

**STRATEGIC HR EXECUTOR: RETAINING “GENERATION Y”
EMPLOYEE IN MULTI-NATIONAL COMPANY IN THAILAND**



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ABSTRACT

It is generally that Generation Y employee is not easy to deal with in order to retain. As an HR executor nowadays, needs to understand motivation factors, learning and development and engagement. In this thematic paper, I develop qualitative and quantitative questionnaire and interview questions of motivation factors and engagement. I express argument against literature and present the fact from Generation Y participants. Moreover, I show an example of participant attitude toward job. Thus, the result is interesting and beyond my expectation. The results imply that employee motivation is not come from one work aspect but personal needs is more essential.

KEY WORDS: Generation Y / Motivation / Learning & Development / Engagement / Retention

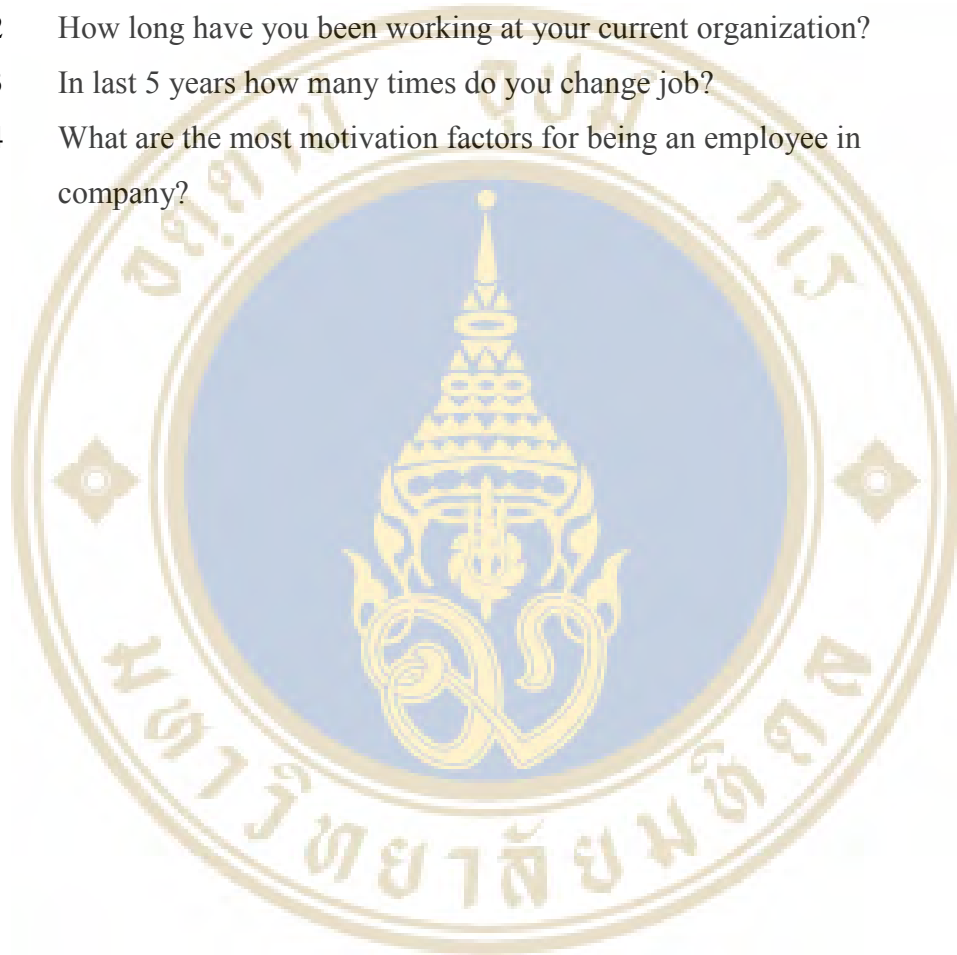
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CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
LIST OF TABLES	v
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW	3
CHAPTER III METHODOLOGY	6
CHAPTER IV FINDING	7
CHAPTER V RECOMMENDATION	14
CHAPTER VI CONCLUSION	16
REFERENCES	17
APPENDICES	18
Appendix A: Work Motivation Factors of Generation Y Employee	19
Appendix B: Interview Questions	21
BIOGRAPHY	22

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
4.1	How long were you working in your previous job?	8
4.2	How long have you been working at your current organization?	8
4.3	In last 5 years how many times do you change job?	9
4.4	What are the most motivation factors for being an employee in company?	9



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In business competition nowadays, everything seem to be fast changing. Most organizations aim to be high performance organization and maximize profitability. Previously organization predictable what market would be and now it is possible to unpredictable. Customer not ever end requirements and demand for best service and product quality. Eventually traditional organization needs to response change quickly. Modern organization also need to accept and adapt to change faster than past.

