UC Berkeley
Other Recent Work

Title

Managing the multigenerational workforce: Lessons German companies can learn from Silicon Valley

Permalink

https://escholarship.org/uc/item/1x9831v3

Author

Klaffke, Martin

Publication Date

2015-04-01

MANAGING THE MULTIGENERATIONAL WORKFORCE: LESSONS GERMAN COMPANIES CAN LEARN FROM SILICON VALLEY

June 2015

Martin Klaffke
Visiting Scholar at the
Institute of European Studies
University of California, Berkeley
207 Moses Hall, Berkeley, CA 94720

Hochschule für Technik und Wirtschaft
Treskowallee 8, 10318 Berlin, Germany
martin.klaffke@htw-berlin.de
www.htw-berlin.de

Abstract
Germany is undergoing a dramatic demographic change that requires its organizations to make workforce talent of all ages a strategic priority. Practitioners in Germany focus largely on Generation Y employees, because this young employee cohort expresses new and different work-related values. However, diverse attitudes and behaviours of employees of different age groups can potentially lead to conflict and have an overall negative impact on organizational performance. Given US labour legislation and media pressure, managing workforce diversity has been on the agenda of U.S. organizations for many years. Consequently, it can be assumed that there are areas in which German organizations can learn best practices from the U.S. experience. Although data collected from Silicon Valley organizations suggest that taking specific action for managing the multi-generational workforce is currently not a pressing issue in the tech industry, setting up innovative workplaces is an action field in which Germany can learn from its U.S. counterparts.

INTRODUCTION

The ability to manage a multi-generational workforce will become a critical success factor in the future. Organizations in Germany are already experiencing more variety in the requests and expectations from their workforce (Bertelsmann Foundation & Mercer 2012). A particular challenge comes from Generation Y employees – people born between ca. 1980 and 1995. Recent surveys suggest that they are exigent and demand, amongst others, more flexibility and autonomy in the workplace as well as more meaningful jobs than previous employee generations (Accenture 2012; Klaffke & Parment 2011).

The expression of concern over the dreadful ways of the young is certainly nothing new. According to a famous quote, often attributed to Socrates, "the children now love luxury; they have bad manners, contempt for authority; they show disrespect for elders and love chatter in place of exercise." If this is a classical and common phenomenon, why do we need to worry about it? The answer lies in the demographic transition and the subsequent change in business conditions. Economic growth potential depends on having sufficient and productive labour. However, as a result of declining fertility rates, most OECD populations are facing a demographic shift with a shrinking and ageing working population.

In managing demographics, German practitioners currently focus on how to change organizational practices to attract Generation Y employees and how to safeguard performance levels of elderly employees through health management. This strategy, however, may not be sufficient given the dramatic demographic change in Germany with a projected decline of its working population by 6 million until 2030. In fact, organizational practices are needed that make talent of any age a strategic priority, allowing organizations to present themselves as employers of choice for every employee generation, while enhancing fruitful collaboration between employees of different ages.

Since workforce diversity has been on U.S. organizations' agendas for quite some time, one can assume U.S. companies to be ahead of their German counterpart in managing generations in the workplace. Therefore, the broad purpose of the pre-

sent research is to examine generation management at Silicon Valley companies and to suggest areas where German organizations can learn lessons from U.S. experience.

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

More than any other OECD nation, Germany's economy is approaching a demographic shock of a scale not observed since the Middle Ages. By 2030 the German working-age population is expected to decline by 6 m, already skewing sharply older in the coming decade (Robert Bosch Foundation 2013). Due to talent shortage, more than half of Germany's small and medium sized enterprises are expecting a decline in prosperity and growth (Ernst & Young 2013).

To safeguard the employment provision, and thus further ensure Germany's prosperity there are two basic options: a) increase the volume of work performed and b) improve workforce productivity. As immigration has yet been unable to compensate for the loss in labour force, some important reforms have already been put in place to lengthen one's working lifespan. School and academic education were shortened, pension was postponed to the age of 67 and retirement pay was cut thus incentivizing employees to work until the statutory retirement age. Given the implemented changes in both exit age and education system, collaboration time of employees of different age with connected divergent values will increase by roughly 10 years.

