

# Multi-Generational Perspectives in Criminal Justice

Lieutenant James Brett Meade

## Abstract

The field of criminal justice is struggling with generational issues relating to recruiting, training and retaining personnel who possess different views, beliefs and expectations within the workplace. These differences can cause miscommunication, confusion, friction and animosity between different generations. A survey given to 48 college students pursuing criminal justice degrees who intend to enter the profession confirmed that younger generations have a different outlook regarding career progression and challenges facing the profession. This research gives insight and perspective into generational differences and gives direction for generations to better understand each other.

## Introduction

We are all different; from our experiences and attitudes, to our work ethic and the way we perceive life. America is in the midst of a unique experience, as four different and distinct generations are occupying the national workforce simultaneously. Although known by different monikers, generally these generations are described as the Veterans (1922-1945), the Baby Boomers (1946-1964), Generation X (1965-1980), and Generation Y (1981-2000). There are several factors leading to this phenomenon. Americans are living longer and as a result, are working longer, the economy is in a recessed state, with economic conditions forcing those who would normally retire to stay in the workforce, and Generation Y is graduating from college and is seeking full-time careers. In the field of criminal justice, in order to effectively maintain the standards of the profession and prepare the new generation for leadership positions, leaders from the previous generations must learn to understand and to adapt to the different traits, abilities, and idiosyncrasies of these younger generations. Generational differences affect aspects of organizational culture in areas such as recruiting, building teams, dealing with change, motivating, managing, and increasing productivity. Each generation has its own set of distinct attitudes, behaviors, expectations, habits and motivational buttons (Hammill, 2005).

In the 1960's and 1970's, it was the Baby Boomer generation's turn to experience confusion and the times were quite tumultuous. Disparaging statements were made based on fundamental differences and perspective. The same generation that said, "Never trust anyone over 30," is now struggling to understand and comprehend younger generations.

Research shows there are separate and distinct behaviors, expectations, and attitudes exhibited by Generation X and Generation Y college students who aspire for careers in various aspects of the criminal justice profession. These behaviors extend to the values each treasure, and in order to be effective, criminal justice leaders must be open to developing new, innovative approaches designed to realize their full potential. This is particularly difficult for the criminal justice profession, which is based on tradition and is notoriously conservative. The real challenge lies in developing open lines of communication between generations that is

honest, sincere, and free of generational prejudice, with the intent to gain trust and share valuable knowledge. The ultimate goal is to provide new generations with realistic expectations, proper training, and guidance in order to develop future leaders within the criminal justice profession.

Today, a new police recruit must be proficient in typing, computer applications, information management, and a myriad of other skills, in order to pass the first phase of an agency's field training program, in addition to the ability to master traditional skill-sets in order to be considered capable enough to be deemed self-sufficient. These skills were unheard of just two decades ago. Having grown up in the information age, younger generations are comfortable with application and embraces rapid advances in technology, where these skills are learned behaviors with previous generations. This research will examine some basic differences between each generation and discuss ways each can achieve a better understanding of other generations. Additionally, we will explore the attitudes Generation X and Generation Y college students with an interest in criminal justice have towards the criminal justice profession. Finally, we will discuss ways generations can work together to understand and appreciate what each has to offer.

### Literature Review

There is an abundance of books, papers, articles and internet sites devoted to the study of generational culture. Some expound on how great a particular generation is, its contributions to our world, and its differences from the previous generations. A few illustrate how if given the opportunity, a particular generation will change the world. Some complain about the commitment of new generations, while others ostensibly grumble about the state of the world they will inherit. All highlight the significant differences in attitude and perspective each generation holds in relation to each other.

Harrison (2007) discusses the age-old issue of generational differences:

Even in the time of Aristotle, adults complained about the younger generation's lack of motivation and disrespect for their elders, fearing that youths would fail in their work life from a lack of "loyalty." Each succeeding generation laments about the next. With the advent of interactive technologies and online social networking, as well as a growing chasm between the wired and unwired worlds, never has the gap between the generation "in charge" and those that follow it been as wide (paragraph 1).

Younger generations are usually very confident, with the perception of having a strong sense of entitlement, and are not afraid of making immediate suggestions, which can be perceived across as egotistical. Bluntness, in the form of straight-forwardness and honesty, may come across as too open or personal in a professional environment. In 2010, Generation Y will occupy approximately 30 million positions in the national workforce (Welc, 2009).

