



FROM GEN Y WOMEN TO EMPLOYERS: WHAT THEY
WANT IN THE WORKPLACE AND WHY IT MATTERS
FOR BUSINESS

RESEARCH ON CAREER CHOICES, CHALLENGES
AND OPPORTUNITIES



Business and
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- Feminist Majority Foundation <http://feminist.org>
- National Council of Women in Entertainment www.nationalcwe.org
- National Council of Women's Organizations www.womensorganizations.org



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- National Council of Women’s Organizations, Younger Women’s Task Force www.ywtf.org
 - Women Construction Owners and Executives www.wcoeusa.org
 - The American Legion www.legion.org
 - Women Impacting Public Policy www.wipp.org
 - Women in Film and Video www.wifv.org
 - Women in Military Service for America Memorial Foundation www.womensmemorial.org
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Table of Contents

Table of Contents	4
Executive Summary	5
Introduction	10
Chapter One: Gen Y Women and Work Values	15
Chapter Two: Gen Y Women and Work-Life Balance	29
Chapter Three: Gender in the Workplace	44
Chapter Four: Gen Y and Intergenerational Workplace Dynamics	56
Conclusion	69
Appendix A: Methodology	76
Appendix B: Sample Profile	80
Endnotes	85





Executive Summary

Established in 1956, Business and Professional Women's (BPW) Foundation has a respected history of researching workforce issues and practices that lead to a successful workplace. One key group of women explored through BPW Foundation research is young working women. For more than five years, BPW Foundation's "Young Careerist" research project has explored young working women's career choices and the opportunities and challenges they face in the workplace.

In 2009, BPW Foundation launched the Generation Y (born 1978-1994) research activity to understand what Gen Y women need to be successful in the workplace and then translate that knowledge into tools that improve how employers recruit, support and retain young women. Building on previous findings from social media research and employer-based focus groups, BPW Foundation launched a national online survey of Gen Y working women in May 2011. A total of 662 Gen Y women from across the United States participated in the survey. The survey explored four key thematic areas: workplace values, work-life balance, gender in the workplace and intergenerational workplace dynamics. Emphasis was placed on understanding Gen Y women's perceptions, experiences, strategies and recommendations for employer actions to address the key issue areas.

This report provides an overview of survey results and explores Gen Y women's workplace expectations and experiences within the larger context of literature on Gen Y workers across the four thematic areas. The data about Gen Y women is connected to employer concerns, highlighting implications and applications for employers.





Key Research Findings

Gen Y Women Hold Disparate Career Values

Literature on generational differences often highlights the importance of identifying a cohort's work values and then tailoring programs and policies to reflect those values. Gen Y women were asked to identify their five most important career values based on a revised version of Super's Work Values inventory, which looks at the relative value placed on the following work related values: achievement, co-workers, creativity, income, independence, lifestyle, mental challenge, prestige, security, supervision, work environment, and variety.¹ Gen Y women, as a cohort, did not uniformly report a set of work values. Responses were mediated by various dimensions of difference: occupation, employer type and presence of children. Gen Y women represent a heterogeneity of goals associated with their work life. While cross-sectional studies often aim to identify key work values for a generational cohort, the survey results suggest the importance of examining critical areas of difference beyond generational categories (gender, race/ethnicity, education, occupation, etc.).

Gen Y Women Want a More Holistic Approach to Work-Life Balance

BPW Foundation survey results corroborate with previous studies: family is the most important aspect of life to Gen Y. Work-life balance literature focuses on how workers combine work and family responsibilities. Missing from the conversation are three important messages:

1. *Work-life balance is equally important to Gen Y women regardless of whether or not they have children.* Survey results found that the presence of children did not impact the level of importance that Gen Y women placed on work-life balance. It is an issue of importance and concern across various categories of women. Because work-life balance policies and programs often preference workers with children, formal or informal rules may preclude Gen Y women without children from work-life balance programs.



2. *Family is important for women without children.* Family is often defined narrowly as relating to one's nuclear family. Survey results indicate that Gen Y women have a broader understanding of family. Almost three-quarters (74%) of Gen Y women report that family is very important, and 69% of women without children report it as very important. Women hold various positions within families – granddaughter, daughter, sister, aunt, mother, spouse and partner. Family responsibilities extend beyond parent-child relationships.
3. *Women have responsibilities and interests outside of work and home.* The work-life balance literature often treats workers as having two spheres of life – work and home. Gen Y women report more than two aspects of life as important. In addition to work and family, Gen Y women report that the following aspects of life are also important: hobbies (55%), friends (44%), exercise (43%), and volunteering (36%).

Gen Y Women Believe Gender Discrimination is Still an Issue in Today's Workplace

While popular literature states that Gen Y women do not believe that gender is a problem in today's workplace, 77% of survey participants identified gender as a moderate or severe problem in today's workplace. Only 3% indicated that gender discrimination is not a problem. Further, almost 50% of Gen Y women have observed or experienced gender discrimination in the workplace. Women who had observed or experienced gender discrimination were more likely to report gender as a severe problem (37%) compared with women who had not (8%). For Gen Y women who had either experienced or observed gender discrimination, the most prevalent forms reported included:

- Stereotyping (63%)
- Unequal compensation (60%)
- Not being treated as an equal (58%)
- Inequality of opportunities (52%)
- Being held to a different standard (51%)
- Sexist jokes and derogatory statements about women (38%)
- Sexual harassment (31%)





Gen Y Women Experience a Double Jeopardy: Gender and Age


Survey results indicate that gender and age may have a compounding effect. Gen Y women who had experienced gender discrimination were more likely to report generational conflict or discrimination than those who had not. Fifty-one percent of Gen Y women who observed or experienced gender discrimination also reported generational discrimination. The types of generational or age discrimination reported included: being perceived as incompetent or inexperienced because of age; name calling such as “kid” and “girl”; being passed over for promotions because of age; and being held to different standards because of age. The findings corroborate with previous studies on the gender dimension of ageism. One study found that in the age group 16-24, women appeared to be at more of an age disadvantage than men in the same age group. According to the researchers, “Being female tended to intensify age prejudice and ‘double jeopardy’ was reinforcing rather than simply additive.”²

Key Employer Implications

The data reveals four key employer implications related to addressing challenges and promoting opportunities for Gen Y women in the workplace.

1. **Addressing Gen Y women’s workplace challenges is a business imperative.** Improving the competitiveness and efficiency of businesses and improving gender equality are mutually supportive goals. The challenges that Gen Y women face in the workplace have profound business implications. Promoting workplace cultures and practices associated with flexibility, equality and inclusivity are imperative for the success and sustainability of businesses.
2. **Identifying Gen Y women’s workplace challenges and opportunities requires examining dimensions of social difference.** While Gen Y women rally around key themes such as the importance of work-life balance, gender equality and generational diversity, young working women are not a homogenous group. Their workplace expectations and experiences differ by occupation, employer type, compensation type, and presence of children. To identify Gen Y women’s challenges and opportunities, key areas of social difference cannot be ignored.



- 
3. **Meeting Gen Y women’s demand for work-life balance requires more than a programmatic response.** Work-life balance is important to Gen Y women regardless of their position in life – single, married, with or without children. For some, work-life balance is maintaining separate spheres of life; for others it’s integrating the spheres. The research indicates a need to examine workplace assumptions about characteristics of the “ideal worker” and aspects of “life” addressed and who is included (or excluded) in workplace policies and programs.
 4. **Enabling Gen Y women to do their work requires identifying and addressing how gender and age shape their workplace experiences.** Gen Y women identified five features that enable them to do their best at work: understanding goals and expectations; open communication channels; encouragement from co-workers and supervisors; having their voice heard; and understanding roles and responsibilities. Efforts to enable Gen Y women to perform their best work must address key dimensions of difference that impact workplace experiences and relationships.

Key Employer Applications

The following strategies are suggested for employers interested in identifying and addressing workplace challenges and opportunities for Gen Y women.

1. **Check your assumptions.** Employers should examine assumptions about Gen Y women and assumptions underlying workplace policies and practices.
2. **Address the sources not just the symptoms.** Designing actions to address work-life balance, gender discrimination and fostering cross-generational relations requires both identifying the condition of inequality and contributing factors to the inequality.
3. **Measure your success.** Employers should develop indicators to measure the success of actions taken to address challenges and promote opportunities—measures that avoid simply “counting” and that measure changes in levels of gender or age inequality.



From Gen Y Women to Employers: What They Want in the Workplace and Why it Matters for Business

Research on Career Choices, Challenges and Opportunities




Introduction

Established in 1956, Business and Professional Women's (BPW) Foundation was the first foundation dedicated to conducting research and providing information solely about working women. BPW Foundation has a respected history of researching workforce issues and practices that lead to a successful workplace. Successful Workplaces are those that embrace and practice diversity, equity and work-life balance. BPW Foundation's research provides employers and policy makers with insights on the needs and challenges of key groups of working women with a variety of skills, education and training.

One key group of women explored through BPW Foundation research is young working women. For more than five years, BPW Foundation's "Young Careerist" research project has explored young working women's career choices and the opportunities and challenges they face in the workplace. Previous work includes *Critical Career Junctures That Direct the Career Life-Cycle of Young Careerists* (2008), which includes suggested research recommendations and questions for discussion and *Bibliography for Critical Career Junctures* (2008).






In 2009, BPW Foundation launched the Gen Y (born 1978-1994) research activity to understand what Gen Y women need to be successful in the workplace and then translate that knowledge into tools that improve how employers recruit, support and retain young women. While much has been written about how Gen Y is changing the workplace, far less has been written about Gen Y women's unique workplace challenges and opportunities. This primary research gives voice to a distinct group of working women who are vital to developing a diverse and skilled workforce. Research has been conducted using social media, focus groups and a national online survey.

- **Phase One:** During November 2009-January 2010 research was conducted using BPW Foundation's social media channels: Young Women Misbehavin' (YWM) blog, Facebook and Twitter. The research objective was to identify key areas of concern for Gen Y women. The research explored the following workplace issues: career expectations, work-life balance, intergenerational dynamics, and workplace motivation. YWM blog posts were developed to introduce each workplace topic. A question related to the topic was then posted on YWM, Facebook, and Twitter.
- **Phase Two:** In June 2010, BPW Foundation conducted three employer-based focus groups with a total of 27 Gen Y women and 17 managers of Gen Y. The focus groups explored Gen Y women's workplace attitudes, perspectives on intergenerational workplace dynamics, and perceptions of how gender impacts their workplace experiences. Through the focus group findings, BPW Foundation sought to provide a framework for understanding Gen Y women's workplace priorities and recommendations to help employers engage Gen Y women employees. Gen Y Women in the Workplace: Focus Group Summary reports on the findings of this phase of the research.*

* The report is available for download at http://www.bpwfoundation.org/documents/uploads/YC_SummaryReport_Final_lowres.pdf





Building on findings from the initial research phases, BPW Foundation launched a national online survey of Gen Y women in the workplace in May 2011. A total of 662 Gen Y women from across the United States participated in the survey. The survey was designed to explore key issues highlighted in the employer-based focus groups: workplace values, work-life balance, gender in the workplace and intergenerational workplace dynamics. While the focus groups primarily collected data on Gen Y women's workplace expectations, the online survey questions were designed to better understand Gen Y women's workplace experiences. Survey questions solicited information about Gen Y women's individual strategies for: success in the workplace, achieving work-life balance, addressing gender discrimination and improving intergenerational workplace dynamics. Gen Y women were also asked about current employer practices and recommendations for future actions by employers to address key issue areas.