This is shows that company need to shift the way they did or improve process to get more productivity. What is the key success factors for them? Do they need to value their people more than the past? Considering if they are lacking of competence employee how they will success? Workforce planning is the key element to achieve HR strategy which support business objectives.

In the meantime strategic HR is becomes more significant in order to support and drive organization for sustainability. How HR executive create strategy and make it align to corporate objectives? Today it seems that Generation Y employees are going to be the most proportion in organization difficult to deal with. Retain Generation Y employee is essential strategy to enhance corporate performance in long term perspective.

Despite, difficulty of coping with Generation Y employee that is another challenge of HR executive. There is something interesting inside Generation Y. What is the contribution Generation Y deliver to company? How potential they are to be successor? These would be positive sides for organization that they are looking for. Consequently do organization has sufficient information to consider the benefit of having Generation Y in workplace?

Nevertheless, there are many questions among HR executive what would be the best solution to manage Generation Y to be happiness and engage with

organization? What is exact definition of Generation Y? How can we retain them to stay with company longer than 1-2 years? How can we motivate them to enhance productivity? What organization's benefit they are looking for? How do we develop them to be successor?



CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Retaining Generation Y employee is HR executive strategy related to many HR aspects. Contrasting between Generation Y and X becomes conflict among workplace nowadays. How organization reduce generation conflict for better result? In this paper I will focus on Generation Y requirement: motivation, learning and development, employee engagement.

Generation Y definition: as we know that in the next few years gen Y will be the most proportion workforce. What is organization and employee perception of Generation Y? What does Generation Y look like? How many issues of Generation Y in organization? What is method to deal with organization conflict for effective collaboration among employee?

Begin with, overview understanding of Generation Y. They are various researcher mentioned. It all about age range, stereotype and attitude. Gen Y is people who was born during 1980 – 1995. They grow up with digital, technology, internet and online media. They also confident and love to balance their work. (PwC, University of Southern California, London Business School).

Generation Y (or Millennial) (Nattavut Kulnides)

Attributes	Description
Definition	Traditional with a modern twist (most educated and most cared for)
Born	1981 - 2000
Work Path	Pre-k, high school, college, grad school, work delay, multiple jobs, multiple companies, multiple careers
At Work	Meaningful, group oriented, access required, digitally available
Motivations	You'll work with very diverse, bright, highly motivated people, your manager...think of her as your mentor, you can be part of a group making a change
Interesting Facts	Today's kids cost their parents about twice as much as they cost their own parents Two out of five 'would feel anxious, like part of me was missing' if they couldn't constantly check their smartphones, friend = family

Motivation: what is the key performance driver? Is it only motivation?

Understanding employee requirements and motivation (Hiam.A, 1999) help identify the basic of employee general requirement and spotlight on Generation Y's requirements such as security, commitment, respect, fairness, and development opportunities.

The principles explain deeply and provide example easy to understand. Studying employee motivation factors might be an element for HR executive to approach Generation Y employee effectively. It also help company improve capabilities to compete in market. Organization potentiality is how they utilize employee competencies and resources properly.

“Any time you make people feel better about themselves, you are building strong motivation.”

--Rebecca Boyle, Empire of America Federal Savings Bank

Learning and Development: what would be suitable time to promote talent employee. Firstly identify how to enhance Generation Y performance by use “A Hierarchy of Performance Variables” (P. Harmon, 1984) as a strategies to coping with. There are Individual Competencies, Knowledge, Individual Attitudes &

Qualifications, Feedback & Consequence, Tools, Resources, & Work Environment, Priorities, Standards & Procedure, Management, and Organization Structure & Goals. Select strategy depends on business direction also need to align them together.

