Generational Change: Y?

Gas Appliance Manufacturers Association of Australia

Annual Conference – "Gas Connections" 2005

Melbourne, August 31st

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evolving into your future

Overview

- **Generations?**
  - Defining a generation
  - Generations as waves of change
  - Common confusions
  - Generation Y contradictions
- **Multiple Dimensions of Generational Change**
  - Dimensions within generations at work
  - Generational changes within a person
- **Trends of Generational Change**
- **New Responses to Changing Characteristics**
  - "I" – Psychological
  - "WE" – Cultural
  - "IT" – Behaviour in social & functional systems
- **In Your Situation**
- **Questions**

"Each generation imagines itself to be more intelligent than the one that went before it, and wiser than the one that comes after it." George Orwell

Generations?

- A new economy – global, knowledge, diversity

- New technology – new ways of working and living

- The looming boomer retirement – less talent

- New kids on the block – Gen Y – to figure out as workers & consumers

- Inter-generational tensions – working together, or failing to work…

- More choices – consumers are harder to reach, and easier to loose

- Global challenges – environment, security, etc. What will the new workforce & consumer base think? What will they do & want in response?

"Looking at the future disturbs the present." Gaston Berger

Defining a Generation…

- Motivations
- Attitudes
- Beliefs
- Thinking styles
- Knowledge
- Aesthetics

- **Demographics**
- Socio-economics
- Social structures
- Nature of work
- Behaviours
- Stage of life
- **World events**

I   **IT**

WE

What's meaningful, beautiful, and personally important?

What's true, factual and observable?

- Cultural norms
- Shared values
- Political ideas

What's good, right and just?

Boomers - 1946 – 1964. Generation X - 1965 – 1977. Generation Y - 1978 - 1990+

Generations as Waves of Change

- Generations are generalisations of social changes ("ITS") and cultural changes ("WE") and psychological changes ("I")

- Each new generation grows into the emerging changes more easily than other generations

- Yet, other generations can adapt too!

- Because, "generations" highlight general waves of change in society

- Each new wave adds to the previous ones, they don't replace them: its transcend and include – new + old (with modifications;)

"Before you go and criticize the younger generation, just remember who raised them." Anonymous

Common Confusions…

- Ethnicity, socio-economic background, education etc

- The West and the "rest"

- Life cycle issues

- Different work and place attract different people

- All age groups can adopt the new generation's "wave of societal change." The new generation, by age, personify the changes

"Every generation is convinced there has been a deplorable breakdown of manners." Byron Dobell

Generation Y Contradictions

- Committed or fickle?

- Civic minded or "all about the money"?

- High self esteem or highest rates of self-esteem issues?

- Ladder climbers or disregard of hierarchy?

- All about relationships or "all about me"?

- Nice, polite and respectful or bold, bratty and expectant?

- Dislike online advertising or are more easily reached there?

"We don't see things the way they are.
We see things the way we are." Talmud

Multiple Dimensions of Generational Change

- **The Problem:** The differences *within* generations are as large as those *between* generations

- **Insights:** 1) Each generation sees the others differently
  2) Inter-generational conflict & dialogue happens *within* people as well as *between* people