About the Report

This study explores Gen Y women's perspectives on and experiences in the workplace through four thematic areas:

- Workplace values (Chapter One)
- Work-life balance (Chapter Two)
- Gender at work (Chapter Three)
- Intergenerational workplace dynamics (Chapter Four)

Survey results are reported and situated within the larger literature on Gen Y workers calling attention to where approaches need to be reoriented, arguments reframed, narratives reread, and questions rethought. Research findings are then translated into employer implications and applications and highlight the importance of critically engaging with Gen Y women and exploring how various dimensions of difference impact workplace experiences.





Study Sample Snapshot

- A total of 662 Gen Y women participated in the survey. Women from each region in the United States were represented with slightly more than 50% from the Eastern seaboard, consistent with the US population.
- The average age of survey participants was 28 years old.
- Women of color represented 19% of the total sample: Black/non Hispanic (5%), Hispanic (5%), Asian (4%), other (5%).
- Women with children represented 20% of the sample; married women 34% and single women 50%.
- The majority of participants were college educated. Eighty-nine percent had at least a four-year college degree, 32% a Master's degree and 3% a Doctorate.
- The majority of participants were employed full-time (79%) in professional, administrative, sales/marketing, manager, and education occupations.
- The top three types of employers for participants were: for profit (43%), non profit (35%) and government (11%).



Chapter One:

Gen Y Women and
Work Values



Chapter One: Gen Y Women and Work Values

Introduction

Differing perspectives exist on what Gen Y believe about and value in work. For example, one study found that Gen Y value leisure more than any other generation while another found that Gen Y value making a difference most of all.³ The literature suggests a link between generational differences and people management strategies: recruitment, training and development, career development, rewards and management style.⁴ As such, a finding that Gen Y values leisure suggests that employers should develop programs that emphasize work-life balance, relaxation and time off. However, a finding that Gen Y values making a difference suggests that employers should focus on helping employees understand how their work contributes to a larger goal and develop robust corporate social responsibility and volunteer programs. While the literature on generational differences does present a rationale for identifying a cohort's work values and then tailoring programs and policies to reflect those values, the literature on Gen Y also treats aspects of people management separately. Particular focus is placed on identifying:

- What type of benefits Gen Y value most
- What factors motivate Gen Y in the workplace
- What features enable Gen Y to perform their best at work





Gen Y and Benefits

A 2009 Fidelity study asked which benefits are a “must have.” Gen Y ranked health insurance first (82%), followed by paid vacation time (68%) and access to a retirement savings plan (57%).⁵ Similarly, a study conducted by Robert Half International and Yahoo!Hotjobs found that benefits most valued by Gen Y were: healthcare coverage, paid vacation, dental care coverage, 401(k) programs, bonuses and flexible work hours/telecommuting.⁶ A 2010 study sponsored by Northrop Grumman also confirmed young professionals’ desire to fulfill basic needs. Gen Y ranked health benefits and retirement plan as two of the three top benefits a company should provide.⁷ More anecdotal data suggest that Gen Y workers value non-traditional benefits. One author suggests that young professionals are attracted to workplaces that offer unique benefits such as: game room, exercise room, peer nominated awards, casual dress or free movie tickets.⁸

Gen Y Work Motivations

The literature suggests that Gen Y workers are motivated by both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards. Donald Shandler categorized Gen Y workplace motivational factors as relating to rewards, recognition and respect.⁹ Gen Y is reported to be motivated by being able to balance personal life with professional life, salary, growth, relationships with peers, achievement and responsibility.¹⁰ A study by Mercer Consulting found that young professionals are motivated more by flexibility in the workplace (83%) than salary (73%).

An Enabling Work Environment for Gen Y

The literature suggests that Gen Y workers require structure, support, procedures and access to technology.¹¹ A study by Robert Half International reports that Gen Y workers are looking for the following in a work environment: a manager I can



respect and learn from; working with people I enjoy; work/life balance; a short commute; working for a socially responsible company; a nice office space; and working with state-of-the-art technology.¹² Other studies emphasize the importance of creating a work environment where young professionals feel that their input is valued and appreciated.¹³ Another enabling factor often mentioned in the literature is Gen Y workers' need for frequent feedback. Gen Y are said to be used to reinforcement at a rate that is 50-100 times greater than Boomers.¹⁴

Research Questions and Findings

Research Questions

The BPW Foundation survey was designed to collect the following information:

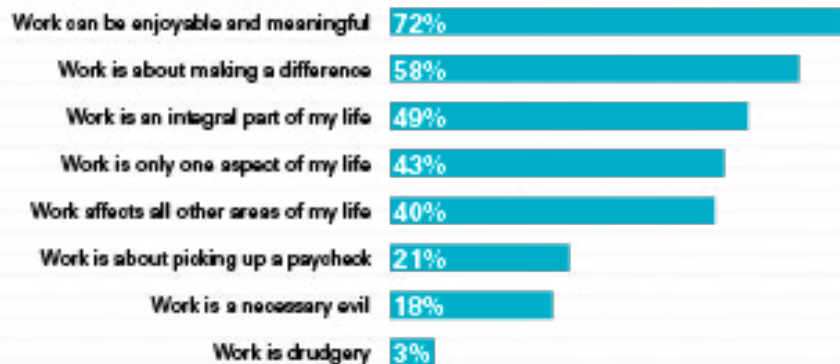
- How Gen Y women view work
- Most important career values for Gen Y women
- Most important employer provided benefits to Gen Y women
- Factors that motivate Gen Y women to produce results at work
- Factors that enable Gen Y women to do their best at work
- Strategies Gen Y women employ to achieve success in the workplace

Research Findings

Gen Y women hold work in high regard. Almost three-quarters (74%) of Gen Y women believe that work can be enjoyable and meaningful. Gen Y women also equate work with making a difference (59%) and perceive it as an integral part of life (49%). Only 3% of Gen Y women describe work as drudgery. Perspectives on work were not impacted by age, occupation, employer, compensation type or presence of children.



Gen Y Women's Views on Work



Gen Y women hold disparate career values. Gen Y women were asked to identify their five most important career values based on a revised version of Super's Work Values inventory, which looks at the relative value placed on the following work related values: achievement, co-workers, creativity, income, independence, lifestyle, mental challenge, prestige, security, supervision, work environment, and variety.¹⁵ Overall, Gen Y women reported the following values as most important.

1. Achievement: satisfaction acquired through accomplishment of goals within the organization (50%)
2. Growth: satisfaction achieved through personal and/or organization growth (48%)
3. Altruism: satisfaction achieved by helping others and society (43%)
4. Creativity: satisfaction achieved by the development of innovative ideas, programs, publications (41%)
5. Compensation: satisfaction achieved through financial gain (39%)

Career values vary by occupation: Table 1 reports the five most important career values by professional, administrative, manager and sales/marketing occupations.



Table 1. Career Values by Occupation

<i>Professional</i>	<i>Administrative</i>
Achievement (51%)	Creativity (52%)
Growth (50%)	Growth (49%)
Variety (41%)	Altruism (49%)
Compensation (39%)	Achievement (42%)
Creativity (36%)	Ethical and Moral Fulfillment (40%)
<i>Manager</i>	<i>Sales/Marketing</i>
Achievement (54%)	Compensation (53%)
Compensation (48%)	Creativity (53%)
Growth (44%)	Growth (46%)
Altruism (43%)	Achievement (44%)
Co-workers (43%)	Flexibility (42%)

Career values vary by type of employer. Where Gen Y women are employed also impacted responses related to career values. Table 2 reports the five most important career values by type of employer.



Table 2. Career Values by Type of Employer

<i>For Profit</i>	<i>Non Profit</i>	<i>Government</i>
Achievement (52%)	Altruism (57%)	Altruism (54%)
Compensation (49%)	Achievement (46%)	Achievement (51%)
Growth (49%)	Ethical & Moral Fulfillment (46%)	Variety (51%)
Variety (36%)	Growth (46%)	Creativity (41%)
Creativity (36%)	Creativity (45%)	Co-workers (39%)

Career values vary with presence of children. Gen Y women with children value flexibility and security more than women without children. Table 3 reports the five most important career values for Gen Y women with and without children.

Table 3. Career Values for Gen Y Women with and without Children

<i>With Children</i>	<i>Without Children</i>
Flexibility (50%)	Achievement (48%)
Compensation (48%)	Growth (48%)
Achievement (44%)	Altruism (44%)
Altruism (42%)	Creativity (43%)
Security/Growth (35%)	Variety (42%)



Health insurance, paid leave and retirement plans are the benefits that matter most. Gen Y women were asked to rank common employer benefits by their level of importance. The five benefits Gen Y women ranked as very important were health insurance (74%), paid leave (57%), retirement (46%), professional development (45%) and dental insurance (42%). The presence of children affected Gen Y women’s responses. More Gen Y women with children reported flex-time work opportunities and work-life balance programs as very important. Table 4 reports the most important benefits for Gen Y women with and without children.

Table 4. Most Important Benefits for Gen Y Women with and without Children

<i>With Children</i>	<i>Without Children</i>
Health insurance (79%)	Health Insurance (73%)
Paid leave (69%)	Professional development (46%)
Retirement program (56%)	Retirement program (42%)
Flex-work opportunities (49%)	Dental insurance (41%)
Work-life balance programs (43%)	Educational benefits (36%)

New challenges and increased pay motivate Gen Y women most. Gen Y women perceive new challenges (65%) and increased pay (60%) as motivating factors for producing results at work. Other important motivating factors include: increased responsibility (47%), simple “thank you” (46 %) and promotion (42%).

- *Greater control over work is more of a motivating factor for hourly workers than salaried workers.* Of hourly workers 41% reported greater control over work as one of the five top motivating factors. Greater control over work was not one of the top five factors reported by salaried workers.
- *Increased pay and flexibility over when work is done is a motivating factors for Gen Y women with children.* Responses were impacted by the presence of children. More women with children than without reported increased pay, flexibility over when work is done and bonuses as motivating factors. Table 5 reports the top five motivating factors for Gen Y women with and without children.



Table 5. Motivating Factors for Gen Y Women with and without Children

<i>With Children</i>	<i>Without Children</i>
Increased pay (65%)	New challenges (64%)
New challenges (52%)	Increased pay (58%)
Simple "Thank you" (45%)	Increased responsibility (48%)
Flexibility over when I work (43%)	Simple "Thank you" (46%)
Bonus/Increased responsibility (39%)	Promotion (43%)

Understanding goals and expectations along with open communication channels enable Gen Y women to do their best at work. Gen Y women were asked about the factors that enable them to do their best at work. The five most reported factors were:

1. Clear understanding of goals and expectations (80%)
2. Open communication channels with co-workers and supervisor (72%)
3. Encouragement from co-workers and supervisor (65%)
4. Having voice heard (63%)
5. Clear understanding of roles and responsibilities (63%)

Significant variations were not observed based on occupation, employer type, compensation type or presence of children.



Enabling Factors for Gen Y Women at Work



Gen Y women look for jobs that align with their strengths and personality traits.

Gen Y women were asked to identify strategies for achieving success in the workplace. The five most reported strategies were:

1. Choose jobs that align with strengths and personality traits (72%)
2. Develop open communication lines with manager or supervisor (70%)
3. Actively seek out opportunities for training and education (65%)
4. Learn unwritten rules of the organization (62%)
5. Seek guidance from older colleagues (56%)

Significant variations were not observed based on occupation, employer type, compensation type or presence of children.



Reorienting Approach To Gen Y and Workplace Values

Gen Y Performance Framework

The literature on generational differences promotes the linkage between work values, motivation and enabling factors. Approaching the survey results through the lens of a performance framework, it is possible to observe logic between the values, motivations and enabling factors Gen Y women reported. For the purpose of this discussion, work values are defined as the objective or goal that women seek in work life. The factors that women report as motivating them are likened to intermediate results, the outcomes that are thought necessary to achieve the overall goal. The strategies for success that women identified are the activities that are necessary for realizing the intermediate results and overall goal. The enabling factors that women reported are largely external. They are to some extent outside the control of the individual and are dictated by the practices of their managers/supervisors and organizations. Figure 1 depicts a performance framework based on the work value of “achievement.”

