Institutional Memory Retention Practices and Generation Y: The Case of an Advertising Agency

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Abstract
The following research report examines the practices of effective institutional memory retention amongst Generation Y employees in an advertising agency. Increasingly short-lived careers of Generation Y Account Managers within advertising agencies is resulting in a drain of important knowledge of clients and the practices of effective advertising. Maintenance of this knowledge is an essential aspect of effective client agency relationships. The following research describes practices of effectively retaining knowledge within the more permanent structures of an advertising agency. The researcher adopted a qualitative approach to produce a descriptive study based on existing theory surrounding institutional memory retention and Generation Y. The research concluded that the three most important aspects of effective institutional memory retention management include the organisational culture, the structure of roles within the agency and the degree of involvement of senior management. By way of summary the researcher has constructed a model to describe these research findings.
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1. Introduction and background to the research problem

1.1 Background to the research problem
Generation Y employees have entered the workforce with a distinctly different set of values and expectations to those that preceded them. Retention is an oft-discussed issue relating to this group: managers that employ Generation Y employees were shocked to realise that the “long-term” commitment that these employees were making to their organisation seldom extended beyond a year (Martin, 2005).

The following report is a descriptive analysis of the ways in which institutional memory is managed among such Generation Y employees in the context of an advertising agency. Specifically, the focus is on how institutional memory is retained within the agency.

Effective management of institutional memory is a key to success in many industries (Pollitt, 2000). This is true of advertising agencies where the appointment of capable individuals has been isolated as an important aspect of the health of any client-agency relationship (Jansen Van Rensburg et al., 2009).

There is a department within the structure of advertising agencies referred to as Account Management. Within this division, individuals at different levels of the departmental hierarchy\(^1\) are assigned to particular clients and manage advertising and design projects from strategic inception, through the creative process, and to final production. This is done with the help of all the other departments within the agency (Kallmeyer & Abratt, 2001).

These individuals are the champions for their clients within the agency and need to learn about the details of their client’s business and industry.

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\(^1\) The lowest level is Account Executive, moving up through Account Manager, Account Director and Group Account Director to Client Service Director (Bendsted-Smith, 2010).
Some models of institutional memory propose that this knowledge resides within the individuals who work within a firm (Wexler, 2002). Thus, when individuals who possess this knowledge leave organisations, so too does the knowledge.

Due to a lack of published data regarding employee churn in the South African advertising industry, the researcher has approached two key personalities in the industry for comment on this matter.

Brenda Bendsted-Smith is the Managing Director of AdTalent, a South African recruitment agency that specialises in the placement of employees into the Advertising, Marketing, Public Relations and Media Industries. Bendsted-Smith commented that churn rates in the account management departments of advertising agencies are exceptionally high and that this is particularly true of younger, Generation Y, employees. She cites two reasons. Firstly, she indicated that client retention problems fuel employee shifts. In her view, a lot of people in this industry change employers because they are either made redundant or because they fear redundancy. Secondly, Bendsted-Smith argues that employees in these roles burn out quickly. She asserted that the roles are extremely demanding, particularly at the lower levels and that this fuels a lot of change. Bendsted-Smith recognises another factor contributing to the latter point, which in the degree to which Generation Y employees seek to maintain a life outside of the work environment (Bendsted-Smith, 2010).

Tony Kunderman is editor of Tony Kunderman’s Ad Review and is a highly regarded commentator of the South African advertising industry. Kunderman confirmed that the employee churn rates in the South African advertising industry are high. His publication sends out a monthly newsletter via email to a database of advertising employees. Kunderman’s comment was that if the database is more than six months old, they get a substantial number of “bounce-backs” indicating that people’s email addresses have been deleted because they’ve changed employers (Kunderman, 2010).
Given this reality, the following study investigates what practices are being implemented within an advertising agency to effectively manage institutional memory retention among Generation Y employees.

1.2. A brief overview of the context - advertising agencies

The study at hand will look to investigate institutional memory management practices among Generation Y employees in the context of an advertising agency. The following section serves to define the construction of this business environment.

Advertising agencies are service organisations that plan and execute advertising programmes on behalf of their clients. Advertising agencies operate in much the same way today as they did at their inception in the early 1950s (Kallmeyer & Abratt, 2001).

A 2009 study published in the *South African Journal of Business Management* looked at retention of advertising agencies in South Africa. The study focussed on the retention of the agencies by their clients rather than staff retention within the agency. The authors identified two key variables that were fundamental to the success of an enduring relationship between an advertising agency and their client. The first of these variables is the state of the client relationship. This variable includes dynamics such as trust, level of importance awarded to the relationship and ability to collaborate. The second variable is what they termed “procurement realities”. These realities include factors such as the value of a long-standing commitment and the financial and psychological cost of switching to a new partnership (Jansen van Rensburg, Venter, & Strydom, 2009).

The study highlighted one essential element to the client relationships variable and that is the account support (Account Management Department). Clients regularly cited the quality of the people assigned to their accounts as a critical attribute in the overall client-agency relationship (Jansen van Rensburg et al., 2009). It thus stands to reason that employees are crucial to a highly functional
client-agency relationship and this will have implications with regard to how institutional memory is encoded within advertising agencies.

1.3 Conclusion
This report begins with a brief synopsis of the study. Thereafter, a review of the relevant literature has been included, which is followed by an outline of the research design, methodologies and limitations. Chapter five outlines the analysis of the data collected against four theoretical models of institutional memory. In chapter six, these findings are discussed and commonalities among the four sets of results are presented. These commonalities are then discussed in relation to the theory surrounding Generation Y, before the researcher concludes and discusses possible future research opportunities.
2. Synopsis of research topic

The following section comprises a brief synopsis of the study and outlines the question leading the study, the purpose and significance of the study, and finally, a brief look at the limitations of the study.

2.1. Question leading the research

What practices are effective in managing institutional knowledge retention among Generation Y employees in the advertising industry?

Issues that relate to this question would be:

- What are commonalities between instances of effective knowledge retention? and,
- What Generation Y values align with the goal of retaining institutional memory in the advertising industry?

2.2. Purpose of research

This study sought to examine successful instances of institutional memory management among Generation Y employees in an advertising agency. Effective management of institutional memory has been shown to greatly improve the performance of an organisation (Pollitt, 2000). This is particularly relevant to the advertising industry where employees are key to maintaining healthy agency-client relationships (Jansen Van Rensburg, Venter, & Strydom, 2009). The purpose of this study has been to examine how institutional memory retention is best managed among Generation Y employees of an advertising agency.

2.3. Significance of research

Generation Y is a term used to collectively describe people born between 1980 and 2005 (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008; Howe & Strauss, 2007). It is alleged that these individuals have different experiences and expectations to those older than them (Broadbridge, Maxwell, & Ogden, 2007). This, along with their different methodologies and use of technology tools, affects the way that records are kept
and information is recorded and accessed by them, in the organisations in which they work (Simons, 2010).

Institutional memory can be understood as the means by which knowledge from the past is brought to bear on present activities (Ozorhon, Dikmen, & Birgonul, 2005). Some theorists refer to institutional memory as an intangible asset, because firms can use it to create wealth (Wexler, 2002). To consider the inverse of this argument:

Institutional memory loss is a significant problem that can impact an organization’s ability to advance its mission successfully, its ability to avoid making the same mistakes it made in the past, and its ability to leverage the accomplishments of departing employees (Coffey & Hoffman, 2003, p.38).

Thus the significance of this research is to inform organisations on effective practices that could be used to encourage Generation Y employees to embed knowledge into organisations, so as to be able to use that information to the maximum benefit of the organisation, and the employees themselves.

2.4. Limitations of research
The study has been limited to a sample of one advertising agency. The subject sample is thus limited in terms of geography, industry and, to an extent, by level of education and ethnicity. These findings are thus limited in terms of their applicability to a more diverse population. Similarly, a focus on one organisation also limits findings to the context of one organisational culture.

The agency in which research took place is a medium-sized agency based in Johannesburg. The firm has been in operation for five years and has met with great success, having won some very prestigious accounts. The agency pride themselves on their South African heritage and their ability to create unique and intelligent communications that appeal specifically to a South African audience.
The study has observed existing practices rather than tested theories on any new practices. The researcher has thus looked at the theory concerning Generation Y and institutional memory and compared the findings of the study to this theory.

Two further limitations, which are explored in more detail in the research design section of this proposal, include the fact that data collection was conducted over a relatively short period and that there is a fairly limited scope to compare the outcomes of this study to other similar studies in order to assess the transferability of any conclusions (Maxwell, 1998).

2.5. Conclusion
The following study explores what practices are effective in managing institutional knowledge retention among Generation Y employees. The researcher argues that this is a relevant study because Generation Y employees have different expectations and work values to those preceding them and that it would be beneficial to organisations to understand how they could better manage institutional memory retention within this cohort to the advantage of all parties. The researcher recognises the limitations of the proposed study, which will be expanded upon later in this report.
3. Literature review

The following is a review of the literature surrounding the topics under investigation in this study. The researcher has sought to answer the following research question: What practices are effective in managing institutional knowledge retention among Generation Y employees?

The discussion begins with a brief examination of generational theory and then looks at some of the specific characteristics of Generation Y. A brief look into Generation Y in the South African context outlines any salient facts that may need to be considered in a local geography. Thereafter, the theory of the psychological contract is briefly outlined before looking at what Generation Y employees seek from their employers, and how they're likely to act in the workplace. Once this is established, the theory surrounding intellectual capital and institutional memory has been summarised, which covers the benefits of managing institutional memory and a discussion of four models of institutional memory. Finally, a snapshot surrounding the structure of advertising agencies and the management of successful client-agency relationships has been explored before concluding.

3.1. Generational cohort theory

References to various generations are frequently made in the diction of modern business, and before subjecting to such references in this paper, the researcher will discuss the literature around generational theory.

Sandra Timmermann (2007) recognises the naivety of generalising about individuals within any given cohort, but contends that generational groups do share common values and experiences that influence their perceptions of their worlds. She further claims that insights into these commonalities can provide an understanding of the attitudes, behaviours and motivations that underlie the actions of any group (Timmermann, 2007).
Similarly, Melanie Sutton defines generations as a group of people from a particular period of time who tend to think and act in a similar manner. She poses that rapid changes in society as well as media and technology in the last century, have crafted a unique set of experiences and values for each generational group (Sutton, 2005).

Another similar definition references a generation as an identifiable group who are born within a similar period and have experienced similar life events at critical stages of their development. Thus a generation is a group that share a set of historical and life experiences. These experiences, which have been relatively stable over their lifespan to date, influence the way a generation feels about organisations and authority (Westerman & Yamamura, 2007).

In their discussion of generational theory, Mack, Gardner and Forsyth (2008) define a generation as above, but include location as a factor that shapes a generation. Their perspective is that generational differences occur because of the major influences to, and shifts in, the socio-cultural environment, which a generation may experience, particularly in their critical years of social development.

Indeed, this claim was well supported by an article recently published in the Deloitte Review where the authors assert that claiming that a generation is homogenous wherever one is in the world is “...tantamount to blithely saying that customers are customers the world over” (Hole et al., 2010).

Generational theory is also often questioned. Aside from debate about the specific characteristics of a given generation, there is contention surrounding the relevance of generational theory at large. Frank Giancolo (2006) asserts that there is a lack of published research on the validity of generational differences and asserts that the approach may be more a product of popular culture than social science.
The Journal of Business Research published a paper on research undertaken by Nobel and Schewe (2003) that attempted to empirically support the generational concept. Their findings were inconclusive and the recommendation was that further, more detailed research into the field is warranted. The premise for their research does however support generational theory. Nobel and Schewe assert the generally held belief that people form their values through socialisation, but they differentiate between socialisation at micro and macro levels. That is, socialisation that takes place on an individual level and socialisation that takes place on a communal level, respectively. The authors also cited studies that confirmed that different generational cohorts reported similar experiences of socialisation on a macro level. The question that they failed to answer was whether these similar experiences would result in similar value systems after accounting for socialisation on a micro level (Noble & Schewe, 2003).

In contrast to these findings Smola and Sutton conducted a roughly concurrent study, published in 2002, which examined the differences in value sets between generations. Their findings strongly indicated that work values are influenced more profoundly by generational experiences rather than by age and maturation (Smola & Sutton, 2002).

It is clear that both popular and academic media as well as practitioners identify with the theory of generational differences and, while the opportunities for further empirical research are countless, it is generally accepted that there is a broad homogeneity within generational cohorts (Macky, Gardner, & Forsyth, 2008).

3.1.1. Profiling Generation Y
The premise that generational cohorts exhibit similar value systems leads to a discussion on what the values are that distinguish the cohort referred to as Generation Y.
The exact dates between which Generation Y individuals were born tends to
differ from source to source. For the purposes of this study I will look to use a
start date of 1980 as defined by Lyons (2004) who is referenced by Cennamo
and Gardner (2008). For the purposes of a cut-off date I will use 2005, the end
birth year offered by Neil Howe and William Strauss (2007). This same cohort is
identified by a number of different labels. Carlyn Martin (2005, p. 40) lists the
following:

While experts have called them Millennials, Nexters, Generation www, the
Digital Generation, Generation E, Echo Boomers, N-Gens, and, most often,
Generation Y, this young generation offers much more creative
descriptions of themselves. They’ve variously call themselves the Non-
Nuclear Family Generation, the Nothing-Is-Sacred Generation, the
Wannabees, the Feel-Good Generation, CyberKids, the Do-or-Die
Generation, and the Searching-for-an-Identity Generation.

So what defines this generation? In order to contextualise this study it seems
salient to gather an insight into who Generation Y are in order to evaluate what
practices are effectively helping to manage institutional memory retention.

There are several characteristics that will be discussed, but the one
characteristic that has been a common focal point of much of the literature is the
idea that this is a generation of special people (Wilson & Gerber, 2008). The
principle is that while Generation X (the preceding generation) were born into a
period of relative indifference to children, the children of Generation Y were
born into a world that had experienced a shift toward a newfound love of
children - a love that implicitly led them to believe that they are very special
(Wilson & Gerber, 2008).

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2 Neil Howe is referenced as claiming Generation Y were born between 1982 and " sometime
recently" in a 2008 interview with Mike Beirne (Beime, 2002).
"Generation Y is the collective term for those born between 1977 and 1994" (Broadbridge,
"...born between 1982 and 2002" (Hershatter & Epstien, 2006, n.p.).
"...the early 1980s" (Howe, 2005, p. 19).
"Born between the years 1979 and 1994" (Smola & Sutton, 2002, p.365).
"Millennials born between 1990 and 2005" (Sutton, 2005, n.p.).
Generation Y was born into an era where a proliferation of “baby on board” signs began to appear on car windows, and abortion and divorce rates began to drop (2007). Howe and Strauss are quoted as referring to this cohort as “the largest, healthiest, and most cared for generation in American history” (Wilson & Gerber, 2008). Howe (2005) further argues that this cohort see themselves as vital to the future and are inclined to list supporting people of their own age as their preferred choice of community service.

Despite the fact that this generation are of a world where technology can expose them to almost anything, Howe and Strauss argue that they’re a sheltered generation (Wilson & Gerber, 2008). As an extension of their previously mentioned specialness, this generation have been sheltered by a plethora of safety rules and devices (Howe, 2005). As a result this group tend to value protection and Howe and Strauss note that in a university setting they would be quickly inclined to complain about unfair assessment criteria and perceived inappropriateness of student-faculty relationships. This theme will no doubt continue into the workplace too (Howe & Strauss, 2003).

