

Business School of Economics and Law Berlin
Department of International Business Administration Exchange

Bachelor Thesis

Generationenkonflikte in der Unternehmensführung
- Generation Conflict in the Corporate Management -

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Preface

The following bachelor thesis is inspired by two of my closes friends since they obtained a leading position at their workplace at an early age. They had to face a lot difficulties with their much older workforce. I have to thank them since they alert me of the topic and made me aware of its importance.

I also want to thank Frau Kaiser and Prof. Dr. Rieger for accepting this subject and helping me with words of advice.

Index of Abbreviations

GG	Fundamental Law
AGG	General Equality Law
BabyBoomers	Digital Immigrants
Generation X	Genration Golf
Generation Y	Digital Natives, Millenials
HR manager	Human Resource Manager
HR department	Human Resource department

I. Introduction

1. Difficulty and Ambition

This Bachelor's thesis—'Generation Conflict in the Corporate Management'—deals with the prevention of generational issues, which is gaining more and more importance due to demographical changes, as well as the changes in the work environment. The topic is immense enough to fill more than one Bachelor's thesis; hence, this paper focuses on the difficulties faced by a young senior manager when leading a much older workforce. Even though this conflict is not a new phenomenon, it has gained significance due to the fact that the situation now arises more frequently.

The goal of this Bachelor's thesis is to provide fresh insight into the conflict between a young senior manager and his older workforce. It provides guidance on how such conflict can be resolved or even prevented. It attempts to improve the comprehension on both sides as well as to help work with and not against one another.

2. Structure

In this section, an outline of this Bachelor's thesis—Generational Conflicts in Corporate Management—is presented. First, the thesis gives a short introduction to highlight the ambition as well as to define the terms senior manager and leadership, to bring every reader on the same level, since there are many different definitions—especially for the term 'leadership'. This paper concentrates on one of the most common definitions.

Afterwards, it discusses the legal requirements, especially 'the principle of best choice' and 'the general equality law' of Germany. These are a primary reason that this topic is significant.

Thereafter, the clash between generations is highlighted—particularly the differences in the value system and the changes in the work environment. The latter also addresses the rapid increase in the use of technology in companies—not only in the office, but also in all industrial sections and crafts. Furthermore, the impact of the internet and social media on a business is factored.

The next part shows the reasons for these conflicts, such as the demographic change, the changes in the work environment, and women as senior managers. This part focuses especially on the different generations—such as the baby boomers and generation X—since their differences are the main reason such strife arises. Generation Y, which is in the focus of this inspection, is too young for the ‘old’ workforce, but too old for the even younger generation. These facts are supported by an empirical investigation in terms of interviews, in which supervisors talk about their experience with the topic ‘Generational Conflicts in Corporate Management’. People from different economic sectors have been selected in order to gain an overall impression.

Afterwards, this Bachelor’s thesis provides a short digression around ‘start-ups’ and how they deal with generational conflicts. Start-ups are a special type of organization, because they are often founded by a group of young people. Within the scope of this paper, the age-dependent conflicts that can arise are discussed.

Eventually, this thesis provides guidance on how to deal with or even prevent such conflicts. This part mostly discusses the theoretical facts in addition to the experience of the senior managers who were part of the empirical investigation. Finally, there is a summary that outlines the findings.

3. Definition: Senior Manager

When an employee is promoted or recruited to be a senior manager, his/her duties change from being just a task receiver to being someone who is in charge of a workforce and who gives instructions. One of his/her major duties is to resolve conflicts between employees; if there were rules for everything, no manager would be needed. This section provides a definition of the term senior manager and his/her tasks.¹

The role of a ‘manager’ is a relatively new, even though there were always people in charge of others. In the beginning of the 20th century, companies were mostly led by their owners and their production areas were led by technical supervisors. Most of them had no experience in leading a workforce. In the middle of the 20th century, the manner of conducting a business changed due to the rapid growth of the markets and the rising liquidity demand. To cope with these changes in the work environment, specifically

¹ Cf. Klutmann, Beate: Führung -Theorie und Praxis, Hamburg 2004, P. 16, 18

trained managers were recruited. That was the first step towards the present-day understanding of the term 'manager'. Today, the conducting of business is more and more in the hands of senior managers. Family-led businesses such as 'Dr. Oetker' and 'Tchibo' are becoming rare and technical supervisors no longer have as much power as they did earlier.^{2 3 4}

The role of a senior manager includes coordinating all tasks his/her department is involved in, as well as making sure the daily business runs smoothly. A manager's largest remit is communication. By the way a supervisor communicates with others, his/her leadership style can be labelled. The following illustrates these three styles further: First, the interpersonal remit, which is segmented in the presenter, which involves ceremonial duties, the leader, which alleges his employees and the liaison, which stands for the relationships outside of the company. Second, there is the informal role, which combines the observer, distributor, and speaker. Finally, there is the decision role, which represents the duty to decide on all important matters inside the company, between employees, and between the company and the outside world. Mostly, a senior manager is expected to have a good deal of working experience. Thus, it can be said that a senior manager's tasks are not only about major decisions about the company's future and competitiveness, but also about representation, observation, and the employees.^{5 6}

4. Definition: Leadership

This section deals with the term 'leadership' and its differences to 'management', which are often associated or even considered to be the same. It is important to know the difference, because as soon as people start working together, coordination is needed. This applies not only at work, but also in all other aspects of life. Even though there is

² Cf. Heinloth, Stefan: Praxishandbuch für Führungskräfte -Mitarbeiter überzeugen Führungsfähigkeiten entwickeln Systematische Methoden anwenden, München 2011, P. 11

³ Cf. BusinessDictionary 2017: manager [online]

⁴ Cf. Deutsche-Unternehmer-Familien 2017: Familienunternehmen: Das Herz der deutschen Wirtschaft [online]

⁵ Cf. Klutmann, Beate: Führung -Theorie und Praxis, Hamburg 2004, P. 17

⁶ Cf. The Balance 2016: The Role and Responsibilities of a Manager [online]

no set definition, this thesis highlights one of the most common ones, in order to bring every reader to the same level of knowledge.^{7 8}

In general, the term ‘management’ is identified as a process of ‘drawing up formal plans, designing organizational structures, and monitoring results’⁹, while ‘leadership’ is ‘about coping with change, established by developing a vision of the future [...], and inspiring them to overcome them’¹⁰. Leadership is a social process defined by a reciprocal goal- and output-driven interference with the workforce to fulfil the given tasks, as well as a structured way of performance. Furthermore, it provides a mission statement to engage the employees. As a result, management can be seen as an executive organ that implements the policies and guidance developed by a leader.^{11 12}

Thus, leadership, in the context of a workplace, is about engaging the employees, as well as creating an overall vision. This way, employees are not only following orders given by their superiors, but also engaging with the company and feeling the need to enhance the enterprise. It is important for a senior manager to also be a leader, because otherwise he/she can only manage the economic side of a company but never motivate the employees to reach their full potential.

II. Legal Requirements

General conflicts in corporate management can also be observed from a legal perspective, by looking at laws that prevent discrimination and help create a better work environment for every employee, as well as for the enterprise. Since different countries have different approaches towards this topic, this Bachelor’s thesis focuses on the German law, specifically on the ‘principle of best choice’ and the ‘general equality law (AGG)’.

⁷ Cf. Hentze, Joachim; Graf, Andrea; Kammel Andreas; Lindert, Klaus: Personalführungslehre - Grundlagen, Funktion und Modelle der Führung, Bern, Stuttgart, Wien 2005, P.1

⁸ Cf. Robbin, Stephen; Judge, Timothy: Organizational Behaviour, New Jersey 2009, P. 419

⁹ Cf. ibid

¹⁰ Cf. ibid

¹¹ Cf. Hentze, Joachim; Graf, Andrea; Kammel Andreas; Lindert, Klaus: Personalführungslehre - Grundlagen, Funktion und Modelle der Führung, Bern, Stuttgart, Wien 2005, P.21

¹² Cf. Robbin, Stephen; Judge, Timothy: Organizational Behaviour, New Jersey 2009, P. 419

Both represent a way in which the German government enforces equality in all public areas, including the work environment. Furthermore, the AGG is an answer to the European Union's guidelines against discrimination introduced in 2000.¹³

In the next section, the effects of these legislations on the work environment, especially in the context of a much younger senior manager leading an older workforce, are highlighted.

1. The Principle of Best Choice

The principle of best choice (Art. 33, Par. 2 GG), which comes under the German fundamental law (GG), is viewed as an example that should apply not only to public authorities. The major aim of this law is to ensure that the candidate who is most suitable in terms of his/her skills, proficiencies, and performance is hired or promoted. As already mentioned, this law does not only apply to the public authorities; but for this Bachelor's thesis, the content is viewed as an example of what could be introduced to every area of the economic market.¹⁴

The principle of best choice aims to ensure that only the most qualified candidate gets promoted. Therefore, the so-called 'vitamin B' can no longer be used to bypass someone who would have been much more eligible. Furthermore, the law calls for a validation of the minimum latency, to make sure that it stays within reason and is not used to exclude a certain number of people. Moreover, an internal job advertisement should be posted in advance, so that every employee has the opportunity to apply. Again, this is a mechanism to ensure that no one is purposefully excluded from the process. Additionally, every employee needs a fair performance evaluation, in order to be compared to other applicants. This results in a positive side effect as an appraisal is guaranteed. In the best-case scenario, it leads to a regular feedback about the performance. Lastly, the principle of best choice stipulates that if more than one candidate is found suitable through his/her performance evaluation, another

¹³ Cf. Antidiskriminierungsstelle des Bundes 2016: Das Allgemeine Gleichbehandlungsgesetz (AGG) [online]

¹⁴ Cf. Prof. Eckstein, Christopher: Der Grundsatz der Bestenauslese nach Art. 33 Abs. 2 GG in der neuesten verfassungs- und verwaltungsgerichtlichen Rechtsprechung, 2009, P. 86–87

performance-based criterion has to be added. Thus, until a qualified employee is chosen, an objective, performance-orientated selection procedure is intended.¹⁵

The principle of best choice is a good example of how application procedures can be conducted without ‘vitamin B’, gender stereotypes, and generational conflicts. Anyone contravening this law faces a penalty. As always, it can be argued that the law is not infallible; however, it can be seen as a good example of how the government can contribute towards an objective selection procedure.

