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## Effective utilisation of generation Y Quantity Surveyors

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### Abstract

In South Africa, 43% of all quantity surveyors are identified as generation Y, born between 1981 and 2000. This highlights the importance of generation Y to the Quantity Surveying (QS) profession, as they are the future upon which the QS profession will build. A lack of knowledge of the differences among generations can easily lead to misunderstandings and conflict in the workplace. QS employers who want to effectively utilise generation Y employees require a sound knowledge and understanding of their attributes and expectations in relation to their job requirements. This study examines the literature on the attributes and expectations as well as the roles and responsibilities of a generation Y quantity surveyor. Suggestions are made as to how QS employers could utilise generation Y more effectively by harnessing their energy and capitalising on their attributes. Initially, 554 published papers, articles and books were generated as references, of which only 68 were purposively selected and extensively reviewed to analyse the key attributes of generation Y as well as to determine the main functions and services rendered by a quantity surveyor. The literature review showed that the key attributes and expectations of generation Y are flexibility; a meaningful job; interesting work; good relationships with supervisors; regular feedback, and career growth opportunities. The literature review also indicated that the service stages offered by a quantity surveyor are inception; concept and viability; design development; documentation and procurement; construction, and close-out. Based on the literature reviewed, generation Y has the potential to be the highest producing workforce in history. QS employers, who practically apply generational knowledge in relation to job requirements, should be able to unlock the potential of generation Y, increase its productivity, and ultimately its profitability. The findings of this article will be of value to employers in the QS profession by expanding

their knowledge and understanding of their generation Y employees. Adapting management and leadership strategies according to these findings could lead to higher staff satisfaction, resulting in workforce productivity and increased profitability.

**Keywords:** Quantity surveying, generation Y, job satisfaction

## Abstrak

In Suid-Afrika is 43% van alle bourekenaars geïdentifiseer as generasie Y, wat gebore is tussen 1981 en 2000. Dit beklemtoon die belangrikheid van generasie Y vir die bourekenaarsprofessie aangesien hierdie generasie die toekoms is waarop die professie moet voortbou. Te min kennis van generasie verskille kan maklik lei tot misverstande en konflik in die werkplek. Bourekenaarwerkgewers wat generasie Y-werknemers effektief wil aanwend, benodig genoegsame kennis oor hierdie generasie se eienskappe en verwagtinge in verhouding tot hul werksverpligtinge. Hierdie studie bestudeer die literatuur oor die eienskappe en verwagtinge van generasie Y asook wat die rol en verantwoordelikhede van 'n bourekenaar is. Voorstelle word gemaak oor hoe bourekenaarwerkgewers generasie Y-werknemers meer effektief kan gebruik deur hul energie te benut en op hul eienskappe te kapitaliseer. Aanvanklik is 554 gepubliseerde referate, artikels en boeke gegeneer as verwysings, waarvan slegs 68 doelgerig geselekteer en omvattend hersien is deur die sleuteleienskappe van generasie Y te analiseer asook om te bepaal wat die hooffunksies en dienste van 'n bourekenaar is. Die literêre oorsig het die volgende aangedui as die sleuteleienskappe en verwagtinge van generasie Y: buigsamheid; 'n betekenisvolle werk; interessante werk; goeie verhouding met toesighouer; gereelde terugvoer, en geleentheid vir groei in hul loopbaan. Die literêre oorsig het ook die volgende getoon as die diensleweringstadiums wat bourekenaars bied: die ontstaan; konsep en lewensvatbaarheid; ontwerpontwikkeling; dokumentasie en verkryging; konstruksie, en afsluiting. Gebaseer op die literêre oorsig het generasie Y die potensiaal om die produktiefste werksmag in die geskiedenis te wees. Bourekenaarwerkgewers wat kennis oor verskillende generasies in verhouding tot werksverpligtinge prakties kan toepas, behoort daartoe in staat te wees om generasie Y se potensiaal te ontsluit, sy produktiwiteit te verhoog, en uiteindelik ook winsgewendheid te verhoog. Die bevindinge van hierdie artikel sal van waarde wees vir werkgewers in die bourekenaarsprofessie deur hul kennis en begrip oor generasie Y-werknemers te verbreed. Deur bestuur- en leierskapstrategieë aan te pas in lyn met hierdie bevindinge kan lei tot hoër werknemertevredenheid wat sal lei tot werksmagproduktiwiteit en verhoogde winsgewendheid.

