

## **Generations and Motivation: A Connection Worth Making**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Most work motivation research focuses on the specific aspects of the motivational process (i.e., needs, goal setting, etc.) that impact employee behavior. Locke's (1991) model provides the framework to relate important motivational theories chronologically, but does not include feedback loops or the impact of differences on motivation for the sake of simplicity. Our adaptation of the model illustrates how generational differences affect motivation and explains how intermediaries (managers and/or human resource professionals) can apply the model in developing attraction, motivation, and retention strategies for various generations of workers.

### **Introduction**

Research on motivation has long been of interest to academicians and practitioners alike resulting in an abundance of motivation theories (Bandura, 1986; Deci, 1995; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Hackman & Oldham, 1980; Herzberg, 1959; Locke; 1991; Locke & Latham, 1990a; Maslow 1970; Miner, 1978; Vroom, 1964; Weiner, 1986). These contributions have had a significant positive influence on management theory and organizational performance. However, there remains a need to better integrate our knowledge regarding the influence of generational differences in determining attitudinal and motivational drivers. By integrating research on generational differences and motivational theory, we develop an adaptation of Locke's (1991) model. This adaptation of the model demonstrates how generational differences act as an influence on work motivation and explains how intermediaries (i.e., managers and human resources professionals) can capitalize on generational differences when attracting, motivating, and retaining workers.

Below we will first briefly describe Locke's (1991) theory. Next, we will identify general characteristics of four generations that are currently entering, leaving, or comprising the bulk of the workforce. We will then develop the adaptation of the model focusing on two generations (Boomers and X'ers) in order to illustrate our points and demonstrate application of the model and close with a discussion of the implications of the model for practitioners.

We would like to make it clear before we proceed that any two of the generations would work as well in this paper as an example. We chose Boomers and X'ers because they

currently comprise the bulk of the workforce and there is a substantial body of research on the characteristics of both generations.

As always, there are risks associated with making statements regarding general characteristics of any groups. One common criticism is that by grouping people into generations and describing general characteristics we are stereotyping. We do not assert that individual attitudes or behavior can be accurately predicted by using generational cohort as a dependent variable. However, we do agree with Lancaster and Stillman (2002) who address the issue by correctly asserting that life events have an impact on people and this does influence behavior. These events will have an impact by shaping assumptions and beliefs of the individual. Having an awareness of this aids managers in anticipating and accommodating potential and generally predictable differences. Zemke, Raines, & Filipczak (2000) address the same issue by stating that all of the persons in a particular generational cohort are individuals. Yet many of the differences and assumptions of those individuals can be explained by understanding characteristics and attitudes of their generational cohort. So, while some may call it stereotyping, and it may be to a degree, an understanding of generational differences and their implications in the workplace does aid in fostering greater understanding between management and employees.

Understanding generational characteristics gives one a starting point from which to move to a greater understanding of one's employees and their individual motivators. These can be used to influence behavior in a positive way. Attracting and retaining X'ers will require adapting to their characteristics (Hall, 2003; O'Bannon, 2001; Rodriguez et. al. 2003; Ruch, 2000). Creating a motivational environment will require attention to the varying priorities of the other generations as well (Lancaster & Stillman 2002; Zemke, 2000). While there is a risk that some may misinterpret this work and attempt to stereotype individuals based on the descriptions of generational characteristics, we caution against it.

Another criticism of work related to generational differences in the workplace regarding attitudes and behavior is that the research is not generally applicable except in the United States. While this may have been so for Traditionals and Boomers, there is research showing that this may be changing (Howe & Strauss, 2000; O'Bannon, 2001). O'Bannon (2001) performed a study that involved work attitudes on a sample of 2,500 students in 11 countries and found a significant consistency in responses in responses. This sort of result may be limited to developed countries with significant capability in terms of access to the media and the internet, but it is worth noting that it is an emerging trend that may make generational research applicable across a much larger population than before. Howe & Strauss (2000) cite studies also that support the contention that the Millennial generation truly transcends national borders.

As for this research, the application is admittedly oriented more toward the United States primarily because the Traditionals and Boomers are products of the historical, social, political, and economic conditions of the United States. But, as noted above, globalization is already influencing generations across borders (Howe & Strauss, 2000;

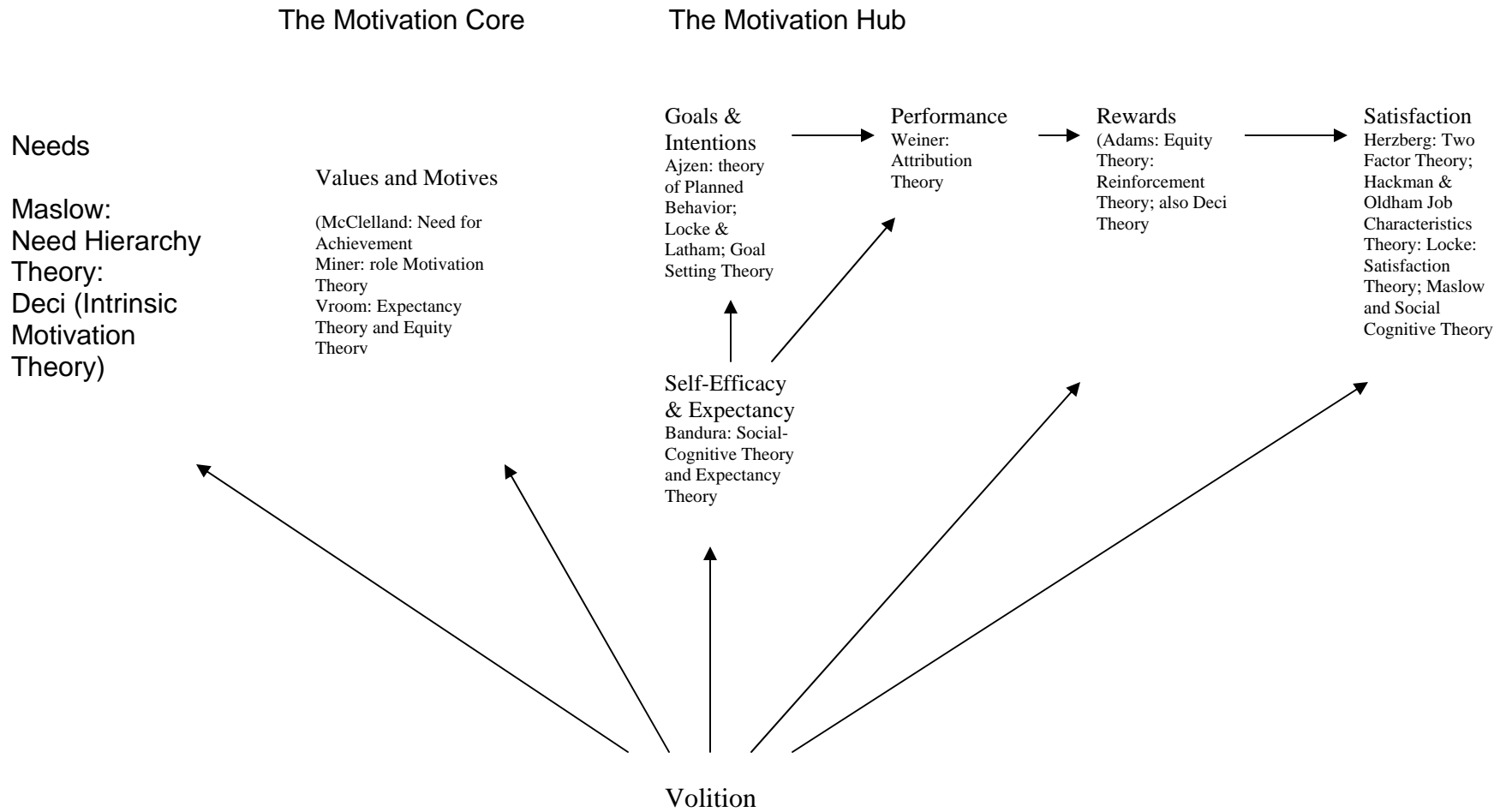
O'Bannon, 2001) and this gives us good reason to believe that the model may become more generally applicable in many developed countries in the years to come.

