

# Diversity Works!



Diversity at Work  
in London

## Updates



Dear Readers;

It has been four years since we started this newsletter and thankfully so much has changed. Diversity and Inclusion is on the radar of most organizations. We understand that being sensitive about diversity in the workplace is not enough; we need to become competent and proficient as well. The language of diversity and inclusion has become more sophisticated and we have come to realize that it is as important as any other corporate objective. We now talk about diversity strategic plans, diversity return on investment and metrics for measuring our

diversity objectives. It can be overwhelming! If you haven't jumped onto the diversity bandwagon, you might want to consider asking yourself, "why". Our workplaces are becoming more diverse and global and we need to have the resources to make the most of these rapid changes. Putting together a diversity plan can be a daunting task, especially if you have never done it before. My advice to you would be, to start with the business case for diversity and inclusion in your workplace. How will your organization's performance and employee relations improve if you decide to go this route? Once you have established your business case, the rest starts to make more sense as you put a plan together. If you are lost, Diversity At Work can help you navigate through the process and give you the organizational capacity to do much of it on your own, if you choose.

*(Continued on page 2)*

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<b>Updates</b>	<b>1-2</b>
<b>Managing Generational Differences in the Workplace</b>	<b>3-4</b>
<b>Generations in the Workplace</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Steps to Success: Bridging the Generation Gap</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Interview with Sherri Elliott-Yearly</b>	<b>7-8</b>
<b>Ask the Elocution Instructor</b>	<b>9-10</b>
<b>Ask the Diversity Consultant</b>	<b>10-11</b>



Do you have an employee who is a New Canadian who is struggling in the workforce because he/she doesn't know what the workplace rules are? Does he/she tend to handle workplace situations in Canada the way he/she did at home, only to find that it is ineffective? Are conflicts arising due to cultural misunderstandings? It could be that he/she lacks the soft skills necessary to succeed in a Canadian work environment. It is difficult enough to learn how to speak English but learning soft skills is even harder. Sometimes one-on-one coaching with a cross-cultural specialist can help New Canadians succeed. With over 15 years of experience working with New Canadians, Diversity At Work can assist the employee to gain new skills and confidence to be successful in the workplace.

This can be offered face-to-face or via Skype.

We thank our many readers for the feedback over the years. We appreciate the fact that you find Diversity Works! a trusted resource for best practices for managing workplace diversity. We want to be able to give our readers more resources, and tips for dealing with challenging issues in the diverse workplace.

We have made the business decision to turn our newsletter into a paid subscription, so that we can improve the quality, while increasing the number of articles. In addition to Alfredo Garcia's column, "Ask the Elocution Instructor", he will be providing a downloadable worksheet for readers who would like to improve their English. Our other advisors will be contributing articles on doing

business overseas and business etiquette. We recognize that we may lose some of our readers, by making this move. For those of you who chose not to subscribe, you will continue to receive our Ask the Diversity Consultant column on a quarterly basis as well as any professional development that we are offering.

We want to hear from you. If you have an article that you would like to contribute or have an event that you would like us to know about, please get in touch with us. We welcome your feedback on our newsletter and encourage you to write us questions or give us suggestions for upcoming issues.

Thank you,  
Evelina Silveira  
President, Diversity At Work

## ***Gender Sensitivity Training***

Are there individuals in your organization who are experiencing harassment? Harassment of any kind can interfere with creating an environment of respect and inclusion. One way to prevent harassers from reoffending is through empathy and sensitivity training, which will help them understand the effects of their behaviour on the victim. Inquire about our sensitivity training.



***Do you need  
a quick answer  
to a diversity  
question or  
problem?***

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## From Suits to Flip Flops: Managing Generational Differences in the Workplace

Sometimes I think that I am getting old, but when the average life expectancy is ever increasing, I trick myself into thinking that I am a youth rather than middle-aged. The radical shift in what is considered to be acceptable workplace behaviour over the last couple of decades would leave anyone feeling ancient. One example is the change in what constitutes appropriate business attire. I recall some of my first office jobs working for a temp agency and being handed a booklet outlining proper business attire that included a picture of a woman with blond poofy hair, pearl earrings and a necklace and blouse with a bough that seemed big enough to place on a large Christmas gift. Let's not forget the navy blue blazer and the ¾ length skirt that perfectly complemented the ensemble. In a nutshell this was "dress for success" 80's style.