Generation Y are a confident and optimistic group. Howe and Strauss mention that they’ve been labelled the “Sunshine Generation” in Canada and studies persistently show that they are optimistic about their individual futures (Wilson & Gerber, 2008). The fact that the Cold War is over, that the War on Terror is winnable and that technology is increasingly able to eliminate more and more ills, are all cited as reasons underlying this optimism and confidence. So much so that four out of five American teenagers believe that they will be more financially successful than their parents (Howe, 2005).

Timothy Fogarty (2008) comments on this confidence and optimism as being something of a self-fulfilling prophecy. He accepts that this generation have a tendency to achieve higher marks than that which preceded them, but his assertion is that all evidence points to lowered standards rather than “… a wave of brilliance” (Fogarty, 2008, p. 370).
Generation Y are team-oriented. Indeed so much of the technology that this generation consumes is aimed at connecting people to one another and to forming communities. This orientation also extends to a tendency to trust in governments and communities to “do the right thing” (Howe, 2005). Generation Y are accustomed to team-play and as a result are more inclined to stretch out for assistance in order to tackle a project rather than seek to conquer it alone (Martin, 2005).

Achievement is key to Generation Y. Howe and Strauss argue that this cohort are highly ambitious and motivated by external factors rather than by internal drive. The cohort are also identified as being very rational and inclined to think long-term about their future and successes (Wilson & Gerber, 2008). In fact a general left-brain inclination has been noted by more interest and improvement in the fields of mathematics and science in schools, rather than in the arts or social sciences (Howe, 2005).

This need for achievement feeds directly into a culture of being highly pressurised. Influenced by their workaholic parents, this cohort have internalised the idea that they need to work hard to achieve success. Howe and Strauss claim that this cohort experiences stress unlike any that their parents would have experienced at the same age. They have fast-paced, bustling lives and never enough time to achieve everything they want to do (Wilson & Gerber, 2008). This is not to say that this is a tightly wound group of people who are ready to snap at any given moment: while anxiety has increasingly become a health concern within this group Generation Y are not adverse to the pressure, as long as they assured that their efforts will eventually be rewarded (Howe, 2005).

Finally, Generation Y is somewhat conservative and conventional. Family is central to their identity and they tend to be willing to accept their parents’ values (Wilson & Gerber, 2008). That said they do believe that these values will be more important in their generation that they were for their parents (Howe & Strauss, 2003). This generation are closer to their parents and more inclined to speak to
them about the things like sex, drugs and alcohol than previous generations. They even share tastes in clothing and music with their parents (Howe & Strauss, 2003).

3.1.2. Generation Y in South African
The discussion so far has been coloured by North American references and, as previously stated; one cannot deny the influence of location on a generation. So the question begs as to whether Generation Y in South Africa is substantially different to that described in the literature.

South Africa’s recent history is one of tumultuous political and societal change which has, of course, affected Generation Y. Hole, Zhong and Schwartz recently published an investigation into what the generational topography of various countries across the world looks like. They propose that in South Africa, Generation Y made a slightly later entrance and place the first birth year at about 1990. In their view, South Africa’s Generation Y “…has no memory of Apartheid and seeks a relaxed, informal workplace that differs from the command structure that shaped [those before them]” (Hole, Zhong & Schwartz, 2010, p. 90).

South African academic Sarah Nuttall refers to South African Generation Y as being people who were born in the 1980s and who are old enough to understand the gravity of the Apartheid era, but young enough to keep an open mind (Nuttall, 2004).

In discussing the differences between the black and white Generation Y in South Africa, Nuttall (2004) draws attention to two magazine titles that are iconic to this generation and, in so doing, brings attention to both the securitised and confident natures of Generation Y:

While the two magazines would remain separate titles, the link was made obvious in their taglines: SL’s line is “SL—everything you know is wrong,” and Y’s, as we have seen, is “Y—because you want to know.” Analysis of these taglines is revealing: while SL expresses the existential uncertainty of young white people whose security has been compromised by history,
Y’s line captures the confidence of a free black youth. YIRED’s\(^3\) aspiration was to have “an intelligent and interactive relationship between two effectively competing titles that feed off each other” (Nuttall, 2004, p. 443)

Considering this evidence it seems fair to conclude that Generation Y in South Africa seems to be congruent with the profile posed in the wider literature.

### 3.1.3. Generation Y and the workplace

Implicit to any employment arrangement is the understanding between what the employer and employee each expect from the relationship. This agreement has come to be referred to as the psychological contract (Rousseau, 2001). The existing literature distinguishes between two components of the psychological contract namely, the transactional and relational components. The transactional component is the explicit or implicit agreement between the two parties in terms of the services that the employee will perform and the remuneration that the employer will provide the employee. The relational component is an unwritten element of the contract. This comprises the social and emotional aspects of the employment contract and embodies such elements as trust, loyalty and respect (De Meuse, Bergman, & Lester, 2001).

An important aspect of the modern psychological contract has to do with the changed perception of career advancement. A chain of short-term, transactional engagements with various different organisations has now supplanted the once common model of upward advancement through the structure of a given firm. Where once organisations sought employees to serve them, we now see a reversal where employees want organisations to serve their careers (Broadbridge, Maxwell, & Ogden, 2007). Generation Y are no stranger to this short-term structure of engagement (Martin, 2005).

That said, Generation Y still regard traditionally linear careers as the most successful and most sought after path of advancement (Broadbridge et al., 2007).

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\(^3\) YIRED is the name of the holding company that owns both Y Magazine and SL Magazine. The name is a play on the term “wired” which refers to being well connected – a frequent theme in both titles (Nuttall, 2004).
Martin succinctly summarises the aspirations of Generation Y in the following excerpt:

When asked what they were looking for in a career, these young people optimistically said they wanted to play meaningful roles doing meaningful work on teams of highly committed, motivated co-workers. They also had every intention of making lots of money while building their ideal career and personal life. And, with three to four part-time job experiences or internships under their belts before they enter the workplace full-time, they were emphatic about the type of manager they wanted to work with (Martin, 2005, p. 40).

But the question that remains is how these aspirations are likely to translate into work practices, most specifically the practices that relate to the management of institutional memory retention.

Martin claims that Generation Y is likely to be misunderstood in the workplace because of their seemingly independent nature. She claims that while Generation Y maintains an incredibly self-confident attitude, they still want clear direction. The difference is that they want the freedom and flexibility to achieve tasks in their own way. That flexibility also needs to accommodate their propensity for collaboration such that Generation Y may seek assistance from colleagues in their process (Martin, 2005).

While it’s been hinted at in the review preceding this juncture, emphasis is yet to be placed on the enormous role of technology in shaping the perspectives of this generation. Indeed, their comfort with mobile digital technology and their expectation of constant connectivity and digital interaction with peers is core to this cohort’s identity (Howe & Strauss, 2007). Generation Y employees are far more concerned with the sorts of technology that are employed in the workplace than generations preceding them. The indication is that they not only want access to the best technologies, but also want to be able to create with them and be able to craft how they use technology to gather and share information (Martin, 2005).
Linked to this is the sense of immediacy that Generation Y demands. In a modern world of instant gratification, the Generation Y employee will want immediate feedback. While their rational planning horizons may be long their contract with an employer will need to embody a sense of immediacy. This cohort will want to know what value they can add today, what they can learn today and how they will be rewarded today (Martin, 2005).

The confidence and securitised nature of the Generation Y employee also lends itself to something of an entrepreneurial inclination. Indeed Generation Y are setting up their own businesses in record numbers, but it’s the attitudes underlying this tendency that are an important aspect of the character of the cohort. Managers of Generation Y employees are being advised not to be surprised when they offer alternate ways of accomplishing a task. Indeed choices, fuelled by technology, have created a cohort who tends to be hesitant to settle for one course of action until several have been explored (Martin, 2005).

In sum, Martin describes Generation Y as a high maintenance but highly productive cohort. In her view, the key to unlocking this productivity will lie in the relationships that these employees foster with their immediate managers. She poses that managers will need to allow Generation Y employees flexibility in terms of how to achieve tasks, but clear expectations of what is required. They will also need to provide regular and immediate feedback and make an effort to get to know the employee and assure them that their personal development is high on the manager’s agenda (Martin, 2005).

An expectation that Martin perhaps understates is one highlighted by Howe and Strauss. That is the tendency that Generation Y employees will have to maintain a solid work-life balance (Howe & Strauss, 2007). Broadbridge et. al. (2007) identify inner satisfaction, autonomy, freedom, and life balance as important criteria to Generation Y employees which need to be incorporated into an understanding of their career structures.
3.2. Institutional memory

Having reviewed the relevant literature pertaining to generational theory and Generation Y, the researcher will now turn to review that which encompasses the theory behind institutional memory.

Institutional memory can be understood as the means by which knowledge from the past is brought to bear on present activities (Ozorhon, Dikmen, & Birgonul, 2005). Wexler (2002) regards institutional memory, also referred to as organisational memory, as an intangible asset of a firm given that firms can use it to create wealth.

The theory of institutional memory is derived from the field of collective memory studies. The idea underpinning collective memory is that fact that biological memory can be externalised and captured as an intangible asset within and organisation (Wexler, 2002).

An important aspect to keep in mind is that memory is not a static entity, but rather a dynamic system whereby information is identified, acquired, stored, searched for, retrieved and disseminated (Ozorhon et al., 2005).

Wexler also draws our attention to another interesting aspect of institutional memory: it is often assumed to be something synonymous with the past. Indeed the origin of information in memory is from the past, but the content can be very much rooted in the present or even future. That is to say, memory may include time embedded information, or may be a recording of anticipated experiences and happenings, which may now be current. As an example Wexler cites the fact that an organisation’s budget projections, strategic plans, contingency plans and broad goals may form part of the content of institutional memory, but they may well be equally relevant and active in the present or future (Wexler, 2002).

Continuing Wexler’s theory of institutional memory being an intangible asset, he further delves into the understanding of intellectual capital to define three constituent forms of capital that comprise institutional memory. These are
human capital, structural capital and relational capital. Human capital refers to the use of stored information to enhance the thinking, problem-solving and skill levels of individuals within an organisation. Structural capital has less to do with the competencies of an individual player and refers more broadly to the capital that is engendered within the policies, job descriptions, standard operating procedures, reporting structures and elements of the culture of an organisation. Finally, relational capital refers to the value installed in the internal and external relationships of an organisation. This includes aspects like the establishment of reciprocal trust, confidence and general understanding between members of the organisation and parties linked to the organisation (Wexler, 2002).

3.2.1. Benefits of effective management of institutional memory
Effective management of institutional memory has some important consequences. It can enhance and accelerate learning within an organisation. It has also been shown to be beneficial to the development of innovative products and services. Effective institutional memory management can lower transaction costs, reduce time requirements and capital required in socialising new members or re-orientating existing members in an organisation. It also creates stability, which is an imperative advantage in the face of rapid change (Wexler, 2002).

Pollitt (2000) takes a slightly altered approach in his investigation into institutional memory by focussing on the issue of institutional forgetfulness. In his paper, *Institutional Amnesia: A Paradox of the “Information Age”*, he muses on the irony of how we live in a society with such technological capability to remember, but such a limited tendency to do so. Pollitt’s assertion is that we live in a world that increasingly focusses on the present, at the expense of focus on the past or long-term future. In his words:

...in the world of management, stress has been placed on innovation and change rather than stability and precedent, on creativity rather than experience, on envisioning the future rather than studying the past, on sound bites and keywords rather than full texts (Pollitt, 2000, p.5-6).
With this in mind he questions what the value of remembering is and offers the following five pitfalls of institutional forgetfulness. Firstly, he cites a tendency toward poor policy learning, which is evidenced by organisations retrying solutions, which have failed in the past. Secondly, he cites a certain vulnerability to fashionable, but superficial and inadequate organisational solutions. Thirdly, he speaks of the tendency of institutions to stick in self-reinforcing habits of reinstituting incumbent policies, which may have worked in other situations, but are not relevant to the situation at hand. He then writes of the downfall of failing to value and respect the knowledge (mostly unrecorded), which exists within long-standing staff. And finally, Pollitt writes of the pitfalls of inconsistency when it comes to dealing with staff and customers (Pollitt, 2000).

3.2.2. Models of understanding institutional memory
Wexler identifies four basic models that are rooted in the existing literature surrounding institutional memory. Each model takes a special focus on a particular problem with regard to the effective creation, storage, retrieval and dissemination of institutional memory. Wexler discusses the strengths and weakness of each of these four models and notes that the theory offers a wide range of descriptive and prescriptive practices on how to manage institutional memory, but concludes that a gap in understanding still exists between the meta-level understanding of these models and determining when which practice is most effective (Wexler, 2002). Each of the models is briefly discussed below.

3.2.2.1. The Storage Bin Model
The first of the four models is the Storage Bin Model of institutional memory. The Storage Bin Model is constructed around the notion that knowledge is gathered, codified and deposited such that it can later be identified and retrieved. Thus, in this view, collective remembering involves finding information or experiences that one has either dealt with before or that has been left in the repository by somebody else for future retrieval. The main focus around this model is to deal with the design of the repository system such that time to retrieve needed information is minimised and that the quantity and quality of the knowledge retained is optimised (Wexler, 2002).
Fernando Olivera distinguishes the concept a little differently by identifying five internal storage bins. The first bin is the collection of individuals within the organisation. Here knowledge is stored in their memories and records. The next bin is the organisational culture. The third bin is the collection of transformational procedures, which includes processes, rules, and systems that guide the transformation of inputs and outputs by the organisation. Structures, particularly roles, make up the fourth bin and the final bin is the ecology of the organisation. By ecology, Olivera refers to the evolving physical structure of the workplace (Olivera, 2000).

Having established the theory underlying this model, the researcher seeks to understand where these “bins” are located. The theory illustrates that the location of each bin is dependant largely on the nature of the intellectual capital being stored. Human intellectual capital is stored in the minds and muscles of the people within an organisation. Structural intellectual capital is imprinted within the structures, routines, procedures, rules and job descriptions of an organisation. Finally relational intellectual capital is stored in the on-going relationships between members of the organisation and their relationships with those in their broader networks including members of their supply chain, shareholders and customers. In very broad strokes the theory suggests that one manages institutional memory, by managing the bins (Wexler, 2002).

3.2.2.2. The Narrative Model

Where the Storage Bin Model tends to focus on the idea of storing and codifying knowledge, the Narrative Model is more concerned with how one motivates the retrieval and use of information and experiences within a system of institutional memory (Wexler, 2002). Easterby-Smith, Aráujo and Burgoyne (1999) note that while it’s not necessarily true to limit our perspective to a lens based on narratives only, it is valid to argue that everything that we can remember is cast in narrative form and that narrative is usually our base for sense-making.
Wexler (2002) expands on this model by looking at how individuals can be stimulated to create, develop and use memory. This relates specifically to the management of human intellectual capital, and Wexler notes that both incentive structures and organisational culture are very influential factors in this process. When discussing structural intellectual capital in the Narrative Model, Wexler looks at the nature of the policies, rules, reporting structures and decision-making practices and how these influence the organisation’s retrieval, interpretation and modification of information and experiences. He also discusses how intellectual capital is stored in the policies and procedures of an organisation and, fundamental to this model, how intellectual capital is stored in the living traditions of an organisation. Lastly, Wexler investigates how relationships (both internal and external) are formed and what the structures and protocols of these relationships are. This is key because relational intellectual capital is stored within, and shared through, organisational alliances and associations.