2. The General Equality Law (AGG)

The AGG, which was introduced in 2006, has its origin in European instructions against discrimination due to ethical, religious, racial, and ideological reasons, as well as handicaps, sexuality, and age. This law is meant to help people who face discrimination from a private citizen, such as a landlord, attendant, or employer. Within the scope of this Bachelor’s thesis, the discrimination based on age by an employer is the centre of attention.¹⁶

This law includes principles which apply to not only the employer but also the employee. It highlights the rights and duties possessed by both sides from the beginning of an employment ad or application until the end of the employment. A contravention is punished indemnity or comprehension. When looking at discrimination because of age, the first thing that comes to mind are people who face trouble because of being older, but it can also apply in the other direction. Phrases such as ‘wet behind the ears’ or the fact that young people are often stereotyped according to their generation (see IV. Cause of Conflict, 3. The Generation Conflict), as well as the fact that they not paid the same as their older colleagues for an equal amount of work and responsibilities, are evidence that discrimination against younger employees exists. These prejudices are one of the reasons that a young senior manager has to face difficulties in order to earn respect from his/her colleagues, as well as appreciation for his/her work.^{17 18 19}

¹⁵ Cf. Prof. Eckstein, Christopher: Der Grundsatz der Bestenauslese nach Art. 33 Abs. 2 GG in der neuesten verfassungs- und verwaltungsgerichtlichen Rechtsprechung, 2009, P. 86–87

¹⁶ Cf. Antidiskriminierungsstelle des Bundes 2016: Das Allgemeine Gleichbehandlungsgesetz (AGG) [online]

¹⁷ Cf. *ibid*

In case of discrimination, it is the employer's duty to take measures against this kind of treatment. At the same time, it is the employer's task to take precautionary steps, such as examination of the work environment, offering further training, and verifying the recruitment procedure to make sure that every individual in the company is being treated equally.^{20 21}

In the end the, the AGG is a good start in the right direction, but it can only help to improve the work environment if all kinds of discrimination are considered and not only the most common ones.

III. The Generation Conflict

A generational conflict is caused by differences between various generations—such as the differences in value systems and a revision of qualifications—which are the focus of this chapter. To begin with, generational conflict is not a modern phenomenon; it has taken place throughout history. As always, the younger generation has other demands when it comes to employment and job enhancement.

In the following sections, first the differences in the value systems are considered, followed by the revision of qualifications. Both are examples of causes of generational conflicts.

1. Differences in Value Systems

This section focuses on the different value systems that can be found among a company's employees. Not only do the values differ among the various generations, but also inside the cohorts, for our value system is formed mostly in our younger years, when parents and other role models are seen as examples. Through their impact,

¹⁸ Cf. Personnel Today 2015: Age equality: five examples of discrimination against young workers [online]

¹⁹ Cf. Victorian Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission: Age discrimination - Workplace [online]

²⁰ Cf. ibid

²¹ Cf. Antidiskriminierungsstelle des Bundes 2016: Das Allgemeine Gleichbehandlungsgesetz (AGG) [online]

individuals decide what is desirable and what is not. Value systems ‘contain a judgemental element in that they carry an individual’s ideas as to what is right, good, or desirable’²². Each individual has his/her own ranking of values, which influences what their desire and how they act. This section highlights a set of values important to present-day society.²³

According to Milton Rokeach—creator of the Rokeach Value Survey—the value system of each individual can be divided into two sets—the terminal values, which represent what a person wants to achieve in life, and the instrumental values, which determine how we act in order to reach our final goals. The second set can also be seen as a price to gain our overall goal. Some examples of each set are given below:^{24 25}

‘Terminal Values

- A comfortable life (a prosperous life)
- An exciting life (a stimulating, active life)
- A sense of accomplishment (lasting contribution)
- Equality (brotherhood, equal opportunity for all)
- Inner harmony (freedom from inner conflict)
- Happiness (contentedness)

Instrumental Values

- Ambitious (hard-working, aspiring)
- Broad-minded (open-minded)
- Capable (competent, effective)
- Courageous (standing up for your beliefs)
- Imaginative (daring, creative)
- Honest (sincere, truthful)²⁶

These different values can be found in the generational studies about the baby boomers and Generations X, Y, and Z, as they have developed different demands due to the environments in which they grew up (see IV. Cause of Conflict, 3. The Generation

²² Cf. Pearson 2013: Values, Attitudes, and Their Effects in the Workplace, P. 74 [online]

²³ Cf. ibid

²⁴ Cf. ibid

²⁵ Cf. Weber, James: Managerial Value Orientations: A Typology and Assessment, Wisconsin, USA 1990, P. 39–40

²⁶ Cf. Pearson 2013: Values, Attitudes, and Their Effects in the Workplace, P. 74 [online]

Conflict). As mentioned earlier, individuals tend to learn from their role models in early life. This does not mean that they aspire to the same things these role models do; instead, they can have a total different opinion on a topic. For example, if a child sees his/her parents only working and never having any free time, it could lead to a desire to have a more equated work-life balance when the child is grown up. Since many people are influenced by the same characteristics, it can be assumed that cohorts have related value systems.^{27 28}

When individuals meet others with different terminal and instrumental values, it can lead to conflicts, which is a problem, particularly at work. For instance, if one desires a comfortable life (terminal value) and uses ambitions (instrumental value) to achieve this goal, he/she can show incomprehension towards someone else, who might seek happiness (terminal value) though a work-life balance. Having less ambition for success and material status symbols could be mistaken for sloth. Therefore, managers in particular have to be aware of the different values people may have, to distinguish whether a person just has other goals in life or is in fact not the right person for the given position. Later in this Bachelor's thesis, the course of conflicts is discussed, with a focus on the several generations.²⁹

2. Revision of Qualifications

In recent years, the required qualifications of employees have changed with the promotion of technologies used by companies to be competitive on the market. We are no longer in need of merely physical strength to fulfil our tasks—for example as industrial workers during the invention of the assembly line—but instead have to adjust to technological innovation. Nowadays, our brains are required more than ever to accommodate a lifelong learning process to keep up with the fast-changing environment. Furthermore, in most areas, employees are no longer just task receiver,

²⁷ Cf. Weber, James: Managerial Value Orientations: A Typology and Assessment, Wisconsin, USA 1990, P. 39–40

²⁸ Cf. Pearson 2013: Values, Attitudes, and Their Effects in the Workplace, P. 74 [online]

²⁹ Cf. *ibid*

but are expected to find their own solutions to complex problems. Autonomy is presumed to be one of the most important features of an employee.^{30 31}

The crux of the present-day revision of qualifications is the digital economy. With faster servers and better internet, globalization is reaching new levels. It is no longer enough to just understand the principles of the position entered; understanding the effective use of modern technology is also essential. Core skills, apart from the fluent use of a computer, include a high level of communication skills. Company hierarchies are getting flatter, leading to more teamwork and self-autonomy. Meetings with people all over the world on a daily basis is becoming common in more and more companies. Some might argue that this only applies to office work, but even in other sectors, such as the industrial or agricultural sector, new technologies demand skilled employees. Some even argue that today we are living in the 'digital revolution'.^{32 33}

The World Wide Web (and everything connected to it) and new technologies are on the rise, leading to more and more jobs being digitized, or even completely new positions being designed, such as social media commissaries. On the other hand, this trend leads to the omission of many position in the industrial and agriculture sectors, or even the elimination of some jobs. Employees are being substituted by machines, causing the ones remaining to be in need of higher qualifications. Is the trend that started with the computer era, towards fewer but more skilled employees rather than a bigger workforce, continuing? Perhaps it is. However, on the other side, the economy is facing the first impacts of the demographic change (see IV Cause of Conflict, 1. The Demographic Change), reducing the amount of available human resources.³⁴

Yet, it is not only the requirements of a company from its employees that change; employees also have new demands from their employer. With the possibilities offered by the 'digital revolution', with its mobile phones and the World Wide Web, it is possible to work flexibly, even working from the so-called 'home office'. But the drawback is that it opens doors for the 24/7 worker, who is always available. When we are on holiday in another country, it is still possible to check and reply to mails or

³⁰ Cf. Hougaard, Rasmus: ONE SECOND AHEAD, London 2016, P. 1–2

³¹ Cf. Nahles, Andrea, Editor: Bäcker Gehard; Lehndorff, Steffen; Weinkopf, Claudia 2016: Den Arbeitsmark verstehen, um ihn zu gestalten, Wiesbaden P. 37–38

³² Cf. *ibid* P. 38–39

³³ Cf. Hermann, Dorothea; Hüneke, Knut; Rohrberg, Andrea 2012: Führung durch Distanz, Wiesbaden P. 31–32, 35

³⁴ Cf. Möller, Joachim, Editor: Bäcker Gehard; Lehndorff, Steffen; Weinkopf, Claudia 2016: Den Arbeitsmark verstehen, um ihn zu gestalten, Wiesbaden P. 49–50

answer important phone calls. Since we are now able to work whenever and wherever we want (and need), how do people draw the line between free time and work? It is clear that the demand of flexible working hours is greater than ever before. Additionally, employees now demand new benefits, such as an enterprise internal preschool or extra holidays, to compensate their 24/7 availability. Furthermore, work should not become monotonous, since people want to be challenged and want to experience lifelong learning. All these new needs are leading companies towards a revision of their standards to meet the demands.^{35 36 37}

Therefore, revision of qualifications take place not only on the employees' side, but also on the employers' side. Companies have to react to the shortage of qualified employees and address the demands specified by the workforce in order to win 'the war for talents'. On the other hand, employees can no longer expect to be just task receivers, but instead have to maintain themselves on the labour market.

IV. Cause of Conflict

In this section, the causes of generational conflicts are highlighted. First, this thesis deals with the demographic change and how it affects the present-day work environment, since the predicted decline in the number of qualified employees has heralded the 'war for talents'. Second, it discusses the current changes in the work environment, to provide an overview of present-day events. Afterwards, the generational conflicts are discussed, with Generation Y in the focus. This section deals with all generations, from the baby boomers to Generation Z, which is now starting to enter the employment market. Finally, the topic of 'women in executive positions' is addressed, as it is a special case of generational conflicts, since women are also often the victim of stereotypical accusations.

³⁵ Cf. Nahles, Andrea, Editor: Bäcker Gehard; Lehndorff, Steffen; Weinkopf, Claudia 2016: Den Arbeitsmark verstehen, um ihn zu gestalten, Wiesbaden P. 38–39

³⁶ Cf. Möller, Joachim, Editor: Bäcker Gehard; Lehndorff, Steffen; Weinkopf, Claudia 2016: Den Arbeitsmark verstehen, um ihn zu gestalten, Wiesbaden P. 50–51

³⁷ Cf. Hougaard, Rasmus: ONE SECOND AHEAD, London 2016, P. 1–2

1. The Demographic Change

In the last few years, demographic change has gained more and more importance. The topic is no longer ignored by most of the economic world; instead, it is at the centre of attention in many analyses and predictions. The reason for this awareness is that many developed countries will face a series of difficulties in the near future. Although demographic change is a global issue, this paper mostly focuses on its impact on and consequences for Germany.³⁸

First, demographic change and its consequences on all areas of a country are defined. Second, its specific impact on Germany is highlighted. Afterwards, the relevance of the topic 'Generational Conflicts in Corporate Management' is discussed.

