

SURVEY SAYS THIN LINE BETWEEN SENIORITY AND LEADERSHIP: CHANGING EQUATIONS AT THE WORKPLACE



A new CareerBuilder Survey says that a new breed of professionals has taken over the workplace and that the relationship between seniority and headship could be on the wane. According to the survey 34 percent of the US workers said that their bosses were younger than them, whilst 15 percent said that they were at least 10 years older than those to whom they were accountable at the workplace. Whilst most said, that they got used to working under a younger boss, but the survey does reveal that age does not necessarily mean seniority. Rosemary Haefner, vice president of human resources at CareerBuilder. "Age disparities in the office are perhaps more diverse now than they've ever been. It's not uncommon to see 30-year-olds managing 50-year-olds or 65-year-olds mentoring 22-year-olds." Increasing mobile technologies and the social media are the reason why the young brigade is taking over. Today's younger generation understand networking and technology much better than the teens of generations past. Their network abilities create a wide network of diverse people and they are connected to them round the clock, 24x7 thanks to modern accessibility. The survey says that the younger breed bring a different working concept to the workplace and are more attuned to modern way way of thinking than the conventional mindset of the elder generation. The modern generation doesn't believe that work can only be done within the confines of the workplace. They tend to work shorter days at the office and are not averse to working from home. They attach less importance to punctuality, but say adhering to strict timelines is not as important as ensuring that work gets done. "They show up early, work through lunch and on the weekends," says Linda Gravett, co-author of Bridging the Generation Gap: Gen X and Yers were raised in the Internet era, where it doesn't necessarily matter where the work gets done, as long as it does." The elder generation is more prone to adopt a direct approach to a project and start work on it as soon as it is given to them. The younger generation approaches it with a detailed game plan that eradicates all chances of mistakes. Whereas the elders preferred person to person contact when the need to communicate arose, the younger bosses prefer emails and texting. Whilst the elder generation would be scheduling appointments, younger bosses tend to say, 'Shoot me an e-mail.' Taking orders from a younger boss can be an unnerving experience. However, understand that he got the position because he has got the right skills and he must have impressed his superiors. So you better start giving him the respect that he merits. Moreover, a young boss will be easier to work with. He will bring in new energy, dynamism, fresh ideas and new perspectives that could herald better times at the workplace which will eventually filter down to everyone working there. It can be hard working for someone who could be your son and it does require swallowing a lot of pride taking orders from a younger boss. Especially since the change in work ethics between the generations could make the youthful boss perceive older employees to be lacking in energy and not be as productive as the younger people. You cannot do without the boss and the boss cannot do without you. Both need to recognize each other's worth and value. Ideally, the boss should also display open-mindedness and forbearance towards his elder workers but your boss's youthfulness cannot hide the fact that he is your boss and it's really the employee's responsibility to adapt to the boss's management style.