Looking back in history, the assumption that the next generation will be fundamentally different from what has come before, has been a common phenomenon. Currently, the assumption is that young professionals from Generation Y are very different from any previous generation. Organisations realise that they do not yet understand the needs and perspectives of this generation and have started to explore how this generation can be managed.

Looking at gender, it appears that a fundamental change in perspective is needed to make use of the diverse talent in the workplace. The gender demography of most organisations follows the 50:30:10 rule. On entry level there are equal numbers of men and women. In mid-management, the percentage of women drops to 30% and in the most senior ranks there are usually no more than 10% women. In the first report of the Centre for Women in Business we have shown what organisations do to address the 50:30:10 problem (Gratton, Kelan, & Walker, 2007). We followed up on this study by highlighting why having 50% men and 50% women in teams makes business sense in regards to innovation (Gratton, Kelan, Voigt, Walker, & Wolfram, 2007).

Our third study now takes a closer look at the entry-level in organisations. We examined the extent to which this new generation brings different attitudes and perspectives to work, career and gender. We selected the term ‘reflexive’ to characterise this generation because this generation is constantly reflecting back on the relationship between self, work and life. In a time when old structures like jobs for life are withering away, the individual is increasingly in charge of shaping his or her own career and life (Beck, 2000). The young professionals of the Reflexive Generation are aware of the fact that they need to re-invent themselves to author their own life stories.

The Reflexive Generation

The new generation is currently a hotly debated topic. However, many commentators do not agree on how to name this generation - Generation Y and Millennials are the most popular names - or how old this generation is - the consensus seems to lie between people born between 1977 to 2000. The characteristics this generation is supposed to have are equally contested and sometimes conflicting. Generation Y people are seen as independent, confident, diverse, collaborative and selfish. Many of these characteristics seem to match more the stereotype than the reality. However, what is clear is that this generation has grown up in a very specific period of time where jobs for life are no more and the world is becoming a global village. Generation Y is also said to be a generation where gender differences are no longer an issue. Women of Generation Y are assumed to be as confident and ambitious as men.

Many of these assumptions are based on hearsay but rigorous academic research is missing. This new generation has literally grown up with technology – they came of age when new technologies such as personal computers, mobile phones and the Internet developed. What is unique about this generation is that they are completely at home with these technologies; they form the largest group of users of social network technologies such as Facebook and Twitter (even though other generations are catching up). These new technologies have shaped the interactional patterns of this generation. For example, rather than waiting patiently for a promotion, this generation is said to want immediate gratification and feedback just like they receive in online interactions.

Assessing generational change is of course a difficult endeavour. One could say that what we see with Generation Y at the moment is more an expression of the life phase young professionals
are in and an expression of individuality, as young people will differ markedly from one another. While changes in generations will only become visible over time, this research provides a snapshot of how young professionals feel now.

We have called this generation the Reflexive Generation. We call them reflexive because this generation is constantly reflecting back on the relationship between self, work and life. In a time when old structures like jobs for life are withering away, the individual is increasingly in charge of shaping his or her own career and life (Beck, 2000). This unique time presents younger generations with the opportunity but also the challenge of choosing the right life path. Individuals will have to reinvent themselves at various times throughout their life course. Young professionals from Generation Y have internalised this reflexive pattern. They reflect upon their life and career options and make choices about which roads to take. These choices are influenced by their own experiences. Thereby their own experiences form part of the options they choose for their future development. In that sense young professionals are reflexive about their work, life and career. They are in a feedback loop where their past influences their present and future experience. This feedback loop allows them to re-invent themselves to author their own life stories.

We focus on three interrelated aspects of this Generation Y feedback loop. First, work is characterized by self-management and the need for instant gratification and feedback. Second, careers should be challenging for this generation, and young professionals stress the importance of self-development to author one’s own career. Third, for this generation, diversity is a fact of life. While many claim that there has been a change in gender relations in recent years, the research showed that some elements of gender relations have not changed that significantly.

Research Design

Given the plethora of studies on Generation Y, we felt that it was necessary to add a gender perspective to these debates and to use different methodologies to assess the degree to which there is generational change. In our previous work at the Centre for Women in Business we used quantitative methodologies to gather a breadth of information. In this research we decided instead to use qualitative methodologies. These methodologies allow us to create a much deeper insight into the mindset of the young professionals we studied. Qualitative research aims for depth rather than breadth, is inductive and theory generating and focuses on a much smaller number of people. The goal is to create a deeper understanding of those we are researching.