Demographic change in general is a long-term shift in the population pyramid, which leads to multiple changes in a society. For many developed countries, this change is attributed to a 'below replacement fertility combined with rising life expectancy' (Demographic Change in Germany 2008, P. 9), i.e. an ageing population. This process cannot be reversed with short-term solution such as an appeal to reproduce or a welcoming immigration policy. As always, this phenomenon cannot be seen as a general fact that applies to every region of a country. Instead, fertility can vary, depending on the area. For example, usually more babies are born in the countryside than in a big city. But on the whole, the fertility is below replacement, which leads to an ageing society. There are multiple reasons for demographic change, such as a shift in value systems, improvement in healthcare, which leads to higher life expectancy, and the emancipation of women. Nevertheless, they all lead to the same social and political consequences for a nation, including the funding 'of local and regional authorities, real estate, infrastructure, schools, child care [...] etc.'³⁹, and in some countries the financing of 'pensions, health, and long-term care'^{40, 41}.

Germany, which can be classified as a developed country, is also facing the effects of an ageing society. As in all nations challenged by demographic change, the fertility and mortality rates are going down, resulting in social and political issues (see above). In

³⁸ Cf. Hamm, Ingrid; Seitz Helmut; Werdning Martin: Demographic Change in Germany- The Economic and Fiscal Consequences, Berlin, Heidelberg 2008, P. 9

³⁹ Cf. ibid

⁴⁰ Cf. ibid

⁴¹ Cf. ibid P. 9–10

1995, Germany had a total population of 81.8 million, including 12.7 million people aged 65 or above (16%), 51.5 million between 20 and 64 years (63%), and 17.6 million under the age of 20 (22%). The average age was 38. By 2005, the total population had grown to 82.4 million, with 15.8 million people aged 65 or above (19%), 50.1 million between 20 and 64 years (61%), and 16.5 million under the age of 20 (20%). The average age had risen to 41.8. Even though the total number of German citizens had gone up, a trend towards lower fertility and mortality rate could already be seen. In 2015, the total population had dropped again to 81.3 million, with 17.3 million people over the age of 65 (21%), 49.4 million between 20 and 64 years (61%), and 14.6 million under the age of 20 (18%). Again, the average age had increased, this time to 45.6 years. Through comparison, an obvious trend towards an older society can be seen. In 20 years, the number of people over the age of 65 has increased from 12.7 million (16%) to 17.3 million (21%), while the number of citizens under the age of 20 has decreased from 17.6 million (22%) to 14.6 million (18%). The average age has risen from 38 to 45.6 years. If this trend continues, by 2025 the population will presumably drop to 80.5 million, including 19.8 million people aged 65 or above (25%), 46.6 million between 20 and 64 years (58%), and 14.1 million under the age of 20 (18%). The average age will supposedly rise to 46.8 years. Therefore, the demographic change towards an older society will presumably continue, leaving Germany to face the accompanying issues (see above).⁴²

Due to this trend, there will be fewer and fewer people in the employable age, leading to a labour shortage in all economic sectors. This trend can already be seen in Bavaria for example, where small and medium-sized companies are fighting to compete with large enterprises for qualified employees and apprentices. Even though the government has created a number of incentives to raise the fertility and increase the immigration, this trend cannot be reversed by short-term solutions. Therefore, it can be seen as one of many reasons that there will be more and more young employees to hold the position of a senior manager.^{43 44}

⁴² Cf. DESTATIS Statistisches Bundesamt 2017: Bevölkerungsentwicklung, Demografischer Wandel [online]

⁴³ Cf. Hamm, Ingrid; Seitz Helmut; Werding Martin: Demographic Change in Germany- The Economic and Fiscal Consequences, Berlin, Heidelberg 2008, P. 9–10

⁴⁴ Cf. Loebe Herbert; Severing Eckart: Strategien gegen den Fachkräftemangel- Kompetenz und Wissensmanagement im Mittelstand, Bertelsmann Verlag 2011, P. 7–13

2. Changes in the Work Environment

People have always worked to not only achieve material goods, but also express themselves, and therefore, together with technological improvement, shape their work environment. This section gives an overview of the work environment evolution, from the industrial revolution to the present day, and with a forecast of the future.

During the first industrial revolution—shaped by the steam engine and the rise of new transportation systems—people started to move into the big cities. The need for a qualified workforce emerged, leading to the development of new jobs. But everything changed with the beginning of the second industrial revolution. The assembly line made highly paid and qualified workers unnecessary for increasing the production. Everyone could work in the factories, whereas educated or not. As a result, the work environment became characterized by long workdays and work-weeks, with poor conditions and low pay. Workers who did not content to this could easily be replaced. More people would move into the bigger cities to answer the demand for more employees, living in tiny apartments. These conditions only changed with the creation of labour unions, which demanded more humane treatment. The third major change faced by the work environment was the invention of the computer, leading factories to a new era. Clearly, the winners of the second industrial revolution—the low-qualified workers—were now on the weak side, as fewer people were needed to operate the new technology. Furthermore, higher qualifications were needed to handle and service the new machines.

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Today, we are on the verge of the fourth revolution—the digital one. The question is whether the trend will continue towards fewer but much more qualified employees. Will employees with fancy degrees overtake the positions of people in lower rungs of the career ladder? Some point out that this has already started, as there are more and more highly educated university graduates who cannot find a job. Therefore, companies have started setting the yardstick higher, leaving the less qualified people as the losers. This implies that some university graduates and young employees are entering management

⁴⁵ Cf. Möller, Joachim, Editor: Bäcker Gehard; Lehndorff, Steffen; Weinkopf, Claudia 2016: Den Arbeitsmark verstehen, um ihn zu gestalten, Wiesbaden P. 55–56

positions, for example that of a team leader, because they are offering their higher qualification for a lower post and price.⁴⁶

On the other hand, many argue against it, indicating that the ‘war for talents’ has begun, and demographic change (see above) is ahead of us, leaving us with an average age of 46.8 years by 2025 and not enough young people. Therefore, companies have to fight for the most skilled employees in order to keep themselves in the running. Perhaps both perspectives are partially true. Companies might presumably focus on the most qualified candidates, while the decline of the workforce size might be attributed to demographic change.^{47 48}

Beside the great factors that shape our work environment, there have been many small changes since the introduction of the computer. The fact that most workplaces are now highly dependent on computers and the internet, together with great interconnection, leads to the fact that enterprises are no longer distinct. For the employees, this leads to a need for lifelong learning to keep up with the newest technologies and software. On the other hand, it also opens the doors for new opportunities, such as the ‘home office’ and flexible working hours, which particularly benefits women, since they are able to arrange their work with the family life (see more 4. Women in Executive Position). A drawback of that is that this leads to a demand for the 24/7 availability of employees, increasing the pressure on them over the last decade.^{49 50}

These changes in the work environment can lead to conflicts, not only among employees, but also between the manager and his/her staff. One of the biggest issues is the use of technology, as not everyone is so keen to use it constantly. In particular, the older workforce, including the baby boomers and the Generation Xers (see below), might prefer some ‘old school’ practices. Furthermore, the introduction of flat hierarchies in many companies might meet the modern demands, but can also lead to

⁴⁶ Cf. Möller, Joachim, Editor: Bäcker Gehard; Lehnndorff, Steffen; Weinkopf, Claudia 2016: Den Arbeitsmark verstehen, um ihn zu gestalten, Wiesbaden P. 56–57

⁴⁷ Cf. Hamm, Ingrid; Seitz Helmut; Werdning Martin: Demographic Change in Germany- The Economic and Fiscal Consequences, Berlin, Heidelberg 2008, P. 9–10

⁴⁸ Cf. Loebe Herbert; Severing Eckart: Strategien gegen den Fachkräftemangel- Kompetenz und Wissensmanagement im Mittelstand, Bertelsmann Verlag 2011, P. 7–13

⁴⁹ Cf. *ibid*

⁵⁰ Cf. Möller, Joachim, Editor: Bäcker Gehard; Lehnndorff, Steffen; Weinkopf, Claudia 2016: Den Arbeitsmark verstehen, um ihn zu gestalten, Wiesbaden P. 56–57

unclear structures. Finally, the need for flexible hours and more ‘home office’ time might be incomprehensible, since the regular office structure was never questioned up to now. Moreover, it needs some trust to actually let an employee work from home.^{51 52}

Thus, it can be said that the work environment has come a long way since the first and second industrial revolution, with their poor working conditions. Today, people are no longer tied to their offices, but instead (if allowed) can work wherever and whenever they want. The constant flow of new technologies aims to simplify the everyday work. But is this new environment good for everybody? The next section—‘The Generational Conflict’—provides an overview of the different generations, from the baby boomers to Generation Z, and seeks to show how they, among others, feel about the new work environment.

3. The Generation Conflict

The following section will focus on Generation Y and its relations with the generation of baby Boomers, X, and Z. Each generation is distinguished by its own characteristics and can be assigned to its own epoch. First, it is important to know that every generation has tensions with the one before it. The value systems of the previous cohort are often only partly inherited, which leads to a claim about the decline in values. This is not a new phenomenon; it can be seen in history. In this Bachelor’s thesis, the focus is on the work environment and how these differences affect it, especially when a Generation Y manager has to lead a Generation X and baby boomer workforce.⁵³

A company should be aware of these characteristics, since qualified employees are a factor of success and at same time are becoming a rare resource due to the demographic change (see above). A special focus is set on Generation Y, since not only is it the youngest generation on the employment market, but it also includes the young senior managers studied in this thesis. The ‘digital natives’—another name for the Generation

⁵¹ Cf. Nahles, Andrea, Editor: Bäcker Gehard; Lehdorff, Steffen; Weinkopf, Claudia 2016: Den Arbeitsmark verstehen, um ihn zu gestalten, Wiesbaden P. 38–39

⁵² Cf. Oertel Jutta: baby boomer und die Generation X - Charakteristika der etablierten Arbeitnehmer-Generation, Springer Verlag 2014, P. 33–35

⁵³ Cf. Appel, Wolfgang; Dittgen-Michel, Birgit: Digital Natives - Was Personaler über die Generation Y wissen sollten, Wiesbaden 2013, P. 4

Y people—have their own expectation and conditions when it comes to employment, which brings them to the focus of attention regarding employer branding.⁵⁴

There are many different time periods in which the Generation Y is located, but mostly people born from the 1980s onwards are the ‘digital natives’. They are the generation after the baby boomers and are often associated with a change in the work environment. Another name for them is ‘Generation Why’, which implies their need to scrutinize what had until now never been questioned, especially in their work environment. For this generation, the classic lifecycle—education, work, family, and later on retirement—is not essentially what they want. They are much more the generation of the ‘no-kids family’, the ‘career singles’, and phenomena such as metrosexuality. Furthermore, the ‘digital natives’ are the generation that grew up with the internet and the connected technology, smartphones, and tablets. Right now, they are entering or establishing themselves on the employment market.^{55 56}