Figure 1. Gen Y Performance Framework





Work Values and the Dimensions of Difference


Gen Y women did not uniformly report a set of work values; therefore, it is not possible to construct a performance framework that represents the values of all Gen Y women. Responses were mediated by various dimensions of difference: occupation, employer type and presence of children. Gen Y women represent a heterogeneity of goals associated with their work life. While cross-sectional studies often aim to identify key work values for a generational cohort, the survey results suggest the importance of examining critical areas of difference beyond generational categories (gender, race/ethnicity, education, occupation, etc.).

Opportunities for Action Outside of the Value System

Literature on generational difference often assumes that it is necessary to start with a particular generation's work values to determine appropriate actions related to personal management. While the survey results did not reveal a particular set of values that hold true for the majority of Gen Y women, the participants did rally around particular benefits, enabling factors and success strategies.

- Similar to previous studies on Gen Y and benefits, Gen Y women report the importance of meeting their basic needs. Two of the three most important benefits reported were: healthcare insurance and retirement plans.
- Regardless of what Gen Y women expect to achieve through their work or what motivates them to do work, they report five features that enable them to do their work:
 - » clear understanding of goals and expectations;
 - » open communication channels;
 - » encouragement from co-workers and supervisors;
 - » having voice heard; and
 - » clear understanding of roles and responsibilities.





To develop strategies that enable Gen Y women to do their best at work it is important to explore how gender and age affect areas such as communication channels, coworker/supervisor relationships, and perceptions of Gen Y women in the workplace.


- Gen Y women also rally around particular strategies for success such as:
 - » choosing jobs that align with their strengths and personalities;
 - » developing open communication lines with supervisor/manager;
 - » actively seeking out opportunities for training;
 - » learning the unwritten rules of an organization; and
 - » seeking out guidance of older colleagues.

Gen Y women perceive these actions as necessary for success within the workplace. As employers seek to support Gen Y women, efforts should examine how gender and age affect key aspects related to these strategies such as the ability of young working women to obtain training and educational opportunities, develop cross-generational relationships, and learn about informal organizational policies and practices.

Employer Implications and Applications

1. **Start with the organization's values.** Practitioner literature on managing generations in the workplace suggests that employers should develop programs and policies that accommodate each generation's work values. First, as already noted, multiple work values exist within a single generational cohort. Second, these recommendations make the employees' values the starting point. Efforts to develop programs that reflect particular work values should start with an examination of the organization's values. The organization's policies, practices and culture reflect particular values or goals. Organizations should articulate their values and then seek out individuals who share those values.



- 
2. **Don't assume you know what Gen Y women value.** Within the single generational cohort of Gen Y, individuals have different characteristics. The dimensions of difference influence Gen Y women's work values. To date, researchers have found differences in work values within generational cohorts based on gender, race, education and region.¹⁶ Efforts and initiatives to accommodate generational differences in work values should be evaluated on the extent to which they integrate the various forms of social difference that impact one's value system.
 3. **Distinguish between values, motivations, expectations and needs.** While Gen Y women's work values may relate to their motivations, what women expect in a benefits package and need in order to do their work may not be influenced by values. Gen Y women reported similar priorities with regards to benefits: healthcare insurance, paid leave and retirement program. Young working women also identified similar factors that facilitate their work such as clear understanding of expectations, open communication, and being heard. Given the variability of values, it may not be practical or feasible to design programs that match the work values of all employees; however, it may be possible to improve the enabling environment for Gen Y women and to meet their workplace expectations.
 4. **Explore dimensions of difference.** Strategies aimed at recruiting, supporting or retaining Gen Y women should explore how dimensions of difference – age, gender, race – shape workplace experiences and expectations. While individuals within a particular generational cohort may share similar events and experiences within a particular time period, they may have divergent work goals and expectations because of significant individual differences.



Chapter Two:

Gen Y Women and
Work-Life Balance



Chapter Two: Gen Y Women and Work-Life Balance

Introduction

It is hard to find an article or book on Gen Y that does not include a reference to the importance of work-life balance for young professionals. It has been said that “Unlike previous generations, for Gen Y work-life balance isn’t just something to strive for – it’s a given.”¹⁷ Gen Y is portrayed as rebelling against their parents’ values—determined to live less work-centric lives. Management experts attribute the shift in perspective to watching their Boomer parents live lives that heavily revolve around work only to get burned out or laid off by corporate America.¹⁸ Common themes in the literature on Gen Y and work-life balance include:

1. Balance as a career goal
2. Family trumps career success
3. Control facilitates personal and professional success





Balance as a Career Goal


The literature on Gen Y and work-life balance suggests that balance is an explicit goal for young professionals. According to a Universum survey of 37,000 recent college graduates, 59% reported balancing their personal and professional lives as their top career goal.¹⁹ Similarly, Accenture's 2010 survey of 1,000 Gen Y women found that 70% of young professional women define a successful woman business leader as one who maintains work-life balance. And, 94% of Gen Y women expect to have a rewarding career balanced with a fulfilling personal life.²⁰

While Gen Y workers expect to achieve balanced lives, studies also indicate that young professionals are concerned about being able to balance the various spheres of their lives. According to a 2007 survey conducted by Robert Half International, nearly three-quarters (73%) of Gen Y professionals are concerned about being able to balance a career with personal obligations.²¹ Further, a 2011 survey conducted by GfK Custom Research found that more than 40% of young professionals are unhappy with their work-life balance, the highest percentage of all age groups.²²

Family Trumps Career Success

Gen Y workers are more likely to be family-centric than work-centric. Research by the Families and Work Institute found that 50% of Gen Y place higher priority on family than work, 37% place the same priority on their work and family, and only 13% place higher priority on work than their family.²³ Similarly, a 2010 Pew Research Center study found that 52% of Gen Y polled thought being a good parent was of the utmost importance in life.²⁴ As one Gen Y worker commented, "Most of the people in this industry don't have families; a lot of them are married to their jobs. That's not how I want to be. It doesn't mean anything in the end if you don't have your family."²⁵





Control Facilitates Personal and Professional Success

Gen Y workers are portrayed as demanding greater control and autonomy as a means for achieving personal and professional success. They are described as advocating for themselves and seeking out alternate solutions to work-life conflict.²⁶ As Celinda Lake, pollster for Lifetime's Women Pulse, states, "Young women represent the forefront of new trends that define the 21st century. Their top currency is 'control' and the flexibility that will give them control. They are not opting out. They want it all but not necessarily all at once. They are defining a new pathway for women."²⁷ Gen Y women are portrayed as wanting to be ringmasters instead of jugglers. They do not want to be simply juggling work and family responsibilities; they plan to control how they balance career and family responsibilities.

Research Questions and Findings

Research Questions

BPW Foundation's survey was designed to collect information about Gen Y women's perceptions of and experience with achieving work-life balance including:

- Perceptions of the relative importance of work-life balance
- Definition of work-life balance
- Beliefs about the compatibility of work and family responsibilities
- Challenges to achieving work-life balance
- Personal strategies for achieving work-life balance
- Employer strategies for promoting work-life balance
- Recommendations to help employers promote work-life balance in the workplace



Research Findings

Work-life balance is very important for Gen Y women. Sixty-seven percent of Gen Y women report that work-life balance is very important and 29% report it as important. Gen Y women's responses did not vary significantly across key areas of difference: age, occupation, marital status, presence of children and compensation type.

Gen Y women hold different definitions of work-life balance. Gen Y women were asked to define work-life balance based on three common approaches to the issue area:

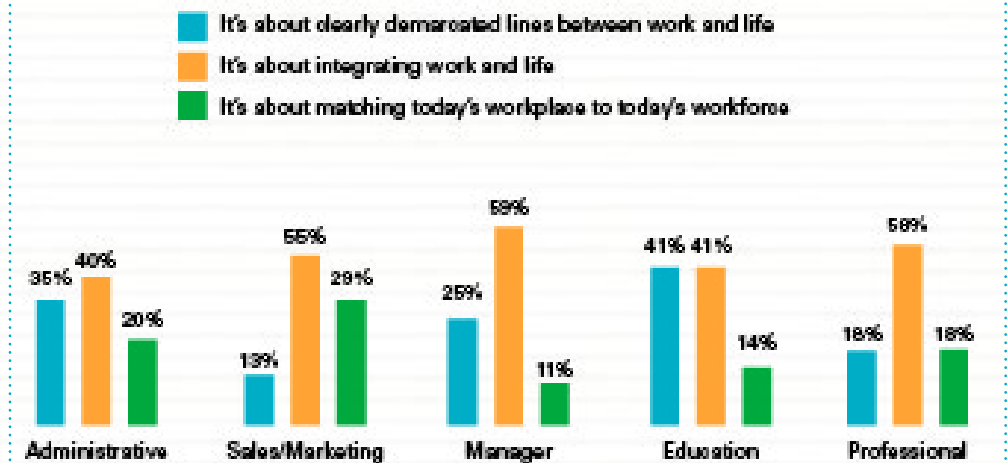
1. It's about clearly demarcated lines between work and life. When I'm at the office, I'm on the job. When I'm outside of the office, I don't want to have to think about work.
2. It's about integrating work and life. Work and life responsibilities blend. When I'm at work, I don't hesitate taking care of personal matters. When I'm at home, I'm happy to take care of work-related items.
3. It's about matching today's workplace with today's workforce. I expect the workplace to adapt to my lifestyle whether it's a need for flexibility, job-sharing, results orientation, etc.

More than 50% of Gen Y women defined work-life balance in terms of integrating work and life, 25% as clearly demarcated lines between work and life and 18% as matching today's workplace to today's workforce. Variations in definitions were observed based on occupation and compensation type.

- **Definitions vary by occupation.** Gen Y women in education and administrative occupations were more likely to define work-life balance as maintaining two separate spheres than women in other occupational categories (though just as many defined work-life balance as integration). Gen Y women in sales/marketing, professional and managerial occupations were more likely to define work-life balance as integrating work and life responsibilities.



Work-Life Definitions by Occupation



- Definitions vary by compensation type.** A higher percentage of salaried workers defined work-life balance in terms of work-life integration as compared to hourly workers (54% versus 43%). Hourly workers were more likely to define work-life balance in terms of lines of separation compared with salaried workers (30% versus 24%).

Family is more important than work. Gen Y women were asked to rate the importance of seven aspects of life: work, family, friends, hobbies, volunteering, exercise and spirituality. Only 29% of women rated work as very important. The two aspects of life rated most frequently as very important were family (74%) and friends (47%). Work is considered important, though, by 62% of Gen Y women. More than 50% of Gen Y women also rated hobbies as an important aspect of life.