Other studies put the numbers of the Generation Y even higher at 102 million and gives insight into the Generation Y psyche. This generation was raised by parents who were most often very supportive and protective of them, educational institutions created character and values-driven curricula. They were constantly reminded of how special they were and, as a

result, this group possesses a high degree of self-esteem. In school, trying was given greater weight than actually getting it right. This combination of self-esteem and receiving kudos for effort over accomplishment has manifested itself, this generation is having a difficult time accepting, and applying lessons learned from constructive criticism. Members of the millennial generation reflect a team-orientation and ascribe to the motto “Nobody is left behind” (Henchley, 2005, paragraph 13).

Williams (2009), notes Generation X and Y will change traditional views of career management, in that the pattern of employees working hard, paying their dues, and being employed in the same profession until retirement will no longer exist. It is estimated that the typical Generation X or Y worker will have between 10-14 jobs during their professional lifetimes. As to their career, Generation X and Y employees are not interested in financial compensation as much as being a viable component of a company. Additionally, younger generations want challenging assignments and recognition for work and do not respond favorably to traditional one-way hierarchical communication, expecting communication to be constant, two way, and flexible. Moreover, traditional, didactic training and performance review methods are not effective, as the ability to provide feedback to their supervisors is vital.

Younger generations have different lifestyle demands, need a sense of community and belonging, want a commitment to a business culture that pursues social responsibility, sustainability, and being treated as good or better than customers. Regarding work environments, they want flexible and restructured work surroundings, prefer social networking integrated into the work environment, and want a balanced, not a workaholic life.

Coaching and mentoring opportunities are sought after, and they expect the company to be devoted to community service. Each generation gives unique perspective and insight into the employment dynamic of today and is motivated differently, responds differently to leadership styles, and communicates in different modalities (Williams 2009). What Generation Y expects in the workplace are leaders who are honest, have integrity, and serve as role models. They desire a career plan that allows them to develop personal and professional working relationships, work that is fun, to be treated with respect, and have flexibility to pursue activities and interests outside of work (Harrison, 2007).

Hammill (2005) further demonstrates personal and lifestyle differences. Workplace characteristics such as work ethic, values, leadership style, interaction style, communications, feedback, rewards motivators and attitudes toward the balance between work and family were compared and contrasted between four generations active in the workplace. Results emphasize specific generational difference. For example, comparing best communication methods, Veterans prefer formal memo, Baby Boomers like to communicate in person, Generation X wants direct and immediate communication methods, while Generation Y prefer e-mail and voice mail.

In respect to personal lifestyle, Hammill (2005) compared and contrasted generational views concerning core values, family, education, media, and finances. Again, disparities were readily identified. Concerning family, Veterans were most familiar with the traditional nuclear, Baby Boomers experienced disintegration of families, Generation X defined the term “latch-key kid”, while Generation Y identify with the concept of merged families.

Statistics vary; Armour predicts Generation Y will ultimately make up a workforce of at least 70 million. “This age group is moving into the labor force during a time of major demographic change, as companies around the USA face an aging workforce.” (2005). They have high expectations of self, high expectations of employers, believe in ongoing education,

seek out immediate responsibility and are goal-oriented. In regards to older employees' attitudes toward their younger workers. More than 60% of employers relate they experience tension between employees from different generations within the workplace. Another related statistic reveals that 70% of older employees feel the abilities of younger generations are sub-par. The feeling is mutual, as almost half of younger employees find fault in the skills of older employees. Regarding the knowledge base of Generation Y entering the workforce, often they possess more knowledge and skill sets that their older managers and do not respond well to commanding supervisory styles. Furthermore, this generation wants to be challenged, are up to date on the latest technology, have a desire to be part of an organization, and want to be respected for their contributions.