We used in-depth interviewing techniques and analysed the results through discourse analysis (Potter & Wetherell, 1987) which explores the interpretative repertoires or ‘off-the-shelf’ explanations people have available to make sense of themselves and the world in which they live. We also made use of picture prompts to explore how young professionals think about certain aspects of their life such as work-life balance, diversity and corporate social responsibility. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and then systematically coded into sections of material using the qualitative software NVivo, where emerging themes and issues were addressed and analysed in detail.

For this research we defined Generation Y as people who were born between 1977 and 1987, which captures the older cohort of this generation. We focused on young professionals from Generation Y, and we sampled from two corporations (16 interviews for each organisation, with 8 men and 8 women) and from young professionals pursuing an MBA degree (10 interviews, with 5 men and 5 women). We interviewed 21 men and 21 women in total, and our sample included 12 nationalities, with participants from all five continents. The average age of the interviewees was 26 with the MBA participants slightly older than those from corporations. The interviews lasted 45 to 90 minutes and were audio and visually recorded.

The Reflexive Generation: Research Insights

Self-Managed Work

Managing Generation Y

When we talked with the young professionals about their work it became clear that this generation has a strong need to self-manage their work. They want to be given goals and targets but want to be left to their own devices to get the job done. We found that they want their managers to be coaches – to help them to navigate their work and life and to support their development. In order for this development to occur feedback is essential and these young professionals are eager to get as much feedback as possible, and as quickly as possible. This feedback helps them to stay on track.

Work-life Balance

Work-life balance was something that young professionals saw as important particularly in relation to technology. Many spoke of technology as a ‘double-edged sword’: it allows them to work flexibly but they recognised the negative work-life balance impact. There was not a unitary perspective on work-life balance; instead three types of perspectives arose. Some people worked long hours and saw this as essential for their job and to get ahead. We call them the excessives. A second group, the balancers, focused more on achieving work-life balance through for instance not working on weekends. The third group, the skeptics, is made up of those who were clear about the impact of work on their life and saw the long hours working culture as harmful to them. Regardless of which stance the young professionals took in respect to work-life balance one thing was clear: the single most important element in relation to work-life balance is that they want autonomy over when and how to work. This autonomy is closely linked to the idea of self-managing and being in charge.

Challenging Careers

When we talked about careers, young professionals were clear that the most important aspect to them is challenge. They want to have a career where they are challenged and can grow with the challenges. Rather than being bored, they prefer jobs which stretch them and if they are no longer challenged they would consider moving on.

The second most important aspect of careers for Generation Y was self-improvement and enjoyment. Self-improvement relates closely to the idea of challenge. They wanted to improve themselves through formal and informal education to avoid stagnating. People used phrases like ‘writing one’s own life story’, showing that the individual is in charge of shaping his or her own career.

Enjoyment also ranked highly. Young professionals did not want to feel as if they simply have to work – but also want to enjoy their jobs. Finally, it is clear that colleagues are important to them. Many young professionals talked about their colleagues as friends and saw them as an important aspect of having fun at work. Interestingly, we found that activities related to corporate social responsibility were less important for job choices.

A Different World…Parents’ Careers

Most young professionals emphasised that their careers are going to be very different from their parents’ careers. They are aware that they will...
The Reflexive Generation: Young Professionals’ Perspectives on Work, Career and Gender

5

have shorter job tenures, they talked about how the world they live in is a global village, and they spoke about how they profited from educational opportunities. Finally, they talked about how opportunities had changed significantly with people settling down later and with many women remaining in employment despite having children.

Endless Opportunities... Despite the Recession?
Many of the young professionals saw their career characterised by endless opportunities. They could see their careers developing in various directions and there was no clear pattern in the responses they provided. They see the world open to them for their taking and believe they are in charge of building their careers through taking positions that would provide opportunities for self-development.

Within corporate research on this topic and in the popular press, there is the idea that people of Generation Y are leaving organisations to a greater degree than other generations. We found that one of the most common reasons given for leaving an organisation was that individuals had not been promoted or were not developing any more. Young professionals wanted to pick up new skills and work on engaging projects to remain motivated. There was also a gender angle to the issue of retaining young professionals within organisations; some women mentioned that the requirements of career progression in the company are less appealing to them because of the energy and sacrifices in terms of work-life balance needed to have a career in the companies.