Current corporate practice in managing demographics with focus on attracting Generation Y employees and providing health management for elder generations is, for at least three reasons, not sufficient to ensure adequate labour supply. Firstly, preserving physical and psychological health is indisputably the basis for work ability; yet this is not enough for maintaining lifelong high performance levels. Studies by the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health suggest that organizational work factors, especially team leadership and management practices, are critical elements in productive aging (Ilmarinen 2005). Secondly, we tend to assume that there are advantages associated with age diversity in the workplace such as an

increase in problem solving skills, an improvement in decision making capacity or in depth client responsiveness. But, empirical evidence is inconsistent. Diverse attitudes and behaviours of employees of different age carry conflict potential, which might lead to a deterioration of labour productivity that organizations need to tackle with sound leadership (Ries et al. 2010; Wegge et al. 2008). Finally, tensions amongst employee groups affect employer attractiveness in the war for talent and might negatively influence the return on personnel marketing spending. Surveys amongst German young professionals suggest that a cooperative and pleasant working environment is especially important to attract and retain young talent (Kienbaum 2010; Hurrelmann & Albrecht 2014). However, if junior employees discover that employer branding is all tinsel and glitter, and expectations are not met by reality, they might soon leave as they tend to be less willing to endure job nuisance with patience.

According to a survey conducted by Bertelsmann Foundation and Mercer (2012), organizations in Germany expect conflict potential resulting from generation diversity; yet, very little attention is currently given to fostering intergenerational cooperation. Diverging attitudes and behaviours of people from different age groups can be explained by pure age related preferences, career or life cycle aspects or generational differences (Bruch et al. 2010). In his concept of generations, the German sociologist Karl Mannheim (1928) distinguishes social generations from family ties, i.e. blood-related generations. Hereafter, a generational cohort represents a grouping of individuals born around the same time who share distinctive socio-historical life events during adolescence and early adulthood. In this critical developmental period we are very receptive for all sorts of influence: our values and subsequent attitudes also tend to be coined by the particular time spirit and related conditions in society and economy. Although values might still change over time, this early imprint "stays with the individual throughout their lives and is an anchor against which later experiences are interpreted. People are thus fixed in qualitatively different subjective areas" (Scott 2000, p. 356).

There is no final generation scheme for Germany yet. Often, the US generation archetypes are transferred with modifications as regards the baby boomer cohort (Klaffke & Parment 2011). Whereas in the U.S. the baby boom directly started after WWII, this phenomenon appeared in Germany approximately 10 years later. Consequently, in Germany the baby boom cohort comprises of people born between circa 1955 and 1965. As exhibit 1 illustrates, up to five different employee generations can be found in German workplaces.
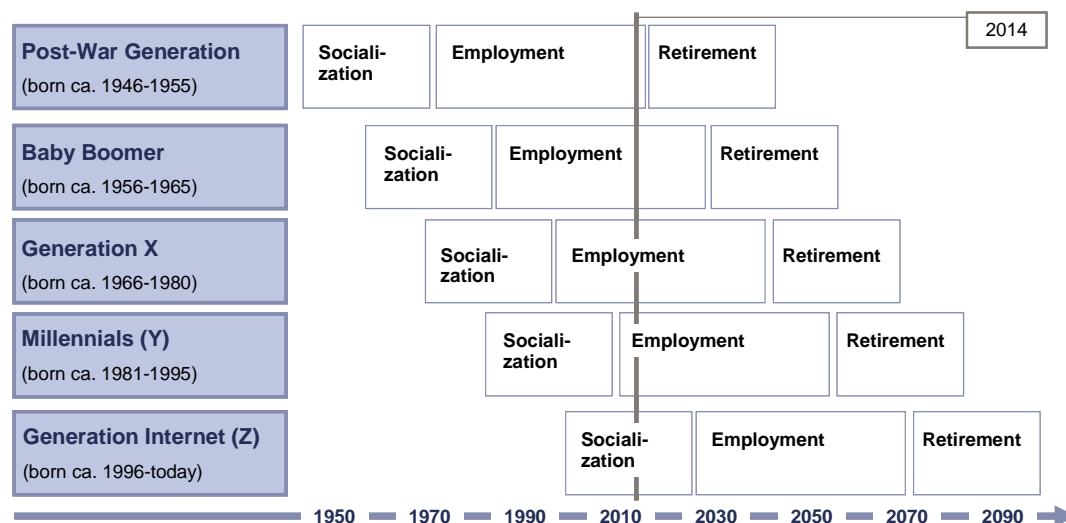
Post-War Generation (born ca. 1946-1955)	Sociali-zation	Employment	Retirement					2014
Baby Boomer (born ca. 1956-1965)		Sociali-zation	Employment	Retirement				
Generation X (born ca. 1966-1980)			Sociali-zation	Employment	Retirement			
Millennials (Y) (born ca. 1981-1995)				Sociali-zation	Employment	Retirement		
Generation Internet (Z) (born ca. 1996-today)					Sociali-zation	Employment	Retirement	

