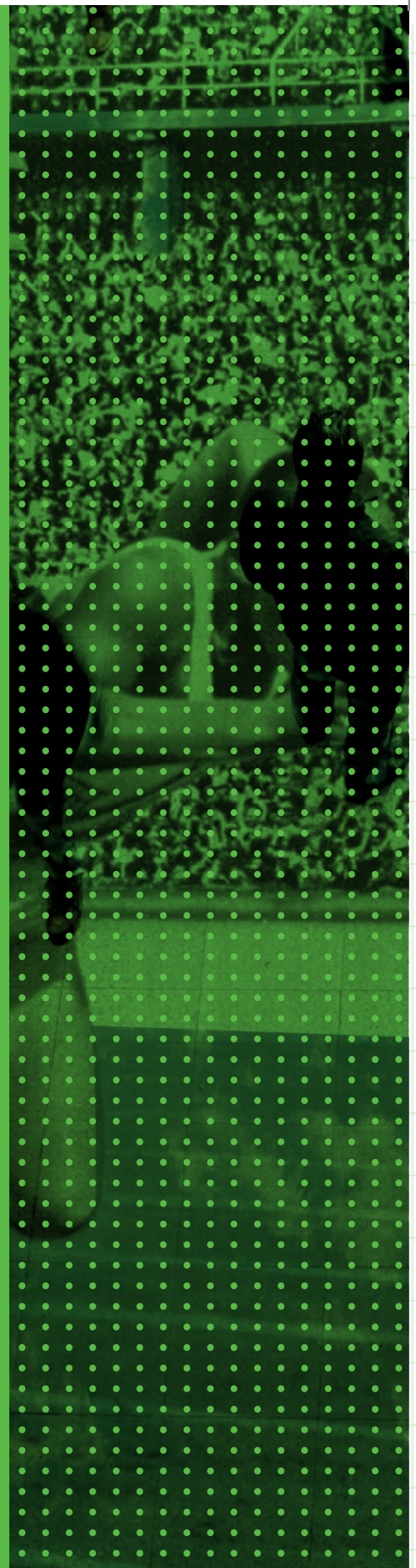


This is an interactive, browsable CV, like a video game, developed by Robby Leonardi. Pop culture entered the job hunting world. In many industries, CVs were no longer tied to standard formats and become a means of showcasing one's creativity and standing out from the growing piles and piles of résumés.

DRIVE

The Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) 2016 report called the generation born right after the end of World War II the "leading-edge" or "driven" generation. This is clearly the generation behind the 1968 protests, the young people who took a stand and expected others to do the same. They had a just future to build. They were really driven. Of course, they all ended up going their different ways in the end. Some even with very little drive. Yet that generation seems light years away from the Millennials of today. When they're actually only their parents!

Still, depending on how you look at it, the future certainly hasn't ceased to exist for today's Millennials (and Generation Z). By all accounts, whatever they do has an effect on the ecosystem, from the wrapping off the chewing gum they regularly pop into their mouths to their choice of career. This could end up being too big a responsibility to bear. The youth of today can certainly choose which issues to be active on: environmental, social, artistic or technological. The first question that springs to mind, though, is: what about politics? Ehmmm... They're nothing like their parents, that's for sure! The second question is: for how long? Young generations seem to be multi-tasking, multi-job even before they were always-on-line (something which did actually come along a little later). Keeping their options open, never putting down roots, preferring a life with "no strings": I'm here now, tomorrow I might be somewhere else." HR managers and recruiters are well aware of this, often seeing young people join a company only to move on very soon afterwards, purely because they feel it's time to try something new. Perhaps what we're witnessing are the "insubordination generations", to use the term coined by Paul B. Bottino, director of the Technology and Entrepreneurship Center at Harvard. Or perhaps the new generations have mastered a kind of self-directed learning, of looking after themselves, that we don't understand yet.



