

# Not Everyone Gets a Trophy

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Bruce Tulgan, a recognized expert on young people in the workplace, shares advice for managing Generation Yers in his book ***Not Everyone Gets a Trophy***.

Tulgan agrees that Generation Y is very high-maintenance but argues that they can also be very high-performance. One step necessary to engage Gen Yers is to get them on board by providing performance-based compensation, flexible schedules, access to decision makers, clearly defined responsibility, personal credit for results achieved, and a chance for creative expression. Looking at this list, it strikes me that these are the same items that most people, no matter which generation, look for in a job.

There's a chapter on how to train Gen Yers and how to manage them like their parents. To manage in the style of their parents, you need to provide structure and boundaries. This means clearly defining tasks, amount of responsibilities and expectations of results. You also need to help them keep score. Gen Yers are used to being recognized for each and every accomplishment. They have grown up in a point-system environment which sparks their competitiveness and drives them to deliver.

Tulgan spends a capture itemizing what you should teach Gen Yers. This list includes how to manage their time, set priorities, and eliminate time wasters by keeping a very, very detailed log of all activity. After a week or two of this, the Gen Yer will see where the most time is wasted), make plans, set goals, use checklists, and be good corporate citizens.

In addition to teaching them and learning about them, Tulgan says that you must teach them about you. What are your ground rules? When is it best to discuss issues with you? How do you want issues brought to your attention?

The book is an interesting, easy read. Tulgan's arguments against 14 common myths is interesting but I don't think he does a good job of really exploring or explaining the points.

**Myth #1** – Gen Yers are disloyal – Not so says Tulgan. They just are not blindly loyal. They are loyal in the type of loyalty you get in a free market. They exhibit transactional loyalty; i.e., whatever you can negotiate.

**Myth #4** – They want the top job on day one – Tulgan does not really dispute this. He says that yes, they want to hit the ground running and immediately make an impact. This does not mean they want the top job, they just want to matter.

**Myth #5** – They need work to be fun – Tulgan again does not directly refute this item. He simply clarifies that Gen Yers want to learn and to be challenged while working with good people.

**Myth #10** – Money is the only thing that matters – No, money is just a threshold issue. Once the threshold is reached, they are going to negotiate for other things such as schedule, task choice, learning opportunities, etc.

**Myth #13** – It's impossible to turn them into long-term employees – False, you just have to do it one day at a time. That's as far as the Gen Yers think.

In general, I found Tulgan's advice to be mostly common sense. I did not think that he really refuted many of the 'myths' regarding Generation Y but did give slightly different perspectives. If you manage a lot of younger employees, the book might prove to be an interesting read. If you manage anyone, the book provides some tips that would be applicable to all generations.