In the law enforcement profession, Van Brocklin (2007) outlines basic differences between those currently in leadership positions and those are entering the profession. These differences demonstrate what each has to say about the other: older police officers from the Veteran and Baby Boomer generations complain that younger recruits and officers are not committed to the work, feel entitled, are not willing to pay their dues, and the profession is just a job. Younger officers believe that the older officers are rigid, inflexible, married to the job and just do not get it. Law enforcement leadership is recognizing the fact that Generation Y, like it or not, will be formidable. Leaders realize this generation might not look at law enforcement as a life-long career, as most of the aging generations do. As a result, recruiting and retention has become a challenge. "Traditionally a lifelong career in law enforcement was sought after by many young people. However ... police agencies nationwide are currently experiencing difficulty with recruiting qualified law enforcement officers to fill new job openings, as well as replace the positions of those who are leaving or retiring. There is evidence that police officers who are members of ... Generation Y may not view law enforcement as a lifelong career" (Israelsen-Hartley, 2007, paragraph 4).

In the next five years, most of this researcher's colleagues in law enforcement will be eligible to retire, leaving a leadership void. This phenomenon is occurring all over the United States. Federal, state and local law enforcement agencies are "aging out," and as a result, there are those who must be trained and prepared to assume leadership positions. Law enforcement must prepare and pass on best leadership practices because it is the previous generation's responsibility for this knowledge transfer. "The millennials' career choices will be influenced by the planning and actions of today's leaders. To gain an adequate segment of the qualified workforce, policing must be attractive to millennials and convince them that law enforcement is their best choice for a meaningful and important career" (Henchey, 2005, paragraph 8).

The fundamental responsibility of an older generation is to prepare the younger generations for the future. To nurture, teach and train them for the challenges to come. This is the only way a culture, society, or organization can survive. This underlying responsibility is critical in the workplace. In regards to nurturing potential leaders, Maxwell (1995), presents the acronym BEST- Believe in them, Encourage them, Share with them, and Trust them (pg. 61). "The leaders you've developed must carry on the tradition of development and produce a third generation of leaders." and "True success comes only when every generation continues to develop the next generation" (pg. 188).

There are effective techniques a supervisor can employ in creating a positive working relationship with younger generations. Twenge (2006) notes that 60% of employers report generational tensions in the workplace. Managers and leaders of organizations are coming to

the realization younger generations respond better if given praise and appreciation for their work, are frank and direct, do not automatically give respect, question everything, and if given a task, must understand why the task is important. This generation is often impatient, and raised on the concept of instant gratification. Younger generations' attitudes are "Not wrong, just different. Just trying to see things from their perspective will help a lot" (pg. 216).

Once this responsibility is recognized, and leaders realize the importance of developing future leaders, generational differences dissipate. What matters is creating an honest dialogue based on demonstrating resonant leadership styles. On occasion, in law enforcement as well as the military, a direct, commanding style is necessary. In emergency situations or critical incidents, an officer or citizen's life can depend on immediate obedience to direct orders. In developing leadership skills, law enforcement leaders can model emotionally intelligent competencies and domains. Leaders can learn, model, practice a "leadership repertoire" as explained in Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee (2002), by developing and reinforcing visionary, coaching, affiliative and democratic leadership styles. Leaders can develop, practice and teach leadership skills that are positive and effective. Pacesetting and commanding styles are effective and necessary in the law enforcement field. However, a wise leader knows what style to use in a particular situation.

What traits are imperative for leaders to pass on? The most important attributes people look for in a leader are honesty, forward thinking, competency and the ability to inspire. These qualities lead to the most important foundation of leadership: credibility. A credible leader is a trusted leader. People and students will believe a trusted leader, regardless of generational differences, and be more receptive to the teachings of that leader (Kouzes & Posner, 2007).

### Methodology

This research is quantitative, non-experimental in nature, designed to explore beliefs, opinions, and attitudes, in order to come to a better understanding of generational perspective affecting the criminal justice profession. For the purposes of this research, 50 college students attending criminal justice classes at a four-year university in Orlando, Florida, were asked to complete a written survey detailing their attitudes, beliefs, and expectations in reference to their entry into the criminal justice profession. These students were chosen because of their interest in pursuing criminal justice degrees and potential careers in the criminal justice profession, their relative naivety to the criminal justice profession, and most importantly, their age, as the majority are Generation X or Y.

Their active pursuit of criminal justice degrees provides the research with subjects who have a personal, vested interest in the future of the profession. The students' inexperience in the field brings a level of un-bias necessary to obtain unhindered feedback, while their inclusion in younger generations provides relevant data from those within Generation X and Generation Y.

