

Running head: THE FUTURE OF MANAGEMENT IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

The Future of Management in Public Administration

by

Liza M. Donabauer

Project Committee:

Sponsor: Robert J. Hartl

Reader: Joanne Smith

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Abstract

This project examined how public sector organizations can better utilize employee age cohorts now in the workplace, mitigate consequences associated with the exodus of retiring Baby Boomers, and effectively manage the transition to younger workers who have considerably less public sector experience. It reviewed literature drawn from three areas: 1) research that differentiates the generational groups and how the differences influence leadership and management tendencies, 2) resources that highlight the experiential gaps between those retiring from the workforce and those entering it, and 3) empirical research and journal articles that suggest how the public sector can best prepare young workers for future leadership roles. The paper concludes by recommending strategies for attracting and retaining younger workers, developing higher levels of emotional intelligence among current managers, and providing training and development that will increase reliance on the principles of transformational leadership.

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The Future of Management in Public Administration

By 2030, one in five Americans will be over 65 and by 2025, 75% of the workforce will be millennials (Ubl, 2015b). Notably, through 2018, a large group of devoted and long-term employees in the public sector is planning to retire, and 2.3 million replacement workers will be needed in government and public education services (Carnevale, Smith, & Strohl, 2010).

Because the Baby Boomer generation is exiting the workforce, county and city governments are looking to the private sector to fill positions including hiring chief executive officers (CEO) from businesses or engineers from for-profit firms to fill high ranking management level positions (Jacobson, 2010). Although these private sector leaders may have considerable experience, it likely is not in public administration experience or with the appropriate type of education.

Therefore, the transition away from Baby Boomers who had long careers in the public sector to a younger group of leaders without public sector experience will present some unique challenges.

Shafritz and Hyde (2008) discussed Woodrow Wilson's vision for public management, which was essentially a bureaucratic approach where a general manager was hired or appointed to direct and organize the planning, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting, and budgeting of an entire organization; that model is still the status quo. Given the exodus of Baby Boomers, there will be a need for a younger generation of employees who have both working experience and the appropriate type of education to fill the management gap in city and county governments. A report by Georgetown's Center on Education and the Workforce (CEW) indicates there is a shortage of post-secondary level educated employees to replace the experienced and retiring public sector employees (Georgetown University, 2013). An earlier Georgetown University study (Carnevale et al., 2010) predicted how the public sector will experience the greatest intensity and need for bachelor and graduate-level educated workers in the immediate future.

This project will attempt to show how public sector organizations can better utilize the three generations currently in the workplace, mitigate the exodus of Baby Boomers, and effectively manage the transition process. It will examine how the face of the public sector will change with the departure of older workers and the influx of younger ones, particularly in top leadership positions. Because public institutions often operate under legislative controls that hinder flexibility, creativity, and responsiveness in ways not experienced in the private sector, this project also will seek to identify strategies that can be used to attract and retain the younger workers who will be critical to the future of local units of government.

Definition of Terms

Bureaucratic. A formal process of management typically formed by an authoritative hierarchical structure, inflexible rules and procedures, and task focus (Shafritz & Hyde, 2008).

Boomer. A generation of employees that were born between 1946-1964, - also referred to as Baby Boomers - (Jacobson, 2010).

Emotional intelligence (EI). An emotionally intelligent leader applies a balance of four attributes that affects self and others: self-awareness, self-management, other awareness (empathy) and relationship management (Emelander, 2013) by acting purposefully, rationally and effectively within their environment (Webb, 2009).

Gen Xer. Generation of public sector employees born between 1965-1979.

Millennial. Generation of workers born between 1980-1999 also known as Gen Y, Digital Natives, and Generation Me (Ng, Lyons, & Schweitzer, 2012).

Public Sector. Used in this paper to refer to all levels of municipal government.

Traditionalist. Generation of workers born between 1922-1945.

This paper begins with a review of literature that explores three primary areas. First, it examines research about the characteristics that differentiate the generational groups, and how any such differences may influence tendencies about how to lead and manage. Next, it will review articles and other resources that highlight the primary experiential gaps between those retiring from the workforce and those entering it; this comparison will illustrate the challenges that the public sector will need to successfully bridge the gap. Finally, journals and empirical research about recruiting will be analyzed to determine how the public sector can best go about recruiting and preparing young leaders for the future.

Based on the information that emerges from the literature, the paper will end with an analysis and recommendations for what the public sector must do to attract and retain its next generation of public sector leaders. It also will suggest tactics that can be used to smooth some of the challenges that have already emerged, and those that will emerge in the future. The generations must be able to work together because their leadership preferences will overlap during the Boomer exodus and transition time.

Review of the Literature

Demographics of Today's Workforce

Ten thousand Baby Boomers turn 65 every day, although 65% of Boomers plan to work past retirement age (Uhl, 2015b). Up to 30% of public sector employees have delayed their retirement (Reichenberg, 2015). Jacobson (2010) reasoned that with the recent economic downturn, there has been a loss of confidence in retirement resources and rising healthcare costs. It is well that not all Boomers are retiring when they can, because the pool of Gen Xers is a much smaller group; in other words, Generation X by itself has a shortage of replacement workers (Lancaster & Stillman, 2005). This means that even younger workers with less experience than the Xers will be needed to fill all of the eventual Baby Boomer vacancies.

A recent survey from International Public Management Association for Human Resources (IPMA-HR), revealed that four out of ten public sector organizations could lose up to 20% of their "talent management" to retirement in the next five years (Reichenberg, 2015) and by 2025, 75% of the workforce will consist of Millennials (Kerrigan, 2012). This transformation of the workforce will present challenges, some expected and some yet to be discovered. For example, at one time some researchers (Dunne, 1997; Green, 2007) believed that different generations exhibit different behaviors because their values were fundamentally different. Recent research has shown that there are actually few values differences across the generational cohorts. However, the values that do differ among younger workers are those that one might logically expect: diversity, the need for feedback, and career advancement opportunities (Mencel & Lester, 2014).

Because the number of employees in the local levels of the public sector has doubled since the 1970s, the aging workforce within the public sector will become a "trend that...[will]

have an...impact on the world of work” (Nigro & Kellough, 2013, p. 10). A 2012 study by the Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates that the public sector has some of the oldest employees than any other labor segment (Maciag, 2013). Nigro & Kellough (2013) predicts that this aging public sector trend will continue through 2018. Therefore, recruiting, training, and managing the blend of demographics within the public sector will be key to the success of personnel management.