1950   1970   1990   2010   2030   2050   2070   2090

Exhibit 1: Generations in the Workplace in Germany (Source: Adapted from Klaffke 2014, p. 12)

As with any other model, the generation approach has its limitations. There are difficulties in precisely defining age limits for each cohort and estimating the importance of other factors such as race, culture, geography and class in explaining individual behaviour. Empirical evidence for generational differences in work values is still somewhat preliminary. Much of the existing literature bases its argumentation on non-empirical sources, often in form of anecdotal accounts. However, the few systematic studies on generational differences in the workplace suggest there do exist different perceptions and expectations from employees of different age groups (e.g. Twenge et al 2010).

A recent survey by AOK Institute revealed that there is mutual misjudgement amongst workers of different age groups in Germany (Zok et al. 2014). In addition to misperceptions, recent studies with the German car manufacturer Daimler

and Germany's leading railway company Deutsche Bahn identified concrete intergenerational issues in the workplace (Klaffke & Schwarzenbart 2013; Klaffke & Von Wedel 2014). On top of the – almost classical – complaint from younger generations about their senior colleagues' insufficient openness for change and new ways of living, lack of both appreciation and feedback turned out to be major fields of intergenerational debate for junior employees. Whereas elder employees expect to be respected for their seniority and lifetime achievements, Generation Y employees are reluctant to kneel before sheer age; instead, they tend to base their praise on current performance levels. Furthermore, Generation Y employees want to be treated on a par by senior colleagues, who often show appreciation for experience and expertise only, which juniors still have to acquire. Seniors also do not understand and are unwilling to comply with Generation Y's expectation that a supervisor shall function as service provider, helping juniors to quickly boost their career development and advancement.

To explain tension amongst employees of different age, there has evolved a set of psychological theories focussing on social interaction processes. Often cited in literature are, amongst others, Byrne's (1971) similarity-interaction paradigm, Turner's (1987) self-categorization model, as well as social identity theory proposed by Tajfel and Turner (1986). People feel attracted to others who are similar to them (e.g. age, gender, ethnicity) thus resulting in increased communication and interaction. Further, to boost self-esteem, individuals tend to form and join sub-groups and perceive their own groups (i.e. in-groups) as superior to the other groups (i.e. out-groups). In-group/out-group-categorization might lead to stereotyping and even overt discrimination, fostering conflict and less cooperation amongst sub-groups. The emergence of opposing sub-groups is assumed to be more likely, when more rigid attributes for group-formation (e.g. age, gender) impede an individual's movement from one sub-group to another (Bruch et al. 2010).

Although organizations see substantial conflict potential as a result of generation diversity, there is still very little practical and academic attention given to manag-

ing generations in the workplace and to fostering intergenerational cooperation (Bertelsmann Foundation & Mercer 2012). Generation management aims at effectively addressing the differences in values and expectations of each employee cohort. Generation management thus represents a facet of diversity management which, as a management concept, focuses on respect and aims at embracing individual differences to turn them into organizational assets (Thomas & Ely 1996). Beyond legal requirements for equal opportunity employment and fair treatment through diversity management organizations can increase their attractiveness as employers amongst each employee generation.

To empirically identify a framework for implementing generation management in Germany, we have, as a first step, conducted a pre-study with the car manufacturer, Daimler, in the German automotive industry (Klaffke & Schwarzenbart 2013). Exhibit 2 shows the three major action fields identified in the study.

