

Bringing Research to LIFE

In Brief

The Winter Issue has Arrived

Watch for the winter 2010 issue of ResearchLIFE – on stands around the Fort Garry and Bannatyne campuses today. The magazine highlights leading-edge research being done here at the university.

Check out this issue's feature stories and learn more about Faculty of Medicine immunologists whose task it is to figure out why one person develops a disease and another doesn't. Read how researchers affected by the fire within the Duff Roblin Building are bouncing back; and how the domestic violence experts at research network RESOLVE are changing the way we help abused women.

Upcoming

Bringing Research to Life Speaker Series

What's All the Fuss About Phosphorus?

with Don Flaten

Soil Science

Wednesday, February 24, 2010

7:00 PM

Room 290

Education Building

For mor information check out:
<http://umanitoba.ca/research/brtl.html>

Café Scientifique

Keeping your Ticker Happy:

Strategies for heart health

Thursday, February 25, 2010

7:00 PM

McNally Robinson, Grant Park,
1120 Grant Avenue

For mor information check out:
http://umanitoba.ca/research/cafe_scientifique.html

RSVP to lindsay_fagundes@umanitoba.ca

Tug-o-War for Talent

Professor provides companies with new approach for recruiting workers



"Each generation is shaped by formative events that happened in their teenage years."

~ Krista Uggerslev

Photo by Katie Chalmers-Brooks

Krista Uggerslev, who does research in recruitment and talent management, says companies looking to successfully attract employees – in what might be the greatest labour shortage of our time – could get an edge by paying more attention to generational differences.

BY KATIE CHALMERS-BROOKS

Donald Trump may not have a shortage of candidates vying for a position with his firm on TV's guilty pleasure *The Apprentice* – but most companies face a far different reality.

Skilled workers are in short supply and demand will only rise as baby boomers continue to retire. More than ever, companies need to be strategic about their plan of attack for recruiting employees. Krista Uggerslev, a staffing and management development professor in the Asper School of Business, has a secret weapon for employers battling in this "war for talent."

She suggests they tailor their approach to the potential employee, and more specifically, keep in mind the generation to which that individual belongs. To better understand someone's perspective – what they think is important in a job and in life – a recruitment officer should consider what was going on in the world when that individual was a teenager.

"Each generation is shaped by formative events that happened in their teenage years," says Uggerslev, who was the presenter featured earlier this week for the Office of the Vice-President (Research) Bringing Research to Life Speaker Series. "We wake up during those teenage years; we open our eyes for the very first time and take a snapshot of what's going on in the world around us. And that ends up shaping who we are, as well as who we are at work."

That world is very different depending on the era, as are the resulting values and beliefs each

generation holds. Having a good work-life balance may be important to one generation; another may equate success with a prestigious title. An older person closer to retirement might see the value in a higher salary, but a younger candidate might think it's more important to work for a company that's environmentally conscious.

There are always exceptions but some general assumptions can be made about each generation, says Uggerslev, who has a PhD in industrial and organizational psychology. Looking at these differences provides insight into how to best recruit a particular individual. It also shines light on the mindset of older people who might be doing the hiring and why their recruitment efforts, while well-intentioned, may miss the mark with younger generations.

Traditionalists, age 64-plus, were teens in the 1940s-50s and watched as factories shifted from making war goods to consumer products. People were moving to the suburbs, building nice homes and buying nice cars. This generation likes to keep things simple, Uggerslev says. Typically, they don't like getting feedback in the workplace, figuring no news is good news.

The next generation, the 44 to 63-year-old baby boomers, witnessed the civil rights movement, and the assassinations of idealistic figures Martin Luther King and President John F. Kennedy. "They saw a much shakier world when they were teenagers and that's partly why now they're looking to change the world and make a mark, make a difference," Uggerslev says. They grew up competing for everything from

nursery school spots to first jobs, and tend to be more competitive in the workplace as a result.

Generation X, age 30 to 43, saw a doubling of the divorce rate as teens and were frequently "latch-key kids," letting themselves in at home before their single parents arrived. As a result they were especially close with friends – and today, as employees, are more reluctant to transfer to another city since they don't want to leave loved ones.

For Generation Y, born in the 1980s and more recently, the teenage years were marked by the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the Oklahoma City Bombing, and the Columbine High School Massacre. As a result they feel an urgency and want things *now*. They expect that women can work – their mothers did – and don't grasp the concept of a glass ceiling. They also grew up with the Internet and assume an organization will "be wired," adds Uggerslev.

The idea of tapping into people's teenage experience to better understand them is similar to a technique marketing researchers have been using for some time, she notes. For example, the soundtrack in a car commercial targeted at baby boomers will typically be a rock 'n' roll song this generation listened to as adolescents. "That is a very purposeful attempt to bring them back to the happy times and thoughts they had when they were driving their first cars. It's the same kind of thing that we're looking at doing within talent management," she says. "It's figuring out what they value."