



HR Technologies for the Multi-Generational Workforce

By Christine König, Ingentis

HR technologies of today and tomorrow must be flexible and responsive to the largest demographic groups, Generation Y (millennials) and Generation Z. Gen Y, aged from early 20s to early 30s, grew up with many new technologies and they can be characterized by their need for flexible working arrangements. An intensification of these characteristics is represented in their successors, Gen Z. Born in the mid-1990s and later, most of Gen Z will be entering the workplace within the next few years and have an even closer bond to technologies and social networking than Gen Y. They have high expectations from all technology since they have grown up with mobile phones, smartphones, and tablets.

The Intersection of Different Generations in the HR Sector

Over the next several years, these young generations will increasingly interact with older, perhaps more conservative generations within the company. In some workplaces, HR technology will be challenged to meet the demands of boomers, Gen X, Gen Y, and Gen Z. The generations before Y were primarily educated in how to handle a PC at work. Boomers and Gen X don't expect as much from technologies as Gen Y and Z. It's a fact that these target groups will also meet each other in the HR sector in the coming years.

Organization Charts and HR Reports as a Basis for HR strategy

The basis for every HR strategy is verified HR data. Therefore, the most important key figures and the organizational structure have to be clearly analyzed and visualized. In this case, leading-edge software applications will be a big help to tech-savvy HR managers and consultants. With your organizational software, you should be able to map any hierarchical structure. The software should create organizational charts, position plans and HR reports automatically and enable browsing the organization structure while simultaneously accessing relevant key data. The organization charts should contain information on organizational units, positions, and employees (see Figure 1).

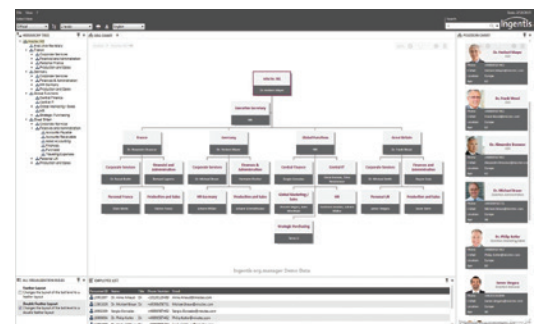


Figure 1. Organizational Chart in Ingentis org.manager.

In employee lists, which can be displayed below the organization chart, users are of-

ferred further detailed information; including employee location, email address, and job ID. Photos of the individual managers can also be added to the organization chart through an automated process. Several structures, e.g., org chart and position plan, can be mapped simultaneously. Moreover, employees are located in the organization chart quickly using the search function, via their name or job ID, for example. There is also a “function” designation, which can be used to search for a group of employees. The resulting hit list can be exported and processed as an Excel document.

Ingentis org.manager is linked to personnel management systems, such as SAP®, PeopleSoft®, Oracle®, to databases such as Oracle®, Microsoft SQL Server®, IBM DB/2®, to directory services such as LDAP/Active Directory or to flat files such as Excel or CSV. This means the software can analyze and display all data coming from this data base.

Reporting of HR Data

To highlight the generational and cultural diversity within a company, different reporting functions are available. For example, the average age in individual divisions (see Figure 2) or the age of each employee can be shown in the org chart. The nationality of an employee can be displayed via a flag icon.

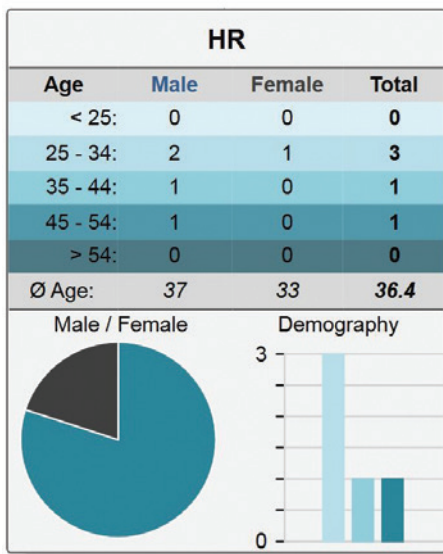


Figure 2. View of the average age.

The personnel reports are automatically generated via calculations, rules, filters, and merging. Rules can be applied to highlight certain fields in the organization chart in color. For example, all departments with vacant positions can be highlighted in red. These values stand out in the general overview because the zoom function condenses all report levels onto one page. Filters in the administration program can be used to hide certain master records, such as all employees who are on special leave. The merging function allows even data from different sources such as Excel, which are not recorded in the linked personnel system, to be included in the graphic display.

Using Flexible Display Options

Ingentis org.manager offers many display options to fulfill the needs of different generations. Older PC-oriented generations should not be lost. All information can be displayed on the PC – therefore the software is compatible with all Microsoft Windows versions. To fit the needs of Gen Y and Gen Z, the information can be published as an HTML version in any Java Script-capable Web browser. Users do not need to install any software on their PC, since the data is provisioned via the network and so a Web link is all that’s required to access the charts.

An HTML-5 based technology, e.g., with a responsive design, can also be used to visualize the org charts and HR reports. In this case, the information can be provided from real-time data. Each type of device is recognized by the system, so that a smartphone or tablet-adapted resolution is made available automatically. “Gen Z is used to accessing information everywhere and at any time. Of course, the information has to be presented in an attractive, well-designed way,” said Marc Rudolph, software development consultant at Ingentis.