The survey begins with basic demographics such as age, gender, degree specialization, and field of interest. The next section of questions is designed to identify the respondent's beliefs as to the future of the criminal justice profession, their individual career goals and career progression, and expectations of promotion and advancement. The next segment asked the respondent to give their personal perspective as to what leadership style they respond to best, their personal expectations, and their view of challenges the criminal justice profession is facing and will face in the future.

The strength of this research lies in the fact that the sample was specifically chosen because of their lack of experience in the criminal justice profession and their age. Being interested, but not employed in the criminal justice profession, provides research data that is un-biased as to individual experience, prejudice, or predisposition within a particular criminal justice entity or specific organization.

There are weaknesses to this study, as the research is one-sided. Those interested, but not actually, in the criminal justice profession comprised the sample. This issue is multi-faceted, with different perspectives. Additional research in the form of comparison studies should be conducted from a sample of leaders and employees well established within the profession, and those who have just entered the profession and are experiencing first-hand generational differences and adaptation to the rigors of the profession.

Another area of weakness lies in the dynamics of the sample itself. College students attending a criminal justice class comprised the research sample, and the survey was given to the students as a handout for the class. Although the student participation was voluntary, and there would not be a grade assigned for completion, there could be deviation associated with providing answers designed to please the instructor instead of true opinions.

### Results

48 out of 50 surveys were completed; resulting in a 96% return rate. All 48 respondents intend to pursue as career in criminal justice. There are discrepancies in total numbers, as some participants did not answer all of the questions, and resulting percentages reflect this disparity. Demographics relating to age, gender, and education level are as follows:

Table 1

<i>Gender</i>			
	Male	Female	Unknown
	16 (33.3%)	25(52.08%)	7(14.5%)
<i>Age</i>			
18-25	9(18.7%)	11(22.9%)	4(8.3%)
25-30	4(8.3%)	8(16.6%)	
30-35	1(2.08%)	4(8.3%)	
35+	2(4.16%)	2(4.16%)	1(2.08%)
Unknown			2(4.16%)
<i>Educational Level</i>			
Freshman (25)	10(20.83%)	8(16.6%)	7(14.5%)
18-25	5(10.41%)	6(12.5%)	7(14.5%)
25-30	3(6.25%)		

30-35		1(2.08%)	
35+	1(2.08%)	1(2.08%)	
Unknown	1(2.08%)		
Sophomore (10)	5(10.41%)	5(10.41%)	
18-25	2(4.16%)	1(2.08%)	
25-30	2(4.16%)	3(6.25%)	
30-35			
35+	1(2.08%)	1(2.08%)	
Junior (5)	3(6.25%)	2(4.16%)	
18-25	1(2.08%)		
25-30		1(2.08%)	
30-35	2(4.16%)		
35+		1(2.08%)	
Senior (2)		2(4.16%)	
30-35		1(2.08%)	
35+		1(2.08%)	
Unknown (6)	1(2.08%)		5 (10.41%)

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Respondents show interest in a wide range of vocations within the criminal justice profession, and their college majors reflect this diversity. Percentages are rounded to the nearest decimal.

*Table 2*

<i>College Major</i>	Male	Female	Unknown
Criminal Justice (73%)	18	16	1
Crime Scene Investigation (2.%)		1	
Criminal Investigation (21%)	1	9	
Unknown (4.%)	1	1	
<i>Criminal Justice Area of Interest</i>			
Law Enforcement (67%)	15	17	
Corrections (8.%)	1	3	
Social Work (8.%)		4	
Probation (2.%)		1	
Judicial (2.%)		1	
Juvenile (2.%)		1	
Unknown (11%)		5	

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A critical component of this research is to determine career motivational factors, and to establish if there is a correlation based on generational perception. A key question asked was: What is your primary career motivation? Respondents were given a choice of security, making a difference, pay/benefits, promotion, excitement or a write-in a response.

Results are as follows:

*Table 3*

<i>Motivation</i>	18-25	25-30	30-35	35+	Unknown
Security (8.34%)	2			2	
Making a Difference (66.66%)	19	5	4	4	
Pay/Benefits (8.34%)	2	1	1		
Excitement (8.34%)	2		1		1
Unknown/Multiple (4.16)	1		1		
Promotion (2.08%)	1				
Blank (2.08%)					1

In regards to the career aspirations of the respondents, each was asked to identify the factor that best fits into their future. Choices were longevity, development, satisfaction, advancement or recognition. Percentages calculated to two decimal points (99.98%).

