

Drive business success by capitalising on a changing workforce

Women are filling leadership roles and millennials (Generation Y) are becoming the key drivers of business performance, pointing to a workforce landscape that has evolved quite significantly over the last few decades.



Charles Brewer

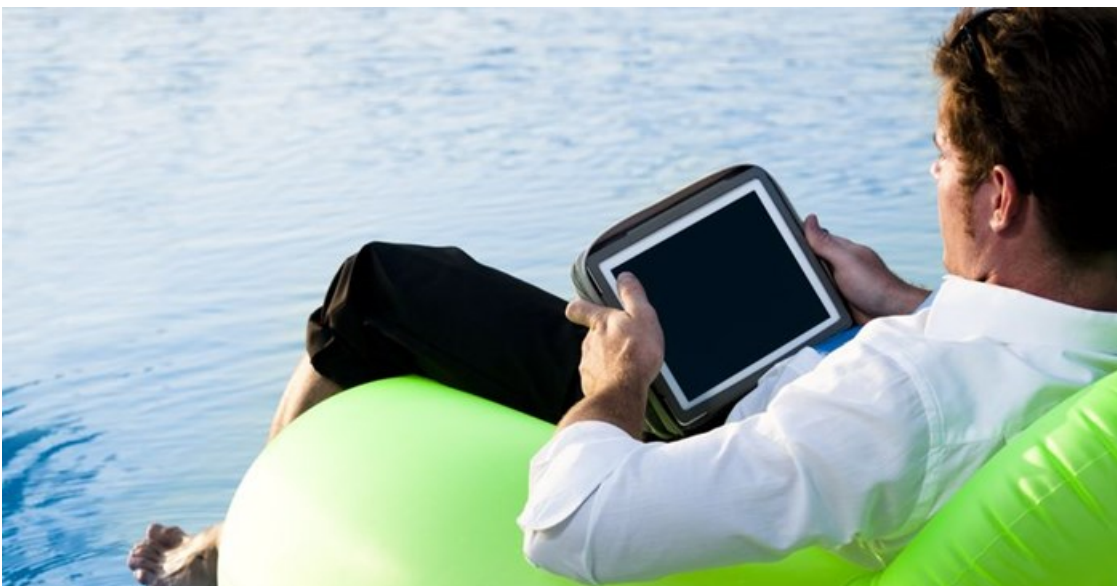
As with many other industries, the logistics industry has traditionally been male-dominated, but this has been changing over time. Charles Brewer, managing director of [DHL Express Sub Saharan Africa \(SSA\)](#), says that the company has made great strides in evolving their leadership structures in SSA and since 2011, the number of female employees in leadership roles more than doubled.

"Four years ago, 15% of our leadership roles across SSA were filled by women, compared to over 35% now and we are committed to further increase the number of female staff members at management level. Similarly, there seems to be an ongoing debate about how to manage and lead the millennial generation - for us, we see the younger generation as the ones who will move our business forward, therefore recognising and accepting the differences and similarities between them and Generation X is crucial to business success."

Keeping things flexible, motivating Generation Y

"Gone are the days of a hierarchical approach to leadership, you have to keep things flexible and open the lines of communication. Employees of today want to have positive work-life balance, do meaningful work and understand the growth paths available to them. If you are able to capitalise on their ambitions and goals, your business will see the benefits," says Brewer.

Research by the global performance management consulting company Gallup shows that employees, who are more engaged, are psychologically more committed to their job than those who are not. "At DHL, we believe that having a motivated workforce will lead to great service quality which will translate into loyal customers and sustainable and profitable business operations."



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Learning from the tech-savvy generation

"Lengthy and rigid performance reviews are also no longer effective - in a fast paced environment such as ours, we find micro-mentoring more effective. We focus on smaller and more regular feedback sessions that may be a five minute discussion over lunch but it has a structure and it is shorter, less formal and more frequent. Reverse mentoring is just as important - you now have a dynamic, tech-savvy generation at your fingertips, it's important to learn from them and get some fresh new ideas."

"We find significant value in exposing high potential employees to the global arena. As a network business, we are in the fortunate position to provide opportunities for employees to learn best practices from various international offices and implement them in their work across the SSA region," adds Brewer.

The focus on employee motivation and engagement has paid off. Earlier this year, the Top Employers Institute awarded DHL Express the 2015 Top Employers Africa and Top Employers Global certification. This is in addition to Top Employer certifications for DHL in six individual African countries. "We are one of only five companies in the world that have achieved Global Top Employers status," adds Brewer.

"Now more than ever, it is important to lead your employees as opposed to merely managing them. They want to learn from you, while knowing that their thoughts and opinions are important. If you can leverage their positive can-do attitudes, it will directly affect your business' success," concludes Brewer.

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