TEST

[C] Reputation	[F] The desire to succeed	[C] Ambition
[D] Safety	[B] Recognition	[A] Respect
[A] Loyalty	[E] Fun	[A] Sense of duty
[E] Sharing experiences	[D] Autonomy	[B] Career
[F] Stimulating surroundings	[B] Independence	[F] Dream of changing the world
[B] Emancipation	[F] Enterprising spirit	[C] Success
[A] Self-esteem	[E] Flexibility	[E] Balance
[C] High standard of living	[D] Freedom	[D] Work to live

TICK 4 OF THE PREVIOUS WORDS AND CHECK OUT WHAT GENERATION YOU BELONG TO WHEN IT COMES TO MOTIVATION

[A] RECONSTRUCTION	[B] LEADING-EDGE BOOMER	[C] TRAILING-EDGE BOOMER
The best contract is a shaking of hands and the best business is done face-to-face. You grow attached to your company and prefer a compliment more from your boss than from your partner (and your boss knows it). Your time is money, which is why you're always the first to do overtime. You respect authority and you want to be respected both inside and outside the company.	You dreamed about changing the world, although finding somewhere to park the car wouldn't be bad either. Your pragmatism and disillusionment make you focus more on your career: there's no room for ideals from 9am to 6pm. From contributing to the cause to looking after your pension contributions.	Whether you're male or female, you wear a jacket to the office because it looks more "professional". You always have your business card in your inside pocket, your job title front and centre: there's a business opportunity around every corner. Your performance bonus is what gets you out of bed in the morning; after all, your lifestyle won't pay for itself.
[D] GEN Xer	[E] MILLENNIAL	[F] GEN Zer
Your future emerges from the shadows at the end of every month. You want your freedom but seek security. You work to live and are loyal to your profession not to the organisation that enables you to practice it. The world is full of dangers; will the welfare state help you to face them?	Your job title is in English. You need at least a table tennis table in the office because a bit of fun helps you to concentrate. You can live without your bats when you're working from home or in the coffee shop thanks to the flexibility good wi-fi allows. Feedback is the new black. Phone calls have to wait until after your 3pm yoga class as balance is important both for the Vrikshasana position and also for your work-life ratio.	You still dream of changing the world, but you'll start by changing your phone. You're always online at work and collaboration is always the most interesting part of the equation. You share ideas but also photos and videos; you'd rather have a like than a compliment from your boss. If you can't find a job, you create one.

RELATIONSHIPS

Do relationships have an on-off button?

Apparently not. Who actually switches their phone or tablet off anymore?

The assumption is obviously that relationships and connectivity are one and the same thing.

How many Millennials or Gen Zers could happily rhyme off endless lists of contacts before our eyes, reams of people, groups, communities, obscure facts, an immensity of "relationships"!

It would be so easy to launch into a lecture on how real relationships are more than just an online chat. That a proper relationship is something else, something more, in more ways than one. Yet one of the defining traits of the younger generations is not that they don't understand what a proper relationship is; on the contrary, they have an almost unbounded hunger to connect with people and to form relationships. To be = to be in contact. Not being available is the ultimate sin of the third millennium. The problem, though, is that relationships are never neutral: they all leave a mark on their protagonists. Profound or superficial, but still a mark. Never just a slight bump or transfer of information. Forty-somethings (or more) will know this. It applies to all relationships, however you intend them: marital, affectionate, professional, human. By contrast, when we think about the meaningful relationships in our lives, we don't mentally scroll through our contact lists; what we actually think about is ourselves. Moreover, there is no software to complete the names for us, so a Mar could be Mark, Mary, Mario, Martin, etc.

What do I have to offer? What am I looking for in him, or her? What kind of person do I want to be? Am I willing to let this or that relationship define me? To spend time on a relationship in order to better understand myself? To sum up, if people from different generations can identify with these questions, then it won't be too difficult to connect them with each other.



