

## CAREER FAIRS JUST AREN'T ENOUGH

BY CHRIS CARMON

**Not** too long ago, companies could show up at a career fair at a local college once or twice a year and the effort would produce a line of great talent predisposed to start work upon graduation. Today, great talent is still graduating all the time, but this talent is proving to have very different motivations and perspectives on how they want to position themselves in the workforce.

Companies that understand the nuances of the younger generations of talent can position themselves better to create opportunities to attract this talent and maximize their productivity. As the baby boomers continue to retire, companies must identify strategies that connect them with local colleges, their faculty and their programs to ensure an effective transition of talent to their business. This more strategic investment of time creates opportunities to attract talent and to mold that talent to better fit positions with their business long before graduation.

Recently, I had the chance to interview Deborah (Deb) Mills-Scofield, who is a strategy and innovation consultant, a partner with Glengary LLC and a Growth Partner with Baldwin-Wallace's Center for Innovation & Growth (CIG). Deb shared experiences, insight and advice on ways her clients engage with local colleges and create programs to benefit from younger talent entering their businesses.

**Q: Why do you continue to work with college students, and what benefits have you received from these efforts?**

As I reflect on my career, I was mentored every step of the way – through college, Bell Labs and AT&T. I wouldn't be where I am without it. So I feel that mentoring is important. I do that several ways: through



the Brown University Women's Launchpad for senior women, informal mentoring of startups from Brown, and through BW's Center for Innovation & Growth (CIG). Frequently I'll have the student fellows at the CIG get involved with my clients and at the VC firm, Glengary LLC, in which I'm a partner. At the VC firm, the students help us with due diligence. Their work has been very impressive and thorough, providing insights that we wouldn't have thought of because of their age and different experiences. I will also have students help my clients as we do planning and innovation – doing some primary and secondary market research and analysis.

**Q: What are the tangible benefits to having students involved in your work?**

By involving students with my clients and Glengary on real projects, these companies get access to some of the best students in Northeast Ohio. These firms are able to assess how well the students fit into their environment and get an inside track to hire them after graduation. The students get exposure to how things are done in businesses, learn about corporate cultures and networking, and they receive practical, useable experience. This helps them get a better feel for what they may or may not want to do – including their own startup – and better evaluate their opportunities. And, let's face it, this looks great on the resume.

**Q: What are some of the differences you see in Gen Y versus baby boomer and Gen X talent?**

The 21st century has really shaken up the world – and the business world in particular. One of the major shocks to companies is Gen Y's attitude to work, often misunderstood as selfishness or lack of commitment. The boomers and Gen Xers have worked hard, did as they were told, didn't challenge the status quo, and punched the industrial clock. Gen Yers don't buy in to this, for some very good reasons. They have grown up with absentee parents caught up in the corporate ladder-climbing rat race and experienced the lack of loyalty companies had to their parents in downturns. Gen Y's loyalty must be earned over and over again (as should any employee's). They are will-

ing to work very hard, just not in vain, and they're not eager to accept the same traditional rewards and recognitions their parents have (e.g., 2 weeks of vacation, 9-5, etc.)

**Q: How do you think Gen Y talent will change business?**

Well, I keep trying to get my clients to realize that Gen Y will have a very large impact on 21st century capitalism. The 20th century's view of profits as the 'ends' versus the 'means' is not sustainable, as our financial crisis blatantly illustrates. Gen Y wants to be part of an organization that makes meaning, not just money. If they are going to give their time, energy and talent, it better be for more than just corporate profits. Gen Y gets it right – profits are an output; making a difference in customers' lives is an outcome. Profits are a means to the end of making a difference, not the end in itself. As these 'kids' enter into business, creating their own ventures and working in existing ones, they will transform business into something much more meaningful and impactful. And that is a very, very good thing. Companies that allow Gen Y to make a difference will have a powerful advantage over those that don't. <<

*If you would like to learn more about Deb Scofield or the Baldwin-Wallace CIG Program, you can visit her company website at [www.mills-scofield.com](http://www.mills-scofield.com) for more information.*

This article was brought to you by Chris Carmon, president of The Carmon Group. You can find out more about The Carmon Group at [www.carmongroup.com](http://www.carmongroup.com)