

PREDICTIONS FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

By Amy Hirsh Robinson, Interchange Group

What's the youngest generation in America called and what will they be like?

Though their beginning birth years have yet to be conclusively decided, children of America's youngest generation are roughly 0-10 years old. They are currently the offspring of Generation X (born ca. 1963-1981) but many will have parents from the Millennial generation (born ca. 1982-2000) as time goes on. While demographers use a variety of names to refer to this generation -- Generation Net, Generation Z, the Homeland Generation -- none of them has yet to stick. And while it's clear that the members of this generation will be the most technologically savvy in history, most of their other values and characteristics have yet to crystallize. Here are some of our predictions:

- **Self-Directed** - In reaction to the "helicopter" parenting style of the Baby Boomers, "slow" or "free range" parenting styles of Gen Xers and Millennials will emphasize unstructured time over overachievement and result in the ability to self-direct.
- **Adaptive & Resilient** - Not having experienced or remembered the years of prosperity prior to the "Great Recession," this generation will come of age accustomed to living with less and working with what they have.
- **Conforming** - Growing up in the wake of 9/11, Columbine and mobile surveillance technology will produce a generation of children highly tolerant of protective environments and imposed rules and boundaries.
- **Inclusive** - This generation's child- and young adulthood will be marked by political polarity, global instability and deepening divides between the rich and poor. As a result they will adopt values of fairness and due process in an effort to right the inequities they see around them.



Because a generation is shaped by the first 16 years of life, we'll need more time to monitor all the influences (e.g. family upbringing, school systems, world events, etc.) of today's youth. What do you think this next generation will be like in society? How will their values and behaviors shape the workplace of the future?