

ARTICLE REPRINT

Welcome The Thirteen Year-Olds

Nine years from now, when most Baby Boomers have retired, today's thirteen year-olds will become your employees. In 2016, when you look at your new hires, you will see a generation that grew up wired – connected at the hip to their parents, to each other, and to the notion of their uniqueness.

Don't be surprised if you'll need to construct a helipad on the office roof to accommodate the personal aircraft of your new employees. At least some of them will arrive with their *helicopter parents* – parents who “hover” 24/7 over their offspring, encouraging them, cuddling them and protecting them from a cruel world.

Our thirteen year-olds today are the true “Me” generation. They are growing up in an atmosphere where parents and teachers promote winning and eschew losing. At home and at school, everyone is a winner – there are no losers. That's why, even today, employers must reward their youngest employees not for superior performance, but just for showing up!

Young teens spend an inordinate amount of time staying connected with each other and promoting themselves. They IM and text message each other, and their parents, even when attending class, watching TV, and hanging out with their friends. They connect to You Tube where they can broadcast “MYSELF” and share all about “ME” with their friends and with people they've never met! Not only are they the *message*, they are the *media*.

Despite your deadlines and emergencies, your new employees nine years from now will want their lives to have meaning beyond the rewards of 9 to 5 performance. They will want to script their lives, and allowing them the connections they have nurtured since birth will improve your chances of succeeding with them as employers.

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