Employee Engagement: recently employee engagement becomes an organization issue because they know that company performance management need to improve in terms of engagement. Most of them are trying to hire consultant to do survey employee feedback and analyze for recommendation and solution. This paper will mention to engagement in some aspect of research model: rewards and organization support (Dr. Padmakumar Ram, Dr. Gantasala V. Prabhakar)



CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

To start with designing questionnaire to get primary data consist of qualitative and quantitative information for the objective of understanding what Generation Y needs. Regularly, I need to know general demographic information such as age and gender to define group of people I want to emphasize on. Besides, questionnaire is point out to their motivation factor and the length of work in existing and past company as well.

Later, specific target group “young executive or people who work in multinational company in Thailand in any filed”. This help identify people according to the topic.

Furthermore telephone interview is way to gather information in terms of perspective and attitude. I make appointment with multinational company employees to call them after work hour. Interview questions are similar to survey questionnaire but design as open-end questions to let them explain what they think. After that, asking for attitude toward their work and elaborate more why they think it is important. I need to know what they want indeed.

However I expected to get specific information and some facts that HR executive and organization never know.

CHAPTER IV

FINDING

Discussion of Findings

Basic Data (Survey)

As I expected to reach 20 people as a group sample. I got total of 23 feedbacks. Most of them are female 9 people or 87% and 3 or 13% are males. There are 5 or 22% in the age between 22- 26 years old, 12 or 52% are between 27-31 years old and 6 or 26% are 31 years old and above.

Next, education background 12 or 52% graduated Bachelor while 11 or 48% graduated Master. Later, the current company industry; 6 or 26% work in Service Professional, 5 or 22 work in Retailing, 3 or 13% work in Manufacturing while 2 or 9% work in Petrochemical and Energy, Finance/Banking and Technology field, and lastly 1 or 4% work in Automotive, Real Estate and Entertainment

Beside, 6 or 25% like to use the Internet/Social Network when they have free time, 10 or 16% like to reading books, 9 or 14% love shopping, 8 or 13% like to watch movie, while 7 or 11% like to do personal development (e.g. learning) and play sports then remains 3 or 5% love technology and do others.

Basic Data (Interview)

Firstly, I called 5 people for an interview. There are one male and four females. 2 of them graduated degree of Master and 3 graduated Bachelor. They all work in multi-national company; Wall Street English, K Bank, Fitness First, KTC credit card and ExxonMobil. They are in the age of 25 – 31 years. They are work in Marketing, HR, Reception and Finance

Main Data (Survey)

After some time, I am surprise with questionnaire summary because most of them working less than one year in previous job. It implied that they are not engage to company at all. By the way, organization may did not do something to motivate them
enough.

Following are outcome:

Table 4.1: How long were you working in your previous job?

	Survey	
	Total	%
≤ 1 yr.	8	35
2 yrs.	4	17
3 yrs.	2	9
4 yrs.	0	0
5 ≥ yrs.	4	17
Others	5	22

Table 4.2: How long have you been working at your current organization?

	Survey	
	Total	%
≤ 1 yr.	7	30
2 yrs.	0	0
3 yrs.	5	22
4 yrs.	2	9
5 ≥ yrs.	7	30
Others	2	9

Table 4.3: In last 5 years how many time do you change job?

	Survey	
	Total	%
≤ 1 time	8	33
2 times	2	8
3 times	3	13
4 times	2	8
5 ≥ times	0	0
Never	9	38
Others	0	0

Table 4.4: What is the most motivation factors for being an employee in company?

	Total	%
Learning & Development Opportunity	10	21
Compensation & Benefit	8	17
Flexibility (Mobile work, Time Attendance)	6	13
Time Management (Work Life Balance)	9	19
Being Talent Employee	3	6
Fairness	4	9
Promotion / Recognition	6	13
Others	1	2

Motivation

Referring the result of figure 4 shows that the most motivation factors is *learning and development* unlike being talent and fairness. It hints that employee Generation Y love to learn. They may need to develop themselves to be good and find what they like to do and make them happy.

Meanwhile, these employee also need to balance their work and live as I see time management is next to. We could not deny that nowadays business competition is more thoughtful than last ten years. Customer has more demanding while company need to survive and being leader. Employee has work load and need to have multi-tasking skill to get the job done faster. Ensure that Generation Y don not want to back home late they have to do job finish day by day.