### 3.2.2.3. The Innovative Model

The Innovative Model of institutional memory is different from the two previously mentioned models in that it doesn’t regard institutional memory as a packaged resource that needs to be accessed, but rather regards it as something present in the conduct of the organisation. Consider the following analogy: if the organisation is a glass of water and the institutional memories are grains of sand in that water, then the focus of the Innovative Model would be on how to keep stirring that water such that the sand constantly clouds it, rather than settling to the bottom. Put differently, the Innovative Model of institutional memory seeks to understand what the drivers are that keep institutional memory present in the practices of anticipating problems, attending to creative solutions and creating useful resources for future consultation (Wexler, 2002).

In this model, human intellectual capital is implicit to the active organisational communities and transactions taking place at any given time. Structural intellectual capital is recognised as being imputed within the policies and practices of an organisation, but the interactive model seeks to illustrate that this
capital is only relevant when supplemented by the active intellectual capital transactions happening within the organisations communities and ranks. In a similar vein, relational intellectual capital is also embodied and made relevant in the active transactions between the organisation and other parties (Wexler, 2002).

3.2.2.4. The Political Resource Model

The final model is the Political Resource Model of institutional memory. In the previous model we assume that knowledge flows freely within an organisation, because no single individual has any incentive to hold or filter information. In other words, the assumption thus far has been that only the organisation as a whole stands to gain from the effective use of institutional memory rather than any one player. The Political Resource Model reconsiders this and recognises that individual players can, and do, hold power by virtue of the institutional knowledge that they control. Thus this model is concerned with what the motivations and practices are with regard to an individual seeking to hold and/or filter knowledge for personal gain (Wexler, 2002).

In the Political Resource Model human and relational intellectual capital are the currencies that various parties use to create power for themselves. Similarly, structural intellectual capital is reflected as a means to reinforce and legitimise the intellectual capital held by various parties. (Wexler, 2002).

The goal in managing institutional memory is to attempt to improve the competitive advantage and general efficiencies of an organisation. Each of these models seeks to demonstrate how mapping institutional memory as a meta-level construct from different perspectives can do this. What these models all demonstrate is that there are many, very different, practices that can be used to manage institutional memory (Wexler, 2002).
3.4. Conclusion

The previously stated research question, which the preceding literature review sought to inform, is the following: What practices are effective in managing institutional knowledge retention among Generation Y employees?

The review began with a basic outline of generational theory before outlining the characteristics of the cohort referred to as Generation Y. This then led into an explanation of the psychological contract and what the general expectations are that Generation Y employees will have of their employers. After briefly exploring Generation Y in the South African context the review moved on to cover theory of institutional memory. The benefits of effective management of institutional memory were discussed along with four theoretical models for understanding institutional memory. Finally, the review covered a brief look at the context of the advertising agency.
4. Research design and methodology

The following section describes the researcher’s research methodology. The approach is outlined and justification and limitations are offered. The researcher then discusses the research design, the research questions and the sampling methodology, before discussing data collection and analysis techniques. Issues of validity and ethics are discussed before the section concludes with a discussion on the role of the researcher.

4.1. Broad methodological approach

Reviewing the research question leading this study the researcher proposes that the core element being investigated is the “practices of institutional memory retention”, that exist within a given context, specifically the context of “Generation Y employees in an advertising agency”.

The purpose of this research is to identify what practices of institutional memory retention are successfully being used to manage institutional memory among Generation Y employees in an advertising agency. There is no intention to distil the practices under observation into quantitative factors, nor is there any intention of testing a preconceived hypothesis or conducting any sort of experimentation.

To that end the study proposed is a descriptive, qualitative analysis where the researcher’s findings are discussed against the existing theory surrounding the research topics.

4.1.1. Justification for the approach

Crabtree and Miller (1999) describe qualitative research as a personal engagement in a field of activity by a researcher who aims to generate holistic and realistic descriptions or explanations through his or her interpretive focus. This describes the purpose of the study at hand where the researcher aims to inform a realistic and holistic description for what institutional memory
retention practices are being successfully implemented in an advertising agency in order to manage institutional memory among Generation Y employees. Strauss and Corbin (1990) assert that the nature of the research problem should be the main driver toward the research methodology implemented. They further emphasise that qualitative research is well suited to research where the researcher aims to obtain intricate details about phenomena that are difficult to extract or learn about though traditional quantitative methods.

4.1.2. Limitations of the qualitative approach

In some academic communities the validity of qualitative research is sometimes questioned, because it is considered subjective and lacking in factual substantiation (Malterud, 2001). Based on the description offered above there is ground for concern in this regard because of the interpretive focus previously referred to. A fundamental differentiator between qualitative and quantitative research stems from the fact that qualitative research aims to portray the issue at hand in its full complexity without simplification (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). The aim of this study is to describe the observed institutional memory practices in all their complexity, and thus this is the methodological route that has been selected.

Malterud (2001) explains the nature of qualitative study as a means of research that is systemic and reflective in nature, and that works to develop knowledge that can be shared and contested beyond the study setting. He does however warn that there are several challenges that the qualitative researcher should be aware of to maintain the maximum possible degree of objectivity in the study. These will be reflected upon below in a section dedicated to the role of the researcher in the practice of qualitative research.

4.2. Research design

Joseph Maxwell (1998) discusses the pros and cons of pre-structuring a qualitative study. Maxwell asserts that structured approaches are useful in studies of comparability whereby one answers variance questions, that is questions that deal with the differences between phenomena and an attempt to
explain those differences. Contrarily, he argues that unstructured approaches allow the researcher to focus on a particular phenomena thereby trading transferability for a specific contextual understanding. Maxwell also asserts that unstructured approaches are best conducted by experienced researchers that have the luxury of time to explore and understand the subject of their study. Structured approaches, he argues, are better for less experienced researchers who are working to understand phenomena within a familiar context (Maxwell, 1998). To this point the researcher has developed a more structured approach to this particular study.

One of the basic principles of qualitative research is that data analysis and collection should happen concurrently such that the researcher can progressively focus interviews and observations in order to test emerging conclusions (Maxwell, 1998). This has been the researcher’s methodology with interviews being transcribed, coded and analysed as data collection continued to take place.

One of the methods that theorists advocate to add to the validity of qualitative research is the practice of triangulation. The logic underpinning triangulation rests on the fallibility of any single qualitative (or quantitative) measure as a representation of social phenomena. Triangulation involves the process of taking varied approaches to the research question to extricate those truths that are consistent across the various approaches (Yeung, 1995).

Yeung identifies four basic strategies for triangulation. The first of these is data triangulation: the process of gathering data at different times, places, people and levels of authority. The second means is investigator triangulation, which involves gathering the inputs of multiple observers observing the same phenomenon. Theoretical triangulation involves the process of analysing data on the same set of objects from various theoretical perspectives. Lastly, methodological triangulation involves analysis of the subject through various methodologies, which can be considered within-method (variations of the same
basic methodology) or between-method (using dissimilar methodologies) (Yeung, 1995).

For the purpose of this report the researcher has incorporated elements of data triangulation and elements of theoretical triangulation. Data triangulation has been achieved by collecting data from different hierarchies within the advertising agency, starting at the bottom and working upwards: specifically Generation Y employees, their direct line managers and the senior management of the agency. Theoretical triangulation has been achieved through analysis of the data against the four different models of institutional memory identified in the literature review, namely the storage bin, the Narrative Model, the Innovative Model and the Political Resource Model (Wexler, 2002).

### 4.3. Research questions

The question leading the research is: What practices are effective in managing institutional knowledge retention among Generation Y employees? Related questions that have been identified to help arrive at a response for the preceding include:

- What are commonalities between instances of effective knowledge retention? and,
- What Generation Y values align with the goal of retaining institutional memory?

### 4.4. Research context

Research was conducted in a medium-sized, Johannesburg based agency. The agency celebrated their fifth year of business in February of 2010. Growth has been strong despite the difficult economic environment over the last two years and the agency is fast establishing itself as a force to be reckoned with in the South African advertising industry.

At the time the research was conducted the agency had a staff compliment of 26 people, six of whom comprised the Account Management department: the focus of this study.
The longest standing employee in the Account Management department had been with the agency for just over three years and the shortest had been with the agency eleven months.

4.5. Sampling methodology

While sampling in quantitative research focuses on probability sampling, qualitative research takes a different focus, due to the nature of the insights the researcher seeks to extract. The category of sampling most often used in qualitative research is purposeful sampling. This is a sampling strategy where specific people, settings and/or events are purposefully selected for the important information that they can provide. Usually this is information that cannot be gathered from other sources (Maxwell, 1998).

Maxwell (1998) identifies four core reasons that should inform purposeful sampling. The first reason for purposeful selection is to achieve a good representativeness of a specific setting, activity or cohort. The principle here is to select a small sample of relatively homogenous sample to discern typicality, rather than focus on a randomly selected group of the same size, which will skew the findings due to accidental variations. Conversely, the second reason underlying purposeful selection can be to get a representative sample of a larger group of more diverse subjects. In this case the researcher aims to identify the various typicalities within the range and ensure that all are included in the sample. Thirdly, the researcher may choose to look at samples that are critical to the theories that the study began with. Lastly, the sample can be selected purposefully to illuminate reasons for difference between settings or cohorts when conducting a comparative study (Maxwell, 1998).

In accordance with the triangulation prerogative mentioned above, the researcher has used purposeful sampling to select three groupings.

The first group are a representative sample of Generation Y employees. The reasons underlying the selection of this group will reflect the first and third reasons listed above. That is to achieve a confident typicality of the cohort under
study and the practices that they value and implement. The second reason relates to the theoretical framework being used to guide the study, in this case this is generational theory focussing on Generation Y.

The second group are line-managers of Generation Y employees who are not Generation Y employees themselves. The reason behind this selection is to achieve a broader range of perceptions on what practices are effective in managing institutional memory with Generation Y employees.

Similarly this data has been triangulated against the perspectives of senior management.

The researcher has selected candidates from within the agency based on their age (generation) and position within the firm.

The final structure of candidates was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Generation Y candidates</th>
<th>Generation Y line managers</th>
<th>Senior Management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of candidates</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.6. Data collection

4.6.1. Interviews

As defined by Broom (2005), a qualitative interview-based study looks to establish a deep understanding of the experiences of respondents, and the meanings within their accounts of a particular action, process or event. In the instance of this study, the processes under study will be the structures of, and motivations behind, institutional memory practices.

Broom identifies three different styles of interview namely, semi-structured or in-depth interviews, unstructured interviews and structured interviews. Structured interviews are best used in quantitative studies where each interviewee is asked the same set of questions and the data is collected in standardised units that can be used for statistical analysis. Semi-structured and
unstructured interviews are used in qualitative research. Here the researcher aims to extract more detail surrounding the respondents’ feelings and perceptions pertaining to a given aspect of study. Unstructured interviews are free-flowing conversations about a topic chosen by the interviewer, but led by the interviewee. Semi-structured interviews are similarly flexible, but the researcher has a schedule or list of themes that he or she seeks to cover (Broom, 2005).

The advantage of a semi-structured interview over an unstructured interview methodology is that it allows the interviewer to extract data surrounding specific topics of study (Broom, 2005).

To this end the researcher conducted an initial round of unstructured interviews with a sample of Generation Y employees to see what themes emerged. The researcher then began analysis on the initial data to build categories. This analysis then informed the interviews that followed with the aim of saturating the categories (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). To that end the interviews following the first round became progressively more structured based on findings.

Full transcripts of both the first and second interviews have been included as Appendix B of and the schedule of themes used by the interviewer for the semi-structured interviews is included as Appendix A of this report.

4.6.2. Rationale
The premise of this study is not to test a concrete hypothesis or unveil an inalienable truth, but rather to identify what practices exist within an advertising agency to manage institutional memory. To that end a set of open-ended qualitative interviews, which increase in structure as the study progresses, was the researcher's preferred method of data collection.

4.6.3. Data gathering sequence
The study involved the use of human subjects and therefore ethical clearance was required before any interviews could be conducted (Thompson & Panacek,
Once said clearance had been achieved the researcher conducted a pilot interview with a single candidate in order to refine the researcher's interview technique.

Maxwell (1998) asserts that one of the primary benefits to conducting a pilot study when conducting qualitative research is to generate an understanding of the concepts and theories held by the people being studied. Maxwell refers to this as interpretation. This is an important insight because it affords the researcher the ability to understand the meaning that the practices under observation hold for the participants.

To that end the pilot interview was structured in much the same way as the final study, in order to gain insight into what the participant understood with regard to the topics under research (Maxwell, 1998).

The researcher then identified a Johannesburg-based advertising agency, of an appropriate size, which was willing to participate in the study. Interviews were digitally recorded, on consent of the interviewee and were conducted in a quiet and private area (Thompson & Panacek, 1998).

Once the first sampling of subjects had been isolated, the interviewer initiated the interviews with a simple open-ended question in order to elicit the participants’ beliefs about how institutional memory is managed and how and why it should be managed (Thompson & Panacek, 1998).
Specifically, the interviewer posed the following questions to each of the three groups of candidates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Generation Y</td>
<td>You as an employee hold a certain amount of knowledge about what you do and the people that you do business with. This knowledge that you hold can be transferred into your organisation, or it can stay with you. When you think about it – what happens in your work practices? How and when do you transfer knowledge into this agency?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation Y line managers</td>
<td>People who work on the accounts you manage gather knowledge about the clients. This knowledge comes in many forms for example technical knowledge and relational knowledge. When you think about your Generation Y staff, how and when do they transfer the knowledge they get back into the agency?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Management</td>
<td>People who work on the accounts in this agency gather knowledge about the clients. This knowledge comes in many forms for example technical knowledge and relational knowledge. When you think about your Generation Y staff, how and when do they transfer the knowledge they get back into the agency?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Subsequent interviews within this sample were informed by those before them and become increasingly more structured as the interviewer sought saturation (Thompson & Panacek, 1998). An illustration of the discussion points that the researcher addressed has been included as Appendix A.

Once this process had been achieved with the first sample, the same method was used in the following two samples until saturation had been achieved in all three groups.

All interview transcripts have been included as Appendix B to this report.

4.7. Analysis techniques

Strauss and Corbin (1990) define the process of analysis as the interplay between the researcher and the data. They consider it both a science and an art.
The science refers to the fact that one needs to maintain a degree of rigor, while the art refers to the fact that researchers need to be able to aptly name categories, ask stimulating questions, make relevant comparisons and extract an innovative, holistic and realistic scheme from the raw data.

Analysis began right after the first data was collected. The researcher worked to identify emergent themes from the data with the goal of establishing the connections between these themes so as to generate a complete picture of the situation under study (Thompson & Panacek, 1998).

Maxwell (1998) identifies three basic groups of strategies for analysis. These are categorisation strategies, connecting strategies and memos and displays.

The primary categorisation strategy in qualitative research is coding. Unlike the quantitative research process of coding where the primary focus is to create frequency counts, the goal of coding in qualitative research is to rather break apart the data and rearrange it into categories. Data within categories can then be compared, as can the categories themselves. The categories implied can either be derived from existing theory, or can be constructed as part of an inductive grounded theory approach. This categorisation allows the researcher to garner a general understanding of the subject through the generation of themes and concepts that can then be validated through further testing (Maxwell, 1998).

Connecting strategies are best used when the research question has to do with how certain events are connected in a given context. Here, rather than breaking the data down into comparable subsets, the data is considered as a whole and using strategies like case studies, profiles and narrative analysis, to name a few, the researcher can contextualise, understand and interpret the data collected (Maxwell, 1998).