Set up structural framework	Ensure lifelong work ability	Enhance intergenerational respect and collaboration
• Survey generation specific demands in the workplace	• Refine corporate health management (trainings, etc.)	• Launch a communication campaign ("Old –Young – Successful")
• Check and adjust performance management instruments	• Implement transformational leadership principles	• Run sensitivity trainings (generation dialogue workshops)
• Further develop flexible work schemes (time, place, career stages)	• Allow for job rotation and ensure healthy workplaces (e.g. ergonomics)	• Embed generation management in leadership training programs
• Ensure merit-based and age-independent promotion	• Offer life-long training and learning opportunities (where required with generation specific instructing methods)	• Install age mixed tandems for learning and mentoring
• Introduce cafeteria approach for benefits and perks	• ...	• ...
• Test new workplace concepts (e.g. non-territorial) office		
• ...		

Exhibit 2: Action fields for implementing Generation Management (Source: Adapted from Klaffke & Schwarzenbart 2013, p. 46)

Accordingly, generation management requires a structural framework of Human Resource Management principles and practices that allow accommodating generation specific needs (e.g.: age-independent promotion, choices as regards to perks and benefits, new office concepts.). It should also support lifelong work ability, for instance through corporate health management programs and personnel devel-

opment initiatives. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, it should create awareness of generational differences and mobilize employees into intergenerational collaboration.

As for diversity management in general, there is no "best way" to manage generational differences in the workplace. To be effective, diversity management must consider business needs and workforce issues, as well as situational factors such as workplace environment or the stage of development regarding workplace diversity. Therefore, diversity initiatives cannot only be different from organization to organization, but also from country to country.

To systematically develop a set of generation management actions that organizations can refer to when designing their individual programs, it is beneficial to study practices in countries believed to be experienced in generation management and to evaluate whether and how their practices could be adopted domestically. In this respect, focusing on U.S. practice is assumed to allow for valuable insights on bridging potential generational gaps and fostering a generations-friendly culture. Managing workforce diversity has been on U.S. organizations' agendas for quite some time, whereas in Germany it is still a relatively new undertaking. The roots of diversity management as a comprehensive management approach in the U.S. go back to the Civil Rights Movement, commencing in the mid-1950s, and consecutive labour legislations. Also, extensive writing on generational differences in work values and consecutive suggestions on how to manage generations at work has emerged in the U.S. (e.g. Lancaster & Stillman 2003; Zemke, Raines & Filipzcak 1999) earlier than in Germany (e.g. Oertel 2007; Bruch et al. 2010).

As workforce diversity can be recognized as a source of creativity and innovation there is reason to assume that, especially in creative clusters such as Silicon Valley in California, it has contributed to prosperity and sustained competitive advantage (Florida 2002). Therefore, Silicon Valley companies were selected to identify areas in which German organizations can potentially learn from the U.S. experience in managing generations in the workplace.

METHOD

As research on generation diversity and associated management practices is still emerging, this project took an exploratory route. Representatives from organizations in the Bay Area were invited for in-depth interviews (cf. appendix 1).

At the same time interview requests to Bay Area companies and organizations were sent out the *San Francisco Chronicle* published an article titled, "Age left out of the diversity discussion" (Brown 2014). It noted that most Silicon Valley companies were reluctant in releasing age related data of their workforce. "Silicon Valley's conversation about diversity has revolved chiefly around gender and race, although the stereo-type of the techie as white, male and young has written out the over-40 set as well" (Brown 2014). Further it was mentioned that "there have been several age discrimination lawsuits against major companies, and frequent reports of employers and funders passing on older workers in favour of younger ones" (Brown 2014). This public debate on ageism in Silicon Valley companies might be a reason why there was hardly any reaction to the interview request: Only five companies agreed on an interview on generation management; Apple, Google, Pixar and Virgin America at least sent regrets. Thus to explore the topic based on secondary data, additional focus interviews were conducted with Great Place to Work, Inc.[1], The Silicon Valley Leadership Group[2] and Steelcase Research.

In total eight focused interviews of a length of 1 to 1.5 hours were conducted in August and September of 2014. A semi-structured questionnaire served as a guideline for the interview (cf. appendix 2). The interview questions were taken from the survey conducted with Daimler amongst German car manufacturers. They looked at generation specificities in career and competence management, in managing performance as well as in managing the employee-employer relation. One question explicitly expolred new approaches in workplace design as in the

---

[1] Great Place to Work Inc. is a global human resources management consultancy and research firm, headquartered in San Francisco, that conducts an annual study of workplace attractiveness.
[2] The Silicon Valley Leadership Group (SVLG) represents as a non-profit advocacy group more than 390 Silicon Valley's companies.

study with Daimler setting up innovative office configurations was found to be an important and new factor in engaging employees.

