

# The Generation Y Challenge

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## Key Ideas

Members of Generation Y first entered the workforce at the beginning of the new Millennium and have gained a reputation for being spoilt brats. There is very little reliable sociological data on their motivations and behaviours, so how can you separate the truth from the lies and better recruit and retain these young people during an ongoing talent war?

The sociologist Jean-Luc Excousseau reviews the reasons for the 'Generation Y buzz'. In his view, the main challenge this generation presents to employers is their relationship with immediate managers in the company—their Generation X elders. Although these two groups are close in age, differences between them are difficult to reconcile. How can companies reduce the friction between the two generations?

Gen Y employees are tomorrow's leaders and are the driving force behind innovation, believes Anne-Catherine de Decker, a senior executive at France Télécom and former manager at Orange UK and Mobistar. She's neither a sociologist nor a DHR, but she has a particular interest in Gen Y and promotes HRM inspired by marketing methods in order to offer a focused response to generational differences.

# What Innovations are Required to Recruit and Manage Gen-Yers?

Article by **Audrey TROTEREAU**, *Business Digest*, April 2008

**Generational conflicts existed long before the arrival of Generation Y, but the arrival of the children of the Web—labelled as self-absorbed, ambitious, and lazy—into workplace seems to be causing quite a stir. So who are they, and what are the keys to recruiting and managing the unmanageable Generation Y?**

They entered the workforce at the beginning of the new Millennium, were born between 1978 and 1994 (the key dates vary across countries)... and have built a reputation for being an employer's worst nightmare. They are 'Gen-Yers', members of Generation Y. How can you attract them if you're not Google or Apple? How can you retain them without giving the impression that you're giving in to their whims (and not respecting certain organisational traditions)? And how can you provide a work environment where they'll work to the best of their ability without creating conflict with their elders?

## WHO IS GEN Y?

They are also known as the 'Millennial Generation' and 'Echo Boomers', a reference to their parents, the Baby Boomers. 'Generation Y' is the most commonly used term, as it alludes to a succession from Generation X, their predecessors (born between 1965 and 1977). American consultant Eric Chester has chosen to use the term 'Generation Why', because of their habit of routinely questioning the constraints imposed on them.

### ■ Children of the Web and globalisation...

They grew up with instant communication and information technologies, and are accustomed to having access to large amounts of information on the Net and using instant communication technologies, whose pernicious effects include an inability to summarise or analyse information (the 'copy-paste' syndrome) and a poor mastery of spelling. They are also the children of globalisation. Since its creation in 1987, the Erasmus programme (also known as European Community

Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students) has, for example, enabled 1.5 million students to spend time studying in one of 31 European partner countries.

### ■ ... spoiled brats?

When they became adults their outlook was shaken by 9/11 and an awareness that companies can also be places where there is fraud and corruption (the Messier scandal, the Enron saga, etc.). They witnessed the bursting of the dot-com bubble and watched the preceding generation experience unemployment and financial insecurity. Finally, they grew up during the 1980s and 1990s, and it was during this period that education focused on developing self-esteem, to the detriment of developing respect for authority<sup>1</sup>. This has produced a generation of people who are often accused of being individualistic, independent, and anti-authority. But they are also described in four positive ways: well educated, well-informed, motivated, and flexible. To sum up, they have a reputation for acting like spoiled children, but are aware that they are in a position of strength, as companies are facing a talent shortage...

### ■ Ambitious, pragmatic, and individualistic

What do they expect from companies? The box on page 4, entitled 'Understanding Gen Y Better: What do the Facts Tell Us?' shows the results of two surveys — one French, conducted by Ipsos in 2005, and the other British, undertaken in March 2008. This snapshot, though not exhaustive, offers a representative idea of what motivates this generation at the outset of their working lives—they are often portrayed negatively (disenchanted, devoid of ideals, materialistic, etc.), but are in fact ambitious, pragmatic, and individualistic.

### ■ Tomorrow's leaders

This young generation's entry in the workforce seems to be causing an unprecedented buzz, with incredulity being the most common reaction. However, since large numbers of Baby Boomers are retiring and there aren't enough Generation X employees to fill the resulting vacancies, mobilising and training tomorrow's leaders has become an imperative for companies. Employee integration programmes will need to be ...

