

# How Do You Get Graduates Fit for Work?

This is what the UK's leading graduate recruitment magazine has to say.



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**A2B is the only training and development provider focussed solely on graduate development.**

Graduate recruitment is about creating a workforce that will take your business forward. It is expensive, time-consuming and unpredictable, so you need to make it work.

Today's graduates enter the workforce with high expectations and a determination to succeed. But they need to learn how to deal with other people and master new behaviour that will drive them forward and help the organisation reach its goals.

A2B are experienced in getting the best out of people new to the workplace. Our aim is to ensure that new graduates make a valuable contribution to your business from day one. We can equip them with the skills they need to deal with the complex issues they will face in the real world of work.

*Developing a*  
**NEW GENERATION**

A2B is part of Acorn Coaching and Development Ltd. Acorn has an enviable worldwide reputation for the creation of innovative development solutions for some of the world's most prestigious organisations. This means that when your graduates have 'earned their wings' we can continue their career progression through the Acorn portfolio of development expertise.



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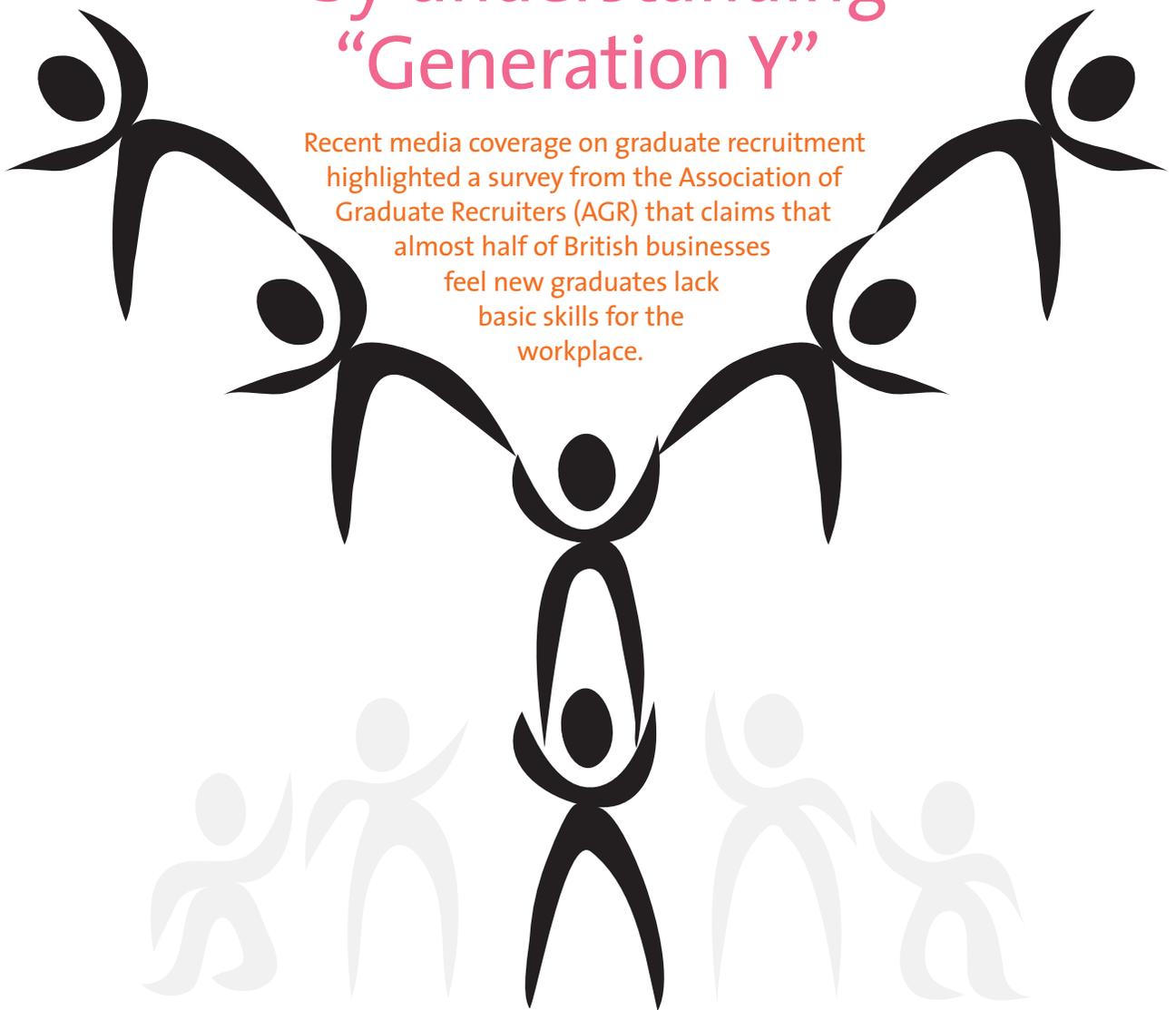
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# How Do You Get Graduates Fit for Work?