*Table 4*

<i>Aspiration</i>	18-25	25-30	30-35	35+	Unknown
<i>Longevity</i> (17, 35.41%)					
Male (6)	1	2	1	1	
Female (8)	4	1		2	1
Unknown (4)	4				
<i>Development</i> (9, 18.75%)					
Male (2)	1	1			
Female (7)	4	2	1		
Unknown					
<i>Satisfaction</i> (9, 18.75%)					
Male (2)	1	1			
Female (4)	4				
Unknown (3)	1	1		1	
<i>Advancement</i> (7, 14.58%)					
	18-25	25-30	30-35	35+	Unknown



Male (3)	3				
Female (3)	1	2			
Unknown (1)				1	
	18-25	25-30	30-35	35+	Unknown
<i>Recognition (1, 2.08%)</i>					
Male (1)	1				
Female					
Unknown					
	18-25	25-30	30-35	35+	Unknown
<i>Blank (5, 10.41%)</i>					
Male (2)	2				
Female (0)					
Unknown (3)	1				2

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An important aspect of this research is to determine if students are planning to stay in the criminal justice field for an extended period. Students were asked where they see themselves in 5, 10, 15 and 20 years. The question was designed to establish if student had a long-term plan for career progression by completing the four parts of the question, therefore their individual answers were not relevant. Out of 48 respondents, 14 (29%) answered all four parts of the question, 21 (44%) provided partial answers, and 13 (27%) left the question blank. Calculations may not total 100% because of incomplete gender and age answers provided for some questions. Those listed as “unknown” are not used in computation.

*Table 5*

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<i>Career Progression</i>					
<i>Answers showing complete career progression (29%, 14 of 48)</i>					
	18-25	25-30	30-35	35+	Unknown
Male (37%, 6 of 16)	3	3			
Female (29%, 7 of 25)	4	2	1		
Unknown (1)	1				
<i>Partial Career Progression (44%, 21 of 48)</i>					
	18-25	25-30	30-35	35+	Unknown
Male (50%, 8 of 16)	5	2	1		1
Female (29%, 7 of 25)	6		1		2
Unknown (3)	2				1
<i>One answer or completely blank (27%, 13 of 48)</i>					
	18-25	25-30	30-35	35+	Unknown

Male (6.25%, 1 of 16)	1				
Female (44%, 10 of 25)	5	2		3	1
Unknown (1)				1	

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As future criminal justice professionals, the respondents were asked to give their opinion as to the most significant challenge facing the profession currently, and the most critical challenge for the future. Answers were what one would expect, such as: terrorism, crime youth violence, technology, gangs, budget, recruiting, prisons, recidivism, corruption, probation, and youth programs. However, six respondents partially answered the question, and 20 of the 48 (42%) respondents left the question blank.

In order to discover which supervisory style best suits individual task accomplishment, respondents were asked to choose one sentence that best describes how a supervisor can assist them. The sentence were designed to determine if a respondent is self-motivated, works better in a team environment, wants to be directed, needs a task demonstrated, wants the ability to ask questions, or prefers no or little supervision.

*Table 6*

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<i>Supervisory Style</i>					
<i>Self-Motivation (33%, 16 of 48)</i>					
	18-25	25-30	30-35	35+	Unknown
Male (25%, 4 of 16)	2	1		1	
Female (40%, 10 of 25)	7	2		1	
Unknown (4.16%, 2 of 48)	2				
<i>Team (14.5%, 7 of 48)</i>					
	18-25	25-30	30-35	35+	Unknown
Male (12.5% 2 of 16)		1	1		
Female (16%, 4 of 25)		1	2	1	
Unknown (2.08%, 1 of 48)					1
<i>No Supervision (14.5%, 7 of 48)</i>					
	18-25	25-30	30-35	35+	Unknown
Male (12.5%, 2 of 16)	2				
Female (16%, 4 of 25)	4				
Unknown (2.08%, 1 of 48)	1				
<i>Demonstration (8.33%, 4 of 48)</i>					
	18-25	25-30	30-35	35+	Unknown
Male (12.5%, 2 of 16)	1			1	