We also conducted a number of follow-up interviews with young professionals after the economic crisis hit to explore the extent to which their perspectives on their career, work and life have changed. We found that most young professionals were affected directly or indirectly by the economic downturn. Their reaction to the changed economic climate was varied: some put their career moves on hold while others accepted insecurity as a fact of life. Some discussed the lowering of their expectations of their jobs for fear of being unemployed, meaning that in this economic context they are less demanding. For others, unemployment was even seen as opening new opportunities to travel or explore different career options. Young professionals also highlighted their flexibility as their greatest asset in being able to cope with the economic crisis. During the economic crisis, the reflexive potential of reinventing one’s life becomes particularly visible and a useful asset.

The Aftermath of Gender

Diversity
When asked about how important diversity is for them, most young professionals stated that it was ‘fairly important’, followed by ‘really important’, and then by ‘not important at all’. The most commonly cited form of diversity was nationality and ethnicity, followed by gender, religion and age. Most people agreed that diversity is enriching because a diverse group of people produces better solutions and ideas. However, the strongest opinion about diversity was that it is a fact of life. This generation would not expect to see a workplace that is not diverse. Diversity is accepted as normal and as nothing that needs to be stressed.

Experiences of Gender
Many young professionals argued that there has been or will be a lot of progress in relation to gender. Young professionals talked about how a gender balance is slowly being reached. They also talked about how gender discrimination is no longer an issue of modern workplaces. The glass ceiling was perceived as a thing of the past, and many people from this generation have the firm belief that equality between men and women has been achieved and will no longer be an issue for them.

However, at the same time, young professionals experienced a very traditional gender culture. First of all, they regularly addressed the masculine culture of business and the young professionals identified that business is a man’s world. Second, the young professionals did acknowledge that in the thirties something changes when men and women have children but most young professionals struggle to put their finger on what it is exactly that changes. Finally, issues with female role models became evident. When talking about women’s networks the assumption was that these women’s networks were for older women and not for younger women. It was also regularly addressed that there is competition among women and that older women are less willing to help women up the ladder. Senior women were often seen in negative terms such as being too emotional and thereby not suitable as role models.

There were few gender differences in the responses overall, supporting the idea that men and women of Generation Y have very similar ideas about work and career. It was also noticeable that men and women talked about having children and many young men voiced that they would like to take active roles as fathers. This was in contrast to the fact that the thirties were seen as critical for women in general and shows that in their own life the young professionals would like to create more egalitarian patterns. It remains to be seen if this optimism turns into reality.

Are Young Professionals of Generation Y Really that Different?
This leads to the question regarding the extent to which the current generation is really different from any previous generation. Many of the elements we uncovered, such as being in charge of one’s own work, career and life, are probably applicable to many people. This generation might be more vocal in expressing their needs, but we should not forget that the period of time in which they grew up shaped this mindset. For them jobs for life and delayed gratification are outdated concepts, and young professionals do not expect this. In such a situation it is not surprising that keeping one’s own skills fresh and relevant and looking for new challenging opportunities is not an expression of egoism but rather an expression of being realistic about the workplace they inherit.

The follow-up interviews during the economic crisis have shown that young professionals from Generation Y are reflecting upon and integrating the economic changes into their relationship to work and life in difficult times. This generation of young professionals is reflexive when it comes to their own careers and lives. What also seems to be specific for this time is that gender equality is now expected and taken for granted. This does not mean that gender inequality has withered away but rather that it has taken on new shapes and forms. This requires ever-changing responses to inequalities to allow people to flourish in future workplaces. Young professionals of the Reflexive Generation are in an ideal position to shape their own life courses by reflecting upon, referring to, and making sense of past experiences and potential futures.

Key Insights and Recommendations
These findings raise some important and far-reaching implications for the management of companies and of individuals. We have identified four specific challenges:

Challenge 1: The Management of Work
One of the overriding impressions of the men and women of this generation is their frustration with performance management practices which are too slow, too bureaucratic and too hierarchical. They want to learn fast, to adapt
with speed and to change tack with elegance and to do this they need more frequent feedback and more support and mentoring. Their needs will put particular pressure on managers who are already over-laden so the emphasis must be on how this generation can manage their own learning and how they can work with their peer groups to create a more frequent flow of information and feedback. One example of this can be seen in the restrictions and boundaries that some companies and even countries have attempted to enforce through the Internet. Despite this repression the digital environment continues to reinvent itself. It is the smart ‘digital natives’ (Prensky, 2001) who collaborate globally to work around these restrictions, to create collaborative environments that benefit a much wider community than their own. Many of these ‘digital natives’ or professionals of this generation do this outside of their professional jobs.