**Sleutelwoorde:** Bourekenkunde, generasie Y, werkstevredenheid

## 1. Introduction

A considerable amount of recent research classifies generation Y as those individuals born between 1980 and 2000 (Codrington & Grant-Marshall, 2004; Qenani-Petrela, Schlosser & Pompa, 2007; Haynes & Nunnington, 2010; Suleman & Nelson, 2011; Kultalahti & Viitala, 2014; Barnett, 2014; Bussin, 2014; Axten, 2015).

A lack of knowledge of the differences among generations can easily lead to misunderstandings and conflict in the workplace.

There is a great responsibility on organisational leadership to take cognisance of generational theory, because relationships at work are the key to job satisfaction (Martin, 2005: 43). Leadership should not reject individuals who do and see things differently, but rather try to understand and embrace these differences and channel them positively into the vision of their company (Martin, 2005: 40; Axten, 2015: 54).

A recent statistical analysis (SACQSP, 2015e) indicates that, as at December 2015, 43% of all South African quantity surveyors (both candidate and professional) come from generation Y. When considering the age group of generation Y quantity surveyors, it was found that 90% fall within the age bracket 25 to 34. According to van Eck and Burger (2015: 8), the percentage generation Y quantity surveyors highlights the importance of this group of employees, as these youngsters are the future upon which the QS profession will build. Job-hopping has financial implications for a company (Miodonski, 2004: 7; Bufe & Murphy, 2004: 57; O'Connell & Mei-Chuan, 2007: 14; Myatt, 2012: Online; Hunt, 2014: Online) and, should they leave the profession, a knowledge gap will be created.

Codrington & Grant-Marshall (2004) explain that generational theory is a tool to help us understand the people around us. As the pace of life has become increasingly faster over the years, each generation has different life experiences, different attitudes, different thoughts and feelings about parenting, education, leadership, politics, the workplace, and many other aspects of life.

As different as generation Y is to other generations, the skills and attributes they contribute to the workplace are of high value. This generation has high aspirations for themselves and their careers. The majority of generation Y displays positive characteristics that employers need in their employees in a present-day competitive economy. They are positive, hardworking and resourceful, have high attainment, and like to thrive on setting and achieving goals. It can be a challenge to work with this young generation, as they require constant feedback, want immediate purpose and meaning from their work, need their job to be challenging, and expect quick advancement on the corporate ladder (Suleman & Nelson, 2011: 39-40).

Managers or supervisors of generation Y employees should, however, not be discouraged. Although they might be perceived as high maintenance, this generation has the potential to be the highest producing workforce in history. Management should learn how to

harness the energy and capitalise on the attributes of this driven generation (Martin, 2005: 40; Axten, 2015: 54).

Generations are vastly different from each other and generational theory is a tool that will help us understand the people around us (Bussin, 2014: 170, 171; Codrington & Grant-Marshall, 2004). Organisational leadership has a great responsibility to take cognisance of generational theory, as relationships at work are the key to job satisfaction (Martin, 2005: 43). Knowledge about the attributes and expectations of generation Y could help employers better understand this group of employees.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the attributes and expectations of generation Y and suggest, in relation to quantity surveying (QS) job requirements, how QS employers can effectively retain and utilise this generation. An extensive literature review was conducted to determine the attributes and expectations of generation Y as well as QS job requirements. These were mapped together and tested by means of open interview discussions with senior QS professionals. Suggestions were then made as to how QS employers could better utilise generation Y employees.

## **2. Literature review**

Literature was reviewed and analysed as per the above search criteria.

### **2.1 Attributes and expectations of generation Y**

Many perceive generation Y or the millennial generation to be a spoilt, demanding, disrespectful, and lazy generation. Other generations tend to react negatively towards the differences of these young employees. Generation Y does have different characteristics and workplace expectations than previous generations and they also expect to be treated differently. A working environment that appeals to generation Y is one where they can participate and where creativity and innovation are encouraged. In the context of the workplace, there is no need to perceive the different dynamics of generation Y1 as negative. Tapping into the potential of generation Y requires managers with the ability to overlook the downside of this generation and focus on the upside. They are more open to change and able to turn their creative thoughts into

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1 The focus of this article is not on the negative but rather to prompt employers to tap into the potential of generation Y by overlooking the downside and focusing on the upside of this generation.

innovative actions. Having the knowledge and ability to inspire and motivate this generation will certainly be a competitive advantage to companies (Fallon, 2009: 5; Barnett, 2014: 14; Qenani-Petrela *et al.*, 2007: 113, 118; Suleman & Nelson, 2011: 40).