Female (4%, 1 of 25) 1  
 Unknown (2.08%, 1 of 48) 1

*Tell (6.25%, 3 of 48)*

	18-25	25-30	30-35	35+	Unknown
Male (6.25%, 1 of 16)	1				
Female (8%, 2 of 25)		1	1		

*Ask Why (2.08%, 1 of 48)*

	18-25	25-30	30-35	35+	Unknown
Male (6.25%, 1 of 16)				1	

*Blank (20.83%, 10 of 48)*

	18-25	25-30	30-35	35+	Unknown
Male (18.75%, 3 of 16)	3				
Female (12%, 3 of 25)	1	1	1		
Unknown (8.33%, 4 of 48)	1			1	2

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## Discussion

### *Motivation and Career Progression*

In analyzing data, some interesting results were discovered. For example, when describing what factor motivated them the most, almost 67% stated they wanted to make a difference. Out of this, 24 of 32 who chose this answer were under 30 years old. However, only 11 demonstrated partial career progression (at least two of four progression questions answered). This phenomenon occurs again in that 13 of 32, (41%) of respondents under 30 demonstrate full (four questions answered) career progression. An additional 15 respondents under 30 years old demonstrated partial career progression. Overall, 23 of 32 respondents under 30 years old show partial or no career progression. This lends credence to Israelsen-Hartley's (2007) assertion that younger generations may not view law enforcement as a lifelong career and the premise that generations X and Y might not think in terms of longevity within the criminal justice profession.

Eight of 24 respondents, one third of which are 30 years or younger, chose longevity as their primary motivational factor. Overall, 17 out of 48, or 35.4%, identified longevity as their priority. It is not surprising that four out of five 35+ year old respondents are in this category. Curiously, four out of five 35+ year old respondents left the career progression question completely blank. Security was important to two of five respondents 35+ years old and excitement was the primary motivator for four respondents, of which two were 18-25 years old. Four respondents, or 8.43%, were interested in pay/benefits, of which two were 18-25 years old.

### *Career Aspiration*

Career development and career satisfaction are equal, as nine respondents respectively identified these factors as the most important. Interestingly, in both cases, eight of nine respondents were under thirty years old. Advancement is important to seven respondents, of which six are under 30 years old. Only one male 18-25 year old selected recognition as his motivational factor. Five respondents left the question blank, of which three were 18-25 years old.

### *Supervisory Style*

The dominant supervisory style chosen was self-motivation. These results emphasize Armour's (2005) contention that younger generations do not respond well to commanding supervisory styles, are goal oriented, and want immediate responsibility. One third of all respondents picked self-motivation, with 12 being under thirty years old. Interestingly, only four were males. The unusual aspect was that almost 21 % of respondents did not answer this question. Of those, 70 % were under 30 years old and only two show partial career progression. Regarding the three respondents who chose the supervisory style of tell (direction), all demonstrated career progression, along with three of four respondents who chose demonstration. The only respondent to select the concept of asking why was a 35+ year old male, with no career progression. Six respondents, all 18-25 years old, stated they prefer no supervision. Seven respondents prefer to work in teams, of which none were under the age of 25.

Regarding current and future challenges to the profession, it is interesting to note that 20 of 48 (42%) respondents left these questions blank. Respondents were not given choices and had to formulate their own answers. There is a concern why so many respondents left this question blank. Of those who did respond, most answers related to relevant criminal justice issues

### Recommendations

This research is important in the fact that results confirm some facets of previous studies detailed in the literature review. For instance, career progression over a long period is not a main concern of respondents, but making an impact while in the profession is a priority. 67% want to make a difference in the criminal justice profession, but only 29% see themselves in the field for 25 years. Longevity is important, especially to those over 30 years of age. Career development and career satisfaction is very important to younger respondents, as the overwhelming majority who chose development or satisfaction were under 30 years of age. Regarding supervisory styles, self-motivation is prevalent. Yet 21% of respondents, over two thirds of these being under 30 years old, did not answer this question.

