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When silence speaks loudest: securing an inclusive workplace through conflict navigation

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Case summary

Stefan Berger, the CEO of Top Training, an Austrian SME specializing in reskilling and workforce development, was faced with latent intra-organizational conflict. Despite his careful attention to creating an inclusive workplace culture through recognition efforts, professional development, and mentoring opportunities, his strategic decision to combine the best skills of younger and older generation workers seemed to have resulted in some unanticipated tensions. While Top Training's business practices were built on premises of diversity and inclusion, the dissatisfaction of some of his staff was leading Stefan to re-think his choices. The case highlights generational tensions emerging from the way Top Training staff perceived their colleagues and the practices at the organization. Learners are invited to analyse the roots of the hidden tensions and evaluate the role of assumptions and generational dynamics in designing constructive interventions. The case addresses Sustainable Development Goal 8 (Decent work and economic growth) and Sustainable Development Goal 10 (Reduced inequalities).

1. A growing organization, diverging expectations

At the time of this case, Europe was pushing an ambitious skills transformation focused on closing labour gaps, supporting the green and digital transitions, and expanding lifelong learning opportunities across all member states. The EU's main goals centred on boosting basic and advanced skills, improving employability, and mobilizing large-scale

public-private partnerships to reskill millions of adults (European Commission, 2026).

One of the partner organizations delivering this type of training and help for migrant workers and others in or at risk of unemployment was Top Training.¹ With a 30-year history of providing up-skilling training and counselling for clients looking to find meaningful employment or advance in their careers, Top Training had built a reputation as a trusted partner to people navigating employment and organizations looking to hire new talent and support talent development initiatives. In addition to supporting individual people, Top Training supported organizations through consulting projects on training, onboarding, and other organizational functions, as the workforce in Austria, and indeed the rest of the world, had experienced changing demographics due to new migration patterns and declining birth rates (England, 2017; Vollset et al., 2020).

Stefan Berger, the CEO of Top Training, arrived at work daily at the company offices in Vienna, Austria, keen on making a positive and meaningful difference to the lives of his clients and the people who worked at Top Training. As a skilled executive with a strong pedagogical background, Stefan had a lot of experience to draw from in finding practical and sustainable solutions to workplace challenges. Stefan had led Top Training since its founding, seeing it grow and evolve through the COVID-19 pandemic, the digitization revolution, political and economic upheaval, and regional conflicts.

Along with its team of project managers and administrative staff, Top Training employed a growing team of nearly 130 full- and part-time trainers, teachers, coaches, and administrative staff. Stefan had built Top Training in a thoughtful and deliberate manner. He believed that leveraging the skills, wisdom, and experience of seasoned senior trainers with extensive educational and executive backgrounds, and combining this with the vibrance of young skilled trainers who were knowledgeable about new pedagogical methods and technologies, and also brought exuberance, would keep Top Training evolving and as a market leader. Stefan believed that combining the strengths of all generations, with mutual respect and an eagerness to serve, would make a formidable group of trainers who would learn from each other, rely on each other, and support each other in necessary ways.

Many of the senior trainers at Top Training were seen as experts in their disciplines and had accumulated a wealth of wisdom and knowledge.

One such seasoned trainer was Johan Muller,² an executive with 30 years of experience. Johan was eager to impart his knowledge to the next generation of workers. The structure of the work contracts at Top Training was ideal for him as it accommodated his other priorities as well. Family and grandchildren, his own health, and downshifting towards his hard-earned retirement were important to him. The hybrid work culture at Top Training meant that he did not have to choose between what was important to him and doing meaningful work. It meant he could take time off to attend to his health or be with family without being de-valued. The standardized curriculum also meant that he could design a curriculum on a particular topic once and have it reused without being altered. The presence of young colleagues who were more technologically skilled meant he could rely on their expertise without having to learn new platforms. Despite the occasional frustrations of an overly eager colleague who wanted to try new things in the classroom, Johan felt valued and respected.

