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Learn to ask 'Y'

By: *Braden Quartermaine*

THE reality is hitting WA bosses -- if you don't keep generation Y staff happy, you will lose them. Perth IT engineer Rowan Macfarlane, 24, said Perth's baby-boomer management generation had plenty to learn.

Mr Macfarlane, a network and systems engineer with Sentient Technologies, said rigid management styles were probably a product of baby boomers' upbringings. "The generation before the baby boomers was very strict and very military and that was where original management theory was generated," he said.

"They were brought up with those ideas and they think that's how it should be done. "But if businesses aren't willing to work on some change, then they're going to start cycling through staff quite quickly, as a lot of people our age are quite happy to change jobs."

Mr Macfarlane said generation Y staff could relate to their bosses better if they were more like a father-figure or role model, rather than telling young staff "just do as you're told".

There were seven management traits that hindered the motivation and morale of proactive generation Ys: closed mindedness; ineffective delegation; lack of knowledge and organisation skills; inability to train or facilitate training; disrespect for young people; intimidating attitudes; and over-emphasis on outward appearance.

"They don't listen to ideas or points of view which we have," Mr Macfarlane said. He will speak at the Australasian Management Centre breakfast forum, sponsored by The Sunday Times, that will look at harnessing the energy and intellect of generation Y in the workplace. The forum begins at 8am at the Perth Convention Exhibition Centre.

Speakers include AMC managing director **Greg Kinnaird**, Mike Scott, from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, and Kate Casson, from the Australian Institute of Office Professionals.

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