Lately, I find myself in a bit of a generational conundrum. I admit it, I am biased and bewildered. *I am baffled when I see exposed body piercings, tattoos, décolleté, and hear the flip flap of the flip flops in the workplace.* (Incidentally,



the name for flip flops when I

was a kid was thongs!) I feel like I have been in a time warp. At what point did all of this happen? What does all of this self-expression and informality mean? When did it become acceptable for a stranger to send me an e-mail with the salutation, "Hey Evelina!"? Since when did we stop communicating over the phone, preferring to do business over the internet? Admittedly, some of the habits of Generation Y (1979-1999) are really hard for me to understand. I am working on it, but I have to tell you that my experiences with working with Traditionalists (1900-1945) and Baby Boomers (1946-1964) serve as a far more comfortable contrast.

A few years ago I had a Traditionalist work for me. I enjoyed that relationship for many reasons. One of them was that he took the job seriously, which was really important for me as a new business owner. When we would have a public event together I could always count on him arriving 45 minutes early wearing a business suit and being impeccably groomed. Although he was old enough to be my father, I never saw him that way. I appreciated what he brought to my business for that period of time: reliability, respect and most of all experience. John had had a lengthy career as a motivational speaker and as a salesperson. I recognized that there was a lot that I could learn from him.

Sometimes he would give me suggestions whether I solicited them or not. On top of that, he would occasionally correct my grammar, if I asked him. What I saw in front of me was a person with enormous life and personal experience, that made me feel especially confident knowing that if anything went wrong while we were doing our gig, we could solve it together. What I saw was a great opportunity for mentoring from his side but also from my side showing him how some of his traditional ways of working could be enhanced with improved technology. It is for this reason that I am a firm believer that by leveraging generational differences in the workplace, we can all benefit. That is why I have never been able to quite understand why employers often discriminated against hiring these experienced workers. What I see is a clear cut opportunity for growth and learning.

Traditionalists' life experiences are so completely different than the Generation X (1965-1980) group that I belong to. We were the first generation to have both parents working, we would arrive home from school to an empty home, we were nurtured with Sesame Street and Swanson dinners and somehow managed to survive the lead paint that we ingested from our cribs and toys.

*(Continued on page 4)*

We rode our banana seat bikes without a helmet and learned through osmosis to survive and thrive in an unstructured ever changing environment. It's no wonder I love flex-time and having my own business!

I believe that I am coming around and appreciating Generation Y'ers a little more these days. Let's face it, a lot of the comments about this age group are quite disparaging. One business consultant notes in his column that one should expect that Generation Y'ers are venting about their employers online and that they are terrible professional writers. How flattering is that! I work with several Generation Y'ers now and they have been very helpful with getting me



up to speed with technology and have offered me a lot of ideas about social networking. While Generation Y'ers are often criticized for being self-centred, this is a matter of perspective. I see them as being much better at taking care of themselves. Self-care is more important to them. And, why shouldn't it be? They, just like everyone else have been exposed to a plethora of messages telling us that stress-related chronic diseases are on the rise and that a sizable percentage of Canadians suffer from depression. This is the generation that grew up with Colombine and terrorism as part of their landscape. Is it any wonder that they think the rest of us should take a "chill pill" about work? With all of this in front of them, I think it is good that they want to take care of themselves at work, don't you?

Let's face it, most of us have an image of our parents and

grandparents working and working with little in the way of a work-life balance. If you are feeling imbalanced your work productivity and co-worker relationships are going to suffer. Generation Y'ers can offer us some perspective about what is really important in life.

With four generations working together for the first time this creates great opportunities but also challenges for employers and workers alike. The key is to learn how to leverage these differences and take what is good from each generation and make it work for your organization. In this issue you will hear from Sherri Elliot-Yearly, generational guru and author of **Ties to Tattoos** who will offer insight and resources to help us understand how to work with all generations.

