

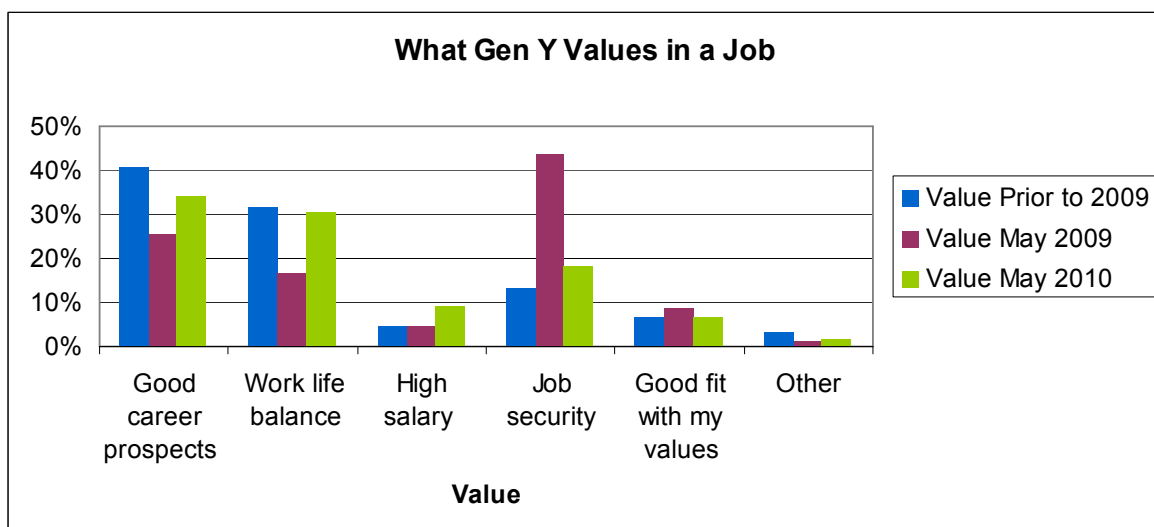


For employers, engaging Generation Y (born 1980 - 1995) has always been a topic of interest. Gen Y has been typecast as high achievers who can be demanding, particularly with regard to career advancement. If the demands of Gen Y are not met, they are prepared to leave their job to look for opportunities elsewhere. They have been in an employees' market with a choice of jobs, and organisations were competing for them in a 'War for Talent.' As a result of this economic prosperity, Gen Y has expected to fast-track their career, receive rewards and perks, and ongoing career development, whilst maintaining work/life balance. In recent times however, Gen Y has lived through the worst economic crisis since they have entered the workforce. For the first time, they were working in an environment characterised by redundancies, forced leave, pay cuts and reduced benefits. During the Global Financial Crisis (GFC), our 2009 Gen Y survey indicated that there were some changes in the attitudes of Gen Y towards work, however the question remains as to whether such changes, including a shift from focusing on good career prospects and work/life balance to job security, remain. In turn, this will indicate how employers can engage and retain Gen Y employees.