Challenge 2: The Management of Boundaries
This generation uses technology like no other. They reach out to peers within their businesses, link in to associates in other businesses and build a significant virtual network of friends across the globe. This is all good news for companies where networking and the rapid dispersion of knowledge and collection of ideas is a crucial competitive advantage. However, as we have seen, it raises issues of boundary management.

The concept of a hierarchical career is based on a traditionally male model of professional work outside the home, premised on a separation between the public and the private domains. A conventional bureaucratic career is built on uninterrupted service to one or a few employers often involving geographical mobility as part of career advancement. What we see now is a change in how boundaries are being managed not only between employer and employee but also between home and work domains. Therefore the boundary management is crucial in a number of key areas. These include: how do the personal and work social networks overlap? What in the public domain can be brought into the work domain? And how can the 24-hour flow of information be shaped and bounded? There are very few protocols, no established rules and routines, and a technology etiquette (or netiquette) that is only now emerging. Creating these norms and frameworks will be an important part of creating a work life for this generation which enables them to have satisfying and balanced lives. This will be especially important as men and women of this generation work outside the boundaries of work and home life, and in households where both partners work full-time or part-time.

Challenge 3: The Design of Work
In the turbulent, fast changing world in which this generation has been raised, it is no surprise that they value their capacity to shape their own destiny through the creation of their personal human capital. They place a great deal of emphasis on intellectual capital (the knowledge and insights they have), social capital (the depth, richness and extent of their networks) and emotional capital (the means by which they understand themselves and build self knowledge). For this generation the emphasis is on ‘work to learn’ rather than ‘work to live’. This creates a crucial role in the organisation around the design of what could be called ‘good work’. This is work that creates the context in which rapid learning takes place. Good work is work which is meaningful, which has sufficient complexity to be stretching, which has within it the provision of feedback and which delivers enough autonomy for the individual to make choices about how best to develop themselves (Gratton, 2004).

Challenge 4: The Future of Flexibility
It is not surprising that this generation play down differences between men and women. Most have grown up in households and schools in which diversity was seen as the norm. However, whilst they themselves may believe that diversity is a fact of their life — they observe around them the lack of diversity. They see few women at the top, they know that many women are potentially leaving after becoming mothers and they see the pressures their senior male and female colleagues are under. This worries and confuses them. The men and women we spoke to wanted to be good citizens and good parents — their anxiety was that they do not know how to do this.

Our research on work/home spillover has shown that working can have positive implications for home life for men and women — and it can have negative spillover for both men and women. What is clear to us and reinforced by the bewilderment of this generation is that families are not a ‘women’s’ issue. Families are an issue for men and women. So the wise executive will understand that flexibility is not a women issue — it is an issue that goes beyond gender to the core of what it is to be a human. Remember that many of the young people we interviewed will live for more than ninety years and many will work for much of this time. For them work life is a marathon – not a sprint - and like a marathon it needs to contain pacing, stamina and resilience. Right now the excitement is there — but what is lacking is a road map.

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Professor Lynda Gratton
Dr Alice Mah
Lamia Walker

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References
Generations at Work

Baby Boomers
(ca. 1940-1960)

Generation X
(ca. 1960-1980)

Generation Y
(ca. 1980-2000)
What We Seem to Know About Generation Y…

**Age**
- Various and conflicting age-based definitions
- In our case young professionals born after 1977

**Characteristics**
- Gen Y is ascribed with various and conflicting characteristics from being selfish to being generous

**Gender**
- Assumption that men and women are equally confident and ambitious

What Do We Know About Generation Y?

- Gen Y largest proportion of social network technology users
- In-depth academic research missing
What Can Be Said About Generations At All?