All interviews were conducted as face-to-face-conversations at the respondents' offices. During the interviews notes were taken that were worked up directly after the meeting. The survey data were analysed by content based on the generation management framework developed with Daimler. Findings were discussed first in a workshop-lecture at UC Berkeley's Institute of European Studies in October 2014, and then they were reviewed with company representatives in Germany.

FINDINGS

The surveyed companies mentioned a number of Human Resource Management practices, which had been already identified in the study with Daimler (cf. exhibit 1). They mostly concerned generation-unspecific actions that could in general contribute to enhancing employer attractiveness. These included merit based pay and promotion, as well as offers of individual contributor career paths besides the traditional management track. Management and individual contributor career paths were often handled similarly as regards compensation; yet, it was stated there to exist less senior positions in the individual contributor line. In this regard, it was also mentioned that in companies offering individual contributor career paths, age would less negatively impact promotion opportunities.

Flex-staffing (i.e. adjusting work time to employees' needs) as well as feedback and fun made up important elements of the work life in most of the surveyed companies. Although per se flexible working hours were allowed, most companies outlined a preference to have their workforce in the office. Therefore, there was rarely a rule specifying a specific weekday recurrently set as a home office day; instead, work flexibility had to be occasionally agreed upon with the respective supervisor. Furthermore, home office allowance often was connected to an employee's commitment to be available. In one company, employees were informed that whenever their attendance rate dropped under 40 percent their assigned desk would be taken away. As regards leader-follower interactions, some firms moni-

tored through engagement surveys whether employees feel that there was sufficient feedback given. In addition to all-firm events, managers, in many cases, were reported to have a team and management effectiveness budget for fun activities and celebration of success in their respective teams (e.g. team dinner).

Particular HRM provisions considering employee generations' potential needs were however rarely noted. Where generation specific HRM practices existed, they focused on Generation Y (e.g. the "parent's day" at Google). A cafeteria approach, i.e. accommodating employees' preferences regarding non-monetary incentives, was rarely used.

Flexibility was typically allowed in regards to social benefits, e.g. contribution to health care, life insurance or retirement packages. For perks, however, there seemed to be in total very little in place, i.e. an employee typically was not offered to choose between child care or elderly care as additional fringe benefits.

Also, specific psychological assistance in preparing for an employee's retirement (e.g. with seminars) was not offered; as a reason, one respondent gave the meritocracy approach of Silicon Valley firms being at odds with an entitlement culture. As employees typically received a competitive salary they were expected to solve their life issues on their own.

Concerning personnel development, all interviewees stated employees could participate in on-the-job training and seminars (mostly online). No evidence could be found of an uneven distribution of training hours or development budgets based on the employees' age. However, learning approaches, methods and tools were reported not to consider elderly workers' learning preferences. In this regard, some respondents mentioned the relatively young age structure of their firms allowed them to neglect aging effects in corporate education.

To raise awareness for diversity and to enhance mutual understanding, all surveyed companies ran diversity trainings. However, "generation" as a specific facet of workforce diversity or challenges in intergenerational collaboration played a secondary role. If at all present, leadership training on generation management

considered potential clashes between Generation Y and Baby Boomers leaving Generation X out of the discussion. One interviewee mentioned some sort of panel discussion, in which Generation Y employees were brought in for dialogue with Baby Boomer executives. Also reverse-mentoring was said to exist in firms.

New office concepts and workplace design were considered in all surveyed companies as an integral element of their workforce strategy. Although interviewees believed that office design per se is not based on generational preferences but on work requirements, they saw it as an important factor in attracting and engaging Generation Y employees. According to research by one respondent Generation Y employees have a preference for open and transparent environments, they are "tuned for constant connection and collaboration", and they want to have autonomy in choosing work time, work location and work place. Another interviewee mentioned that his company had been losing on Generation Y talent because it had not been offering a fun and state-of-the-art work environment.