The third strategy Maxwell identifies is that which he terms memos and displays. Memos are used as reflection tools to look at methods, theories and goals intrinsic to the research, but can also be used as analytical tools. Memos facilitate
the researcher's ability to think about relationships within the data and transform the researcher's ideas into visible and retrievable entities. Similarly, displays involve the coding of data into visual representations such as matrices, tables, network and concept maps, flow diagrams and many other forms. These serve the dual purpose of aiding the researcher in presenting the data and allowing the researcher to gain a perspective on the whole system under analysis (Maxwell, 1998).

Given the nature of the research question the researcher in this study has utilised a combination of all three methods. Both categorisation and the memos and displays strategies have been employed to answer the primary research question: What practices are effective in managing institutional knowledge retention among Generation Y employees?

Comparative strategies were then be utilised in attempt to draw insight into the secondary research questions, which are:

- What are commonalities between instances of effective knowledge retention? and,
- What Generation Y values align with the goal of retaining institutional memory?

Finally, memos and displays have been used as reflective tools during the research process and to present and evaluate the data collected. Specifically the researcher has constructed target diagrams to represent the degree of homogeneity of responses from the three data cohorts and has constructed a model to illustrate the ultimate findings of the study.

**4.8. Issues of validity**

One of the primary issues with the validity of qualitative research has already been touched on and specifically relates to the role that the researcher plays in the research (Broom, 2005). This will be dealt with in a separate section hereafter.
Beyond the role of the researcher there are several other factors that can influence the validity of a qualitative study. Drawing from the work of several theorists including Maxwell has constructed a list of seven axioms that delineate the primary threats to the validity of a qualitative study (Maxwell, 1998).

The first of these is the length of involvement. Theorists assert that a longer research engagement leads to a more complete picture of the subject of study. The length referenced here refers to both the duration of the researcher's presence in the field and the number of engagements with each subject over a period of time (Maxwell, 1998). Unfortunately, time is not a luxury of this study and so it needs to be conceded that this study is somewhat vulnerable to the influence of short-term data anomalies.

Maxwell’s next axiom is what he refers to as the richness of the data. That is, the degree to which the data collected embodies the wealth of information, both spoken and unspoken, that is communicated during an interview. For instance, simple notes recorded by the interviewer are inferior to videotaped interviews (Maxwell, 1998). For the purposes of extracting the maximum value from the interviews, the researcher recorded all interviews in an audio format and, where relevant, noted the implied body language associated with any spoken message, which has been included into the transcripts.

The next issue is one of misinterpretation of the respondent. This is where the interviewer's bias begins to play into the research and may potentially undermine its validity. Maxwell (1998) advises a process of respondent validation: a process of systematically soliciting feedback from the respondent on the understanding that the interviewer is taking from the engagement. The researcher of this study has incorporated this check into the interview process.

Issue four surrounds the handling of data discrepancies. Maxwell (1998) asserts that data discrepancies needed to be handled very consciously before naively ruling them out as anomalies or, conversely, adjusting the research conclusion to accommodate what may be spurious reasoning. Here, the researcher of this
study had intended to use the iterative nature of qualitative research to apply appropriate rigor to any data discrepancies that arose. Fortunately there were no significant anomalies in this study.

The next issue that Maxwell discusses is the issue inherent to trying to claim generality against the perspectives of a narrow grouping. The check in this instance is to triangulate the findings through multiple sources (Maxwell, 1998). As previously mentioned, the researcher of this study used data triangulation and theoretical triangulation strategies in this study (Yeung, 1995).

Maxwell (1998) draws attention to the fact that qualitative studies can be undermined by neglect of the inherently quantitative elements of their conclusions. That is to say, making a claim about something like the prevalence of a practice in a given context is an inherently quantitative claim. Maxwell’s argument is that simply stating that a particular practice is rare or common jeopardises the validity of the claim, because the claim isn’t quantitatively reinforced. The proposed solution is the use of what theorist Howard Becker refers to as quasi-statistics. These are simple numerical results that can be readily and confidently derived from the data, such as the percentage of respondents who spontaneously mentioned a particular practice (Maxwell, 1998).

The researcher has been conscious of the implied quantitative value of any conclusive claims and sought to validate said claims numerically as far as the data reliably allowed. Specifically the researcher sought to identify the degree of significance that interviewees placed on various factors within each of the theoretical models. This was achieved by using the number of spontaneous mentions as a proxy, but it is emphasised that these findings are strictly qualitative, and the researcher has avoided creating any spurious quantitative claims by attempting to assign values to any element by virtue of the frequency with which it may have been evidenced.
Finally, Maxwell discusses comparison as a means to validate the transferability of findings. Ideally the validity of research is enhanced by validation by comparison to either similar studies or multi-site research (Maxwell, 1998). Unfortunately this too is a limitation to this study in that the researcher’s scope for comparison is limited.

4.9. Informed consent and research ethics

The study used human subjects and therefore had to be passed by a relevant ethics committee before any data can be collected or analysed (Thompson & Panacek, 1998).

It is imperative that the interview respondent be given enough information about the scope and nature of the study to be able to make informed consent. The respondent must also consent to the use of any recording devices (Thompson & Panacek, 1998).

The University of Cape Town Graduate School of Business, the institution for which this research is being prepared, specifically states in their research policy that, in order to gain clearance from the ethics committee, the researcher is to verify that there are no known risks or dangers to anyone associated with the study and that researcher will not attempt to identify, or allow any other party to identify, any respondents in the study (The UCT Graduate School of Business, 2007).

Before conducting each interview the researcher read a standardised document that covered the requirements stipulated by the university’s policy. A copy of this document has been included as Appendix C to this report.

The researcher submitted a proposal for this study to the University of Cape Town for review on 31 August 2010. Notice of ethical clearance was received from the university on 8 September 2010.
4.10. Role of the researcher

The influence of the researcher has already been alluded to in this study, but is an important aspect that requires further discussion. The researcher will invariably impact any research project through influence on the methodological and theoretical foundations of the study as well as the analysis of the data (Broom, 2005).

Specifically, Malterud (2001) advises that the researcher avoid reflexivity, which is the role of the researcher in the study with regard to any biases that could affect an objective and systematic approach to knowledge construction through the study. Similarly the researcher needs to be aware of his or her preconceptions of the field of study, especially those that will be derived from the researcher’s personal history. Thirdly, the researcher needs to be explicit about his or her vantage with regard to the theoretical frame of reference that is being implemented. That is the theories, models and notions that are being applied to interpret the material under study. The researcher also needs to be explicit about, and conscious of, the meta-positions of the study, that is, the strategies that the researcher implements to create adequate distance between the researcher and the study that he or she is immersed in. Finally, the quantitative researcher must be conscious of the transferability of the study or the range of limitations that apply to application of the findings of the study to other contexts (Malterud, 2001). To the best of his ability, the researcher has adhered to these principles.

4.11. Conclusion

As discussed above, this study is a descriptive, qualitative study where the researcher’s findings are discussed against the existing theory surrounding the research topics. Data has been collected via a series of interviews that began as unstructured and later became semi-structured as concurrent analysis informed the process. During analysis the findings were triangulated both through looking at them from different theoretical perspectives (theoretical triangulation) and by looking at the responses from different groups within the advertising agency (data triangulation). All findings have been correlated into this final report.
5. Research findings and discussion

The following section outlines the findings of this research and the researcher’s discussion of these findings. This section begins with a discussion of how the analysis was conducted, after which the findings are discussed and then critiqued against theory presented on institutional memory and Generation Y.

Analysis of the data has been conducted around the central question leading the research: What practices are effective in managing institutional knowledge retention among Generation Y employees?

After establishing the most effective means of institutional memory creation evidenced against each of the four institutional memory theories discussed in the literature review the report will turn to discussion of these findings. This discussion refines the research against the primary research question and addresses the first of the secondary research questions: What are commonalities between instances of effective knowledge retention?

Thereafter the researcher compares these findings against the theory relating to Generation Y, thereby addressing the second secondary research question: What Generation Y values align with the goal of retaining institutional memory?

5.1. Discussion on presentation of analysis

As discussed in the research design section of this report, the researcher has attempted to support the integrity of the research findings by using two triangulation strategies: data triangulation and theoretical triangulation. The data analysis that follows has been constructed around these measures. Data triangulation was achieved through interviewing three cohorts: Generation Y employees, their line managers and the senior management. Theoretical triangulation was achieved through analysis against four theories of institutional memory: the Storage Bin Model, the Narrative Model, the Innovative Model and the Political Resource Model.
In analysing the data against each model, the researcher has presented the findings for each cohort separately in order to assess the homogeneity of the findings and therefore the integrity of any insights that may be derived from that analysis.

This data has been illustrated in the form of target diagrams. Each element of a model of institutional memory has been assigned a colour and the elements that were evidenced most significantly were placed in the centre of the target. These diagrams allow the reader to visually assess the homogeneity of the findings and to see the relative significance of the various elements of each model.

Included in the analysis of each model of institutional memory is an illustration of the findings from the first unstructured interview and an illustration of the findings of both interviews combined.

Data was coded using Hyper Research™ Qualitative Analysis Tool, version 2.8.3.

5.2. Analysis of findings against various theoretical models

From the initial unstructured interviews there was strong evidence indicating that the Storage Bin, Narrative, and Innovative Models appeared to be the most natural descriptors of the institutional memory creation at play at the agency under analysis. Respondents in both the Generation Y and line manager cohorts both emphasised evidence relating to these three models above that relating to the Political Resource Model.

This same trend continued after the second round of semi-structured interviews. It seems that respondents continued to focus on evidence that pertained to the Storage Bin, Narrative and Innovative Models above that which pertained to the Political Resource Model, which appears to further confirm that the former three models were a better fit in this context.

Evidence against each model is discussed in detail in the sections that follow.
5.2.1. Storage Bin Model

5.2.1.1. Overview of the Storage Bin Model

As discussed in the literature review portion of this report, Fernando Olivera outlined five internal storage bins within which institutional memory is stored. The following table outlines these five bins and the type of intellectual capital that is likely to be stored in each (2000):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bin</th>
<th>Intellectual Capital</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individuals</td>
<td>Human Capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational culture</td>
<td>Relational Capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecology of organisation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformational procedures</td>
<td>Structural Capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structures and roles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Initial analysis indicated that, within the agency under analysis, there is evidence that institutional memory is actively stored in each of the five storage bins that Olivera delineates, with the grave exception of organisational ecology.

5.2.1.2. Overview of findings relative to the Storage Bin Model

Figure 1 graphically represents the findings after the first interviews. The bins illustrated nearest to the centre of the circle were those that were most strongly evidenced for each cohort, while those near the periphery were less significantly evidenced. The three segments representing the various data cohorts are labelled “Gen Y” for the Generation Y cohort; “SM” for the senior management cohort; and “LM” for the line manager cohort.
The results after the first interview represent a clear and homogenous picture. All three cohorts evidenced that intellectual capital was stored primarily within individuals, then transformational processes and then structures and roles. Organisational culture and organisational ecology were less significant.

This image changed slightly after the findings from the second round of interviews were included. As can be seen in Figure 2 the Generation Y and line manager cohorts remained completely homogenous, but differed slightly from the image derived from the senior management cohort evidence. In contrast to the initial findings the organisational culture bin was evidenced as being more significant than transformational processes and structures and roles bins. The picture derived from the senior management perspective placed the structure and roles bin at the centre of the diagram, followed by the individual bin and organisational culture bins. Across all three cohorts it was evidenced that the individual, organisational culture and structures and roles bins were more significant than the transformational processes and ecology bins.
5.2.1.3. Detail of findings against each element of the Storage Bin Model

In evidence of the intellectual capital held at an individual level, respondents spoke about how there were specific things that they knew about their clients and how they needed to represent the interests of those clients and check work against specific criteria that only they understood. They also spoke of the briefing process and how there was information that they possessed which was vital to achieving a successful outcome. Finally, respondents spoke of how they often asked colleagues (or were asked by colleagues for) help. Similarly, many respondents indicated individuals who they knew held certain information that they could access if they needed it.

Respondents spoke frequently of the roles that they played in the creative development process when offering evidence of the intellectual capital stored in the structures and roles bin. One respondent spoke about her duty to guide the creative process while another stated, “It’s kind of almost, you like the policeman”. There was also evidence of how some important information existed within the
departmental and organisational hierarchy. One respondent spoke about how
the Managing Director was sometimes made privy to sensitive information about
her client that even she was unaware of. There was strong evidence that
supported the idea that respondents used the structures of the agency to funnel
information and that they felt it was fundamental to their role to speak to people
and regularly feed information through to them. In the words of one of the
respondents “Because, um, at the end of the day, we guide the process, the creative
process upstairs, so it will be [Line Manager] and I who have the final say”.

Organisational culture was a topic that most respondents tended to speak
fervently about. Almost every respondent likened the organisation to a family,
indicating that there were open and easy lines of communication between
various individuals and departments. One respondent stated, “Right now we’re,
we’ve got departments, but it’s not, it’s not bounded, you know. It’s not, we’ve got
access to everyone”. Further evidence indicated that this was actually encouraged
by senior management. When the topic was raised with the Managing Director
she emphasised that the agency was operated like this by design because
“everyone’s opinion counts… If we have people there whose opinion doesn’t count
then they shouldn’t be there”.

As a corollary to this, every interviewee claimed to know the names of every
other employee in the agency indicating a very close-knit organisation. In the
words of a respondent “We’re tight like that, you know”.

Another aspect of the organisational culture was an inclination to help one
another. One respondent told a story of how she had to take compassionate leave
for a week, due to a sudden death in her family. A colleague working on a
completely separate client stepped in to run her account. In the respondents
words “She just ran with everything, I mean I was out of the agency for a week and
when I came back everything was just sorted”.

Evidence supporting intellectual capital stored within transformational
processes was less abundant, but still evident. Respondents spoke about the
process of briefing, of translating and interpreting the client’s instructions and then communicating these to the creative studio. Similarly, work in development undergoes an iterative review process, which is another forum in which the respondents evidenced intellectual capital. One respondent particularly spoke about all that she had learnt as a result of the process that she coordinated and how it shaped her thinking about finding solutions to business problems. The final process that was often cited was a weekly Monday morning agency breakfast where the achievements of the previous week are shared with the whole agency and different parties are invited to share interesting insights with their colleagues.

Organisational ecology was the least evidenced bin. There was more evidence supporting intellectual capital in this area from the line manager and senior manager cohort than there was among the Generation Y cohort. Almost all respondents were of the opinion that the agency was undergoing fairly fundamental change as a result of rapid growth, but few evidenced intellectual capital stored in the fabric of this process. One respondent indicated that the rapid changes were forcing employees to rely on each other much more to cope with the challenges inherent to change. Further to this, opinions were quite varied.

5.2.1.4. Summary of findings relative to the Storage Bin Model
In summary, evidence against the Storage Bin Model indicates that intellectual capital is effectively stored in the individual, organisational culture and structure and roles bins.