**Life Phase**
- Other generations were similar in this life stage

**Individuality**
- There are differences among and between individuals of one generation

**Change**
- Changes in the period of time in which these young people grow up will only fully show in the long run

The Questions We Are Asking…

**Work**
- How do young professionals of Generation Y experience work?

**Career**
- What expectations do young professionals of Generation Y have of their long-term careers?

**Gender**
- What perspectives do young professionals of Generation Y have on diversity and gender?
Qualitative Research

In-Depth Interviewing and Discourse Analysis

In-depth Interviewing
- Allows deeper understanding of research participants’ views

Discourse Analysis
- As a means to understand the ‘off-the-shelf’ resources participants have access to
Picture Prompts

The Analysis

Verbatim transcription

- Identification of key themes and ‘interpretative repertoires’
- Comparisons across sample
- Use of NVivo software

Coding and analysis

- Identification of key themes and ‘interpretative repertoires’
- Comparisons across sample
- Use of NVivo software
Our Sample

- Young Professionals
- 1977-1987 (21-31 years at time of first interview)
- Work in one of two organisations for less than three years
- or pursue an MBA degree

Sample Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Number of Interviewees</th>
<th>42</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>12 nationalities (from all five continents)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>21 women, 21 men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBA</td>
<td>10 (5 men, 5 women)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation 1</td>
<td>16 (8 men, 8 women)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation 2</td>
<td>16 (8 men, 8 women)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews with Senior Professionals</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow up interviews in crisis</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average age (overall)</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average age (MBA)</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average age (Organisations)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Interview</td>
<td>45-90 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of transcribed interviews</td>
<td>500,000 words (without follow up interviews)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Reflexive Generation

Self-Managed Work

- Self-management
- Work-life balance

Challenging Careers

- Challenges and self-development
- Generation change
- Endless opportunities

The Aftermath of Gender

- Diversity as fact of life
- Gender changes and continuities

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How Does Gen Y Want to be Managed?

Self-Management

Give them goals and let them run with it...

Give me a remit but then be hands off
High level overview and then leave me to it
Set goals and give vision but leave me the freedom to do it how I want to do it
Have clear deliverables and sporadic checkpoints
Do not give me baby steps but end goal
No micro-management
Do not watch me over the shoulder
Trust me to do things
Coaching

Coaching managers

- I look more for a mentor rather than a manager
- I want to be coached
- I want a coaching manager
- I want to be developed
- A manager should help me to grow
- A manager should develop me

Feedback

Feedback should be...

- Constant
- Immediate
- A lot of it
- Constructive
Work-Life Balance and Technology: The Double-Edged Sword

**Technology...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Has massive potential</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is a double-edged sword</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the spawn of the devil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You are always on, but you always have to be on, too</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invades one's life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectations that you read and reply to emails at 10pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is addictive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crackberries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook addicts with 750 plus friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creates privacy/boundary issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you become friends with your manager?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They can see you drunk or on holiday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make inappropriate comments about work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Work-Life Balance: A Segmented Generation...

- **Excessives**
  - ‘I probably work more hours than I should […] that is the nature of business’
  - ‘I slept 15 hours in five days’
  - ‘It’s a time in your life when you have to put the hours in to accelerate your career’

- **Balancers**
  - ‘I don’t work during weekends because then you risk not having a life’
  - Working longer hours can be required but this time can be compensated later on

- **Skeptics**
  - ‘I don’t work because that’s who you are, I work to earn money so I can eat. […] My career isn’t who I am.’
  - Living to work as social epidemic
  - ‘I don’t want to find myself asking ‘where did my life go’
…With A Shared Perspective

- ‘I am choosing to work long hours’
- Working long hours on own terms

Autonomy

Challenging Careers

- Challenges and self-development
- Generation change
- Endless opportunities

Self-Managed Work
- Self-management
- Work-life balance

The Aftermath of Gender
- Diversity as fact of life
- Gender changes and continuities
Challenging Careers

**Challenge**
- ‘Going out of your comfort zone’
- Being stretched
- Intellectual stimulation
- ‘Keeping me on my toes’
- Keeping busy
- Keeping interested
- Task diversity
- No routine
- No boredom

**Enjoyment**
- Work does not feel like working
- Wanting to go to work
- Getting up in the morning and looking forward to work
- Forgetting the time while working
- Being happy with what one does

**Self-Improvement**
- Improving yourself
- Developing skills
- Company sponsorship for learning (doing an MBA)
- Writing own story line of life

**Colleagues**
- Colleagues are friends
- Colleagues are like-minded
- Working with them is fun
- Use their brains to solve problems

What Is Less Important For These Young Professionals

- Contradictory to perception of Generation Y
- Young Professionals reported that they enjoyed CSR activities like volunteering
- But those with an interest in social responsibility might have joined different organisations
A Different World…Parents’ Careers

Changing Allegiances
- Gen Y expects no more jobs for life
- Gen Y expects shorter tenure

Global Village
- Gen Y has greater mobility
- Gen Y perceived to have more opportunities

Education
- Gen Y saw education as central
- Some people mentioned that they were the first person in their family to go to university

Gender Changes
- Gen Y expected to settle down later
- Some reported that their mothers stopped working when they had children. Men and women of Gen Y expect to remain in employment.