A



B



C



D

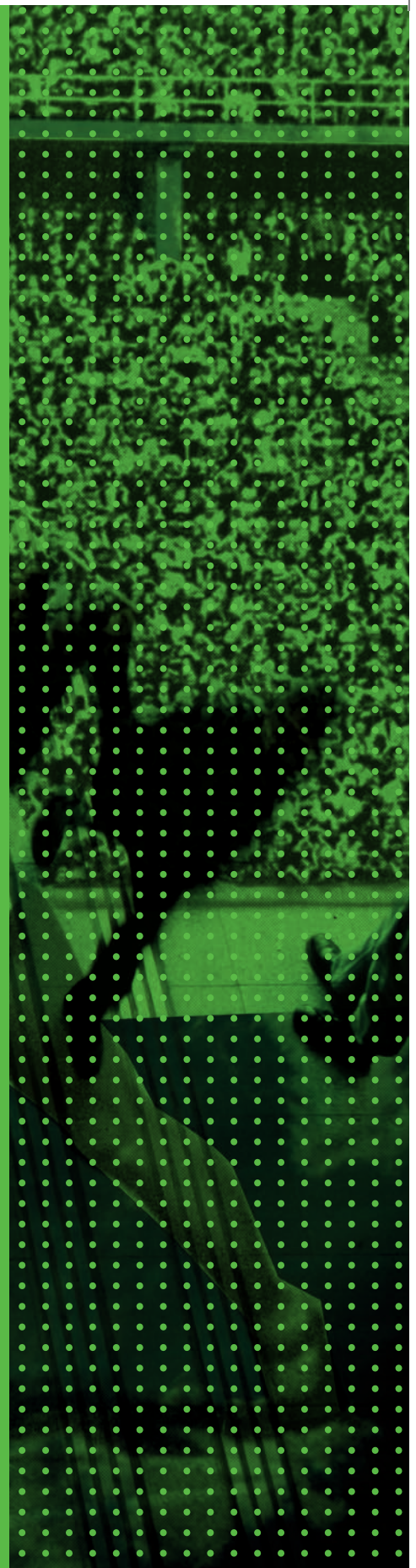


IF YOU ARE NOT
A MILLENNIAL,
TURN THE PAGE
UPSIDE DOWN AND
FIND OUT WHAT'S
WRITTEN IN THE
MESSAGES!

A Business didn't go well, therefore the company is not happy. Bye bye, you are fired. Kiss your salary good bye.
B Let's speak at 9:30 on Skype. Important!
C The company is very happy about you. You've been promoted. More responsibilities but also more money. Much more money!
D Clients are not happy about the project. Let's think of out of the box ideas and let's cross our fingers.

SPACES

"You young people don't have the space we used to have!" It wouldn't be the first time we've all heard a near-pensioner harking back nostalgically like this, would it? Just to be clear, the same kind of thing Italian crooner, Adriano Celentano says when he sings, "there's a city now where once there was grass". Maybe they're wrong, but the units of measure for space have changed dramatically. Since time immemorial, space has always been a place where experience and action occur. Everything else was left up to the imagination. Or the unexpected. The proximity of someone or something was a condition that had to be earned. That's how things were until not so long ago. But what now? The younger generations measure space in terms of Amazon Prime, Ryanair, and Whatsapp calls. The unit of measure for space is now gauged by communication speed, meaning space no longer exists. Who's near us? Every human and every product on the planet. Who's far away? Nothing and no one. Everything is near, close at hand (or rather, just a tap away). A Millennial would be baffled by anything else: used to social media groups, communities, incubators, in increasingly open spaces. Distances, silence, are a thing of the past; no more saving your breath to get ahead, to find oneself (or be found). But assuming (rightly or not) that there is no longer any space to be explored, under our noses or on our own two feet, horizontal space in other words, there's still vertical space. Organisations occasionally on the lookout for content of substance, not just post-truth; young people who are always online but who feel the need, occasionally, for non-banal, more substantial interaction. Maybe this is a sign that, for younger generations, there is still space to be explored, space that can still challenge their observation and their actions. The depth and density of space. Maybe it's this space that young people need to make their own.



