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Enemy mine – Generation “Y” and the lost Generation “Z”

“Every generation imagines itself to be more intelligent than the one that went before it, and wiser than the one that comes after it.” - George Orwell

Over the last 5 years, I have been working on several international projects around the globe and no country, be it rich or poor, as well as the respective companies in it, spared to talk about the new generations (Y and Z). Most of the times I was discussing this topic with people belonging to Generation X (born at the end of the 60s and before the 80s) or even to the so-called traditionalists (born in the fifties or before). During our discussions, I had very often the impression that the people who were describing these new generations were almost afraid of them. Very often they were describing them as the most numerous and richest generation on the planet, making them almost feel like a hostile army of alien fighters who had invaded mother earth. I believe no other generation in history has been analyzed in such a scientific and meticulous way than the so-called millennials.

It seems like CIA, FBI, KGB, and Mossad all together are tracing every single step these new generations are making or are about to make. Complete departments of multinational companies are engaged in analyzing behavior, purchasing power, on- and offline activities, buying patterns, words they pronounce or don't, the methods they communicate with, the way they dress or even how they express their feelings. Professors at the Universities around the globe are investigating and trying to pinpoint all the differences between the various generations. In short, the Generation Y and Z, the latter often not only described as the lost but also often as doomed to be the last generation, are overwhelmed with the attention they never asked for.

It is undisputed that the new generations are in various aspects different from the ones before and common sense would say it is also normal.

Technical evolution (by the way with a lot of inventions from generation X and those before), structural and organizational changes (by the way vehemently wanted by Generation X and the ones before) such as the Bologna-Reform, G8 or maybe more appropriately "Turbo-ABI" or the flexibility of the labor markets, are contributing to the observed phenomena of young generations not knowing if a bachelor degree nowadays is still sufficient or not.

To me, belonging to Gen X, many of the innumerable studies about the new generations don't make much sense. They are very generic and often full of prejudices (mainly from other generations).

I believe it is an enormous behavioral achievement and not disrespect if the new generations unlike the ones before are today asking precise questions (and many of them), if they give direct feedback at eye level regardless whom they have in front of them. I have experienced this with inquiring students thriving for lifetime learning. Many of them have clear ideas and a healthy base for engaging in entrepreneurial adventures.

Instead of talking about them, I would like to invite everyone to talk more with them, embracing them for what they are - a new generation - and like all new generations, they are longing for support, a helping hand. There is no cultural clash between generations, maybe some mental ditches imposed by paper-based studies and assumptions. Real beautiful minds regardless the generation they might belong to, have been in the past, are in present and will be in the future always able to wander with an enriching spirit amongst all generations they encounter.

Because we are people of great civilizations, past and present, we have reached incredible milestones by working hand in hand from generation to generation. We know that the future depends on the care we take for new generations.

So, I believe it would be both, intelligent and wise at the same time not to believe in the above-stated quote of George Orwell.

Zulla Consulting & Partners has in the past and will in the future continue to invest in the new generations regardless the letter which has been assigned to them. For additional information and an initial consultation, feel free to contact Daniele Zulla at zulla@zulla-consulting.com.