

Attracting & Retaining Young Talent

According to recent studies, 50% of the biggest challenges top leaders repeatedly face are linked to talent development. This is also one of the main characteristics and key features of a true leader: how to educate and inspire, how to recognise young talents, how to mentor and coach junior team members and executives, how to create future leaders.

Words Sissi Lignou

Growing talent and making place for younger generations is not an easy task. It is a challenge for any team leader, teacher, educator or instructor, counsellor, project manager or senior executive, manager or director, CEO and anyone who manages people in different environments and fields; even those who never recognise it as a challenge, definitely face it very frequently. The majority of the companies, institutions, schools, organisations or individual professionals who aim to incorporate a young spirit into their organisation's culture, think they embrace and attract the young generation effectively. They do not actually do enough.

A recent study by Deloitte conducted among 10,455 millennials and 1,844 Generation Z in 36 countries presents respondents as disappointed that business leaders' priorities do not seem to align with their own. A majority of them agree with the statement that corporations have "no ambition beyond wanting to make money". Among millennials, 43% envision leaving their jobs within two years, while the

same happens for 61% of Gen Z respondents. Short-term contracts and part time employment are mostly preferred instead of full-time employment. No matter the terminology and acronyms used for generation change, this is all important information, which should be a great concern for present leaders and educators and a basic tool in shaping the future.

BASIC STEPS

So what are the basic steps in attracting the younger generation? Here are some of the key features current leaders and educators need to consider and follow: Knowledge, Acceptance, Recognition, Inspiration, Inclusion, Education & Leadership.

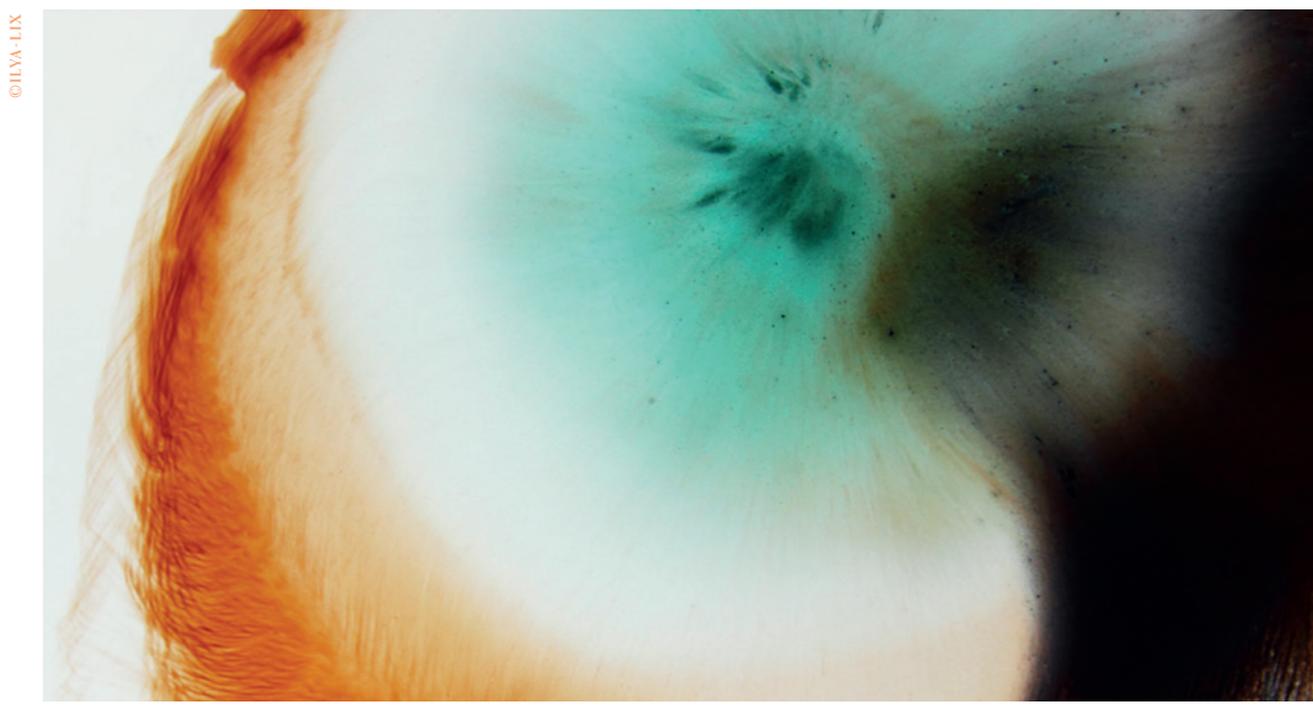
Knowing them and understanding their needs is top priority. Who are they, what are their preferences, expectations, visions and fears?

Their present differs from the present of their predecessors, they see the world differently, as they grew up in a different environment.

In order to understand them we need to turn the coin upside down and observe it from their side. We need to listen and learn. Give them the opportunity to make place for us, so we can enter their world, see through their eyes. We need to allow ourselves to be inspired by them. Young people know their needs and strengths better than we do, so we need to try and recognise them.

Accepting the fact that the young generation is part for the future and **recognising** their value for humanity is vital. There is no future without them.

Our future leaders need to be **inspired**. They are eager to **learn**. Any current leader or educator who manages to attract the young people's attention and trust, make them listen and learn from the past experience, use the wisdom and knowledge of the older generations to further develop, has succeeded in leading by example. The younger generation is looking for a learning experience and need the guidance from their predecessors. We just need to



©ILYA-LIX

find the ways to transfer the knowledge in the most effective way and make them listen to our stories, make them respect their history. Give them the problems to solve, let them think and be creative, don't offer the solution. Use the Socrates method*. Let's **include** them in the dialogue, so they can be educated to work as a team, exchange knowledge, be challenged, think and finally learn.

HOLISTIC EXPERIENCES IN A MODERN WORLD

They grew up in a digital world and have experienced instable environments and economies falling. New technologies and digital tools have to be part of their professional life. Innovations have to be incorporated in their tasks and challenges within their working experience.

They are looking for a more 'holistic' experience, a diverse and modern environment, a working life-style that embraces change, diversity and respects differences. They value change, like to be challenged, and be

assigned with different tasks, which help them showcase their skills and potential. They are innovative thinkers, rule breakers and technology-savvy and are looking for opportunities on a global level. They do not like old-fashioned and it is least likely to restrict themselves to a geographical area. They understand the necessity of a social responsible world and want to be part of any organisation that embraces social responsibility into its culture.

The meetings industry, as well as the association world, is the perfect environment for the young generation. It offers diversity, different experiences, global opportunities and provides different platforms for experimental education, innovation and use of new-technology tools. It is a colorful world of constant change, ideal for a creative thinker who wishes to develop to be a future leader. The time is now to make them part of this extraordinary, exciting Industry.

It is time for us leaders to step aside, and observe. Listen to their fairytale, be aware of their presence, part of their today, so they can be part of our future, so they can BE the future. Give them the wisdom and knowledge, and let them fly. The sky is the limit for them.

This article was provided by the International Association of Professional Congress Organisers, author Sissi Lignou, CEO, Congress & Events, AFEA Travel & Congress Services (www.afea.gr). IAPCO represents today 130 companies comprised of over 7,500 professional congress organisers, meeting planners and managers of international and national congresses, conventions and special events from 41 countries info@iapco.org \ www.iapco.org



* The Socrates method was a part of co-operative argumentative dialog, based on answering questions to promote critical thinking and to draw out ideas