

The ‘Generational Divide’ In ‘Tech Savvy’ Within Your Workplace



The Canadian labour market is made up of a few generations:

- **Digital immigrants, the baby boomers (born before 1965)**
- **Generation ‘X’ (born roughly between 1966-1980)**
- **and the digital natives, Gen ‘Y’s’ (millennials)**

The term, “digital native” was coined by Marc Prensky in 2001 to describe those born after the 1980’s. It is often supposed that digital natives are more tech comfortable compared to their older digital immigrant co-workers.

The digital native generation is making significant changes to the Canadian workplace.

Digital Natives Know They are Tech Savvy and Believe it is Important

In a 2013 survey, titled “Generational Research On Technology and Its Impact in the Workforce” 2/3rds of digital natives rated their technology skills as ‘cutting edge’ or ‘upper-tier’. For the digital immigrants, 53% of boomers rated their skills as ‘middle tier’ and 79% of Gen X rated their skills as Upper or Middle tier. The survey (Conducted by CompTIA) included responses from 700 people who worked in office environments with some form of technology.

A digital native perceives tech savvy as among one of the biggest assets he or she brings to the workplace. Moreover, a digital native expects their workplace to recognize and fall-in-line with the logic that tech knowledge is an important component of the modern workplace.

Digital Natives Want to Work For Tech Savvy Organizations

BYOD: Using Technology In The Workplace

When asked if they use personal devices at work digital natives were more likely to BYOD (bring your own device).

The most common devices were smart phones.

- 75% of digital natives used their smartphones compared to 37% of boomers. Young workers also brought tablets, laptops and GPS devices.
- Digital natives and some Gen X'ers were also more likely to use non-traditional business software and sought to interact with technology in their own way using technology of their own choosing.
- Workers under the age of 40 were more likely to use online versions of word-processing applications such as Google Docs compared to older workers.

The digital native workforce will change the landscape of the workplace just as the baby boomers before them. Sheer numbers and their desire to bring their own devices, knowledge, technology and way of working into the workplace will give digital natives an edge. Older co-workers will need to consider this edge in the changing face of business.

Source:

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