Characteristics of the Generational Cohorts

Boomers. Two point three million replacement workers are now needed in government and public education services to fill the gap left by retiring Baby Boomers (Carnevale et al., 2010). Burk, Olsen, & Messerli (2011) explained that this hardworking generation of public sector employees came from an era when jobs were not plentiful and therefore places importance on job security and loyalty to an organization. The Boomers were active participants in evolving social change including human rights initiatives that addressed gender, sexual orientation, and race; and they experienced advancements in the space program, new genres of music and culture, and an undeclared war in a distant land (Ubl, 2015b). Although often stereotyped as technology inept, the truth is Boomers desire to be on the brink of new and changing technology (Ubl, 2015a). Raised by Traditionalist parents, this generation tends to be self-sacrificing, loyal, patriotic, fiscally conservative, competitive, and spirited; has faith in large institutions, and enjoys being a part of a group (Ubl, 2015b). Boomers desire appreciation of their hard work and contributions (Burk et al., 2011), and they feel respected when others give them their time and conversation (Ubl, 2015b).

Gen Xers. This smaller population group is sandwiched between the Boomers and Millennials. Representing the 35-50 year olds in 2015, Generation X is a smaller group totaling

52.9 million Americans (Fry, 2015). Their era experienced the 9/11 attacks, the explosion of the space shuttle “Challenger,” fall of the Berlin Wall, the end of Communism, increasing numbers of women in the workplace, tripling divorce rates in the U.S., and numerous advances in technology (Ubl, 2015b). The children of the Baby Boomers saw their parents laid-off from large corporations due to economic conditions (Dunne, 1997), which attributed members of this generational group to become fiercely independent, resourceful, and more requiring of a work-life balance than their older counterparts (Ubl, 2015b). Gen Xers resist being micro-managed and are attracted to opportunities that allow them flexibility and the ability to multi-task (Burk et al., 2011). Thought of as a generation that is overeducated and intensely private (Burk et al., 2011), this generation is often stereotyped as cynical, honest, and truth-seekers (Ubl, 2015a) who expect to work in an organization that demonstrates trust, integrity, and honesty (Axten, 2015). Ng et al. (2012) also found that Gen Xers are more interested than were Boomers in high-income jobs. Gen Xers have a higher self-esteem than cohorts did at their age, and hold high educational and work expectations for themselves (Ng et al., 2012).

Millennials. This populous group of younger generation, born between 1982-2000, has exceeded 80 million and represents over one-quarter of the nation’s population (Bureau, 2015). This means that one out of three American workers are 18-34 years of age in 2015 (Fry, 2015). According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2015), the population of this generation has exceeded the large population of 75.4 million Baby Boomers. By 2025, 75% of the workforce will be composed of Millennials who are tech-savvy and wish to work for organizations that are socially meaningful (Musgrave, 2014). This generation also was affected by the 9/11 attacks and a series of school shootings; they learned that the world can be scary (Ubl, 2015b). They lived in a world that was transformed by the 2008 presidential election of the first African-American President, a

significant economic collapse, and ongoing technological advances (Ubl, 2015b). This generation became accustomed to structure, quick changes, and being protected by parental figures and involved teachers (Axten, 2015).

Given their upbringing, this generation tends to choose where to work based on their perceived experience of the organization (e.g., workplace culture, rules, goals, socially meaningfulness); salary not being a high ranking decision making factor (Ubl, 2015b). Burk et al., (2011) supports this idea in stating that the Generation Y group wants to give back to society; therefore, flexibility within the workplace and opportunities to make a positive impact will far outweigh a higher wage.

Millennials sometimes have been stereotyped as being entitled (Ubl, 2015b) but they also have a clear desire for intrinsically interesting and socially rewarding work; they tend to switch jobs, careers, and employers more frequently than the Boomer generation did (Ng et al., 2012). Therefore, a variety in daily tasks is important for the younger generations. The younger generations tend to need praise, entertainment, and validation in their work world; this higher sense of self is sometimes viewed by Boomer managers and coworkers as narcissism (Ng et al., 2012).

Similarities among the generations. Recent literature demonstrates that the values of Millennials are more similar to the values of Boomers than they are different. Mencl and Lester (2014) suggest that supervisors who focus on the similarities of the generational cohorts, rather than the differences, will go a long way toward minimizing miscommunication, stereotyping, and workplace tension. Burk et al. (2011) cautions that although the generations share many of the same values and goals, these values and goals can be communicated quite differently, which can lead to conflict.

Mencel and Lester (2014) demonstrated that the three generations have more similarities than differences in seven out of ten workplace values. The generations placed similar value on teamwork, flexible schedules, work-life balance, challenging work, opportunities for training and development, being involved in decision making processes, and being financially rewarded for hard work. The differences were few, but were demonstrated in Millennials placing higher value on career advancement, diversity in the workplace, and requiring continuous feedback from their immediate supervisor.

No doubt that every generation wants to do great work and be rewarded for it (Ubl, 2015a). Generation Xers and Millennials are trying to work their way into higher roles, and Baby Boomers are looking for ways to contribute their knowledge after retirement (Poindexter, 2008). Members of the Boomer generation are open for opportunities to mentor or consult (Ubl, 2015b), and the incoming generations are looking for work in a collaborative workplace with access to leaders who will allow them to grow (Hilvert, Ibarra, Swindell, & Thoreson, 2015).

According to Deal (2014), all generations share the same expectations regarding what makes a leader a “good leader.” Research through the Center of Creative Leadership indicates that the Boomer, Gen X and Millennial generations want a leader who can effectively manage all generations. The common thread that defines whether a manager is capable of such a feat is found in those leaders who demonstrate participative consideration, enthusiasm, collaboration, and compassion (Deal, 2014). Axten (2015) discusses that all generations desire a leader who is able to provide a clear vision for the organization and is able to rally the troops to share in the execution of the vision.