All firms had experimented over the last years with innovative office configurations enhancing a culture of collaboration, speed and co-creation; consequently allowing for substantial floor capacity savings while fostering employees' identification with the corporate culture. In all companies the workplace design had been moved away from the traditional U.S. high wall cubicle configuration to open space offices including walk-in meeting rooms, telephone booths, lounge areas for informal meetings or even yoga and wellness centres. The guiding idea behind office design was to set up an "ecosystem" of different workplace options employees can choose from according to the individual task requirements. One interviewee noted that "sitting [has come] to be the new smoking", most office layouts were reported to be considerate of employees' physical activity needs. For instance, to encourage people to move around, one firm had built an open staircase to connect two floors, implemented different room types on the respective floors and made different snacks available on different floors. Further, in one company, the majority of employees worked in a non-territorial office setting, i.e. they did not have an assigned workstation. Reasons given were to move people

out of their comfort zone, to make them tidy up their workplace at the end of every business day and to avoid any sense of entitlement.

According to the respondents, transitioning from a traditional office to an open configuration required substantial change management effort and could not be carried out as a mere facility management project with focus on floor capacity reduction. This included both employee mobilization and change in leadership towards a result orientation. Besides communication about the new office's benefits and the mode of transition, mobilization activities focused on involving employees in co-creating their new office space. For instance, in one firm each team had been given a decorating budget to set up a themed office "neighbourhood" (i.e. an area in between team sections for informal communication) and employees had turned them into a cinema, a spa or a sports bar neighbourhood. As the "no assigned seat concept" requires employees to have access to storage areas, one firm implemented lockers, similar to those at colleges, and employees were invited for locker decoration contests.

In regards to leadership, executive training, in some cases, was offered and covered topics included how to manage employees without direct and physical supervision. In addition, supervisors were required to act as a role model and to sit in the open desk area. Last but not least, regular surveys were conducted to learn what employees appreciated in the new office settings and to identify areas for improvement.

Whereas earlier new office concepts focused on moving employees in open spaces settings to push floor capacity savings, interviewees observed now a trend for more privacy. According to them privacy, however, does not mean having a separate office, but could take on different spatial forms (e.g. have glass walls to separate office zones, install enclaves for focus work, use library spaces for heads-down activities or set up dedicated rooms for recharging in silence). Further, one respondent mentioned that there was a need for a more fluid office arrangement, allowing employees and teams through mobile furniture (e.g. desks and chairs on wheels, movable walls) to quickly change the office configuration. Finally, com-

panies started to cut back on the number of "non-assigned" desks, as they had discovered that people need anchoring and personalization.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Given the small number of surveyed companies, the sample composition and its explorative approach, the analysis does have limitations. However, since the Silicon Leadership Group and Great Place to Work with their wide experience and insider's knowledge were included in the study, two main conclusions might be drawn from the findings.

First, at least as Silicon Valley enterprises are regarded, this study does not support the assumption that in managing generations U.S. companies lie ahead of their German counterparts. The survey could not find any specific U.S. practice beyond the actions already identified in the pre-study with Daimler. As there is barely any initiative taken to enhance intergenerational collaboration, the age and generation focus seems to be irrelevant in the Silicon Valley companies interviewed. This finding tends to support the *San Francisco Chronicle's* reporting on age being left out of the diversity discussion.

Further, the survey indicates evidence for a general reservation amongst U.S. employers to offer a menu of voluntary benefits and perks, employees can choose from according to their needs. This, however, conflicts with the general idea of generation management which requires companies to dispose of a variety of HR instruments in order to position themselves as employer of choice amongst every generation. According to one respondent, in the U.S. employee private lives and work are seen as rather disjointed and a company would rather move business to a different location than offering specific perks.

The second conclusion concerns the importance of generation management for future office design. In building the office and the workplace of the future, German companies can learn substantial lessons from the U.S., since in Germany private or shared offices are still prevalent. Many visits of German corporate and

governmental delegations to Silicon Valley companies give obvious proof of the already identified learning potential.

From a Human Resource Management perspective, the idea of incorporating the workplace strategy in the workforce strategy is important given Germany's expected labour shortage. However, to use the office as a further strategic tool in talent management, new office configurations in Germany cannot be confined to meet one specific generation group's requirements (i.e. typically Generation Y's requirements), but rather they should be attractive for talents of all ages. Most German Baby Boomers and Generation X employees became socialized in companies with private or shared offices, and they still tend to consider a private office as a status symbol similar to a company car or a meaningful job title. Thus, in managing the multi-generational workforce, it is indispensable to offer employees choices for task execution. This firstly requires acknowledging employees' divergent needs for privacy and then refraining from pushing everybody for non-territorial offices. Furthermore, a staggered approach in transitioning to new office settings could reduce employee resistance and make the office a system for accommodating and fostering both the work and the growth of different generations. In this, according to one interviewee, Generation Y could take on a key role as a trendsetter: "Other generations might observe the young employees' behaviours in the new office and gravitate to the new mode of working".