# “ Gen-Yers have the potential to become the highest producing generation ever. ”

... based on adaptation rather than confrontation. ‘Yes, Gen Y is demanding. They want training now, they want recognition now, and they want to create the lifestyle they desire now. If managers can learn how to harness their energy and coach them effectively, these young employees have the potential to become the highest producing generation ever,’ believes Carolyn A. Martin, consultant at RainmakerThinking, Inc. and author of *Managing Generation Y*².

## RECRUITING GEN Y: THE RACE TO INVENT NEW RECRUITMENT METHODS

Several companies have already adapted their recruitment processes to target Generation Y, and have no qualms about hunting for potential employees on their own turf: the Net (where 67% look for work, according to Accenture³). Here's a look at some of the most inventive initiatives:

### ■ New student recruitment campaigns on campuses

To attract future talents ‘who aren't available to everyone’, PricewaterhouseCoopers launched the ‘je peux-je veux’ (I can-I want) recruitment campaign in 2007-2008, which invites students to leave their ‘I want’ messages (an e-mail, SMS, or video) on a special site⁴. They received responses to their messages during the ‘Connectedthinking Tour,’ a tour of 17 grande école campuses in France (higher education establishments outside the mainstream framework of the public universities system), organised between October and December 2007, which also provided the company with an opportunity to tell students about jobs in auditing and offer them advice.

### ■ Blogs and webcams give candidates a realistic view of work

According to the global consulting firm Accenture, ‘the sales approach with promotional leaflets doesn't work anymore. To persuade young people to join you, you have to seek them out on the Net and give them a realistic view of work, and do more than just release adverts.’ Real estate company Century 21 France is well aware of the changing trends, and in its latest recruitment campaign uses a blog to enable potential applicants to gain greater insight into the daily reality of being an estate agent. French bank BNP Paribas gives prospective candidates the chance to

see what life is like in its offices through a webcam, while real-time chat with employees is available via their website.

### ■ From job interviews to realistic business simulations

Job interviews are increasingly taking the form of realistic simulations of business scenarios. L'Oréal, which pays particular attention to its HR marketing strategy, has used this strategy with its business games, which enable the company to inform candidates about its businesses and identify potential talents. The L'Oréal Brainstorm, for example, asks participants to reinvent one of the Group's brands. TF1 (French TV channel) and Bouygues Télécom (French mobile phone company) have launched the Virtual Regatta recruiting game, where candidates can register for free to take part in a virtual boat race. Participants choose the boat (each boat has a colour scheme to match one of 25 companies) they want to captain and, if they win, secure an interview with recruiters from their chosen company.

### ■ Three recommendations to recruiters

Fifty per cent of companies questioned by ESC Pau (a French business school) and BVA (a French market research institute) in November 2007⁵ complained that they were having difficulty in recruiting young graduates, because they knew little about them or their activities. The results of their survey suggested recruiters should:

- 1) Recruit a Campus Manager to implement an active recruitment policy directly from higher education establishments.
- 2) Adopt a policy of replying promptly to candidates: ‘Candidates often think that organisations are bureaucratic if there's a long, drawn-out recruitment process.’
- 3) Win candidates over! ‘Small and medium-sized companies that can't necessarily provide employees with career opportunities must highlight other advantages, such as the degree of autonomy and responsibility.’

## MANAGING GEN Y: REINVENTING AUTHORITY

Companies must also encourage the development of new management methods, where managers practise informal mentoring and agree to give the freedom- and recognition-seeking Gen Y more autonomy. Sommer Kehrli, a consultant at San Diego's Centre for Organisation Effectiveness, and Trudy Sopp, a sociologist, have designed strategies to help companies overcome the main managerial challenges posed by Gen Y.

### ■ ‘They question authority’

#### Use coaching and practise informal mentoring

Gen Yers are an inquisitive lot—they want to know the reasons behind a situation and aren't happy with a, ‘That's just how we do things round here, end of story!’. They're not interested in questioning managers' authority, but rather in ‘understanding why managers behave in a particular way, so that they can learn how to act in future encounters.’ Kehrli and Sopp advise managers to ‘avoid using tones of power and authority, which only reduce your credibility. Practise informal mentoring: answer ...

... their “why” questions before they even ask them by giving them frequent and detailed briefings providing information they wouldn't be able to gather on their own. Spend some time talking to them every day: give them the benefits of your experience, the history and context of a situation, your thorough understanding of the corporate political climate, and so on. You will win their loyalty by connecting with them on a personal level instead of making them feel like spare parts.’

