



**The G Factor, Gratitude:  
How Gen X and Gen Y Achieve Greater Career Success (in a world of Boomers)**

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Across America and across the globe, members of Generations X and Y and are scratching their heads in search of ways to climb the proverbial ladder of success. As many of them realize they might not create the next Face Book, Groupon, Word Press or Living Social, they search for the right chess move to become a business king or queen. After 25 years of interaction with business people from every generation, I am convinced that career success for Gen X and Gen Y can be found in one word: **Gratitude!**

Gratitude. Mr. Webster's famous reference tool defines it as a feeling of appreciation or thanks. As I help younger clients, mentees and friends achieve their goals, I can reference countless sources that help Baby Boomers understand Gen X and Gen Y. And that's a good thing. However, I rarely see tools that help Gen X and Gen Y understand Baby Boomers.

And here's the big news flash that makes this important: Most of the world's business "visions" and "decisions" are made by Baby Boomers! Take a moment to visualize the C-Suite members of Fortune 1000's and companies you do business with. You're probably envisioning women and men who were born some time between bucks stopping with Truman and civil rights becoming law under Johnson.

While there are numerous career strategies I share with younger colleagues, I contend that gratitude is a powerful influencer among their older peers. Here are a few ideas for the Gen X or Gen Y professional who wonders what gratitude looks like.

*RISE & SHINE*

Periodically start your work day early and end it late. Just make sure your choice to do so is not accompanied by a big announcement of your "sacrifice". Baby Boomers—though they have been blown adrift by the winds of restructuring, down-sizing and right-sizing—see long hours as a duty versus a sacrifice.

*HUMBLE PIE*

You worked hard. You earned success. You're proud of your accomplishments. Here's the tip: Just don't talk about it. Boomers prefer it when younger peers defer to their years of knowledge and experience. By choosing to let your work speak for you rather than your accomplishments, you might receive fewer challenges from your graying teammates.



#### *THANK-FULL*

Never take your position for granted...even if you don't like it. Instead, find ways to express your thankfulness for your position. How do you do that? Choose times to share why you appreciate your position. Ask reliable Boomers to suggest ways to leverage your position. Discuss what you enjoy most about your position.

#### *BEFORE E-MAIL*

Deliver and “snail mail” hand-written thank you notes to persons (of every generation) whose advice and support made a difference in your career. For Boomers, this gesture implies that you were willing to take the time to focus on the unique contribution that was made on your behalf.

#### *TIME MATTERS*

Even if you do expect to have the corner office soon after you enter the organization...keep it to yourself. Boomers believe that it takes a long time and a great deal of effort to earn the high post. And as a matter of reference, a decade...or two... represents a “long time”.

#### *STORY GLORY*

Informally interview your seasoned peers to gain their insights on the history and highlights of the organization. Boomers value history and they value compelling facts about history. Your willingness to hear their stories expands your foundation and it engenders greater interest in you.

#### *DO THE MATH*

Have you ever wondered why we have two ears, two eyes and just one mouth? There must be a reason we have *four* intake sources and *one* source for output. Gen Xers and Gen Yers seeking advancement among Boomers should listen and observe *four* times as much as they talk. This approach accelerates how quickly you can identify the clues for advancement.

#### *IN THE END*

Even though your Boomer counterparts don't have all the answers and they aren't right all the time, they usually have the power to impact your destiny. View gratitude as a key that unlocks the door to greater career opportunities. And who knows, when you're 55 years old, you might decide to let Gen Z do things their way!

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