

Expectations and Aspirations of Young Professionals in the Energy Industry

John Hogg¹

¹MGM Energy Corp., Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Abstract

The profile of the Canadian energy industry, like most industries today, is bimodal; heavily weighted towards the Baby Boomer generation, born after the Second World War, with many of them reaching retirement age now almost on a daily basis.

The Gen Xers, born in the late 60's to seventies, are a much smaller group in our industry, coming of age during numerous downturns in the late eighties and early nineties and thus many finding positions outside of our industry.

Millennials, born between 1981- 2000, are the second part of the bimodal distribution. These Young Professionals are mostly interacting with management two generations removed from them and sometimes clash with Boomers on workplace issues. They are fresh, engaged, motivated, open minded and confident. Their expectations are very high, they have always excelled at what they do and at times their aspirations and confidence may exceed their abilities.

Their current managers, Boomers, came into the industry as extremely hard working, competitive, professionals, that were highly motivated, by title, position and perks. Boomers had to learned to deal with adversity; oil price collapse, and multiple downturns in the industry where job losses were high, many careers were ended. Their bosses, the Silent Generation, born between the great wars, made decisions slowly and valued long hours of work and commitment to the corporation as much as technical skillsets that the Boomers brought to the workplace.

Today's Young Professional need to consider that our industry is, and always will be, slow to change and building skillsets away from the office will become invaluable as junior management positions open up with the retirements of the Boomers.