Beside historical events like the cold war and the terror attacks and financial events such as the crisis and the uniform currency in Europe, three major influencing factors can be seen. The first is globalization, which leads to an interconnectedness around the world, not only from an economic point of view, but also from cultural and social ones. This new environment has led, on the one hand, to more freedom and a more openminded and multicultural generation, but on the other hand to greater awareness of the world’s downsides, like world hunger, wars, and the ecological destruction. It has also given this generation the opportunity to discuss topics with people all over the world, leading to a cohort that questions more, especially their own country and surroundings, including their workplace. They want a job with an engagement and flexible work hours. Additionally, due to the continuously growing economy and the rising demand of skilled employees, they are aware of their qualifications and therefore are more self-confident than the previous generation. They are often called self-orientated by other generations. Nevertheless, they are willing to work after hours and are often available 24/7 on the phone.^{57 58 59}

⁵⁴ Cf. Dahlmanns, Andreas: Generation Y und Personalmanagement, München u. Mein 2014, P. 12–14, 16–17

⁵⁵ Cf. ibid P. 16–18

⁵⁶ Cf. Ewinger, Dunja; Ternés, Anabel; Korbeel Juliane; Towers Ian: Arbeitswelt im Zeitalter der Individualisierung, Wiesbaden 2016, P. 13–14

⁵⁷ Cf. Dahlmanns, Andreas: Generation Y und Personalmanagement, München u. Mein 2014, P. 18–19, 22–23

Second, the technological improvement has had a great impact on Generation Y, especially since the World Wide Web was created in 1994. It opened up a new channel of communication, with which the ‘digital natives’ grew up. Furthermore, a new way of free-time entertainment has been created through gaming consoles. However, this has not only had positive effects on this generation; it has also led to exhaustion, since they do not substitute and instead do everything at once. Furthermore, mobile phones have led to a constantly available generation, which has increased their stress further. It is said that with this generation the triumph march of technology and the use of the internet, with all of its aspects, will be accelerated further.^{60 61}

It can thus be said that Generation Y is not only a very self-confident generation of people who question their environment and are aware of their labour power value, but also a generation that is more exhausted, due to the attitude to do more than one thing at once. They are the generation that aspires to individual fulfilment more than being part of the crowd.

1. Generation Y and the Baby Boomers

First, the relation between Generation Y and the baby boomers is examined. The baby boomers are characterized by a high birth-rate and can be categorized as being born shortly after the Second World War, in between 1946 and 1962. The end of the war led to a high birth-rate. Men were coming home from the frontline and new hope arose. After Germany was separated into east and west, mostly west Germany was supported during the reconstruction. Still, both countries experienced an economic growth, which was another reason for the higher birth-rates. Additionally, the work environment improved, due to the rising impact of labour unions.^{62 63}

Despite the cold war, the baby boomers grew up in a stable environment with a collective attitude, leaving less space for individuals. Therefore, the baby boomers had

⁵⁸ Cf. ZDF 2017: Erklärstück Generation Y [online]

⁵⁹ Cf. AMA -American Management Association 2017: Leading the Four Generations at Work [online]

⁶⁰ Cf. Neef, Andreas; Schrill Willi, Theis Björn 2009: Die Revolution der Web-Eingeborenen [online]

⁶¹ Cf. Dahlmanns, Andreas: Generation Y und Personalmanagement, München u. Mein 2014, P. 25-27

⁶² Cf. ibid P. 14–15

⁶³ Cf. Oertel Jutta: baby boomer und die Generation X - Charakteristika der etablierten Arbeitnehmer-Generation, Springer Verlag 2014, P. 33–35

to justify themselves more. Rationality was dominant in all aspects of life, including consumer behaviour. This attitude can be explained by the crises experienced by this generation. They spend their money on things they need. This often leads to a clash with other generations with a more wasteful consumer attitude. Nevertheless, the baby boomers, due to their high completion, have great social skills, are good team players, and know how to enforce themselves. They have an established a value system with the law at the centre.^{64 65}

When comparing Generation Y and the baby boomers, the most important difference is seen in the value system. Generation Y is an opulent generation that does not operate only reasonably, while the baby boomers do. Additionally, the 'digital natives' do not believe in the classic lifecycle of education, work, family, and retirement. Instead, they aspire to self-fulfilment, which can be seen, for example, in the urge to have job enhancement. As the baby boomers are the more conservative ones, they often presume that Generation Y is selfish, demanding, and lazy.^{66 67 68}

Another big difference is that the 'digital natives' are, as the name implies, the first generation to grow up with the World Wide Web and new technologies such as smartphones and gaming consoles. The baby boomers, on the other hand, had to learn these new technologies and are often called 'digital immigrants'. Despite using computers and the internet at work, they often still print mails to keep a copy. This can lead to strife if the younger generation tries to help them when they get extremely confused about the new technologies. It is important that this training is done in a respectful way, instead of pointing out that using these technologies is easy. Another important fact is to understand that baby boomers may prefer to be verbally informed about changes in the working environment, instead of receiving an email or reading an article in the company's website. Therefore, it is important for young managers to not only communicate verbally with them, but also take the time to listen to their demands and suggestions. Through direct communication, Generation Y can learn about the other

⁶⁴ Cf. Dahlmanns, Andreas: Generation Y und Personalmanagement, München u. Mein 2014, P. 15–16

⁶⁵ Cf. Oertel Jutta: baby boomer und die Generation X - Charakteristika der etablierten Arbeitnehmer-Generation, Springer Verlag 2014, P. 33–35

⁶⁶ Cf. ibid

⁶⁷ Cf. AMA -American Management Association 2017: Leading the Four Generations at Work [online]

⁶⁸ Cf. Appel, Wolfgang; Dittgen-Michel, Birgit: Digital Natives - Was Personaler über die Generation Y wissen sollten, Wiesbaden 2013, P. 4

cohorts and mediate their own. This way, a degree of respect on both sides can be achieved.^{69 70 71}

Thus, it can be said that if Generation Y is to work with baby boomers, they have to understand the other cohort, especially that they are ‘digital immigrants’ and might not want to switch completely to communication through the internet. Furthermore, Generation Y must accept that the other generation might not be as demanding as they are when it comes to the workplace and therefore must make an effort to not appear selfish.

2. Generation Y and Generation X

Second, the affiliation between Generation Y and their preceding Generation X is in the centre of attention. Generation X, also called ‘Generation Golf’, comprises people born between 1960 and 1980. Their cohort does not have a birth-rate as high as that of baby boomers, which can be attributed to the use of oral contraceptives. Unlike the baby boomers (see above), who grew up in a stable environment shaped by strong economic growth, Generation X faced a number of economic depressions, e.g. the oil crisis. As a result, an easy access into working life was no longer given, leading to a strong need for security and materialistic possessions. ‘Career, wealth, and security are important factors’⁷² for the Generation Golf, with the result that starting a family was no longer a high priority. One reason was that the fertility rate was going down even more. On the other hand, they were the first to demand a work life balance instead of devoting their lives to the company, as well as the first to embrace changes in the work environment.^{73 74 75}

Generation X was the first to grow up with the media revolution, experiencing a greater spread of global and local news. Furthermore, this resulted in a higher adaptivity

⁶⁹ Cf. Oertel Jutta: baby boomer und die Generation X - Charakteristika der etablierten Arbeitnehmer-Generation, Springer Verlag 2014, P. 33–35

⁷⁰ Cf. AMA -American Management Association 2017: Leading the Four Generations at Work [online]

⁷¹ Cf. Dahlmanns, Andreas: Generation Y und Personalmanagement, München u. Mein 2014, P. 14–15

⁷² Cf. ibid, P. 16

⁷³ Cf. ibid, P. 15–16

⁷⁴ Cf. Collier, Elissa: Workplace Warfare: baby boomers, Gen X and Gen Y [online]

⁷⁵ Cf. Oertel Jutta: baby boomer und die Generation X - Charakteristika der etablierten Arbeitnehmer-Generation, Springer Verlag 2014, P. 29

towards technology and a great interest to learn more. The Xers are the first to strive for a lifelong learning process and also to ensure their position within the company. The indicators that best describe this generation are: 'autonomy, equality, being well-informed, ambition, reliability, rationality, and environmentalism'.^{76 77 78 79}

Comparing Generation X and Y, it is noticeable that they have a similarity. Both have grown up with a technology revolution. Since Generation Xers have a strong drive towards lifelong learning, they adapted well to the World Wide Web. Furthermore, both generations are quite demanding towards their employer, but while the Xers are mostly interested in task selection to improve their skills, the 'digital natives' are demanding in more than one area. When leading Generation X, it is important to provide task varieties, not only to ensure that these employees can grow through their own work, but also to give them opportunities for their own decisions.

3. Generation Y and Generation Z

Third, the relation between Generation Y and Generation Z is highlighted. Even though Generation Z is just starting to enter the labour market, they are already exerting influence through internships, apprenticeship and trainee programmes. It is presumed that some of the positions that Generation Z will occupy have not even created so far.⁸⁰

Generation Z comprises people born between 1995 and 2010, who are often said to have grown up with a smartphone in their hands. They are even more 'digital natives' than Generation Y, and place a greater focus on social media than any previous cohort. Furthermore, they have started to shift their social life more into the internet, involving a daily use of apps and websites such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. To appeal to them as a company, it is necessary to have a well-designed website as well as a great social media presence.^{81 82}

⁷⁶ Cf. Dahlmanns, Andreas: Generation Y und Personalmanagement, München u. Mein 2014, P. 16

⁷⁷ Cf. *ibid*, P. 15–16

⁷⁸ Cf. Oertel Jutta: baby boomer und die Generation X - Charakteristika der etablierten Arbeitnehmer-Generation, Springer Verlag 2014, P. 29

⁷⁹ Cf. AMA -American Management Association 2017: Leading the Four Generations at Work [online]

⁸⁰ Cf. *ibid*

⁸¹ Cf. *ibid*

⁸² Cf. Bedürftig, David 2016: Was Generation Z vom Berufsleben erwartet [online]

They are just as demanding as Generation Y, but with other intentions. For them, ‘regular working hours, no temporary employment, and structured work environment’⁸³ are the most important factors. Furthermore, they request a clear division between work and free time, as they have seen their parents and older relatives bring work home and be available to their employers even after office hours. Due to this highly demanding attitude, they are often seen as self-orientated and uninterested in engaging with their work.⁸⁴

Comparing Generation Y and Z, the most striking coincidence is that they both grew up with new technologies—the World Wide Web and mobile phones—making them ‘digital natives’. Besides this, both are very demanding in their own ways. Apart from these similarities, they do not have much in common. Generation Y is more willing to engage with their workplace, even happy to work after hours and take work home. When leading Generation Z, it is important to create an appealing surrounding, and to accept their demands at least partly.