The younger trainers were early career professionals who found meaning in Top Training's purpose-driven mission. Elena Meyer,³ a young trainer with a background in learning and development, wanted to make a difference. She wanted to learn from her senior colleagues and come up with creative ways of teaching the content to a diversity of people. She also appreciated the flexible work culture at Top Training, which allowed her to attend to her caregiving needs as well. However, she encountered resistance when trying to modify the curriculum or try new methods of teaching. While she valued her senior colleagues' knowledge and wisdom, the fixed curriculum felt stifling to her. She wondered if that policy was designed to take into account the capacities of her senior colleagues rather than attending to the needs of the learners. Sometimes, she felt she was only valued for her technological acumen. She also felt she had less of an opportunity to make use of the flexible work setting because her senior colleagues' needs were prioritized over hers. Despite tensions such as these, however, most of the younger trainers valued the work and the opportunity to learn from their senior colleagues.

On the morning of 2 February 2026, as Stefan entered the office, he was approached first by Johan, and about an hour later by Elena, both personally requesting from him that they no longer be assigned to the same project as the other. Stefan was stunned by such open requests coming from two highly valued employees who had been successfully working on an ongoing project. Yet, once his astonishment passed, he started recalling some indications of dissatisfaction emerging from the trainers on various project teams. For the most part, people were respectful towards each

other. There were no indications of overt disagreement or conflict, as it seemed to Stefan. Facing this open yet polite employee demand, however, Stefan started realizing that he may have been missing a serious issue emerging in the organization. Although Stefan had worked hard to build a successful company with an inclusive and appreciative culture, he now needed to put all his pedagogical and organizational development competence to use in addressing the simmering tensions that threatened to evolve into full-blown conflict between Elena and Johan.

2. Creating and managing purpose-driven expert organization

2.1 Managing a firm with social purpose

Top Training provided quality technical training, interpersonal development, and coaching services, and served the public good by developing talent in people who were struggling to enter the workforce or advance in their careers. Some of the learners Top Training frequently worked with included those with mental health concerns, substance-dependence issues, histories with violations of the law, recent migrants with limited native language ability, under-trained workers, and those with physical disabilities. Top Training's business plan largely depended on responding to and securing public tenders and entering into training and workforce development contracts with governmental, non-governmental, and private entities.

Even though Top Training's ethos was purpose driven, it was ultimately a private enterprise and depended on sustained income to maintain business viability. Therefore, it was imperative that it delivered quality services and could illustrate its impact on its learners to funding agencies. As a private training company, Top Training could not rely on continuing in business as a given, unlike formal schools and universities. Therefore, it was embedded in the company culture that they were in a volatile project-based business, where they needed to compete *'year-to-year, sometimes even month-to-month'* for their existence. This mindset created some extra pressure and uncertainty among the staff.

Thus, Stefan, as the CEO, needed to communicate and justify all actions and changes reflecting on their business model and how they would need to fulfil their contracts and clients' expectations. He had found it beneficial to talk things through using pedagogical aspects, frameworks, and justifications that were familiar and appealing to teachers and trainers,

something that otherwise might have been overlooked in the business model. In fact, Stefan felt that his position was challenging, as he needed to communicate to both worlds – employees internally and Top Training’s clients externally – and their views were sometimes difficult to bring together. Stefan thought to himself:

It is sometimes difficult for the manager to bridge this gap. I need to represent both stories, I have to represent the mission that we have signed up for, but we need to reach the benchmarks; end of story: we need to be successful. What we are proud of does not always meet with our expectations.... [To bridge these two worlds, I need to] understand both languages.... Sometimes I feel like a mediator.

Top Training also operated in a competitive marketplace. Other training organizations with similar product offerings competed for the same tenders offered by the same organizations. Individuals seeking training and up-skilling could have chosen to attend vocational training institutes, tradecraft, or technical training programmes or apprenticeships. While some of those opportunities did not come with the same type of one-on-one counselling and coaching services, they were choices that individuals could make, thereby cutting into Top Training’s business.

Top Training assessed the success of its products by reporting on participation rates, percentage of employment placements, and learner satisfaction. One of the main KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) was the number of participants who found employment, namely the employment rate 90 days after the training period. Some of the trainers felt that not everything could be taught/learned during the training period, and that the participants needed, for example, formal training in addition. Thus, although KPIs were always discussed in relation to new projects, among the project members, to ensure a holistic understanding of the business case, it was not always easy to relate to this measurement from the teachers’ point of view.