This, however, needs to be accompanied by thoughtful change management measures such as regular exchanges between first movers and followers and cross-mentoring between generations which will, in turn, enhance mutual understanding in the workplace and contribute to fruitful intergenerational collaboration.

This research was able to identify data from which companies in both the U.S. and Germany can learn in relation to intergenerational management. American companies, specifically those in the Silicon Valley, are altering their workforce environment to give their employees workplace customization in effort to improve interaction and productivity. Given Germany's demographic challenges, German

companies, on the other hand, are perhaps more in tune with different generational work groups and focus on employee retention and satisfaction. Multigenerational workforce management is a complex topic that will undoubtedly affect companies in both the U.S. and Germany. Exchange of research data and implementation of studies in multigenerational workforce management between Germany and the U.S. can stimulate transatlantic learning and thus aid in improving current and developing new and effective strategies for managing the labour force of the future.

REFERENCES

Accenture (2012). 2012 Pulse Check. Generation Y im Berufsalltag. Accenture, Kronberg.

Bertelsmann & Mercer (2012). Den demografischen Wandel im Unternehmen managen. Ergebnisbericht einer Studie von Mercer und der Berteslmann Stiftung. Mercer, Frankfurt.

Brown, K.S. (2014). Age left out of the diversity discussion. In: San Francisco Chronicle, 27 July 2014, Section D, D 3.

Bruch, H. et. al. (2010). Generationen erfolgreich führen: Konzepte und Praxiserfahrungen zum Management des demographischen Wandels. Wiesbaden: Gabler.

Byrne, D. (1971). The attraction paradigm. New York: Academic Press.

Ernst & Young (2013). Mittelstandsbarometer 2013. Ernst & Young GmbH: Essen.

Filipczak, R. et. al. (2000). Generations at work: Managing the clash of veterans, boomers, Xers and nexters in your workplace. New York: Amacom.

Florida, R. (2002). The rise of the creative class ...and how it́s transforming work, leisure, community, & everyday life. Cambridge: Basic Books.

Hurrelmann, K., & Albrecht, E. (2014). Die heimlichen Revolutionäre. Wie die Generation Y unsere Welt verändert. Weinheim und Basel: Beltz.

Ilmarinen, J. (2005). Towards a longer worklife – Ageing and the quality of work-life in the European Union. Finish Institute of Occupational Health (FIOH). Helsinki: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

Kienbaum. (2010). Absolventenstudie 2009/2010. Gummersbach.

Klaffke, M. (2014). Erfolgsfaktor Generationen-Management – Handlungsansätze für das Personalmanagement. In: Klaffke, M. (Hrsg.), Generationen-Management. Wiesbaden: Gabler, 3-25.

Klaffke, M. & Parment, M. (2011). Herausforderungen und Handlungsansätze für das Personalmanagement von Millennials. In: Klaffke, M. (ed), Personalmanagement von Millennials. Wiesbaden: Gabler, 3-21.

Klaffke, M. & Schwarzenbart, U. (2013). Demografie als Chance. In: Personalmagazin, 03/2013, 44-47.

Klaffke, M., & Von Wedel, A. (2014). Babyboomer und Generation Y im Dialog. In: Personalführung, 09, 84-87.

Lancaster, L, & Stillman, D. (2002). When generations collide: Who they are, why they clash, and how to solve the generational puzzle work. New York: Harper Business.

Mannheim, K. (1928): Das Problem der Generationen. Kölner Vierteljahrshefte für Soziologie, 7 (1928), 157-185; 309-330.

Oertel, J. (2007). Generationenmanagement in Unternehmen. Wiesbaden: Gabler.

Robert Bosch Stiftung (2013). The Future of the Working World. On the Way to the Year 2030. Robert Bosch Stiftung: Stuttgart.

Ries, B.C., Diestel, S., Wegge, J. & Schmidt, K.H. (2010). Altersheterogenität und Gruppeneffektivität – Die moderierende Rolle des Teamklimas. In: Zeitschrift für Arbeitswissenschaft, 64, 2010/3, 137-146.

