



## INNOVATION FORUM

# Respect for Gen Y

FRED Holman has spent a lifetime working with young people and in contrast to the views of some of his contemporaries, he has plenty of time for today's Generation Y.

Mr Holman, 65, the WA general manager of Australian Convenience Foods Group, will speak at the next Australasian Management Centre Innovation Forum breakfast.

He said the key to bosses getting on with their younger staff was to understand them and treat them as individuals.

"I've always found that irrespective of the age of your employee, everyone's an individual; you look after people as an individual," Mr Holman said.

He said Generation Y could sometimes be misunderstood in the workplace, generating unnecessary friction.

"In some ways they show a lack of proprietorship, which can come across as a lack of respect," Mr Holman said.

"With Generation Y, I personally don't think they're lazy. I think there are some very, very hard workers. I think they're just as hard-working and as valuable a resource as any other generation has been.

"And I think they're very educated, they're very smart."

Mr Holman said skills shortages would be a medium-term reality and that embracing the talents of young people would become increasingly important.

"Gen Ys are so switched on to computerisation that we are achieving projects at breakneck speeds in comparison to probably 10 and 20 years ago," he said.

"They're going to continue to find better ways of doing almost all things that we do now. This will have a certain offset factor on the labour shortages."

But Mr Holman said employers needed to be realistic and accept that young staff would eventually want to move on.

"I think staying with a company for a decade now is probably yesterday's thinking," he said.

"You will get the Gen Y who will work very hard and apply themselves diligently during the time that they're employed, then another opportunity will come up and they will be inclined to grab it.

"The boomers really started the change away from the lifetime job. They were prepared to move around far more than the previous generations and I think that has now accelerated progressively through the years and the different generations."

The AMC Innovation Forum breakfast will be on March 4 at the Perth Convention Exhibition Centre. Tickets are \$195 each, or \$1100 for tables of six. They are available at [www.amcinnovation.com](http://www.amcinnovation.com) or by calling 1300 466 688.

—BRADEN QUARTERMAINE



Fred Holman