Generation Y displays characteristics such as loyalty, honesty, caring, balance and humour, among others. They are also visionaries who can lead with confidence and optimism, most probably instilled in them by their boomer parents (those born between 1941 and 1960). Generation Y youngsters want to make the world a better place and find meaning in their work. They want to lead a balanced life; therefore, keeping healthy and spending time with family and friends is a big part thereof. They want to use their money for immediate gratification and to save the world. Generation Y youngsters see opportunities in life and are thus very entrepreneurial. Technology surrounded generation Y while they were growing up and they are thus the most technological advanced generation of all. Tools contributing to the success of this generation are their ability to think fast, learn quickly and perform on high levels of energy (Bussin, 2014: 170, 171).

Generation Y are good at multitasking and have incredible stamina. This generation is a very well-educated generation. Double the amount of generation Y children compared to boomers has had further education at an institution of higher education. High college or university debt might contribute to their expectation of a high salary in the workplace. This generation is very social and well connected with their friends via social media and networking. They have also experienced political unrest and social tragedies and victories not only via the internet but also in real time. This influences how the generation Y approach life as they all too well realise that they should make the most of every opportunity (Herbison & Boseman, 2009: 33-34; Axten, 2015: 54).

## **2.2 Quantity surveyor role and responsibilities**

The South African Council for the Quantity Surveying Profession (SACQSP) was established to act as juristic person for the QS profession. The main role of the SACQSP is to administer the Quantity Surveying Professions Act (No. 49 of 2000). The Act also makes provision for the SACQSP to recognise Voluntary Associations provided that they meet the Council's requirements. The Association of South African Quantity Surveyors (ASAQS) is such a voluntary association and is currently the only voluntary association recognised by the Council. An important aspect of understanding the roles and functions of a

quantity surveyor in South Africa is firstly to define the terms 'quantity surveyor' and 'quantity surveying'. The SACQSP (2015b: online) defines these two terms as follows:

**Quantity Surveying** is the provision of expert, professional services and advice on construction procurement, contracting and costs. Quantity surveyors are trained, experienced specialists who have acquired comprehensive knowledge of construction procurement and contracting methods, finance and economics. They advise, collaborate and co-operate with members of other Built Environment Professions.

**Quantity Surveyor** is a person who is registered as such in terms of the Quantity Surveying Profession Act, 2000 (Act No. 49 of 2000).

The modern quantity surveyor can be viewed as the construction cost advisor or construction cost consultant with a broad knowledge of construction economics (Maritz & Siglé, 2010: 9). The services provided by a registered professional quantity surveyor can be categorised into six stages as illustrated in Figure 1.

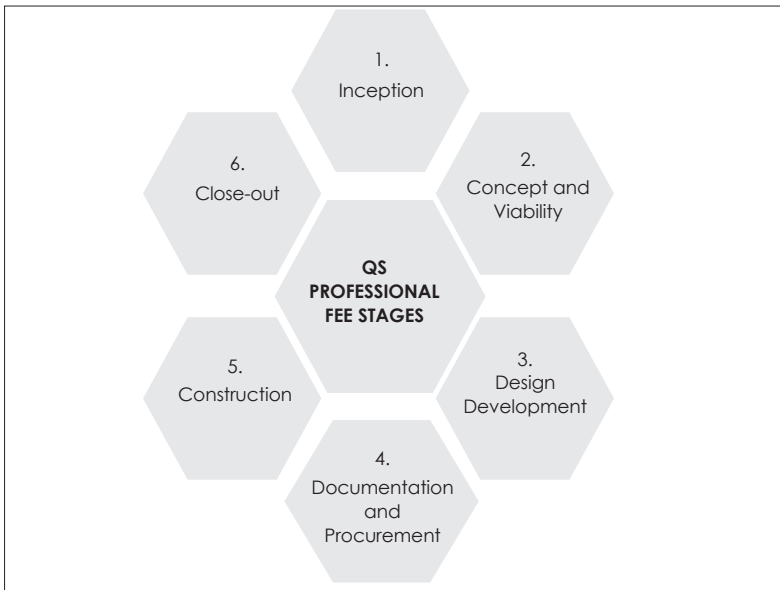


Figure 1: QS professional fee stages

Source: Adapted from SACQSP Tariff of Professional Fees (2013: 5)

Professional quantity surveyors base their fees on these stages as outlined in the 2013 Tariff of Professional Fees Schedule as published by the SACQSP. The actions and deliverables of the quantity surveyor align with various project stages and key deliverables at the end of each stage (SACQSP, 2015a: online; Maritz & Siglé, 2010: 12). The following services are provided in each stage.