5.2.2. The Narrative Model
5.2.2.1. Overview of the Narrative Model
Again looking back to the literature reviewed above, the researcher drew reference to the work of Wexler who identified various enablers that support the flow of intellectual capital within organisations. As above, the table below delineates the specific enablers and the nature of the intellectual capital that pertains to each (2002):
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enabling Factor</th>
<th>Intellectual Capital</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incentive Structures</td>
<td>Human Capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational Culture</td>
<td>Relational Capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policies and Rules</td>
<td>Structural Capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting Structures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision-making practices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structures and protocols for external relationships</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The image constructed after the evidence from the second round of interviews was included in Figure 4 and provides a more homogenous picture. The most significantly evidenced narrative structures include the organisational culture, reporting structures and incentive structures, which sit at the core of the diagram for all three cohorts. Figure 4 illustrates the significance with which the various cohorts evidenced the remaining four narrative structures. The Generation Y and line management cohorts evidenced traditions least significantly and structures and protocols for external relationships more significantly. The inverse was true of the senior management cohort.

**Figure 4: the Narrative Model – Results after both Interviews**

5.2.2.3. Detail of findings against each element of the Narrative Model
There was significant evidence that organisational culture was an enabler to narrative creation within the agency. Most significantly was evidence that respondents felt close to their colleagues. Many respondents used the term “family” to describe the agency. Respondents spoke openly about having access to people at all levels of the organisation and to feeling free to expressing opinions and finding support for good ideas. Respondents often referenced the
fact that they could ask colleagues for help and would freely help colleagues if, and when, needed. All respondents also knew the names of every other person in the agency.

The reporting structure at the agency also evidenced the creation of narratives. There were two strong themes to this evidence. The first was a collective need to be responsible to the client, regardless of the particular role that any person played. One respondent described the agency as “...a collaborative, boundary free environment”, while the Managing Director emphasised that managing the expectations of the client is absolutely key and that it is the prerogative of the whole agency to work towards that goal.

The other pertinent theme that was evidenced was the fact that there are several formal reporting structures in the form of meetings, such as creative reviews, where respondents felt many narratives were created. Respondents cited these meetings as important opportunities to input on the creative work being developed. Similarly, the line managers spoke of their efforts and encouragement to get their Generation Y charges to use this forum to give input on the work and affect the process. This was further confirmed by the Managing Director who spoke passionately about the need for younger staff to table opinions and have them considered in the context of those senior to, and more experienced, than them.

The third narrative enhancer that was evidenced as core was one driven by incentive structures. Most evidence was themed around notions of recognition and having your opinions heard and respected. Both line managers and Generation Y’s spoke about the fact that they appreciated the fact that they had a voice and that their opinions were heard and considered. Similarly a senior manager identified “recognition and acknowledgement” as the primary incentives to a Generation Y employee.

The Generation Y and line manager cohorts evidenced structures and protocols for external relationships as the next most significant narrative enabler. This
particular enabler was barely evidenced in the senior management cohort and thus featured as least significant with that group. Evidence of the significance of this enabler among the Generation Y and line manager cohorts was easily grouped into two key themes.

Firstly, respondents felt beholden unto their particular clients and thus these relationships tended to enable narratives within the agency.

Secondly, the agency is required to be the single point of contact for the client and subsequently all relationships that ultimately exist between the client and third party suppliers are filtered through the agency.

All three cohorts were homogenous with regard to the degree of significance with which policies and rules and decision-making practices were evidenced. Policies and rules evidenced some narrative creation in so much as they delineate standard processes of operation. These processes generally created narrative through briefing procedures, reviews and presentations. One respondent stated “So there is a way to do stuff that gives people a sense of confidence and professionalism and that helps you realise that it’s not just superficial and that there’s depth to everything that you’re hearing and doing, the recommendations that you’re getting”. Similarly decision-making practices evidenced the creation of some narrative given the highly collaborative nature of the work and working environment. When asked who made the final decision on whether a piece of work was ready for presentation, almost all respondents replied with a slightly altered version of the same iterative process.

Finally, both the Generation Y cohort and the line management cohort attributed least significance to traditions as forces of narrative creation, while the senior management cohort gave this great priority. The Managing Director clarified this when she said “I think we’re young, we’re a bit young to have traditions, but there’s things that are starting to become traditions”.

5.2.2.4. Summary of findings relative to the Narrative Model
From the evidence at hand it seems fair to conclude that the most significant narrative enablers in this agency are the organisational culture, the reporting structure and the incentive structure. Evidence supporting the other narrative creation forces was less significant and responses were less homogenous.

5.2.3. The Innovative Model

5.2.3.1. Overview of the Innovative Model
The Innovative Model of institutional memory is based on the notion of an active exchange of intellectual capital. In the earlier literature review the analogy of a glass of water with grains of sand in it was used. The water depicts the organisation and the sand: nuggets of intellectual capital. This model seeks to identify what forces are at play to stir the different forms of intellectual capital, thus keeping the water clouded and preventing the sand settling (Wexler, 2002).

The researcher coded evidence of such forces in the data in accordance to the type of intellectual capital that they were likely to keep active: human, structural and relational capital.

5.2.3.2. Overview of findings relative to the Innovative Model
After the initial round of interviews, both the Generation Y and the line manager cohort had significantly evidenced flows of relational capital, proceeded by structural and human capital flows. This is illustrated in Figure 5. The senior management cohort had evidenced human capital flows as most significant followed by structural and relational flows.
After the second round of interviews, the image presented was completely homogenous with primary significance placed on relational flows, followed by structural and finally human capital flows. This is illustrated in Figure 6.

**Figure 6: the Innovative Model – Results after both interviews**
5.2.3.3. Detail of findings against each element of the Innovative Model

Exchanges of relational capital were evidenced through significant mentions of the degree of communication that occurred between staff at the agency outside of the formal structures of meetings. Comments like “Yeah in the conversations. Good conversations” and “Somebody might mention stuff and the you kind of add to the conversation” were typical examples of this evidence. Strong evidence also supported the flow of relational capital through formal meetings and through evidence of initiatives that respondents identified as fun.

Evidence of structural capital was also significant. Many respondents evidenced the exchange of structural capital based on responsibilities inherent to their roles, but this was met equally with evidence of exchanges of intellectual capital that arose by virtue of people crossing disciplines to help colleagues in other departments. Examples of this would include the following comments “…via account management reviews, looking at the work, judging the work, using that kind of ‘What would the client do?’ as a mindset” and “Like I’ll help [Production Manager] in production or I’ll phone, like helping [Art Buyer] with art buying. You know we all just get in there, it’s quite, there’s no like, defined like scope of work so to speak”.

Finally exchange of human capital was evidenced less significantly by comments such as “It’s mostly a written document, ahhh, it’s also a large amount, it’s a lot of your own knowledge that you would obviously, you’re writing it from your perception. When you’re writing a written document, which is actually quite a scary thing, it might not be as objective as it should be”.

5.2.3.4. Summary of findings relative to the Innovative Model

Thus, against the Innovative Model, it was evidenced that factors motivating the flow of relational capital were the most significant in the context of this agency.
5.2.4. The Political Resource Model

5.2.4.1. Overview of the Political Resource Model

The Political Resource Model differs from the previously discussed models in that it doesn’t assume that intellectual capital is free flowing. Rather, this model identifies that intellectual capital can represent a value to the holder of such capital, which can then be used to create personal power (Wexler, 2002).

In order to identify the extent to which the dynamics of this model are evidenced by the data, the researcher has sought to identify practices and structures that either signify a barrier to transferring intellectual capital or practices and structures that actively encourage sharing of information.

5.2.4.2. Overview of findings relative to the Political Resource Model

Results after the first and second interviews construct the same, homogenous images, which are illustrated in Figure 7 below.
5.2.4.3. Detail of findings against each element of the Political Resource Model

The most significant evidence points to habits and structures that institutionalise the free flow of information with very little evidence of power creation through withholding information. Evidence of sharing information included formal structures within the organisation that were created to facilitate the sharing of information; a culture of sharing and helping; and evidence that respondents perceived that there was greater value to them inherent in sharing information than there was in holding it. Examples of comments that evidenced this include:

‘Also we do a lot of meetings, so we’ll have creative reviews where we actually discuss if the information was interpreted correctly, whether it’s, whether they’ve answered the brief correctly and obviously whether they understand what’s been put on the brief’

“I think we rely on each other so much more, because traditionally, I’ve been to other agencies where the type of work I do, two other people can do in a normal agency. So here we all pull in together more, work as a team more, help each other. Help each other get there. That’s the culture of [Agency] we all do everything”
“So what you put into the brief is what you actually want to get out of that brief. So it has to be, you have to get them inspired, get them motivated do more than just that Word document, you know, do something that you think will inspire them.

Evidence of structures that support the holding of information for the purpose of creating personal power is largely insignificant. The only instance that some respondents commented on was the nature of the relationship between the Account Management Department and the Creative Studio. Some respondents indicated that they were sometimes hesitant to share ideas for fear of “stepping on toes”. As one respondent put it:

...there is this sense in the agency that an idea can come from anywhere, but sometimes you think, and having just worked in client service, you feel like that’s not necessarily your speciality, so whether you’re comfortable enough with actually presenting it, or telling someone is another story.

5.2.4.4. Summary of findings relative to the Political Resource Model

Thus, the evidence seems to indicate that withholding information for personal gain was not a particularly significant issue in this context.

5.3. Discussion of findings against models of institutional memory

5.3.1. The Storage Bin Model

5.3.1.1. Discussion of findings

The evidence collected indicates that institutional memory is most significantly stored with the individual, organisational and structures and roles bins. Wexler states:

Collective remembering entails locating information or experiences that either one has directly dealt with earlier or more indirectly has been left in a repository by others, including earlier generations, for future retrieval (2002, p. 397).

Wertsch (2004) asserts that this memory is distributed between what he refers to as “active agents” and the contexts in which they operate.
Indeed this appears to have been true of the agency under analysis given that respondents evidenced a keen awareness of where to locate information, should it be needed. For example one of the Generation Y respondents had the following to say about her line manager:

…it helps me to go in there with [Line Manager], because she's been on the business for so long, so she, she just knows. When she sees something she’s just like 'No', because she knows. She's like 'No!', '[Client] doesn’t do this!', you know, this, this, that, and she explains it to them, she literally backs what she says, cos she's been on the business for so long.

The effective management of institutional memory in terms of the Storage Bin Model is rooted in the effective translation of human capital into structural and relational capital (Wexler, 2002). That is to say that intellectual capital begins in the organisation in the form of human capital. If the organisation manages this capital well, it is used to inform structures and inter- and intra- organisational relationships, thereby creating structural and relational capital. As discussed earlier there is a particular type of intellectual capital associated with each of the storage bins and it's noteworthy that the three most significant bins evidenced by respondents include bins that are associated with all three forms of intellectual capital: human capital in the individual bin, relational capital in the organisational culture bin and structural capital in the structures and roles bin.

The fact that the Generation Y and line manager cohorts evidenced the individual bin as most significant concurs with this model.

Wexler also identifies four basic reasons associated with the breakdown of institutional memory management by virtue of the Storage Bin Model. These include the decay of stored information, the obsolescence of stored information, a creation of false security by virtue of stored information and the storage of inaccurate information (2002).

Stored information can be decayed by a number of means. The most significant to this context include a failure to access and update the information and the loss of staff and structures that contain this intellectual capital. One of the Generation
Y respondents specifically identified this when she stated, “To be honest people come and go, but I don’t think that information is retained in the agency. When I leave I’ll probably take it with me”. She did however go on to contradict her point by illustrating that intellectual capital is effectively stored within the structures of the agency, noting that “...it will probably stay with the other people who are a lot more senior like the MD, the creative executive director. They sort of all hold that knowledge. But not everyone else in the agency”.

Discussion of the Innovative Model, which follows, will elaborate more on the degree to which intellectual capital is kept from decay through constant access and updating. A comment that the Managing Director made bodes well for the idea that this is the case within this agency:

*We always want to be, like organised chaos. That’s what we want. We want a place where it’s organic and it’s full of ideas and it’s growing and it’s changing and it’s moving with the times and it’s meeting consumer needs and it’s understanding what’s happening in our country and all of that stuff.*

This same sentiment would also indicate an effective measure against the threat of storing obsolete and inaccurate information.

The final threat that Wexler discusses is the fact that some institutions may develop a false sense of security by virtue of information that is stored within the organisation. Specifically, Wexler discusses the position of organisations that have weathered adversity and rely on the intellectual capital that they’ve amassed as a result of overcoming those adversities without giving appropriate consideration to the current state of the organisation (2002).

Evidence indicated that most respondents were very conscious of the fact that the agency was undergoing a continual change as a result of rapid growth. The implication is that this high pace of change hasn’t allowed for any extended degree of complacency. One respondent made the following comment

*I think that, uh, I think that’s mostly due to the fact that people (laughs) are finally starting to realise that the resource is way to small for the*
magnitude of work that’s being done. And I think it’s phenomenal that we’re doing so much work, but the big problem with this change and what might be inhibiting it and stopping us from evolving as much as we’d like is that we don’t have the security of retainer clients.

This illustrates that the organisation seems to be constantly assessing their position and is aware that old coping strategies are not sufficient when facing future adversity.

5.3.1.2. Summary of discussion
Thus, through the lens of the Storage Bin Model it appears that this agency is managing institutional memory fairly effectively. Evidence indicates that human, relational and structural capital are being stored within the agency and that this intellectual capital is actively utilised and updated to preserve its relevance. Underpinning the success of this transfer is the nature of the culture within the agency and the organic approach to structures and roles.

5.3.2. The Narrative Model
5.3.2.1. Discussion of findings
The Narrative Model of institutional memory is different to the Storage Bin Model in that it is based on a constant dynamism. Wexler (2002) argues that the key repository of intellectual capital in this model is actually the organisational culture. What’s important to note is that an organisational culture is not constant, but rather something that is constantly updated by new learning. Wang, Shieh and Wang (2008) explain organisational culture as being composed of three parts: the values and assumptions of founding members; the learning experiences of members of the organization; and the new values and assumptions brought into the organization by new members. This concept of the constant refreshing of the organisational culture, and inherent intellectual capital, is core to the Narrative Model.

The data evidenced organisational culture as a core narrative enabler in the agency under analysis. The next two most significant enablers were reporting structures and incentive structures. Views on the significance of the enablers
that followed were somewhat mixed with the Generation Y and line manager
cohorts evidencing structures and protocols for external relationships as most
significant while senior management focussed on traditions. What this indicates
is that, as with the findings in the Storage Bin Model, human capital was
identified as core. In this instance this was followed by evidence of structural
capital and then relational capital.

Again the significance accorded to all three forms of intellectual capital is
encouraging in that it indicates that human capital is being coded into the
structures of the organisation. But, as highlighted in the theory just earlier, the
successful management of intellectual capital in terms of the Narrative Model
depends on the consistent access and reinterpretation of stored intellectual
capital.

One of the first themes within the evidence of organisational culture as a
narrative enabler was the culture of helping that existed within the agency. Many
respondents made comments such as ‘Because you can just look up and say ‘Do
you guys know what this means?’ or ‘Where is this place?’ or ‘Do you think I’m
doing the right thing by saying this?’’; “If somebody asks somebody for an opinion
or advice on something said or something that needs to be done, we try. We really
do try” and “It might be a conversation that I have with someone saying ‘Oh I
remember this, when I was working on this’ so it might just happen via a
conversation”. These types of comments all evidence a constant accessing and
application of past reinterpreted for the present.

Equally significant was a strong focus on the need to inspire creative staff which,
by implication, also involves a process of actively engaging with knowledge from
the past and presenting it again in a fresh and innovative way to encourage the
best result from the creative process.

While this active engagement is evident within the realms of human capital,
Wexler would argue that it’s important to cite evidence of human capital being
coded into the organisation in the form of structural and relational capital that are subject to the same process of access and reinterpretation (2002).

