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Q&A: The Generations in Brazil

Hi Tammy!

I read an article on the magazine HSM Management here in Brazil where I could read also an interview you gave about Generation Y and the generation conflicts in the companies nowadays.

Then I'd like you to answer one of my questions: are the situation and the results the same for this age group in emerging countries, like in Brazil? Because here these young people started working before, when they were 17 years old usually, so could this fact influence anyway?

Thanks for your attention!

Thaís

Dear Thaís,

Because the generations are shaped by the events that occurred during their formative years (roughly ages 11 - 14+), they vary significantly from country to country around the world.

A summary of my research on Brazil is included, below. I hope you find it helpful.

Warmly,

Tammy

Brazil

The four generations in Brazil's workforce today developed under conditions spanning from the Vargas dictatorship of the 1940's, through the military coup of the 1960's, to today's democratic government. Under these varying political environments, young people's early experiences with authority and views of institutions were significantly different, as were the economic opportunities they were able to pursue. They developed different attitudes toward risk, varying investment horizons, and a range of expectations toward the workplace.

During the Traditionalist's formative years in the 1940's and 1950's, Vargas' rule nationalized natural resources, created the country's first industrialization plan, and saw the growth of small local industry. However, after his death in 1956, a rapid influx of foreign investment and capital rapidly shrank domestic industry. This generation grew up accustomed to a dominant authority, with modest expectations. Members had limited expertise or confidence in how to build a business; most were more comfortable being part of the multinational enterprises that dominated the economy after Vargas' rule.

The economy struggled during the 1960's and 1970's, marked by hyperinflation. A right-wing military coup d'état expanded the executive branch's powers, giving the leaders unchecked authority over the country's direction and radicalizing a generation of left-wing student groups in opposition. This generation of Boomers developed idealism for a better future and an anti-authoritarian point of view, although most were cautious about expressing their true feelings.

Worried about the economy and in constant fear of hyperinflation, this generation developed a short-term orientation and became excessive consumers.

The economy continued to struggle in the late 1970's and 1980's, resulting in strikes for higher wages. Opposition to authority became more vocal and widespread. Civilians protested to end the military government rule and demand a direct vote. In 1989, the first democratically elected president in 29 years brought free trade and privatization, although the transition was fiscally arduous. This difficult path left members of Generation X risk-adverse, with a strong sense of self-reliance and a strong commitment to their families.

From the mid-1990's forward, Brazil's economy has stabilized and grown. Brazil has emerged as a major player on the world stage with strengthening international relations, although charges of corruption have tainted the local government. Generation Y's developed with excitement about participating in the global economy and proud of Brazil's emerging international status. Although disdainful of politics, this generation is optimistic and immediate, with a desire to make things better and gain success now. Like other Gen Y's around the world, they grew up as "digital natives," highly comfortable with today's technology.