### **2.2.1 Inception**

The inception stage is the stage where the initial brief to the client is prepared. This brief will outlay the strategy the professional team will follow in delivering the required outcomes of the project. The client will have to approve the strategic brief of the professional team prior to the start of the concept and viability stage. Once the client has accepted the project initiation, the concept and viability phase can commence (SACQSP, 2015a: online; Maritz & Siglé, 2010: 12).

### **2.2.2 Concept and viability**

The concept and viability stage allows for the concept design to be drawn up. The quantity surveyor will be responsible for preparing the initial cost estimate and feasibility based on the concept design. The quantity surveyor will also provide the client with cost advice required during the design concept stage (SACQSP, 2015a: online; Maritz & Siglé, 2010: 9, 12). The cost estimate and feasibility study will at this stage give the client a rough indication of what the construction cost will be and whether the project will be feasible or not. The client must approve the concept design and building cost prior to the commencement of the design development stage (Maritz & Siglé, 2010: 12).

### **2.2.3 Design development**

During the design development stage, the architect will develop his concept designs into more detailed designs. The quantity surveyor will, in turn, revise the cost estimate and feasibility study according to the design development. The construction cost is now based on more detailed designs and reflects a more accurate cost (SACQSP, 2015a: online; Maritz & Siglé, 2010: 12). Personal experience in the built environment has shown that what the client wants is not always what the client can afford. The process whereby quantity surveyors streamline the project cost is referred to in practice as cost engineering. Cost engineering aims to align the design requirements and project cost to a point where it is acceptable to the client. The

next phase will commence once the design development has been approved (Maritz & Siglé, 2010: 12).

#### **2.2.4 Documentation and procurement**

At this stage, all project designs should be sufficiently detailed for tender purposes. The quantity surveyor is responsible for the procurement process that starts with compiling the tender document. Although various pricing documents are available, the most commonly used document is the bill of quantities. The quantity surveyor is responsible for compiling a detailed bill of quantities for inclusion in the tender document. A comprehensive tender document containing all the required information regarding the project is then issued to the market. Once the tenders are received, the quantity surveyor will conduct tender evaluations. During the tender evaluation process, the quantity surveyor will check the tender prices and returnable documentation and report on the qualifications and financial implications thereof. The professional team together with the client will consult and select the successful tenderer. The quantity surveyor then draws up the contract document to be signed by both parties prior to the commencement of construction on site (SACQSP, 2015a: online; Maritz & Siglé, 2010: 9, 12).

#### **2.2.5 Construction**

At this stage of the project, the contractor establishes on site and commences with the construction work in accordance with the contract document. The quantity surveyor is now responsible for the cost management of the project. Such duties include attending site meetings and technical meetings with the professional team, client and contractor; doing monthly valuations of the work executed on site; compiling monthly payment certificates; managing contract instructions and contractual claims; re-measuring provisionally measured work; issuing cost reports to the client, and calculating applicable price fluctuations (SACQSP, 2015a: online; Maritz & Siglé, 2010: 9, 12).

#### **2.2.6 Close-out**

During the close-out phase, the quantity surveyor is responsible for the financial close-out of the project. This means compiling the final account of the project. The SACQSP Professional Skills Module No. 5 defines the final account as follows

The final account is a document prepared by the quantity surveyor on behalf of the client or the principal agent that represents the



final gross value of the project after the financial consequences that any item, such as variations (savings or extras), adjustments of prime cost amounts, provisional quantities and sums, etc., might have, are taken into account (SACQSP, 2015d: 8).

The contractor must agree to and sign the final account. The final payment certificate will be issued to the contractor only once the final completion certificate has been issued. It is important for the quantity surveyor to take note of the timeline in which to complete these documents. If not completed in time, this can result in a breach of contract. Once the final account has been signed, and the final completion certificate and final payment certificate have been issued, the contract between the client and the contractor has been concluded (SACQSP, 2015d: 46).

