

Is She Worth the Investment?

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Is She Worth the Investment?

Written by Kate Mallow Sheridan

Olivia is a member of the newest generation of worker - the *Primaries*. Born after 1997 - following the *Millennial Generation* - she is one of over 75 million "9/11 babies." Time goes by quickly. The first-born of this generation will turn 19 this year. Companies that hire 14 to 19-year-olds are already experiencing this group of workers. As companies tighten training budgets and increasingly turn towards "teaching with technology," we have to question if Olivia - from a generation that thrives with one-on-one personal training - will be worth the investment?

What do we know about the Primaries? We know that they will mirror the *Traditionalist Generation*. Their generational name is descriptive of their return to core values and ideology. They will be *Relater* in style (people-focused and socially aware) and *Analytic* in practice (data-focused and self-disciplined). In every way - except in being technologically advanced - they will be opposite the Millennial generation. Primaries are loyal and seek to please others. Though self-sufficient, Primaries sense a need to secure permission before taking risks.

How will we lead this generation?

- In Technology. Both the Millennials and the Primaries grew up with advanced tools of technology and communication at their fingertips. The difference will be that Primaries will move as if technology is an extension of them, not as something they need

to master. Tools will need to be fluid and interactive. Voice-generated response from office equipment will be a natural expectation. Less buttons - more sensors.

- In Personal Development. Millennials are risk-takers by nature. They are fearless and assertive. Companies have been trying to slow down the hard-charging Millennials in their quest to dominate until they conquer the basics. Primaries will need something completely different from their leaders. They are people-pleasers. Very smart and organized people-pleasers. They will need encouragement to take risks. They will constantly seek permission before making decisions on their own - if those decisions will impact other people.
- In Communication. Primaries will largely be a *Kinesthetic* generation - meaning they will prefer tools of communication that can be touched and sensed. They are analytic in practice and will be able to clearly interpret messages sent through visual tools - such as email - but they will *master* communication sent through Kinesthetic channels such as interactive apps and video instruction with a touch-and-build component.

Let's go back to Olivia. She is a public speaker for her generation. In a recent program, she said these things about her generation:

- "A good economy is theory to us. We've never seen one. We govern our monies as if there will *never* be a good economy again."

- "We don't trust authority outside of our family and close friends. We saw what authority did to our parents in the workplace and our friends at school. But, we will comply with authority. We will forever be sitting-down on the outside, while standing-up on the inside."
- "We are told that we should feel secure because the world is now a safe place and because we are the most culturally-diverse generation ever. Yet, we see soldiers at the airport and terrorism on TV. We do not feel secure."
- "We are told that change will be easy for us because we have constantly lived with it. Change is not easy for us. We are loyal to our friends and family. Every change hurts us."
- "We save money. We hide money. Our parents have no idea how many dollars we have hidden away in our mattresses and in books with secret slots."
- "We are confused on higher-education. We are told we must have a college education to succeed, but only one-in-three of us intends to go to college after high school. We hear about student loan debt. We want to go to work first and get our education later. We like apprenticeships and on-line education. The social part of college is not something we need."

Olivia tells company leaders that her generation will want to learn hands-on with their supervisors nearby, or at least accessible. Primaries are loyal by nature and will thrive when they can build relationships through trust. Companies should prepare to bring back one-on-one *leading at the front line* (opposed to the *leading from the*

bunkers style that worked best with the Millennials.) There will be a financial investment needed by companies to integrate the training through people rather than relying solely upon technology.

Human Resource Departments will need to dust off the motivational books that were put away after the Xer generation settled into leadership as well as actively watch over bullying by the much *overtly*-stronger generation of the Millennials. Primaries hold their strength within. The result of not giving Primaries their voice will be a passive-aggressive workplace. As Olivia says in her speeches, her generation will be "standing up on the inside." Worth the investment? Loyal, self-sufficient, industrious, pragmatic, and resourceful - She votes yes!

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