History of Organizational Culture in the Public Sector

Gabris (2004) discussed how the former bureaucratic approach to public management has become stagnant because government organizations do not have outside competition and therefore, have little reason to reinvent its processes, provide better customer service, or cater to its changing and future workforce. Yet, there is a recognized need to attract a new workforce into the public sector. Posner and Schmidt (1994) administered a survey in 1992 asking why government workers would encourage young people to consider careers in all levels of government. The majority of the respondents were Traditionalists with an average of 25 years of experience in government. Their responses varied between idealist values and career assets such as job security, upward advancement, and interesting work. According to Posner and Schmidt, the responses resonated the following theme: public and civil service “needs our brightest and best young...people to make an impact on the difficult problems of our society” (p. 22, 1994). The responses also recognized that working in government provides job stability, interesting opportunities and advancement.

Sahfritz and Hyde (2008) discussed how Woodrow Wilson, the father of public administration, had a vision for how public management is viewed today. The bureaucratic approach was to appoint or elect a general manager to direct and organize an entire organization in planning, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting, and budgeting (Shafritz & Hyde, 2008). Management has traditionally been more formal in conducting business because of how it operates under a formal structure of legislative rules. The public sector interacts in multiple management functions via labor management relations, formal performance measures, financial management, and the enlistment of policies and procedures (Shafritz & Hyde, 2008). Utilizing hierarchy and traditional forms of power, management was a way to bring order and consistency

to manage behaviors, tasks, and people (C.K. Bowman, personal communication, February 17, 2011).

The unique economic and socioeconomic changes in each of the last three decades have impacted the attractiveness of working in the public sector. Jacobson (2010) validated that with the recent economic downturn, employees have lost confidence in retirement resources and rising healthcare costs. These factors will slow the immediacy of filling the Boomer positions, as these types of employees will hold on to their careers longer to continue working toward their retirement goals.

Certain changes in the last three decades have affected the attractiveness of working in the public sector for the younger generations (Posner & Schmidt, 1994). For example, during the Ronald Regan administration in the 1980s, public employee morale was declared to be at an all-time low; when surveyed, less than 25% of government employees would have recommended government work to the younger generations (Posner & Schmidt, 1994). In the 1990s, during the elder George Bush's presidency, the United States shifted from being the largest creditor nation to becoming the largest debtor nation, foreign competition soared, downsizing became the unwelcome trend for private sector employees, and the workforce became more diverse (Posner & Schmidt, 1994).

Experiential Gap between the Retiring and Entering Employees

Filling the experiential gap that exists between the long-term, skilled, and highly educated Baby Boomer leaders and the incoming, less-experienced Generation X and Y generations will have its challenges (Nigro & Kellough, 2013). As the Boomer managers slowly hand over the reins to younger co-workers, one of the biggest challenges in the next five to ten years will be how the outgoing managers facilitate the needs of the incoming generations. These

outgoing Boomer managers will need to find ways to bridge the knowledge gap and be innovative in their use of motivational techniques with the younger replacements (Husar Holmes, 2012).

Green (2007) has described the crux of this challenge as bringing in “postmodern employees into a non-flexible bureaucracy” (p. 22). The incoming younger generation have only entry to mid-level career skills but desire a workplace that allows creativity, and that provides feedback, and flexibility (Husar Holmes, 2012). Differences in work styles between the generations can lead to chaos and an unproductive workplace. Popescu and Rusco (2012) stated, “Diversity tends to create conflicts and tension, and in order for organizations to capitalize on the benefits of a diverse workforce, those conflicts must be actively managed in a culturally sensitive manner” (p. 236).

Bridging the gap. Current Baby Boomer leaders must learn how to recognize and manage an increasing blending of skills – both stronger and weaker - in the workplace, which reflects the infusion of younger workers into the workplace and the exodus of their generation. This will become increasingly important when younger public sector employees compare their work experiences and statuses with their peers in the private sector and decide which sector they prefer (Walker & Derrick, 2006). Hilvert et al. (2015) confirm this concern that serves to remind all levels of workforce leaders that government, as an employer, competes with many other sectors; therefore, a “business as usual” attitude will not attract the twenty-first century workforce of replacement leaders.

Providing opportunities that bring to light the differences between the interacting generations could bring about an understanding and recognition of generational differences within the workplace. In fact, Crump (2008) notes that addressing generational differences on

the front end is important. Younger employees should realize they need to earn the respect and trust of older workers; whereas, the older employees need to start developing their younger employees. This can be started through genuine dialogue (Denning, n.d.), which involves listening and one-on-one personal interaction (Scott, 2015). Millennials want to be heard, and in turn, senior leaders want to be asked for their opinions. One-on-one time, versus email directives and questions, allows for personal interaction, soliciting opinions and building respect for all parties involved. It is also a way to meld experience with new energy (Scott, 2015).

Most people recognize that the younger generations bring a new energy into the workforce. Yet, the older generation brings stability. Therefore, the challenge for whoever is in charge will be in managing the complexity of the varying demographics and coming to understand what attracts both age cohorts to the public sector (Ng et al., 2012). An effective leader will be one who can differentiate the characteristics of the groups, but also values their diversity (Popescu & Rusco, 2012).

Walker and Derrick (2006) noted that focusing on the commonality of the generations may help to bridge the gap. Each of the generations believe in the power of their work. They share the common goal of being good public servants. Thus, transformational leaders will focus on aligning these goals with the mission and vision of the organization and will focus on the core values of the public (Walker & Derrick, 2006).

Van Wart (2003) discussed how the range of skills necessary for leaders in public administration has grown through an “emphasis on leaders who can create change in deep structures, major processes, or overall culture” (p. 218). Instead of focusing on a transactional form of management, a contemporary leader must learn to distribute work to employees and focus more on providing training, motivation, and development. Walker & Derrick (2006)

promote management techniques such as allowing rotational job duties so that younger employees will be able to fill the void created when retirees exit the workforce. According to Axten (2015), Millennials need to know how their actions, or their jobs, fit into the vision of the organization. To the extent they do, they will demonstrate higher satisfaction, productivity, and effectiveness within the organization. An effective leader encourages employee self-development and input instead of focusing on work quantity and productivity levels; such a leader embraces employee development and empowerment, consultation meetings, training, and producing an environment that stimulates human feedback and growth (Schmid, 2006).

A shift in management style. In the early nineties, Posner and Schmidt (1994) asserted that managerial values have changed over the last several decades. Specifically, they reported the following themes that they believed would characterize managerial values in subsequent years: a greater emphasis on customer service, a greater importance on serving the public, a greater divide over the importance of home and personal life, and the need for an increased effort to recommend younger people work in government. However, challenges will continue for managers as they focus their efforts in administering to the changing values. Posner and Schmidt (1994) asserted that work conditions and the changing culture of the public organizations will play a role in how leaders within the public sector will recruit and retain a younger generation of educated and experienced employees.

