HOW THE LEARNING PREFERENCES OF A GENERATIONALLY DIVERSE WORKFORCE WILL AFFECT CLIENT EXPECTATIONS FOR EXECUTIVE EDUCATION

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Workforce Education & Development

by

Angela L.M. Stopper

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Reviewer’s Signatures

This Master’s paper of Angela L.M. Stopper was reviewed and approved by the following:

_____________________________________________________
Dr. William J. Rothwell
Professor of Education
Workforce Education and Development

Dr. Richard A. Walter
Associate Professor of Education
Workforce Education and Development

Dr. Judith A. Kolb
Professor in Charge
Workforce Education and Development
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Chapter 1

**Introduction**

*Historical Perspectives: Executive Education*

Executive education is not a new concept. In fact, “companies have been using executive development programs for a very long time, dating as far back as the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries” (Crotty & Soule, 1997, p. 4). From university designed programs to in-company alternatives, education of employees has been going on for years. In the early days of executive education, university programs dominated, offering functionally based learning opportunities to mature, highly motivated, experienced managers (Crotty & Soule, 1997). These programs almost always focused on the development of the individual manager, helping to make him/her successful in his/her current career and desirable for future assignments.

Crotty and Soule (1997) contend that university based executive education is an outgrowth of MBA degree programs like Harvard’s which started in 1908, or Wharton’s in 1881. Since these programs were usually two-year, full-time commitments, younger managers tended to take that option. The shorter, non-degree options that sprung from these MBA programs, and later developed into executive education as we know it today, were an alternative for older managers that could not afford such a time commitment. Crotty and Soule (1997) note that the root of the movement was at Harvard, where they began to offer pieces of their MBA program to non-degree students in five week segments in the early 1920’s. That was followed by their 15-week Second World War production course, teaching managers how to change their production facilities from
civilian goods to those that were needed in war time. After the war, more programs were added and the trend of university run executive education was established.

A few large companies offered in-house development activities. Crotty and Soule (1997) mention GE, IBM, and Motorola, to name a few. In the beginning, companies offered education which covered company-specific technical subjects, while university executive education was used to educate executives on more broad topics (Crotty & Soule, 1997). That began to change when GE announced the offering of their 13 week advanced management program in 1956, modeled after Harvard’s 13 week advanced management program. The company designed the program to mimic a university run program with specific GE components. They cited cost and the number of people that why wanted to train as reasons for development of this new kind of company run education. They saw the value in the university run education, but thought it would be even more valuable with a GE spin, covering all of the basics covered by Harvard (finance, marketing, personnel) and adding information about GE policy issues (Crotty & Soule, 1997), this beginning the struggle between university run executive education and in-house company run programs.

Historical Perspectives: Generational Diversity

In the 1999 book *Generations at Work: Managing the Clash of Veterans, Boomers, Xers, and Nexters in Your Workplace*, authors Ron Zemke, Claire Raines, and Bob Filipczak define and discuss four worker cohorts present in today’s workforce. Additionally, they discuss the characteristics and preferences of members of each cohort. Their work in this book is a collaboration of 10 years of individual research and has been
corroborated by Higher Education Research Institute, UC Los Angeles, the National Center for Educational Statistics, and the Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company.

According to Zemke, Raines, and Filipczak (1999), there are currently four distinct and different worker groups or cohorts in today’s organizations. Zemke et al. (1999) note that members of these four cohorts are split not only by the year of their birth, but also by their values, preferences, learning styles, and numerous other areas. Different researchers call the cohorts by different names and haggle over the exact year that one generational cohort starts and the other stops. Zemke et al. (1999) categorize the four generational cohort groups by the titles Veteran, Baby Boomer, Generation X, and Generation Next. When referring to individual members of each cohort, Zemke et al. (1999) use the terms Veterans, Baby Boomers, Generation Xers, and Nexters. Arsenault (2004) further defines these cohort groupings with specific, non-overlapping years for each to begin and end. By combining the definitions of Zemke et al. (1999) and Arsenault (2004), this paper will use the groupings described in Table 1 when discussing today’s workforce and the high potential executives from each that are sought as clients for executive education.

Table 1

*Generational Cohort Grouping Categories*

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Generational cohort</th>
<th>Birth years</th>
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<td>Veterans</td>
<td>1922-1943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby Boomers</td>
<td>1944-1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation Xers</td>
<td>1961-1980</td>
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<tr>
<td>Generation Next</td>
<td>1981-2000</td>
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The term “Veteran” is used to describe all members of the first generational cohort that will be investigated in this paper. It is not meant to categorize these
individuals as war veterans. Instead, it is the general name given to anyone born between the years 1922 and 1943 (Arsenault, 2004). According to Zemke et al. (1999), this cohort prefers to learn in stable, risk-free environments. They long for order, logic, and discipline, and the traditional lecture-style classroom appeals to them. Since Veterans are known for their respect for authority, they also look at those performing the executive education event as an authority figure. They will rarely “take-on” or openly disagree with a facilitator and are uncomfortable when others do. They are motivated to learn when it is shown that the learning will improve their company as a whole. When categorizing the main traits of this generation, Salopek (2000) calls on research provided by BridgeWorks (www.generations.com), a company founded in 1998 by business partners Lynne Lancaster and David Stillman with the objective of educating organizations about the four distinct generations in the workforce and identifying ways to bridge the gaps that this generational diversity causes. From their research, Salopek (2000) pinpoints four things to remember. Veterans are patriotic, loyal, fiscally conservative, and have great faith in institutions.

The general consensus for members of the Baby Boomer cohort, or Baby Boomers as they will be referred to in this paper, is that they were born between 1944 and 1960 (Arsenault, 2004). According to Zemke et al. (1999), their preferred classroom is much less structured and less authority focused than that of the Veteran. They enjoy teambuilding, networking, and forming personal relationships, increasing their social network while increasing their work-related skills and abilities. In contrast to Veterans, the ideal facilitator in a classroom of Baby Boomers is someone who they see as an equal. Hierarchy and militant authority are not well received by this cohort (think flower
children of the 1960’s). As for motivation, they are motivated to learn when they feel the learning will better them and give them an advantage on the job such as a raise or promotion. When categorizing the main traits of this cohort, Salopek (2000) suggests three things to remember. Baby Boomers, or the “me” generation as she refers to them, are idealistic, competitive, and tend to question authority.

