

ECHO BOOMERS IN THE CLASSROOM: TRIUMPHS AND TRIBULATIONS OF TEACHING MARKETING TO GENERATION Y

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ABSTRACT

"As Generation Yers (aka Echo Boomers) continue to flood the nation's colleges and universities, they remain a puzzle to many of the faculty and administrators who try to teach them." (Windham, 2005).

Generation Y students, who were born between the late 1970s and the mid-1990s are 60 million strong. They challenge academicians because of their defining characteristics, which include: 1) their confusion of input (what they do) with output (what they achieve); 2) their lack of need to benchmark against their peers and their greater need to be motivated by personal fulfillment; 3) their pursuit of majors based on employment possibilities not passion; 4) their "tendency to prioritize according to individual demands at a particular moment rather than considering the long-term importance of such demands" (Hill, 2002).

Moreover, generation Yers have different learning styles from previous generations. They are kinesthetic learners, i.e. they learn by doing. It is a post-literate generation. They learn better through stories, music, visual aid (McCrinkle, 2005).

This session participants discuss Generation Y's impact on marketing education and university administration. It provides an overview of Generation Y characteristics and compare how the students in our classes compare to the national average. Marketing educators share how they have tried to bridge the gap between Generation X professors and Generation Y students.

They're Here: Echo-Boomers, the New Marketers' Dream - Juanita Roxas, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona

Dr. Roxas profiles the Echo Boomers or Generation Yers. According to Sixty Minutes, "They are used to home computers and 500-channel television sets. They are great at multitasking, though their schedules have been controlled by their parents. More than a third of them are non-white. They have a reputation

for being team players, not overachievers. They turn less to violent crime, tobacco and alcohol than their parents did. They get their information from the "buzz" -- the Internet, text messages and cell phones. Most have never ridden a bike without a helmet. They grew up belted into car seats. They never get near peanut butter. And they have a reputation for being naive and even clueless about life in the world." (Deseret News, Salt Lake City, Utah: June 6 2005).

Measuring Characteristics of Cal State Echo Boomers: Lifestyles vs. Learning – Styles - Helena Czepiec and Frank Marvasti, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona

Drs. Czepiec and Marvasti analyze to what extent California State university students possess the characteristics that are most frequently ascribed to Generation Y. This is based on surveys administered to marketing students at Cal Poly.

Update on Echo Boomers (Generation Y) on the College Environment: Expectations and Behaviors as They Impact on Classroom Interactions -Delores Barsellotti, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona

Dr. Barsellotti discusses the impact Generation Yers have on traditional teaching methods. On the plus side, Generation Yers are comfortable with technology and expect the very best. They can multi task. Yet with their over exposure to the media their ability to concentrate has been shortened and they expect to be entertained while they learn. This has had a profound impact on how to structure our own teaching styles to enhance their learning styles.

Are All Echo Boomers Created Equal? – Dennis Vredenberg, Southern Utah University

Dr. Vredenberg describes the extent to which marketing students in other states resemble the Generation Y stereotype and discuss how their teaching methods have changed to bridge the generational gap.

How to Motivate Echo Boomers in marketing classrooms: Teaching Methods and Assignments that Reflect The Characteristics of Generation Y Students – Chong “Joanna” S.K. Lee & Brian McKenzie, California State University, East Bay

Dr. Lee and Dr. McKenzie present alternative ways to improve students’ involvement in marketing classes. They discuss the benefits of the proposed methods as they relate to the defining characteristics of the students. They report some empirical evidence that supports the effectiveness of the proposed methods in enhancing students’ motivation in the marketing courses.

Impact of Generation Y on University Administration - Patricia Hopkins, California State University, Pomona

Dr. Hopkins, a former associate vice president of student affairs, discusses steps the university has taken to deal with Echo Boomers and their parents. Parents of Echo Boomers are more involved in the day to day lives of their college children than in previous generations

Moreover, Echo Boomer students need a lot of feedback and expect to be treated as special. They are adept at using the internet and have their own websites. Opinions on the internet in the form of blogs can undermine businesses in the marketplace. Universities should act to head off potential problems in the future.

Echo Boomers and the Millennials: Adaptations and Expectations of Corporate Recruiters – Debra Haley, Southeastern Oklahoma State University

Dr. Haley discusses corporate recruiters’ experiences with recent grads that have changed their approach to the “millennials” born between the early 1980s and 2002. Recent articles in the Wall Street Journal suggest that these grads place a greater emphasis on

job security, structure, well-defined policies and responsibilities. They simultaneously demand greater flexibility in a work-life balance which combines to create distinctive challenges in recruiting grads in corporate America. Other characteristics include their expectation of frequent feedback, praise for their accomplishments and having recognition for a job well done. Such traits manifest not only in the classroom and at graduation, but also impact on the recruitment of marketing majors within a school of business.

REFERENCES

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