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Showing Org Charts on the App

For showing org charts on the Apple iPad, Ingentis org.manager [mobile] is provided (see Figure 3).



Figure 3. View of HR reports on the tablet.

In addition to organizational units, employees and positions, details on individual employees, such as their telephone number, email address, and department are displayed. Information can be quickly and easily retrieved using the search function. This means that users always have a complete telephone book and employee directory at their fingertips. The user simply touches an item in the search hit list to display the individual in the organizational chart. In personnel reports it is also possible to graphically portray data in diagrams, such as gender distribution or vacant positions. The user touches the position box to get an employee's average absences or vacation time taken.

Identifying Employees with the Greatest Potential

For an active and formative HR function with the goal of adding value to the company, the following questions should be answered: Which employees have the greatest development potential? Which employees possess particular expertise and contribute significantly to the success of the company? High-performers who have development needs should be identified, and an overview

of the personnel and organization structure needs to be retained. Frequently, the data is available to achieve this, but there is no way to display the data in a structured manner since the data may be captured by different systems. One way of combining this information is a “potential performance grid.” This grid can be directly visualized in the organization chart. The matrix displays performance, as well as the development potential of individual employees. Furthermore, additional employee and performance details, such as absences, utilized vacation time, or overtime can be shown.

Visualizing Talents and Skills

Another interesting area of concern for HR professionals is managing talents and skills. Human resources data has to be provided efficiently and accurately to give value to the customer and the company. Of course, the need for talent also depends on HR strategy. If a company plans, for example, to expand or enter new markets, its demand for talented employees might rise. In this case, the visualization of talents and skills within the org chart could be a good basis for planning.

The generations mentioned above differentiate in talents and skills. For example, Gen Z employees are the largest demographic group using social networking. Companies can profit from these generation-based characteristics. With Ingentis org.manager, employees with special skills can be identified and highlighted in the org chart. All employees with the skill “social networking” are shown in the org chart by displaying the skill below their name. Using the search function all employees with this skill can be found. To recognize the talents of employees belonging to a particular age decade, e.g., Gen Z, defined as all employees born in 1995 and later, can be marked blue in the org chart (see Figure 4). Similarly, but using the opposite logic, talent gaps can be identified. The only requirement is that all the information has to be stored in the linked data system.

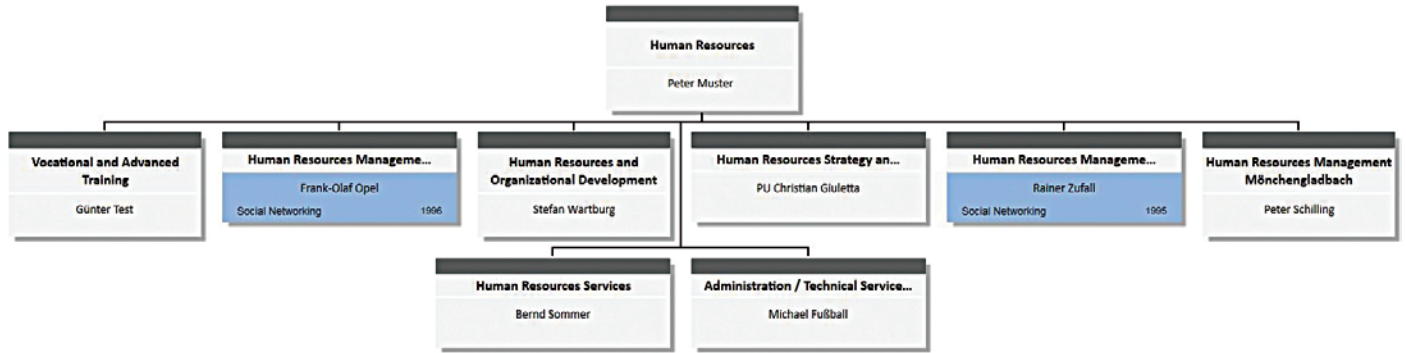


Figure 4. Gen Z with Skill “Social Networking” Marked Blue in the Org Chart.

Displaying Successors of Exiting Employees

The eventual departure of employees is a fact that has to be considered in every HR strategy, especially when a company employs older generations who may be retiring in the near term. Additionally, the risk of losing key employees of younger generations needs to be analyzed. Is there a danger of them leaving the company? One option is to depict the fluctuation risk in the organization chart by using color to highlight employees or positions with a high “risk of flight” potential. At the same time, successor planning should be initiated to find a timely replacement for employees who are likely to leave. Appropriate successors can be directly displayed in the organization chart to help with succession planning. The system can also display the availability of appropriate successors.

Summary

To review, globalization and workforce diversity will play a key role in the development of future technologies. Tech-savvy employees, like Gen Y and Z, prefer flexible and responsive HR solutions – solutions that provide “information everywhere, at any time and at any digital touch point,” making HR information available to them on-demand.

About the Author



Christine König was born in 1987 (Generation Y). She is responsible for Public Relations and Online Marketing at the German house of HR-add-ons, Ingentis, since 2013. She graduated with a bachelor’s degree in Business Economics and a master’s degree in Marketing at the German university “Friedrich-Alexander-Universität”. In her bachelor thesis she delved into customer retention in the sector of motor vehicle insurance. The thesis was awarded by the North-Bavarian insurance institute with the “Forum V-Preis 2010”. Finally, in her master thesis she dealt with the influence of emotions on consumer behavior. She can be reached at christine.koenig@ingentis.com. For more information about Ingentis visit www.ingentis.com.