### ■ ‘In one ear, and out the other!’

#### Put technology to good use

‘Managers complain about Gen Yers’ inability to concentrate. Generation Y processes information selectively due to the abundance of MTV images and resources at their fingertips,’ explain Kehrlı and Sopp. They advise managers to use technology in order to maintain constant communication regarding project progress by: ‘Requiring an e-mail response confirming their understanding of the project and instructions you have just issued; asking to see them capture the “to do” in their BlackBerry and requesting that they use e-mail, voice mail, or text messages to provide you with regular updates on a project.’

### ■ ‘They tell us what to do’

#### Give them some authority!

‘They frequently come to their managers with both a problem and a solution’; ‘they have the audacity to tell the manager what they think should be done’: Gen Yers haven't got a reputation for being independent for nothing. ‘But this behaviour doesn't stem from arrogance,’ say the two American experts. ‘They are products of an environment in which they were home alone or with an older sibling and had to learn to solve problems on their own. Generation Yers also come to the workplace with higher education and work experience from volunteer opportunities

or internships, so they don't view themselves as newbies in the organisation.’ Instead of fighting their need for authority by being authoritarian, let them make their own decisions regarding training and development options.

So what does this picture tell us? That companies need to break the spiral of misunderstanding that has emerged from a lack of objective information on the behaviour and expectations of Gen Y; that these expectations are pushing companies to adopt a personalised approach where work is primarily a life experience—and that this is a positive step; finally, that companies should waste no time in jumping on the Gen Y bandwagon: have you heard of the virtual world of Second Life and the social networking site MySpace? Better still, is your company ready to recruit on these sites? That's a pity... Gen Yers already consider them as ‘old hat’. From now on, only sites like There, Kaneva, Friendster, and Xanga will be the in thing for them... ■

1. According to Jean M. Twenge, professor of psychology at San Diego State University and author of *Generation Me* (Free Press, 2006).
2. Interviewed in the book *Millennial Leaders*, Bea Fields, Scott Wilder, Jim Bunch, Rob Newbold, Morgan James Publishing, November 2007.
3. *La Génération Y : une intégration à réussir* (The importance of successfully integrating Generation Y into the workforce), Outlook, December 2006.
4. *Jeuxjeux.fr* (in French)
5. *Comment réussir le recrutement et l'insertion des jeunes diplômés* (How to successfully recruit and integrate young professionals), ESC Pau Group, November 2007, [www.escpau.com](http://www.escpau.com)
6. See the interview with sociologist Jean-Luc Excousseau on p. 5, which explains how efficient management of Gen Y can stimulate a process of progressive change throughout companies.

## Understanding Gen Y Better: What do the Facts Tell Us?

**In March 2008, the British magazine *Management Today* commissioned** recruitment consultancy FreshMinds to carry out a survey. The results give us an insight into Generation Y's ambitions in Britain (which, it is important to note, has enjoyed full employment for the last ten years):

**Ambition:** 41% of Generation Y expect to progress rapidly in their current organisation, compared to only 20% of Generation X.

**Job satisfaction:** 66 % of Gen Y are satisfied with their jobs. Gen X men expressed the least job satisfaction, at 56%, while baby-boomer women expressed the most, at 69%.

**Job-hopping:** The average job tenure is 16 months for Gen Y, three years for Gen X and over five years for baby-boomers; 54% of Gen Y have already held three or more jobs, and 30% of them expect to have a job in a different industry within five years.

**Perks:** 28% of Gen Y think gym membership is important, compared to 17% of Gen X and only 9% of baby-boomers; 50% of Gen Y think sabbaticals are important, compared to 45% of Gen X and 13% of baby-boomers.

**In France, the market research company Ipsos conducted a study of employees aged between 20 and 25 in 2005** to mark the 20th anniversary of *La Tribune* (French financial newspaper). The study concluded that the young generation ‘is essentially characterised by a high degree of pragmatism and individualism’:

**Pragmatism:** 78% say they feel confident about their future at work, but 60% think they will be unemployed at some time during their career.

**Individualism:** 56% believe it would be better for everyone to pay for their own social welfare; 67% would like to set up their own company if they had the chance, and 64% say they would be interested in working abroad for a long period.

# X Versus Y-

## From the 'Precarious Generation' to the Expectations of the Gen-Yers

Interview with **Jean-Luc EXCOUSSEAU**, sociologist, April 2008

Those who manage Gen-Yers are often their immediate elders—the Gen X thirty-year-olds, who entered a difficult job market and were forced to unquestioningly accept the codes of corporate life. According to the sociologist, Jean-Luc Excousseau, the epicentre of the 'Gen Y earthquake' is right at the meeting point between Generations X and Y. He believes that if they can establish dialogue and exchange, this will help companies in their quest for truth and will foster well-being in the workplace.