It is largely agreed that members of the Generation X cohort, or Generation Xers as they will be referred to in this paper, were born between 1961 and 1980 (Arsenault, 2004). Generation Xers tend to prefer self-directed learning activities and do not like to waste time. Expert trainers who get right to the point are the ideal facilitator for this cohort, and if the facilitator can make the training fun, even better.

Salopek (2000) states that there are a few key ways to grab the classroom attention of Generation Xers and hold it long enough to teach them something. She gives nine guidelines for educators dealing with Generation X: make it make sense, make it fun, make it personal, make it fast-paced, make it involving, make it chunky (Generation Xers, she says, process information in 20 seconds, so “chunk” the information accordingly), make it safe to participate, make it yours (facilitators should be the expert), and make it theirs (facilitators should allow learners from this cohort to discover their own aha! moments). From the description of Veterans and Baby Boomers provided earlier, one can easily see how some of these suggestions would be preferred in a classroom for all three generational cohorts, while other would not. Salopek (2000) categorizes members of Generation X as techno savvy, diverse, independent, skeptical, and entrepreneurial. But what about the Nexters?
Generation Next, whose members are referred to as Nexters, is the newest generation to enter the workforce. Nexters were born beginning in 1981 (Arsenault, 2004). Zemke et al. (1999) feel that this generation has a combination of some of the best from each generation before. “This new wave of workers combines the can-do attitude of the Veterans with the teamwork ethic of the Baby Boomers and the technological savvy of the Xers” (p. 52). Their preferred classroom, be it brick and mortar or virtual, will include aspects that play to each of these strengths. They will search out learning experiences that combine teamwork and technology. It is also felt that they will need more supervision and structure then the Generation Xers before them. They will tend to seek out skills that will make their lives less stressful, and fun is a key selling point for this cohort as well. Salopek (2000) sums up Nexters, or Millennials as she calls them, as independent spenders who are globally concerned, health conscious, and cyber literate.

The Problem

In a 2004 study, Paul M. Arsenault looks at the differences as stated by the theorists mentioned above and validated the “importance of generational differences as a legitimate diversity issue” (Arsenault, 2004, p. 137). Not only do members of each generational cohort prefer different classroom settings, different facilitation styles, and different learning materials, they may also have different expectations of how far we, as executive education providers, should go to cater to them specifically (Cambiano, De Vore, & Harvey, 2001). The purpose of this paper is to discuss how the learning preferences of today’s generationally diverse workforce will affect client expectations for executive education. From this discussion, the author proposes to uncover research
discussing if traditional executive education will be successful on the leaders of
tomorrow and what changes, if any, will be necessary to position university executive
education providers for future success.

Definition of Terms

Veterans: Individuals with “birth years 1922 – 1943” are referred to as Veterans, part of

Baby Boomers: Individuals with “birth years 1944 – 1960” are referred to as Baby

Generation Xers / Gen Xers: Individuals with “birth years 1961 – 1980” are referred to
129).

Nexters: Individuals with “birth years 1981 – 2000” are referred to as Generation

Generational cohort theory: “Generational cohort theory contradicts the more traditional
belief that people change, mature, and develop their values, attitudes, and preferences as
a functions of age.” “A generation is a social creation rather than a biological necessity.
Where novel events are rare and change is slow…distinct generations may not appear.”
(Sessa, Kabacoff, Deal, & Brown, 2007, p. 49).

Generational cohort: “Only where events occur in a way that demarcates a cohort can we
speak of a generation” (Sessa et al., 2007, p. 49).

Learning style: Learning style is “the composite of characteristics cognitive, affective,
and physiological factors that serve as relatively stable indicators of how a learner
perceives, interacts with, and responds to the learning environment” (Griggs, 1991, p. 2).
Learning preferences: “The concept of individual learning preferences is perhaps the most vital development in American education today” (Cambiano et al., 1995, 32).

Executive Education: More than “a reward for high potential executives or a chance to renew an individual’s knowledge base, (executive education ) programs are increasingly harnessed as opportunities to recast the worldviews of executive teams and to align organizations to new directions” (Conger & Xin, 2000, p. 73).
Chapter 2

Methodology

Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a brief description of the methodology used to gather the necessary research studies and information that make up the review of the literature (chapter three) in this paper.

Research Methodology

To compile the necessary information and research to write this paper, the author performed numerous searches using several Internet resources to gather a wide range of information to produce a well-rounded view of the issue. Searches were performed using the following resources:

- ERIC – Educational Resources Information Center
- Penn State’s dissertation and thesis database
- Google scholar
- Penn State’s CAT
- Peer reviewed journals and other publications

The searches were performed in a preplanned, systematic way, allowing for a thorough review of all information available. The information received from the searches was grouped into three sections: (1) generational diversity information; (2) learning style preferences information; and (3) executive education information. The information that crossed over two or more of the groups was heavily focused on, as the purpose of this
paper is to determine a link between the three areas. Please see Figure 1 for a representation of the search and categorization method.

Figure 1. Key word searches and information categories used in this paper.

From this search method, numerous research studies and informational papers were discovered and deemed relevant to this topic. All will be discussed in greater detail in chapter three, Review of the Literature.
Chapter 3

Review of the Related Literature

Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a review of the related literature and past research studies to give a general understanding of generational diversity, learning preferences, current executive education practices, and proposed future executive education practices. Regarding generational diversity and learning preferences, each generational cohort is described in detail and the literature that is available concerning the key traits, strengths, classroom style preference, and instructor preferences of members of each cohort is reviewed. Motivators for, and leadership style preferences of, each cohort will also be discussed. At the conclusion of this chapter, the information will be summarized into four figures, Figure 2, Figure 3, Figure 4, and Figure 5.

Generational Cohort Theory

Generational cohort theory states that “only where events occur in a way that demarcates a cohort can we speak of a generation” (Sessa et al., 2007). Sessa et al. (2007) go on to discuss:

Six characteristics (that) help determine the scope of a generation: (a) a traumatic or formative event such as a war, (b) a dramatic shift in demography that influences the distribution of resources in society, (c) an interval that connects a generation to success for failure (e.g., the Great Depression), (d) the creation of a “sacred space” that sustains a collective memory (e.g., Woodstock), (e) mentors or heroes that give impetus and voice by their work (e.g., Martin Luther King),
and (f) the work of people who know and support each other (e.g. Bill Gates, Steven Jobs). (p. 49).

Researchers use this theory to defend the categorization of individuals into generational cohorts. Members of each generational cohort, the Veterans, the Baby Boomers, Generation Xers, and Generation Nexters, have defining moments in their histories that break them into their specific cohort, events that draw them to one another and away from others not born and brought up at the same time.