4. Recap

In the end, it can be said that Generation Y is too young for the older workforce (baby boomers and Generation X), but too ‘old’ for Generation Z. They often have the feeling of not doing it right. It is important that they take the time to communicate and understand the other cohorts, specially baby boomers and Generation X, which place great importance on verbal exchange. Since the Millennials are often seen as self-orientated, it is important to demonstrate that they can also listen to the options and suggestions of others and also appreciate the loyalty that others feel towards the company. Considering this, they might achieve the respect of their colleagues. Additionally, Generation Y has to accepted that not all members of the prior generations want to switch completely to computers, internet, and smartphones but instead may prefer to have something in their hands. Moreover, Generation Yers have to be aware of the next generation of people, who are even more ‘digital native’ than themselves, and accept that they might not have the same value system. But since the demographic

⁸³ Cf. Bedürftig, David 2016: Was Generation Z vom Berufsleben erwartet [online]

⁸⁴ Cf. ibid

change has a great impact on the employment market, qualified employees are becoming a rare resource, leading to the 'war for talents', leaving not only the young managers with a difficult situation. They need to keep the older employees engaged with the company, as well as creating an attractive environment to attract the younger generation. This can only be achieved if an understanding for all other parties exist.

4. Women in Executive Position

Women in executive positions face a special type of conflicts in corporate management. In this Bachelor's thesis, we focus specially on young women in management positions, as they face not only generational conflicts, but also 'age-old gender stereotypes'⁸⁵. Even through the work environment has changed, many still believe that management is in fact a domain for men and women are better off in social professions, such as kindergarten teaching and nursing. Still, many women are aiming for a management position, through Bachelor's and Master's degrees.^{86 87}

In Germany, the 'AGG' (see II. Legal Requirements, 2. The General Equality Law) and the 'proportion of females' helps women achieve their goal. The latter is a law that sets a floor on how many women should work in a company. If ignored, a financial penalty will be imposed. This law was extended in May 2015 with the stipulation that women should be part of management. One reason is that women in executive positions are a good change, because they often approach situations differently compared to men. Women are often more focused on the human and social component, which can be seen in the fact that many women work in HR positions. Furthermore, they prefer a cooperative leadership skill that focuses on the 'We' concept. Women are good at creating matching teams, as they know most of the relations between the employees and therefore consider who can or cannot work efficiently with one another. Consequently, women might be better at motivating employees as well as making sure the work-life balance is taken into account. This behaviour reduces costs for the employer, for it increases the job satisfaction and reduces absenteeism due to illness. However, they succeed on not only on the internal side but also on the external, due to the fact that they

⁸⁵ Cf. International Labour Organization: Woman in Business and Management, 2015, P. 15

⁸⁶ Cf. Ibid, P. 7, 17

⁸⁷ Cf. Bundesministerium der Justiz und für Verbraucherschutz 2015: Gleichberechtigte Teilhabe: Die Frauenquote kommt! [online]

have a high-quality management style, not putting the focus on sales in the first place. All these positive features are not meant to put women above men; rather, they aim to show that in fact female managers can be an advantage for a company. In the end, the best is to have a balanced management tier, to benefit from the leadership skills of both genders.^{88 89}

Because women face not only generational conflicts but also gender stereotypes, it is important to change the attitude, adjustment, and values of a company towards this issue. A fixed proportion of females is not a final solution to help women enter management positions, as sentences like ‘They only achieved this position due to the quota for females!’ are often heard. Enterprises have to understand the advantages of having female managers. To reach this point, companies have to advertise features in their job ads instead of focusing on old gender stereotypes. On the other hand, women need to stick to their different attitudes towards leadership. At present, many women have only achieved a higher position by acting like a male manager. If women want to maintain their position in the management tier, which they certainly do, they need to stick to their values to prove what they can do and not pretend to be something else. Otherwise, they will not be satisfied in the long run.^{90 91}

Young women, on the one hand, might find it easier to work with different generations in their team, as they are more sensitive and have a higher focus on the human and social factors. On the other hand, they face not only generational stereotypes but gender ones as well. Specially with an older team, the emotional aspects of a female manager can be mistaken as weakness, and therefore her instructions could be questioned. All in all, a young woman does not necessarily have it harder; it ultimately depends on the team she has to face.

V. Illustrations

While dealing with the topic ‘generational conflicts in corporate management’, questions were designed to learn about the experiences of senior managers in regard to

⁸⁸ Cf. Bundesministerium der Justiz und für Verbraucherschutz 2015: Gleichberechtigte Teilhabe: Die Frauenquote kommt! [online]

⁸⁹ Cf. Buchenau, Peter: Chefsache Frauenquote, Wiesbaden 2016, P. 61–62, 64–65

⁹⁰ Cf. Ibid., P. 64, 66

⁹¹ Cf. International Labour Organization: Woman in Business and Management, 2015, P. 28–31

this issue. These questions will highlight how these people have achieved their positions, what conflicts appeared, and how they were resolved. Moreover, the senior managers were asked if they would change anything afterwards.

Unfortunately, I was not able to interview enough people for an empirical investigation; therefore, I can only provide an illustration of the situation in the economic market. The reason some senior managers refused to answer my questions was mainly that they are still employed in the company and did not want to speak poorly about their employers.

A detailed interview transcript can be found at the end of this thesis (see Annex). The interview questions included the following:

Interview questions

1. How did you achieve this position?
2. Have you ever worked with an older workforce before?
3. How did you handle the situation?
4. How did you resolve the problem?
5. How did you mitigate the condition?
6. Did your superior help you?
7. Did you attend any training programme to help you with the situation?
8. In retrospect, would you change the way you handled the issue?

Chris Viertel

The first person to be interviewed was Chris Viertel, who works as a technical manager, as well as team leader. Further details about his company's name and structure are not given, following his request.

When he started working for this company, he was relatively new in his career, since this was only his second job. When the old technical manager resigned because of health issues, Chris Viertel was offered this position. He had no previous management or leadership training and was not offered one when he started the job as a technical manager and team leader.

His first counterperson with whom he had trouble could be placed in the baby boomer cohort, since she is 56 years of age. She would not accept Mr Viertel as the manager, as he was younger than her, as well as new to the company, while she had been there for many years. All other colleagues were Generation Xers, with whom Mr Viertel had no problems.

In particular, they had disagreements about how the work had to be done. The counterperson was gridlocked and could only think stereotypically. Even when asked repeatedly to implement alterations, she would disregard the instructions. When asked how he handled this situation, he answered that at first, he ignored this kind of behaviour, believing it might go away after some time, once they were acquainted with each other. After some time, the situation did not change but rather intensified. Therefore, Mr Viertel decided to talk with the counterperson to resolve these conflicts. He negotiated in a non-aggrieved manner with her. Even though Mr Viertel did not show sympathy towards her—for she did not respect a clear job instruction—he tried to find a trade-off. While they had their discussion, the counterperson seemed to understand the weight of the situation and showed realization of her circumstances. Chris Viertel believed the condition would improve, but was angered when he found her ignoring the agreement again.

After he realized that he could not solve the problem himself, he sought help from his supervisor, explaining the situation and demanding that his co-worker be transferred to another position, away from his team. Chris Viertel declared that this strife undermined his work and guidance towards the team. His supervisors did not want to negotiate between him and the counterperson, but instead decided in collusion that it would be best to dismiss her. Therefore, he did not receive direct support from his superior; rather, they chose the easier way out.

When asked if he received any training before entering the management position, he declared that none was offered. During his qualification, he also had not received any leadership education. Thus, Chris Viertel had to face these strife without background knowledge. During the interview, he also mentioned that up to now he had still not received any form of further education, even though another new co-worker from the same cohort caused the same difficulties.

Finally, Mr Viertel was asked if he would change anything retrospectively. He responded that he would. For him, the reason these conflicts escalated was that he could

not take drastic measures due to his inexperience and fear of negative consequences for himself. Furthermore, he believes that he is too kind towards his co-workers.

Matti Enderlein

The second person to be interviewed was Matti Enderlein, who now works as an engineer and shift manager in an industrial firm, which is his second managerial position. He also started in the position of a manager at a young age, almost immediately after he received his degree. Like Chris Viertel, he also faced a row of conflicts with his co-workers, which are discussed below.

When asked how he achieved both his manager positions, he replied that during his Master's degree he proactively applied for the position of a team leader in a midsize company and was hired. For the second job, it was a bit of luck and vitamin B he said, since he wanted to cancel an appointment with another company, due to the fact that he would no longer work for the first. Hearing this, his old employer (during his Master's degree) offered him a job. Furthermore, he narrated that also in his private life he gained a superior position in the red cross through hard work.

Matti Enderlein was asked if he had in any of his positions an older workforce underneath him, which he affirmed. During his first employment, depending on the assignment, he had between two and 15 people in his team, mostly much older than him. Now, at his new job, there are usually around seven people whom he supervises, also mostly older than him. Since in his case, there are two examples, they will be divided into Companies A and B.

During his work in company A, the greatest problem faced by Matti Enderlein was that his employees questioned his instructions, though they usually carried them out. Additionally, if a mistake happened, the workforce did not inform him directly, but instead went straight to his superior. He responded to this kind of behaviour by only using mail communication for important topics and instructions. Furthermore, he tried to improve the working atmosphere by changing his cautious, as well as listening more to what his team had to say. Still, the condition did not improve. Therefore, Mr Enderlein decided to seek his superior's help, while informing him of the situation at hand. Instead of receiving help, Mr Enderlein only received fatherly advice. His concerns were waved aside, and he was even partly negatively evaluated. In the end, Mr Enderlein assumed

that these conflicts, together with the fact that he was the last manager to be hired, led to his dismissal. When asked if he would do anything another way, he answered that he did his best, but the team did not want to work for a ‘youngster’.

Matti Enderlein is now working for Company B, where he also faced some difficulties concerning his staff, but not as severe as in the one before. He reported that his position was freshly created—positioning him between the management of the firm and the previous shift leaders, who had to be demoted. Therefore, as expected, he was not warmly welcomed. Similar to the situation in Company A, his staff questioned his instructions, not believing that he was fit for this position. Furthermore, workplace safety was often an area of dispute. But in contrast to Company A, it helped that he listened to their concerns and at the same time let them explain how operating cycles had been done up to now. He communicated openly with his team, while still showing the authority needed to lead. Problems were discussed with his superior during his performance review, which takes place regularly. Even though Mr Enderlein has to solve the problems himself, he receives support. In short, Matti Enderlein is pleased with where the course is leading, expecting to wipe out most of the conflicts in the near future.

In neither job did Matti Enderlein get further training in leadership, even when the first problems arose. It can be said that—especially in company A—he was expected to find a solution himself. His advantage was that he in fact had received this kind of training during his volunteer job at the red cross, leading to a better understanding of how to handle this situation. Mr Enderlein is convinced that further training and better understanding of the workforce are the best ways to avoid or remedy conflicts between the manager and his staff.