### CAREER



Jean-Luc EXCOUSSEAU has a doctorate in sociology and is a graduate of the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (Paris). He is an expert on generations and age categories. Since 1986, he has worked as a freelance sociologist in a variety of fields ranging from consulting, lecturing at conferences and seminars, and conducting surveys in companies of varying sizes and sectors. He wrote *La mosaïque des générations, comprendre les sensibilités et les habitudes des Français* ('The generational mosaic: understanding the concerns and habits of the French'), published by Editions d'Organisation, October 2000.

### Gen Y makes up only '20% of the workforce and accounts for 80% of the problems'... why the buzz?

While Gen Y only make up 24% of the working population in Europe, compared with 27% for Generation X (30-39 year olds) and 49% for Baby Boomers, their arrival on the job market has had a far greater impact. The buzz created by this generation is the result of the clash between them and their immediate elders, Generation X.

### Y Gen versus X Gen: reasons for the clash

In Europe, when the thirty-year-olds arrived in the world of work in the 1990s, they used a chameleon-like strategy to adapt and assimilate into the work environment. This is in stark contrast to the individual self-assertion that has typified

the members of Generation Y. Why has Generation X been so ready to conform to the world of work without ever questioning the corporate codes? Because it is the precarious generation (temporary job contracts, contracts for young employees, etc.) that entered a saturated job market and had to accept what it was offered. So, this generation's conception of work has been influenced by its precarious and impoverished nature; today, a thirty-year-old employee earns 40% less than their 50-yr-old counterpart, compared with a difference of only 15% in the 1970s. Since 2000, a completely different kind of generation has been entering the job market—Generation Y. These employees are not afraid to assert their personalities, unlike Gen-Xers, who adopted an approach of conformity in order to be accepted. Gen-Yers are much sought-after

by recruiters, who are anxious to hire new blood before the inevitable talent shortage. So this new generation is in a strong position to insist that companies meet their demands, in a way that Gen-Xers were unable to do.

### What are Generation Y's expectations?

These employees are more materialistic, far more interested in actions than ideas, and are interested in seeing if there is any truth behind the words. This generation is all for establishing social or quality charters, and appreciates any measures to increase well-being in their company; at the same time, they will readily ask where the relaxation or smoking area is, whether the company has a Playstation they can play during their breaks, about the sports equipment available in the sports ...

... room, if the working environment has plenty of green plants, the colour of the walls, and so on. This generation has ideals like any other, but it also wants something more tangible. And it shifts between various extremes: it is capable of being both instinctive and mature, and expects the company to cater for all human registers, to be able to reflect while having a good time, and to work hard, but also to be able to have fun. This contrasts sharply with the generation of 35-year-olds, which is more concerned with efficient methods, procedures, and pre-established checklists. Generation X has, in fact, created quite a tough working environment, and for them relaxation and personal fulfilment are things to be pursued outside office hours. This means it tends to set the pace at work, which is all about speed and efficiency, and aims to get to the heart of the matter, to 'get the job over and done with'. Generation Y's attitude is to do the exact opposite: 'since we'll be working for a long time, we would rather ensure our working environment is a visibly pleasant one, and get along with our colleagues, and so on.'

### Expectations that are changing companies ... for the better!

Gen-Y's attitudes are interesting because their quest for the truth forces companies to reflect on whether they offer a fulfilling work experience. They will thus help to relieve the stress currently experienced in the work environment. When the Baby Boomers leave in their droves, the thirty-year-olds and Gen-Yers will be unable to fill the gap; companies will need to count on their forty-something employees to work longer. And this potential will be facilitated by the more flexible initiatives introduced by the Gen-Yers (flexible working hours, part-time work, etc.).

Gen-Yers will also bring about a return to local management, because this management style can provide them with new challenges each day and give them the extra spice they are looking for at work. By being precise and definite in their demands, i.e., explaining exactly why they are making them, their immediate superiors will be able to turn the established corporate rules into challenges to suit the Gen-Yers.

### The guiding principles of a new X-Y management relationship

**1) Concentrating on Gen Y demands:** Gen Y is like an elastic band—very effective when stretched! Give them short-deadline tasks to complete. Ask them specific things, in a precise way; explain very carefully what you expect from them. A young salesman may want to come into work wearing baggy trousers. He'll readily accept why it's not possible to do so if the manager explains it to him beforehand.

