

## X generation needs a tune-up for finding jobs

**T**he next generation of employees and executives – people still in high school and college – have unsurpassed technology skills and are almost irrationally optimistic, experts say.

But unless they develop better communication skills, figure out how to write memos that are error free and learn the importance of relationships, those X generation workers can expect something of a muddy path on their journey to success.

“Who owns most businesses today? Baby boomers,” said Jon Bartos, president and chief executive officer of Jonathan Scott International, a Mason-based staffing and consulting firm where 26 people are employed.



**Bartos**

And those baby-boomer owners have expectations that workers will see the world through the same prism of the baby-boomer generation, that is, understand the need to develop relationships, communicate well with clients and, perhaps, one day develop more than a measure of loyalty to the company that cuts them a check each week.

The next generation has a way to go, Bartos says.

“In the last five years, we’ve placed maybe 800 people who are 20-something or 30-something into jobs,” Bartos says. “What I see is pretty simple. Communications skills and the persistence needed to find a good position – it’s simply not there.”

Bartos, 42, blames a couple of trends:

■ Many Gen X workers came from fractured families, so they never had consistent dinnertimes to discuss their day, moan about problems or crow about successes. That time at the dinner table during the formative childhood years translates into an adult who is more sensitive to relationships. “Fewer family dinners means nobody is trading stories anymore,” Bartos said. In the workplace, that can mean people who work in a cocoon, not interacting well.

■ Persistence translates into fire in the gut, and Bartos says many 20-somethings simply lack



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the drive to achieve. “They send out a resume and hope something happens,” he said. Few follow up with phone calls, e-mails or notes.

■ The X-Gen’s lack of loyalty to any and all companies will probably never go away. Companies need to understand that and help youthful employees set critical goals.

“Companies need to make sure they hire the right people, and once they are on board, the companies need to offer training and development so people will stick around – so there is no revolving door,” Bartos said.

Stephanie Wood, 22, a Fort Wright resident and June graduate from Miami University, doesn’t totally agree with Bartos.

“It really depends on what the new graduate studied,” she said. If they were in communications, you can bet they are going to know how to communicate, she said. And English majors will know how to write.

“But I think many new graduates probably have trouble communicating with somebody from an older generation,” she said. “And overall, their writing skills are not what they need to be.”

Bartos does not insist that the future of the work force is full gloom and doom. He thinks, for instance, that those in the next generation who have deficiencies can correct them.

“Go to Toastmasters to learn to communicate,” he said. “Set specific goals and then drive yourself to meet them.”

But there is one thing nobody can teach: a fire in the belly. Either you have it or you need it.

“If people have ambition and show that ambition, they’ll get hired nine times out of 10 over somebody who doesn’t have it,” Bartos says, “even somebody with more experience.”

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