Finally, much of what has been written on generations assumes that older generations will manage younger generations. While this is certainly the case many times, there are many situations where people from younger generations are managing members of older generations. The trend of older workers to delay retirement will contribute to this phenomenon. We believe that understanding generational characteristics is of value in both managing older employees as well as younger employees. We have attempted to approach the model in a way that facilitates its use in either situation. Next we will describe the model.

### **Locke's Motivational Sequence**

Locke (1991) combines key motivation theories into a sequential framework illustrating the causal effects of each aspect of motivation (see Figure 1). The sequence begins with needs as the antecedents to the values and motives that appear in the motivational core using Maslow's (1970) Needs Hierarchy and Deci's Need Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Figure 1  
The Motivation Sequence (Locke, 1991)



The next segment in the sequence is the *motivational core*. Locke (1991) describes it core as the essence of the sequence noting that it makes each person a unique individual and that choices and actions are guided by values. The main theories included are: McClelland's Need for Achievement Theory (1961; 1971), Miner's Role Motivation Theory (1978), Vroom's (1964) Expectancy Theory, and Adam's (1963) Equity Theory.

The action center of Locke's framework is the *motivational hub* where goals or intentions and self-efficacy are the most direct and immediate motivational determinants of performance. It is here that people put their values and feelings of self-confidence (or lack of) into action and make the judgements about their work performance (attribution) that affect future action. The central theories applied here are Goal Setting Theory (Locke & Latham, 1990), Weiner's (1986) Attribution Theory, and Social Cognitive Theory, (Bandura, 1986). Here he also includes a cognitive theory, the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1975).

The last two sections of the framework discuss how the rewards and punishments people receive as consequences of work performance impact job satisfaction. Locke includes Adam's (1963) Equity Theory and Reinforcement Theory (Skinner, 1971) under rewards. Herzberg's (1959) Dual Factory Theory, Hackman and Oldham's (1980) Job Characteristics Theory, and Locke's (1976) Satisfaction Theory are included under satisfaction.

While Locke (1991) discusses how individual values relate to personal identity, he does not acknowledge the impact differences have on the individual aspects of motivation (i.e., needs, values, goals, etc.) or the motivational sequence as a whole. From an application perspective, the sequence also fails to address how practitioners (intermediaries) can effectively influence the population(s) they wish to motivate (although he does point out that intermediaries will be ineffective influencing the Motivational Core (values/motives)). Because our adaptation of Locke's (1991) framework deals with generational differences, we will explain the relevant generational theories and characteristics below.

### **Generational Theory**

Generations, or "cohort groups" share common experiences in the social and historical process at a similar stage of life predisposing them for a common mode of thought and experience and a common mode of behavior (Mannheim, 1952). This definition is similar to Strauss' (1991) belief that generational characteristics are determined by the parental nourishment received and the social moments (either a secular crisis or spiritual awakening) experienced during the course of a generation's lifecycle. Strauss' (1991) historically based theory describes the cycles that contribute to the development of four generation types. The cycle begins with underprotection where parents, driven by the desire to overcompensate for the flaws they remember from their own childhood, demonstrate increasing nurture over the next generation. The subsequent generation

then overprotects its children and this finds the next generation of parents engaged in a period of decreasing nurture.

Strauss and Howe (1991) have identified 18 cohort generations since the birth of America. They discovered and characterized four types of peer personalities that follow a recurring pattern in a fixed order, the generational cycle. The personality of the generational cohort group emerges as a result of decisive social events that affect each generation differently depending on the stage of life each is in at the time of the event(s).

Stages of life are defined as youth (0-21 yrs) where the cohort group is dependent, growing, learning, being nurtured, and defining values. Next is rising adulthood (22-43 yrs) when the cohort group is focused on activity, this is characterized by working, starting families, serving institutions, and testing values. This is followed by midlife (45-65 yrs) where leadership, is a primary activity. Parenting, teaching, directing, and using values are central activities. Finally, there is elderhood (66-87 yrs) Activities in this stage are stewardship such as supervising, mentoring, and passing on values (Strauss & Howe, 1991).

Responses to historical events that alter the social environment are influenced by the stage of life a cohort group is in at the time of the events. Also, a cohort's collective response is shaped by how and when they were raised, resulting in considerable variance in interpretation of the event and the resulting response/behavior from one generational cohort group to another.

The four types of generations that are identified in the recurring cycle are named Civic, Adaptive, Idealist, and Reactive (Strauss & Howe, 1991). Civics are aggressive institution builders when young and institution defenders when old. Adaptives are elder focused conformists when young and junior focused pluralists later in life. Idealists rebel against elder built institutions in youth and mature into moralists. Reactives are risk takers in youth and are pragmatists as adults.

At the present time in the workforce there is the Silent generation also called Veterans or Traditionals, (adaptive, 1925-1945), the Boomer generation (idealist, 1946-1964), the Xer generation (reactive, 1964-1980), and the Millennials (civic, 1981-2000) at various stages of their working lives in (and out of) the work force.

### Silent or Traditionalist

The millennial cycle in which we currently exist began with the "adaptive" Silent generation who, growing up as the overprotected children of "civic" GIs, matured first into risk-averse conformists and later into indecisive arbitrator-leaders with less respect than their civic elders. There are about 52 million in this generation. Reacting to suffocating childhoods, Silents indulged Boomer "idealist" children who, while narcissistic during rising adulthood, became both cultivators of principle and morality

and visionary elders. Continuing the cycle of permissiveness, boomers produced “reactive” Xers who, growing up as underprotected and criticized youths, matured into risk taking, alienated adults positioned to become pragmatic leaders (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002; Strauss, 1991).

### Baby Boomer

Boomers as the 80 million individuals born between 1946 and 1964 (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002). Significant social events (the first man on the moon, the civil rights movement, the women’s movement, the assassinations of public figures, student activism, and the anti-war movement) experienced during the boomer life span contributed to the formation of common “modes of behaviour, feeling, and thought” (Mannheim, 1952: p.291). These “commonalties” include a strong need to pursue what “contributes to their personal development and status” despite a strong social conscience or having “always had their way in public policy and a marketplace of job and personal opportunity characterized by prosperity” (Tecker, 1991: p.3). This assertion is supported by Schrammel (1998) who found that between 1979-96, the greatest gains in employment and earnings among young adults occurred when most members of the cohort were boomers.

### Generation X

Popularized by Douglas Coupland’s novel of the same name, the phrase “Generation X” describes the 46 million individuals born between the years 1965 and 1980 (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002). Embracing the label and tenets espoused in Coupland's work, the term “Generation X” became synonymous with an MTV generation of cynical twenty-somethings lacking in ambition, education, and economic opportunity. The strongest Xer characteristic is that they suffer more negative affect for jobs than their baby boomer counterparts (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002; Manolis, 1997). According to Schrammel (1998), Xers have been far less successful (in terms of earnings and other labor market measures) than their boomer counterparts. Not only were young adults in 1996 more likely than their 1979 boomer counterparts to be employed in lower-paying occupations, real median earnings between 1979 and 1996 decreased by 15 percent.

### Millennials or Nexters

These are the 76 million people born between 1981 and 1999 (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002). Howe and Strauss (2000) describe this generation as affluent, educated and ethnically diverse. They understand and focus on teamwork and good conduct as well as achievement and modesty. They have been the most watched over generation in

our history and have respect for following the rules accepting authority. They are smart and believe in the future.

An additional characteristic worth noting is that they are truly becoming a world-wide group in the more developed countries due to the availability of technology and communication. This generation has been exposed to the freedom to move across borders and has been exposed to travel. Add to this the growing influence of multilateral agencies focused on common societal problems across borders and one has the first generation that truly may transcend national and cultural boundaries. Millennials are found in East Asia, China, all of Europe, Russia, Latin America and North America.

As employees, it is predicted from early research that they are looking for careers and job stability. They are able to organize and get what they want as McDonalds found out recently when a teenager organized a strike forcing them to yield to all but one of the groups requirements Howe & Strauss (2000). Workplace behavior and attitudes have not yet been researched as the graduating class of 2000 was the first of the millennials to complete high school. However, the general attitudes of civic-mindedness, teamwork, career orientation and respect for authority show potential for some very positive contributions from this generation.

