

Book Review on “Motivating the ‘What’s In It For Me?’ Workforce” by Cam Marston

(Review by Gary Tomlinson)

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Anyone who has spent time in any workplace over the past twenty-five years knows that it’s not like it used to be. Members of the Baby Boomer generation remember that in the post-World War II era, the 50’s, 60’s, and 70’s, there were business leaders (the Mature Generation) who looked forward with burning vision. These Matures also knew how to look back, learn from their mistakes, and then apply those lessons. Today, it’s the Baby Boomers who are the leaders. But the workplace has changed, and fulfilling those responsibilities today is much tougher and more frustrating than it was for the immediate post-war generation.

It’s a given that no workplace is perfect and that there are always job-related issues. But two new generations of employees, called Generation X (Gen X) and the New Millennials (Gen Y), have changed the workplace. These employees, many of them the same age as the Boomers’ children, don’t necessarily follow the traditional styles and patterns of workplace behavior. The common wisdom among Boomers is, “they aren’t really interested in the future, and their vision is limited to the here-and-now. They don’t have the seasoning or burning ambition to even want to look forward or back to learn.” On the one hand, many Boomer managing-leaders believe the concept of a work ethic will die with them, on the other, many young employees view the Boomers as dinosaurs, thanks to their limited techno-ability and a shift in the demographics of the workforce itself.

Is the generational divide really that sharp and derisive? Not always – but in many companies generational issues are a common and continuing problem that can have an all-encompassing organizational impact and can lead to employee unhappiness and, ultimately, to profit loss. For these reasons, I have chosen Cam Marston’s *Motivating The “What’s In It For Me” Workforce – Managing Across the Generational Divide* for this month’s book review.

With four distinct generations in the workforce today, it becomes increasingly important for managing-leaders to understand what motivates each to perform. Employers need to know how each generation defines loyalty – and that definition varies widely – in order to create an environment that inspires loyalty at every level. Understanding generational biases is the first step in developing a high-performing, loyal workforce for the long-run.

Cam’s book addresses the most important concerns managing-leaders face when working with different generations and provides clear solutions that one can start using right away. Topics include:

- How can I build a team with four generations?
- How can I motivate employees who don’t buy into the “pay your dues” mentality?

- What can the younger generations learn from the Boomers about work?
- How can I give critiques and/or reprimands without employees losing their enthusiasm?

While most managing-leaders are Baby Boomers, a large percentage of the workforce is now, and will increasingly be, Gen Xers and Millennials. Cam has spent his career interviewing countless numbers of employees of every generation. He has studied and researched the problems, values, and belief systems on each of the four distinct generations. His book contains solutions that can be implemented in workplaces of every type, shape, and size. Cam's book addresses the critical need for a practical, solution-oriented reference that businesses can use to improve employee relations in the multi-generational workplace and at the same time increase profits. His book will help you discover:

- How the different viewpoints of each generation affect the workplace.
- The basic survival skills the Boomer managing-leader must have to cope with Gen Xers and Millennials.
- How a realistic plan, with workplace-tested, concrete steps for solving the problems that may arise from generational differences, can give you the freedom to explore and unlock the full potential of your organization.

Cam's book delivers the insight and tactics needed to connect with employees of each generation, motivating them to work together to achieve more. His book will give managing-leaders a completely new understanding of how people communicate and how this affects the bottom line.

Enjoy this month's selection, *Motivating The "What's In It For Me" Workforce – Managing Across the Generational Divide* and share it with others in your life because as Alvin Toffler says; *"The illiterate of the 21st Century will not be those who cannot read or write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn."*