Evelina Silveira,  
Editor and President

## ***Services of Diversity At Work Include :***

- Cultural competency assessments
- Ethnic marketing
- Training in International Business Etiquette and Business Customs
- Building business partnerships between mainstream and aboriginal communities
- Starting up and troubleshooting your Diversity Committee
- Pronunciation and Elocution classes for Internationally trained professionals
- Creating Employment Orientation programs for New Canadians
- Developing Diversity Strategic Plans

## **Our Recent Clients:**

The University of Western  
Ontario

Fanshawe College

Alzheimer's Society of Halton

Canadian Mental Health  
Association

Regional Municipality of Halton

Southlake Regional Health Centre

# Generations in the Workplace

## Traditionalists 1900-1945

- Approaching retirement or are working well past retirement
- Considered loyal, hardworking and financially motivated



## Boomers 1946-1964

- One of the largest segments in the workforce
- Guided and driven by both money and work ethic
- Strong over-time work ethic
- They are loyal and often want to manage



## Generation X 1965-1980

- Technically savvy
- Influenced by the media and internet
- Skeptical, primary loyalty is to personal advancement
- Most likely to change jobs and careers



## Generation Y Millennial 1979-1999

- Concerned about supporting themselves and their families
  - Interested in finding and keeping a job.
  - Need to have career satisfaction
  - Like to have frequent communication with their boss
  - Prefer informal and friendly workplaces
- Note: Some researchers peg Generation Y between 1979-1980.



# Steps to Success: Bridging the Generation Gap

## **Workplace Strategies for Generation X'ers to use with Baby Boomers**

- Show respect.
- Choose face-to-face conversations.
- Give your full attention.
- Play the game.
- Learn the corporate history.

## **Workplace Strategies for Baby Boomers to use with Generation Y'ers**

- Get to the point.
- Use e-mail
- Give space.
- Get over the idea of dues-paying.
- Lighten up.

## **Workplace Strategies for Working with Traditionalists**

- Honour the chain of command.
- Recognize their importance the place on job security
- Value their experience.
- Appreciate their dedication.

## **Workplace Strategies for Working with Generation Y'ers**

- Challenge them.
- Ask them for their opinion.
- Find them a mentor.
- Provide them with timely feedback.

Taken from:  
Penn Behavioural Health Organization. "Bridging the

Generation Gap at Work." *Management Resources*.



## **Strategies That Employers Can Adopt to Optimize the Performance of A Multi-generational Workforce**

1. Build a culture of inclusion to address the negative stereotypes about the various generations in the workplace.
2. Implement policies, programs, and practices that respond to the cross-generational desires for respect, flexibility, and fairness in the workplace.
3. Learn from the effective practices that other organizations have developed to recruit, engage, and retain multigenerational workforces.

Taken from:  
Krywulak, Tim and Martha Roberts. "Winning the "Generation Wars"

## **Resources about Generational Differences in the Workplace**

Elliott-Yearly, Sherri. *Ties to Tattoos: Turning Generational Differences into a Competitive Advantage*. Dallas: Brown Books Publishing Group, 2009.

Krywulak, Tim and Martha Roberts. "Winning the "Generation Wars" - Making the Most of Generational Differences and Similarities in the Workplace." Conference Board of Canada. Nov. 2009.

The International Association of Business Communicators. "Survey of Generational Communication Differences Around the Globe." 14 Oct. 2008.

Penn Behavioural Health Organization. "Bridging the Generation Gap at Work." *Management Resources*. Web. 12 Mar.2011. <[http://www.pennbehavioralhealth.org/documents/bridging\\_the\\_generation\\_gap\\_at\\_work.pdf](http://www.pennbehavioralhealth.org/documents/bridging_the_generation_gap_at_work.pdf)>.

# Interview with Sherri Elliott-Yearly, Generational Guru



[Generationalguru.com](http://Generationalguru.com)  
[Geninsyght.com](http://Geninsyght.com)  
[Optimancestrategies.com](http://Optimancestrategies.com)

## Sherri Elliott-Yearly – Generational Guru

Sherri Elliott-Yearly is known as the Generational Guru because of her expertise in helping employees and employers bridge the generation gap to work more productively and achieve a competitive advantage in the marketplace. As a Senior Human Resources Professional with over fifteen years of experience, Sherri has seen her share of on the job squabbles. She's learned from experience what works and what doesn't in an era where four distinctly different generations must all work together and get along.