THEN

NOW

PHYSICAL SPACE

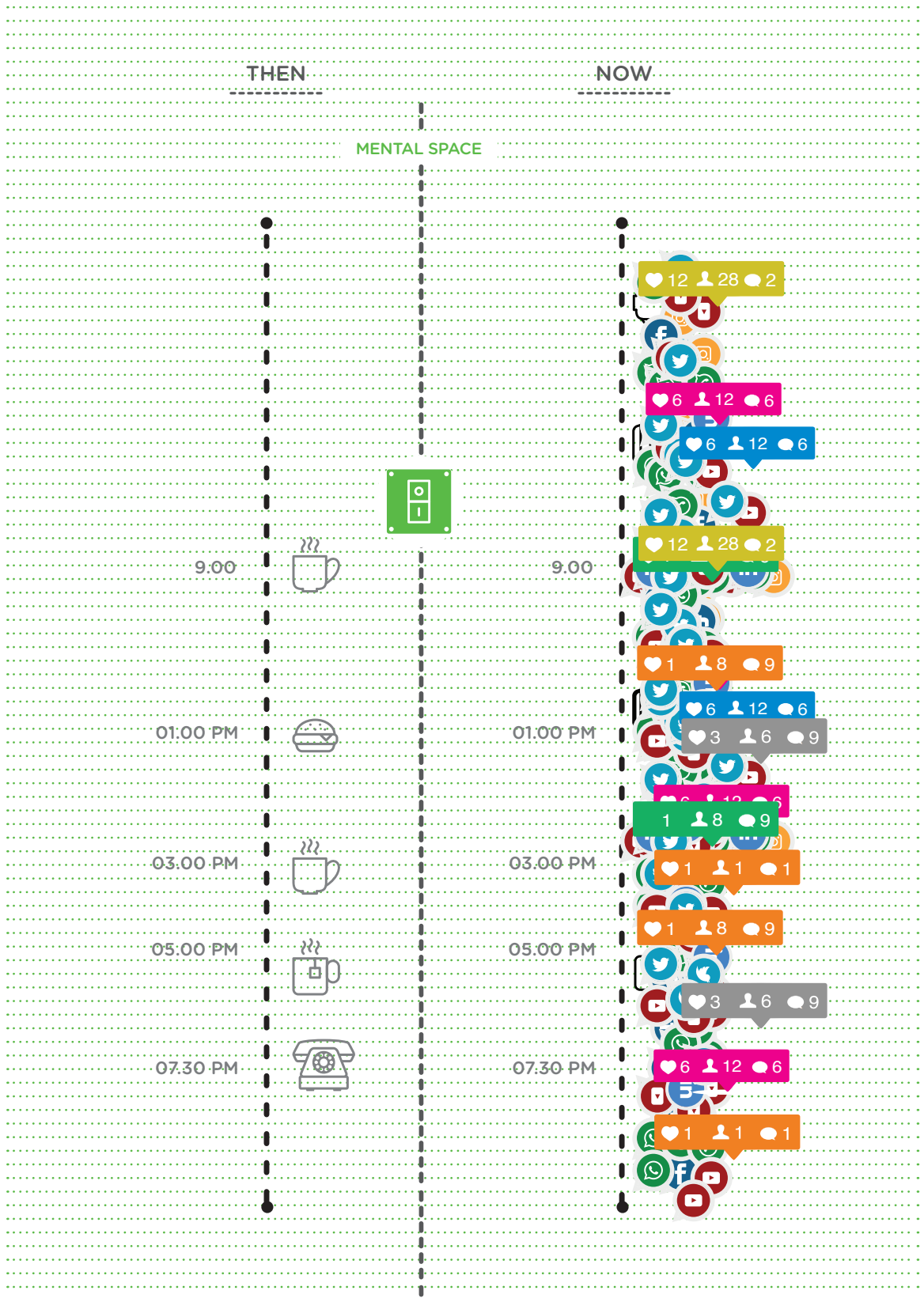


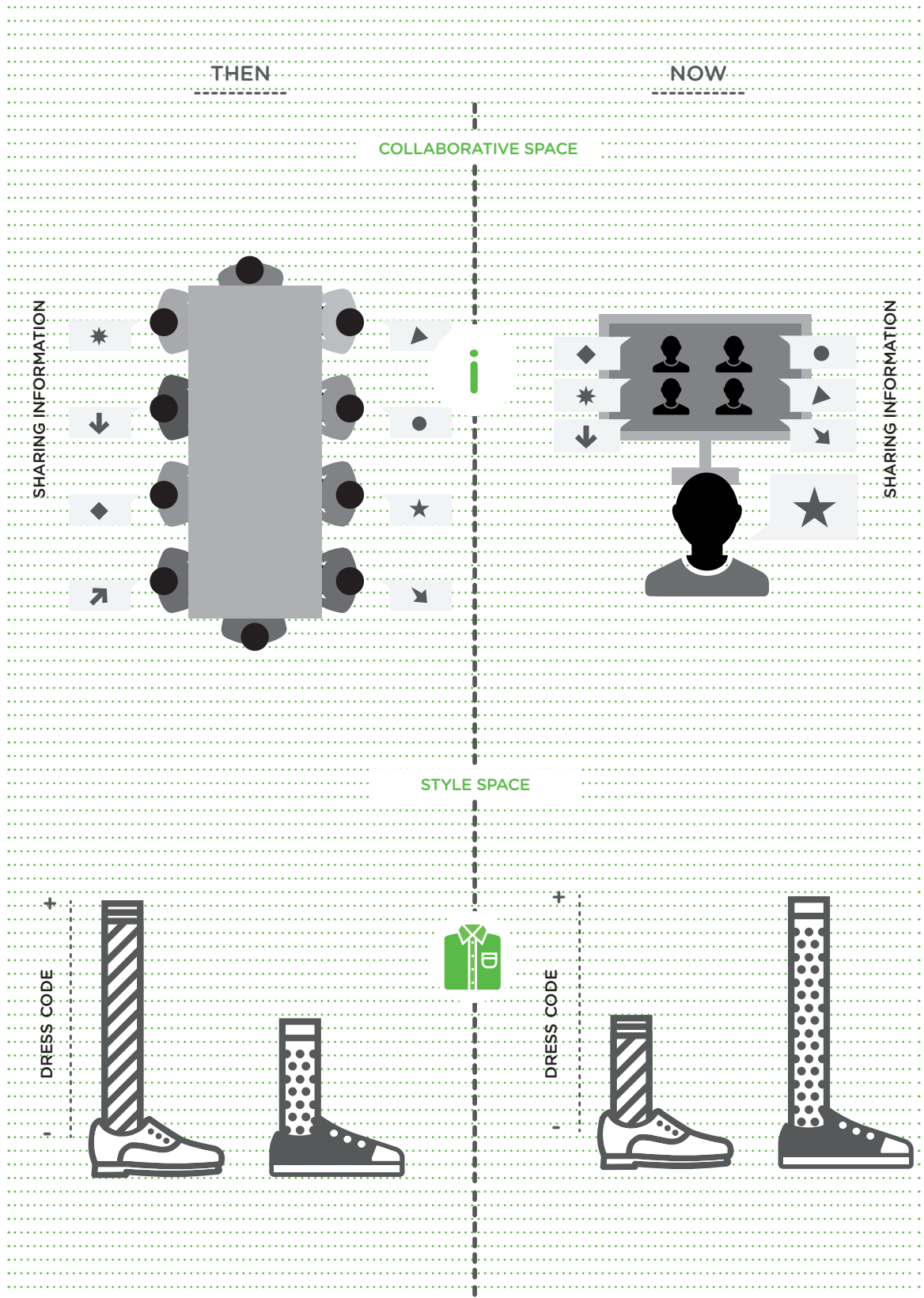
RESTAURANT



DELIVERY

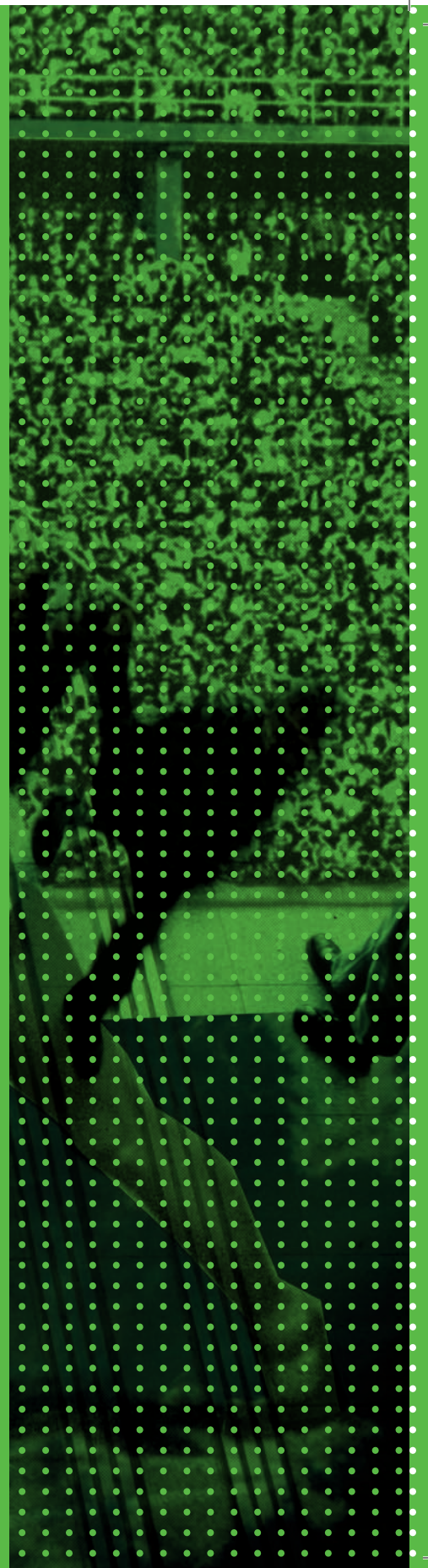






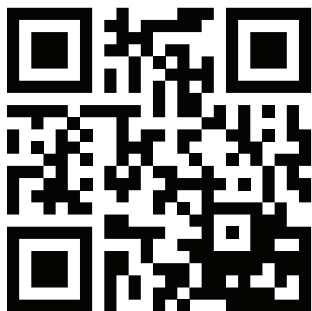
TIME

Slogans are easy: "Now!" Whatever it is, as long as it's now! Now, now, now, the mantra of the younger generations. The problem is, our fathers, grandfathers, grandmothers, aunts, etc. probably all said the same thing of every new generation, and often in disapproving tones. Yet today's younger generations are not all about rushing around and immediate results; they're actually more interested in synchronicity. For them, the present is not the most important aspect of their existence, to be consumed here and now. The present that the new generations are growing up in is a "place" of simultaneous presences. Like a world glimpsed in a shaft of light, a cross-section of an instant in time and space where different paths, different objects, different lives meet. So different it could almost be that "certain Chinese encyclopaedia" mentioned by Foucault. There's no denying, though, that their vision of the future seems to have stalled somewhat. Young people at interviews have been known to become perplexed or even respond ironically when talk turns to their future in the company. What future? Who believes in that anymore? Yet these are the same generations that grew up with recycling systems, sustainable development, and zero emissions, to make sure "the planet we leave our children is still safe to inhabit." The younger generations need to make up their minds about this. In the meantime, let's stick with the reality that, in the eyes of our young people, the future has not totally ceased to exist. If anything, it's come so close it's hard to tell it apart anymore from the day after today. We need to be a bit more patient, and give a bit more credit to what time may decide to reveal, if we don't want them to grow up either hyper-responsible or hyper happy-go-lucky.





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