Indeed there is evidence of this with regard to structural capital. Evidence indicated that intellectual capital was being fed up to the senior staff where it was constantly accessed and applied. One respondent spoke of how she had to learn to interpret her client, and literally translate their thinking into something that she could feed into a brief. She specifically mentioned that she knew that she could access the Managing Director who “…knows the technicalities of the client. Ja. Like how they think”. She also indicated that, because of the complicated nature of this client, some dedicated resources had been assigned to them. Specifically she mentioned a copywriter who “…understands, um, the feel they always want, you know, that feminine quirky feel”.

Evidence of relational capital was given slightly less significance in the interviews with respondents. The Generation Y and line manager cohorts evidenced more coding of relational capital as a product of the structures and protocols that applied to external relationships. Core to this evidence was the need to represent the agency and the client in the best possible light and secure the best possible deal that could be achieved in any given circumstance. Senior management put a stronger emphasis on relational capital coded into traditions. When interviewing the Managing Director she was very clear that most of what they focussed on in terms of traditions were customs that they were attempting to establish rather than standing institutions. The traditions mentioned included weekly breakfast meeting reviews, annual social functions (both with staff only and with external parties) and annual reporting on the financial standing of the agency.

The concerns of senior management leads to discussion on the first of two potential shortcomings to the effective management of institutional memory in terms of the Narrative Model, as discussed by Wexler. This first concern is the fact that, because of the self-adjusting nature of the Narrative Model, management tends to have fairly little control over the contexts and processes
under which the flows of intellectual capital take place (Wexler, 2002). This could indeed be a risk that the agency faces given the culture amongst peers to help one another as a process of daily operations. That said, evidence has suggested that both line managers and senior management remain quite intimately involved in the daily exchanges within the agency. In the words of one respondent “We find that [Managing Director] is our core source of knowledge, so if the girls don’t understand. If I don’t understand, I’m confident to go to [Managing Director] and be like ‘[Managing Director], what is this? What’s going on here?’”.

The second potential shortcoming by virtue of the Narrative Model is the possibility for inaccurate information to be lauded over more useful information (Wexler, 2002). This is was a difficult issue to assess in the particular context, but it seems that the on-going culture of helping, coupled with the constant presence of management in the narrative process would suggest that the application of most intellectual capital accessed is both useful and successful.

5.3.2.2. Summary of discussion
As was the case with the Storage Bin Model, the Narrative Model appears to suggest that intellectual capital is well managed within the context of the agency. Again, human capital sits at the core of the model and evidence suggests successful translation of this capital into structural capital and, perhaps to a slightly lesser degree, relational capital. Here the strong culture of helping and the active involvement of management appear to be the key forces driving the successful management of institutional knowledge.

5.3.3. The Innovative Model
5.3.3.1. Discussion of findings
On first inspection it seems that the evidence analysed within the framework of the Innovative Model of institutional memory may contradict the findings of the previous two models, because in this model we see relational capital falling to the core of the model, while human capital exists on the periphery. In reality this isn’t the case at all, because the Innovative Model is a very different lens to that imposed by the two previously discussed models.
Wexler highlights that this model is the least stable and sustainable model of institutional memory. He highlights the fact that this model differs from the others in that it is primarily a project-based notion of institutional memory (2002).

The key to the successful management of institutional memory in the framework of the Innovative Model is determined by the continual accessing and questioning of existing knowledge in order to open boundaries and code new and updated institutional memory. Inherent to Innovative Model is the concept of communities of practice.

Communities of practice are collections of people who come together to share and learn from each other. These are groups of practitioners who work to develop, review and disseminate knowledge (Cook-Craig & Sabah, 2009).

Indeed the presence of a community of practice is very evident within the agency under observation. Respondents often spoke of the close-knit nature of the department in which they worked – a closeness that often extended beyond the bounds of the department and into other departments.

Wexler further identifies three factors that underlie the effective management of institutional memory by virtue of the Innovative Model. This first factor is that the community of practice requires the presence of a managerial function. This needn’t be central to the community, but is important to settling disputes and keeping the momentum of intellectual capital transfer active. Secondly, it is important that the accuracy and integrity of knowledge is constantly tested through on-going interplay between experts (as defined by the community of practice) and novices. Thirdly, it’s important that no party harbour a resistance to change as a result of new information and experiences that result from knowledge flows. This type of resistance will be covered in more detail in discussion of the Political Resource Model, but specifically refers to a resistance
to change because of potentially jeopardised interests of any one party (Wexler, 2002).

The active involvement of management in the daily processes of the agency under observation has already been evidenced, indicating that this requirement has been achieved.

The interplay between experts (in this context, more experienced managers) and novices has also been evidenced through the already discussed open interplay between peers and the active culture of helping that is evident within the agency.

Finally, a resistance to change because of personal interests will be further discussed in the following section, but evidence indicates that this is not a stumbling block within this agency. This is partly evidenced by the culture of the agency and partly evidenced by the general acceptance that the organisation is in a constant state of change. In the words of the Managing Director “We want a place where it's organic and it's full of ideas and it's growing and it's changing and it's moving with the times and it's meeting consumer needs and it's understanding what's happening in our country and all of that stuff”.

Thus it seems clear that significant evidence of the transaction of relational capital is inherent to a case of successful management of institutional memory by virtue of the Innovative Model.

5.3.3.2. Summary of discussion
Again, the researcher concludes that management of institutional memory appears to be successful through the lens of this third model. As with the Narrative Model it appears that the key forces leading this success are the strong culture of helping and the active involvement of management in the daily processes of the agency.
5.3.4. The Political Resource Model

5.3.4.1. Discussion of findings

As discussed in the literature review section of this report, the Political Resource Model of institutional memory differs quite substantially from the preceding three models in that it doesn’t presuppose an unencumbered flow of intellectual capital. Rather, this model seeks to identify structures and practices that allow for the unequal and selective transaction of intellectual capital done to accrue or maintain influence within an organisation (Wexler, 2002).

Wexler argues that the logical root of the model relies on the credibility of multiple and substitutable pasts. That is to say that brokers of power have the ability to effectively re-write aspects of the organisational history in order to serve their own means. This is particularly prevalent in circumstances where new leadership is introduced (2002).

Given these aspects of the Political Resource Model it is difficult to apply evidence from the agency under analysis with any real certainty, as the organisation is relatively new and hasn’t, to date, experienced any significant change in leadership.

Evidence did suggest that the leadership are key personalities within the agency with one respondent identifying the Managing Director as “core”, but any evidence of a will to own or reinterpret the history of the agency was not evidenced explicitly.

Rather, the primary focus of respondents across the board seemed to be very strongly focussed on the organisational culture of the agency as being sacrosanct. One respondent made the following comment:

*I think they’re growing quite quickly and I think that the culture, the culture is key here and I think they’ll retain that, it’s just about hiring the right kind of people to fit into the agency. Um, but I do think they’re changing and I think it’s natural. It has to happen, as long as you can evolve the agency with that change and hang on to what you stand for.*
This was confirmed by the Managing Director when she discussed characteristics that she looks for in prospective new employees: “I look for the kind of qualities in terms of their character that will fit into our culture. And our culture, I think, is becoming more and more of a very defined thing now. It wasn’t. We’re young. So we’re starting to define our culture”.

There was also some evidence that illustrated a relinquishment of control over the organisational culture on the part of senior management. When discussing the formal employee review system the Managing Director mentioned an interesting inclusion:

> I always ask the question: Are they, do you think this person is a [Agency] person and an asset to the company? I ask the peers to say whether they believe they are or not. And it’s amazing what you get out of that, because, sometimes you’ll get ‘This person is absolutely amazing, does a great job, but no, not a [Agency] person, because they’re negative about certain things’ or because ‘They are too focussed on their own goals and their own happiness and not on their contribution’. It’s interesting stuff.

Robbins (2000) is cited in Wang (2008) discuss the important role that leadership can play in creating a set of organisational values that support the achievement of organisational goals. These values, as evidenced above, then form part of the structural capital of the organisation.

Wexler discusses some of the costs that are inherent to mismanagement of institutional memory by virtue of the Political Resource Model. Notably he mentions that a constant tussle for power can result in the feeling that the organisation is being led by a “fad of the day” which can ultimately demoralise staff and make it very difficult to socialise new members into the cultures and routines of the organisation (2002).

Neither of these two effects is evident within the agency; in fact, quite the opposite is true of each case. Staff attest to being very motivated and very clear on what the culture of the agency is. Further to that, it appears that new employees are seemingly easily integrated into the culture. When discussing the
ecology of the agency, one line manager mentioned that there were loads of new staff entering the organisation and that it was refreshing to “hear new voices”.

5.4.3.2. Summary of discussion
Thus the researcher concedes that it’s difficult to apply an analysis of this organisation against this particular model of institutional memory, given that the organisation is so young and still led by the founding leadership. That stated, there is evidence that suggests that even the leadership tend to renounce ownership or dictation of the organisation’s history, but rather encourage an egalitarian and self-perpetuating culture to inform that intellectual capital. Further to this, no evidence seems to exist to indicate that institutional memory is being mismanaged from the perspective of the Political Resource Model.

5.4. Conclusion
Analysis indicates that institutional memory is being effectively managed within the agency under observation. While analysis against the Political Resource Model was somewhat stunted by the short history of the organisation, analysis against The Storage Bin, Narrative and Innovative Models all seem to point toward effective management of institutional memory.

The nature and significance of the organisation’s culture emerged as a major factor that played a key role in all of the models of institutional memory that were addressed. The culture of the agency was evidenced as being very intimate. Many respondents described the agency as a family and there was strong evidence of a tendency to work together and help each other. The Storage Bin and Narrative Models identified this culture as a key repository of intellectual capital, while it was identified within the Innovative Model and the Narrative Model as a key means of coding human capital into relational and sometimes structural capital. Similarly the seeming sovereignty of the organisational culture from the direct manipulation of any one interest group supported the idea that this was a key driver to successful management of institutional memory under the Political Resource Model.
This relates specifically to another factor that was a significant driver to successful institutional memory creation in the various models: the structure of the agency. While it was evidenced that there was a fairly clear sense of hierarchy within the agency, there is also a propensity for staff to engage freely with people in other functions, which contributes, to what the Managing Director referred to as “organised chaos”. Thus, by the Storage Bin Model, the informal structure of the organisation seemed to be a key repository for structural capital and a key enabler for the coding of both structural and relational capital by virtue of the Narrative and Innovative Models.

The third key factor that appears to have contributed to successful management of institutional memory is the active engagement of management within the daily operations of the agency. Analysis of the Storage Bin Model identified management as one of the key repositories of human capital. The Narrative Model indicated that the intimate involvement with management informed the organisational culture, which led to effective coding of accurate knowledge into the organisation in the forms of structural and relational capital. Management’s intimate involvement was also a key factor to the successful and sustained transactions of intellectual capital under the Innovative Model.

Thus the researcher argues that upon analysis of the data collected against these four theoretical models of institutional memory, the most important factors underlying instances of successful institutional memory retention relate to the strong organisational culture; the “organised chaos” of structures and roles within the agency; and the active presence of management in the daily processes of the agency.
6. Research findings and Generation Y perspective

6.1. Summary of Generation Y theory

Summarising from the earlier literature review the researcher has developed a list of characteristics for Generation Y employees against which to analyse the findings of each model of institutional memory.

This list includes the following traits:

1. Generation Y is “the special generation”, who see themselves as vital to the future and inclined to list supporting people of their own age as their preferred choice of community service (Howe, 2005).
2. Generation Y are optimistic and confident (Wilson & Gerber, 2008).
3. A strong team orientation and a trust in collective institutions like governments to “do the right thing” (Howe, 2005).
5. Highly pressurised and hard-working as long as they’re rewarded (Howe, 2005).
6. Fairly conservative and conventional, with a strong appreciation for traditional family values (Wilson & Gerber, 2008).
7. Self-confident and self directed, but in need of constant clarity on their performance (Martin, 2005).
8. Inclined to seek help from colleagues and approach tasks in groups rather than alone (Martin, 2005).
9. Highly technologically savvy and accustomed to instant gratification (Martin, 2005).
10. Entrepreneurial and inclined to find new ways of achieving tasks (Martin, 2005).
11. They are a sheltered and protected generation who are quick to complain about unfair assessment (Howe & Strauss, 2003).
The following discussion will look at each of the three factors, identified by the researcher, that were evidenced to underpin the successful instances of institutional memory creation: the agency’s culture; the “organised chaos” nature of structures and roles; and the active involvement of management. In discussion of each of these factors the researcher will draw on the theory relating to Generation Y and comment on the concurrences and contradictions between the findings and the theory.

6.2. Discussion of three key factors against theory of Generation Y

6.2.1. Organisational culture

The culture of the agency was a topic that every respondent raised at some point during his or her interview. Many respondents used the term “family” to describe the agency. This notion of family implied closeness amongst employees and a genuine concern for one another. As one respondent put it “Here we all pull in together more, work as a team more, help each other. Help each other get there. That’s the culture of [Agency] we all do everything”. Other hallmarks of the culture that came to the fore in many interviews were a general optimism and a strong sense of confidence. These were perhaps best exemplified by the Managing Director:

So our culture is, very glass half full, very positive, very committed to South Africa, and committed to doing more than what is expected of you. So it’s not good enough just to be a good South African agency. You must be a bloody good, brilliant, world-class agency. (hmmm). And the ones that shine at [Agency] are the ones that have that in their characters.

The description of the agency as a family parallels with one of the fundamental characteristics of the Generation Y make-up. Ideas of family are considered core to the identity of Generation Y who are inclined to accept their parent’s values and who even go so far as to believe that these values will be more important for their generation than they were for their parents (Howe & Strauss, 2003; Wilson & Gerber, 2008).

Similarly the optimism and confidence that are embodied in the culture of the agency speak directly to the character of Generation Y. Generation Y generally
believe that they are more likely to be financially successful than their parents were (Howe, 2005). As discussed in the literature review section of this report, Howe (2005) argues that the facts that the War on Terror is generally perceived as winnable and that technology is increasingly able to eliminate more and more ills are cited as reasons that underlie this confidence and optimism (2005). South African academic, Sarah Nuttall, echoes this same ethos highlighting the fact that Generation Y’s in South Africa are old enough to understand the gravity of the Apartheid era, but young enough to not be jaded by the realities of it (2004).

6.2.2. Structure and roles within the agency
The structures and roles within the agency were another point of focus for most respondents. Closely related to the sense of family that was embodied within the culture of the organisation, was a clear sense that roles were considered to be quite amorphous in nature. While it was clear that each employee had an area of responsibility, there was clear evidence of a strong team spirit and a tendency to cross disciplines in order to achieve the desired outcomes. In the words of one of the respondents:

*I think that’s the advantages of being in a small agency, you kinda, you get to know a bit of everything, and every area of what you do on a daily basis. Whereas in a normal big agency you kind of work in silos, like ‘Oh that’s productions issue’ or ‘Oh that’s Art Buying’, but here you kind of, it kind of overlaps.*

Similarly the structure of the organisation promotes a free and open flow of conversation. Respondents often mentioned that they were glad to have access to every other employee in the agency and that they felt that healthy conversation between employees in different departments was encouraged. As one respondent put it:

*But at [Agency], even though we do try and desperately try to put systems and structures in place, we absolutely are. I mean, we definitely communicate a lot. I think there is a culture. You know what, maybe it’s not a 100% there, but it’s definitely on its way there. We really do try and I think especially with [Managing Director] and the systems that she’s tried to introduce, she’s really tried to like, push that way of thinking and introduce it to the agency. And even with [Head Creative Director], I think*
The fluidity of the roles within the agency speaks directly to two of the core characteristics of Generation Y. The first is the fact that Generation Y is exceptionally team-orientated. This orientation is partly attributed to the fact that so much of current technology is aimed at connecting people and forming communities (Howe, 2005). This orientation towards teamwork is also met by a strong inclination to seek assistance in order to tackle a project rather than attempt to tackle things solo (Martin, 2005). Again, this tendency towards help seeking was also very evident within the agency and core to the structure of the agency.