The good news is that according to a survey, which was completed by Young Government Leaders (YGL), the younger generation has an optimistic vision of what government can do for the public and for their careers (Maltempo & Robinson, 2014). The same survey also indicated that the incoming generation chooses to work in the public sector because

it meets their needs to serve the common good. The respondents also felt that their work allowed them to be innovative.

The longevity of administrators in the public sector can lead to stagnant or unchanging management methodologies; long-term government servants can become uncomfortable with change. Malone (2015) ascertains that this is in part to a human necessity for predictability and acknowledgement of a past mastery of a skillset, confidence that comes with mastery, and one's growth in their organization and career. When a new employee moves into the organization, the long-term employees feel a level of challenge or threat in regard to the organizational behaviors and values that have long been established. However, according to Green (2007), this type of chaos can occur at all levels of employment in the public sector: appointed department heads, elected officials, newer and entry-level employees, and newly hired or promoted department heads.

Green (2007) discussed the "high risk" and relevant concern with how the public sector would be transformed as senior managers prepare to retire, making room for the younger generations to fill their shoes. His concern was that these groups of public workers may find there are differences between the traditional form of public sector management and a desire for transformational leadership. As shown in Table 1, there are distinct differences between the traditional management style and the transformational leadership style in the public sector.

Due to economic fluctuations and changes in the demographics of the workforce, a more contemporary style of leadership has evolved and will need to continue to evolve if the public sector wants to attract and retain qualified workers. Today's public sector now encompasses consultants, independent contractors, and a shift in employee demographics (Husar Holmes, 2012). Given this multi-sectoral workforce, "The range of skills necessary for leaders has

grown” (Van Wart, 2003, p. 215); transformational leadership takes into account the changes that have occurred within the organization, provides a vision for the employees, and reenergizes organizations that have slipped into complacency. Finding ways to improve former bureaucratic methodologies that frustrate workers can be a way to energize an organization (Hilvert et. al., 2015). Leaders who can find ways to reduce processes or steps in a process that add “no value” will be successful (Axten, 2015).

Table 1

Functions of Traditional and Transformational Styles

Bureaucratic/Traditional Management	Transformational Leadership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formalized chain of command • Division of labor; duties of employees and leaders are standardized and clearly defined • Fixed compensations • Work focused • Discharge of rules and duties without regard for person • Inflexible and slow to organizational culture changes • Influence primarily on legality of authority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspiring visionary • Demand for higher employee performance • High communications • Promote creative thinking • Trust building • Family focused • Anti-authoritative leadership • Aligned to organizational values • Enhances employee pride and confidence; enlists and enables others to act • Challenges processes • Recognizes individual contributions

Note. Adapted from Gabris (2004) and Green (2007).

Another key component of transformational leadership is the leader's emotional intelligence and his or her influence and impact on employee attitudes and performance (Green, 2007). A leader with emotional intelligence is one who is skilled in self-awareness, self-management, empathy and relationship building (Goleman, 2014). Management and relationships in the workforce are interdependent (Gouge, 2003). Self-aware managers are leaders who recognize the need to change their style and incorporate measures to match the leadership skills needed by the organization (Goleman, 1998). In the future, greater importance will be placed on building and supporting a multi-sector labor force (Husar Holmes, 2012); and according to Gouge (2003), this can be done by building a contemporary organization through vision, leadership, efficiency, and process.

Goleman (1998) studied qualities of great leaders and found that emotional intelligence was the one characteristic that set apart a leader from its counterparts. Parthasarathy (2009) discussed how a manager or individual can learn to better evaluate and respond to situations over time. Managers can learn (if they choose to do so) from past experiences and mistakes in order to make better decisions in the future. This growth and improvement is the quotient to maturing as an emotionally intelligent manager. Walker and Derrick (2006) suggest that one way an emotionally intelligent leader can ease the tensions between the long-time employees, who are used to merit-based promotions, versus younger employees, who expect ongoing promotional opportunities, are to create more project-centered work. According to Walker and Derrick, using project-based work assignments focuses attention on talent and bridges the gap between the different working styles and attitudes of employees. Project-based work best suits utilizing the enthusiasm of younger employees as well as the experience and knowledge of long-term

employees (2006). Further, it provides opportunities for younger employees to see results and to gain developmental opportunities (Walker & Derrick, 2006).

Workforce planning. The public sector is in the beginning stages of an age and experience crisis. The Boomer generation is soon to retire and, in their wake, a large gap of vacancies will need to be filled. IPMA-HR reported that four out of 10 public sector organizations could lose 20 percent or more of their employees to retirement within the next five years (Reichenberg, 2015). With a large percentage of people in executive management positions expected to retire within the next 5-10 years in the public sector, Jacobson (2010) described how government must compete with private and non-profit organizations for talented workers. Jacobson also argued for strategic human resource planning, or “workforce planning,” which she described as a process of aligning the “right people in the right places at the right times” (p. 354). Training and development will play a key role in getting young employees ready to perform the critical tasks when the time comes.

According to Young (2008), the administrative and managerial sectors within the public sector are likely the most important and the most difficult to replace. Because the managerial positions are highly skilled, a focus will be placed on finding employees who can be trained and promoted to fill these positions. This calls for more progressive human resource planning. However, workforce planning has been slow to develop in the public sector. In its survey results, IPMA found that only 27% of respondents started a workforce plan or some sort of planning to prepare for the major generational transformation in the public sector (Reichenberg, 2015). Robbins and Judge (2009) wrote that strategic planning not only identifies the quantity of needed employees, but the path and the type of education, training, and experience needed for these positions. Planning on this level not only helps in the recruitment process for “new blood,”

but also boosts morale as it lays out a specific plan for the “up and comers” already in the public sector (David, 2006). Workforce planning, as described in Table 2, is “an organizational activity intended to ensure that investment in human capital results in the timely capability to effectively carry out the organization's strategic intent” (Plachecki, 2012, p. 27).

Table 2

Key Elements of Workforce Planning

1.	Increase understanding of current workforce by determining what motivates workforce and recognizing talents, etc.;
2.	Envision the operating environment that will most likely exist in the future (consider changes in technology, work environment, work ethic of Gen X and Gen Y);
3.	Distinguish the competencies that will move the organization forward to overcome demands, explore opportunities, and prosper in what will be a new world of work; and
4.	Develop strategies and implement tactics for building a strategic workforce (cross-training, coaching, providing immediate education and support).