In a competitive marketplace, Top Training sought to stand out from the competition by employing and retaining well-credentialed and talented trainers with several years of experience working in industrial, corporate, or government-sector executive roles, and this guided Top Training’s practices in employee management. One of the byproducts of Top Training’s attempt to maintain a competitive edge in the recruitment process was the increasing average age of its trainers. The average trainer at Top Training was 51 years old, with a large number of its trainers in the

50–60-year age category. This was partly due to Top Training's investments in its internal workforce development. By investing in creating an inclusive and welcoming workplace with, for example, extensive and obligatory training for employees, it had managed to retain its trainers year after year, with minimal turnover. The consequence of this success was that the average age of the training staff had increased over the years and was likely to continue on that trajectory.

On a practical level, the weekly large-group training sessions engaged up to 60 learners at a time and could vary from a 6- to an 18-month commitment. For each project, Top Training typically assigned between 40 and 60 trainers to ensure that each project team was self-sustained. Each project team was led by a project manager who reported to Stefan. The project manager oversaw project logistics, technology needs, training assignments, learner experience, and learning efficacy. Project managers also served as frontline managers who were best positioned to understand team dynamics and working relationships between the project team members.

Almost two-thirds of the training staff worked on part-time employment contracts, which required them to work 32 hours per week. The rest of the staff worked 38-hour work weeks, which was fairly standard in Austria. The work week included time spent delivering on-site learning sessions on a fixed weekly schedule, preparing for the learning sessions, and holding one-on-one coaching or counselling sessions with individuals, based on the trainer's ability to meet with clients. While the weekly large-group sessions ran on a fixed schedule, the one-on-one sessions offered the trainers more flexibility in their work week and were typically held virtually.

Work was arranged according to the employee roles, with some employees having the possibility to work in hybrid mode. Even after the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020–22, most of the training sessions were arranged on site. Thus, the trainers' opportunities to benefit from workplace flexibility were limited. Mainly their work comprised training days and preparing for them. Project managers and other administrative staff, on the other hand, could work online more freely and frequently, as their work was not tied to the classroom. Therefore, the employee experiences could have varied to some extent. In fact, following the pandemic the situation had changed: some of the employees had to return to working on site as before, whereas others were given more opportunities to choose how and where they worked. The post-pandemic era that started in 2022 also brought up the need for workers to be technologically savvy as hybrid

work became the new norm and technology began to be utilized more than before in everyday work (Nguyen et al., 2020).

At the same time, the main concept and structures of their training sessions were created by their external clients and customers, who requested certain types of training. Thus, the trainers and teachers had very limited possibilities to tailor the pedagogical aspects of the programmes. Even the schedules were ready-made, so that the teachers' input was based solely on the delivery of the training.

2.2 Managing the growth and motivation of expert employees

While most of the training programmes were planned outside Top Training, there was still room for teachers' own judgement and delivery. As a result, pedagogical issues – such as appropriate approaches and delivery solutions – sometimes led to raised eyebrows and questions during meetings. Despite Stefan's background in pedagogy, he occasionally felt challenged by the teachers, particularly on pedagogical matters. 'If you bring together two teachers, you have three opinions,' Stefan joked to himself. Practices, wishes, and expectations did not always align, and a significant portion of the project managers' time was spent reassuring, negotiating, and explaining.

Although the business model appeared clear and structured to Stefan, he recognized that motivating highly confident and skilled teachers required continuous attention. 'Getting their paycheck' was a way to reward employees, Stefan said, with a glimmer in his eyes, while admitting that it was an unromantic answer that referred solely to extrinsic motivation. He had observed that personal appreciation and cultivating inner motivation were crucial – especially for his staff. He tried to strengthen the employees' intrinsic motivation by noticing their efforts, ranking top performers – but not the bottom ones – and ensuring that good work did not go unnoticed:

Personal contact, personal appreciation, are more important than money. If you want to be in this profession, you need intrinsic motivation. People want to be rewarded on a personal level; they want to be shown interest, want to be noticed... not only by me, by project managers [who] are [their] direct superiors. But not in an artificial way; people are not stupid.

To address his employees' motivational challenges, Stefan attended project meetings, acknowledged individual performances, and spent time

applauding successes. He wanted to make expectations and recognition transparent. Although he celebrated and uplifted individuals, he consistently emphasized collective effort and highlighted teamwork. To recognize achievements and boost team spirit, Top Training organized parties, gatherings, and after-work activities, though not everyone chose to participate. Stefan had also introduced a buddy system and made a point of praising newcomers so they would feel welcomed.