The second core characteristic of Generation Y that the fluidity of roles within the agency relates to is the highly entrepreneurial nature of the generation. Martin (2005) writes at length about the flexibility that Generation Y employees seek in the workplace. This flexibility is partly required to accommodate their tendency to work collaboratively, but partly because Generation Y are characterised as being inclined to want to find their own ways of working. Martin cautions that managers of Generation Y employees are advised not to be surprised when offered alternate ways of accomplishing a task, because Generation Y is a cohort that is used to a plethora of choices, fuelled by technology, which means that they are hesitant to settle for one course of action until several have been explored (Martin, 2005).

6.2.3. Role of management

The final element that the researcher has evidenced as factor underlying the successful management of institutional memory in the agency under analysis relates to the presence of senior management in the everyday operations of the agency. Both the Managing Director and the Head of Strategy sit in an open plan environment amongst the Account Management Department. More than this, it was evidenced that they encourage employees to involve them in the daily processes of work. When discussing this point, one of the Generation Y employees made the following comment: “I don’t fear, you know, I’m not scared to
ask them, you know, if I need help, it’s fine. [Managing Director]’s always, like ‘ask for help’. ‘Ask for the opinion, it’s fine’. I’m not scared of that at all”.

Here again, the characteristics of Generation Y are mirrored by the operation of the agency. Previously mentioned was the inclination of Generation Y to seek help in their approach to any project, rather than face the challenge alone (Martin, 2005). The active presence of management allows for them to access a credible source of help.

While management’s involvement as a source of help is significant, a more direct parallel between this occurrence and the Generation Y character might be the need that Generation Y have for guidance in their work. Martin describes Generation Y as a high maintenance, but highly productive cohort (2005). This tendency is embedded in the nature of the psychological contract that Generation Y characteristically hold with their employers. Where once organisations sought employees to serve them, we now see a reversal where employees want organisations to serve their careers (Broadbridge, Maxwell, & Ogden, 2007). Despite wanting the flexibility to design their own work processes, Generation Y seek constant feedback and direction in order to feel that their personal development is high on the agenda of leadership (Martin, 2005).

6.3. Model of institutional memory management among Generation Y employees
The researcher has constructed the following model to depict the findings of this research.
Figure 8: Model of institutional memory management among Generation Y employees

The black ring represents the organisation and the circles indicate the various characteristics of Generation Y employees that have been identified as key to the successful management of institutional memory within an organisation. The triangle represents that structures within the agency that need to be put in place to ensure that the appropriate characteristics of Generation Y are accessed.

Specifically, as noted in the study, structures and roles can allow the organisation access to intellectual capital through the gateways of Generation Y’s team orientation and entrepreneurial nature if they are appropriately accommodating. The same is true of organisational culture if structured to accommodate Generation Y’s conservative family ideals and optimism; and of leadership if structured to accommodate Generation Y’s need for direction and inclination to seek help.

Of course, the various characteristics of Generation Y cannot be viewed in isolation and therefore the model proposes these characteristics as a system of
satellites that orbit the organisation, implying that each has an effect on every other.

6.4. Conclusion

The results of the researcher's examination of the successful instances of institutional memory creation among Generation Y employees in an advertising agency, against four different theoretical models of institutional memory, yielded three general factors that were evidenced as key to successful institutional memory management. These three factors were: the nature of the organisational culture; the nature of roles and structures within the agency; and the presence of senior management.

In the context of the agency it was evidenced that the organisational culture was familial and that employees were encouraged to converse openly and help one another. The Managing Director described the agency as "organised chaos" which describes the nature of the structure and roles within the organisation. That is to say that the structures and roles are flexible and allow for employees to work collaboratively towards a common end. Finally it was evidenced that senior management were both present and accessible to all employees.

These three factors have been identified as aligning well with certain characteristics of Generation Y, suggesting that the success of these factors in the creation of institutional memory amongst these employees could be rooted in their shared generational values.

Specifically, the organisational culture appeals to Generation Y’s conservative family values and their strongly optimistic nature. The nature of structures and roles within the organisation speaks to the team orientation of this cohort and to their entrepreneurial nature. Lastly, the presence of senior management aligns with Generation Y’s constant need for direction and their propensity to seek assistance.
7. Conclusions and future research

7.1. Summary of research findings

The primary question that led this research report was the following: What practices are effective in managing institutional knowledge retention among Generation Y employees?

As a corollary to this question the researcher had posed the following two secondary questions:

- What are commonalities between instances of effective knowledge retention? and,
- What Generation Y values align with the goal of retaining institutional memory?

In pursuit of an answer to these questions the researcher selected an advertising agency and conducted a descriptive qualitative research study. Data was collected from three data cohorts (Generation Y employees, line managers of Generation Y employees, and senior managers). This was then analysed against four different theoretical models for institutional memory (The Storage Bin Model, the Narrative Model, the Innovative Model and the Political Resource Model). From this analysis some commonalities were extracted from the findings against each model. These commonalities were then assessed in terms of Generation Y theory to ascertain if there was a fit between the values of Generation Y and the factors that contribute to successful management amongst Generation Y employees.

Analysis of the data collected from the advertising agency under observation evidenced successful management on institutional memory when considered against each of the four theoretical models. The Political Resource Model posed a challenge to the analysis in that the agency is quite young and has not had a significant change of leadership yet, making it slightly more difficult to analyse against this particular model. There was, however, no evidence of the costs associated with mismanagement of institutional memory against this model.
Discussion of the results of analysis against each model illustrates a range of practices that are effective when managing Generation Y employees, thereby addressing the primary research question in detail. A synopsis of these results addresses the first of the secondary research questions: What are commonalties between instances of effective knowledge retention?

It was ascertained that these commonalties related to the optimistic and familial nature of the organisation’s culture; the flexibility or “organised chaos” of the structures and roles; and the presence and accessibility of senior management.

These three factors were then considered against the theory surrounding Generation Y employees and the expectations of Generation Y employees in the workplace. The results revealed no notable contradictions to the theory, indicating an overlap between these factors and the values and expectations of Generation Y.

Generation Y is characterised as being fairly conservative and very in favour of traditional family values. They are also considered an incredibly optimistic generation, and so the close knit, familial and very up-beat organisational culture evidenced at the agency fit perfectly with this. This synergy evidenced the coding of intellectual capital into the organisation as relational capital in The Storage Bin, Narrative and Innovative Models of institutional memory.

Entrepreneurship is another central characteristic of Generation Y. While this implies that many of the generation seek to start their own businesses, it also embodies a generational mindset of finding their own way to do things. This coupled with a propensity to seek help and work in teams spoke seamlessly to the organisational structure and roles at the agency: structure that the Managing Director described as “organised chaos”. Against the theoretical models discussed, this synergy indicated a coding of intellectual capital into the organisation in the form of structural capital.
Finally, the presence and accessibility of senior management also aligned with the expectations of Generation Y employees. Not only does this give employees a source from which they can seek help, a propensity of the generation, but it also fulfils one of the most basic elements of the psychological contract that Generation Y employees are theorised to hold with their employers. That is, Generation Y employees expect that the organisation will put their personal growth as centrally important to the relationship between individual and organisation. As a result of this, Generation Y employees are prepared to work exceptionally hard, but expect constant feedback and direction, something that the presence of senior management can provide. This, in turn, was evidenced to facilitate the coding of human capital into the senior management of the organisation in the Storage Bin Model and coding of relational capital in the organisation by virtue of the Narrative and Innovative Models of institutional memory.

The researcher then concluded his discussion by proposing a model to describe the dynamics that were evidenced by the research.

7.2. Future research

The focus of this particular study was on the factors that contributed to the successful retention of institutional memory amongst Generation Y employees in the context of an advertising agency. As the research progressed, there were several avenues for further study that presented along the way.

The first of these was the issue of accessing institutional memory. Memory is not a static entity, but rather a dynamic system whereby information is identified, acquired, stored, searched for, retrieved and disseminated (Ozorhon et. al., 2005) Thus the successful use of institutional memory, indeed any memory, involves not only the perception and recording of a fact or observation, but also the later access and application of that knowledge. This study really only addresses half of the process of effective institutional memory management in that it focuses only on memory storage. A future study might examine what the
factors are that contribute to the successful access and application of existing institutional memory amongst Generation Y employees in a particular context.

A further research opportunity that presented itself during the study was an exploration on the possibility of different approaches to this issue between male and female Generation Y employees. Coincidently, the majority of respondents in this particular study were female, as was the leadership within the organisation. A similar study could be conducted in a more masculine environment to establish if these findings are consistent across gender.
8. Bibliography


**Appendix A: Discussion points for second round of (semi-structured) interviews**

Based on the initial analysis of the first round of unstructured interviews, the researcher composed the following list of discussion points to lead the semi-structured interviews. These discussion points are listed below and are accompanied with the justifications that underlie them. The intention in leading these semi-structured interviews was to cover as many of these conversation points without conducting a formal structured interview.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discussion Point</th>
<th>Justification</th>
<th>Limitations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you think there is a culture of sharing knowledge here? Can you give an example?</td>
<td>• Understand perceptions of flow. • Get examples of enablers for innovative model. • Understand more about human capital and relational capital bins.</td>
<td>• Concept of sharing could become leading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is this organisation changing? If so, are those changes affecting how information flows here?</td>
<td>• Understand organisational ecology bin. • Look for evidence of forces that influence innovative model.</td>
<td>• None.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You learn a lot about your client – who do you pass your knowledge onto and how?</td>
<td>• Assess narrative streams. • Understand more about structures and structural capital.</td>
<td>• Could be leading – need to note the ease with which the interviewee responds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you feel you will be rewarded (praised, promoted, paid more) if you put more of yourself into your work?</td>
<td>• Look to incentives that encourage narratives. • Seek forces that motivate innovative model flow. • Inform ideas on organisational culture.</td>
<td>• A loaded question – although interviews are anonymous, interviewee may be intimidated to answer in the negative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Action 1</td>
<td>Action 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who makes most of the decisions that affect your work? Is it you that has the final say or someone else?</td>
<td>Seek evidence of information politics. &lt;br&gt;Understand structural capital better.</td>
<td>Could be leading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there any traditions or particular characteristics about your agency that you think make you a smarter agency? Things that help the flow of information here?</td>
<td>Look to traditions that create narratives. &lt;br&gt;Inform conceptions of organisational culture.</td>
<td>None.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What, if any, are the general rules when you deal with parties outside of the agency with regard to how you share information? Do those relationships tend to get smarter?</td>
<td>Understand relational capital better with external parties. &lt;br&gt;Inform narrative models. &lt;br&gt;Seek factors that inform politics and holding of information.</td>
<td>Could lead Interviewee to construct answer – need to note ease with which question is answered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do people help each other here?</td>
<td>Assess organisational culture and understand the flow of human capital.</td>
<td>Loaded question. Could be difficult to answer in the negative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you know everyone here’s name?</td>
<td>Understand organisational culture. &lt;br&gt;Seek political barriers or structural blocks.</td>
<td>Loaded question. Could be difficult to answer in the negative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you ever feel a need, or a will, to hold information back? Can you explain that?</td>
<td>Seek evidence of political motivations.</td>
<td>Loaded question. Could be difficult to answer in the positive.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Would you say that there's information politics here?

- Assess interviewee's reaction to the term "politics" to see what the professed values are with regard to organisational information politics.
- Very leading question. Actual answer to be disregarded but rather the reaction to the use of the term political is the interest here. Question purposefully left until end of interview due to very leading nature.

Appendix B: Interview transcripts

Following are the transcripts of all interviews conducted for this research. Speaking parts by the interviewer are designated “I” and respondents “R”. Names of the agency, clients and individuals have all been excluded and the subject of the reference indicated in square brackets.

1. Round 1: Unstructured interviews

1.1. Generation Y cohort

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview number</th>
<th>Gen Y</th>
<th>X</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>11:31</td>
<td>Line Man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>12 Nov</td>
<td>Senior Man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code</td>
<td>KG002</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I Consent form read (no interruption)
R Yes
I Okay, were you born before or after 1980
R I was born on 1980... or in 1980
I So you as an employee hold a certain amount of knowledge about your clients. Technical knowledge. Now this is knowledge that you can hold or it can be transferred into your organisation. When you think about it. What happened in your work practices? How and when is knowledge transferred into the organisation?
R Wow, okay. So you asking how... It’s just so I understand the question. You’re asking how I use my knowledge and how I transfer that knowledge
I Absolutely. So when you learn something about the clients that you’re working on, about the nature of their business. That knowledge, how do you think it gets put into the organisation?
R I think, I mean, more so with our role because there’s a lot of exchange of, you know, the like briefs. Particularly of briefs. All the information. That’s the primary medium of where all the information is transferred is onto the brief. The brief is
the most important document that circulated within the agency and the organisation, right. Because that will outline what the clients requests are. It gives you the information of what the budgets is, what the campaign is and also what you know about the certain product is that they want to promote. That’s where most of, I think the most, that’s the most important. The briefing document is the most important thing for me. Also we do a lot of meetings, so we’ll have creative reviews where we actually discuss if the information was interpreted correctly, whether it’s, whether they’ve answered the brief correctly and obviously whether they understand what’s been put on the brief. And um, You know also, after the whole creative review process has happened, after the briefing process, then we have the creative presentation so then that information is taken out of the organisation and shared in another way with the client and... ja... that’s where... that’s when the advertising material will start coming to life, because then now you know, out of that presentation, we know exactly what is going to become tangible to the consumer. Is it going to be a TV ad, is it a billboard? So, ja, so it goes from an exchange of information on a simple Word document, on a brief to a beautiful billboard or something that just engages with the consumer. Ja.

And. Tell me a little bit more about the brief. In your mind is the brief just a document, or what else goes with the brief? You mentioned meetings.

Hmmm. Mmmm. I mean the brief, yes it is a document but it’s also more than that because out of that, I mean that brief has to inspire a creative person. You have to be so careful about what you put on that brief. You can’t give him too much information, because, you know it might bore them, it has to be something that will help spark an idea, that will inspire them, that will motivate them, that will help them get excited about the brief, so, you know, it’s got to live in that way. And, and I mean, in this organisation it, you know every organisation works differently, but in my experience in account management, what normally um accompanies a briefing document is take it out of the organisation and actually immerse them in that environment where the brief is coming from. So a good example is like on Mini, we take them on an advanced driving course to actually drive the car, feel the performance of the car, so that you know, when they have to go back and look at that blank piece of paper, they will go back to that experience that they had on that advanced driving course, race track and then the copy will come to life because it’s based on real experience. So you need to always make sure that that briefing document will give you the output that you want. So what you put into the
brief is what you actually want to get out of that brief. So it has to be, you have to get them inspired, get them motivated do more than just that Word document, you know, do something that you think will inspire them.

Brilliant, thank you.

Is that all you need?