By the way, information from interview is relate to what I got from survey. They show motivation factors against work are Flexibility, Compensation, Recognition, Learning & Development, Promotion and Work-Life Balance. In fact, they are not consider only one factor there are other factors influence them decide to apply the job

Workplace environment such as colleague, infrastructure, system are relevant factors. They persuade them to continue work or leave job. Most of them are happy with colleagues and system. Some are unhappy with boss.

Surprisingly, unexpected outcome is performance management because they mention that the system is good but the bad thing is people who grading them. They are bias when rating at the year end. They think about personal relation if you are my subordinate and I also like you then you get A or good rating. Some said that company measure performance by KPI. Regarding KPI, on work process boss will approve project depend on who they like so meaning that if you want to achieve KPI you should make he/she like you for project approval.

However, result above confirm what author and I want to say in this paper. Motivation factor of employee can explore into 6 categories (Alexander Hiam);

1. Open Communication – I think it is the first thing organization needs to do because it is most impact to every work process as communication as a key of successful. Open communication is how to make employee understand business direction clearly. Company should not make employee have doubt

2. then productivity decrease and become organization issue. From interview some feel that company is not clear with his/her role and responsibility. Communication is not the same from what their have talked on orientation day. Once employee doubt they will looking for a new job!
3. Security – this issue always raise up in employee’s thought such as economic down size, disaster, financial etc. I realize from an interview employee could feel unsecure because of their boss. Yet today boss love you and what if for tomorrow it prove that employee is not thinking of money as first priority. It is not easy for HR executive to deal with this factor.
4. Commitment – in fast changing today everything needs to adapt and move on faster than past. As same as company cannot go slowly there by employee have to serve demand of customer, manager who often change. Sometimes manger forget what is the top priority they have to sooner. This effect to demotivate employee who work with. One interviewer present that she put a lot effort to make job done as manger need she so tried then it make her rethink how long she can live with this pressure because manger always demanding. May be she is not match with manger who crazy job work 24 hours a day. Boss expect employee commitment to make job done on time. He does not know he is killing his subordinate indirect.
5. Fairness – it is a big issue from interview session 3 interviewer complain to performance management process of the old company. They explain that there is bias on performance management process even company has system support. Manager has bias as they are person who rating on performance review. Bias comes from how good and long relationship between manager and employee. This proves that fairness is critical factor for leaving company.
6. Respect – this may happen in traditional organization but still some in multi-national company. Employee want organization and colleague respect their ideas and work. I got information support from one interviewer he mention that his boss does not value in people he value only financial result. I am not surprise why in past few years this company replaced 5 HR Directors according to interviewer mentioned during an interview.

7. Development Opportunity – from survey and interview information Generation Y do not like routine job they need to enhance working skill. They are looking for an opportunity to develop themselves. I will explain more in leaning and development part.

Engagement

The result of figure 1 is interesting. As I see most of responses are work in previous company shortly. It is lower than one year and possible to be less than 5 months. They show that employee in Generation Y do not engage with organization much. The result confirm that Generation Y has low engagement with organization.

In the other hand they impatient lower than generation x. It makes generation x doubt and compare with their age. Sometimes it could be conflict among employee in organization. This would be management concerned how to escalate engagement index with Generation Y employee.

Typically figure 3 explain about the period of time in last 5 years. It seems junior employee usually change job during 5 years. I would wondering how company retain Generation Y employee to stay with organization more than 5 years or as long they can be employee.

At first of interview it seems they are engage with company because 3 of them work in the company at least 5 year before they leave. On the other hand I feel there have no interviewers are engage with organization because they plan to leave. In reality we could not deny that there are many factors affect to employee decision making. They are detail in work industry, family and education background. Additionally, it depends on what is they desire for future.

Moreover, one interviewer mentioned that she does not satisfy with her job. She give reason that her everyday work is unlike the day she applied in this position. She think she work over an agreement discussion earlier. This information confirm that job satisfaction is a factor of employee engagement.

Whether they are in multi-national company with lots competitive advantage they are going to leave. As long as they are not engage as HR executive how can they help company maintain market position and sustainability? This confirm that it should be generation condition.