Sherri specializes in helping supervisors understand Millennials (a.k.a. Generation Y). Millennials are rapidly becoming an important part of the workforce, but because they are so different than previous generations, conflict frequently occurs.

Sherri was born in Kingston, Ontario, Canada and relocated to Dallas, Texas where she now resides with husband Dr. Mason Yearly and three Millennial daughters!

**D@W** - In what way is categorizing people on the basis of their age group helpful to managing workplaces? Don't we run the risk of stereotyping when we try to fit everyone into a category?

**SY** - In my opinion and based on my research I believe each generation can identify with their Generational DNA, based on the year they were born and shared significant life events, such as war, economy, birth order etc. We also have what I call our "Generational DNA" which allows each of us to decide the generation we feel most connected to. For instance I am a Gen X based on my age – 42 years old BUT I act more like a Baby Boomer due to being the first born child of three younger siblings and graduating high school at the age of sixteen and starting college.

The generational types are a means for understanding how and why each of the generations do what they do

and the best way to Attract, Retain and Motivate them in the workplace. It is the basis for our understanding of what makes each person unique not as a stereotype.

**D@W** - How do you know when a conflict in the workplace is generational rather than cultural, or gender or personality-based?

**SY** - When I assist clients with hiring a new workforce we need first look at the type of role, organizational culture and current age demographics for the department such as WinStar World Casino. We were charged with the responsibility of hiring 1,900 people to work at a Casino where the local population was 478 in Oklahoma City. In order to attract and retain top talent that could get along in the workplace and SHOW up we marketed each role to different generational ages. For instance, housekeepers were needed for all operations and many seniors aka. Traditionalists still want or

need to work and make a contribution so we focused on that population. For security we focused on the Millennial and Gen X Generations because they enjoyed the physical and 24/7 work environment.

When you hire team mates that understand and support each other with a common interest employers will experience less generational misunderstandings than previously.

One of my favourite mentoring programs is to assist out of work candidates prepare for interviews with each of the 4 different generations. As I explain to the Millennial group you cannot Text Your Way Through a Job Interview, they MUST learn face to face communication and put down the phone and turn it off and have a real conversation and sell themselves.

*(Continued on page 8)*

**D@W** - Have you noticed whether these generational differences have been found cross culturally?

**SY** - There are a lot more generational issues in the more affluent countries, US, Canada, Europe but technology is everywhere and that is the greatest difference for the four generations. If we need our TV or DVD player fixed, who do we call? Our kids, the advancement of instant all access technology with iPhone, I pad, WIFI and Social Media has provided the youngest generation the ability to access instant information worldwide.

**D@W** - Why do you think Generation X'ers are so misunderstood?

**SY** - As a Gen X'er myself, I believe it is because we are called the "sandwich" generation. There is approx.. 78 million Baby Boomers and 76 Million Millennials (Gen Y) and only 48 Million Gen X. As the economy improves and the Traditionalists can afford to retire, Boomers will be searching for their second half of their life and want to have a better Life/Work balance which leaves Gen X'ers holding the responsibility of the workforce of the future without any knowledge workers.

Gen X'ers are typically very independent as they are known as the Latch Key kids, most of them watched their parents lose money in the stock market, laid off and divorced with no one home at the end of the day so they learned to be more creative.

Gen X'ers are interested in building their future their way with little trust in the Corporate world that laid off

their parents and family members and did not take care of them because there is no REAL job security so they will make their own. This generation does this by building a Lattice type of career that is widespread versus the Corporate Ladder the Boomers aspired to climb. They will build their skill set with many areas of interest and expertise so they do not get pigeon holed into one career. This allows them to pick and choose what they want to do for work and WHO they want to work with either as a business owner or employee.

**D@W** - If you were to encounter an employer who was biased against hiring Generation Y'ers, how would you convince them that Generation Y'ers have many redeeming qualities that are needed for a productive modern workplace?