### **3. Methodology**

The research methodology used for this study was a literature review analysis. The focus of this study was to examine literature on the attributes and expectations of generation Y as well as the roles and responsibilities of a quantity surveyor. Following the examination, an analysis of the literature followed as part of literature-based research. The findings from literature were then tested by means of open interview discussions with senior QS professionals. Suggestions were then made as to how QS employers could utilise generation Y more effectively by harnessing their energy and capitalising on their attributes.

#### **3.1 Sampling method**

Literature was reviewed by using search engines (Emerald, Business Source Complete, Ebsco Host, and Worldcat Local) at the University of Pretoria's Merensky Library, in order to obtain references in published papers, articles and books that complied with the search criteria. The search criteria for this study were the attributes and expectations of generation Y employees as well as the role and responsibilities of a quantity surveyor. Senior QS professionals, with over 30 years' experience each, were specifically selected, based on their standing in the industry and their extensive knowledge and experience. They were asked to provide their expert opinion with regard to the literature review findings by means of open interview discussions.

### **3.2 Sampling size**

A literature review analysis was used as research method to derive the findings of this paper. Open interview discussions with experienced quantity surveyors were then used to test and substantiate these findings. The literature review initially generated 554 published papers, articles and books, of which only 68 were purposively selected for further analysis, as they met the literature review selection criteria. Four senior quantity surveyors provided their expert opinion on the initial literature review findings. They were specifically selected and had over 144 years' combined experience. Based on their extensive knowledge and experience of QS as well as their standing in this industry, their opinions were deemed sufficient for this study.

### **3.3 Data collection**

Analysis of the literature was used to tabulate the attributes and expectations of generation Y and to lay out the job requirements of a quantity surveyor. These were mapped together and tested by means of open interview discussions with four senior QS professionals. Prior to the open interview discussions, the following information was provided via email to the selected QS professionals: abstract, Table 1 with attributes and expectations of generation Y, and Tables 2 and 3 mapping the attributes and expectations of generation Y with QS service stages. The selected QS professionals were asked to provide their expert opinion on the initial literature review findings.

### **3.4 Response rate**

All four selected QS professionals agreed to assist with the research study and expert opinions were received from all of them.

### **3.5 Data analysis and interpretation of findings**

Following the systematic review analysis the interviews followed. The researchers considered the comments and suggestions made by the QS professionals during the open interview discussions. Suggestions were then made as to how QS employers could better utilise generation Y employees.

## **4. Findings**

This study analysed various literature sources and the attributes and expectations of generation Y employees were tabulated (Table 1).

Table 1: Attributes and expectations of generation Y employees

<i>Attributes</i>	<i>Expectations</i>
Lead a balanced life.	Flexibility and work-life balance.
Technologically inclined.	To work with latest technology.
Make the world a better place / Find meaning at work.	To find meaning and purpose at work.
Social generation and well connected via social media.	Social interaction with colleagues.
	Place a strong emphasis on relationships with supervisor and colleagues.
Ability to think fast and learn quickly.	Regular feedback and recognition.
	To be shown the bigger picture (vision and mission of company).
Well-educated generation.	Rapid career growth and personal development.
Perform on high levels of energy.	To do interesting and varying work.
Good at multitasking.	To be given ownership and responsibility.
Use money for immediate gratification and to save the world.	Fair compensation (salary).
	To receive rewards that are meaningful to them.

The attributes and expectations in Table 1 need to be considered. According to Suleman and Nelson (2011: 39-40), the majority of generation Y youngsters display positive characteristics that employers require their employees to have in the current competitive economy. This generation has the potential to be the highest producing workforce in history. Unlocking the potential of generation Y and steering it correctly can ultimately result in an increased bottom line (Martin, 2005: 40; Qenani-Petrela *et al.*, 2007: 113, 118; Fallon, 2009: 5; Suleman & Nelson, 2011: 40; Barnett, 2014: 14; Axten, 2015: 54). This will, however, require organisational leadership to have knowledge about their generation Y employees.

In order to apply this to the QS profession, this generation needs to be linked to what QS work entails.

#### **4.1 Correlation between generation Y attributes and expectations and quantity surveying role and responsibilities**

Knowing the attributes and expectations of generation Y and understanding how to synchronise these with the services offered by quantity surveyors will ultimately result in effective utilisation of

generation Y employees. It is important to note that the attributes and expectations discussed are generic to generation Y as a whole. Each individual is unique and it can thus be assumed that these attributes and expectations, although generic, will vary in order of importance for each generation Y individual.