Learning and Development

According to motivation factors from figure 4 confirm that Generation Y employee like to learn so it is not hard to encourage them to develop competencies and attitude. It would be advantage to company to develop succession plan strategy for competitiveness. The fact is in next 3-5 years Generation Y will be the most employee proportion in the world. They will become management and it would be great if company provide learning and development to motivate them to increase performance and productivity.

Supporting information from survey, interviewer give reason suppose they are going to leave. They needs something new and challenge not only routine. They think about learn new thing to develop themselves. Current company is nothing help them growth in terms of brain development. This confirm my objective to do this paper



CHAPTER V

RECOMMENDATION

For the past few weeks I work out on mini research focus on motivation factor of Generation Y to find out the best solution to keep employee stay with company longer. Therefore I would like to recommend framework how to retain Generation Y employee to HR executive and company to as below:

Stage 1 – Asking employee

Defining what Generation Y employee want. HR executive need to know specific need from this group employee. The more you dig down into their certain need achievement is closer. Starting with focus group interview, create question lead to positive attitude and expectation again current work. Build interview atmosphere as informal and relax. Ensure that you obtain essential information. Then confirm your understanding toward their attitude and desire.

Stage 2 – Create challenge as usual

After you know exact expectation, create project assignment challenge their capability. Provide resources and support as possible to secure project will run smoothly. Establish measurement criteria to evaluate project achievement and tided with performance appraisal for promotion. Encourage them to present their performance extremely. Learning and development is another issue management should concern. Assigned project to Generation Y employee but not support for development would reflect to negative mindset and complain.

Stage 3 – Communication is a key

From the start to finish the project communication is a key success factor. HR need to communicate with clear objective, expectation even measurement criteria. Generation Y needs everything clear at the beginning if you make them doubt during the project it will damage trust and demotivate.

Stage 4 – Relationship is important

As you know that Generation Y love social and community. It imply that they enjoy building relationship among people. Make sure you do much enough building rapport with employee. HR need to build trust with this group of people.

Stage 5 – Regular recognition

Generally, Generation Y is like to be successful. Once they success they need to be a star. They want people recognize what they did. As HR professional, you need to create organization culture and encourage employee to recognize when person success or behave well.



CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Nowadays many organization has a problem with lacking of workforce to contribute productivity different with business is growing faster. Demanding is higher but have no employee to serve need. Stealing employee from competitor is easiest way to have people who ready to work.

Retaining Generation Y employee in multi-national company is an HR challenge. In the next few year, Generation Y will become most management population in the world. Getting ready to create strategy to deal with upcoming situation would be advantage for organization.

Consequently, there are many hidden information that we never know if we do not ask and open minded.



APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Work Motivation Factors of Generation Y Employees Survey

1. Gender: Male Female
2. Age: ≤ 21 22 – 26 27 – 31 $31 \geq$
3. Education: Bachelor Master Ph.D.
4. What you like to do when you have free time?
 - Technology Sports
 - Watching Movie Reading Books
 - Shopping Personal Development (Learning)
 - Internet/Social Networks Travelling
 - Others (please specify)
5. What is your current company industry?
 - Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) Retailing
 - Pharmaceutical
 - Technology
 - Petrochemical and Energy
 - Automotive
 - Manufacturing
 - Real Estate
 - Finance/Banking
 - Entertainment
 - Others (please specify)
6. How long were you working in your previous job?
 - ≤ 1 yr. 2 yrs. 3 yrs. 4 yrs. $5 \geq$ yrs.
7. How long have you been working at your current organization?
 - ≤ 1 yr. 2 yrs. 3 yrs. 4 yrs. $5 \geq$ yrs.

8. In last 5 years how many time do you change job?

≤ 1 time 2 times 3 times 4 times $5 \geq$ times Never

9. What is the most motivation factors for being an employee in company?

Learning & Development Opportunity Promotion / Recognition

Compensation & Benefit Fairness

Time Management (Work Life Balance) Being Talent Employee

Flexibility (Mobile work, Time Attendance) Others (please specify)



APPENDIX B: Interview Questions

1. Gender
2. Age
3. Education
4. How long have you been working at your current organization?
5. Why do you consider to work with current company?
6. What is your expectation from the company?
7. What factor drive you work happier?
8. How long were you working in your previous job?
9. What made you resign from previous job?
10. In last 5 years how many time do you change job?



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