*The Veteran Cohort*

As discussed in chapter one, the term “Veteran” is used to describe all members of the first generational cohort will be investigated. It is not meant to categorize these individuals as war veterans. Instead, it is the general name given to anyone born between the years 1922 and 1943 (Arsenault, 2004). According to Generational Cohort Theory, each cohort has events that occurred in their early lives that highly influenced their existence. Again, building on the research of BridgeWorks, whose founders have been asked to speak on CNN, CNBC, the Today Show, National Public Radio, Voice of America Radio, and WNYC in New York as authorities on generational diversity in the workforce, Salopek (2000) provided examples of such events for Veterans, including The Great Depression, The New Deal, World War II, and the G.I. Bill (Salopek, 2000). Characteristics that are often used to describe members of this generational cohort include “practical; patient, loyal, and hardworking; respectful of authority; and rule-followers” (Sessa et al., 2007, p. 50).
The Baby Boomer Cohort

As started in chapter one, to be considered a member of the Baby Boomer cohort, an individual would have been born between the years of 1944 and 1960 (Arsenault, 2004). According to Sessa et al. (2007), this cohort includes about 78 million individuals, meaning that about 26% of the population of the United States falls into this cohort. Events that are often credited as most influential to Baby Boomers include the Vietnam War, the civil rights and woman’s movements, the John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King assassinations, Nixon’s Watergate, man’s first walk on the moon, the sexual revolution, and Woodstock. They were raised to expect the best from life, believing that while they should be independent and control their own destiny, they should also embrace traditional values and material wealth (Sessa et al., 2007). Baby Boomers’ positive work abilities, or strengths, include consensus building, mentoring, and effecting change. According to Sessa et al. (2007), members of this cohort are seen as “optimistic, ambitious, and workaholic, and they believe in teamwork and cooperation” (p. 50).

The Generation X Cohort

As started in chapter 1, to be considered a member of Generation X, an individual would have been born between the years of 1961 and 1980 (Arsenault, 2004). Sessa et al. (2007) put this generational cohort at 44 million members, meaning about 14 1/2 % of the population of the United States falls into this cohort. Again, according to Generational Cohort Theory, the events that occurred during the early years of this group’s youth drew them to one another. For members of Generation X, those events include an increasingly globally competitive environment, the introduction of MTV, and the first reported case of the deadly sexual transmitted disease, AIDS. Other events that
influence this cohort include the Challenger explosion, the beating of Rodney King, and the fall of communism (Sessa et al., 2007). According to research performed on workers of the United States, Sessa et al. (2007) note that members of Generation Xers are far more individualistic when compared to the Baby Boomers before them. Growing up in single parent households, or those where both adults worked, this cohort became more likely to form close friendships and tend to turn to those individuals, not just family, for support. They tend to be cynical and untrusting of employers, having watched their parents give everything to a job and then be laid off. This also led to Generations Xers need for life outside of work. They are good problem solvers, “technically competent and very comfortable with diversity, change, multitasking, and competition” and “believe similarities, rather than differences, should be emphasized” (Sessa et al., 2007, p. 51). Zemke et al. (1999) also remind educators that members of Generation X ask a lot of questions. It is suggested that when teaching members of this cohort, the educator leave time for questions and provide follow-up contact information.

The Generation Next Cohort

Anyone born during or after 1981 is considered members of Generation Next (Arsenault, 2004). According to Sessa et al., this cohort has numbers similar to that of the Baby Boomer cohort, about 70 million, or 23% of the population of the United States. Generation Next is our first “high-tech generation” having members who have grown up surrounded by cell phones, automatic teller machines / bank machines, and laser surgery (Sessa et al., 2007). According to Sessa et al., (2007) Generation Nexters have been influenced by economic uncertainty and terrorism like no generational cohort before them. Because they are so connected, they see the world in which they live more
honestly than others before them. This generation knows that their world is flawed, but they are also sure they can get exactly what they want from it. They “have a tremendous appetite for meaningful work” and may become as socially active as the Baby Boomers were in the 1960s (Sessa et al., 2007, p. 52). Family has reemerged as an important social influence for this cohort, removing their priorities even farther from the Generation Xers before them (Sessa et al., 2007).

Oblinger (2003) refers to members of Generation Next as members of the “information-age mindset” (p. 40). Because they have grown up with technology, their opinion of technology is different from that of other generations. Oblinger (2003) quotes Jason Frand, author of *The Information Age Mindset: Changes in Students and Implications for Higher Education*, who has defined 10 attributes of this generation: computers are not technology, the Internet is better than TV, reality is no longer real, doing is more important than knowing, learning more closely resembles Nintendo than logic, multitasking is a way of life, typing is preferred to handwriting, staying connected is essential, there is zero tolerance for delays, and consumer and creator are blurring (if something is digital, it belongs to everyone).

A Look Between the Cohorts

Executive education classrooms are often a mix of some or all of the above described cohorts. Even though some similarities are present, there are also numerous differences that need to be recognized by today’s education providers. We will begin by looking at some of those differences according to a research article from Oblinger (2003) that exist between Nexters and Generation Xers. Oblinger (2003) states that if an educator is currently crafting development activities for members of Generation X, he/she
will have to make some changes when the group is predominantly members of 

Generation Next. A few examples of the differences between these two cohorts follow:

- While Generation Xers are individualistic, Nexters gravitate towards group activity.
- Nexters identify with their parents values and feel close to their parents. (You will remember, Sessa et al. (2007) have stated that Generation Xers feel a distance from their families and have close knit friend groups.)
- When compared, Nexters report that they spend more time doing homework and housework and less time watching television than Generation Xers.
- Nexters believe that it is cool to be smart.
- One in five Nexters come from a family that has one immigrant parent.

To further build on the research that has been done between the cohorts, we will now discuss numerous studies completed over the last few years both in the United States and internationally proving that the separation that can be seen from workforce generational diversity is not only a Western issue.

In 2005, Hui-Chun Yu of Hsing Wu College (Lin-Kou, Taiwan) and Peter Miller of Southern Cross University (Lismore, Australia) published a study aimed at discovering if the research that has been completed in the Western world regarding work characteristics and leadership styles can be duplicated in research of workers in Taiwan’s higher education sector and manufacturing industries. To begin, they give a very systematic and detailed description of the research that they used to establish the link to Western beliefs and what they assume they will see in Taiwan. They start by discussing the work characteristic differences seen between Baby Boomers and Generation X,
describing the cohorts different work values, work attitudes, and work expectations. They then discuss the leadership styles that can be used to best manage members of the two cohorts.