Note. Table adapted from Plachecki (2012).

A strategic human resource plan focuses on providing immediate education and support to its employees to prepare them for the highly specialized leadership positions that will soon become available. The public sector has more specialized jobs than the private sector: 50% public vs. 29% private (Jacobson, 2010). Specialized public sector jobs (e.g., finance, legal, engineering, management) require special training, education, and job skills. Focusing on training will prepare future leaders for advancement. Making heavy investments in employee

training, education, and development will be required to fill the void left by the departure of the Boomers and their knowledge, skills, and experience (Nigro & Kellough, 2013).

Training, retraining, career counseling and productivity enhancements are all progressive steps in human resource planning. A program such as productivity enhancement encourages employees' participation in improving the efficiency of government operations. Management can use these approaches to identify organizational needs as well as how to address the developmental needs of existing employees to prepare them for placement into specialized government jobs (Jacobson, 2010). Qualitative research, conducted through timely, personal interviews of younger employees, can be a useful tool in determining how management and mentors can support development of those workers (Ng et al., 2012). Management and public sector unions both know that employee experience and workforce stability is the key to long-term success. Efforts made toward training, retraining, development, and career counseling help reduce employee turnover.

Jacobson (2010) has also described how important it is for a public sector organization to have a current strategic plan. An effective plan will identify the knowledge gaps within the organization and, in doing so; will be able to define training goals, hiring priorities, and leadership opportunities. All of these mechanisms will increase staff retention, employee satisfaction, and increase employees' commitment to work and the organization. This type of preemptive plan, and its action steps, improves the organization's image (Jacobson, 2010). Therefore, recruiting, training, and managing the generational groups within the public sector will be key to the success of human resource management. Notably, a contributing factor to successful workforce planning will be enthusiastic executive and line management participation (Plachecki, 2012).

One has to consider the traits of the incoming generations when considering workforce planning. They do not expect a single organization to fulfill their lifelong goals for skill and achievement building or serve as a source of retirement funding (Green, 2010). Green (2010) also suggests that this trend of self-reliance will require organizations, such as public agencies, to change how they promote employment opportunities. The Gen Xers and Millennials will be seeking employment opportunities that provide immediate skill building and rewards (Green, 2010). They will be looking for organizations that provide educational opportunities and provide them with “lifestyle choices.” For these reasons, Green (2010) also has suggested that management will need to adopt more “project-based” initiatives versus overall department-based activities. Because technology has helped current society to become more portable, the incoming generations of public sector employees will also expect their jobs to be portable (Green, 2010).

Recruiting a Younger Generation of Educated and Experienced Leaders

The public sector needs the younger generations to step up and start to fulfill the duties of their soon-to-be predecessors. This situation is not new, perhaps always having been a challenge in the public sector. Back in 1961, John F. Kennedy (as cited in Davidson, 2011) first sounded this theme:

Government service must be attractive enough to lure our most talented people. It must be challenging enough to call forth our greatest efforts. It must be interesting enough to retain their services. It must be satisfying enough to inspire single-minded loyalty and dedication. It must be important enough to each individual to call forth reserves of energy and enthusiasm (Davidson, 2011).

Kennedy's speech also called for "highly skilled," "imaginative," "creative effort" and "recognition of the need for teamwork of the highest order, as well as the free flow of ideas and information." He acknowledged that government workers were not in it "for riches" (Davidson, 2011).

Similarly, Brockman (1971) once wrote, "We live at a time when the creation and design of jobs and employment opportunities to challenge our young people is an urgent concern of all of us...the young want and need the opportunity to undertake valuable and challenging work, and that society needs them to be able to" (p. 571).

The situation is much the same today. Jacobson (2010) and Ng et al. (2012) agree that government at all levels will need to make a concerted effort to steer new graduates toward the public sector. The public sector does not pay high salaries and bonuses; however, the Y Generation finds energy in "making a difference," and "doing good," which can be a draw for working in government (Husar Holmes, 2012, p. 451). Branding government agencies as considerate organizations can serve as an attractive recruiting attribute for young people.

Starting recruitment at the college level. Concerted efforts by organizations such as the Partnership for Public Service serve to change the negative stereotypes of working in government service (Spahr, 2005a). As stated in its mission, the Partnership "works to revitalize our federal government by inspiring a new generation to serve and by transforming the way government works" (Partnership for Public Service, 2013, para. 2). Organizations such as the Partnership promote recruiting and retaining young, talented and diverse applicants for government service. The *America Has Talent* (2010) case study suggests that public agencies need to start early in their recruitment efforts by developing relationships with local universities.

Taking simple measures such as promoting civil service on college campuses will start attracting young people to the public sector ("America Has Talent," 2010).

Public organizations can create face-to-face relationships with college recruits not only by having human resource managers and hiring agents on hand, but also by developing relationships with college deans and professors who can create curricula around certain public agency specialties ("America Has Talent," 2010). This study also discusses that having representatives from public agencies on hand at college campuses debunks the belief that applying for government jobs is difficult.

Green (2007) suggests that public organizations should establish internship programs to connect potential employees with those public organizations. This gives interns an opportunity to learn about the organizations and how they are led. Internships also keep the public sector in touch with the changing culture of the incoming workforce (Green, 2007).

In turn, successful internship candidates have been found to be extremely successful recruiting agents ("America Has Talent," 2010). Interns who return to their alma mater and conduct information seminars and explain how their work experiences align with the interests of their peers have been shown to increase the number of internship applicants in the public sector. Edwin Luevanos, a Department of Energy human capital specialist, (as cited in "America Has Talent," 2010) stated that peer mentoring and recruitment is the best and most effective way to recruit entry level government employees. Government agencies engaging interns as recruiters is a successful way to change the perception of working for government (Spahr, 2005a).