Fabian Müller

Third to be interviewed is Fabian Müller, soon to be manager of his own office, called BonnFinanz AG. Since his graduation at the Mittelbrandenburgische Sparkasse, he has continuously worked hard to reach a higher position. Now in his late 20s, Mr Müller has reached his goal.

Since he is only starting out in his management position, the questions differ from the ones the other candidates were asked. The aim to this interview was to get an idea of how people feel about the upcoming challenge, as well as to understand their wishes and hopes. Therefore, the questions are more future-orientated than the original ones (the exact wordings are given in the annexure).

First, Mr Müller was asked about his occupational deployment. Before his apprenticeship at the Mittelbrandenburgische Sparkasse, he worked in a call centre and later for a mortician. He claims that this variety of jobs will help him, since he has got to know many different types of people and therefore can read them better. During these years, he discovered his passion for the banking sector.

Mr Müller was then asked, how he achieved his new position at the BonnFinanz AG, to which he answered that he had been searching in employment websites for a suitable position. There, he found the job advertisement and applied. In the following weeks, he had multiple appointments with the HR manager and the regional management. In the end, Mr Müller received the job, also with the option to later assemble his own team. When asked if he already knows his current team, he said no.

Furthermore, Fabian Müller was asked about his expectations from his new staff and if he was worried that he might not be acknowledged as a superior. He declined, saying that he believes that his prior experience will help him enforce his position and help him negotiate, if necessary. In the worst-case scenario, Mr Müller will receive support from his superior, even if it means transferring the employee to another department.

Finally, the interviewee was asked if he would like to receive further leadership training or if he has already obtained some. Fabian Müller agreed that even though he is confident about his skills it would be worthwhile to learn more about the topic. Therefore, he is happy that his new employer plans to send him for training, to improve his skills further.

Thus, it can be said that Fabian Müller is confident about his future at BonnFinanz AG.

Rieke Pollmann

The last person to be interviewed was Rieke Pollmann, who will soon begin a management position in her family business. Her brother, who has already started there,

is facing some difficulties, not only due to the change of position, but also because of his youth. During her first apprenticeship, she worked as a hotelier in the accounting sector. Even though she should not have been in a management position, she indirectly became the team leader.

First, she was asked how she achieved this position. She answered that after her exchange year, she applied for an apprenticeship in accounting at a hotel. Her co-workers were mostly aged between 50 and 60, and even though they were all very friendly and helpful, she noticed that the use of computers was minimized as much as possible. Since she had never worked with an older staff before, Ms Pollmann could not compare this situation to others. As already mentioned, Ms Pollmann achieved this position not through the normal way of being promoted. Instead, she indirectly promoted herself, as her superior did not take responsibility and was not leading the team. Thus, over time, Ms Pollmann started taking over his job, as well as changing the technique. Therefore, she no longer was an apprentice, but instead a manager. At first, the interviewee was delighted, but later on, after missing out on appreciation and the financial bonus, she was dissatisfied. She even questioned herself why there was no appreciation.

After this experience, Ms Pollmann became an uncompromising manager. She worked together with the HR department and guided appraisal interviews. She even went to the management to get a co-worker transferred. Furthermore, she accepted that most of her co-workers would question her instructions, especially when it came to new directions about computers. What Ms Pollmann appreciated was that changes she launched were completely supported by her superior. Furthermore, she was asked if she felt less accepted as the manager, due to her sex, which she dissented, as most of her staff was female. Even with the male co-workers, Ms Pollmann did not feel less in control because of her being a woman. Lastly, she was asked if she had received any form of further leadership training, which she declined. Ms Pollmann assumed that since she was only the 'official' manager of the department, no one offered something like this to her. However, she has never asked for it either.

All in all, Ms Pollmann would not aim for a management position the same way she did. Instead, she wants to first finish her education and get more experience with people of different generations. This way, she expects to be more prepared when entering the family business.

Recap

The interviews above are of four different people, in the same situation. Two of them are still facing the setting, one has quit after finishing her apprenticeship, and one will enter his new position in the coming weeks.

Three of them—Matti Enderlein, Chris Viertel, and Rieke Pollmann—have experienced similar problems. First of all, the instructions given by them would be questioned and sometimes even ignored. Second, their position would be doubted because of their youth. Lastly, they all had an older workforce, with no one from Generation Z.

Furthermore, there were similarities shared by only Matti Enderlein and Chris Viertel, as neither of them received any help from the superior. They had to face their problems alone and without any training in leadership. The only support option was to dismiss the problematic team member. Rieke Pollman may have received help because after all she was ‘only’ the apprentice.

When comparing these three to Fabian Müller, it can be said that he represents what the others were before they worked in a company. All of them had a cheerful spirit towards the topic in the beginning, but after facing a row of conflicts they were brought back to reality. Perhaps if Fabian Müller were to be re-interviewed in a couple of months, his feelings about a management position at a young age may change. I will certainly question him again.

When comparing their stories with the sections above, some striking features can be observed. Most of all, the generation theories about the baby boomers, Xers, Yers, and Zers are reflected. Though this does not mean that everyone from these cohorts is the same, the degree of similarities is still stunning. Furthermore, the different value systems and the revision of qualifications can be spotted. For example, most of the co-workers were not as fluent with computers as the four ‘digital natives’. Additionally, their beliefs of how work should be done often differed from the interviewees. Whether or not the demographic change had an impact on the fact that they received the management position could not be detected. To get a better understanding of this, a higher number of people would have to be interviewed.

All in all, the illustrations mirror the theory mentioned above. Therefore, we still lack information about how to work with others and face generational and gender-specific stereotypes. Since this Bachelor's thesis only provides a small view of the labour market of Germany, these findings cannot be generalized.

VI. Start-ups

This section deals with the topic of 'start-ups', specifically entrepreneurship, due to the fact that this special form of a company is very common at the moment. When looking at Germany, one of the most attractive cities to found a start-up is Berlin. This paper highlights why start-ups are so popular right now and how they are also facing the generational conflicts. First, the differences between 'classic' companies and a start-up structure is considered. The Bachelor's thesis aims to provide a general overview of the topic, as well as putting a focus on the striking differences. Furthermore, it defines the most notable features of a start-up. Second, the generational conflicts that can arise in this special form of a company will be at the centre of attention. In all, this section aims to show that in fact all kinds of company structures can face generational conflicts, and therefore it is important to be aware of the evidences of a rising clash. In the end, a conflict between employees does not only have financial consequences; unmotivated workers will not reach their full potential and important resources will be lost. In times of a rising 'war of talents', this could be a disadvantage for the economic market.⁹²

1. The Different Company Structure

In this section, a comparison between a classic company structure and a start-up is the focus of attention. Start-ups are usually small companies founded by a handful of people, usually in their younger years, with a new or innovative business idea that is new on the market. According to Ripsas and Tröger, the term 'innovative' can refer to the technology as well as the business model. When the enterprise is launched, the product is already mostly or completely developed. Further, a business model is already

⁹² Cf. Neumann, Michael: Wie Start-ups scheitern, Wiesbaden 2017, P. 7, 9

designed. Since the office accommodation and further needed resources require more investment, most start-ups seek financial support from their families, friends, and near ones. Thus, one striking difference between a start-up and an established company can be seen. The start-up relies on the financial support of a third person, while the company is well-secured. Therefore, the classic company positions are stable and mostly without limitation, in contrast to entrepreneurship.⁹³

Entrepreneurship can be defined as a business in its early state, after the development, no older than 10 years. They seek a strong, continuous growth. To minimize cost, it is common for the founders to be actively involved in the production and implementation of the manufactured product or service, as well as in the sales, marketing, and all other departments. It is even possible that in the early state, the shareholders are also the only employees. Moreover, it has to be noted that a start-up is not a sustainable enterprise and contains a high risk of failure.^{94 95}

By comparison, a classic business model usually involves product lines and sectors that are already established on the market, with competitive firms, such as wholesalers and financial service providers. These enterprises have already passed the early state. Furthermore, the classic business model also includes companies founded around an already existing product or service, such as a craft enterprise.⁹⁶

When focusing on the employees, start-ups often offer more flexible working hours, as long as the assessment is done in time. Additionally, there is a lot of room to develop oneself and grow with the tasks, since they have less specific working procedures. On the other hand, this leads to a higher time pressure, which can easily overstrain employees. In comparison, processes in an established company are well-organized, with clear structures, litigations, and authorities. This means a stable environment for all employees, but less creative problem-solving. If problems arise with the products, a start-up has to react fast, which leads to a massively stressful situation for the employees, as their job can depend on the success of the manufacture. In contrast, a declining product might be produced longer in an established company, as there is no need for a drastic change. These situations often lead to the start of the innovation process of a new line. Hence, the employees have to worry less about the security of

⁹³ Cf. Neumann, Michael: Wie Start-ups scheitern, Wiesbaden 2017, P. 7, 9

⁹⁴ Cf. Ibid, P. 7–9

⁹⁵ Cf. UNICUM Karrierezentrum 2016: START-UP & Selbständigkeit - Startup-Life vs. Konzernalltag [online]

⁹⁶ Cf. Neumann, Michael: Wie Start-ups scheitern, Wiesbaden 2017, P. 8

their position. Another distinction is the meeting structure. Start-ups have less formal tasks. They often discuss topics ‘on the fly’ or at the workplace. This provides more time for the work, but leaves more space for mistakes or wrong interpretations. On the contrary, an established company has more meetings—often weekly or even daily (depending on the position in the company and its size)—which results in clear operating instructions. Furthermore, there is always a superior, or someone responsible for the project, who can answer questions or provide guidance. Lastly, the introductory training is not similar, as start-ups will often provide only a small or even no period of practice, throwing the new employee into the cold water, due to the fact that their resources and time are limited, while the established company will give a detailed introductory training.^{97 98}

Thus, there are differences between start-ups and established companies at the structural level, as well as at the organizational level. Most striking is that start-ups distinguish themselves through a casual work environment and innovative ideas, while established companies have a more conservative and rigid environment. From the employees’ point of view, the preference will differ, depending what they seek in a work structure and environment.

2. Generation Conflicts in Start-ups

Even though start-ups are young companies—not older than 10 years—mostly consisting of people from the same generation, at some point generational conflicts can arise. While not every start-up is majorly different from the classic structure of an enterprise, most are—due to their young age, casual work environment, and innovative business model. This section deals with the generational conflicts that can arise in start-ups, and also between them and an established enterprise. Lastly, such conflict can occur due to different expectations in regard to cooperation, which is based on the rising demand of companies to engage with start-ups to push their innovations.

Although most employees of a start-up are from the same cohort or born at the end of the previous generation, generational conflicts can arise in another context. In this case,

⁹⁷ Cf. UNICUM Karrierezentrum 2016: START-UP & Selbständigkeit - Startup-Life vs. Konzernalltag [online]

⁹⁸ Cf. Neumann, Michael: Wie Start-ups scheitern, Wiesbaden 2017, P. 7–9

the focus is more on the period of time an employee has already served in the company, as employees who have been there longer might put others beneath themselves. Most employees do not bring much work experience, as they have just finished their degrees; therefore, 'older' workers might put themselves above others. As a result, the ones with a higher age of service might believe that newer employees are less dedicated.