According to Yu and Miller (2005) there are specific differences between Baby Boomers and Generation Xers that employers and educators need to keep in mind when planning development activities for these two cohorts. Baby Boomers values focus on hard work and teamwork. Generation X, on the other hand, value personal satisfaction and working alone. While a Baby Boomer’s work attitude leads him or her to value job promotion, loyalty to the employer, and formality; a Generation Xer’s work attitude is more concerned with job satisfaction, loyalty to his or her own skills, and informality. Generation Xers also prefer a fast moving, empowering environment while Baby Boomers enjoy a more steady work environment.

Work expectations also differ between these two cohorts. Baby Boomers expect money and recognition for their efforts; Generation Xers expect educational rewards. While Baby Boomers expect job security, Generation Xers expect job challenge. The sense of entitlement that seems to be prevalent in the Baby Boomers has been replaced by an entrepreneurial spirit in Generation Xers (Yu & Miller, 2005).

To complete the study, Yu and Miller (2005) identified 20 higher education institutions and 148 manufacturing organizations. “Using systematic sampling techniques, every third higher education institution and every 15th manufacturer was selected for the sample (Yu & Miller, 2005, p. 42). The study was formulated to target “Baby Boomers and Xers in all public and private higher educational institutions in the Taipei region, and all registered, private machinery manufacturing SMEs in Kaohsiung”
(Yu & Miller, 2005, p. 42). Information was gathered through use of a specifically designed three part questionnaire. The first section “consisted of five questions regarding the respondent’s demographic background,” the second consisted of 38 questions that “dealt with questions about work characteristics,” and the final section was “designed to collect information about preferred leadership styles from each generation” (Yu & Miller, 2005, p. 42). Information was gathered, coded, and validity was established using multivariate analysis. Their findings concluded that workers in the manufacturing industry do show similar differences to those in the Western world, while workers in the education sector did not represent the same generational diversity.

Another study in 2008 from Peter Busch of Macquarie University (North Ryde, Australia) and Krishna Venkitachalam and Debbie Richards, both of La Trobe University (Bundorra, Australia), aimed to discover differences between Baby Boomers, Generation Xers, and Nexters of the same work team regarding “issues of status in the workplace; need for recognition, typically by younger employees; issues of commitment to the workplace and finally idealism in the place of work” (Busch, Venkitachalam, and Richards, 2008, p. 45). To do so, they researched three IT organizations, one large and two small, gathering data from 128 individuals. They farther limited their sample size by relying on data only from Western workers, defined as those who had “no language other than English or otherwise had European language backgrounds,” to 75 individuals consisting of Baby Boomers, Generation Xers, and Generation Nexters (p. 49). It is not stated in the research article why such a small, specific sample was collected, other than to say the aim was to “examine generational differences soft knowledge responses rather than the organizations themselves” (Busch et al., 2008, p. 49). Information was gathered
using a “survey questionnaire consisting of three components, a biographical section, a Social Network Analysis (SNA) section… and finally a soft knowledge inventory section” (Busch et al., 2008, p. 48).

From the study, Busch et al. (2008) discuss the differences in expectations among Baby Boomers and Generation X and those of members of Generation Next. While the Baby Boomers and Generation Xers “expect to graduate from formal education and work their way up the company ladder one step at a time,” the Nexters do not (Busch et al., 2008, p. 47). Instead Nexters expect “to change jobs every couple of years, are far less interested in the corporate ladder, and require motivation to stay in the same position and / or company” (Busch et al., 2008, p. 47).

Busch et al. (2008) also note an interesting distinction between the Baby Boomers and the two younger generational cohorts that they refer to as the “idealism of youth” (p. 54). While Baby Boomers note that they are happy to accept their work place as it is and are subdued “with regard to the importance of their points of view”, Generation Xers and Nexters are not (Busch et al., 2008, p. 54). Both Generation Xers and Nexters are “enthusiastic about their opinions” and want to be heard (Busch et al., 2008, p. 54).

Of course, with Generation Next being the newest generational cohort coming into the workforce, their short work history needs to be supplemented with additional research aimed specifically at them. A 2006 article from Ronald J. Burke of York University, Canada, and Eddy Ng of Trent University, Canada did just that by compiling a manuscript of information gathered from past research studies aimed at discovering “how changes in the external environment of organizations have altered the world of work” (Burke & Ng, 2006, p. 86). They pay particular attention to demographic changes,
such as the aging workforce, increasing workforce diversity, and Generation Next specifically.

By using secondary data, Burke and Ng (2006) discuss the differences that employers will see in new workers, those from Generation Next. Their findings reinforce those of earlier mentioned studies, reminding organizations that this cohort should not be expected to stay in one job for very long. Nexters bore easily and expect quick job promotion and mobility. Because of that, they tend to prefer flatter organizations. Mentoring is very important for this cohort, and organizations must “offer developmental and mentoring opportunities to meet the expectations of these younger workers” (Burke & Ng, 2006, p. 89).

Additional information about the Generation Next worker can be found from a 2008 study completed by Jean M. Twenge of San Diego State University, Sara Konrath of the University of Michigan, Joshua D. Foster of the University of South Alabama, W. Keith Campbell of the University of Georgia, and Brad J. Bushman, also of the University of Michigan. It was in 2008 that these researches published the results of a study that encompassed information gathered over a 30 year period that aimed to discover if there is a trend of ego-inflation in young college students/new workers that belong to the Generation Next cohort. To do so, they completed a cross-temporal meta-analysis of a sample of 16,475 American college students (collected in 85 samples) using the 40-item Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) between the years of 1979 and 2006 (Twenge, Konrath, Foster, Campbell, and Bushman, 2008). Studies that fit into their criteria were found using the Web of Knowledge citation index. Unpublished mean scores were also gathered “by posting a message to the Society for Personality and Social
Psychology Listserv” (Twenge et al., 2008, p. 880). When collected mean scores were analyzed using correlations between mean scores and year of data collection, these researchers found a sharp rise in narcissism, finding “almost two-thirds of recent college students are above mean 1979-1985 narcissism score, a 30% increase” (Twenge et al., 2008, p. 884). In performing their analysis, “means were weighted by the sample size of each study to provide better estimates of the population mean” and SPSS analyses was performed (Twenge et al., 2008, p. 881).