Table 2 illustrates which attributes will have a direct impact on the work tasks applicable within each QS service stage. Literature on the attributes of generation Y was mapped with the QS job requirements applicable to each service stage. This was tested by means of open interview discussions with senior QS professionals in order to obtain their expert opinion in this regard. The QS professionals all agreed that the attributes of generation Y will overlap and re-occur across the various QS service stages, as indicated in Table 2.

Table 2: Attributes of generation Y employees

<i>Attributes</i>	<i>Inception</i>	<i>Concept and viability</i>	<i>Design Development</i>	<i>Documentation and procurement</i>	<i>Construction</i>	<i>Close-out</i>
Lead a balanced life.						
Technologically inclined.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Make the world a better place / Find meaning at work.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Social generation and well connected via social media.						
Ability to think fast and learn quickly.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Well-educated generation.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Perform on high levels of energy.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Good at multitasking.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Use money for immediate gratification and to save the world.						

It is clear from Table 2 that the attributes of generation Y overlap between the various QS service stages. Within each service stage, the duties, responsibilities and outputs to the client and professional team will differ. Although these work tasks differ, the attributes of generation Y are such that they can be applied across the various

service stages. Not all attributes have a direct impact on the service stage and work tasks within that service stage. Some attributes of generation Y will affect a business indirectly such as, for example, leading a balanced life which contributes to the overall wellbeing of an employee; being well connected via social media can relate to the impact on a company image when young employees communicate work-related matters to friends via social media, and generation Y using their money for immediate gratification could relate to the personal satisfaction of employees.

Table 3 illustrates which expectations will have a direct impact on the work tasks applicable within each QS service stage. Literature on the expectations of generation Y was mapped with the QS job requirements applicable to each service stage. This was tested by means of open interview discussions with senior QS professionals in order to obtain their expert opinion in this regard. The QS professionals all agreed that the expectations of generation Y will overlap and re-occur across the various QS service stages, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Expectations of generation Y employees

Expectations	Inception	Concept and viability	Design Development	Documentation and procurement	Construction	Close-out
Flexibility and work-life balance.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
To work with latest technology.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
To find meaning and purpose at work.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Social interaction with colleagues.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Place a strong emphasis on relationships with supervisor and colleagues.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Regular feedback and recognition.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
To be shown the bigger picture (vision and mission of company).						
Rapid career growth and personal development.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
To do interesting and varying work.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
To be given ownership and responsibility.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fair compensation (salary).						
To receive rewards that are meaningful to them.						

It is clear from Table 2 that most of the expectations of generation Y employees will remain similar within each QS service stage. Expectations such as to receive fair compensation, meaningful rewards, and knowing the vision and mission of the company are not directly associated with a specific service stage, task or construction project. These expectations will have to be met by the employer and not the tasks or construction project assigned to the QS.

The impact of different personalities on some attributes and expectations of generation Y quantity surveyors were addressed in the interviews and noted. Certain personalities will naturally be inclined towards certain tasks and activities within the QS service stages. A generation Y QS who is a "talker" with good people skills will prefer to work directly with clients in comparison to technical QS work. On the other hand, a generation Y QS might prefer technical QS work such as measuring bills of quantities and final accounts more than interact with clients. The generic attributes and expectations can be applied, in general, but will differ in level of importance between individuals.

It was further noted that, as the experience levels of generation Y quantity surveyors vary, their responsibilities within each QS service stage will also vary. For example, a generation Y quantity surveyor with 10 years' experience will have the ability to act as lead QS on a project in comparison to a generation Y quantity surveyor with only 3 years' experience who might only be partially involved in a project under supervision. This supports the earlier notion. The order of importance of generic attributes and expectations can certainly change and vary as individuals develop personally and in their career.

Due to individual differences, be it personality, background, culture, gender, experience or career growth, not all generation Y quantity surveyors will have all the generic attributes and expectations. The majority of generation Y employees should display some of these attributes and expectations, but further research will have to be conducted to determine the extent of this.

## **5. Discussion of findings**

Generation Y employees can be valuable assets to an organisation. Knowing which generation Y values and applying them will elicit greater levels of determination, inventiveness and efficiency in employees of this age group (Fallon, 2009: 5).

When considering the attributes and expectations of generation Y in relation to the role and responsibilities of a quantity surveyor, employers should take heed of the following suggestions in order to effectively utilise generation Y employees.

