

## **Excerpt from *“Engagement, Meaning and the Generational Divide”* by Flo Mauri**

Some of the relevant trends that have emerged in the past 5 to 10 years are an indication of the future focus training and development will take. Here are some excerpts from my article on these trends:

“The inter-generational and diverse/global workplace of today is adding another layer of complexity to the mainstream training issues of contemporary leadership, decision-making strategies, managing work groups, performance, people skills and conflict management.

### **New trends and challenges:**

- Johnson & Johnson implemented a “focus on growth” initiative tied to employees’ personal and professional aspirations (addressing the whole person).
- A recent Fast Company Trends Survey reported that 75% of companies surveyed say they are or will be using their top executives to actually teach in their programs. This trend is putting the onus on leaders to also be the internal faculty and mentor.
- Another significant finding from the same survey is that companies (56%) are seeing the relevance of executive coaching as paying off from performance improvement (as executives are increasingly under the gun to move quickly and make complex decisions).
- Companies are using action-oriented learning (working in teams on current business problems) to address both real business problems and develop the participants.
- Bridging generational divides: what baby boomers need to learn about generation Y and vice-versa; how values of X and Y generations are impacting the workplace.
- Making change happen in times of complexity: challenges of planning and implementing in an ever-changing landscape.
- The level of worker engagement predicts performance and great managing is at its core. According to Gallup’s pioneering research, there are 12 statements that best predict employee and workgroup performance. At least 10 of these are directly related to the manager’s skills and competencies.
- The need for expanded management competencies: training managers to effectively coach and mentor their people.
- Managing self as a change agent competency: emotional self management; exploring strategies to build on personal strengths.
- The power of a service-oriented workplace: creating a culture of service excellence.

New research points to a need for “meaning” in the workplace. What drives success has changed. What people want has changed. There’s a crisis of commitment, as indicated in the book, “Meaning, Inc.” What customers want and how they judge companies is changing. Social and political attitudes and pressures are becoming more important. As an

example, young people are choosing to work for companies that have some social relevance.

Companies that respond to a sense of “meaning” tend to mobilize a sense of purpose. Workers feel special and are authentically engaged. This type of company enjoys positive customer and public perceptions and has a sense of coherence and a forward-looking personality.

It is predicted that “meaning” will become increasingly important to workers. Creating meaning enables people to connect their activities to things that matter to them (Johnson & Johnson is getting it right). Organizations that are getting it right are connecting purpose, meaning and organizational values as an integral part of employee engagement.