What does this rise in narcissism mean? First, let us examine how this questionnaire (the NPI) defines narcissism: 1) a positive and inflated view of the self, 2) social extraversion, and 3) self-regulation efforts aimed at enhancing the self (examples include attention seeking or taking credit for the work of others). This research has found that the “shift over 25 years is also twice as large as the current sex difference in narcissism; thus generation is a better predictor of narcissism scores than gender” (Twenge et al, 2008, p. 889). One can easily see how these characteristics, and an increased prevalence of them in members of Generation Next, could cause conflict in today’s multigenerational workplace and executive education classroom. Will this increase in narcissism affect the Nexters’ ability and willingness to adapt for the good of the group? Will it make Nexters harder to please?

Generational Cohorts and Leadership

One of the key developmental activities undertaken in the executive education classroom is leadership development. Executives who are being developed in an executive education classroom are there, among other things, to develop their skills and abilities to be the leaders of tomorrow.
In 2004, Paul M. Arsenault of West Chester University performed a study aimed at “validating generational differences and whether these differences affect how a generation views leadership” (Arsenault, 2004, p. 130). To do so, this research uses two different instruments. The first instrument used was a five question, open-ended survey asking subjects to discuss events of the last 75 years that have affected them (world events, movies, television shows, musicians, and leaders). The second, a forced rank order of the most admired leadership characteristics. In the end, 790 respondents were interviewed, 190 Veterans, 203 Baby Boomers, 243 Generation Xers, and 154 Nexters. From the data gathered, a “MANOVA was conducted to determine the effect of generation on the ranking of admired leadership characteristics” (Arsenault, 2004, p. 132).

From this study, Arsenault (2004) discusses another significant difference between the two older generational cohorts and the two younger generational cohorts. When looking at leadership, Veterans and Baby Boomers feel more strongly that honesty is imperative to good leadership, and that a good leader looks at his/her employees as friends, not just employees. Generation Xers and Nexters rank determination and ambition as more highly regarded traits in leaders. Another interesting finding in Arsenault’s 2004 study is a relationship between members of the Baby Boomer and Generation X cohorts. These two cohorts find competence important; they “want leaders that have expertise in leadership abilities,” leaders who can “challenge, inspire, enable, and model” for their employees (Arsenault, 2004, p. 135).

A 2007 study supports these conclusions and deepens general understanding of the topic, contending that the leadership and management styles of the different
generational cohorts differ enough to cause conflict in the classroom. The “differences in attitudes, values, and beliefs of the several generational cohorts are believed to influence how each generational cohort views leadership, which then manifests itself in use of different preferred leadership styles” (Sessa et al., 2007, p. 53).

To come to this conclusion, Valerie I. Sessa of Montclair State University, Robert I. Kabacoff of the Management Research Group, Jennifer Deal of the Center for Creative Leadership, and Heather Brown, also of Montclair State University performed two 2007 studies reported in the same research paper aimed at determining if generational diversity will effect leader values and leadership behaviors. In the first study, the opinions of 447 sample subjects were measured regarding their feelings on the most important characteristics of managers. The sample used in this study was pulled from a worldwide database of 4,810 individuals “recruited to participate in a study on emerging leaders through multiple methods” (Sessa et al., 2007, p. 56). Of the individuals studied, all were working in the United States and represented each of the four generational cohorts. An online, web-based survey was used to gather options from these individuals regarding “general lifestyle issues, work patterns, employee work attitudes, developmental areas, interest in training options, values, perks, learning tactic, and leadership attributes” using a forced rank order methodology (Sessa et al., 2007, p. 57). In doing so, some very interesting discrepancies emerge. While the three older generations felt credibility was the most important characteristic of a leader, members of Generation Next do not agree. The Nexters ranked dedication as the most important characteristic and did not include credibility into their ranking at all. So, in the end, these researches determine that “yes,
managers and professionals in different generational cohorts do differ to some extent in attributes they consider important” (Sessa et al., 2007, p. 68).

In the second study, 20,640 individuals from 23 industries and 48 states were sampled to discuss leadership behaviors. A “360-degree evaluation process called Leadership 360” was used to obtain necessary data (Sessa et al., 2007, p. 62). “The Leadership 360 is a descriptive, behaviorally oriented instrument, providing scores on 22 dimensions of leadership behavior in six functional areas” (Sessa et al., 2007, p. 62). Data were gathered for this study from an extensive archive managed by the Management Research Group. “To identify the leadership dimensions that most highly differentiated leaders of the different generations, raw scores of the 22 Leadership Effectiveness Analysis dimensions were subjected to a canonical discriminate analysis” using the generational cohort as the outcome variable and the dimensions as the predictor variables (Sessa et al., 2007, p. 64). In the end, “linear combinations of predictor variables” were discovered and reported (Sessa et al., 2007, p. 65). They again determine that “yes, managers in different generational cohorts do behave differently (as perceived by selves and others” (Sessa et al., 2007, p. 68).

It is easy to see how these differences in beliefs about what is necessary to be a successful leader will manifest in the executive education classroom. If educators want their faculty leaders, those who lead the discussion and lead the learning in the executive education classroom, to be seen as successful, different skill sets and teaching styles will be necessary.
It is well documented that individuals have distinct learning styles. According to Griggs (1999):

A comprehensive definition of learning style was adopted by a national task force, comprised of leading theorists in the field and sponsored by the National Association of Secondary School Principals. This group defined ‘learning style’ as the composite of characteristics cognitive, affective, and physiological factors that serve as relatively stable indicators of how a learner perceives, interacts with, and responds to the learning environment (p. 2).

Part of this definition includes a learning style diagnostic tool used to discover the learning style of adults called the Productivity Environmental Preferences Survey (PEPS). This instrument is a 100-item self-reporting questionnaire used to determine preferences of adult learners concerning the conditions in which they best learn. To do so, the “inventory examines five components that affect the learning situation: (a) environmental, (b) emotional, (c) psychological, (d) sociological, and (e) physical” (Cambiano et al., 2001, p. 34). It is used to help determine “patterns in which the learners have the highest potential to be productive in the learning environment” (Cambiano et al., 2001, p. 34).

In 2001, Renee L. Cambiano of Northeastern State University, and Jack B. De Vore and Rhonda L. Harvey of the University of Arkansas conducted a study aimed at discovering the learning style preferences of members from each generational cohort. To do so, the PSPS was used with a sample of 133 graduate students from an unnamed midwestern university. The sample was made up of 22 members of the Veteran cohort,
30 Baby Boomers, and 81 Generation Xers. “One-way ANOVAs were conducted on the variables generational age cohorts and gender. To determine where the differences among the cohorts lay, the Tukey HSD was used.” (Cambiano et al., 2001, p. 35).