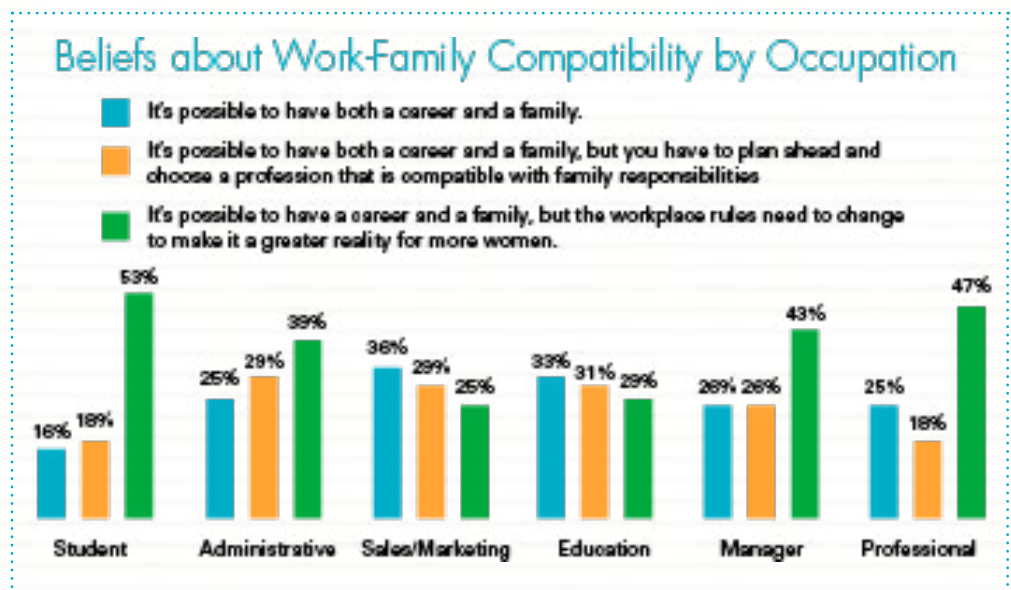
The importance placed on work was not impacted by the presence of children, but the presence of children did impact the importance placed on family and friends. Of women with children 97% reported family as very important compared with 69% of women without children. More women without children rated friends as very important (53%) compared to women with children (25%).


Gen Y women believe that it is possible to have a career and a family, but workplace rules need to change. Only 5% of Gen Y women believe that it is either not possible to have a career and family or that it is not possible to have them at the same time (4%). While the majority of Gen Y women believe that it is possible to



combine work and family, 23% believe that women have to plan ahead and choose careers that are compatible with family responsibilities and 40% believe that workplace rules need to change in order for more women to be able to combine the two spheres. Responses varied by occupation and employer.

- **Students most likely to believe workplace rules need to change.** More than 50% of students cited the need for changes in the workplace in order to improve work-family conflict. Women working in professional (47%) and managerial (43%) occupations reported the need for workplace change at a higher rate than women in education (29%) and sales/marketing (25%) occupations. Women in sales/marketing and education appear the most optimistic about combining work and family responsibilities. A third of women in both occupational categories believe that work and family can be combined without specific actions at the individual or organizational level.



- 
- **Women working for non profits and the government most likely to see need for changes in the workplace.** Approximately 50% of women working for non profits or the government reported that changes need to be made in the workplace in order for women to combine work and family responsibilities compared to 32% of women in for profits. Of Gen Y women in for profits 31% also believe that it is possible for women to combine both sets of responsibilities without individual or organizational actions compared to 20% of women in non profits and 22% of women working for the government.

Lack of organizational policy and program is the most prevalent challenge for Gen Y women trying to achieve work-life balance. The five most reported challenges to achieving work-life balance were:

1. My organization doesn't have a formal work-life balance policy or program (54%)
2. My organization doesn't have a culture that fosters or respects work-life balance (27%)
3. I am expected to be available 24/7 (22%)
4. I have little say over where, when or how I work (21%)
5. I am constantly forced to choose between work and other aspects of life that are important to me (21%)

Significant variations were not observed between salaried and hourly workers, across different occupations or between types of employers. Women with and without children, however, did rank challenges to work-life balance differently.



Table 6. Top Five Challenges to Achieving Work-Life Balance for Gen Y Women with and without Children

<i>With Children</i>	<i>Without Children</i>
Lack of formal work-life balance policy or program (61%)	Lack of formal work-life balance policy or program (52%)
Being forced to choose between work and other aspects of life (36%)	Lack of organizational culture that respects work-life balance (30%)
Having little say over where, when or how works is done (25%)	Expectation of 24/7 availability (23%)
Lack of organizational culture that respects work-life balance (22%)	Having little say over where, when or how works is done (20%)
Expectation of 24/7 availability (19%)	Being forced to choose between work and other aspects of life (18%)

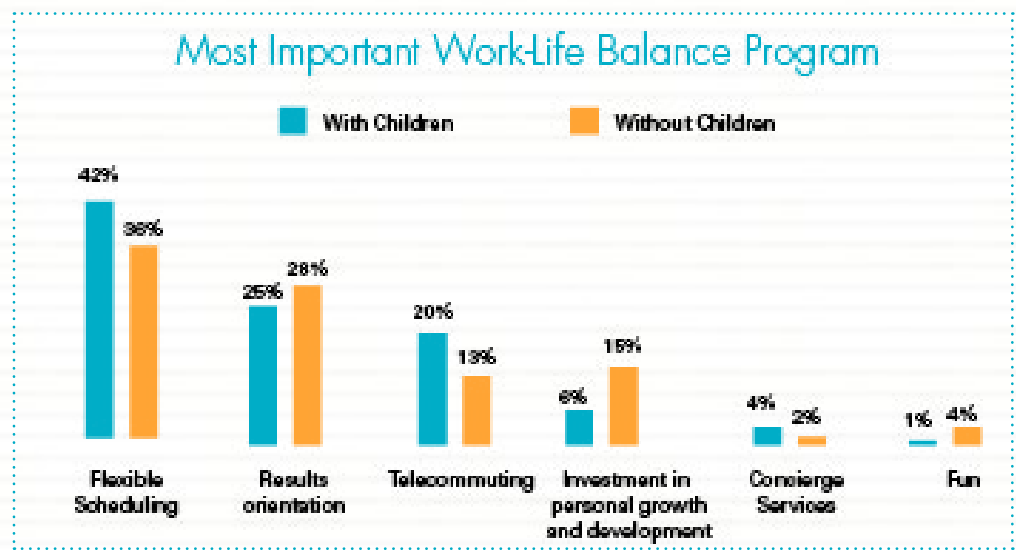
Gen Y women primarily address work-life balance issues with individual solutions. Two-thirds of Gen Y women report paying attention to health, getting sufficient sleep and taking vacation time as strategies they have used to achieve work-life balance. Far fewer women have taken actions related to their organizations or their work. Only one third of Gen Y women have developed a work style and schedule that matches their life needs and priorities and only one in ten women have discussed work-life balance challenges with their manager or human resource department.



Flexible scheduling tops the list of employer actions to promote work-life balance. Gen Y women were asked about actions previous or current employers have taken to promote work-life balance. Approximately 50% of participants provided an answer. The four most common responses were: flexible work schedule; encouraging staff to take time off (paid leave, compensatory time, and personal days); cultivating a culture that respects work-life balance; and evaluating performance based on results instead of the number of hours at the office.

Gen Y women want work-life balance programs that address when, where and how work is done. Gen Y women recommend that employers focus on how work is structured as a means for facilitating work-life balance. Thirty-seven percent of Gen Y women said the most important program an employer could offer is flexible scheduling, 26% said results based orientation and 15% said telecommuting.

Women with children were more likely than women without children to report that programs related to work arrangements were most important for facilitating work-life balance. Women with children were more likely to report telecommuting as the most important work-life balance program than women without children (20% compared to 13%). For both groups of women, though, flexible scheduling was reported as the most important program an employer could offer. Occupation, compensation and employer type did not appear to impact Gen Y women’s responses.



Reframing the Gen Y and Work-life Balance Literature


Much of the literature on Gen Y and work-life balance focuses on the importance of balance to young professionals and how they are achieving their goals of combining work and family. Survey results indicate a need to further understand how Gen Y women define work-life balance, expand the discussion beyond work and family, and rethink the notion of the ideal worker.

Gen Y women hold different definitions of work-life balance. The literature often assumes a universal definition of the term work-life balance. Survey results indicate that Gen Y women do not possess a monolithic approach to work-life interactions. Twenty-five percent of young working women want to maintain separate spheres, 50% want to integrate the spheres and 18% place the onus on workplaces to better reflect the realities of the workforce. It is not enough to know that this issue area is of concern to young workers. More research is needed on how Gen Y women understand work-life balance and how those definitions relate to how employers define and approach the issues.

Work-life balance is more than a nuclear family issue. BPW Foundation survey results corroborate with previous studies: family is the most important aspect of life to Gen Y. Work-life balance literature focuses on how workers combine work and family responsibilities. Missing from the conversation are three important messages:

1. *Work-life balance is equally important to Gen Y women regardless of whether or not they have children.* Survey results found that the presence of children did not impact the level of importance that Gen Y women placed on work-life balance. It is an issue of importance and concern across various categories of women. The challenges that women face trying to achieve work-life balance, however, are impacted by the presence of children. Women with children are more likely to report increased pressure to choose between work and





other aspects of life or to feel constrained because of their limited control over where, when and how work is done. Women without children are more likely to identify lack of organizational culture for work-life balance and expectations surrounding availability. Because work-life balance policies and programs often preference workers with children, formal or informal rules may preclude Gen Y women without children from work-life balance programs.

2. Family is important for women without children. Family is often defined narrowly as relating to one's nuclear family. Survey results indicate that Gen Y women have a broader understanding of family. Almost three-quarters (74%) of Gen Y women report that family is very important, and 69% of women without children report it as very important. Women hold various positions within families – granddaughter, daughter, sister, aunt, mother, spouse and partner. Family responsibilities extend beyond parent-child relationships. Given the importance of family to Gen Y women it is necessary to expand the work-family discussion and look beyond workers with children.
3. Women have responsibilities and interests outside of work and home. The work-life balance literature often treats workers as having two spheres of life – work and home. Women report more than two aspects of life as important. In addition to work and family, Gen Y women report that the following aspects of life are also important: hobbies (55%), friends (44%), exercise (43%), and volunteering (36%).





Addressing work-life issues requires more than individual solutions. Gen Y women assume that it is possible to combine work and family responsibilities. However, young working women also recognize the need for workplace change in order to make it a greater reality. Examining the ways in which individual Gen Y women respond to the pressures of attaining personal and professional success is important, but so too is exploring the ways in which workplaces are mismatched to the workforce.

It has been noted that today's workplace is designed for the 1960's workforce.²⁸ In the 1960's only 10% of mothers worked. Out of the 1960's emerged the "ideal worker" who is available for work anytime, anywhere and for as long as the employer needs. The ideal worker demonstrates devotion through time. The importance placed on time spent working is reflected in the fact that Americans work longer hours than most other developed countries, and American elites work longer than other Americans. As sociologist Cynthia Fuchs Epstein notes, "Time becomes a proxy for dedication and excellence. People literally forget that it is possible to be both talented and dedicated to their careers while also refusing to mistake their job for their life."²⁹ Simply creating individual solutions to work-life challenges, such as increasing workplace flexibility, is unlikely to create the systemic change required both to meet the demands of Gen Y women for greater balance and the larger workforce need for workplaces that reflect life realities.³⁰ What is needed is a critical examination of the "ideal worker" and how employers measure and evaluate an employee's career commitment and dedication.





Employer Implications and Applications

- 1. Recognize the business implications of promoting work-life balance.** Gen Y women’s reluctance to mistake a job for their life is good for business. Studies indicate that the norm of work devotion can detract from the bottom line. Working oneself too hard can undermine productivity. Research documents indicate that sleep deprivation corrodes performance, and that workers who are under constant stress have higher health insurance costs.³¹ Conversely, workplace flexibility is associated with enhanced business effectiveness. The business case for workplace flexibility is well documented. Benefits of flexibility include:
 - » Stronger employee loyalty and commitment
 - » Enhanced productivity
 - » Reduced stress and related elements that lower health insurance costs
 - » Decreased turnover and enhanced recruitment
- 2. Start with assumptions: who is the ideal worker?** Gen Y working women largely do not aspire to be “ideal” workers – available for work anytime, anywhere and for however long an employer requires. Survey results indicate that work-life balance is very important to Gen Y women. While work is important, young working women report that family and friends are more important. Workplace policy and practice are rooted in assumptions about the “ideal” worker and the role of work in an employee’s life. Discussions surrounding perceptions of work and workers are an important starting point for instituting organizational work-life balance policy and programs.