Job advertisement in the public sector. Effective recruiting will become a business necessity in the public sector as more than half of the workers were over the age of 45, according to the Labor Department's age study, in 2012 (Maciag, 2013). Organizations such as

the Partnership for Public Service help to bridge the knowledge and experience gap by minimizing the challenge of recruiting young talent (Partnership for Public Service, 2013). They build relationships with public agencies and show them that simply posting job announcements is not going to attract young talent ("America Has Talent," 2010). Agencies have become passive in seeking new employees, often relying on very traditional recruitment methods. A challenge for most government agencies is in their traditional ways of posting job vacancies ("America Has Talent," 2010). Traditional public sector job advertisements take the form of newspaper ads or postings on a website that often describe the positions using technical and legal jargon about tasks, responsibilities, and minimum qualifications.

Making a great first impression is the first place where the public sector can attract new quality employees (Hilvert et al., 2015). The *America Has Talent* (2010) case study discussed the importance of "branding" to differentiate public sector jobs from those jobs that can be found through generic job web search engines. Because incoming Millennials are looking for opportunities to make a difference in their communities; Hilvert et al. (2015) recommends altering traditional job postings to be more enticing by changing their technical tone (e.g., "ability to understand statistics and research data") to a more creative approach (e.g., "Are you looking to make a difference by finding ways to fund services which benefit your community?"). Reducing technical, legal-sounding aspects of a job posting demonstrates that an organization is interested in more than someone who can simply do the job; they are looking for a candidate who wants to make a difference.

Web and electronic recruiting is becoming more popular, as it is an effective way to attract new public sector recruits. Web-related and interactive tools are the more effective ways to communicate with the younger generations who grew up on computers ("America Has

Talent," 2010). The *America Has Talent* (2010) case study also discussed how utilizing social media, interactive media, and consolidating recruitment efforts of several agencies onto a single website is a great way to attract a younger pool of applicants.

With technology changes come changes in how candidates search and apply for jobs. Traditional advertising in newspapers is not only expensive but also has been found to be ineffective in finding younger recruits ("America Has Talent," 2010). According to Hilvert et al. (2015), an increasing movement toward utilizing smartphones has occurred with those looking and applying for jobs. To broaden the pool of talented job seekers, Partnership for Public Service (2015) suggests adding social media to the traditional website job advertisements. Social media can be used not only to recruit top talent, but also to showcase an agency's successes and the spirit of the organization. Moyer & Winter (2015) have suggested that agencies should utilize focus groups to determine how to recruit candidates via social media.

Other considerations for recruiting. Spahr (2005a) discussed how college students who are nervous about their college debt might shy away from working in government if they anticipate difficulties in paying off their loans. Non-profit organizations such as Partnership for Public Service and YGL can help government agencies brand themselves in a way that reduces the negative stereotypes (Spahr, 2005a). For instance, because Generation Xers are "results-orientated" and may be driven to pay off their college debts, offering recruitment incentives, moving expenses, pay for performance, student loan repayment and tuition reimbursement programs could serve as attractive inducements for incoming young leaders (Young, 2008).

Branding government agencies as leaders in providing professional development and networking opportunities also likely would draw young professionals (Young, 2008). In-house leadership and development opportunities with actual working assignments would excite Gen

Xers and Millennials (Young, 2008). Neiberline, Simanoff, Lewis, & Steinhoff (2015) suggest assigning a mentor, or a buddy, to incoming Millennials before their first day on the job.

Providing leadership opportunities for non-supervisory positions will allow newly hired Millennials to test how they could fit into the organization's vision (Axten, 2015); and when assigning new tasks to a Millennial, the duty should be framed by how it supports the organization's mission and serves the public on a higher purpose (Neiberline et al., 2015).

Millennials will be on the fast track for growth if encouraged to facilitate goal setting, and given frequent feedback and communications with their mentors and supervisors (Neiberline et al., 2015).

Soonhee (2012) described how recruitment for IT departments in the public sector has focused not only on the traditional assets of working in government service (i.e. stability, security, social and civic service) but also on opportunities for advancement, training and development, supervisory communications, pay and reward satisfaction, and family-friendly policies. Other potential non-monetary benefits include work/life balance (such as flex schedules), variety of work, ability to influence change, increased transparency, child and adult care benefits, and telecommuting (Young, 2008). Some of these flexible benefits are likely because the younger generation is more tech savvy than earlier generations (Walker & Derrick, 2006). The younger public employee, if given the opportunity, can more easily accomplish his or her work outside of the limitations of the traditional eight to five, Monday through Friday office job.

Preparing the Younger Generation for the Future

Soonhee (2012) found that several factors affect turnover rates in the public sector including lack of promotional opportunities, in-effective supervisory communications,

unsatisfactory pay and reward systems, anti-family-friendly policies, and minimal training and development. Moyer & Winter (2015) added that the three most positive ways to improve employee retention are through recognition, responsibility, and interesting work. Soonhee (2012) and Moyer & Winter's (2015) findings suggest that a public organization and its management need to commit to progressive human resource practices. Updating the human resource manual and its policies to match the needs of the new age of employees will demonstrate that the organization cares for its employees (Thomes, 2014). An example of a progressive human resource policy is allowing flexible work hours to allow for work-life balance (Neiberline et al., 2015). With technology advancements, employees have the flexibility of working from home, coffee shop, while on vacation, child's soccer game, late evenings and/or early mornings to accommodate family needs.

Crewson and Fisher (1997) discussed the importance of mentors and coaching. Mentors can be key to enhancing the abilities and skills of managers in the public sector. A mentorship program can provide cost effective training and leadership tools (Maltempo & Robinson, 2014). Another lean management tool is coaching. Coaching is referred to as a positive managerial tool leaders use to motivate and involve employees through asking thoughtful questions, practice active listening, and challenging young leaders to solve problems in a new way (Kloster, 2010). Goal setting and coaching have positive influences on "employee commitment, participation, involvement, morale, motivation, performance, and job satisfaction" (Kini & Hobson, 2002, p. 606). Motivating and thoughtful coaching techniques best utilize and develop the talents, skills, and initiatives of an organization's employees. Moyer & Winter (2015) provided an example of an organization providing a three-to-five year mentorship in which the "up and comer" is provided specific opportunities to engage in activities that her or his mentor does (e.g., attend

city council meetings, meet with auditor, attend conferences, engage in discussions with other public leaders).

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) created a two-year coaching and mentoring process for new hires (Spahr, 2005b). The program offers classroom training and pairs the new employee with mentors and “buddies” to help the employee’s transition into the government agency (Spahr, 2005b). Offering mentoring opportunities demonstrates that a workplace values the experiences of its long-term employees and offers leadership development for the younger generation of employees (Walker & Derrick, 2006). Such efforts can bring together different generations and integrate differences in values, experience, attitudes, ethics, and work styles.