### ***Adapting the Motivational Sequence***

Locke's integrative framework (see Figure 1) organizes the key motivational concepts into a chronological sequence. In addition to illustrating the causal effects of the different aspects of motivation, his framework can also be used to examine factors that influence parts of the motivational sequence. However, an area not addressed by his framework is the effect that differences (in this case generational differences) have in determining the antecedents to action (values and attitudes) or how those differences affect the entire motivational sequence.

The purpose of adapting Locke's sequence is to demonstrate the role that differences play throughout the motivational sequence and to discuss how this extended model (see Figure 2) can be applied to different generations in today's workplace. To this end, we will illustrate both the effect life experiences have on creating generational differences and how these differences influence each aspect of the sequence. To demonstrate how managers and HR professionals can influence attraction, motivation, and retention, we will also introduce the role of the intermediary and indicate the points at which appropriate interventions can influence these factors among workers.

#### Generational Inputs

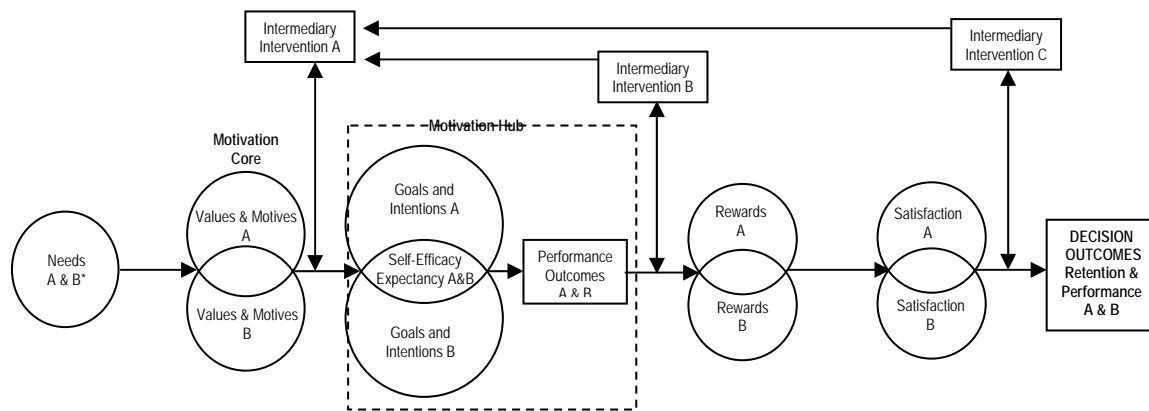
The extended sequence is designed to accommodate input from two distinct generational groups. This is important because although Population 2000 has prepared



businesses for the influx of Hispanic and other minorities into the workplace, little attention has been paid to generational differences. Because today's business climate calls for "flexible, technoliterate workers who think like entrepreneurs, take charge of their own careers, and quickly adapt to ever-changing responsibilities" (Tulgan, 1997: p.1), the target population for many of these efforts has come to include a growing number of Xers (Tulgan, 1996). In recognition of this important demographic variable, the extended model uses two generational inputs (see Figure 2, Xers "A" and Boomers "B") to initiate the sequence.

Figure 2

## The Motivational Sequence Applied to Attraction, Motivation and Retention of Generation X



\* A relates to Xers and B relates to Boomers

## *The Motivational Core*

Locke's sequence begins with needs (Figure 2, C) as antecedents to the values that make up the motivational core. There is empirical evidence supporting the idea that the experiences of a population influence how needs are prioritized by that group (Burke, 1994, Manolis, 1997; Stoneman, 1998; Straus and Howe, 1991). Within the context of Maslow's theory we contend that in general boomers prioritize esteem and ego status needs, the needs of primary importance to Xers are security and self-actualization (Hill, 2002; Lancaster & Stillman, 2002; O'Bannon, 2001; Zemke, Raines, & Filipczak, 2000). Given the strong independent and entrepreneurial characteristics of many Xers (Cooke, 1998; Losyk, 1997; Stoneman, 1998; Tulgan, 1996), we also assume Xers have an increased need for autonomy in the workplace (Deci & Ryan, 1985; O'Bannon, 2001). Though there is evidence that needs may be prioritized differently by various cohort generations, we concur with Locke (1991) that need priorities are not hard wired and so we represent needs with a common module in this model.

The life experience of the cohort group plays a large part in influencing perceived needs and values (Burke, 1994, Hicks & Hicks, 1999; Lancaster & Stillman, 2002; Mannheim, 1952; Manolis, 1997; Rodriguez, Green, & Ree, 2003; Stoneman, 1998; Tulgan, 1996; Strauss, 1991; Zemke, et.al., 2000). For example, growing up in an environment of increased crime and declining economic opportunities, Xers experienced "the social and interpersonal insecurities of the 1980s as well as the dismantling of the infrastructure and safety net that [silents] and boomers took for granted as their pass to success" (Stoneman, 1998; p. 46). As a result, Xer values, attitudes, criteria for satisfaction, and definitions for success differ vastly from their boomer counterparts.

Over the last few years there has been a deluge of information about the work values and attitudes of Xers. The most critical comments have come from boomers who see Xers as lazy, disloyal, and unwilling to pay their dues (O'Bannon, 2001). Despite these stereotypes, permissive latchkey childhoods and early exposure to technology taught Xers to be independent problem solvers able to effectively manage today's information overload. Further, as the generation responsible for more than 70 percent of all new start up businesses in America today (Bagby, 1998), the slacker label ascribed to Xers has also been proven more myth than reality. Despite their entrepreneurial spirit, Xers "disdain the workaholic, slave-to-the job mentality of their parents and bosses" (Losyk, 1997: p.42). They are searching instead for ways to individually apply their talents on their own terms: "I want material success, but I also want balance in life. My dream is to live life as an entrepreneur ... on my own terms, with my own skills, resources, and competencies" (Stoneman, 1998: p.49). Multiple researchers substantiate these Xer attitudes and describes, in order, the work issues of paramount importance to Xers as: a balanced life style, flexible scheduling, challenging tasks and projects, frequent performance feedback, accommodating family responsibilities, rewarding loyalty with loyalty, and high ethical standards (Burke, 1994, Hessen & Lewis, 2001; Lancaster & Stillman, 2002; O'Bannon, 2001; Rodriguez, et. al., 2003; Ruch, 2000; Zenke, et.al. 2000). These values are a far cry from what Herzberg (1959) found among

professionals who, instead of being motivated by environmental factors and working conditions, were motivated by things like achievement, opportunity for advancement (presumably within the company) and increased responsibility.

Given the divergence of attitudes between boomers and Xers, the motivational theories Locke addressed in his *motivational core* may not adequately address the needs of many Xers. For example, the criteria used in role motivation theory (Miner, 1978) to identify the values that characterize successful line managers (i.e., valuing authority figures, liking competition, and desiring to impose one's wishes on others) were developed within a traditional (read: boomer) framework. But as both the role and generational characteristics of the traditional line manager continue to evolve, the criteria used to identify such values may no longer be applicable. For instance, Xers' distaste for authority makes them less likely to value authority figures based solely on their position within a corporate hierarchy (Losyk, 1997).

In addition to their feelings about authority, Xers are also less likely to equate management positions with financial security and career success. Instead of climbing the organizational ladders that lead to management positions, Xers find success and security through embarking on entrepreneurial endeavors and acquiring highly marketable skills that can be easily transferred within organizations and across industries (Hessen & Lewis, 2001; Lancaster & Stillman, 2002; Ruch, 2000; Zemke, et.al. 2000). Thus, as the number of Xers entering the workforce increases, the ability to identify employees with the characteristics of the traditional line manager will become increasingly difficult. Although the implications of this extend beyond motivation to the structural components of how businesses are organized, it is clear that the characteristics that once defined managers must evolve along with the demographics of the workplace.