- **A Solution:** Refine the idea of a person's "generation" by assessing the three dimensions of change independently:
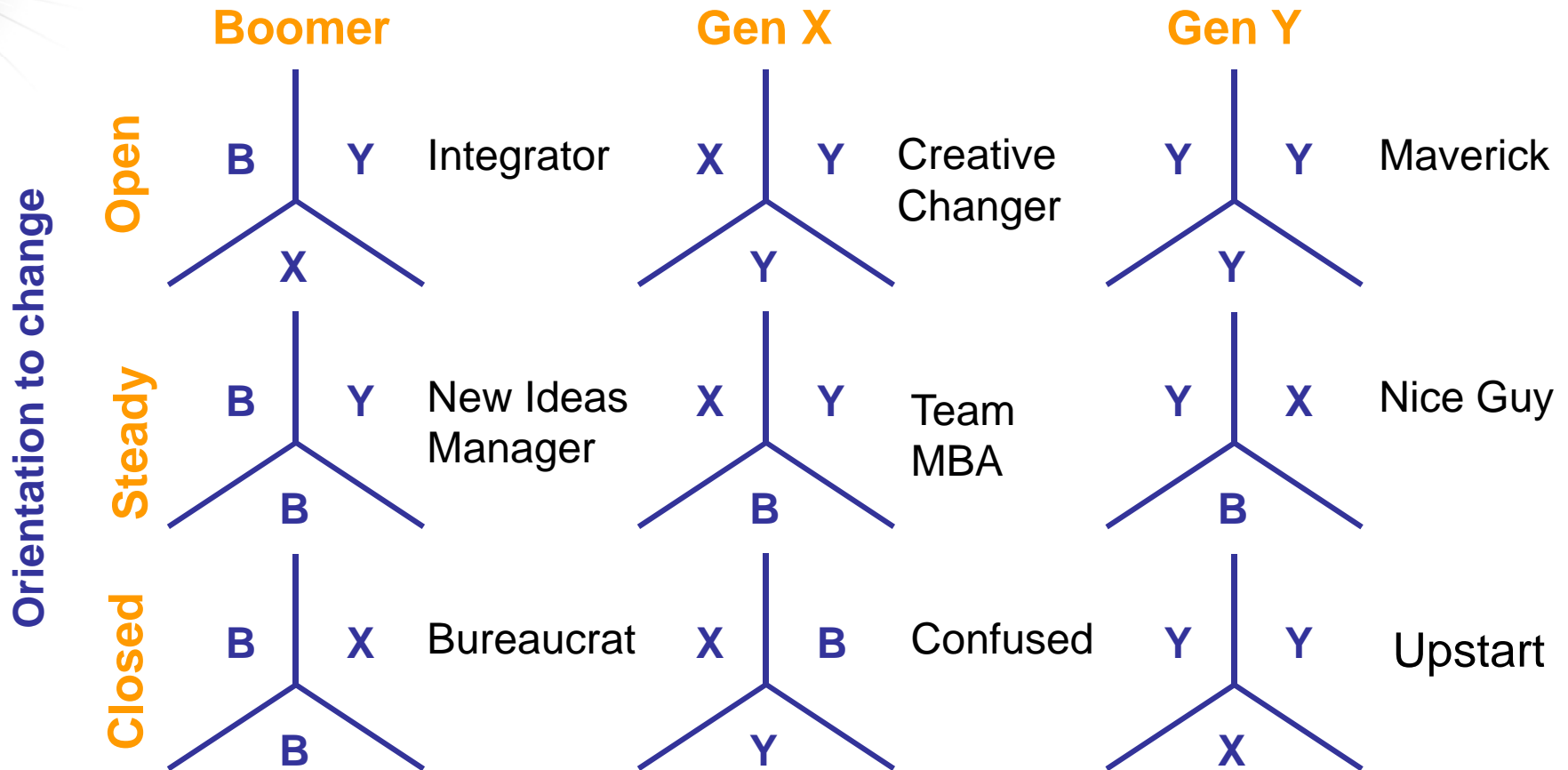
Psychology   *Behaviour in Social /Functional Systems*