**2) Returning to local management:** Generation Y is difficult to manage from a distance. It is better handled in units of a maximum of ten people, where everyone is given 'challenges' and their progress is monitored on a daily basis.

**3) Inventing interactive management:** Generation Y is a generation that enjoys playing and reacting. It cannot stand pyramidal, top-down information systems. Interactive management means spending

more time with Gen Y, but results in a more enriching experience for everyone involved.

**4) Adopting a new type of teaching:** they love action, so put them in situations where they have to act! They must be left to make their own mistakes, because this is far more effective than showing them PowerPoint slides in the meeting room.

**5) Investing in material:** Generation Y employees need a neater working environment, where great attention is paid to small details. Look into the company's physical characteristics and environment.

**6) Awareness amongst all company employees:** prejudices and misconceptions about the different generations need to be cast aside through impersonal debate. Tackling problems in an objective way encourages people to share their concerns, an essential step to working out universally beneficial operational methods. ■

### Are you Radio Babies, Baby Boomers, Gen-Xers, or Gen-Yers?

**Radio Babies** were born before 1941. In theory, they should no longer be working, but in reality are present in political and economic circles.

They equate work with hierarchical systems, loyalty, and security. Their values are based on tradition, know-how, and heritage.

**The Baby Boomers** belong to the generation born between 1942 and 1967, and have imposed their codes on the workplace. They have been spoilt by a rich and individualistic civilisation, are entrepreneurial, and are very active in civil society. They are conformist in their daily lives, but are liberated at heart, and for them companies are places where one can find fulfilment in one's personality and ambitions. They're not ready to retire because they still feel like they're eighteen - even with thirty-five years' experience!

Their values are based on the ideals of the youth of the 1960s and 1970s.

**Gen-Xers** were born between 1968 and 1978. They entered the job market at a time when unemployment was high, and therefore - unlike the Baby Boomers - couldn't afford the luxury of deciding what they would like to do but rather did what they could do. They are mobile, and always on the lookout for a better job and wage. They are flexible, networked, eager to learn, and don't look to the company to bring them fulfilment.

Their values are based on ethics, pragmatics, citizen involvement, and mobility.

**Echo-Boomers** (Gen-Yers) were born between 1979 and 1990, and their arrival in the world of business has created a shockwave. They are very influenced by the multimedia revolution, and are neither passive nor rebellious; their main desire is to interact with others.

Their values include being part of the group, thrill-seeking, and instant gratification.

Source: *La mosaïque des générations*, (The generational mosaic) Jean-Luc Excousseau, published by Editions d'Organisation, 2000.

# Gen Y: Managing Human Relations Like Customer Relations

Interview with **Anne-Catherine DE DECKER**, Services Platform Director at France Télécom, April 2008.

About ten years ago, Anne-Catherine de Decker witnessed the entry of the first wave of Gen Y employees into Mobistar. Since then, she has moved on from Orange UK to France Télécom, where she has just taken on new responsibilities. She believes that an organisation's adaptability is the key to turning this generation into a major actor for innovation. And she believes that this adaptability is related to a HRM policy inspired by customer relations marketing techniques.



## CAREER

Anne-Catherine DE DECKER started out as a commercial engineer in the telecommunications sector in 1995, as Business Unit head for Belgium and Holland at RAM, where she was also part of the management board. A year later she was appointed IT director of Global One, and then spent seven years working for the Belgian operator Mobistar, where she was head of Quality and major transversal programmes. At Orange UK, she added to her duties by taking on responsibility for the upgrading of information systems. She has been director of international development of France Telecom's service platforms since March 2008.

### What's your immediate impression of the Gen-Yers?

'The young fear nothing and love change,' and yet the Gen-Yers seem to be just the opposite! They appear to be quite anxious as they start out on careers that are set to undergo many changes. Their realistic stance in the face of this challenge partly explains their materialism and their interest in rapid gains. That said, they are very clear about demanding fairness and consistency between the company's stated values and routine management practice. They are the first generation to see blunders that were previously hushed up; they are less compromising, and won't accept keeping secrets and holding onto information as levers for power. Another immediate impression is their technological know-how. But this distinctive fac-

tor is what is most likely to create a rift between them and their immediate elders. I think Generation Y is less self-confident than people think, and more self-centred and technologically confident—although this know-how needs to be used tactfully around older colleagues, as a failure to do so might create two disparate and mutually distrustful groups.