**SY** - I call this Generation – Millennials because there is a lot of negative statements associated with Gen Y....Why Why Why? This generation appears to ask a lot of questions BUT it is not a sign of disrespect, it is because they were allowed to do it with their parents and this is how they learn and in their opinion add value. Millennials are our future generation of leaders and with their vast knowledge of technology and willingness to learn, I believe that is each of our corporate and community responsibility to mentor them to be successful. Millennials are able to multi task and get more done within less amounts of time if they are provided the training and constant feedback they have been raised to expect. On

average in the US a Millennial will leave their job 10.2 times before they are 35 years old. An employer is lucky to keep this generation in a role for 8 to 12 months without them getting bored and needing a new challenge or project. The answer is keep feeding their interest and provide on the job training to feed their curiosity and interest to learn so you can be the Employer of the Future.

**D@W** - Do you have any suggestions for resources that employers can obtain to enhance their knowledge of the role of generational differences in the workplace?

**SY** - Purchase a book on the four generations and study their differences and values such as my book **Ties to Tattoos** and others that can be found on Amazon. Research websites and online materials for free instant up to date information and blogs. My websites contain articles I have written for several publications such as SHRM, HR Executive, Talent Magazine and TV appearances. My websites are [www.generationalguru.com](http://www.generationalguru.com) and [www.geninsyght.com](http://www.geninsyght.com) I recommend employers start using social media channels such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn as recruiting tools and avenues to communicate with their connected generations.



## Ask the Elocution Instructor



### Dear Elocution Instructor:

I am an accountant. I've worked very hard since arriving here about 15 years ago. Spanish is my first language and it seems that no matter how much I try, my accent is something I just can't seem to get rid of. My accent makes me feel like an outsider. Worst is when others feel free to comment on it. I think sometimes it's preventing me from advancing in my field. Do you have any suggestions?

Signed:  
No Matter How Much I Try

This is a rather intriguing entry, thank you for bringing it to our attention. There are several issues at work here: Sound production – accent; Perception – feeling like an outsider; Social commentary – fear of becoming an anecdote.

In relative terms, the Spanish-speaking community is one of the most recent

communities to emerge in this country. In the generational process, speaking about the immigrant experience of those very first arrivals is a voice that is still very strongly felt.

It's not surprising that your awareness as to how you sound in English is giving you such distress. In previous issues, I've commented on the importance of voice. How voice is a determinant that establishes, among other things: education, age, mood, gender, attitude and/or fluency of language – all components that impact upon personality. Confronted with the challenges of expressing ourselves in another language in a new culture can be a very unsettling experience. So, too, is the altered perception of who we are as individuals – our personality, as it is brought into question.

Feeling like an outsider is a common observation made by New Canadians. It bears to mention that the process of assimilation, of integrations is lengthy. But it's important to keep in check our perceptions on how we are being viewed by others. In cities like Toronto, where six out of every ten individuals were born outside of the country, it may be the absence of an accent that is the cause for alarm.

Nevertheless, it's very important that, in viewing ourselves, we see ourselves clearly: Own your accent. An accent is another attribute that can establish personality. And remember that everyone has an accent. In this case, you might not get a job promotion on the basis of it, but it can become an asset in your overall presentation package – make good use of it.

If people have commented on how you sound in English, have you thought about the fact that you've made an impression upon them? Canadians, as a general cultural note, are not as forward in their approach as to put you on the spot. Perhaps, it might be that you've inspired enough confidence for them to bring it up in conversation. Think about it.

Within the spectrum of an accent there are sound components that can be modified as to have a greater impact upon the presentation of your spoken English skills. Here are two timely suggestions to consider:

*Seek the services and advice of a well-trained pronunciation instructor – A good instructor will help to resolve the uncertainty and explain the process.*

*(Continued on page 10)*

In terms of technique, one of the greatest challenges for students of English is their desire to want to pronounce every word correctly. In English, this is not possible. The linguistic tradition of English places it within the group of time-stressed languages, unlike Spanish which is a syllabic language. This is to say that:

*Correct pronunciation in English comes from stressing the right words (content words) while gliding over the*

*others (non-stressed or function words).*

*Content words have semantic meaning (nouns, verbs, adjective, adverbs...), whereas function words help to keep the structure of a sentence together – a type of "glue" (articles, prepositions, conjunctions...)*

Here is a brief exercise:

•*Write down the same sentence twice. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence underline the content words*

•*Read the 1<sup>st</sup> sentence. Now read the 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence placing a stress on each content word (You'll find the reading of the 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence to be quicker and better sounding).*

Practice this exercise and listen to native speakers on how they stress certain words – you'll be surprised how your pronunciation improves.