I | IT

WE
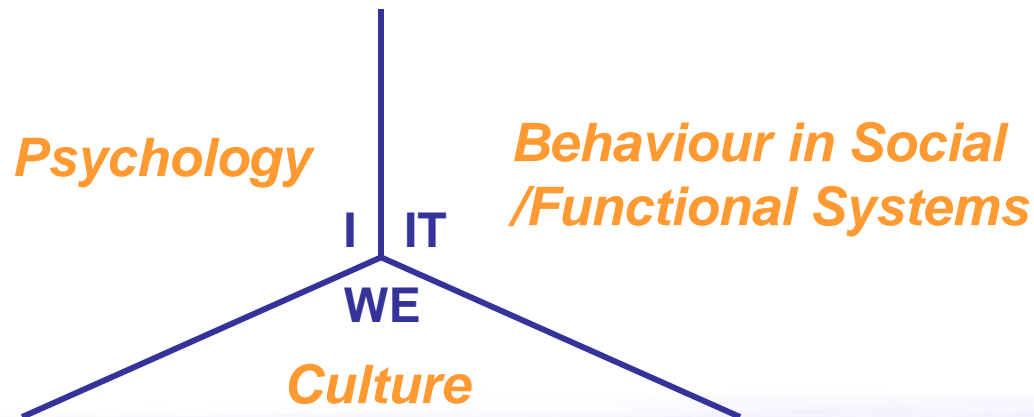
Culture

"Theory is extremely useful, because your theory determines what you can see." Albert Einstein

Dimensions Within Generations At Work

	I	WE	IT
Boomer	Working for security	Organisational culture respects commitment and longevity based rewards (the gold watch, long service leave, the super package etc)	The Institution - silos
Gen X	Working for freedom	Organisational culture respects acknowledgement and merit based rewards (financial, prizes, public recognition etc)	Functional groups - teams
Gen Y	Working for meaning	Organisational culture respects collaboration and competence based rewards (training opportunities, direct personalised feedback, negotiated benefits)	Relational networks – interest groups

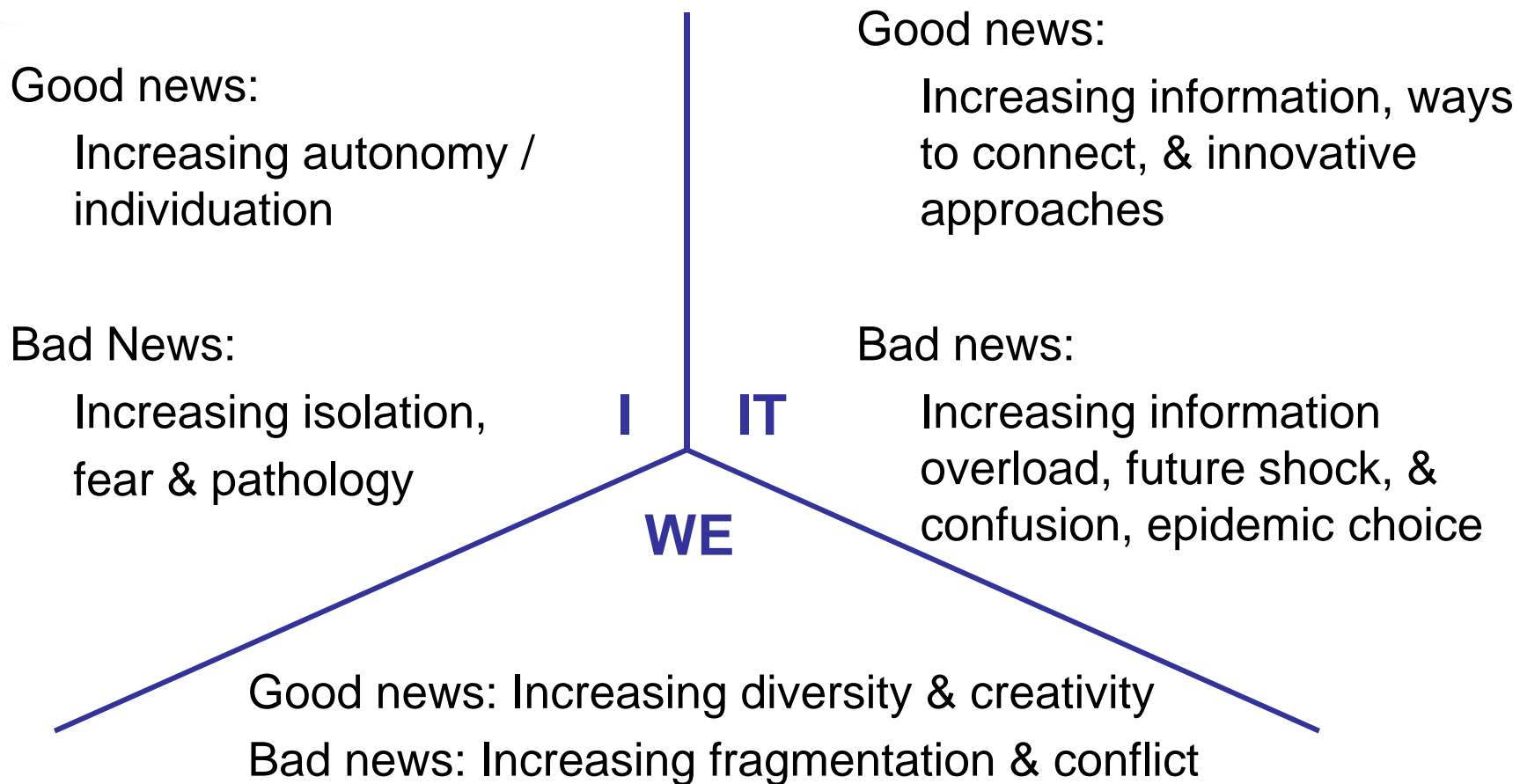*"I only work at things worth failing at." Fred Kofman*