### From Attraction To Motivation: Intermediaries in the Motivation Process

One of the most important reasons for adapting Locke's (1991) sequence is to introduce the role of the intermediary and illustrate the three critical points at which the intervention of an intermediary, usually a manager or human resource professional, can facilitate the process of attracting, motivating, or retaining employees. From this perspective, the role of the intermediary is similar to that of the leader described by House's Path Goal Theory (1971) that focused on the relationship between leadership behaviors and outcome measures. According to House's Path Goal Theory (1971), leaders should find ways to increase payoffs to subordinates for work-goal attainment and make attaining these pay-offs easier by clarifying how to achieve the goal, providing resources and reducing obstacles, and increasing the opportunities for personal satisfaction during the process of goal achievement. Given this role, the first opportunity the intermediary has to influence the motivational sequence occurs after the newly configured *motivational core* where understanding the needs and values of a cohort group is the key to developing effective recruitment strategies.

Understanding both the elements and the dynamics of the motivational core will be useful for the intermediary during the goal setting process. Because goals (and the self-efficacy that contributes to the development of these goals) are regarded as the most direct and immediate motivational determinants of performance, the role of the intermediary is to demonstrate the degree to which goals are consistent with the values and objectives of both worker and organization. By providing this intermediate step between valence (and instrumentality) and action, the intermediary can help employees navigate the pathways which lead to organizational and individually valued outcomes (Schriesheim & Neider, 1996).

Whether the goal is organizational efficiency, increased performance, improved work attitudes, or commitment to customer service, work motivation theories are geared toward improving the performance outcomes that impact organizational success. In Locke's (1991) sequence, the action or performance that enables this success begins with the goal setting process. Viewed as the action center of the entire sequence, goals were placed within the *motivational hub* consisting of goal, performance, self-efficacy, and expectancy theories. The extended model, however, dismantles this structure and separates goal setting from the performance element of the sequence. This change was made to illustrate the fact that while generational differences have a decided impact on goal setting, specific performance outcomes are not generationally specific. What is specific, however, is the way in which different groups approach task performance and thus, how performance outcomes are achieved.

Because generational differences impact how work is performed (O' Bannon, 2001; Rodriguez, et. al. 2003; Ruch, 2000), an important motivational factor intermediaries must consider is how to accommodate different work approaches. One element where differences loom large is in the area of time. Where schedule driven boomer managers relate time spent on the job with successful performance, Xer managers are results oriented preferring to let people manage their own time as long as they are producing results. This bias also translates to the Xer need for autonomy and preference for working independently, resulting in a potential clash between corporate America that has been remaking itself into team-working organizations, and a whole generation of entrepreneurs saying they want to do it on their own (Stoneman, 1998). Thus, Xer employees require a management style that promotes choice, a key component in creating atmosphere for autonomy (Jurkiewicz, 2000; Lancaster & Stillman, 2002; O'Bannon, 2001; Woodward, 1999). Other relevant differences in how work is performed between boomers and Xers are time to accomplish a task, decision making, and work hours. Xers prefer challenging tasks with short completion times, boomers like longer time lines. Boomers like consensus building and participative management, Xers like autonomy. Xers like flexible schedules and to limit time on the job to make room for a personal life, boomers like fixed schedules and are more apt to be on the job overtime (Jurkiewicz, 2000; Lancaster & Stillman, 2002; O'Bannon, 2001; Woodward, 1999).

In this environment the role of the manager or other intermediary is to transcend the superior/subordinate relationship and find ways to promote and support human autonomy within the workplace. An environment of autonomy allows self motivation to flourish and leads to authentic creativity, responsibility, healthy behavior, and lasting change (Deci and Flaste, 1995). Thus, the question is no longer how to motivate employees, but how to create conditions within which they will motivate themselves.

Instead of designating a specific area to address the theories of Weiner, Vroom, and Bandura, these theories are included with the performance element of the sequence. Because the attributions made (and the self-efficacy and expectations these attributions change or reinforce) in the evaluation of the performance outcome that was achieved, both Weiner's (1986) and Bandura's (1986) theories remain within the performance element of the dismantled hub.

### Intermediary and Feedback & Evaluation

Although it has been easier to empirically test the impact of path-goal leadership on employee satisfaction than on performance, research continues to show that leaders who provide support and help to mitigate the effect of situational constraints, have a statistically significant positive impact on performance (Klein & Kim, 1988; Schriesheim, 1996). An example of the kind of support the intermediary can provide is found in the evaluation process. Because the population of workers that expect performance feedback continues to grow, intermediaries using two-way feedback and evaluation methods of communication will benefit both the worker and the organization in a number of important ways. First, helping workers interpret performance experiences and outcomes broadens attribution scripts that in turn affect subsequent goal setting and performance (Weiner, 1986). If an external attribution is made, the intermediary can address the issue(s) (resource problems, etc.) and effect a renewed attempt with a higher expectation of success on the part of the worker. If an internal attribution is made it may be due to lack of knowledge, skill or ability. These may be addressed by an intermediary as well thorough investment in the worker to address the perceived shortcoming resulting in a renewed attempt to succeed at the task. Second, being open to feedback from Xer employees can help managers tap into Xer motivation by identifying what Xers view as effective or demotivating management practices. Third, because Xers view feedback as part of their learning and development (Cook, 1998; Tulgan, 1996), prompt and constructive feedback may have an indirect impact on retention by providing a reward deemed extremely valuable by Xer employees (Cook, 1998; Hessen & Lewis, 2001; Lancaster & Stillman, 2002; O'Bannon, 2001; Tulgan, 1996; Woodward, 1999; Zemke, et. al.; 2000). Finally, information gathered during the two-way communication can be channeled to the parts of the organization that influence attraction, motivation, and retention efforts (Caudron, 1998; Cook, 1998; Kennedy, 1998).

Another example of how intermediaries can influence motivation, satisfaction and performance occurs is the extent to which they can successfully complement those elements missing in a work situation. However, the degree to which an intermediary can complement these missing elements successfully is moderated by the characteristics of employee (Xer or Boomer) and environment. (Rodriguez, et.al., 2003; Schrieschem & Neider, 1996). Workplace analysis identifying characteristics associated with generational diversity can help the intermediary make better decisions based on work preferences and organizational objectives. A practical approach for this type of analysis includes diagnosing workplace functions which cause employees attracted to a particular industry or job function to be motivated, perform at high levels, and to be satisfied, identifying the degree to which these functions are provided by sources other than the leader (co-worker, environment, etc.), and modifying leader or intermediary behavior accordingly (Rodriguez, et. al., 2003; Schriesheim & Neider, 1996).

### From Motivation To Retention: Rewards and Satisfaction

A direct outcome of performance is the reward. It is important to note that rewards may be material or may be in the form of praise, feedback or other non-monetary forms. Here we see that specific values influence how rewards are perceived. This perception determines the level of satisfaction experienced as a result of the reward and it contributes to the decision making process where an employee evaluates the rewards (both motivation and hygiene factors) making a decision about whether to continue, increase, or decrease performance efforts, or leave organization entirely. Given the importance of these employee decisions to business, an intermediary involved in the development and administration of the reward system must understand: 1) the link between rewards and satisfaction, 2) the extent to which generational differences influence the value placed on specific awards, and 3) how that value in turn impacts employee satisfaction.

Another issue of importance and concern is the potential effect that external rewards may have on intrinsic satisfaction and motivation in this context. Some claim that by providing external rewards and/or feedback a manager risks diminishing the satisfaction of the employee and reducing intrinsic motivation. However, recent research shows that the intrinsic satisfaction a person gains from doing a good job may be positively influenced by praise and/or recognition. Lindenberg (2001) performed a study that demonstrated that intrinsic satisfaction is derived from two bases, enjoyment and obligation. Employment creates an environment for obligation based intrinsic satisfaction and within a context of clear norms and standards it can create substantial intrinsic motivation. The more an activity serves to satisfy an individual's goals of physical and social well-being the stronger the intrinsic motivation to perform the activity for any length of time. Thus, by providing a positive environment for the individual to achieve personal goals of physical and social well-being (earning a good income and advancing in one's career), providing feedback and rewards in this context will very likely add to intrinsic motivation and intrinsic satisfaction (Lindenberg, 2001; Rawsthorne & Elliott, 1999).