Top Training also utilized extensive internal training programmes – both obligatory and self-assigned – to support employee development and growth. Roughly 70 per cent of these trainings were mandatory, ensuring that employees remained competent and well certified so that they would deliver high-quality programmes. The company had adopted ‘train-the-trainers’ and ‘project-to-project’ models to channel knowledge and competencies generated during projects into the development of its own staff. The training portfolio included certifications in gender and diversity competencies every other year, instruction in innovative pedagogy and learning, and shared on-site and digital platforms where trainers could exchange ideas acquired from external workshops they had attended.

Looking into the matter further, Stefan noticed a pattern in employees’ eagerness to attend training and development sessions themselves. The attendance rates were not equally distributed: those who were active in their competence development anyway did attend training themselves, but those who would have especially benefitted from new ideas and further education were more reluctant to attend. Stefan also noticed that the youngest employees tended to participate more actively, but this might have been due to them being in the early stages of their careers – or at least that was one explanation Stefan had come up with. Elena, along with many other junior employees, was particularly enthusiastic about these opportunities and never missed an event focused on digital advancements in teaching. The more senior staff were highly self-confident and trusted their expertise, prompting a lower level of participation by them in professional development. Stefan also recognized a typical dilemma whereby people who already knew the topic often showed up to the training programmes, while those who needed the training did not. However, even though Stefan noticed these tendencies in the attendance rates, he remained unsure as to how much he could rely on his interpretations and generalizations.

Attempts to praise individual and team efforts also had their downsides. Some employees felt pressured and anxious when they were not placed in

the top-three list and described the achievement boards as ‘another form of pressure’. Instead of fostering healthy competition and acknowledging strong performance, the system sometimes generated stress and worry.

Stefan had also received direct feedback from senior staff members. One day, one of his trainers, Johan, had confronted him in his office and told Stefan, ‘Don’t tell me what we need in terms of innovation; we have done it like this for ages.’ Stefan acknowledged that the company’s long history and deep experience were advantages, but he believed they should not prevent further development and did not mean that no challenges remained.

3. Signals of the underlying tensions

3.1 Silent voices of dissatisfaction lost in personal employee conversations

For Stefan, Top Training had always been about performing at a high level, clients continuing to receive a high-quality learning experience, and promoting a culture that welcomed people of all demographics and identities. Many of the teaching staff at Top Training had been with the organization for a long time and were used to that culture, while actively building it themselves. They held a huge amount of tacit knowledge, shared understanding, and with this some underlying assumptions. On the contrary, newly hired team members had needed to quickly learn and adapt to Top Training’s strong work culture that had been evolving for decades.

Now confronted by Johan and Elena, Stefan remembered one earlier conversation among employees that he had overheard on 9 December 2025. Elena had been speaking to another junior colleague, Lukas, in a tense, frustrated tone:

Elena: I’m still upset about the 3 December session. The slide deck didn’t display properly because of how Johan formatted it. Half the materials didn’t show on the screen. It made me look unprepared in front of the learners.

Lukas: That’s rough. Did you talk to him about it?

Elena: I did. And I’m not blaming him personally – I know he didn’t mean it. But this keeps happening. I feel like I’m constantly fixing things behind the scenes.

Lukas: You’ve been picking up a lot lately.

Elena: Exactly. And when senior trainers call in sick, the rest of us just absorb the workload. I have care responsibilities too, even if I don't have kids. But it feels like their needs always come first. Sometimes I feel... inferior. Like they have the privilege to 'get sick first,' and I just have to deal with it.

Lukas: That sounds exhausting.

Elena: It is. And honestly, I don't feel valued for what I'm trained to do. I have an advanced degree in learning and development, but I'm treated like tech support. I try to suggest changes to make the material more relevant for learners, and I get resistance. It's like my expertise doesn't count yet.

Lukas: Have you told anyone?

Elena: I spoke to a programme manager. I explained how frustrated I am. But nothing really changed. I don't want to complain I just want to feel respected and used properly.

Stefan had remained out of sight, listening as the conversation faded. What he had first assumed was a momentary outburst sounded increasingly like a deeper, unresolved frustration. It was especially the tone of the exchange that unsettled him. Stefan had always believed that respect for experience and seniority was one of the cornerstones of Top Training's culture. Junior staff often spoke about how much they learned from senior colleagues, and knowledge sharing had long been a source of motivation and pride within the organization. Hearing Elena's words challenged that assumption.