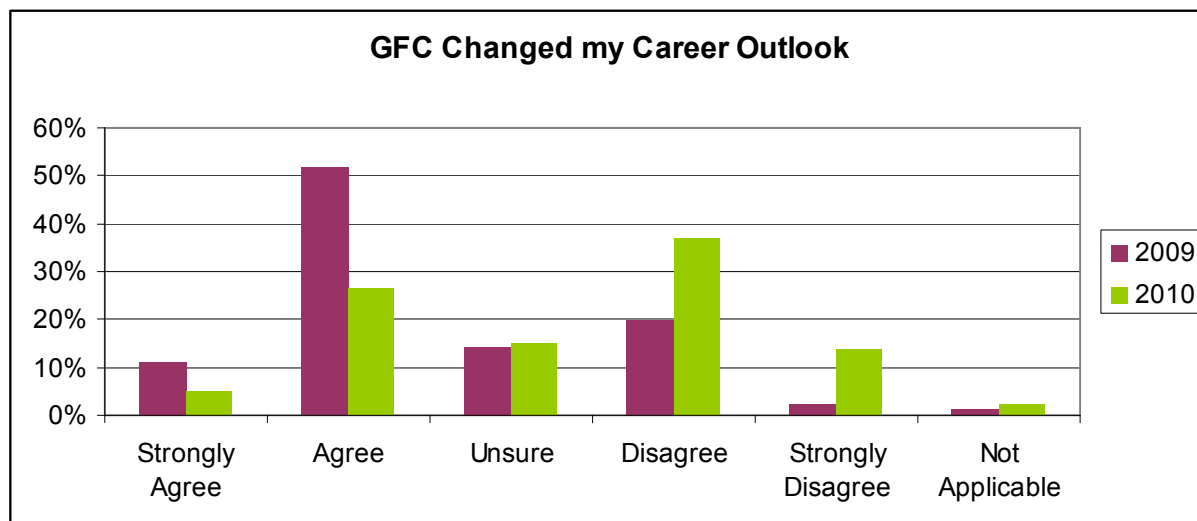
Throughout May and June 2010, Psylutions conducted a follow-up online survey investigating the work attitudes and values of Gen Y following the GFC. In 2010, 68% of respondents were working full time with 6% part time and 9% casual. Comparable to the 2009 sample, 53% indicated that their highest level of education was an undergraduate degree, 11% postgraduate degree, and 14% had completed TAFE/college or secondary school respectively.

#### Has the GFC changed the attitudes of Gen Y towards work?

As shown in the graph below, the survey results indicated that in 2010, Gen Y value good career prospects most in a job (34%), closely followed by work/life balance (30%). However, during the GFC, job security was most highly valued, with 44% indicating that this was most important to them in the 2009 survey. In 2010, only 18% now reported that job security was most important to them in a job. This is comparable with Gen Y work values before the GFC, when 13% selected job security as most important. This suggests that the impact of the GFC that resulted in a change of attitudes towards work has now returned to similar values prior to the GFC.



In terms of their career outlook, in 2009, 63% agreed that the GFC had changed their attitude towards their career, however one year later only 32% agreed or strongly agreed with the same statement (see the graph below). This suggests that any change in the career outlook of Gen Y as a result of the impact of the GFC was short lived.



Specifically, Gen Y also believes that they can change jobs more easily in 2010 than they could in 2009 during the GFC. In 2009, 80% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they could not change jobs as easily during the GFC, however in 2010 only 42% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they could not change jobs as easily now as they could before the GFC. Additionally, 39% actually disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement in 2010 compared to 7% in 2009. This indicates that there has been a shift back to believing that they can change jobs again, which may result in an increase in this type of behaviour.

#### Did the GFC affect the work behaviours of Gen Y?

During the GFC, although 51% of survey respondents indicated that they were in the same role as prior to the GFC, 34% left their organisation. Of that 34%, 18% left due to a lack of career development. These results suggest that during this time, even though many felt they were unable to change jobs as easily, this may not have necessarily impacted on their behaviour. When you consider this in conjunction with the change in their attitudes regarding how easily they can now change jobs, the tendency for Gen Y to leave their current role, if it does not meet their needs, has the potential to increase.

In the 2010 Survey, most indicated that largely, they were not adversely affected by the GFC, similar to results from 2009. Though, in 2010, 81% indicated that they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that they did not know what the concern about the GFC was about, suggesting that they believed there was some basis for concern about the GFC. However in 2009, 61% agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, and only 23% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. This suggests that while the GFC was happening, Gen Y in general did not perceive that there was a reason for concern, however in hindsight they do agree that there were grounds for concern. Nonetheless, this does not seem to have necessarily affected their behaviour as a result.

#### Implications for employers of Gen Y

Gen Y are still willing to 'jump ship' for better opportunities elsewhere, and this still occurred even during the GFC, despite their focus on job security. With the focus for Gen Y returning once again to good career prospects and work/life balance, it is critical for organisations to offer such opportunities to their Gen Y employees through a strong focus on their career development.