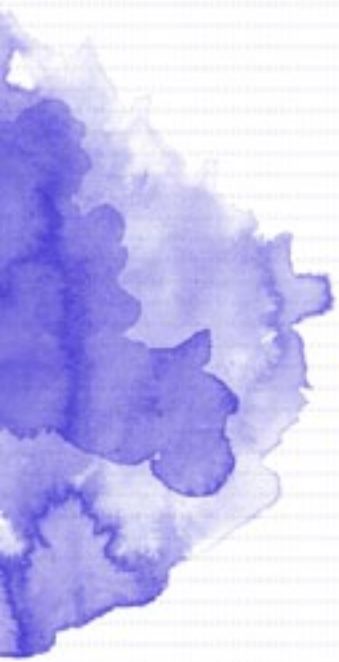


3. **Match workplace policy and programs to the workforce.** Gen Y women are not uniform in how they understand work-life balance or their life roles and responsibilities. Work-life balance definitions, challenges and solutions should be explored rather than assumed. Efforts should focus on developing policies and programs that match the range of realities of a workplace's workforce, rather than one-off, individualized flexibility.
4. **Focus on work structure and arrangements.** Gen Y women believe that workplace rules need to change. They see the greatest need for change in how work is structured. Young working women value work-life balance that addresses work arrangements – where, when and how work is done.
5. **Develop a multi-pronged approach for promoting work-life balance.** Gen Y women report multiple sources to work-life balance challenges – perceptions, policy and organizational culture. Addressing work-life balance issues requires identifying the factors that create obstacles to achieving work-life balance. The survey results indicate the need for action at multiple levels:
 - » Creating policies and programs
 - » Fostering a supportive organizational culture
 - » Obtaining buy-in from supervisors and managers
 - » Monitoring and evaluating the impact of actions



Chapter Three:

Gender in the Workplace



Chapter Three: Gender in the Workplace

Introduction

The literature on Gen Y women in the workplace often depicts gender as a non-issue. Young working women are portrayed as optimistic about their career opportunities. It is said that Gen Y women assume that they are equal to men and because of their belief in equality, less likely to see inequality in the workplace.

Three themes common in the narrative on Gen Y women are:

- Gen Y women are optimistic about their career trajectory
- Gen Y women believe that the glass ceiling is a thing of the past
- Gen Y women suffer from gender fatigue





Career Optimism

Accenture's 2010 survey of 1,000 Gen Y women found that the majority of young professional women expect to have rewarding careers that include a job where they can make a difference.³² Of those surveyed, 70% believe they will be successful and one-third anticipates reaching the top of their professions. Unlike previous generations, Gen Y women believe that they can “create a web of opportunities and choices for themselves.”³³

Not only are young professional women optimistic about their career opportunities, they are also optimistic about their workplace reception. Young women have been socialized to expect equity. Writing for BlogHer, Marya Stark explains, “Millennial [Gen Y] women live in a world where they believe they are equal, for the most part, and believe they are treated as equal.”³⁴

Glass Ceiling, a Thing of the Past

Studies report that Gen Y women do not perceive gender discrimination as a major problem in today's workplace. A 2010 study conducted by the London Business School found that Gen Y professionals saw the glass ceiling as something their mothers had to confront but not something they are likely to experience.³⁵ Similarly, a 2010 study commissioned by Levi Strauss & Co. that phone interviewed 1,000 Gen Y women found that less than one in five women in the United States believe that their gender is an obstacle in attaining their work-related goals.

Gen Y women also reportedly believe that organizations are making strides in the area of gender equity. One study found that young professional women assume that gender parity is being reached in most organizations.³⁶ Further, a 2009 study found that of all the generational cohorts, Gen Y women are most likely to believe that deliberate discrimination is declining.³⁷



Suffering from Gender Fatigue

Not only are Gen Y women less likely to see gender equality as a pressing problem, they are reportedly also less likely to see gender inequity in the workplace.³⁸ As such, Gen Y women have been diagnosed with gender fatigue. Dr. Kelan notes, “Gender fatigue is caused by workers not acknowledging that bias against women occurs. The problem with gender fatigue is that it prohibits productive discussion regarding inequalities between men and women, making gender bias difficult to address.”³⁹

Since Gen Y women no longer see gender issues in the workplace, it is reported that they are skeptical of forums in which such issues are raised, namely corporate women’s groups. Women’s networks and groups are viewed as old-fashioned and irrelevant.⁴⁰ Similarly, Gen Y women do not rank women’s leadership and female role models as important factors for driving professional success. Accenture’s study found that only 16% cited “women in company leadership” and only 18% cited “having female role models at my company” as helpful in driving professional success.⁴¹

Research Questions and Findings

Research Questions

Much of the focus on Gen Y women in the workplace has focused on their expectations. Fewer studies have explored young working women’s experiences. BPW Foundation’s survey questions were designed to collect information about Gen Y women’s perceptions of and experiences with gender discrimination including:

- Perceptions of the severity of gender discrimination in the workplace
- Perceptions of the most common forms of gender discrimination in the workplace
- Personal experiences with gender discrimination
- Personal responses to observed or experienced gender discrimination
- Employer responses to gender discrimination in the workplace
- Recommendations to help employers promote gender equitable workplaces





Research Findings

Gen Y women say gender discrimination is still a problem in today's workplace.

While popular literature states that Gen Y women do not believe that gender discrimination is a problem in today's workplace, 54% of survey participants responded that it is a moderate problem and 23% identified gender as a severe problem in today's workplace. Only 3% indicated that gender discrimination is not a problem.

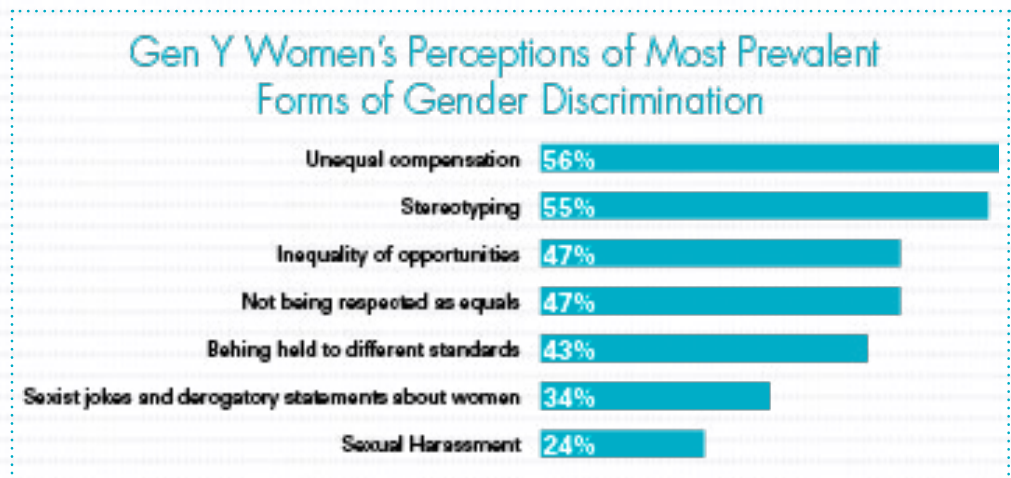
Responses varied between women who had and had not observed or experienced gender discrimination in the workplace. Women who had observed or experienced gender discrimination were more likely to report gender as a severe problem (37%) compared with women who had not (8%). Significant variations were not observed across key occupation categories, types of employers or between hourly and salaried workers.

Gen Y women experience gender discrimination in the workplace. Survey responses indicate that while Gen Y women expect to be treated equally in the workplace, almost 50% have observed or experienced gender discrimination. Variations in the reported incidence of gender discrimination were observed based on the following factors: age, occupation and type of employer.

- **Positive correlation between age and observation of or experience with discrimination.** Older Gen Y women (ages 30 to 33 years old) were more likely to have observed or experienced gender discrimination than younger Gen Y women (ages 23 to 26 years old). Thirty-three year old women reported gender discrimination at a rate of 63% compared to 23 year old women at 30%.
- **Reported incidence of gender discrimination varies across key occupation categories and types of employers.** Gen Y women did not report gender discrimination evenly across occupation categories. Women in professional occupations reported at a rate of 56%, education 47%, administrative 47% and managers 44%.
- **Reported incidence of gender discrimination also varies by type of employer.** Women working for the government reported the highest rates of gender discrimination (56%) compared to women working for non profits (51%) and for profits (45%).



Explicit and Hidden Forms of Gender Discrimination are Prevalent. The most prevalent forms of gender discrimination reported by Gen Y women include both explicit and hidden forms of discrimination. The five most reported forms include examples of how gender is inscribed into the organization - unequal compensation (56%) and inequality of opportunities (47%)- and how gender is practiced by employees – stereotyping (55%), not being respected as an equal (47%), and holding men and women to different standards (43%).



Responses varied by occupation, type of organization and experience with gender discrimination.

- Women working in education reported lower levels of unequal compensation (43%) and inequality of opportunities (38%).
- Women working for non-profit employers were most likely to report unequal compensation (63%). Women working for the government were least likely to cite it (45%).
- Women who had observed or experienced gender discrimination reported stereotyping as the most prevalent form of discrimination, while women without experience reported unequal compensation (see Table 7).



Table 7. Perceptions of Most Prevalent Forms of Gender Discrimination at Work based on Experience

Have you ever experienced or observed gender discrimination at work?

Yes	No
Stereotyping 63%	Unequal compensation 52%
Unequal compensation 60%	Stereotyping 48%
Not being treated as an equal 58%	Inequality of opportunities 42%
Inequality of opportunities 52%	Being held to different standards 36%
Being held to a different standard 51%	Not being treated as an equal 34%
Sexist jokes and derogatory statements about women 38%	Sexist jokes and derogatory statements about women 30%
Sexual harassment 31%	Sexual harassment 17%

More than half the women who had personal experience with discrimination rallied around five forms of discrimination. The response rates among women without direct experience were less uniform. The two categories of women reported significantly different assessments of the prevalence of sexual harassment in the workplace (31% compared to 17%). Just under one-third of women with personal experience reported that sexual harassment is an issue. This response rate is consistent with national statistics on sexual harassment at work. A recent telephone poll of 782 workers found that 31% of women workers have been harassed at work.⁴²

Gen Y women primarily confront gender discrimination with individual solutions. Gen Y women are taking action to address gender discrimination in the workplace. Efforts include confronting managers and colleagues about the discrimination



observed or experienced (41%), reporting the discrimination to human resources (13%), and leaving an employer over discrimination (14%). Gen Y women largely focus on individual solutions, confronting the perpetrator, rather than reporting it to the human resources department.



While more than 40% of Gen Y women have pointed out gender discrimination, approximately one-third of women report not knowing what to do about what they have seen or experienced. Nearly one quarter of Gen Y women have dismissed what they have seen or experienced as unimportant. Significant variations were not observed based on occupation, type of employer or compensation.

Of the 49% of women who had observed or experienced discrimination, the only response that varied significantly from the overall responses was the rate at which they have left employers. Approximately 24% of women report they have left an employer because of discrimination.

Employers focus on increasing the presence of women. Gen Y women were asked to identify actions that current or previous employers have taken to promote a gender equitable workplace. Only 36% of participants provided answers. Of those who answered, the two most common responses related to hiring women and promoting women to positions of leadership.