Another form of generational conflicts in start-ups is between them and established enterprises. A cooperation between these two different players on the economic market is becoming more and more common, as companies have realized the value of start-ups in the innovation contest and therefore have started opening up. It is possible for both sides to sustainably profit from cooperation, but only if potential conflicts can be overcome.

One reason for arising conflicts can be the massive gap between the company culture, goals, and economic structures. The start-up has a casual structure, with new innovative ideas. The enterprise, on the other hand, has an established market position, with lots of experience. Second, the entrenched company may take the lead, believing the other to not have enough knowledge. This can lead to the belief that it is an employment rather than a cooperation. Thus, the start-up might feel short-changed.

Another conflict issue is that start-ups often wish for more empathy towards their situation and interests, as well as more respect and tolerance. Furthermore, they often resent that the established enterprise does not listen to them and reduces the flow of information to them to a minimum. Sometimes, it is even hard to reach a contact person. Moreover, bigger companies are often not willing to take a risk, which is necessary for the best performance. Lastly, it is often criticized that in the end they do not have an even operation on the market, but are often only mentioned somewhere. Thus start-ups often feel more like a means to an end, instead of a partner. This conflict arises because a more experience company does not see the younger one as an equal business associate, due to the latter's short period of time on the economic market.

Thus, the greatest clashes between a start-up and an established company arise when the expectations from a cooperation are not similar, as a result of which one side feels offended or left out. Therefore, it is vital that both sides—especially the big players—need to understand that a good cooperation is the result of an honest and frequent

communication and an understanding for the other party. If this is adhered, both companies can have a long-lasting relationship, with benefits on each side.

VII. Guidance

This section features guidance about the topic ‘Generational Conflicts in Corporate Management’. The previous sections show different reasons that generational conflicts can occur, as well as a number of special cases, such as ‘Women in Executive Positions’ and ‘Start-ups’. In general, it can be said that most of these suggestions can also be applied to conflict resolutions in general. Furthermore, they are not absolute answer, but instead aim to support.

First of all, the young manager should be aware of his/her staff. It may help to inform ourselves of the cohort to which our employees belong. As mentioned before, the theory of the generation baby boomers, Xers, Yers, and Zers is not absolute evidence about one’s beliefs and values, but it may explain the way they act. For example, baby boomers place importance on direct conversation instead of being informed about changes or instructions through mail. Thus, if the young manager communicates mainly through emails, they might see this behaviour as a form of disdain. In this example, the clash could be resolved if the young manager starts having direct interactions with his employees. Being aware of the different characteristics of generations can lead to a better understanding. Fink explains that there are key factors about what one’s leadership towards the staff should be like, so that the team is engaged and a satisfying work environment is created. First, the manager should take part in his/her employees’ plans. He/she might join them for lunch once in a while. Second, the staff should have the opportunity to be involved in some decision-making. Third, the employees should feel appreciated and supported, as this not only lets them talk openly about issues, but a job engagement is created as well. Furthermore, it is essential that they feel well-treated. Lastly, one should always keep in mind that promises should be kept, or at least attempted. This way, the staff can see that their commitment is leading to something. In short, it is important to get to know about the employees’ values and beliefs, as well as having a good interaction with them.^{99 100 101}

⁹⁹ Cf. Klutmann, Beate: Führung: Theorie und Praxis, Hamburg 2004, P. 100

Another way to avoid or resolve generational conflicts (and also most other clashes) is to have good and open-minded communication. If there are already clashes between two employees—in this Bachelor's thesis between a young manager and his staff—one solution would be to examine one's communication. It might be that further training could improve his/her way of interaction and therefore also the leadership. One way of direct communication is through feedback, in which the manager has to find a neutral way to talk about the other person's cautions and how they appear to him/her. In case the conflict becomes too intense, a superior should have a feedback talk with both parties involved. The following section provides guidance on how a feedback conversation should be led.^{102 103}

First, how the message is passed on is important. The communication should be through the word 'I' instead of 'you', as this sounds less negative. Furthermore, it puts the focus on how the person who receives the feedback appears to his superior. Second, it is significant that only the conflict is addressed. The feedback should not be used to criticize everything, but instead be a productive way to mediate between the manager and his employee. Third, the young manager who gives the feedback should always remember that he has to describe the situation and how he feels about it; under no conditions should he evaluate the caution of the other. Again, he/she should keep in mind that this talk is about mediation and not for payback. Moreover, this conversation should be held close to the latest clash. This way, both are still on the topic. Lastly, positive things about the employee should also be said.¹⁰⁴

Another way to improve is to be aware of the four sides of communication, given by Friedmann Schultz von Thun, who improved the five basic axioms given by Watzlawick. His theory shows how the four sides of a message are received in the communication square. One of the four sides is the factual level, in which the broadcaster informs about the matter in a neutral way. The second side is the self-announcement, where clues about the private situation and emotions of the broadcaster are transmitted. The third side discloses the relationship between the submitter and the message receiver, from the broadcaster's side. Lastly, the plea side enunciates the

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Oertel Jutta: baby boomer und die Generation X - Charakteristika der etablierten Arbeitnehmer-Generation, Springer Verlag 2014, P. 33–35

¹⁰¹ Cf. Dahlmanns, Andreas: Generation Y und Personalmanagement, München u. Mein 2014, P. 14–15

¹⁰² Cf. Heinloth, Stefan: Praxishandbuch für Führungskräfte, München 2011, P. 147

¹⁰³ Cf. Carl, Notger; Fiedle, Rudolf; Joras, William; Kiesel, Manfred: BWL kompakt und verständlich, Wiesbaden 2008, P. 172–173

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Ibid,

appeal of the submitter. Thus, each message has a factual level, a self-announcement, a relationship side, and an appeal to the receiver. Through this, Friedmann Schultz von Thun explains that a message has more aspects than neutral information and that in some cases, this information is not, or only partly, transmitted, because the other three sides are too strong. Therefore, the young manager should try to be aware of his four sides. If he/she is uncertain, a consultation with a third, uninvolved person should be done.¹⁰⁵

Hence, it is important that the young manager has good communication skills, which should be evaluated, because one big reason for conflicts is a lack of, or wrong interaction. Especially in the case of generational conflicts with generation baby boomers or Xers, a lack of communication is fatal, since these generations value face-to-face contact. Moreover, wrong interaction can lead to a poor public image. Lastly, one should always keep in mind that a person cannot not communicate.^{106 107 108}

Thus, the focus should be on understanding the other parties, as well as on good communication, for this is the best way to deal with any form of clashes, including generational conflicts. Therefore, it is wise to send all employees—especially the young manager—for further training in communication and leadership. Furthermore, the manager should get to know his/her people and their values and beliefs, as only if one knows the people he/she is working with can an appropriate reaction be made. In the end, even with all good intentions, it can be that the conflict cannot be solved. Then, the only solution is to relocate the employee or manager to another team, or even dismiss him/her from the company, as seen in the example of Chris Viertel in the section above.

VIII. Summary

To conclude, a recap of the topic ‘Generational Conflicts in Corporate Management’ and all its aspects is provided. As mentioned earlier, this issue is much bigger than what a Bachelor’s thesis can cover, but this paper aims to provide an overview, as well as a general guideline for how to deal with arising conflicts. In the beginning, the paper talks

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Heinloth, Stefan: *Praxishandbuch für Führungskräfte*, München 2011, P. 151–153

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Carl, Notger; Fiedle, Rudolf; Jorasz, William; Kiesel, Manfred: *BWL kompakt und verständlich*, Wiesbaden 2008, P. 172–173

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Heinloth, Stefan: *Praxishandbuch für Führungskräfte*, München 2011, P. 151–153

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Klutmann, Beate: *Führung: Theorie und Praxis*, Hamburg 2004, P. 118

about the governance work against discrimination, through the AGG and the principle of best choice. Both laws are a good start against the stereotypes faced by people in everyday work life; however, they are not a final solution. Together with the promotion of females (which of course only applies to women), these legislations open doors for statements such as: ‘You only got the position because of the promotion of females’. Therefore, there is still a lot of room for improvement from the government side.

The reason generational conflicts occur is that each person and cohort has different values and beliefs, which influence how they interact with other employees. Further, the work environment has changed over the last few decades, letting older employees face new structures and surroundings. To understand how different generations can be the reason for conflicts, the paper looks at the baby boomers, Xers, Yers, and the newest generation to enter the labour market—the Zers. As mentioned in the corresponding sections, each generation grew up with different influencing factors, leading to their values and beliefs. A person from the baby boomer cohort might be a ‘digital immigrant’, with a strong focus on direct communication, while the young Generation Y manager may prefer to give instructions via mail, since he/she is a ‘digital native’. When researching for the paper, I came to question how young people even achieve a management position. The answer was quite surprising, since a lot can be attributed to the changes in the required qualifications (for more details, see III. Generational Conflict, 2. Revision of Qualifications), as well as the so-called ‘war for talents’, which is the first consequence of the reduction of fertility rate. Lastly, the demographic change predicts that the average age will be 46.8 years of age by 2025, with 25% of all people over 65 years and only 18% under the age of 20. Thus, the number of older people is rising, while the number of young people drops.

But when generational conflicts are common between a young manager and an older employee, how can the one react to prevent or resolve the problem. The most important factor is to get to know the other cohorts, as understanding is the first step to better collaboration. Second, good communication and leadership skills are needed, to be able to mediate between oneself and a person from the other cohort. As seen in the illustrations, none of the candidates received any training in these fields before entering the management position, which is unfortunate, for a message has more to say than just the neutral content. It also represents how we feel in the moment and about the other person. If one lacks communications skills, he/she might believe the message was

neutral, while the receiver understood something completely different, as the other three sides of the message dominated the actual one.

Another area covered by this thesis is that there can be generational conflicts, not only between people, but also among a young company (start-up) and an established enterprise. The situation is quite similar to the one among employees, as again the older one often disdains the other, following the motto: ‘When I was your age, I did things differently and look where it got me.’ Therefore, the guideline can also be applied to this field, but to a greater extent, as seen through the desire of start-ups for more emphasis.

To summarize, generational conflicts are a result of different values and beliefs that occur in different generations. The best way to try to prevent or resolve them is to have an understanding of the other party, as well as great communication and leadership skills, which can be gained through further training, if they do not come naturally to the person.

For myself, this topic is very important, since I have seen my friends struggle in their occupational lives due to generational conflicts. I would say it is hard for a young manager who, despite having the best ambitions, is still lacking in professional experience. Since I aim for a management position myself, I found myself investigating this topic further. During my research, I learned a lot about interaction with other employees and that you need to recognize other people’s beliefs and values. In the end, I do believe that writing this Bachelor’s thesis helped me understand the topic further, so that I might be better prepared when entering the labour market.