While the complexity associated with trying to identify “generation appropriate” rewards sounds staggering there is information available to help managers accomplish the task. For instance, human resource professionals across the country have amassed a great deal of information about the rewards preferred by the Xer employees. Among these rewards, time is perhaps the most valued. Time is now being called the new money. We are finding that employees who wouldn’t change jobs for more money will change jobs for more time off (Kennedy, 1998). In addition to time, Xers want scheduling flexibility, autonomy in doing their work, portable health and retirement plans, and coaching, training and mentoring opportunities that allow them to develop transferable skills they can use across industries and careers (Bagby, 1998; Burke, 1994; Hessen & Lewis, 2001; Hill, 2002; Jurkiewicz, 2000; Kennedy, 1998; Lancaster & Stillman, 2002; O’Bannon, 2001; Ruch, 2000; Tulgan, 1996; Zemke, et. al. 2000).

### Decision Outcomes (Retention and Performance) and Intermediaries

The end of the extended model deals with the extent to which decision outcomes reflect the success of the motivational process. Because it is at this point the decision to continue, increase, or decrease performance efforts, or leave organization is made, intermediaries skilled in both influencing and evaluating retention decisions are key.

Tulgan (1997) uses Xer interviews as the basis for practical advice for intermediaries wishing to retain the investment made in Xer employees. Because the structure of today’s companies may be less focused on static positions with fixed job descriptions, these suggestions are also valuable for businesses with non-traditional staffing needs. First, building internal escape hatches gives people the chance to reinvent themselves and their careers within the organization (training and development). With today’s Xer employees viewing themselves as sole proprietors no matter where they work, training provides the Xers with an opportunity to trade skills, creativity, and hard work for a measurable increase in their self-based career security (Hessen & Lewis, 2001; O’Bannon, 2001; Tulgan, 1996). Ironically, because Xers more than any other generation understand the critical need to prepare for multiple careers, providing employees opportunities to gain new skills is often the very thing that prepares them to move on to the next employer. However, businesses can create personal retention plans, offer people opportunities to leave without leaving (flextime, sabbaticals, telecommuting, etc.), and tie the employees’ career goals to the opportunities within the organization. Thus, they can build renewable short-term loyalties with employees based on project oriented transactions (Burke, 1994; Kennedy, 1998; O’Bannon, 2001; Tulgan, 1997). These ideas are confirmed by Rodriguez, et. al. (2003) who stated that Xers desire challenging short term tasks, flex hours, a challenging job that is not necessarily secured, and portable benefits. Ruch (2000) identified characteristics of a targeted retention policy for Xers as: a manageable job, career management, good internal communication, freedom to balance work and life, clear objectives, and mentoring.



While success depends largely on the resources, philosophy, and structure of the supporting organization, a primary role of the intermediary is to gather, analyze, and disseminate the results of these retention efforts back to other intermediaries and decision makers at every level of the organization. This feedback in turn provides the information needed to build programs, incentives, and communication mechanisms that support attraction, motivation, and recruitment efforts at the key points within the motivational sequence.

## **Implications and Summary**

The purpose for extending Locke's (1991) motivational sequence is to provide a timely and practical tool that capitalizes on the generational diversity that characterizes today's workforce. This is important given today's low unemployment and the smallest pool of workers since the 1930's (Losyk, 1997). The talent businesses find themselves competing for is often part of the generation X workforce (Tulgan, 1997). In a recent article Caudron (1998) described the importance of targeting advertisements that might prove helpful to intermediaries familiar with the values and work attitudes of Xer candidates. Recruitment strategies focused on Xer based values and work attitudes were more successful than traditional approaches promoting competitive salaries and good benefits. One example of a non-traditional approach is found in a Coopers and Lybrand advertisement headline that read "Sell your expertise, not your soul" and called for people who would "perform, not conform or sacrifice their character for their contributions". In addition to attracting 250 more applications than previous efforts, the HR staff hired more than five times the employees from the newer pool (Caudron, 1998). This is an excellent example of how intermediaries can apply the lessons learned by understanding the motivational core to the development of generationally specific recruitment strategies. Others that have been successful in crafting recruitment and retention strategies for Xers are American Express, the U S Army, Starbucks, General Mills, and Allergan (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002). While several organizations have recognized the advantage of targeted recruitment and retention strategies the trend above is not universal. Fewer than 20% of firms surveyed in 2001 by Watson Wyatt had recruitment and retention strategies (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002). For those that do have these strategies higher shareholder returns are realized (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002).

In addition to attraction, the introduction of the intermediary and associated feedback elements builds in an important communication component which can be useful in gathering and disseminating key information to both employees and decision makers at every phase within the sequence. While the communication aspect of the intermediary role needs further development, its inclusion in the extended model illustrates the need for built-in feedback mechanisms that can be used to evaluate the impact of motivational efforts on different work populations.

Finally, in emphasizing how life experiences influence peer personalities (Burke, 1994; Mannheim, 1952; Strauss, 1991), we have demonstrated how understanding these characteristics enhances the ability of the intermediary to predict the behavior of a

cohort group (Strauss, 1991). However, because it is the collective life experience of a cohort that contributes to the development of a peer personality, we caution against using this model to make broad assumptions about an individual or group based on single factors such as race, gender or ethnicity. This is not to say that these elements do not play a role in the determining differences, but it is an acknowledgement that single externally based characteristics such as race may be misleading and lead to faulty conclusions. For example, in describing the difference between genetic and cultural diversity Hamel and Prahalad (1994) describe the fallacy of believing that a group with similar education, socialization, and frames of reference are viewed as “diverse” solely on the basis of externally observable differences. They call companies that ‘worship cultural diversity yet enforce, by design or default, an orthodox set of perspectives and precepts...as competitively vulnerable as those that are myopically ethnocentric’ (Hamel & Prahalad, 1994: p.63).

Despite these caveats, we believe that in today’s environment where technological advances have made individual specialization more the norm than the exception, there is an increasing expectation for businesses to specialize. This expectation extends into the workplace where the same organizations that cater to the needs of the most obscure niche markets are also expected to address the varying needs of their increasingly diverse work population. Far from attempting to polarize any two populations by highlighting their differences, this model provides a practical framework for understanding and valuing the differences of distinct work populations within the same organization. We believe practitioners can use this model as a practical tool in capitalizing on the diversity that characterizes today’s workforce to achieve and sustain a competitive advantage.

We will close with a brief summary of the information we have found that addresses the various generations’ preferences (Hessen & Lewis, 2001; Hill, 2002; O’Bannon, 2001; Rodriguez, et. al. 2003; Ruch, 2000; Zemke, et. al., 2000) to aid practitioners in applying the model.

### Motivating Traditionals

1. Be personal in communications, avoid impersonal e-mail/fax correspondence
2. Traditional perks and awards that can be displayed are desirable
3. Respect their background and experience
4. Ask before you coach, be tactful and respectful
5. Motivating Boomers
6. Use the personal touch e.g. “I need you to do this for me”
7. Provide public recognition for successes
8. Provide opportunities for them to prove themselves and their worth
9. Provide retirement plans and perks
10. Name recognition is important
11. Use consensus building and participative management

12. Reward their work ethic and long hours
13. Provide challenging tasks to accomplish with moderate time lines
14. Regular hours of work are generally preferred

### Motivating Xers

1. Design jobs with a variety of challenging tasks with short completion times
2. Give them the freedom to plan and prioritize their work and use a flex-time approach.
3. Balance between work and life is a priority, avoid loading them up with weekend work
4. Avoid changing plans abruptly
5. Provide constructive feedback often and in a timely manner
6. Provide time to pursue their interests and make the work environment fun
7. Give them good technology to use and design jobs so that it can be used
8. Be sure that you are equitable with perks across all employees. Avoid any semblance of the “good old boy” network
9. Provide mentors and coaching and avoid office politics
10. Create individual development plans that show the employee the career path they can follow in the organization with specific goals along the way
11. Provide portable benefit plans

Getting generations to work together requires a lot of communication. It brings assumptions made by the respective parties to the surface and provides a way to address the unconscious criticism about the others by all involved. By using employees with varying backgrounds, experiences, viewpoints, and skills teams can be strengthened (Zemke, et. al., 2000).

While there is not a ‘magic bullet’ we can prescribe to attain the goal of creating a motivational environment for any given workplace, we have attempted to provide some insight as to how to use an adaptation of Locke’s model to address generational differences. By being aware of the general preferences of the respective generations managers have a good starting place from which to proceed to learn the preferences of the individual workers and craft an approach that will be effective.

