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The Mixed Gen Management Team —Don't Act Like a Punk.

The Positive Effect of Old-School:

What do you do when “the old-school team refuses to leave and make room for digital/millennial thinking”? If the whole organization feels stodgy and a bad fit for you, move on. If it's just that your pain point is meshing your skill set with the old-school management, then direct your energy toward the real net positive effect, for yourself and your organization, of a mixed-generation management team. Some key points of wisdom to listen for, and learn from, are:

- Corporate goals—very old-school building block, and the basis of everything you should be doing in your role
- Customer profiles and customer needs, and the perspective of changes over time
- Marketing the business before digital—what was done before and what worked; and that using this perspective will help predict which new technologies/media will stick.
- Where the bodies are buried, and how to step over them
- And, basically, years of business management intelligence, implemented

Your Approach:

To fully access the expertise of the management team, you might have to adjust your own attitude. Go back to that space when you were no longer a teenager, when you were on your own for the first time, and you realized that your parents were not complete drooling idiots, that they were right about a lot of things—how you then felt embarrassed for having put them in that space of inferiority because of their age and because of your own insecurity. Probs not a good idea to make that mistake in a business setting.

Practice Your New-Found Idolatry in These Two Scenarios:

- Negotiating with customers—when speak, when to lie down, when to beg:

Great old-school sales people have not really had to adapt from “always be closing” to “always be helping”. They have a natural sense of helping customers, and know that part of this is gauging the customer's mood when negotiating. Sometimes customers need to hear something that they might not want to, sometimes you need to hear something that you might not want to, and sometimes you will need to really fight to keep the business. Get with your superiors on this—they've been through it before.

- Pitching an idea—wind up before you throw:

Having success pitching an idea to your superiors means gaining their consensus, whoever they are and whatever their perspective. Don't get frustrated in meetings because things aren't going your way, if you haven't laid some groundwork ahead of time. When you have a big presentation with internal stakeholders (a.k.a. your superiors,) make sure you preheat the oven. Visit with each stakeholder separately prior to the big meeting, and get her/his individual opinion, feedback and approval. Make changes as necessary before your presentation. Then when you are in the larger meeting and presenting, you will have several cheerleaders who feel that you are representing them, not resenting them.

Own your ideas and be very bold with them, but be respectful with those above you on the org chart. They hired you for a good reason, but they are not called “superiors” for nothing.