Whereas classroom training can sometimes become cost prohibitive, eLearning, especially during difficult recent economic times, may be utilized in lieu of on-site learning and conferences. eLearning is less expensive and less time consuming than traditional conferences and workshops, all while providing fast skill building (Pantazis, 2002). When used as a part of an integrated program of training opportunities, eLearning can be a much less expensive way of providing skill and learning opportunities for the purpose of strengthening the workforce.

Mandates in human capital investment through in-house development programs are becoming increasingly popular (Husar Holmes, 2012). Changes at the federal level via the 2002 Workforce Planning Act can be seen at the local government level according to Husar Holmes (2012). Organizations such as the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), have developed fellowship programs matching graduating masters students with senior level management at the local government level (“The Local Government Management Fellowship |

icma.org,” n.d.). Programs such as this generate an interest in working in local government and stimulate a path toward quality leadership and a skilled incoming workforce.

Although organizations are challenged to find ways to bridge the knowledge and experience gap, it is the younger generation’s responsibility to fill the gap as they will be the ones who end up leading public organizations in the future. In fact, if the current leaders are to be successful in providing direction through the transition, they will need help from the younger generations. Organizations such as YGL and Young Professionals at State (YPro) serve as great resources for young government professionals (Spahr, 2005b). Not only do organizations such as Senior Executives Association (SEA), YGL and YPro address issues that young professionals face, but they also help provide resources to employers for growing young leaders (Maltempo & Robinson, 2014). These types of organizations provide online support, conferences, social gatherings, mentorship, and leadership opportunities.

Application

Overview

The purpose of this project was to determine how public sector organizations could better utilize the different age cohorts currently in the workplace, mitigate the consequences associated with the exodus of Baby Boomers, and effectively manage the transition to younger workers. The review of literature identified and analyzed various factors that must be considered in undergoing this transformation, especially at the executive level of organizations. This section of the project will recommend strategies that can be utilized to manage the transformation and to create and maintain a work environment that nurtures communication, motivation, leadership, and synergy across the changing generational landscape.

A number of relevant themes emerged during the literature review, but they can be reduced to two major questions. The first is, what is the best way to recruit and retain the future leaders of the public sector? The second is, how can the public sector effectively transition relatively inexperienced new leaders into well-established bureaucracies and quickly fill the gaps left by retiring Boomers?

Attracting and Retaining the Next Generation of Public Sector Leaders

Based on what was learned in the literature review, one has to question if it will be possible to attract (and retain) sufficient numbers of younger leaders into government service. Further, the challenge not only will be how to get them to commit to government service but also how to prepare them to quickly fill the shoes of their very experienced Boomer predecessors. One strategy will be to give the public sector a facelift by showcasing how government serves the people versus just providing regulatory functions. Such a facelift will make working in the public sector more attractive to Millennials who as a generation wish to perform socially

meaningful work (Muscrave, 2014). A second strategy will be to change the perceptions people have of public sector human resource management and management efforts in general. As the literature has shown, the future of public management will be constantly changing, and human resource professionals will need to be more progressive in their methods to build the necessary personnel infrastructure. For example, traditional approaches to job postings in newspapers and public places will need to take better advantage of social media, something younger generations have learned to rely on for obtaining information and staying connected. Another example will be how governmental units need to form relationships with educational institutions. For example, a local government entity can invite children service units to tour City Hall, meet the Mayor, or participate in a mock City Council Meeting. Another example would be to invite government and/or social studies classes at the junior and senior high levels to become involved in a project brought before the City Council. At the college level, recruiters for units of government should be at student events to showcase how government can become a viable and rewarding career choice.

Communication should be considered at the heart of the issue in attracting and retaining future executive-level leaders to the public sector. Public employers must build relationships with educational resources at all levels, including the elementary schools, to jump-start young, potential leaders to consider working in the public sector (Gould, Walker, & Frazell, 2009). Engaging youth, or “up and comers,” in a conversation about public service will hopefully instill the desire for civil engagement in their community and, perhaps one day, attract them to work in the public sector. The research has suggested that one can attract Millennials to government service by inviting them to reach citizens and leaders through sharable places, spaces, and events (Ubl, 2015b). In turn, current leaders can utilize the ideas they hear from Millennials in

determining how to modify their supervisory styles and work policies to prepare for the incoming generations of younger workers (Gould et al., 2009).

Proper onboarding and ongoing feedback from the immediate supervisor can be key to workplace satisfaction (Maltempo & Robinson, 2014). For example, everyone knows exit interviews are important in determining why an employee leaves an organization; however, retention interviews are just as important (Hilvert et al., 2015). A retention or “stay” interview is an informational interview to seek what keeps an employee engaged before they become dissatisfied. The interview asks pointed questions with the goal of finding out why employees enjoy their work and what they will need from the organization to continue their satisfaction (Mochari, 2013). Hilvert et al. (2015) suggested meeting with top performers to ask how the organization can challenge them. These mid-point retention interviews, especially for younger workers, also can help flush out the types of work conditions that valued employees are seeking: flexible schedules, telecommuting, a healthy workplace culture, upward mobility, leadership and professional development, shadowing, and coaching. Using the information gathered in these types of conversations can provide insights about how to give Gen Xers and Millennials an opportunity to lead a new project or temporarily fill a position that has not been officially created, as well as instill the motivation needed to think outside of the box (Muscrave, 2014). Finding opportunities that push a younger generation into situations outside of their comfort zone will create irreplaceable opportunities to experience leadership (Miyasato, 2014).

This research project reviewed several employment ads for small city administrators. All of these positions required a four-year college degree in business, community development, or public administration. Most ads outlined a preference for a master’s degree in business or public administration, and five years’ experience in the public sector. Most traditional civil

service or human resource offices substitute schooling for work experience due to the 1971 Supreme Court decision on the Griggs v. Duke Power Co. case, which addressed systematic or unintentional discrimination (Sims, 2010). All of the job descriptions required knowledge of human resources, municipal finance, budgeting, management of city assets, support to City Councils, utilities, coordination of contracted services, and planning and zoning experience.