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## Response to reviewers:

First we would like to thank the editor and the reviewers for their time and effort to read the manuscript and offer their comments for my consideration. We appreciate the feedback and we have incorporated it into this revised manuscript. We have made significant changes throughout the manuscript in response to the issues raised. Two major changes in particular are the literature review was expanded in response to your suggestions and we added specific recommendations for practitioners in the discussion at the end of the paper. Our specific responses to the criticisms offered are as follows:

### Response to Reviewer 1:

1. *Locke's theoretical model (as well as the theoretical models of Maslow, Hertzberg, Vroom, etc) is culture-bound. .... Perhaps some discussion of cultural components may be appropriate following Hofstede's work.*

To date generational research has been culture-bound. Traditionals and boomers are a distinctly U.S. phenomenon and we doubt that the generational model is transferable across cultures yet. To verify this thinking we reviewed literature on motivation over the past 10 years to see what generational and cultural research has been done. We found only one study that specifically addressed the issue. O'Bannon (2001) found consistency in what Gen X'ers want in a work environment across cultures. He found in his study of attitudes of 2,500 members of the Gen X cohort across 11 countries that there was consistency in their responses to survey questions regarding: need for feedback, time off for community service, flextime, and balance between career and personal life.

The literature on generations has been steeped in the culture of the United States from the beginning (the time frames are based on events and the changes in generations in the U.S. to this point). However with the advent of the internet the political boundaries may not be a defining issue in the future. With the instant communication and news coverage that is available to the entire developed world it may be, as indicated above, that generational characteristics may transcend national borders in the future.

We agree that a discussion of cross-cultural generational issues would be interesting. However, we had a hard time getting our arms around how to approach the task. It seems that in order to adequately address it the manuscript would grow too long and the focus would be lost. We accept that cross-cultural application of the model may be limited, but are willing to accept that given that the bulk of the current workforce described in generational literature (traditionals, boomers, and Xers) is also culture-bound.

2. *The authors elect to focus on two generations, "boomers" and "x'ers." .... one wonders whether the emergent model has applicability to other generations beyond the two that the authors select.*

We focused on Boomers and X'ers because they are the largest components of the workforce currently. They are also the most researched and relevant for today's managers in terms of practical application. We have addressed the issue by being clear in the text (see p. 3-5) that the model is applicable across any generational gap and can be used to assist in strategizing on appropriate responses to motivational issues managing both down (older to younger) and up (younger to older) generational cohorts.

3. *There is an implicit suggestion of reciprocal loyalty between organizations and employees. The data clearly indicate that individuals (at least in the U.S.) not only change organizations over their work life, but change careers several times. This is not addressed in the model.*

The literature supports your assertion that today's workers, particularly Generation X, are more mobile than those in the past (Hessen & Lewis, 2001; O' Bannon, 2001; Ruch, 2000). We are not sure how one would demonstrate this in the model. We are attempting to provide a tool that will assist management to counter act the trend by providing input as to how to attract and retain employees. This is consistent with the theme of most literature on managing across generations regarding prescriptive advice regarding how to retain employees across generations. Zemke, Raines, and Filipczak (2000) in their book "Generations at Work" and Lancaster & Stillman (2002) cite numerous examples of companies that have adapted and retain their workers more effectively than others. We are not suggesting that turnover can be stopped, but rather that it can be slowed and that the costs of turnover can be reduced by attending to the priorities of the generations in the workplace.

4. *Economic cycles in addition to environmental variables, have an impact on organizational HR practices. Perhaps this could be addressed.*

We agree that economic cycles have an influence on the workplace. The most dramatic of these affecting a generation may have been the depression when nearly half of the workforce was unemployed. This had a dramatic impact on those who lived through it and affected their view of the value of a steady job. Loyalty to the company became a key ingredient of their value system as a result. The economic conditions of the past couple of decades influenced job attitudes as well. The propensity of X'ers to move around is fueled in part by the ability to find a job easily due to the relative (and soon to be absolute) shortage of labor due to the reduction in size to the workforce as Traditionals and Boomers retire. We chose not to address this specifically in the paper since it is covered rather well in the generational literature.

5. *The authors, in their concluding statements (see page 18) briefly mention the role of cultural diversity. Given the broad diversity of the emerging labor force, how would the authors suggest that their model be applied in the future?*



Our point in making the comment was that to apply the model to make generalizations based on a single trait would not be productive. The generational cohorts are the product of a collective experience of a multitude of events and conditions. Race is a single trait as is gender. To make generalizations or to prescribe an approach to motivation for an individual based on the single trait would be ineffective. Peer or cohort personalities on the other hand, though general in nature, give us a good starting point for understanding what may motivate a person from a particular generational cohort. To say that it will work in every single instance would not be correct or verifiable. To use it as a starting place to ask questions of individuals to determine what will provide motivation to accomplish organizational goals is an appropriate and beneficial use of the model.

Response to Reviewer 2:

1. *... did not see the model proposed by the author as an extension of the Locke's Motivational Sequence. The present author's model seems more like a reinterpretation of Expectancy Theory of Motivation. I believe the author would benefit a lot more if she or he presented the current model as such reinterpretation.*

Thank you for the correct observation regarding the model not being an extension. We have addressed this by reframing our treatment of the model as an adaptation of the model to fit the generational cohort context. The model as Locke approached it is greatly influenced by the Expectancy Theory of Motivation. We considered framing our adaptation of the model as a reinterpretation of the Expectancy Theory, but decided against it since the Motivational Sequence is basically that to begin with and we merely build on the work already accomplished to adapt it to a generational context.

2. *Many assertions and assumptions are made either explicitly or implicitly which might need some work.*
  - a. *Throughout the paper the assumption is made that business organizations should adjust their ways to employees' needs and not the other way around. .... organizations operate the way they do and change them more as a result of changes in technology, pressures from investors, strong competition from rivals, etc.*
  - b. *Very few changes are implemented in response to the needs of the workers (e.g.. Some mandated changes by the laws are an exception). With very few exceptions organizations operate generally in areas where they find plenty of people to hire (including global markets through outsourcing and other methods). And they tend to tell "how we do things around here," which job applicants either accept or reject.*

We agree with you that organizations may change more (at least in the short term) in response to changes in technology and pressure from competition and stakeholders. However we respectfully suggest that if it were truly the case that organizations do not change in response to employee needs/wants then the entire field of OB/OD would be superfluous.

In the past workers were treated as tools that could be employed to accomplish a job in the most efficient manner as per Taylor's Scientific Management. That changed as a result of gaining the understanding that workers may not be motivated only by money. Herzberg made this clear when he came up with empirical support for his motivation/hygiene theory. While many companies are indeed slow to change, the change does come in response to the needs/desires of the workers. O'Bannon (2001) notes that though the change is slow, Gen X is changing the work environment. Some examples are the abundance of health care plan options, ala carte benefit plans, and the prevalence of flex time, telecommuting, and other accommodations for workers that were unheard of only a few years ago. In their book "Generations at Work" Zemke,

Raines, & Filipczak (2000) name several examples of companies that have adapted to the needs/desires of their employees resulting in positive organizational outcomes.

The way things were done in the past where employers set the conditions and the workers were expected to conform to them may be a thing of the past soon. We are about to experience a serious shortage of labor as the Traditionals and Boomers leave the labor force (Rodriguez, Green, & Ree, 2003; Ruch, 2000). Because the Boomer generation is around 80 million people and Gen X is only 46 million Lancaster & Stillman (2002) predict an increase in demand of 35-50 year olds of 25% and a decrease in supply of them by 15% over the next 30 years. This will impact the ability of organizations to operate in areas where they find plenty of people to hire and tend to give the applicants a 'take it or leave it' employment proposition. This will be especially true in areas of knowledge work (where our economy is already well on its way to becoming a knowledge based economy). We believe that your comment accurately reflects how things were in the past and may be to some extent in the near future especially in lower paying jobs. However, we respectfully disagree that companies will be able to face the impending labor shortage without learning to adapt the needs/desires of their workers. The companies that understand this first will create a first mover advantage that will provide them a competitive edge and we believe it will be sustainable as others attempt to catch up. Already companies that have implemented formal retention strategies to address this issue (fewer than 20% of the organizations surveyed) are earning greater returns than those that do not (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002).