In the end, Cambiano et al. (2001) determined the lifelong learning style of each cohort using Generational Cohort Theory and the PEPS. From this study, a basic framework describing major learning style preferences of Veterans, Baby Boomers, and Generation Xers was developed. One major limitation of this framework is its focus solely on individuals from the United States. This framework, by design of the study and sample, is strictly based on data gathered from individuals living in the United States, and therefore cannot be generalized to a worldwide population.

Findings from Cambiano et al. (2001) regarding members of Veteran show that they prefer to learn in the morning. For this cohort, the researchers also made a gender distinction. Female Veterans “prefer to have an authoritarian figure present when learning new information…they want feedback, personal contact, and reassurance” (Cambiano et al., 2001, p. 38). Male Veterans “prefer kinesthetic learning…real life experiences, opportunities to move around, and occasions to become physically involved” (Cambiano et al., 2001, p. 38).

Additional tips for providing learning activities for Veterans come from Zemke et al. (1999), who give the following four tips for training Veterans:

- Keep a stress free training environment, do not rush the learning.
- Veterans respect for authority can also play out negatively when those providing the training are young. Young trainers must work to build a rapport with this cohort so they are not seen as unreliable sources of information.
• Veterans are proud. It is recommended that an educator not make a Veteran look foolish in the classroom. One should always ask for permission before coaching a Veteran, and above all, be respectful.

• Do not make assumptions about this group. Just because they are older, they are often not out of touch. Many do know how to use computers, even if they are not the preferred communication tool.

Cambiano et al. (2001) go on to state that when offering development opportunities to those in the Baby Boomer cohort, instructors must keep in mind that this cohort prefers a “physically warm learning environment” (p. 37). They suggest that instructors have the ability to adjust the room temperature and offer warm coffee for this cohort. They also suggest making sweaters available. One could also suggest clothing layering when setting up a dress code for the classroom. To the more mental side of learning, the Baby Boomers in this study state that they prefer “tactile learning…hands on learning activities using three-dimensional and manipulative material, i.e., touchable and movable materials” (Cambiano et al., 2001, p. 37).

In addition to the above mentioned research study, Salopek (2000) gives us a few guidelines to consider when building learning activities for Veterans and Baby Boomers. While the researcher does not differentiate between Veterans and Baby Boomers, she gives the following guidelines that should be followed when developing learning activities for these two cohorts:

• The activity should be learner-centered. Getting the individuals involved is important, but a facilitator should do so without playing games.
Members of these two cohorts do not like to be put on the spot. Do not embarrass them in the classroom.

Members of these cohorts do not like conflict, especially with those in positions of authority. Educators must make their classrooms a safe place for disagreements.

The learning experience should be positive. This can be accomplished by explaining the benefits of the learning, not focusing on negatives.

It is important that the material matter. Stay away from remedial training; treat older workers like they still have time to make a difference.

Physical and mental comfort is important. While making the learning experience as emotionally comfortable as possible by giving the learner time to prepare, this research also suggests making sure seating is comfortable, lighting is appropriate, and chairs are movable, allowing the distance from computer monitors and other learning materials to be adjusted. You will remember that members of the Baby Boomer cohort also prefer a physically warm classroom.

Educators should be mindful of the fact that testing can be stressful for members of these two cohorts.

Salopek (2000) also reminds educators that Veterans and Baby Boomers have a lot of experience that should be brought out in classroom discussions. Once a rapport has been established, ask Veterans and Baby Boomers to share stories and teach from their experiences.

The findings of Cambiano et al. (2001) regarding members of the Generation X cohort suggest that a very structured learning environment is a must when delivering
education to this cohort. In their study, they found that Generation Xers need “carefully laid out plans of what is expected of them…knowing assignments that are due in the future, the parameters of each lesson, and the sequential steps involved in all assignments” (Cambiano et al., 2001, p. 37). Instructors should leave little to interpretation when teaching members of Generation X; clear direction and expectations are preferred.

*Executive Education Today and Tomorrow*

In 1998, Dr. Albert A. Vicere published a research paper describing changes in practices and perspectives that executive education would see in the early 2000’s. In this, the fourth paper in his series of reports on the subject, 400 companies were invited to participate (Vicere, 1998). From the original 400 companies, 44 returned a 35 question survey detailing their views on executive education and leadership development. From those 44 returned questionnaires 10 years ago, Dr. Vicere concludes eight trends to look for in executive education (Vicere, 1998):

- A growing focus on in-company, customized programs
- An increased level of importance attached to performance feedback in the development process / return on investment (ROI) and accountability
- A perception that technology and distance learning will play a more critical role in the delivery of executive education, helping it to reach a more diverse, growing audience
- A significant shift toward experience-based methodologies (taskforce and project assignments, job rotation, on-the-job learning), coupled with the issue of how to help executives capture learning from these activities
The disappearance of the desire for long-term, external programs; replaced by a trend toward shorter, large-scale cascading programs involving staff throughout the organization, not just top management

The necessity for business school executive education providers to link education programs and develop initiatives to their partner organization’s strategic imperatives

A shift in perspective towards leadership competencies for the future including flexibility/adaptability, ability to learn, business acumen

Because of an increasingly competitive market place, business schools will need to rethink their role and partnerships with organizations

Vicere’s work in 1998 supports many conclusions drawn in a research paper from Philip T. Crotty and Amy K. Soule from the year before.

Crotty and Soule (1997) discuss the beginning of executive education, where it stood in 1997, and how they saw it emerging successfully in the future. They also predict that companies will begin to move into the arena, making university business schools rethink their place there. Additionally, they suggest that providers will need to focus on customers, shorten the long in-house programs designed specifically for top executives, embrace action learning and distance learning techniques, focus on results, measure ROI and accountability, and stress custom, or in-company programs. Additionally, they suggest a move toward consortium-type custom programs where companies partner with a university to offer a custom designed program to their small group, cutting down on the initial cost that comes with single company, customized offerings (Crotty & Soule, 1997).
With all of this talk of the future, where does executive education stand today? By performing an Internet search, using the key word phrase “executive education”, nearly every link that is found is a university-based executive education program run by that university’s business school. If the search is changed to “executive education options,” still, the first links to appear are university based executive education programs. To the searcher, it would seem that large, in-house university run executive education is still dominant. As the market continues to shift, and the executive education client continues to evolve in today’s generationally diverse workplace, will this already questionable model of university based, business school run, executive education continue to be successful in its current state?

