

## The Power of Youth

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**A**s the father of three children — one in college, one writing college applications and one who won't get off the Xbox — I take a keen interest in the job market for today's youth. Many recent articles have been written about the difficulty kids are having in securing their first good job after college, and some of these authors are beginning to question the underlying value of a college degree.

I don't agree. Our firm has experienced dramatic growth over the last year and almost all of our bright new hires have been 20-somethings. Bright, motivated, naïve, college-educated, high-energy kids that we are willing to entrust with the future of our organization. The secret is out; these kids are great. They need to be mentored and managed, but they are just great.

### Energy Crisis?

The most striking element of a 20-something is their energy. No surprise here. We were all 20-somethings once, and we remember what it was like to be able to rally on little or no sleep, whether for a big presentation or for another party. But I am talking here about more than just the strength and endurance of young bodies and minds. Hire a young rising star and they will work late, arrive early and rally whenever necessary. Then hire a couple more of the same and you will start to experience a collective energy boost — the compounding influence of these ambitious youngsters full of dreams and cooperation and belief.

Hughes Marino recently moved into a new headquarters building, and the nicely appointed brick remodel at the corner of Front and Beech streets has been widely praised as a remarkable workplace setting. Many of our clients have remarked about the feeling of good energy as you walk through our doors. But not as many people notice that in conjunction with our recent move we have been steadily growing, and that the average age of our team members has now been knocked almost in half. Yes, you can feel it when you walk in the doors, and it feels great. It is a wonderful building, to be sure, and the increasing youthful energy of the firm is our secret ingredient. This is the power of youth.

### Excellence is a Habit

One of the challenges in hiring an established professional is that they are an established professional — which means they have found a professional formula that works for them. And this formula might be adaptable to another team environment. Or it might not.

These kids have none of that. They are blank slates, eager to be mentored and coached in the right way of doing things. And for all of their hard work in high school and college, these kids are quick studies. If you map it out for them, they will get it right away. Got an ethical dilemma? Do the right thing, every time. Facing a challenge? Ask for help. Have something to share? Share it with the team. If you start from scratch and train these young professionals as part of a winning team, you will find a wonderful formula for excellence and success.

### Feeding the Beast

By the way, that established professional probably has three kids, a hefty mortgage and college tuition stress. I'm just guessing here. And the point is that they need to feed the beast, and keep the income-expense ratio balanced. They really can't afford to take a break from their production to learn a new or different approach to the business.

Those young kids? They've got none of that either. Overhead? They might be living at home, meaning their parents' home. Expenses? Not on a scale that can't be managed.

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And because they are young and unencumbered, they don't have the same need to ramp up income production immediately.

We can all take the time to learn/teach the right way to do the business, and to trust that it will be worth it in the end. Worth it for the youngster who will find themselves as a key member of a high performing team with a bright future, and worth it for the organization that will secure its future in a perpetual succession model. It is a win/win/win/ win/win...

Today's kids are tomorrow's visionary leaders. The earlier we recognize this and tap into it, the better we can leverage their strengths for the benefit of our organizations. Now if I could just get my last kid off the Xbox.

*John Jarvis is Senior Vice President of [Hughes Marino](#), a San Diego commercial real estate company specializing in San Diego tenant representation and building purchases. Contact John at (619) 238-2111 or [john@hughesmarino.com](mailto:john@hughesmarino.com) to learn more.*