As he replayed the conversation in his mind, Stefan felt a growing unease. He knew what absences meant operationally: others had to step in, adjust schedules, and sometimes reorganize entire training programmes. While Top Training relied on a strong volunteer spirit among the staff, he had assumed the system was resilient. He had not considered that this goodwill might be being stretched too thin.

Elena's comments about being undervalued struck him even harder. Stefan had always believed that the project teams were being assembled to leverage everyone's strengths. Yet Elena's experience suggested that some skills – particularly those of newer employees – might be overlooked. Thinking back over what she had said, Stefan wondered whether he had been naïve in assuming that flexibility and empathy were being consistently practised across the organization.

He felt conflicted. Part of him reacted defensively:

Who are they to complain about anything, when I and many of their colleagues invested time and effort in building the business, created a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere, and helped these young professionals to grow.

How could these young employees see it so differently? The defensiveness quickly gave way to anxiety, however. If Elena's frustration was this intense, it was unlikely to be an isolated incident.

He recalled earlier meetings where employees had challenged him, saying, 'You're not in the groups; you're not with the learners every day.' At the time, he had brushed those remarks aside. Now they resurfaced with new meaning. He recognized the paradox of his managerial role: he could not be everywhere, yet effective leadership required staying close enough to understand people's daily realities. The revelation that Elena had already raised her concerns with a programme manager unsettled him even more. How had this not reached him? What else might he be missing?

Stefan began to question the culture he had taken such pride in. Was Top Training still the inclusive environment he had believed it to be, or had his assumptions shielded him from uncomfortable truths? He began to see that unspoken tensions – especially around generational expectations, workload, and recognition – were simmering beneath the surface. If left unaddressed, they could erode both morale and trust.

For the first time in years, Stefan felt uncertain. Alongside the fear, though, was a growing clarity: the organization needed spaces where frustrations could be voiced openly and resolved respectfully. His challenge now was to confront the gap between his perception of the culture and the lived experiences of his employees, and to decide what leadership required of him next.

3.2 Gathering evidence of the underlying tensions

Stefan had not forgotten the conversation he had overheard, and the various signs of tension he had observed over time were now returning to him bit by bit, especially since this morning when Johan and Elena had put their demands on the table. As an SME executive, Stefan was often busy and even overwhelmed with operational issues, and constantly fighting emerging fires. Although he had managed to create an inclusive, purpose-driven organization, he was now hoping it would continue functioning as intended. First and foremost, he would need the capacity to stay involved in addressing strategic issues.

A flashback from September 2025 further strengthened Stefan's concerns that he had been missing some major issues for a while. The memory took him back to the first week of September when he had met with the project managers. The project managers had been venting about discussions in meetings, where they had sensed some tensions among the employees. One of the senior employees had been frustrated and concerned about needing to re-tool his teaching material to work with newer technologies. In the same meeting, a junior colleague had presented her material, showcasing flashy slides and taking advantage of the platforms they were using. The senior staff had raised their eyebrows and indicated with micro gestures that they felt the presentation was showing off. Stefan was immediately reminded of the frustrations Elena had with Johan. The project manager had not addressed the issue but had raised some concerns in the meeting with Stefan and the other project managers, stating that they did not like the direction the meetings were heading in. The same kind of tensions that Stefan had not paid attention to back then had resurfaced this morning. Based on this memory, Stefan was now even more concerned about his staff and the actual state of the work atmosphere.

For Stefan, one of the key strengths of Top Training was its experienced and well-credentialed staff like Johan, who had decades of experience in various industries. Stefan recognized that the wisdom and knowledge his senior trainers brought to the projects they worked on were an invaluable part of the learning experience for his clients. He also recognized that, in an increasingly digitized teaching-learning landscape, people like Elena, who were learning and development professionals trained in new technologies and innovative pedagogy, were essential to attracting clients and keeping them invested in their learning. Of course, he had noticed that some of his newer, younger training staff were more adept at learning new digital platforms and making use of them to create a learning experience in line with the contemporary work landscape. However, he had thought that this was their competitive advantage: combining wisdom, experience, and subject matter expertise with nimble, modern teaching and learning professionals provided the best experience for the clients. However, now he was faced with staff feeling frustration, that they were being undervalued, and with harmful assumptions potentially being made.