Gen Y women recommend focusing on structural and cultural issues. Gen Y women were asked to indicate the three most important things an employer can do to promote a gender equitable workplace. The top three responses were:

1. Create a structure and procedures where employees can feel safe raising issues (54%)
2. Commit to fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace (44%)
3. Conduct organizational audits/surveys to look for gender-based discrepancies regarding pay, hiring, promotion, etc. (39%)

Women who have observed or experienced gender discrimination report the same elements but place greater emphasis on organizational audits (46%) than organizational commitment (40%). The recommendations indicate the need to develop responses that address organizational policy and procedures, culture and accountability.

A Rereading of Gen Y Women on Gender in the Workplace

The survey results indicate a more complex picture of Gen Y women's perspectives on and experiences with gender in the workplace. Gen Y women report that gender equity is important to them and that the gender issues still abound in today's workplace. The discussion below provides an alternate reading of Gen Y women that has implications for future research.

Gen Y women's workplace experiences do not match their expectations. The insights on how young women's workplace expectations differ from that of previous generations are valuable. However, equally important is the documentation of their experience in the workplace. The forms of discrimination that Gen Y women reported in the survey are not different from those experienced by other generations. Young working women may enter the workplace with a different mindset, expecting gender equality, but the workplaces they enter often do not enact those assumptions.





Gen Y women may not see “their” gender as an obstacle but it does not mean they do not see gender obstacles in the workplace. Previous studies have asked questions about Gen Y’s perceptions of gender in the workplace treating gender as the property of an individual. One study asks, “Do you see your gender as an obstacle in the workplace?” Young working women may not perceive “being a woman” as an obstacle in today’s workplace, but they do observe and experience obstacles based on the ways in which organizations, supervisors and colleagues understand what it means to be a man or a woman. Gen Y women reported ways in which organizations treat men and women differently – pay inequity and differential employment opportunities - and the ways in which colleagues treat men and women differently –undervaluing women’s contributions, holding men and women to different standards, and showing different levels of respect to men and women. Gen Y women’s observations and experiences of how organizations “do” gender may have little correlation to their beliefs about gender equality.

Gen Y women’s response to gender discrimination in the workplace suggests lack of support and awareness, not fatigue. The most common reported responses to gender discrimination were pointing it out and inaction because of lack of information. One-third of young professional women report that they do not know what to do about the gender issues they encounter in the workplace. At the same time, Gen Y women who experienced gender discrimination were more likely to leave an organization than report discrimination to their human resources department. While the survey did find that approximately one quarter of Gen Y women reported gender fatigue symptoms – letting gender discrimination slide because they did not feel it was important – it may also be that organizations and Gen Y women are ill equipped to address gender discrimination in the workplace.





Employer Implications and Applications

1. **Don't assume Gen Y women will overlook gender discrimination.** Gen Y women are entering the workplace expecting to be treated equally. Eighty-nine percent of Gen Y women report gender equity an important aspect in today's workplace (61% cite it as very important and 28% cite it as important). Gen Y women's workplace expectations do not match their workplace experiences. Survey results indicate that almost 50% of Gen Y women have experienced or observed some form of gender discrimination at work.
2. **Gen Y women experience different forms of gender discrimination in the workplace.** Gen Y women experience different forms of discrimination in the workplace that originate from employer policies and practices such as unequal compensation and inequality of opportunities. Bias and discrimination are also experienced within relationships; for example, women experience stereotyping and perceive that they are held to different standards and not treated as equals.
3. **Promoting a gender equitable workplace is smart business.** The costs of gender discrimination are well documented. Gender inequality jeopardizes productivity and negatively affects employee morale. Lower employee morale is associated with lower retention rates and higher attrition and recruiting costs. Survey results indicate that approximately 25% of women who have experienced or observed gender discrimination have left an employer in response to discrimination. Women who have experienced discrimination were more likely to leave (23%) than report an incident to the human resources department (14%).





4. **It's not enough to count bodies.** While the presence of women within an organization and at different levels within an organization is important, it is not enough. Addressing gender discrimination requires more than hiring and promoting women to positions of leadership. Gender is about the social construction of men and women. Gender in the workplace is not simply a “woman’s issue.” Individuals and organizations “do” gender in that they enact socially constructed categories of men and women. Socially constructed ideas about men and women are enshrined in organizational practices and practiced daily in organizations. Following Gen Y women’s recommendations it is important to create policies, structure and a culture that include measures of accountability.

5. **Address the sources, not just the symptoms of gender discrimination.** Designing actions to address gender discrimination requires both identifying areas of inequity and uncovering their root causes. Various factors are often embedded in a condition of inequality. For example, women may be underrepresented in leadership positions. This inequality may have multiple causes:
 - » Perceptions (e.g., prejudicial attitudes about women in leadership)
 - » Policy (e.g., lack of policy or strategy for promoting equitable advancement opportunities)
 - » Practices (e.g., differential networking opportunities for men and women)

Simply addressing the symptom of inequality (under-representation of women in leadership) without addressing the sources of inequality (perceptions, policy and practices) will not lead to systemic change that improves outcomes for businesses or women.



Chapter Four:

Gen Y and Intergenerational Workplace Dynamics



Chapter Four: Gen Y and Intergenerational Workplace Dynamics

Introduction

The notion of a generation gap is not new. What marks this moment in history as different, though, is the presence of four generations in the workforce: Traditionalists (born 1925-1945), Baby Boomers (born 1946-1960), Gen X (born 1961-1978) and Gen Y (born 1978-1994). Integrating the different experiences, perspectives and priorities each generation brings to the workplace is said to provide employers with unique challenges and opportunities. The literature on intergenerational workplace dynamics focuses on three issue areas:

- Characteristics of the four generations
- Generational conflict, collision and confusion
- Strategies for mitigating generational challenges





Characteristics of the Four Generations at Work

Most discussions of generations at work begin with a summary of key characteristics that define each cohort. In *When Generations Collide*, Lynne Lancaster examines the influencing factors of each of the four generations currently in the workforce. Traditionalists, she writes, were influenced by the Great Depression, Baby Boomers by Vietnam, Gen X by AIDS and the loss of “world safety,” and Gen Y by the expansion of technology and 9/11. Other authors write about what motivates each generation to stay in a job: Traditionalists, loyalty to clients; Baby Boomers, making a difference; Gen X, building a career; and Gen Y, work that has meaning.⁴³ The message communicated through the generational profiles is that each cohort was shaped by different historical events and possesses different sets of values, priorities and perspectives.

Collision and Conflict between the Generations

The differences between generational cohorts are regarded as key to understanding the conflict in today’s workplace. Several sources of difference that contribute to sparking conflict and confusion are: different work ethics, different communication and work styles, and different ways of utilizing technology.⁴⁴ Table 8 summarizes key perceived workplace differences across generational cohorts.



Table 8. Workplace Characteristics by Generation

	<i>Traditionalists</i>	<i>Baby Boomers</i>	<i>Generation X</i>	<i>Generation Y</i>
<i>Work Ethic and Values</i>	Hard work Respect for authority Duty before fun	Workaholics Work efficiently Desire quality	Eliminate the task Self-reliance Want structure and direction	Multitasking Entrepreneurial Goal oriented
<i>Work is...</i>	An obligation	Exciting adventure	A difficult challenge	A means to an end
<i>Communications</i>	Formal Memo	In person	Direct Immediate	Email Voicemail

Greg Hamill, "Mixing and Managing Four Generations of Employees"

Strategies for mitigating generational issues

The literature also focuses on strategies for managing generational differences in the workplace. A common theme is increasing understanding between members of different generations and finding common ground, much like the literature on diversity in general. Suggested strategies include:

- Discussing generational differences. The American Management Association recommends conducting generational information awareness/sharing sessions. Open forums provide opportunities for education about each generation's history, culture, language and norms.
- Expanding communication strategies. Adapting communication strategies to meet each generation's needs and preferences is recommended for increasing the reach of key messages.
- Accommodating differences. It is recommended that employers treat employees as they do their customers and where possible meet each generational group's work preferences.



- Teambuilding. Each generation possesses strengths. Workers should be encouraged to identify and capitalize on each other's strengths. Emphasis should be placed on helping members of different generations work together successfully.⁴⁵

Research Questions and Findings

Research Questions

Much of the literature focuses on how generational differences lead to clashes in the workplace and strategies for overcoming those challenges. Few studies have explored how Gen Y women perceive and experience generational conflict and discrimination in the workplace. The BPW Foundation survey was designed to collect the following information:

- Perceptions of the importance and benefits of generational diversity in the workplace
- Perceptions of the severity of generational conflict and discrimination in the workplace
- Personal experiences with generational conflict and discrimination
- Perceptions of common sources of generational conflict and discrimination in the workplace
- Individual responses to generational conflict and discrimination in the workplace
- Employer responses to generational conflict and discrimination in the workplace
- Recommendations to help employers improve intergenerational workplace dynamics





Research Findings

Generational diversity is important to the majority of Gen Y women. Almost two-thirds of Gen Y women report generational diversity as either important (46%) or very important (18%). Only one-quarter of Gen Y women perceive that generational diversity is not important or unimportant.

Sharing of professional experiences and different perspectives perceived as primary advantages of a multi-generational workplace. Gen Y women were asked about the primary benefits of a multi-generational workplace. The top five answers include:

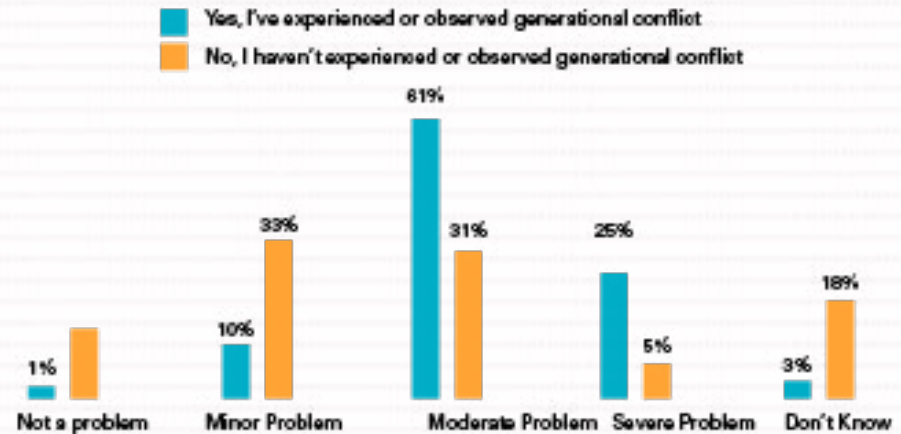
1. Professional experience to be shared (80%)
2. Different perspectives (75%)
3. Life experience to be shared (73%)
4. Institutional knowledge to be shared (66%)
5. Opportunities for mentoring/coaching (63%)

Significant variations were not observed across key areas of difference: workforce tenure, occupational categories and employer type.

More than 50% of Gen Y women believe that generational conflict is a moderate or severe problem in today's workplace. Generational conflict is perceived as a moderate problem by 43% of Gen Y women and a severe problem by 18% of women. Perceptions about the severity of the problem are impacted by Gen Y women's experience with generational conflict or discrimination. More than 60% of Gen Y women who have personally experienced conflict report that generational conflict is a moderate problem and 25% report that it is a severe problem.



Impact of experience on perception of severity of generation conflict in the workplace



- *Gen Y women who have experienced gender discrimination are more likely to report generational conflict or discrimination.* Of Gen Y women who observed or experienced gender discrimination, 51% have also experienced generational discrimination compared to 28% of women who have not experienced gender discrimination.
- *Gen Y women in education least likely to experience generational conflict or discrimination.* Of Gen Y women in education, 32% have observed or experienced generational conflict or discrimination as compared to 42% of women in administrative, 44% in professional and 49% in managerial occupations.