Public sector human resource offices must find ways to make position descriptions appear more attractive and interesting to younger generations. This might include changing the wording on traditional job descriptions, revising the format and content of advertisements, and finding new venues for posting jobs, to include modern electronic media. For example, Gould et al. (2009) have written that replacing the bureaucratic and boring wording within a job posting with creative, more exciting wording can speak to the needs of those who are looking to use their transferable skills in a meaningful way.

Smoothing the Transition of Varying Generations through Transformational Leadership

Distinct differences exist between the traditional hierarchal management style that is still common in the public sector and a more progressive transformational leadership style that will be needed to guide incoming generations. Absent careful planning, as Boomers hand over the reins of their well-run organizations to younger and less experienced generations, considerable instability likely will be created within the workplace. To mitigate such instability, soon-to-depart Baby Boomer leaders must learn to change their management styles to meet the needs of the incoming, younger generations. This will include developing their own emotional intelligence, in particular becoming more “other aware,” to address the concerns of the incoming younger leaders. The more traditional, top-down bureaucratic style to that of transformative leadership must change.

Transformational leaders will be better prepared to guide the public sector as it makes its way from a Boomer-dominated work environment to those populated by Gen Xers and Millennials. A transformational leader has the competencies to meet her or his team's basic needs while inspiring and exciting its members to be innovative and productive (Ghasabeh, Reaiche, & Soosay, 2015). Consultant Cheryl Kelly-Bowman has asserted that a transformational leader provides a strategic vision to employees during times of change (Personal Communication, February 17, 2011). A manager who is self-aware of his/her leadership style and who is open to changing it to address the future needs of the organization can be trained to be a transformational leader. Gabris (2004) explained that just as in learning or practicing a sport, one can become more comfortable, better equipped, notably skilled, and even excel at becoming a leader of enthusiastic and authentic changes.

A public sector manager or leader must collaborate with his or her employees to identify the changes needed within the department and/or organization and to define the vision, mission, and goals for the organization. A leader is an important facilitator in the organization during times of change. A transformational leader is never emotionally neutral; he or she has the "power," through emotional intelligence, to give positive energy to her/his employees through enthusiasm, developing feelings of trust, and supporting collaboration (Zurn, 2011). A leader's enthusiasm is infectious. Studies indicated that a manager's optimistic attitude derives collaboration and overall positive group performance (Webb, 2009). Using enthusiasm and credibility, the leader's portrayal of the organization's values becomes believable and achievable, changes become easier to accept, and relationships become more cooperative (Gabris, 2004).

If not already condoned in the past, public organizations need to instill mentoring and coaching programs. Successful transitioning can be done by enlisting mentees to seek guidance in unfamiliar or uncomfortable responsibilities or tasks. Axten (2015) stated that Millennials look for the vision and guidance they were used to from their parents and teachers. According to Axten, Millennials not only are accustomed to being told what to do, but want to know how their work fits into the organization. This can be developed through a supervisory, mentoring, or coaching opportunity.

Government services must provide active coaching to incoming, younger, executive leaders. Husar Holmes (2012) suggested that coaching enlists four critical processes in effectively providing leadership development: 1) in-class curriculum, 2) analytical assessment of personality strengths and weaknesses, 3) mentor/peer relationships to discuss leadership challenges, and 4) assignments (specific to jobs) that challenge a person's comfort zone. Organizations can collaborate with learning institutions to also provide these types of developmental opportunities (Hilvert et. al., 2015).

Coaching requires a public manager to be emotionally intelligent in his or her skills of: 1) observation (of oneself and workers), 2) asking effective questions, and 3) listening and responding (Kloster, 2010). Providing good supervisory communication via interactive discussion and listening techniques bodes well with younger public employees. Soonhee (2013) described a few simple and effective interactive management behaviors: 1) asking for an employee's opinion regarding work objectives, 2) using support and guidance to provide effective job-related criticism, 3) providing clear direction about job expectations, and 4) giving ongoing feedback to improve job performance. Because the younger generation of public employees need ongoing and frequent feedback, a leader should try to maintain a constant

dialogue process as opposed to the traditional annual or bi-annual performance review (Walker & Derrick, 2006).

The effectiveness of a manager's leadership style can be measured through several gauges, one being measures of employee satisfaction. Trottier, Van Wart, and Wang (2008) discussed how gauging employee satisfaction is important in its effect on short term and long-term productivity. Taking an interest in employee satisfaction diminishes dysfunction in the workplace and serves as a guide for moving employees toward organizational goals (Trottier et al., 2008). It also is a general measure to determine how employees are motivated, allowing employees to find intrinsic value in their work. Measuring, detecting, and being self-aware are all key components in successfully managing the transformation of the public sector as the Boomer generation and younger generations of employees converge and blend their work styles over the next five to ten years.

Conclusions

The public sector will see a large changeover in its workforce within the next five to ten years. The Boomer generation (in management and lower level employment) is preparing to retire in anticipation that their legacy will be continued by a younger generation of employees. However, there is a notable shortage of educated and experienced employees to fill their positions. As the transition of outgoing and incoming employees meld, the face of the public sector will change. As the traditional managers and the younger generation of employees pursue their working relationships, they are finding they have different work styles, communication, motivating factors, and leadership/follower styles. These differences can lead to conflict and chaos within the workplace.

This paper examined the characteristics of the generational groups and how these differences influence management and leadership styles. Then the experiential gap between the outgoing Boomer leaders and the incoming younger generations was discussed. Through analysis and appropriate recommendations, the paper showed how the public sector can attract and retain its next generation of leaders while bridging the gap between the generations through concepts associated with transformational leadership.

Government service needs to appear attractive, valuable, and challenging to the incoming younger generations who want to make a difference in the world. Government agencies must be creative in their recruitment of younger employees, using new technologies and more modern outreach efforts. Once recruited, progressive human resource techniques will be required to retain talented young leaders. Changing traditional employer policies to accommodate technology-savvy employees seeking work-life balance must become the norm. Developing coaching and mentoring programs to continuously grow and challenge young leaders must become a priority within public organizations.

Finally, we learned that a leader is an important facilitator in the organization during times of change; leadership is about building relationships with followers (Gabris, 2004). A transformative leader will be the key to leading the government organization through the transition of the outgoing Boomer and incoming younger generations. During the upcoming generational turnover in the public sector, strategies such as leadership development and succession planning will continue to be important (Husar Holmes, 2012). Engaging employees and demonstrating enthusiasm can support a changing workforce and yield increased job satisfaction, achieve higher productivity, and revolutionize organizational vision.

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