Thinking back to this meeting, Stefan began pondering where this tension had come from, and what the root causes were. He had heard in these discussions some kind of generational divide that he thought might deserve more attention. The average age of the employees had reached 51 years. Naturally, this had not always been the case, but with employees

remaining at the company over the long term, the shift had been subtle but inevitable. However, decreasing the average age just for the sake of an argument was neither possible nor appropriate. Recruiting younger staff and basing recruitment decisions solely on age would certainly be discrimination. Additionally, since the employees had to meet high formal standards, it was not easy to find younger experts. The success of Top Training had been based on its employees' expertise and on its highly competent workforce. Thus, even though some of the recent challenges had only occurred as the employees were getting older, the expertise and experience that came with age had certainly resulted in Top Training's success. Stefan was not yet convinced but was thinking hard about whether this was a generational issue – or actually something else.

He recalled some anonymous feedback that they had systematically gathered before the pandemic in 2020. The results had indicated that the employees were reluctant to provide open feedback, as they did not want to talk badly about others. Even when Stefan had been summarizing the feedback, he remembered saying, 'No one wants to say that their 56-year-old colleague missed half of the week... again.' Stefan could not help but wonder whether this was something that had escalated under the radar during the past few years.

4. Real or perceived problems?

Stefan felt that he had already taken a lot of measures. He had done 'everything that is possible from my point of view, in our reality, with our structure.' He was about to meet with the project managers but was still unsure how to address these issues. Clearly, it was not something to be avoided or ignored – that was certainly not how Top Training addressed issues – but somehow Stefan was reluctant to open Pandora's box. Deciding that addressing these issues was just a question of polishing the good that they already had, and nothing else, calmed him down a bit. The open questions in his mind were merely linked to generational tensions. Where do these tensions stem from? Could these issues even be traced back to generational issues and conflicts? Also, what did these subtle messages reveal? What were they indications of? What were the employees actually expressing and was there a possibility of a bigger, underlying concern?

Stefan had a business to run, a reputation to be maintained, and employees to look after. He wanted to make things right. His own training in

pedagogy and his experience as a seasoned executive told him that, at the root of conflicts, there were usually unmet needs and expectations, and firmly rooted assumptions about people and practices. He knew that, when the assumptions people had of each other resulted in unmet needs, conflict became inevitable. As he began to think about this generational struggle that was unfolding within the company he had built over 30 years, he started to wonder about the assumptions he had made about people (seasoned executives, young professionals), practices (fixed schedules, in-person teaching, flexible consulting hours), and opportunities (buddy programmes, professional development sessions, social hours). Assumptions did not simply emanate or exist but were formed as a result of pervasive and repetitive discourse (or dominant discourse; Foucault, 1977). Therefore, if over the last 20 years we had been told over and over again that wisdom came with experience and adaptability came with youthfulness, and TV shows and films depicted older wiser heroes partnering with young adventurous sidekicks to save the day, then maybe, at Top Training, we had also adopted this taken-for-granted thinking or assumption about experience and youth. Maybe the system for recruitment, development, and training at Top Training that was built to appreciate diversity and turn it into a competitive advantage had been based on the wrong assumptions?

Questions for reflection

1. Provide a case overview and timeline for the major incidents.
2. How did the efforts at Top Training to create an inclusive work culture relate to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8 (Decent work and economic growth) and SDG 10 (Reduced inequalities)?
3. Despite Stefan's efforts, what conditions had shaped the unfolding conflict at this workplace? What were the unexpected outcomes of some of the actions that Stefan had taken when developing a work culture that was inclusive and appreciative of everyone?
4. What are some taken-for-granted assumptions that seem to have permeated Top Training regarding the following: (a) experienced trainers; (b) younger trainers; (c) fixed schedules; (d) flexible work options and training; and (e) overall business practices?
5. How had some of the assumptions given in answer to question 4 led to the generational tensions that existed within Top Training? What needs of the employees were going unmet? What needs seem to have been contradictory or opposing? Consider the conversation Stefan had overheard between two Top Training staff members – Elena and

Lukas – as a starting point and then move on to consider the entire case narrative.

6. How can the concept of generations help to explain and solve this case – or can it? How do the taken-for-granted assumptions manifest from the perspective of generations and generational differences? What is the meaning and role of generational stereotyping in this case?
7. How could these hidden conflicts at Top Training be solved?

Notes

1. Company and executive names are anonymized due to confidentiality requirements.
2. Fictional composite character comprising characteristics described in several people across interviews and organizational material provided.
3. See note above.

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