We have added text throughout the manuscript reflecting and reinforcing the above comments.

- 3. Approaches to understanding people's needs as suggested by this paper are probably more appropriate when applied to employees with very unique and highly desirable skills and capabilities with the potential to make exceptional contributions to the company's core operations.*

We agree to a degree. In entry level jobs there may not be a lot of utility in implementing some of the ideas in the paper. However as we become a more highly educated and skilled workforce the implementation of the ideas in the model will become more important. More of our jobs will be white collar and this will make the implementation of the ideas in the model applicable to a larger population of employees every year. There is evidence that the time to move is now per the example cited above. It is also important to note that Starbucks (Zemke, Raines, & Filipczak, 2000) and American Express (Lancaster & Stillman, 2000) have implemented recruitment and retention programs that incorporate ideas reflected in this manuscript. The employees involved are not what one would consider highly skilled workers, yet the accommodation of their preferences results in lower turnover and real bottom line improvement for the organization.

4. *How many members of these two generations actually work under the conditions identified in the paper. How many of them actually get their work preferences met? When considering all the studies cited that identified these generations' preferences, how many of them indicate whether these people would absolutely not work for organizations which do not provide all they want from their ideal jobs?*

Recent research shows that as a rule if Gen X'ers do not get what they want they will be gone in a very short period of time to look for another organization that will provide what they want (O'Bannon 2001; Hessen & Lewis, 2001). What seems to be happening is a shift in thinking that follows generational lines regarding loyalty to the company.

Traditionalists were loyal because they wanted to keep working having experienced the depression and knowing the hardships that unemployment brings. Boomers are career oriented and look to advance themselves generally within the organization and at this stage have significant 'side bets' (vested retirement and other benefits) where they currently work and so are less motivated to exit if things are not exactly right. X'ers in the other hand are career oriented, but see their career as a series of experiences broadening their skill set not necessarily within one company. In fact they generally see their career as a series of employment opportunities in different companies in different jobs instead of the old model of advancing from position to position in one company. The trend is to get what you want or leave to find it elsewhere.

5. *The major impact how work is performed is more the result of changes in technology than as a result of generational differences. Example, the level of automation has had a tremendous impacted how many jobs are performed today in comparison to how they used to be performed.*

We agree that technology impacts how work is done in a very dramatic way. As noted above, we are becoming a knowledge-based economy and as such the way work will be done in the future is going to be very different from today. This work will be done more and more by technoliterate Gen X'ers who as noted above will be driving changes in the workplace. Retention of workers in the face of a shortage of knowledge workers (Lord, 2002) will be key to remaining competitive in the future. Retention strategies involve accommodating worker preferences regarding working conditions, HR practices, employee development, supervisory practices, etc. rather than how the work is done on a technical level.

6. *Other factor affecting how jobs are performed is competition. According to many studies we are an individualistic society. This makes very difficult for business organizations to implement teamwork efforts. But this has not stop organizations from trying. Many are being very successful. Teamwork became a need because companies, mainly from other cultures, were applying it and obtaining great results with it. US companies had not other choice but to apply it too.*

Authors on generational differences note the competitive nature of boomers and the less competitive nature of X'ers (Hill, 2002; Lancaster & Stillman, 2002; Rodriguez,

Green, & Ree, 2003). Your point about the difficulty implementing teamwork-based approaches is well taken. Boomers have been known to be fiercely competitive due to the large population of workers in the cohort and the resulting need to compete for just about everything. However Gen X may not have an issue with teamwork the way the Boomers tend to. Several authors have identified team environments as attractive to Gen X'ers (Hessen & Lewis, 2001; Jurkewicz, 2000). Further, millennials are looking to be even more team oriented if the research by Howe and Strauss (2000) remains consistent with the attitudes of this cohort in the future.

7. *We tend to present our ideas in a way that is too isolated. This paper talks about employees as if management personnel were neither from the boomer or the Xers generations.*

This is a good point. We have revised the paper to address managing up and down generations with specific mention of it on p.5 and an attempt to revise it throughout to address this issue.

8. *Also, the most direct outcome of performance for an individual may not be the reward. One should first check the internal satisfaction of having accomplished something! Then, the rewards. Many people work for less in terms of rewards because they perform jobs that provide a whole lot on internal satisfaction.*

In response to your comment we have revised the manuscript to include intrinsic satisfaction as part of the reward discussion (see pp. 19-20). We agree that it is important first to be sure that the employee is engaged in work that s/he has an aptitude for and enjoys if one desires to create a climate where the employee will be motivated. It is also the case that appropriate recognition/rewards, while at times may not be as important to the individual, will still have a positive impact on satisfaction (Lindberg, 2001; Rawsthorne & Elliott, 1999). So while individuals work for the satisfaction of accomplishing something desirable, appropriate rewards are useful for recognition and increasing the satisfaction. To us one of the greatest risks is not recognizing the efforts and accomplishments of workers and thus appearing to take them for granted.

9. *Finally the anecdotal reference to Coopers and Lybrand may not be an experience that can be generalized. We don't even know if there was consistency between the slogans in the ad and the actual activities performed by the organization. It is like An Army of One! Is this true? Has the army really changed its ways to allow people to be "an army of one"?*

We would expect that the Army still operates as a unit. What they changed was their recruiting approach to appeal more to the generation that they are recruiting to join the Army. Another company that did the same was Prudential when they changed from 'get a piece of the rock' to 'be your own rock' to appeal to Gen X.

In response to your comment, we did further research and found more evidence that companies are adapting to accommodate the needs/desires of Gen X. Current

research supports the need to adapt to the needs/desires of Gen X to create an environment conducive to attracting and retaining them (Hill, 2002; Hessen & Lewis, 2001; O'Bannon, 2001; Rodriguez, Green, & Ree, 2003; Ruch, 2000). As noted above, Lancaster & Stillman (2002) found that fewer than 20% of organizations have formal retention strategies even though firms with retention strategies earn higher shareholder returns. This indicates that, even though the practice has not been universally adopted, developing retention strategies for the current generation is becoming a hot issue and the first movers are taking advantage of the greater returns associated with catering more to Gen X. We expect that as the Boomers retire and there is more competition for the shrinking labor pool that organizations will have to adapt if they will be at a serious disadvantage in the labor market.

*10. I enjoy reading this paper because it really elicited all these questions. But the practicality of the model proposed is questionable as presented. I believe that this type of approach would be very useful for very unique and expensive employees as I indicated it above.*

We respectfully challenge your assertion that the practical application of the model is limited to the very unique and expensive employees. While one may not want to apply the model universally to all workers from entry level to top management, it does (or soon will) apply to a major part of the population of the work force. The days of abundant labor are numbered and the nature of work is changing from unskilled labor to fairly highly educated knowledge workers.

If an employer considers turnover and employee satisfaction to be non-issues then the model has no application. If there are real costs associated with turnover that one desires to minimize, then the model will provide a useful way to look at one's situation and gain some understanding of potential avenues for improvement. We believe that the model could be applied across the board in most any employment situation either individually or as a tool to use when auditing an organization's HR approach.

Now if the question is: 'will it be applied to lower income workers?' the answer may more appropriately be maybe not (Starbucks and American Express may just be exceptions). Business has had a tendency in the past to wait until there is an absolute crisis before acting to resolve an issue. If an organization wants to anticipate the coming issues surrounding attraction, retention, and motivation of the workforce we believe that the model can be a useful tool. If the organization chooses to wait until the crisis arrives, then the model will have no application until that time. Either way it is available for use when the need arises and we are confident that it will.