Successful Executive Education Tomorrow

Generational cohorts are distinctly different. Arsenault’s work (2004) reemphasizes that generation gaps have always been used as a marketing tool. Volkswagen does not market their minivan in the same way or to the same group to which they market their small, convertible, Volkswagen Beetle. Politicians market their message differently; religious institutions market their message differently. Why do executive education providers believe that programs can be successfully developed and sold to these different generational cohorts using the same teaching styles, techniques, and program designs?

As Arsenault states in the conclusion of his 2004 study concerning generational cohort differences, “the most important change is how to deliver these diversity and leadership development programs” (p. 138). Generation Xers, and even more Nexters, are not content with the traditional, teacher-dominated lecture hall style learning.
Members of Generation X and Generation Next prefer “working on future-oriented scenarios” (Arsenault, 2004, p. 138). They also “desire quick assessment of their skills” so that they know what they need to improve to be successful (Arsenault, 2004, p. 138). Executive education providers need to be conscious of these differences and have a framework in place to help deal with them in order to continue to satisfy the preferences and expectations of tomorrow’s high potential executive.

*Chapter Summary*

All of these differences may seem like to much to handle, but to continue to be successful, those that provide education and development programs to these different cohorts, and to mixed cohort classrooms, must do just that. To begin, providers can chart the differences and similarities in the cohorts and from this, and additional research, develop a framework to address the differences and capitalize on the similarities.

Pulling from all of the literature reviewed in this chapter, the author has designed the following figures to begin to simplify all of the information available on the preferences of the four studied cohorts. For a summary of the literature reviewed in this chapter describing the basic traits, workplace strengths, classroom/learning style preference, ideal instructor, ideal organizational leader or boss / authority figure, and motivation for learning for members of the Veteran cohort, see Figure 2. Similar figures can be seen for the Baby Boomer cohort, Figure 3, Generation X, Figure 4, and Generation Next, Figure 5. Again, all information represented in these figures has been compiled from the literature reviewed in this chapter.
**Figure 2.** Key points educators should consider regarding the Veteran cohort.

**Veterans**
(born 1922 - 1943)

**Key Traits:**
Respectful of authority, Rule followers, Conservative

**Strengths:**
Practicality, Patience, Loyalty, Hardworking

**Ideal Leader:**
Leads in a structured style emphasizing delegation, Honesty most important, Looks at workers as more than employees

**Ideal Instructor:**
Authority figure, Female Veteran:
Authoritarian figure who gives feedback, personal contact, reassurance
Male Veteran:
Kinesthetic instruction

**Classroom:**
Risk free, Stress free, Lecture-style room, Learn better in the morning

**Motivation for Learning:**
Leaning will improve the company as a whole

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**Baby Boomers**
(born 1944 - 1960)

**Key Traits:**
Idealistic, Competitive, Question authority, Optimistic, Ambitious, Workaholic

**Strengths:**
Consensus building, Mentoring, Effecting change

**Ideal Leader:**
Emphasizes individualism and self-expression, Honesty and competence most important, Looks at workers as more than employees

**Classroom:**
Less structured, Less authority focuses, Teambuilding / Networking based, Tactical, Hands-on learning, Physically warm classroom

**Ideal Instructor:**
An Equal

**Motivation for Learning:**
Leaning will give them a personal advantage, Promotion

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**Figure 3.** Key points educators should consider regarding the Baby Boomer cohort.
Figure 4. Key points educators should consider regarding the Generation X cohort.

Key Points:

- Ideal Leader: Leads with excitement making them feel like change agents, Determination, ambition, and competence most important
- Classroom: Self-directed, Time efficient activities, Structured, Carefully laid out and explained
- Key Traits: Individualistic, Friends are family, Cynical, Untrusting, Skeptical, Needs life outside of work, Want to be heard
- Strengths: Problem solving, Technically savvy, Comfortable with diversity, Independent, Entrepreneurial
- Ideal Instructor: Expert who gets right to the point, but leave time for questions
- Motivation for Learning: Personal skill growth, Job satisfaction

Gen Xers (born 1961 - 1980)

Figure 5. Key points educators should consider regarding the Generation Next cohort.

Key Points:

- Ideal Leader: Leads with a team style making them feel like they can accomplish their goals, Determination and ambition most important
- Classroom: Group activity, Supervision, Structure
- Key Traits: Globally concerned, Health conscious, “High-tech generation”, Want to be heard
- Strengths: Very technically savvy, Very comfortable with diversity, Very “teachable”, Multi-tasking
- Ideal Instructor: Mentor, Coach
- Motivation for Learning: Stress reduction, Job change

Nexters (born 1981 - present)
Chapter 4

Conclusions / Recommendations

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to discuss how the learning preferences of today’s generationally diverse workforce will affect client expectations for executive education. Ultimately, knowing what is preferred by participants in executive education and how those preferences are expected to be met will build the base for a successful executive development relationship between university executive education providers and their clients. In looking at the current research on this subject, the following conclusions and recommendations have been established.

Conclusions

As the preferences of those who purchase executive education and attend executive education seminars change, one could argue that executive education must also change. While it is well documented that the different generations want and need different things, how that will impact the executive education classroom is not as well defined. As discovered in the Sessa et al. (2007) research study described in the Generational Cohorts and Leadership section of this paper, while the work values that impact people’s performance in the workplace differ, “to date, the little empirical research that exists has not pinned down specific difference” (p. 52). They go on to say that their findings are mixed “on whether generational cohorts’ differences actually have any impact in the workplace” (Sessa et al., 2007, p. 52).
From the additional research covered in this paper, the author makes the statement that the differences will in fact affect the workplace and the workforce, and in turn affect executive education. It will be the responsibility of those running executive education departments, especially those in the university business school setting, to make sure that their programs are moving and changing with the times. By doing this, providers can begin to make sure that executive education is prepared to deal with all of the differences that will arise in a mixed classroom of Veterans, Baby Boomers, Gen Xers, and Nexters.

*Veterans’ learning preferences.*

Much of traditional university based executive education is delivered in a way that meets the preferences of the Veteran cohort, instructor led, lecture style classrooms where the instructor is the authority figure delivering learning to the participants. While there is certainly nothing wrong with that style of delivery for very complex ideas or short periods of time, this cannot be the only style used in successful executive education. Even with the Veteran cohort, it has been discovered that they enjoy bringing their experiences to light and discussing their ideas with a learning group. Instructors are simply reminded to be careful to not make a veteran feel like they have been put on the spot or embarrassed when asking for input, but that is true for all cohorts.