Generational Changes Within a Person

Orientation to change

	Boomer	Gen X	Gen Y
Open	B | Y — Integrator / X	X | Y — Creative Changer / Y	Y | Y — Maverick / Y
Steady	B | Y — New Ideas Manager / B	X | Y — Team MBA / B	Y | X — Nice Guy / B
Closed	B | X — Bureaucrat / B	X | B — Confused / Y	Y | Y — Upstart / X

Trends of Generational Change

Good news:

Increasing autonomy / individuation

Bad News:

Increasing isolation, fear & pathology

I   **IT**

WE

Good news:

Increasing information, ways to connect, & innovative approaches

Bad news:

Increasing information overload, future shock, & confusion, epidemic choice

Good news: Increasing diversity & creativity

Bad news: Increasing fragmentation & conflict

"The age of reason has ended, and now we must organize around chaos."
Watts Wacker, CEO, First Matter

New Responses to Generational Trends

	General	HR	Management	Marketing
I	Personalised, highly flexible solutions	Tailored contracts = contract management for organisation	Accessibility to, yet relative autonomy from, management	Niche and meta messages and strategies
WE	Integrative /synthesising and co-creative emergent cultural norms	Hiring for fit, diversity, be okay with high maintenance & fluid connections	Cultural, values, negotiation and coaching skills required	Responsive /interactive, authentic relationship building
IT	Provide meaningful, evolving pathways /roadmaps, 'meta-data'	Tailored or varied styles of as-needed education, training, mentoring and learning experiences	Competence based management – emphasis on knowledge networks	Values based marketing/PR that accounts for whole/balanced picture of org, market & customer

Complexity requires flexibility

New "I" - "I":   Psychology

Characteristics

- **Authenticity** – Personal integrity, someone-I-know-credibility & personal principles are front and center

- **Meaning** – Need reasoning of why for any activity; seeking to find work meaningful & providing meaningful things to others

- **Independence** – *Expect* creative freedom; rights equal to responsibilities in work

- **Personalisation** – Life-style aspect to every work, social & consumer choice. Used to getting tailored solutions through an interactive/transactional approach

Example Strategies

- Marketing **– Values and emotional design –** to messages, products & interaction with company

- Management – **Reasoning upfront and accessible** – Lead with rationale of outcomes, personalise if possible, be open to discuss & interpret

- Management – **Make Space** – for creative reflection, in-house innovation; provide clear lines of responsibility & rights.