### At Orange UK, Generation Y has come under great scrutiny. Why so?

Companies must reflect the market they target—and the market is changing. Ten years ago, Orange was only a start-up with a novel value proposition; today, the company is a leader on some markets, and needs to learn how to reinvent itself. This capacity for reinvention depends on mobilising the younger generations

around a continuous innovation process. Orange has therefore initiated a range of specific actions since 2006, such as 'Dave', the name of a fictitious customer, and the 'Re-Ignite passion' programme. 'Dave' encourages the youngest employees, whatever their job and hierarchical position, to take part in continuous efforts to improve the company by submitting their ideas. By giving them an opportunity to show their worth, Orange has developed a form of participation that's more appealing for these young people, who are more egocentric and shyer than their elders. 'Re-Ignite Passion' is a transversal programme that was initially launched in the UK to improve customer experience. Generation Y has established itself at Orange and shown its worth as a catalyst for innovation, not only because it ...

... has forced companies to rethink and reformulate working methods, but also because it has reflected the customer base. In this context, a visionary and creative HR policy is essential for maintaining their interest.

### How can HR be creative and show vision in its management of Gen Y?

At Mobistar, where the HR department was particularly visionary, Gen Y's arrival almost ten years ago brought about introspection: how could they be won over aside from offering them the usual advantages of a complementary retire-

sharing. In addition, HRM decided that career accompaniment was outmoded. Now, Mobistar leaves career progress entirely up to the individual employee, with the company helping only to develop their market value through personalised block training programmes. Generally speaking, winning over and retaining Generation Y members means that the company must adopt the same approach to them as it does to its customers, by focusing on the individual interests of each business unit, or even sub-unit, to offer a range of suitable working products.

influence their future choice of employer.

### Are you optimistic about meeting the challenges posed by Generation Y?

Companies have no choice: Generation Y must become the catalyst for generating innovation in the Western world, because it's the only way to stay ahead of the emerging economies, which have stopped being low cost in order to place themselves higher on the value chain. In technology companies like ours, we are very familiar with this generation as they are similar to most of our customers and we therefore have no problems relating to them. But we are still faced with the challenges of successfully creating and maintaining a work environment that fosters wide-scale innovation, and getting Gen-Yers to actively contribute to this effort. This challenge involves adopting several fundamental practices: eliminate any difference between what the company does for its employees and what it does for its customers; improve career management; HR must participate in the company's strategy to define its ten-year plan by examining fundamental trends like demographic ageing and the expansion of the service sector; ensure total consistency between the employer's stated aims and managerial reality; finally, make people aware of the benefits of generational diversity in the workplace. ■

## 'Generation Y must become the catalyst for generating innovation in the Western world, because it's the only way to stay ahead of the emerging economies.'

ment scheme? Mobistar offered them evenly distributed stock options and developed services that targeted a better working life (dry cleaning, car washing, etc.). They also highlighted the singular advantages of the company's transversal culture—consisting of real interchange between commercial and technical departments—to win over young employees who are particularly appreciative of smooth and rapid information

Ideally, there should be no difference between a company's customer relations principles and its HRM. And in the same way that marketing takes an interest in potential customers, HRM should capture the attention of the younger generations before they even enter the job market. We shouldn't forget that as soon as an individual starts watching TV or playing a video game, they are receiving information about a brand that could

### From the Balanced Scorecard to Gen Y—the motivations of a committed manager

In March 2007, while based at Orange UK, Anne-Catherine de Decker was invited to attend the EFQM (European Foundation for Quality Management) Congress in Athens to give a presentation on Gen Y. And in the book *Above the Clouds* (A Project Inspired by EFQM, Greenleaf Publishing, March 2006) she wrote a chapter entitled 'Keeping the Y-ers on board'. Anne-Catherine de Decker is not a sociologist, nor does she have experience in HRM, but she explains her fascination for Gen Y through her 'passion' for the Balanced Scorecard, 'which promotes balance between all the employees. But it has to be said that shareholders still attract all the attention. So I have always tried to develop tools that the employees could use, and especially transverse governance models designed to make corporate strategy clearer and more easily shared: decision platforms, organisational models, and so on. These kinds of transversal initiatives, above and beyond classic HR measures, are necessary if we want to see the emergence of a virtuous circle which is still underestimated: a happy employee = a happy customer = a happy shareholder.'