Generation Y may at first be more interested in a high salary, but this will change as their career grows (Berry, 2008: 26-29). Job satisfaction is superior to compensation, as this generation wants to first love what they do (Steiner, 2007: 6). QS employers should make sure that financial remuneration for generation Y employees is fair in relation to their job responsibilities, level of experience, and location. Generation Y should also not have unrealistic salary expectations. The ASAQS issued the 2015 salary survey report which, among others, reflects a national annual salary comparison by qualification. Table 4 provides a summary of the annual salary for generation Y, based on their level of qualification and experience. This can be used as a benchmark for fair compensation.

Table 4: Median remuneration by qualification and experience

Qualifications	Experience			
	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-10 years	11-20 years
University	R 195,000	R 320,000	R 450,277	R 712,500
University of Technology	R 156,800	R 242,750	R 309,220	R 575,000
None	R 96,150	R 213,000	R 146,000	R 342,500

Source: ASAQS Salary Survey (2015)

Table 4 is a national remuneration benchmark. For example, an individual holding a university qualification with 3-5 years' experience should be receiving an annual salary of approximately R320,000. **Remuneration** of each individual will, however, be different based on the province and region of employment, position and responsibility within a company, and level of experience. The salary expectation of generation Y is that they will be fairly remunerated. This expectation will be met if remuneration is aligned with their job responsibilities.

Generation Y is very knowledgeable when it comes to technology; employers should provide them with up-to-date **technology**. Matching the technological skills of generation Y with the technology of their company can result in great productivity (Martin, 2005: 41; Steiner, 2007: 6; Herbison & Boseman, 2009: 33-34; Harrington, 2011: 106; Bussin, 2014: 170, 171; Axten, 2015: 53). Making use of

measuring software such as PDF measure or DimX could increase productivity in producing estimates and bills of quantity.

For this young generation, there is a close relation between happiness at work and having time for doing the things they value outside of work. Technology has made the conventional eight-to-five office structure less relevant in the workplace nowadays (Harrington, 2011: 105-106, Kultalahti & Viitala, 2014: 576, Barnett, 2014: 14, Axten, 2015: 50). Generation Y expects to be judged on their performance rather than on their physical presence at work. Employers should show that they trust in the abilities of their young employees by allowing **workplace flexibility** (Harrington, 2011: 105-106, Kultalahti & Viitala, 2014: 576, Barnett, 2014: 14, Axten, 2015: 50).

**Social interaction** and enjoying their time at work is of great value to generation Y. Employers should not underestimate the value of staff lunches, team-building activities or company outings, as this will provide the opportunity for this generation to interact and build relationships with their managers and colleagues (Fallon, 2009: 5). Social interaction can also be achieved through the work itself. Afford generation Y employees the opportunity to work on projects as part of a team so that they can interact with colleagues, talk through problems and brainstorm together for solutions while having fun (Suleman & Nelson, 2011: 41-42; Axten, 2015: 52).

Generation Y wants to work on **interesting projects** and do **varying work**. Working on the same types of projects for too long will not stimulate young employees (Martin, 2005: 42; Kultalahti & Viitala, 2014: 577). Harrington (2011: 105) explains that the average generation Y employee will seek new challenges every two years. If their employer is unable to provide them with new challenges, they will merely seek it elsewhere. QS employers should not let youngsters stagnate in their professional development. Allow young quantity surveyors to work on projects in various market sectors such as residential, commercial, industrial, health care, sports and leisure, among many others.

Compared to other generations, generation Y values a job with **meaning and purpose** (Bussin, 2014: 170, 17). This generation cares about making the world a better place and has a high regard for being able to contribute to a good cause. The key is to create opportunities within or through your organisation for them to improve the world (Fallon, 2009: 5; Barnett, 2014: 14; Axten, 2015: 51). Getting this generation involved hands-on, for example, with corporate social responsibility initiatives will help them be more invested and



enthusiastic about their work (Fallon, 2009: 5; Barnett, 2014: 14; Axten, 2015: 51).

Generation Y places a **strong emphasis on relationships** with their managers and colleagues. This young generation responds positively to one-on-one mentoring and coaching by their supervisors and managers. This enhances their level of loyalty and devotion to their organisation and its goals and ultimately leads to high productivity (Steiner, 2007: 7).

Generation Y requires **regular feedback and recognition**. Constant feedback is not to boost a frail ego, but serves as a corrective mechanism for this generation. It is imperative for managers to give honest and direct feedback that will help this generation excel (Suleman & Nelson, 2011: 42). The annual performance review alone will not suffice for generation Y employees. Feedback does not always have to be face-to-face and can even be done via email or text messaging. As long as they receive feedback on a regular basis, generation Y will be content (Herbison & Boseman, 2009: 34).