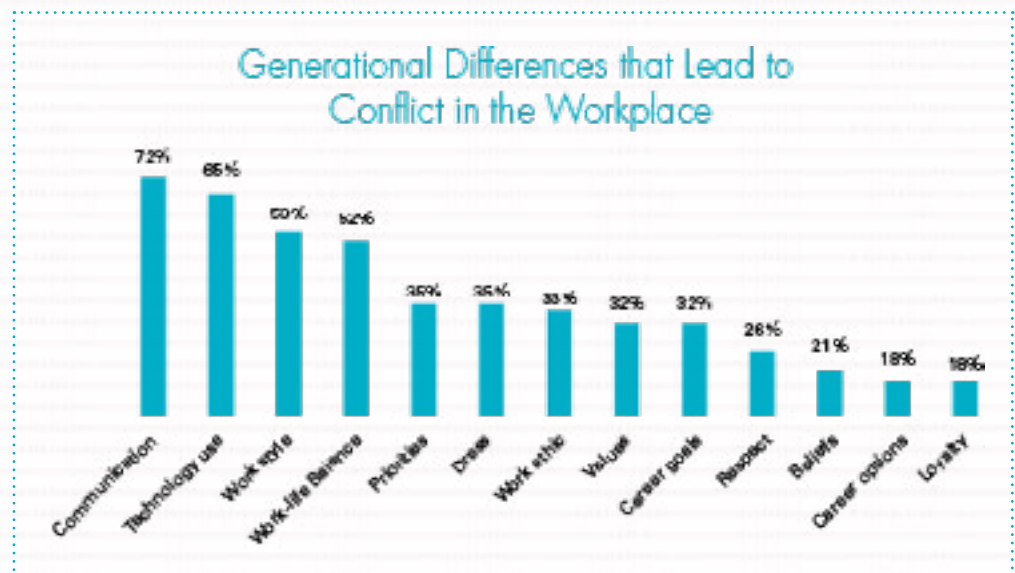
Gen Y women encounter more age bias than generational conflict. Gen Y women were asked to describe the types of generational conflict or discrimination they had observed or experienced. The most prevalent forms of discrimination reflected clashes related to colleagues' perceptions of age. Gen Y women reported the following types of age discrimination:

- "Too young" bias, being perceived as incompetent and inexperienced because of age
- Name calling such as "kid," "girl," and "grasshopper"
- Inequality of opportunities, being passed over because of age
- Inequality of workload, being given a heavier workload because of age and lack of "family responsibilities"



Differences in communication style reported as main source of generational conflict. Gen Y women were asked to identify sources of differences between Gen Y and other generations that lead to conflict in the workplace. The four most reported differences were: communication style (72%), technology use (65%), work style (53%), and priorities (52%). Significant variations were not observed based on age, occupation, employer, compensation or presence of children.

Gen Y women focus on showing older colleagues respect to improve intergenerational workplace dynamics. Gen Y women were asked about the actions they have taken to improve cross-generational relationships. Approximately three-quarter



ters of Gen Y women (73%) practice showing respect to older colleagues. Other common strategies include adapting to different communication styles (59%), soliciting guidance from older colleagues (46%) and acknowledging generational differences (45%).

Employers focus on dialogue and training to improve intergenerational workplace dynamics. Gen Y women were asked what actions current or previous employers





have taken to improve intergenerational workplace dynamics. Thirty percent of participants provided an answer. Gen Y women most frequently identified the following efforts: open discussions about generational issues; education and training on generational issues; and mentoring programs.

Gen Y women recommend that employers focus on adapting communication to meet the needs of each generation. Gen Y women were asked to identify the three most important actions employers could take to improve intergenerational workplace dynamics. Young working women recommend:

1. Adapting communication to meet the needs of each generation (42%)
2. Establishing multi-generational work teams (41%)
3. Acknowledging generational differences (37%)


Gen Y women's responses did vary by occupational categories. The responses provided by women in administrative and managerial occupations reflected the overall response rate. Differences were observed in responses provided by women in education, sales/marketing and professional occupations (see Table 9).



Table 9. Most Important Employer Actions Reported by Occupational Category

<i>Occupation</i>	Three Most Important Employer Actions to Improve Intergenerational Workplace Dynamics
<i>Education</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish multi-generational teams (44%) Adapt communication to meet the needs of each generation (37%) Acknowledge generational differences (33%) Increase employees' knowledge of generational differences (33%) Discuss generational differences in open forums (33%)
<i>Sales/Marketing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapt communication to meet the needs of each generation (46%) Establish multi-generational teams (40%) Acknowledge generational differences (36%) Train managers to identify and address generational differences (36%) Support performance management systems that address each generation (36%)
<i>Professional</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish multi-generational teams (43%) Increase employee awareness of generational differences (40%) Train managers to identify and address generational differences (33%)





Rethinking Questions About Intergenerational Workplace Dynamics

Gen Y Women and Ageism in the Workplace

The survey questions were designed to better understand how Gen Y women perceive and experience generational conflict in the workplace. The answers participants provided, though, about specific encounters suggest that Gen Y women are more attuned to the ways in which their age shapes interactions with colleagues than how generational differences create tension at work. Gen Y women report not being taken seriously because of their age, being called names such as “kid,” and being held to different standards because they are young. The examples that Gen Y women provided of generational conflict are consistent with ageism.⁴⁶ Robert Neil Butler, who coined the term in the late 1960s, defined ageism as a combination of three elements: prejudicial attitudes toward an age group, discriminatory behaviors and institutional practices or policies that perpetuate stereotypes of a particular age group.⁴⁷ All three elements of ageism appeared in the survey responses.

The phenomenon of ageism in employment is typically applied to older adults; however, studies do exist that support the hypothesis that young workers can be disadvantaged in the workplace by age stereotyping. One study found that one-third of all business students had experienced age discrimination in employment – being given relatively low-paid jobs because of beliefs associated with their age and being given less responsibility because of beliefs associated with youth and trustworthiness.⁴⁸ While the literature on generational conflict is no doubt important, questions should also be developed to explore how Gen Y women experience ageism in the workplace.





Double Jeopardy: Gender and Age

Survey results indicate that gender and age may have a compounding effect. Gen Y women who had experienced gender discrimination were more likely to report generational conflict or discrimination than those who had not. Fifty-one percent of Gen Y women who observed or experienced gender discrimination also reported generational discrimination. The findings corroborate with previous studies on the gender dimension of ageism. One study found that in the age group 16-24, women appeared to be at more of an age disadvantage than men in the same age group. According to the researchers, “Being female tended to intensify age prejudice and ‘double jeopardy’ was reinforcing rather than simply additive.”⁴⁹ This suggests the importance of applying a gender lens to research and efforts aimed at identifying and addressing ageism in the workplace.

The Right Answer to the Wrong Question?

Management strategies for addressing generational conflict in the workplace are premised on the assumption that workers from different generations clash because of their differences - be they work ethics, work style or communication. As such, emphasis is placed on identifying, understanding, appreciating and accommodating differences. Lessons from the literature on ageism indicate an alternate entry point – beliefs, attitudes and perceptions. Studies on ageism in the workplace indicate that it is beliefs about differences, not the differences themselves that lead to discriminatory practices and policies. Posing questions about the differences between generations versus the beliefs about generational differences will lead to different sets of solutions.





Employer Implications and Applications

1. **Examine assumptions about sources of generational conflict.** Management strategies to improve cross-generational relations focus on understanding, respecting and accommodating differences. Differences do not produce discriminatory attitudes, behavior and policies. It is beliefs about differences that lead to discrimination. Efforts to increase education about generational difference should also explore how individual and organizational beliefs about different age groups affect Gen Y women's workplace opportunities and experiences.
2. **Explore links between ageism and generational conflict.** Gen Y women report that generational diversity is important and recognize the benefits gained from workplaces that include a variety of professional experiences and perspectives. Forty percent of Gen Y women also reported observing or experiencing age discrimination in the workplace including: prejudicial attitudes associated with their age; discriminatory behavior in the form of name-calling; and unfair institutional practices such as being passed over for a promotion or being relegated to jobs with low-levels of responsibility. Developing efforts to identify and address age discrimination may be an important strategy for improving intergenerational workplace dynamics.





3. **Improving intergenerational workplace dynamics and promoting age equity is a business imperative.** Literature on the multi-generational workplace argues that cross-generational relations are important for recruitment, retention and employee engagement. Further, research on ageism and older workers indicates the gravity of age discrimination for business effectiveness. When age bias and discrimination is overlooked, organizations miss opportunities to capitalize on workforce talent, skills and experience. Discriminatory attitudes, behaviors and policies are associated with poor work culture, a demoralized workforce and reduced business profits.⁵⁰

4. **Develop a strategy that addresses perceptions, practices and policy.** Age discrimination manifests itself in different forms at the individual and organizational level. Steps should be taken to identify areas of age inequality and factors that contribute to the inequality. For example, Gen Y women may be clustered in jobs with low levels of responsibility. The sources of the inequality could include:
 - » Perceptions and beliefs about the capabilities of young women
 - » Practices privileging employee tenure over employee performance
 - » Lack of policies that ensure age equitable opportunities

Studies indicate that gender exacerbates age discrimination. Efforts to address ageism in the workplace should pay attention to gender issues.





Conclusion

What We Know About Gen Y Women


This report explores Gen Y women’s expectations of and experiences in the workplace. Literature on generations in the workplace seeks to identify shared sets of values, priorities and work styles. The BPWF Foundation survey results reveal important areas of similarity across Gen Y women as a cohort as well as differences within the cohort. A summary of similarities and differences across the four thematic areas –workplace success, work-life balance, gender in the workplace and intergenerational workplace dynamics – is provided in Table 10.



Table 10. Similarities across Gen Y Women and Differences between Gen Y Women

<i>Similarities across Generational Cohort</i>	<i>Differences within Generational Cohort</i>
Gen Y women hold work in high regard. They believe that work can be enjoyable and meaningful.	Gen Y women do not have a shared set of workplace values. Values differ by occupation, employer and presence of children.
New challenges and increased pay motivate Gen Y women the most.	Motivating factors vary by compensation type and the presence of children.
Work-life balance is very important to Gen Y women.	Gen Y women hold different views and definitions of work-life balance.
Family is more important than work for most Gen Y women.	The importance of various aspects of life such as hobbies, friends, and volunteer vary based on the presence of children.
Most Gen Y women believe that it is possible to have a career and a family.	Beliefs about the individual and employer actions required to combine the two spheres of life differ by occupation and employer type.
Gen Y women believe gender discrimination is still a problem in today's workplace.	Gen Y women experience different types of discrimination and the incidence of gender discrimination varies across key occupation categories and types of employers.
Generational diversity is important to most Gen Y women.	Gen Y women's perspectives on how employers can improve intergenerational workplace dynamics varies across occupation categories.





While Gen Y women's experiences vary, when faced with workplace challenges young working women largely apply individual solutions to workplace challenges rather than working through or with their employer. For example, the most reported strategies for achieving work-life balance included: paying attention to health, getting sufficient sleep and taking vacation time as strategies they have used to achieve work-life balance. Far fewer women have taken actions related to their organizations or their work. Only one in ten women discussed work-life balance challenges with their manager or human resource department. Similarly, Gen Y women's actions to confront gender discrimination focus on individual solutions. More than 40% of Gen Y women have confronted managers and colleagues about the discrimination observed or experienced, 14% have left an employer over discrimination and only 13% have reported discrimination to human resources. The findings suggest that Gen Y women may be unaware of employer-based solutions to workplace challenges; employers may not be addressing the needs of Gen Y women; and or employers may not provide uniform solutions to workplace challenges confronting Gen Y women. The lack of employee/employer engagement in solving workplace challenges may contribute to the inequities experienced by Gen Y women.