Research has also made the assertion that male Veterans do enjoy more action based learning, as opposed to strict classroom lecture learning. If this trend can be shown to be present in both male and female Veterans, that would be one more step in bringing this cohort’s preferences closer in line with those of individuals who belong to alternative cohorts.
**Baby Boomers’ learning preferences.**

In the Baby Boomer cohort, research begins to show a move to less structure learning environments. This cohort tends to like more group-based learning projects coupled with networking opportunities. Executive education is no longer just about what can an individual learn to help their company succeed, but also about what the learning will do for them, personally. Baby Boomers do not desire to be taught by a true authority figure because often they feel that they are an expert in their own right.

When facilitating a group of Baby Boomers, it becomes evident that instructors need to be able to manage a group, especially in mixed groups, where Baby Boomers could dominate the conversations among participants. While the ideal facilitator for a Baby Boomer is an equal, this must be tempered with someone who is able to control the group. Additionally, the Baby Boomers social skills and optimistic attitudes will make them great mentors for the younger generation of workers new to the workforce, if properly motivated and trained.

**Generation X’s learning preferences.**

When looking at Generation X, it is important to recognize the differences that we will see in executive education participants of this generational cohort. Many of their preferences will be new to educators who have typically developed education for the prior generations. Generation Xers are not known for their patients. While they do prefer to be instructed by an expert, they do not like to waste time with time filler activities. Executive educators who have gotten used to working with Baby Boomers should keep in mind this groups’ need for time sensitive structure and carefully laid out plans of action.
It should also be noted that this group expects their organizations to provide learning opportunities to workers as a perk. They desire job challenge and their entrepreneurial spirit is hard to deter when given the proper motivation and resources. This group is enthusiastic and wants to be heard, both in their work teams and in their organization as a whole. Executive education providers and organizational leaders alike should remember this when working with this group and find ways to capitalize on the determination that this group possesses, while coaching them on proper business etiquette and group behaviors.

*Generation Next’s learning preferences.*

Generation Next is the newest cohort to enter the workforce. While they have not yet been in the workforce long enough to have empirical evidence proving how executive education providers can best meet their preferences, certain clues have emerged from the present research giving us a glimpse into the needs and desire of this group. Like Generation X before them, this group is very time sensitive and prefers activities that are to the point and fun. Their ability to multi task is at a level never seen in workers, and if targeted, can be capitalized. The main different between Generation X and this cohort, and the difference that will cause the most tension in the executive education classroom if not addressed, is this group’s need for mentoring and coaching. While Generation X hates to be micromanaged and told what to do, this group prefers it. In fact, they need it to help them to be successful. How to get the loner generation of Generation X to behave as proper managers to this generation will be a challenge.

It should also be remember that the typical Nexter has been called a mix of all the best of the prior generations. They will look for education opportunities that combine
teamwork and technology and prefer experience-based learning programs. Having said this, they also expect that they will succeed at achieving their dreams, but maybe not through the typical corporate ladder ways. Like Generation X, they are enthusiastic and want to be heard, but they are also not used to failure and it will be interesting to see how that lack of readiness plays out in organizations and the executive education classroom. For this group, mentoring and coaching will be the key.

**Recommendations**

Numerous recommendations have been developed from this research regarding ways that university-based executive education providers can use workforce generational diversity to amplify their success. Educating a generationally diverse workforce is not an impossible task, as long as our educators are sympathetic to the differences in learning styles that they will see in the classroom.

**Program design.**

Earlier recommendations from Vicere’s 1997 study on the progress that should be made in executive education still hold true today when discussing participant preferences. Executive education must continue to move to more action project and experience based learning activities to appease the learning style preferences of today’s new executive. No longer is lecture based classroom learning appropriate as the only delivery method for executive education. It is also important to remember that this new executive is technologically savvy. The day of the written, paper printed word has been replaced by the typed, laptop viewed word and to video and other media-based approaches. Learning materials will need to be updated to match this new preference.
Also, time is precious. Those providing education must be ready to show executives how spending time in a learning activity will benefit them and their organization. Executives will desire programs that skip the nonessential learning activities and go straight to the actionable learning, items which allow them to learn, implement, and see results. There is a strategic balance that needs to be achieved between this and keeping the activity fun, engaging, and entertaining.

Additionally, executive today are very concerned with process and structure. Executive education must provide the structure that young executives, especially those from Generation Next, need to be successful. Examples include detailed program outlines, measurable milestones, objectives that can be successfully accomplished, and the proper praise for an experience well learned.

*Online learning.*

As the definition of executive education continues to change from a perk only offered to top management, to instruction to the masses to help move and improve organizations, more and more people need to be reached. One cost effective way to accomplish this goal is through online learning. It has been discovered that Generation X likes self-directed learning activities. Additionally, Generation Next is so very technologically savvy that very little in the online learning arena will discourage them. Both of these generations would embrace online learning activities if they are structured correctly, a little bit fun, and not seen as fluff or a waste of time.

The question often posed by this suggestion is “will this move hurt what executive education stands for?” In the past, it has been said that executive education is as much about networking as it is about classroom learning. From this research, it is
possible that this tread is not as true for Generation X and Generation Next as it was for the Baby Boomers. These later two generations are so very technologically savvy, they may not longer need to be in the same room with a group of people to feel that they have networked. As on line learning becomes more advanced, it is very possible that members of Generation X and Generation Next will form as strong of networks using technology as those formed in the traditional classroom. One only needs to look at current online social network sights to see how successful they are (i.e. facebook.com, myspace.com, twitter.com, linkedin.com). If this technology were applied to executive education, the time needed to network in an actual brick and mortar classroom could be diminished, if not eliminated.

Executive education of the future.

If these recommendations are followed, executive education of tomorrow will begin to look very different. While there is no evidence that the brick and mortar executive education facilities on university campuses will disappear, there is substantial evidence that the services offered at those institutions will need to change. While there may always been a need for functional open-enrollment programs, clients will begin to farther differentiate their needs. To remain successful, executive education will need to find ways to satisfy the new learning needs of a generational diverse workforce while working with client companies in flexible way.

Summary

In the ever changing world of executive education, it is important for educators to keep the client in mind. As Vicere predicted in his 1998 study, the market is ever
evolving and university business schools are not the only players in the executive education arena. To best be suited for success, understanding client preferences and needs will give executive education providers an advantage that they cannot afford to ignore. A Veteran, who is well versed in the ways of his/her organization, will have different learning needs than a newly employed Nexter. Success can and will come from knowing a clients better than anyone else knows them, understanding their needs and preferences better then they understand them, and being able to education them in the best way imaginable.
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