Generation Y is interested in **rapid career growth**. They view one year as a long-term job commitment. Promises of long-term career advancement will not suffice for these young employees. They are interested in what they can learn today and what will be offered to them now (Martin, 2005: 41). Although young employees are in need of experience and coaching, they will easily pick up empty career growth promises accumulating to little or no progress at all (Suleman & Nelson, 2011: 41).

When generation Y has done good work, they expect to be **rewarded** with something that is meaningful and exciting to them. Rewards do not only need to be an annual cash bonus. It can even be something small to express thankfulness for a job well done at the completion of a project or task. Some young employees might prefer a reward for good work to be in the form of dinner at a restaurant, a round of golf or movie tickets (Suleman & Nelson, 2011: 42-43). QS employers should ask their generation Y employees what they perceive as a meaningful reward and then act on it.

Generation Y needs to be given **ownership and responsibility**. When they step into the workplace, they need to learn how to work in a multi-generational work environment and organisational structure with hierarchy. This often makes them feel less valued and less driven with a sense of no ownership within the company (Fallon, 2009: 5; Moore, 2008: 72). Addressing this is easier than perceived. Give this generation something they can take ownership of, even if it is

something small. Use them to arrange a company event, facilitate a meeting or even administer a process within the office (Fallon, 2009: 5; Moore, 2008: 72).

Generation Y wants to know what the **bigger picture** of their company is and, more importantly, how they fit into it. They want to know towards what vision and purpose they are contributing. Not showcasing this to generation Y employees or not keeping them in the loop will cause them to become bored, uninterested employees with a low morale and lack of creativity (Fallon, 2009: 5; Barnett, 2014: 14; Axten, 2015: 51).

## 6. Conclusion and recommendations

The South African construction industry remains a challenging work environment, especially when it comes to cost management of construction projects. In the majority of construction projects, the cost management responsibility lies with the quantity surveyor and can be quite a demanding task. There are many role players involved in construction projects that are affected financially; this contributes to the challenge of construction cost management. It is important to appoint skilled quantity surveyors on a construction project who will be able to execute this task effectively and efficiently. With 43% of all quantity surveyors being from generation Y, it is imperative to understand and correctly manage these employees.

For generation Y, it is important that appreciation be shown for their individuality and that they are included in decision-making; provide them with appropriate training opportunities; mentor and guide them; tell them why they are doing something and why it is important; provide feedback; show how their work contributes to the bottom line; always be honest and truthful; provide career growth opportunities with achievable milestones; make use of the latest technology, and allow workplace flexibility (Bussin, 2014; Lassen, 2015; Martin, 2005).

Since generation Y makes up 43% of all quantity surveyors in South Africa, this highlights the importance of this generation to the QS profession (SACQSP, 2015e). To effectively utilise this generation, it is imperative that employers learn how to harness and capitalise on the energy of this driven generation. QS employers must understand and embrace the difference of generation Y and channel it positively into the vision of their company.

It is recommended that senior QS mentors be assigned to young employees to help and guide them on their route to register as a

professional quantity surveyor as well as into leadership roles. Senior quantity surveyors or management should take juniors with them to construction sites and project meetings so that they can learn through observation.

QS employers could also consider giving feedback once certain project stages or milestones have been completed; for example, on completion of the concept and viability stage. This will provide the opportunity to reflect on lessons learnt in real time and how to improve processes for the future. This can be of benefit to the entire company and not simply to the individual receiving the feedback.

It is further recommended that QS employers could put clear goals in place that they want youngsters to achieve within a particular time period. Such goals can be to attend certain training courses, to be involved in certain construction projects, to meet project deliverables and targets, to source new clients or to be involved with leadership initiatives within the office such as leading a committee.

Lastly, it is recommended that QS firms use staff meetings as a platform to discuss with their young employees how the various clients and projects contribute to the bottom line of the business. Managers should also communicate the profit margins of their projects to their generation Y employees so that they can begin to grasp the business side of QS.

Having knowledge and understanding of generation Y attributes and expectations will certainly be a competitive advantage to QS employers. But knowledge alone is not enough. Knowledge in action is what will ultimately result in efficient utilisation of this generation, greater workforce productivity, and increased profitability.

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