What We Don't Know About Gen Y Women

What we know about Gen Y women is largely determined by the questions we ask. Anthropologist Michelle Rosaldo once argued that we have a considerable amount of data about women but very few questions.⁵¹ Similarly, the results from the BPW Foundation suggest the need to rethink and reframe our questions about Gen Y women in the workplace. The discussion below suggests several areas for future research.





1. **Work Values and the Dimensions of Difference.** Gen Y women’s workplace values are mediated by various dimensions of difference: occupation, employer and presence of children. Research suggests that work values also vary by race, education level and region. Future studies on Gen Y and workplace values should explore critical areas of social difference beyond generational categories (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity, education and occupation).
2. **Employee and Employer Responses to Work-Life Balance.** Gen Y women do not have a homogenous understanding of and approach to work life interactions. More research is needed on how Gen Y women understand work-life balance and how those definitions relate to how employers define and approach the issue. Comparing Gen Y women’s assumptions and approaches surrounding work-life balance with that of employers provides opportunities to explore the ways in which workplaces may be better matched to the workforce.
3. **Double Jeopardy – Gender and Age in the Workplace.** While Gen Y women enter the workplace expecting equality, they often experience gender and age discrimination in the workplace. The survey results indicate discrimination in a variety of forms including perceptions about capabilities based on gender and age, practices based on beliefs about gender and age, and policies that enshrine assumptions about gender and age. Further research is needed both on Gen Y women’s experiences with gender and age discrimination and the factors that cause discrimination.

Employer Implications

1. **Addressing Gen Y women’s workplace challenges is a business imperative.** Improving the competitiveness and efficiency of businesses and improving gender equality are mutually supportive goals. The challenges that Gen Y women face in the workplace related to work-life balance and gender and age discrimination have profound business implications. The costs associated with discrimination are well documented – misallocation of human resources, com-



promised productivity, and reduced profits. Promoting workplace cultures and practices associated with flexibility, equality and inclusivity are imperative for the success and sustainability of businesses.

2. **Identifying Gen Y women’s workplace challenges and opportunities requires examining dimensions of social difference.** While Gen Y women rally around key themes such as the importance of work-life balance, gender equality and generational diversity, young working women are not a homogenous group. Their workplace expectations and experiences differ by occupation, employer type, compensation type, and presence of children. To identify Gen Y women’s challenges and opportunities within specific workplaces, key areas of social difference cannot be ignored.
3. **Meeting Gen Y women’s demand for work-life balance requires more than a programmatic response.** Work-life balance is important to Gen Y women regardless of their position in life – single, married, with children or childless. Family is also important to Gen Y women regardless of their position in life. Further, family and work are not the only spheres of life important to Gen Y women. Hobbies, friends, exercise and volunteering are also important. Gen Y women do not possess a uniform understanding or approach to work-life balance. For some, work-life balance is about maintaining separate spheres of life; for others it’s about integrating the spheres. The research results indicate the need to further examine workplace assumptions surrounding: characteristics of the “ideal worker,” aspects of “life” covered and accommodated in a work-life balance policy or program, and groups of workers who are included or excluded in workplace policies and programs.
4. **Enabling Gen Y women to do their work requires identifying and addressing how gender and age shape their workplace experiences.** Gen Y women identified five features that enable them to do their best at work:



- » Clear understanding of goals and expectations;
- » Open communication channels;
- » Encouragement from co-workers and supervisors;
- » Having their voice heard; and
- » Clear understanding of roles and responsibilities.

Approximately 50% of Gen Y women have experienced gender discrimination and 40% have experienced age discrimination in the workplace. Employees and employers enact beliefs about gender and age. Those beliefs and behaviors shape the communication channels that Gen Y women have with co-workers and supervisors and their ability to have agency within an organization. Efforts to enable Gen Y women to perform their best work cannot be treated in isolation from key dimensions of difference that impact their workplace experiences and relationships.

Employer Applications

The following strategies are suggested for employers interested in identifying and addressing workplace challenges and opportunities for Gen Y women.

1. **Check your assumptions.** Employers should examine assumptions about Gen Y women and assumptions underlying workplace policies and practices:
 - » Assumptions about Gen Y women. Survey results indicate the importance of checking what is thought to be “known” about young workers. Key areas that should be explored instead of assumed include: Gen Y women’s workplace values; how Gen Y women understand work-life balance; and Gen Y women’s experience with gender and age discrimination.
 - » Assumptions of the workplace. Policies and practices in the workplace are shaped by beliefs and perceptions. As employers seek to address areas of importance to Gen Y women, efforts should be made to understand workplace assumptions that impact young working women’s workplace experiences. For example, addressing Gen Y women’s demand for work-life balance requires understanding the beliefs and assumptions underlying work, who is an “ideal worker,” and who is entitled to work-life balance.





2. **Address the sources not just the symptoms.** Designing actions to address work-life balance, gender discrimination and fostering cross-generational relations requires both identifying the condition of inequality and contributing factors to the inequality. Conditions of inequality such as women underrepresented in leadership or young women overrepresented in low paying jobs may have multiple factors including:

- » Perceptions and beliefs about women’s capabilities
- » Practices associated with promotions
- » Policies that fail to promote equitable opportunities

To address the inequality, action is needed on multiple levels. Addressing the sources of inequality – perceptions, practices and policies – will lead to improved outcomes for women and business.

1. **Measure your success.** Employers should develop indicators to measure the success of actions taken to address challenges and promote opportunities. Efforts should be made to avoid simply “counting” women and include indicators that measure changes in levels of gender or age inequality. Instead of counting numbers of Gen Y women in departments, indicators should explore percentage change in Gen Y women moving into particular departments or percentage change in Gen Y women receiving promotions. Regular audits should be conducted to monitor progress and evaluate approaches for addressing issues related to work-life balance, gender discrimination and intergenerational workplace dynamics.



Appendix A: Methodology

Survey

A web-based survey was administered through Zoomerang (www.zoomerang.com) during the months of May and June 2011. The survey was announced through emails to BPW Foundation followers, young professional organizations and women's organizations, to include the following:

- Academy Women
www.academywomen.org
- ASAE Business Services, Inc.
www.asaecenter.org
- Business and Professional Women's Foundation
www.bpwfoundation.org
- Feminist Majority
<http://feministmajority.org>
- Feminist Majority Foundation
<http://feminist.org>
- National Council of Women in Entertainment
www.nationalcwe.org
- National Council of Women's Organizations
www.womensorganizations.org
- National Council of Women's Organizations, Younger Women's Task Force
www.ywtf.org
- Women Construction Owners and Executives
www.wcoeusa.org
- The American Legion
www.legion.org
- Women Impacting Public Policy
www.wipp.org



- Women in Film and Video
www.wifv.org
- Women in Military Service for America Memorial Foundation
www.womensmemorial.org
- Women's Information Network
www.winonline.org

Additional channels included BPW Foundation's blog - Young Women Misbehavin' (www.youngwomenmisbehavin.com) - and other social media channels, such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter. The survey link was also shared through several blogs including the [Glass Hammer](#), [Young Feminists Taskforce of the National Organization for Women](#) and [Bud to Boss](#).

For purposes of the survey, Gen Y was defined as those born between 1978 and 1994, inclusive, though no one born in 1993 or 1994 completed the survey. The survey was restricted to women. A total of 662 Gen Y women participated in the survey (552 completed the entire survey, 110 partially completed the survey). Of note, 65% of the respondents asked for a copy of the final report.

Survey Tool

The survey was developed based on information gathered previously in forums and on a review of the relevant research literature. The survey included a combination of ordinal scale, interval scale, multiple choice and open-ended questions. The survey was divided into five major sections:

- Work and workplace success
- Work-life balance
- Gender in the workplace
- Intergenerational workplace dynamics
- Demographics (work experience, employment status/experience, and personal information)





The following information was collected:

- Demographics (e.g., race/ethnicity, marital status, educational level)
- Employment characteristics
- Workforce experience
- Perceptions of work
- Workplace values
- Strategies for success in the workplace
- Attitudes toward work-life balance
- Challenges related to work-life balance
- Strategies for achieving greater work-life balance
- Perceptions of and experience with gender discrimination in the workplace
- Personal strategies for addressing gender discrimination
- Organizational strategies for promoting gender equitable workplaces
- Perceptions of and experience with generational conflict in the workplace
- Personal strategies for improving intergenerational workplace dynamics
- Organizational strategies for improving intergenerational workplace dynamics.





Analyses

Survey responses were filtered based on the following categories of difference:

- Occupation type
- Organization type (e.g., for profit, non profit, government)
- Compensation type (e.g., salaried or hourly)
- Marital status
- Presence of children

The over-representation of white, college-educated women from urban areas limited the ability to compare Gen Y women based on race/ethnicity, education level or regional type (i.e., urban, rural). The very small representation of those with current or former military experience limited the ability to compare responses on this basis as well.

The respondents were from all geographic regions, with slightly more than 50% from the Eastern seaboard, which is consistent with the US population. The respondents had a range of number of employers, with a mean of 6.5 years of workforce experience.

Gen Y women's responses were also compared to the larger literature on Gen Y and, where applicable, the larger literature on key workplace issues (e.g., gender and work-life balance).



Appendix B: Sample Profile

The tables below provide an overview of the survey sample including demographics, regional representation, employment characteristics and workforce experience.

Sample Demographics

Age (Mean Years) 28

Marital Status

Single	50%
Married	34%
Living with a partner	13%
Divorced/Separated	3%

Children and Caregiving Responsibilities

With children	20%
With caregiving responsibilities	6%





Race/Ethnicity

White/non Hispanic	81%
Black/non Hispanic	5%
Hispanic	5%
Asian	4%
Other	5%

Education Attainment

High School	6%
Vocational/technical school	2%
Associate degree	3%
4-year college degree	54%
Master's degree	32%
Doctorate	3%

Military Service

Active	3%
Veteran	4%





Sample Regional Representation

The survey sample included Gen Y women from each of the ten regions in the United States. Six percent of Gen Y women in the sample reside outside of the United States. A list of the regional representation is provided below:

- Region 1: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont (5%)
- Region 2: New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands (11%)
- Region 3: Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia (29%)
- Region 4: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee (9%)
- Region 5: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin (14%)
- Region 6: Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas (7%)
- Region 7: Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska (3%)
- Region 8: Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming (5%)
- Region 9: Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana (7%)
- Region 10: Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Washington (4%)
- Outside of the United States (6%)



Sample Employment Characteristics

Employment Status

Employed full-time	79%
Employed part-time	10%
Employed temporarily	4%
Self-employed	3%
Not employed, currently seeking employment	2%
Not seeking employment	2%

Compensation

Salaried	66%
Hourly	22%
Commission	4%
Profit Sharing	2%
Not applicable	7%

Employer

For profit	43%
Non profit	35%
Government	11%
Association	2%
Military	2%
Not applicable	7%





*Occupation**

Professional	42%
Administrative	13%
Manager	11%
Sales/Marketing	11%
Education	9%
Student	9%
Medical	3%
Trade/Labor	1%
Unpaid Caregiver	1%

Workforce and Workplace Experience

Workforce experience (mean number of years)

6.5 years

Workplace experience (number of employers)

1-3 employers	61%
4-6 employers	26%
7-9 employers	7%
10 or more employers	6%

*Fifteen percent of participants answered "other" for their occupational category. Upon analysis, it was discovered that responses matched existing occupational categories. As such, they were added to the totals of the appropriate categories.



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