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X. Annex

1. Interview questions

1. How did you achieve this position?
2. Have you ever worked with an older workforce before?
3. How did you handle the situation?
4. How did you resolve the problem?
5. How did you mitigate the condition?
6. Did your superior help you?
7. Did you attend any training programme to help you with the situation?
8. In retrospect, would you change the way you handled the issue?

Beneath the interviews with Chris Viertel, Matti Enderlein, Fabian Müller and Rieke Pollmann can be found. Despite the English questions, all four candidates preferred to be interviewed in German, the answers are presented in this language, for they are copies of the original interview.

2. Interview Chris Viertel

1. How did you achieve this position?
 - Nach einer neuen Praxis umgesehen
 - ➔ Da mit der alten Arbeitsstelle unzufrieden
 - Durch einen Freund auf die Praxis „Corazio GmbH aufmerksam geworden
 - Dort war der alte Praxisleiter erkrankt
 - Bewerbung als fachlicher Leiter der Praxis geschrieben
 - ➔ Nach mehreren Gesprächen eingestellt worden
2. Have you ever worked with an older workforce before?
 - Nein

3. How did you handle the situation?

- Es gab Meinungsverschiedenheiten
 - ➔ Zum Beispiel: Wie Arbeitsabläufe durchgeführt werden sollten
 - ➔ Scheuklappenblick, Schubladendenken und eingefahrene Verhaltensweisen von Seiten der Angestellten
- Am Anfang die Probleme ignoriert
 - ➔ Gehofft das sich die Situation mit der Zeit gibt (nach der Kennenlernphase)
- Da es keine Veränderung gab, dass Gespräch gesucht
 - ➔ Keine aggressive Gesprächsführung
 - ➔ Versucht auf die Angestellte (Empfangsdame) einzugehen und Kompromisse zu finden
 - ➔ Trotzdem nicht von seinen Änderungen komplett weg gegangen
 - ➔ Kompromisse wurden nach dem Gespräch übergangen
 - ➔ Alles blieb beim alten
- Bei der zweiten Empfangsdame war die Situation genauso

4. How did you resolve the problem?

- In beiden Situationen, nach dem persönlichen Gespräch, um die Versetzung, bzw. Kündigung der Person gebeten

5. How did you mitigate the condition?

- Geduld gezeigt und Gespräch gesucht
 - ➔ Wurde dadurch nur schlimmer

6. Did your superior help you?

- Gespräch mit Vorgesetzten gesucht
 - ➔ Situation geschildert und anschließend beraten

- Hilfe kam in Form der Kündigung von erst der ersten und dann ihrer Nachfolgerin
- Es gab keine Vermittlungsversuche von Seiten der Vorgesetzten

7. Did you attend any training programme to help you with the situation?

- Nein
- Würde er aber gerne machen

8. In retrospect, would you change the way you handled the issue?

- Würde im nachhinein einige Sachen anders machen
- Zum Beispiel: Von Anfang an härter durchgreifen
 - ➔ Empfindet sich selber als zu nett gegenüber seinen Kollegen

3. Interview Matti Enderlein

1. How did you achieve this position?

- Den ersten Job, direct nach der Masterarbeit durch Vitamin B
 - ➔ Kontakt durch die Arbeit während des Masterstudienganges
 - ➔ Initiativ beworben
- Den zweiten Job, als Schichtleiter, durch den alten Job bekommen
 - ➔ Termin abgesagt, da nicht länger für das alte Unternehmen tätig
 - ➔ Daraufhin zu einem Gespräch eingeladen und ein Jobangebot bekommen
- Darüber hinaus hat Matti ein Ehrenamt beim Roten Kreuz inne
 - ➔ dort erst Gruppen- und nun Zugführer

2. Have you ever worked with an older workforce before?

- Aufgrund des ersten Jobs. Direkt nach dem Studium schon Erfahrung mit einer älteren Belegschaft
- Aber auch schon durch das Ehrenamt mit älteren Kollegen gearbeitet

3. How did you handle the situation?

- Im ersten Job Projektleiter, mit 2-15 Angestellten, gewesen
- Größte Problem war, dass seine Anweisungen in Frage gestellt wurden
 - ➔ Wurden aber meistens ausgeführt
- Darüber hinaus wurde jeder Fehler direkt zum Chef getragen und nicht vorher angesprochen
- Im zweiten Job Schichtleiter, mit 7 Angestellten = Großteil wesentlich älter
- Weniger Reibungspunkte als im ersten Job
- Aber auch hier werden Anweisungen in Frage gestellt
- Ebenfalls wichtiges Thema ist die Arbeitssicherheit
- Problem: Die alten Schichtleiter wurden degradiert um eine weitere Position einzufügen = zusätzlicher Konfliktpunkt

4. How did you resolve the problem?

1. Job

- Hat den Angestellten zugehört und Vorschläge gesammelt
- Außerdem versucht sich in teilen den Kollegen anzupassen und mit Können zu punkten
- Im Endeffekt konnte er die Situation nicht lösen, da er gekündigt wurde

2. Job

- Hat seine Position durchsetzen können
- Trotzdem vermehrt zugehört und von den Erfahrungen der Kollegen gelernt
 - ➔ Alte Maschinen, die die Kollegen besser kannten
 - ➔ Durch den Willen zu lernen mehr Respekt bekommen

5. How did you mitigate the condition?

- Rückversichert: Immer alles per Mail abgestimmt
 - ➔ „Wer schreibt, der bleibt!“

6. Did your superior help you?

1. Job

- Es gab keine Hilfe von den Vorgesetzten
 - ➔ Nur einen „väterlichen“ Rat
 - ➔ Anstatt zu stärken gab es auch viel Kontra
 - ➔ Sollte die Probleme alleine lösen

2. Job

- Offen mit dem Vorgesetzten über die Probleme geredet
- Mit diesem Probleme besprochen und nach Lösungsansätzen geschaut
- Ausführung der Lösung geschah ohne zutun des Vorgesetzten

7. Did you attend any training programme to help you with the situation?

- In beiden Jobs kein Führungstraining bekommen
 - ➔ Im zweiten Job aber bei Bedarf nachholbar
- Durch das Rote Kreuz eine Schulung zur Personalführung bekommen

8. In retrospect, would you change the way you handled the issue?

- Im alten Job würde er noch mehr zuhören
 - ➔ Matti vermutet, dass wenn er seine Kommunikation weiter verbessert hätte, sich die Situation hätte verbessern lassen

4. Interview Fabian Müller

1. How did you achieve this position?

- In einer Jobbörse im Internet auf das Stellenangebot der BonnFinanz AG aufmerksam geworden
- Nach mehreren Gesprächen mit dem Geschäftsführer, Gebietsdirektionsleiter und dem Personalchef eingestellt worden
- Da er den Job erst nächsten Monat beginnt, kennt er seine Kollegen noch nicht

2. Have you ever worked with an older workforce before?

- Ja, in mehrerer seiner alten Jobs
 - ➔ Zum Beispiel: Call Center, Bestatter, Mittelbrandenburgische Sparkasse und Deutsche Bank
 - ➔ Bisher nie Konflikte mit älteren Kollegen gehabt
- Neue Arbeit: Glaubt nicht dass es zu Konflikten kommen wird

3. How **would** you handle the situation?

- Würde ein klärendes Gespräch mit dem entsprechendem Kollegen suchen
- Sollte dies nicht helfen, würde er um eine Versetzung oder Kündigung aus dem Team bitten

4. How did you resolve the problem?

Diese Frage wurde nicht gestellt, Fabian Müller zu diesem Zeitpunkt nicht in einem Konflikt mit Kollegen steht

5. How did you mitigate the condition?

Diese Frage wurde nicht gestellt, Fabian Müller zu diesem Zeitpunkt nicht in einem Konflikt mit Kollegen steht

6. **Would** your superior help you?

- Im Falle eines auftretenden Konfliktes würde sich der Vorgesetzte pro aktiv mit einschalten
- Bereits im Vorfeld Beratungsgespräche angeboten

7. Did you attend any training programme to help you with the situation?

- Fabian Müller hat bisher keine Form von Personalführungstraining bekommen
- Er wird es nach diesem Gespräch ansprechen

8. In retrospect, would you change the way you handled the issue?

Diese Frage wurde nicht gestellt, Fabian Müller zu diesem Zeitpunkt nicht in einem Konflikt mit Kollegen steht

5. Interview Rieke Pollmann

1. How did you achieve this position?

- Hat sich nach einem Auslandsjahr für eine Ausbildungsstelle in der Buchhaltung eines Hotels beworben
- Möchte im Familienunternehmen einsteigen, daher schon damals eine Ausbildung im Bereich BWL angestrebt
- Team war zwischen 50-60 Jahren und scheute sich sehr vor Technik
 - ➔ Nur das nötigste mit dem Computer gemacht
- Chef hatte keine Führungsqualitäten und übernahm keine Verantwortung über die Abteilung

2. Have you ever worked with an older workforce before?

- Nein

3. How did you handle the situation?

- Nach einiger Zeit Aufgaben des Chefs übernommen = in die Position reingerutscht
 - ➔ Zum Beispiel: In Absprache mit dem Chef Dinge durchgesetzt (wie Überarbeitung der Computerdateien, Mehrnutzung der Computer), Gespräche mit der Personalabteilung geführt, Rechnungsvorlagen bearbeitet etc.
- Am Anfang sehr begeistert von der „neuen Position“
 - ➔ Nicht länger bei den Azubis gegessen, sondern bei den Kollegen der Buchhaltung
- Dann entstanden Konflikte über die Änderungen die durchgesetzt wurden, besonders die die Technik involvierten
- Steigende Unzufriedenheit, da kein Dank oder Anerkennung

4. How did you resolve the problem?

- Knallhart die Führungsposition durchgezogen
- Am Anfang persönliche Gespräche gesucht
 - ➔ Als das nicht half, Unterstützung aus der Personalabteilung geholt
 - ➔ Am Ende um Versetzung der Person bei der Geschäftsführung gebeten, was auch passierte

5. How did you mitigate the condition?

- Als Konsequenz aus der Situation, ein Studium an der Hochschule für Wirtschaft und Recht begonnen
- Arbeitet auf eine Führungsposition im Familienunternehmen hin

6. Did your superior help you?

- Ihr direkter Vorgesetzter hat nur geholfen wenn Rieke im einen fertigen Plan hinlegte
- Sonst nur Hilfe von höhergestellten Instanzen bekommen

7. Did you attend any training programme to help you with the situation?

- Nein, da offiziell nur Auszubildende

8. In retrospect, would you change the way you handled the issue?

- Sie würde eine solche Position nicht wieder indirekt annehmen
➔ Nur noch wenn dafür Angestellt