Endless Opportunities…Young Professionals’ Own Careers

In five to ten years, I will have…
- Developed within the company
- Joined a competitor
- Joined a customer company
- Moved into a different industry
- Become an entrepreneur
- Moved to a different country
- Taken a sabbatical
- Earned a lot of money and have a comfortable life
- Done an MBA
- Children
- Settled down
- Don’t know

Are Young Professionals more likely to leave?
- They leave if they have not been promoted (men and women)
- Women were slightly more likely to talk about the incompatibilities of their own life plans with a corporate career:
  - I want to have more responsibility but I want to have work-life balance (female)
  - I am loyal to the company but too much effort, energy and time is needed to compete (female)
Changing Perceptions?
The Economic Crisis

Realistically optimist…

| Crisis is affecting them, their partners, their friends and their families |
| Making sure you are useful for your company |
| Rather sit the crisis out than move jobs |
| ‘I have lower expectations and I am less demanding’ |
| More risk averse and greater need for security |
| ‘I made a deal with insecurity. I never expected job security’ |
| Being made redundant opens the opportunity to travel and reassess your life |
| There are always opportunities |
| The company needs those at the bottom and those at the top. Those in the middle are most dispensable. |
| Being flexible and having a broad skills set keeps you employable |
Diversity is...

‘Fairly important’
- Followed by ‘really important’
- And ‘not important’

Nationality/Ethnicity
- Followed by gender
- And Religion
- And Age

Enriching Work
- Better solutions
- Learn from other people
- Getting new ideas

Fact of Life
- Diversity is accepted as normal
- ‘I have not had it any other way [than diverse]’
- ‘It’s not something I’d ever considered. I’d never expect an organisation this day and age not to be diverse’

What They Experience in Relation to Gender...

Gender Balance is Improving...
- It [the gender balance] has improved in the last 20 to 30 years (male)
- It was an issue of my parents’ generation (female)
- The experience of the glass ceiling is narrowing for my generation (female)
- In 20 years there will be gender equality, because several women earn more than me (male)

Gender Discrimination as a Thing of the Past
- I don’t feel I have to break any boundaries (female)
- I never experienced discrimination (female)
- I have never seen a glass ceiling (female)
- Gender discrimination no longer happens these days
- Women no longer feel marginalised
...And Yet They Observe

Women in a Masculine Culture
- Women are outnumbered
- Work is male dominated
- It's a man's world
- There is a boy's club where men have a cigar and play golf

Women and Men in Their Thirties
- Women have babies when they are 32
- Women start families at 30
- Raising a family becomes important at 30, 35 (for both men and women)
- Employers think that women at 29 will go off and have children

Female Role Model Identification
- Women's networks are for older women (female)
- The women in the women’s network are more my parents’ generation (female)
- [Senior] women don’t like other women in the workplace (female)
- Female/female relationships clash more because of rivalry (female)
- Women are too emotional

Parenthood - a Shared Issue?
- Men and women talked about having children
- Some men talked about taking parental leave and that provisions for paternity leave are not sufficient
- Some women said that their partner is going to take time out to be with the children
- Time will tell if these plans are put into practice
Are Young Professionals of Generation Y Really That Different?

- Young Professionals reflect the period of time in which they grew up
- Careers for life are no more and constant self-authoring of own life is central
- Gender takes on new forms
- Young Professionals of Generation Y shape their own life course through constantly referring back to past experience to build potential futures
- They are a Reflexive Generation

Key Insights and Recommendations
Challenge 1
The Design of Management

- Tell me the goal
- My peers to support me
- Mentor me
- Give me feedback

Challenge 2
The Future of Flexibility

- Families affect men and women
- Flexibility is beyond gender
Challenge 3
The Design of Work

Challenge 4
The Management of Boundaries

Building my Human Capital

From Work to Live ----► To Work to Learn
Work -----------------------------► Meaningful, Ambiguity, Feedback, Autonomy
Thanks to our sponsors...

Further Resources

- www.genderationy.com
- Kelan, E. K., & Dunkley Jones, R. 2009. Becoming a Manager: The MBA as a Rite of Passage (discussion paper).

Additional Reading

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