Response to Reviewer 3:

1. *Little or no mention is given to the growing body of literature that highlights similarities between generational groups. For example, the statement “Within the context of Maslow’s theory we contend that while boomers prioritize esteem and ego needs, the needs of primary importance to Xers are security and self-actualization” is blatantly stereotypical in nature. Research conducted by the Center for Creative Leadership (2003) notes the following:*
  - *“Though there are some real differences (e.g., older people are more likely to be married and to be higher in organizational hierarchies than are younger people), there are at least as many similarities (e.g., almost everyone believes they are contributing to society in their current jobs) as there are differences. We recommend [based on this research] that people treat potential generational differences as they do every other possible demographic difference—very, very carefully, and without relying on stereotypes.”*

There seems to be a debate emerging slowly regarding generational cohort and life stages. The vast majority of the literature supports the approach taken by Howe and Strauss. In our research we found one empirical article that concluded that attending to life stages rather than generational cohort may work in developing HR strategies (Jurkiewicz, 2000). However, it is important to note that Strauss & Howe (1991) include a discussion of life stages and note the influence on cohort group. This is also noted in the manuscript on p. 8 (and is also in the original manuscript).

In response to your comment we have softened the language and provided additional citations in support of our assertion regarding the needs of primary importance to Boomers and Xer’s (Hill, 2002; Lancaster & Stillman, 2002; O’Bannon, 2001; Zemke, Raines, & Filipczak, 2000). While it may be “blatantly stereotypical in nature” that does not make it inaccurate. We find it would be difficult to function in life without stereotypes as a means to simplify managing all of the information that needs to be processed in a day. We do not recommend that managers blindly conclude that because an individual is of a certain age that s/he may assume that the person will exhibit all of the characteristics of that cohort group and only those characteristics. However, we do think that each cohort group shares common life experiences that create a frame or reference that will influence the way they will respond to events and situations in their life. The value of being familiar with this information is to gain some insight as to how different cohorts may interpret situations and respond to them.

2. *A major concern of this reviewer are the attitudes that are attributed to Xer’s versus Boomers concerning work priorities, life-style goals, and need for autonomy (pg. 9). A growing body of literature perceives age and generational cohort as a poor predictor of understanding motivational goal establishment (see*

*Anderson & Hayes, Life Ties: A Re-Examination of Adult Development (Springer, 1996).*

We were not able to find the citation as it is noted above. The closest title to it we could locate is: *Anderson & Hayes, Gender, Identity, and Self-Esteem: A New Look at Adult Development (Springer, 1996)*. Having reviewed the book we find no contradiction between it and the content of the manuscript.

We do not suggest that using generational cohort alone will yield accurate predictions of goal establishment. What we do suggest is that there will be differences between generational cohort groups in terms of generally preferred approaches to work and conditions of work that are good for managers to be aware of. There is little doubt that there are differences between generational cohorts given the abundance of empirical research literature on the subject. Having an understanding of these well researched differences and using them as a means of getting to know the general nature of the population of workers one interfaces with is a good starting point for moving on to personalized approaches to goal setting, career development plans, etc.

3. *Page 10 of the manuscript contains a variety of perspectives on Xer's perspectives on authority within an organization. It is here that the author(s) could have made a vital contribution by examining how different generational cohorts perceive job performance, employment satisfaction, and perceptions of work-place accomplishment. The CCL (2003) research study on generational career patterns indicates that all generational groups have similar attitudes regarding the relationship between pay and perceptions of "success." A major issue that goes unaddressed within the manuscript is that motivational drivers within a generational cohort is also predicated on whether they are an early or late Xer. See the work by Hicks Boomers, Xers, and Other Strangers: Understanding the Generational Differences That Divide Us.*

Perceptions of the various cohorts regarding job performance, employment satisfaction, and work place accomplishment is certainly worthy of study. However, to adequately address this issue it would require another manuscript. We chose to limit our focus and discussion to the topics already in the manuscript and save those for another paper.

Having read the book you reference above we are puzzled by what you are referring to in the book. The authors start the book by breaking down the events of the past 100 years into decades starting in 1900 and then go on to describe generations in the conventional terms generally accepted in the literature (more or less). In the section describing the generations there is no mention of within generation differences that we were able to perceive upon a careful reading. There was a discussion of a similarity of values between generations attributed to Christian values, but that is not germane to your point.

Other authors discuss 'cuspers', those who are at the earliest or latest years of a given generation. Those people will generally fit into one cohort or another, but may exhibit



characteristics of either cohort from time to time. We do not discuss them specifically since the topic is well covered in the generational literature.

4. *The authors note on page (12) that “Because generational differences impact how work is performed, an important motivational factor intermediaries must consider is how to accommodate different work approaches.” Although I disagree that the author(s) using current literature have proven the link between generational cohort and work performance, I believe that there is merit to evaluating different approaches to “promoting and supporting human autonomy.” Instead of focusing on Xer’s needing a “management style that promotes choice” it would have been more helpful to highlight how every generation contains individuals that are undergoing different life transitions that could benefit from a supportive intermediary. For example, there is no discussion within the paper that illustrates that each generation contains demographic groups (such as women, ethnic minorities) that require unique, and tailored support systems. Nancy Dailey (1998) in her book When Baby Boom Women Retire argues that females will need new work-role mentors to address the crushing impact of mid-life divorce, cross-generational care giving, and singleness to actualize their desire for “autonomy.”*

We have done some work to the paper to reinforce the differences in how the respective generations approach the performance of work (p. 17). We have also included a section at the end of the paper listing some of the preferences of the various generational cohorts regarding several aspects of the work environment.

Regarding the life transitions argument, we agree that life transitions require attention in order to fully meet the needs of one’s employees. However, this would be a within generation issue as opposed to a between generation issue in our estimation. Each generation will face the same transitions as they age and will need support as they progress through life. The approaches that are most appropriate may need to be tailored to fit the idiosyncrasies of the different generations. While we believe that it is certainly a subject worth writing about and is of great importance it would not be possible to do the subject justice given the necessity to respect page limitations. Therefore, we feel that it is beyond the scope of this manuscript and so respectfully desire to limit the discussion to between generation issues and leave the within generation issues to another time.

5. *According to the author(s) the purpose of extending Locke’s motivational sequence was to “provide a timely and practical tool which capitalizes on the generational diversity that characterizes today’s workforce.” In my opinion, to accomplish this goal the author(s) must address and reflect on the following points:*
  - *The current labor force for the foreseeable future is predicated on developing working environments in which all generational groups are*

*able to be collaboratively motivated to ensure the cross fertilization of skills, talents, and knowledge.*

*Attention needs to be given to the idea that “identifying characteristics associated with generational diversity can help the intermediary predict ..different types of leader behavior” is very dubious. The current and future work force of the United States is predicated on leadership roles occupied by a vast diversity of age groupings and generational cohorts. We require a “practical approach” that addresses how to identify and motivate employees throughout the age spectrum. An issue that needs tremendous thought is how “intermediaries” will avoid age-discrimination and motivate the masses.*

We agree that we need to develop work environments that are collaborative and synergistic. Appreciating and leveraging diversity creates the opportunity for synergy by recognizing the various group’s preferences as sources of strength rather than as limitations or obstacles. We believe that this is what we are attempting to do here. We have included language to make that more clear. For instance we specifically state that workers may be managing (or managed by) older or younger employees. We have included a list of the notable preferences by cohort found in the literature at the end of the paper to assist practitioners in identifying characteristics of cohorts that are likely to need attention. We have also provided examples of organizations that have successfully implemented plans that accommodate the preferences of the different generations resulting in greater retention rates.

After re-reading the section regarding the quote above we agree that is dubious. It adds nothing to the manuscript and is off point. We have removed it from the manuscript.

- 6. This paper starts on a very intriguing and thoughtful path. There is great need to examine generational differences (and motivational models) that will benefit HR practitioners. Unfortunately, it would be very helpful to examine more recent research that could advance a motivational model that does not perpetuate stereotypical biases and thinking.*

To address this comment we searched the research published from 1990-2004 (over 1600 articles) for the latest articles published in the business journals on the topic of motivation. We found several relevant additions to the manuscript that we have incorporated throughout the manuscript. We have added cautionary advice regarding the need to avoid stereotyping as well. Any time one groups individuals for the purposes of understanding general characteristics, trends, qualities, or other phenomenon there is a risk of someone using that information to stereotype members of the group. We do not see our work as “perpetuating stereotypical biases and thinking”. Rather we see it as a tool to use to gain a general understanding of how employees of differing ages may see their jobs, careers, etc. as a starting place to then ask questions to better understand the employee. This is not intended to be a ‘one size fits all’ approach and we have made efforts to prevent that from happening.