## - by understanding “Generation Y”

Recent media coverage on graduate recruitment highlighted a survey from the Association of Graduate Recruiters (AGR) that claims that almost half of British businesses feel new graduates lack basic skills for the workplace.



According to Dan Shiels of A2B Development, HR directors need to understand the psyche of new young talent if they are to stand any chance of turning them into the leaders of tomorrow.

This understanding hinges on grasping the attitudes and values of what has been called Generation Y. This article outlines suggestions for getting the most from 'Generation Yers' and how to successfully integrate them into the workplace.

Generation Y refers to young people born after 1978 who are now making an impact in the workplace. They have a new attitude and set of values dramatically different from their Generation X forbears.

The 'marketing men' have had this sussed for some time, but it's only now that HR directors need to sit up and take note as huge swathes of 'Generation Yers' enter the workplace for the first time.

These young people are different from previous generations. They are demanding, have high expectations of self and aim to work faster and better. They have high expectations of their employers and want managers that are highly engaged in their personal development and growth. They want immediate responsibility and seek recognition quickly.

Not only that, this group wants to feel that their work is worthwhile and making a real contribution. This generation is IT competent and enter the workforce with an acceptance and understanding of new technology that outshines any previous generation. This all sounds like good news for employers, but let's dig a little deeper.

'Generation Yers' do not have the same sense of loyalty or obligation towards their employers as previous generations. They



don't expect to stay in a job or even a career for too long. They've seen their loyal, hard-working parents made redundant during several economic recessions. This generation is not content to wait. If they don't get what they want quickly, they move on.

These attitudes are, in many instances, creating conflict with co-workers and causing HR headaches. For example, seemingly innocuous subjects such as appearance are proving highly contentious. Left to their own devices, 'Generation Yers' will turn up at work in flip-flops and jeans with iPods permanently attached to their ears.

Not only that, they expect to have their mobile phones on at all times and consider it acceptable to take personal calls during work hours.

In addition, many employers are finding generational difficulties between older and younger employees. A survey carried out in the USA last year by Lee Hecht Harrison, PhD, among Fortune 500 corporations, found that more than 70% of older employees

## Getting the best out of 'Generation Yers' boils down to five key points.

### 1. Provide challenging work that really matters

Educate your young workforce about the contributions your products or services make to society and how you support the local community. In addition, make sure they know why they are doing whatever it is they are doing.

### 2. Offer increasing responsibility as a reward for accomplishments

Give young people who earn it, the opportunity to take on more challenging roles, such as project leaders. Tap into their desire for challenge by teaching them leadership skills and engaging them in leadership roles as early as possible.

### 3. Provide ongoing training and learning opportunities

Clearly define the skills and knowledge that employees must learn in order to advance to the next project or level. Create a road map of ongoing learning opportunities that will keep a young workforce engaged. Once training opportunities dry up so does Generation Y enthusiasm.

### 4. Establish mentoring relationships

Create a network of mentors – people within the organisation willing to pass their strategies and skills along to Gen Yers. Make a list of those mentors, including areas of expertise. Encourage Yers to seek out those individuals for informal chats, brainstorming sessions or training opportunities.

### 5. Consistently provide constructive feedback

Look for key opportunities to coach employees. Ensure your managers are trained to coach effectively and zoom in on what people did right, what they did wrong, and what they must do next to get back on course in order to continue improving and growing.



were dismissive of younger workers' abilities and that younger workers were equally disparaging about the value of more mature or experienced colleagues.

### So what does all this mean for HR directors?

I believe that Generation Y presents the next gigantic opportunity and the next considerable challenge for managers and business leaders in the new economy. To make this work, companies need to adapt many of their established working practices and develop career development programmes that will stimulate the Generation Y employee and help them make a valuable contribution to the organisation quickly.

Many Generation Y youngsters have grown up over-supervised. Their parents enrolled them in time-intensive before and after school activities. They have been driven to and picked up from school by car. Unlike previous generations, 'Yers' have been prevented from going out unsupervised and then tethered to mobile phones, computers and PlayStations.

In short, this generation have been so micromanaged by their parents and teachers that they are now champing at the bit to manage their own time and make their mark in the workplace.

This means that employers must be prepared to coach and mentor, and break-up large projects into more manageable pieces to enable the young workforce to feel their contribution making a direct impact.

This generation is already posing new challenges to business leaders and managers, who are spending more time, energy and money than ever before recruiting and training the young talent needed to compete in today's high-speed, high tech world.