Future research should focus on confirming data. Two weaknesses identified were: first, respondents were asked to give only one answer to aspiration, motivation and supervisory style questions. In order to acquire improved information, respondents should be able to rate answers from one to five according to their individual preference, thus obtaining rating statistics encompassing the entire range instead of only one best answer. Second, regarding current and future challenges to the profession, participants could be given choices instead of developing answers on their own. By providing options a better response rate can be obtained.

### Conclusion

Research has shown there are fundamental differences between the four generations that currently occupy our workplace. These distinct generations have different perspectives,

values and talents and sometimes have disparaging views of each other. This disconnect comes from a lack of understanding, miscommunication and mutual suspicion that leads one to believe other generations “just doesn’t get it.”

This lack of understanding is certainly nothing new or unique to our times. Other than having four simultaneous generations active in the workplace, history is full of generations complaining about each other. Is Generation Y really looking for anything different than we wanted at the beginning of our careers? Yes, there are fundamental contrasts in our outlooks, values and traits. However, we all looking for role models whom we can trust, believe in and learn from.

Generation X and Y are equipped with talents learned from exposure to technology at a very young age. This experience, coupled with instant access to information and knowledge, has created a generation that is progressive and talented, with unparalleled self-confidence. Thus, in order to forge a bond and establish trust, our generation must put aside our stereotypical impressions and accept responsibility to provide leadership value in order to prepare this generation for future challenges. This can be accomplished by taking an active interest, forming individual rapport, being a positive role model and providing positive mentoring to individuals. After all, leadership is a learned skill and is intensely personal.

What does Generations X and Y owe the older generations? This bonding process has to be mutual, collaborative and personal. Generation Y as a whole must mature, as eventually every generation has done throughout history, and come to the realization that knowledge and experience are the greatest gifts. Without knowledge, one cannot grow, without experience, one cannot learn from previous mistakes. Individuals within Generation Y will ultimately transition from student to teacher and one day be questioning their legacies. They will be the ones struggling to understand and connect with a younger generation, and they will be the ones who will realize the importance of establishing this connection, passing on knowledge and developing future leaders.

Brett Meade has worked with the Orange County Sheriff’s office since 1990, and previously served with the DeLand Police Department for almost 8 years. He has experience in community policing, youth services, patrol, professional standards and special investigations. He currently serves as a lieutenant commanding the Intelligence and Joint Terrorism Task Force Unit. Brett Holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Criminal Justice Administration from Columbia College, a Master’s degree in Public Administration from Webster University and is pursuing a PhD in Organizational Leadership from North Central University.

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## Appendix A

### Survey-Generational Perceptions

- 1) Do you intend to pursue a career in criminal justice?                      Yes    No
  
- 2) If yes, what is your primary career motivation?  
(Circle one)  
     Security  
     Making a difference  
     Pay//benefits  
     Promotion  
     Excitement  
     Other \_\_\_\_\_
  
- 3) What is your area of interest, (Circle one) Law Enforcement, Corrections, Social Work, Judicial,  
     Other \_\_\_\_\_?
  
- 4) What agency, department, position, assignment or rank do you see yourself in:  
     5 years \_\_\_\_\_  
     10 years \_\_\_\_\_  
     15 years \_\_\_\_\_  
     20 years \_\_\_\_\_
  
- 5) In terms of your career, please circle the answer that best fits your professional aspirations.  
     Career longevity  
     Career development  
     Career satisfaction  
     Career advancement  
     Recognition  
     Other \_\_\_\_\_
  
- 6) In your opinion, what is the most significant challenge facing the criminal justice  
     profession today? (Use the back of the paper if necessary)
  
- 7) In your opinion, what will be the most critical challenge the criminal justice will face in the  
     future? (Use the back of the paper if necessary)
  
- 8) In accomplishing tasks, Do you best respond to supervisors who:(Circle one)  
     Tell me what to do and then make sure I do it.  
     Assign me a task, and then let me do my job without supervision  
     Demonstrates a task, and then leaves me alone to accomplish it  
     Give me direction and the ability to ask why the task is necessary  
     Let me work with others as a team  
     Rewards my self-motivation, because when I see something that needs to be done I will do it  
     without having to be told
  
- 9) Age (Circle one) : 18-25, 25-30, 30-35, 35 +                      Gender: Male    Female
  
- 10) College major \_\_\_\_\_
  
- 11) (Circle one)      Freshman                      Sophomore                      Junior                      Senior