- Management – **Employee centred approach** – negotiating tailored benefits for performance; personal, specific feedback; emphasise life-style /career path benefits

"If you're certain you're right ...you shouldn't be afraid to include opposite voices at your table." Paul O'Neill

New "I" - "WE":   Culture

Characteristics

- **Global** – Thinking, researching, buying & exploring globally via internet & media; often justify decisions within global context: work; TBL+ is important

- **Networked** – Natural P2P approach to respecting other's competence, work collaborations, learning environments, social life and product/service information

- **Tolerance** – The ethnic, sub-cultural, physiological, religious etc kinds are expected. Full stop.

Example Strategies

- Marketing **– Respect the decision context –** global trends & issues mater, yet so do global/local differentiations & whole of company supply chain perception

- Marketing **– Friends/personal experience is king –** experiential, lifestyle and user + social benefits in communications; grass roots and buzz marketing approaches

- Management – **Constant collaboration** – support knowledge networks (in/out of org) & collaborative work approach

- HR **– Active diversity –** recruit to reflect social environment & customer mix

"That which seems the height of absurdity in one generation often becomes the height of wisdom in the next." John Stuart Mill

New "I" - "IT":   Behaviour in Systems

Characteristics

- **Flex-Flow** – Intuitive with technology; capable multi-skillers; enjoy creative tension of parallel projects

- **Both/And** – See whole-of-system: want this reflected in "wants" (a little of everything), work (diverse, multi-functional), & decision making (systemic impacts and execution implications)

- **Immediacy** – Just-in-time strategic approach to thinking, learning & communicating; expect efficiency, timing & relevance (esp. technology, information & knowledge management); automated wherever possible – esp. repetitive tasks

Example Strategies

- Management **– Vary work tasks/patterns –** variety is the spice of interest and feed commitment; training and experience are key rewards

- Management **– Need unfettered access to information and people –** to inform thinking, task meaningfulness, & decision making

- HR **– Train them to keep them –** cohort tailored, on-demand, training can be used as reward for performance within *mentor management approach*

- Management – **Open to innovation** – must actively encourage ideas for technological & process efficiency

"The young do not know enough to be prudent, and therefore they attempt the impossible – and achieve it, generation after generation."
Pearl S. Buck

In Your Situation

- CAREFULLY assess your workplace *before* taking any actions

- Frameworks for understanding complexity of issues – e.g.:

  - Spiral Dynamics: values/worldviews

  - Integral Theory: whole-of-system development

  - Strategic Foresight: strategies covering diverse future possibilities

- QUESTIONS FOR YOUR ORGANISATION:

  - Where will this lead in 3, or 5 or 10 years?

  - How will that change how we recruit, manage, and market?

  - How can you meet future challenges – now? because if you don't, you won't have the talent or customers to survive, let alone thrive…

"Confidence, like art, never comes from having all the answers; it comes from being open to all the questions." Earl Gray Stevens

In Summary

- Get beyond contradictory "surface" approaches generational change – they lead to bad strategy – and see waves of societal change

- There are powerful ways to do this – e.g. integral dimensions of I, We & It

- Anyone can adopt the generational changes – e.g. an internet savvy boomer

- The future is bright, but complex, and coming fast…

- Change needs to happen *now* to be ready for workforce changes – i.e. boomer retirement, smaller workforce, talent crunch

Remember: RELATE TO ME, CHANGE WITH ME, in a GLOCAL context

Questions?

"I see no hope for the future of our people if they are dependent on the frivolous youth of today, for certainly all youth are reckless beyond words. When I was a boy, we were taught to be discrete and respectful of elders, but the present youth are exceedingly wise and impatient of restraint."

Hesiod   800-720BC

Please email or call me if you have questions, want directions to information or competent consultants in marketing or strategic workforce management…