

Managing and Motivating Gen X

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Generation Xers are so fiercely independent that sometimes people assume that they're not interested in having mentors. The truth is that most Xers place a high value on opportunities to build lasting relationships with those in the workplace who have grown wise through experience. While information and technology have usually been Xers' most reliable problem solving resources, teachers have usually been Xers' primary human supporters outside of family.

Most Xers welcome the chance to create long term bonds of loyalty with teaching managers and mentors, especially in a world where Xers cannot believe in long term bonds of loyalty with established organizations. Xers rarely turn to mentors for raw information they can find elsewhere. What they look for from mentors is learning that's not available from other sources:

- A Mentor they can look to as a role model.
- A Mentor who will teach them and share experiences with them.
- A Mentor who will care about them and help answer some of their deepest questions.
- A Mentor who will push them and demand more of them than they may demand of themselves.
- A Mentor who believes they are capable of achieving the impossible and is willing to help them do it.
- A Mentor who will provide them with unique opportunities to prove themselves.
- A Mentor who will introduce them to others.
- A Mentor who will value their opinions and ideas, seek their input and learn from them.

By mentoring Xers, managers demonstrate a deep commitment and provide valuable direct support – and ultimately win Xers' most dedicated efforts. Plus, being a role model keeps the pressure on you to always be at your very best; teaching helps you think of new ways of looking at problems and solving them; and having a protégé forces you to practice your leadership skills – priority setting, communication, and motivation.