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The difficulty in recruiting experienced producers and account managers has led many agency managers to tap recent college graduates for these jobs. Labeled “Generation Y,” these younger workers were born after 1978 and have been filling job openings for the past five years. Over the next five years, approximately 10 million of them will join the American work force.

Gen Y has grown up with technology, constant stimulation

and age their input and spend little time coaching them. Their managers are sometimes frustrated with their constant questions and expect them just to do the job as directed. Gen Y producers, for example, can easily use the Internet for prospecting and marketing, something their managers might not be able to do. But they will not be successful if their managers do not coach them in sales techniques. Gen Y account managers learn automation systems quickly and can process a large volume of work. But they will be frustrated if their ideas about streamlining workflow are not considered.

Gen Y employees crave mentoring and want their managers to be engaged with them. Training in the insurance industry has been largely self-study or classroom style. The Gen Y employees will want more personal involvement from the manager and on-going training, not just a one-time event. The new producer will want to be critiqued on his or her sales call or will want the time to brainstorm the loss of a sale. Account managers will appreciate department meetings where they are kept in the loop and given an opportunity to solve problems with their peers. They will want direct feedback which will help them enhance their knowledge and give them recognition from their managers about their accomplishments or special skills. Their job loyalty will depend on how well their needs can be met.

The agency system stands to benefit from the Gen Y employees because they can be highly productive, selling and servicing more efficiently than their predecessors and bringing fresh ideas to the table. The challenge is to provide this generation with a management approach and work environment which will motivate them to stay productive and stay with the agency.

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High performance and high maintenance, Generation Y requires a different type of management.

from media and from their many life experiences. Their parents valued their opinions from the time they were toddlers and gave them choices, rather than making decisions for them. Their teachers involved them in learning experiences, encouraged their questions and recognized their individuality. As a result, Gen Y employees have high expectations for themselves and for their employers. They expect their questions to be answered, they challenge the status quo and they want to understand the big picture. They work fast, learn quickly and are adept at using technology. They want jobs with relaxed dress codes and the flexibility to accommodate their personal lives.

When Gen Y employees go to work in an agency, they find an environment very different from their home or school life. Their baby-boomer managers seem set in their ways, discour-

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