**Elocution Teacher**  
**Alfredo Garcia**

## Ask the Consultant

### Dear Ask the Diversity Consultant:

I am a male working as a bank teller. I work alongside several other women and we do the same job. We have noticed lately that there are some men from a particular country who have indicated that they do not want to be served by women. So, I jump in and tell them that I would be happy to help them. Am I doing the right thing? After all, aren't we in Canada and shouldn't people just get used to dealing with women even if it isn't in their culture? I am really confused and I sense that I am probably getting my female co-workers upset.

Kris, Vancouver, British Columbia

Dear Kris:

Thank you for your question. This issue has come up a lot in my consulting and training sessions. What do you do when you are faced with men from a culture who do not want to be served by a woman? How do you continue to deliver excellent customer service but also be respectful to your female co-workers?

When I have posed the question to my clients, "What would you do if a client or a member of the public came into your organization and told you that they did not want to be served by someone who was Black? Or Asian? Or Jewish?" Almost unanimously they acknowledged that this is a racist request, and told me that they would let the client know that they cannot choose the race of the person who is

going to serve them. Disturbingly, however, when we are confronted with the issue of sex, it seems that there is more tolerance for sexism. The impact is the same in my opinion. The client does not want you to serve them based on genetic differences.

In the case that you have described, I would not be so quick to assist in the manner that you described. I would find a male manager and have them speak to the male clients. I would find out why they are uncomfortable with dealing with the female employees. I would thank them for their business, and let them know that they cannot guarantee that there will always be a male to serve them.

*(Continued on page 11)*

I would ask the male manager to let these clients know that the female employees are as fully qualified to do the job that the male has been doing, and tell them about the number of years of experience they have and so forth. The idea is that the male clients will see that a senior male manager is endorsing his female staff and that should have some credibility. Looking ahead, your bank might also want to do some public education in the community. You don't want to alienate the community because they are your customers, but perhaps you can learn what their concerns are and meet with them for the benefit of mutual education.

In my travels, I have seen for instance several incidents where only males did the job of a bank teller. This is because the job was considered far too important to be given to women. It could be that these men may have the same experience. Perhaps they think that the women do not have the same level of responsibility as the male teller? It is hard to say.

Change can be hard to come by, especially if you are coming from a culture where women don't work outside the home, or by speaking to a person of the opposite sex could be considered as adulterous or immodest. Nevertheless, part of the integration process is to learn how to navigate through daily life the way Canadians do.



By making these accommodations it does not help with New Canadians' understanding how things work here and will only lead them to frustration if they see some people accommodating them and others who do not. Of course there are always exceptions to everything, and one of them is related to health care. Where issues of modesty might interfere with a man or woman obtaining proper health care services, every effort should be made

to provide them with a healthcare provider of the same sex. After all, in our culture some people do prefer the services of a health care provider of the same sex.

*We cannot reverse all of the accomplishments that we have had in the women's movement just to be culturally sensitive to someone else.*

By doing so, we are being culturally insensitive to Canadians and taking women back to a place that they don't want to be in. Think of it this way: sexism is racism against 52% of the world's population. It should not be taken any lighter than racism or homophobia. The reality is, is that sexism affects a larger population of the world than any other "isms".

You may want to discuss your intentions with your female co-workers and reassure them that you do have confidence in their work and that you are going to talk to the manager about how you can resolve this.

### **The Diversity Consultant**

## **We Want to Hear From You**

*Would you to submit a question for our columnists?*

*Do you have any feedback or suggestions for future issues?*

*Please e-mail us at*

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