Scott, J. (2000). Is it a different world to when you were growing up? In: British Journal of Sociology, 51, 355-376.

Tajfel, H. & Turner, J.C. (1986). The social identity theory of intergroup behaviour. In: Worchel, S. / Austin, W.G. (eds.). Psychology of intergroup relations. Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 7-24.

Thomas, D. A.; Ely, R. J. (1996). Making differences matter. In: Harvard Business Review ,74, 07/1996, 79-90

Turner, J.C. (1987). Rediscovering the social group: A self-categorization theory. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Twenge, J.M., Campbell, S.M., Hoffman, B.J. & Lance, C.E. (2010). Generational differences in work values: Leisure and extrinsic values increasing, social and intrinsic values decreasing. In: Journal of Management, 26, 1117-1142.

Wegge, J., Roth, C. & Schmidt, K.H. (2008). Eine aktuelle Bilanz der Vor- und Nachteile altersgemischter Teamarbeit. In: Zeitschrift für Wirtschaftspsychologie, 10, 30-43.

Zemke, R., Raines, C. & Filipczak, B. (1999). Generations at work. New York: Amacom

Zok, K., Pigorsch, M., & Weirauch, H. (2014). Babyboomer und Generation Y als Beschäftigte: Was eint, was trennt? In: B. Bandura et al. (Hrsg.) Fehlzeiten Report 2014. Berlin und Heidelberg: Springer, 47-59.

APPENDIX 1 – Companies and Organizations Invited to the Survey

- Adobe Systems
- AMD
- Apple Inc.
- Applied Materials
- Bank of the West
- Buck Institute for Age Research
- Charles Schwab
- Chevron
- Cisco Systems
- eBay
- Electronic Arts
- Facebook
- Gap Inc.
- Genentech
- Google
- Great Place to Work
- Hewlett Packard
- Intel
- Kaiser Permanente
- Levi Strauss & Co
- Logitech
- Netflix
- One Workplace
- Oracle
- PGE
- Pixar
- Robert Half International
- Safeway
- Salesforce.com
- SAP
- Silicon Valley Leadership Group
- Steelcase
- SunEdison
- Tesla
- The North Face
- Trimble
- Twitter
- Union Bank
- Virgin America
- Visa, Inc
- Vmware
- Wells Fargo Bank
- Williams-Sonoma
- Yahoo!

APPENDIX 2 – Interview Questions (Guideline)

A.   CAREER & COMPETENCE MANAGEMENT_____

A.1   In which way does your company allow and prepare "cohort 50 plus" employees for promotion at a later stage in life (e.g. mentoring women having raised children)?

A.2   Which career models do you offer, and how comparable are they in e.g. benefits, perks etc.?

A.3   How do your company's leadership/executive trainings cover generation diversity and its management challenges?

A.4   In which way does your company consider employees' age in personnel development?

A.5   How different are your company's personnel development programs for younger employees from development measures provided to elder staff?

A.6   How does your company ensure and manage knowledge transfer between employee generations (e.g tandems, mentoring)?

B.   Performance Management_____

B.1   In which way does your company consider generational differences in its performance management?

B.2   How does your company's workplace and office design reflect generational differences in working style preferences (e.g. co-working spaces vs. traditional office)?

B.3   In which way has your company in the last years adopted a modern office configuration (e.g. flexible workspace, open lounge areas, mobile/home office)?

B.4   Which choices is your company offering regarding work-time and work place flexibility; and how does your company manage the challenges associated with mobile and flexitime working (e.g. restriction of home office days)?

B.5   In which way does your company allow employees to flexibly choose benefits and perks according to their preferences (e.g. Cafeteria model)?

B.6   How does your company allow for "fun" in the workplace?

C.   Relationship Management_____

C.1   In which way does your company foster intergenerational understanding amongst managers/ work-force (e.g. campaign on specific wants of generation Y, reverse-mentoring)?

C.2   In which way does your company offer specific benefits according to employee life stages (e.g. elder care, kindergarten support, etc.)?

C.3   What options does your company offer for an employee's transitioning to retirement (e.g. part-time above an age of 60)?

C.4   How does your company prepare elder workers for the transition to retirement?

C.5   In which way does your company survey need differences amongst employee generations?