Editorial

Javier Bajer

The generational trap

In a desperate evolutionary need to use shortcuts and save mental energy, we have fallen into a rather expensive trap. It can be entertaining to put people into neat boxes by just using the year of birth as a template; however, this is now affecting how we connect people and work, eroding both engagement and productivity.

Meet Mario (51, Gen X) and expect him to be resourceful, logical and a good problem-solver. Or Claudia (28, Millennial), a confident and ambitious digital native. Need someone to manage the factory? Your brain might find it easier to see Mario doing the job and pick Claudia to run digital marketing instead. But was this the right decision or just the result of lazy decision-making?

The problem is that we overgeneralised generations. Just as an example, we might not trust a Zoomer (Gen Z) to lead a complicated project because "they are too spoilt and sensitive", choosing instead a Boomer "who are tough and stoic" [1].

These overgeneralisations are making us miss opportunities in a market that is already starving for talent and about to get even worse. In the next 20 years, the world's population is expected to get 6.1 years older [2]. That means, proportionally, a lot more people will be in their 50s and 60s than ever before in history.

Now is a good time to question the underlying assumptions we have regarding talent across generations and dare to develop people practices that go beyond stereotypes and unlock human potential at scale, irrespective of their age.

Whatever generation you are, I hope you will enjoy reading this fabulous issue of Strategic HR Review.

Warmly,

Dr Javier Bajer, Cultural Architect

Editor-in-Chief, Strategic HR Review

Notes

1. Quoting exact words I recently heard during a Talent Strategy meeting at a global pharma.
2. Data Source: United Nations Population Division – World Population Prospects 2022 – Medium Variant.