That’s all I need!

Great.
I Consent form read (no interruption)

R Yes

I Okay, first question. Were you born before or after 1980

R After 1980

I Okay, so you as an employee you hold a certain amount of knowledge that exists with you and this is knowledge that you can hold yourself, or it can be transferred back into the organisation. When you think about it, what happens in your work practices? How often do you think you transfer this knowledge into the agency?

R Ahhhh... Not often enough. I think that we assume that, um, there are certain rules and guidelines, certain product information, terms and conditions that we, that are put on a piece of paper that happens to be a brief and we assume that everyone reads it and everyone understands it and initially when the brief goes into the agency, you will reiterate them, but I don’t think that I impart that knowledge as often as one should. The assumption is that everybody knows it (ja, okay). So I think, I know it, my client knows it and if someone asks the question, I’ll answer them, but we don’t belabour it, we don’t sit and talk about the fact that you know that you should, that the FSP line, there’s a certain size. You will check those things towards the end, before that piece of communication goes out to publication, but there isn’t really space or time... There isn’t really an opportunity for us to actually talk about those things...

I But it happens?

R Yeah, absolutely. It always happens.

I That’s interesting. Okay great. Cool. Anything else?

R Um... I don’t know it’s difficult when in the brief you, you, you, you want to meet client’s objective. That sort of becomes, that overshadows everything else. And you want a big idea, you want the guys to come up with something out of the ordinary. You want the innovation that client seeks. The rest of it just kinda happens towards the end really, towards the end of the process where you know, there are certain things that I know, that I actually feel are even that valuable anymore, because it really is about that idea. It’s about the creative, and then right at the end I’ll sit and make sure that everything I know will be on there. That is a requirement by the client or that I’ve learnt as a result of working on the business I’ve been on for about 3 to 4 years now that I’ve been working on insurance products here at [Agency] and, ahhhh, to be honest people come and go, but I
I don’t think that information is retained in the agency. When I leave I’ll probably take it with me. And it will probably stay with the other people who are a lot more senior like the MD, the creative executive director. They sort of all hold that knowledge. But not everyone else in the agency. So, I dunno maybe elaborate, tell me more in terms of... how this memory should be held in an organisation.

I Okay, well what I’m going to do is do a follow-up interview where I ask you a few things in a bit more detail. So you’ve actually given me more than I need for now. Thanks so much!

R Okay great! Thanks!
Great, thanks. Okay. So the first question is, now that we've hot all of that out of the way, the first question is, as we discussed earlier. You gain a certain amount of information about your clients specifically that you work with, and that information is obviously with you: it's your experiences, your knowledge. Just through your normal everyday work practices, how do you see yourself feeding that information into the agency?

Via verbally, via briefs, via account management reviews, looking at the work, judging the work, using that kind of "what would the client do?" as a mindset almost, especially when your evaluating if something is something that they would buy or would not buy and whether the creatives should spend more time investing in that particular project. How else? I think those two are the main, the main, the first two are the main things that come to mind.

Okay, well, talk to me a little about briefing. What, what is everything that constitutes a brief?

Essentially, it's. Ahhh. I'm trying to put this into a simple term. Ahhhh. Essentially it's the client coming to you with a business problem, where you have to find a right-brain solution to a left-brain problem. Coming up with something that ticks all the mandatory's and fundamentals that they wanna achieve, for instance, every single client wants to make a profit at the end of the day so it's making sure that whatever you do enhances the brand and enhances sales. Sometimes. Sometimes it's enhancing sales, sometimes it's not. If it's not a retail business, if it's a museum or a city it might not necessarily be the same thing. And taking that information as well as the background information and the parts of the business that we know about, that we are exposed to, because we're always given a snapshot, that's my. Anyway I'm going to digress because we're give a snapshot and we're not treated as partners, which we should be, that's the ideal, but not what happens in practice, so it's taking all the information that we have at hand and funnelling it into something that's useful for the creatives to be able to come up with a right-brain problem to the, the...

Okay, okay, and that process, I mean, you funnel something down and now you've got a brief that's going into the agency. What, what all entails that brief, I mean, there's a written document, but what else is part of that process do
you think?

R  It’s mostly a written document, ahhh, it’s also a large amount, it’s a lot of your own knowledge that you would obviously, you’re writing it from your perception. When you’re writing a written document, which is actually quite a scary thing, it might not be as objective as it should be. You might not include certain information, which would be vital, that you take for granted because you know it so well. Ahhh. There’s a verbal briefing and then obviously, when the brief is in the system, there’s reviewing all the work that’s been done according to that document and whether it meets the requirements or not.

I  And reviews. What’s your input during a review?

R  Just generally if you think it’s, if you think that the solution that they’ve come up with is, reasonable in the sense that it relates, it answers the question that’s been asked, that’s needs to be addressed is addressed and it’s addressed in a fashion that the brand with its’ personality and tone and characteristics – that’s there. It’s the marriage of the two almost. So it’s answering a business problem and taking the brand to another tier and injecting some life into it.

I  You mentioned account management reviews. What’s the process there? What are those about?

R  Essentially they show us the work that’s been done to date and the briefs that you’ve put in the system and then you comment as to whether you think that the work is suitable, if it’s at a stage to be presented, if it’s not at a stage to be presented, if you think that the ideas are good or bad, or relevant or irrelevant, or if you think that the idea is amazing or the budget would never allow one to pursue that. So it’s kind of almost, you like the policeman.

I  Okay, ja. Okay great, the one question that I didn’t ask you earlier is: Where you born before or after 1980?

R  After 1980.

I  After 1980, okay great. That makes you a Generation Y. Great, thanks, that’s all I need for now!

R  Okay, great, thanks!
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<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<th>I</th>
<th>So the first question that I want to open with is, is a sort of broader one. We spoke about the fact that everyday as you do your job you learn more and more about your client’s business and the business of advertising. If you think about just the everyday job practices that you do, what you walk into this agency in the morning and do, how do you think you’re feeding that knowledge into the agency?</th>
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<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Um… Our client [Client] is very, they’re very picky, so I think one of the biggest things that I’ve had to learn is that, is translating what they say to me, because sometimes they’re not very specific, so I have to kinda, when I speak to them I have to really just get to the core of what they’re trying to do and translate that onto my brief, because sometimes they just, they just, give us feedback and it’s not specific, like we want it to. So I think that’s one of the biggest things that we’ve had to learn. Because at the end of the day, when I return work to them for approval, it needs to, they need to be like “No, this is what we wanted, this is what we expected back”. If I don’t translate that brief back properly, that debrief then that work isn’t going to be done, they’re going to bitch and moan about it until it’s actually done. And they will take it into the, they won’t take it into consideration that they haven’t briefed it correctly, you know, because they do everything right. Hmmm.</td>
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<tr>
<th>I</th>
<th>And, and, who else knows how to understand them?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>[Line Manager]. [Line Manager] em… [Line Manager]’s been working with them for a long time now, I just, I came in, I think it was February. This year, straight from varsity, so…</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>I</th>
<th>Tell me, tell me about. Do you guys? What’s the nature of that relationship like? Do you guys chat a lot about the client?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>We do, we do. I think she gives me a lot of leeway, she wants me to take that initiative and learn myself, but when she sees that I’m struggling somewhere, she does actually come in and, because she knows how to speak to them more than I do, cos I’m still, you know, still a bit nervous to talk to them, to put my view across. But she does that really well. She does that really well, so whenever I am, I am struggling, she’ll just come in, cos she generally just, she oversees what I do. Ja.</td>
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| I | Okay great so, you, you, you, These learnings that you have and the way that you learn to interpret what they say. You’ve spoken about how you put that in through a brief and |
obviously a lot of that is also part of your relationship with [Line Manager], are there any other ways, do you think, that that stuff that you learn about the company gets put into the agency?

R Um, I think, you know, sometimes we do proactive jobs for them. Like if we, let’s say, we’re doing the retail campaign now, and because in the agency we have to go through a review process, I have to be able to literally put my foot down at sometimes and be like “Client won’t like this!” even thought they’re pushing, they’re like “No I think we should really, put this through” you know, present it to client. If I see that client won’t like it and it, it’s just irrelevant to their business, then I can’t, I can’t let them go through with that. I’m still learning as well, to, to put my foot down, but, um, it helps me to go in there with [Line Manager], because she’s been on the business for so long, so she, she just knows. When she sees something she’s just like “No”, because she knows. She’s like “No!”, “[Client] doesn’t do this!” you know, this, this, that, and she explains it to them, she literally backs what she says, cos she’s been on the business for so long.

I Okay so that’s really interesting. There’s that kind of information that comes out in the meetings and the conversations as well...

R Yeah in the conversations. Good conversations.

I Last question, were you born before or after 1980?

R After 1980.

I Okay great, thanks, that’s all I need for now.

R Cool!
1.2. Line manager cohort

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I Reads consent form (no interruption)
R Yes
I Thanks. Okay, so were you born before or after 1908?
R Before

I Before, great. Okay When you think about particularly the younger employees that below you. They gain a certain amount of knowledge that comes from the business and the experiences that they have with the business they work with. And this is knowledge that they can hold or they can transfer it into the organisation. When you think about it – during their everyday work practices, how is that knowledge transferred back into the agency?

R Well, if I have to use [Gen Y] as an example, I think it’s transferred a lot, because she’s a, she comes from such a young generation. She has more of a, they, it’s more of a, what’s the word? Um... They’re in tune with Twitter and Facebook and the internet and great at researching stuff on the internet and stuff like that. And it comes easy to them because they’re brought up with it, so that kind of knowledge just like we used to go to libraries and open up textbooks, you know, so, um, I think from working with her, I’ve noticed that she knows stuff. She knows where to buy stuff online, she doesn’t seem to shop anymore. She first researches on what she wants to buy ad it’s just a different mindset, more than anything else. So I think that’s a big part of it, um, and just media wise, you know, they kind of seem to understand what’s happening, what’s in, what’s cool and being in advertising and in a an agency, it helps to have that young vibe and that interest and she’s brought a lot of that. Especially to [Agency] and she has a say and a voice. You know. Um... what else has she brought. I think her energy and coming from a cell phone network, she’s also got quite a lot of retail background which is also helping bring in quite a bit of how they do things differently. Ja.

I Brilliant. Cool. Okay thanks. That’s all I need for now!
R ‘Thanks!'
Okay, were you born before or after 1980?

Before

Okay, so the employees that work within the agency, particularly the younger guys, um, they gain a certain amount of knowledge as a result of their interaction with their clients, their client’s business and knowledge about the business of advertising. They can either hold that knowledge unto themselves or there are various ways that they can feed that knowledge into the agency. If you think about the sort of daily work practices that happen in the agency, how do you think information is transferred into the agency?

Well, client sends us a brief, we prepare the brief for creatives, so it’s transferred in the form of a brief, but also, in the form of actual communication, when you are debriefing creatives or briefing creatives on a new job. I wouldn’t say that all information is transferred, sometimes things do, sometimes things are left out, or things don’t, you know, but ja, in most cases through the brief and then through oral transfer.

Okay, okay, can you elaborate a little on the oral transfer, what are the forums in which that takes place?

We have a, when a new brief comes in to the system, we have a system whereby the brief is, um, it goes upstairs to the creative teams, to the CD’s they look at the brief, then we have a little forum where we actually brief the creative team that’s working on the job. What we should do on every brief is provide background and most likely in that background is where we transfer all the information, but there are always things that aren’t written down that you’ll remember, or you’ll know from the client that you try and transfer in that briefing session. And then if there’s a question from creative, if it’s something we don’t know, or we find it out in the same way we find out from client, and then it’s a conversation, or it’s something that’s put on a brief for creatives.

Great, so it’s quite a formalised process?

Quite, yes, although I must say at [Agency] we are able to just communicate with creatives if we need to although, it’s always probably better to write things down, because you know, creatives can forget. They don’t just work on one piece of business or two like we do in account management.

So there is that, there is a conversation as well...
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<th>R</th>
<th>Absolutely.</th>
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<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Great, thanks [Interviewee]. That’s all I need!</td>
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<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Okay cool! Thanks!</td>
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1.3. Senior management cohort

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I

Laughs
Okay, so...
Consent form (no interruption)

R

Yes (consent)

I

Firstly in terms of your age. Were you born before or after 1980

R

I was born after 1980

I

After 1980. Fantastic. You as an employee hold a certain amount of knowledge.

R

Right

This knowledge that you hold can be transferred into your organisation, or it can stay in you. When you think about it – what happens in your work practices? How and when do you transfer knowledge into this agency?

I

Well I think it's at a point when I'm in a situation where I need to draw on that knowledge, so if I get asked for instance something about financial services which is a field of expertise that I have because I've worked on a banking, um, client then I'll draw on that knowledge. But it'll be mostly around research that I've done or experiences that I've had in that environment. I don't think I'd ever draw on anything that would be confidential or cause any issues in terms of competition. But um, as and when I need to I draw on that knowledge. and I think what's different for me is that, because I'm in strategy there are so many things that influence communication. So in some instances I'll be working on a motor brand but there'll be some financial services knowledge that I have that actually influences the way the communication goes so things are quite interconnected. So ja, I tend to, when I need to I draw on it and I make sure that I've got it, because without it I largely forget what I've got in terms of research and thinking.

R

And when you draw on that knowledge, when you pass that knowledge through, how are you passing that through into the organisation is it going into the hands of other people, is it going into structures how would you describe its...

I

Well, I think it goes through in numerous ways. I mean it can go into a presentation to another client, so it might manifest itself as a statistic or as an experience. It might be a conversation that I have with someone saying “Oh I remember this, when I was working on this” so it might just
happen via a conversation, but for the most part I think it would be, be put into a formally written document that goes to the next client or whoever I’m presenting it to. So that’s it.

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<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>That’s it!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Wow! Easy Peasy!</td>
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Consent (no interruption)

I

Thanks. Okay, So , the first question that I’m going to put out there is just sort of a broad one which we can talk around in any way you find an answer to. What interests me is that you get so many young people that come into an account handling department within an agency, and they don’t know much about advertising and they don’t necessarily know much about the client that they’re working on. And when I say “know much about the client” it’s about knowing how that client does business and also knowing about the industry that that client’s in. Because some industries can be quite complex, in fact most are. They all have their own vocabulary and, what’s so interesting is that when these people move on, they seldom seem to specialise in a particular industry. You’ll have someone who worked in insurance and then they end up on a motor brand or a fashion brand or whatever the case is. Um, what I’d like to know is, just in terms of the everyday work practices that the account handlers get up to. In your mind, how do their learnings and the things that they know about their clients get imprinted upon the agency?

R

Their learnings imprinted upon the agency? (Ja). Which ever agency they go to?

I

Well, particularly yours...

R

[Pause]. Hmmmm. See I don’t think that that’s where it starts. I think that their learnings are the imprint of the agency when they get there. So they get there and they have either got experience or they haven’t, or it’s varying degrees of experience (okay). And then they first immerse themselves in to some of what they may or may not know, okay, at those varying degrees and then they work off the, let me call it a blueprint, that the agency gives them. cos, I think most agencies have a way of working and have a way of approaching projects that gets given to employees and only if they are exceptional, do they make changes that are then something that they leave behind and something that they imprint on the agency’s blueprint. So I think I’m talking about systems and processes. And then on individuals contributions, you get some people, like you said, they have varying degrees of experience, and they have varying degrees of experience not only in their function, but in the industry or the category that their client is operating in. So they come in and some contribute way more than others,
those are the ones that leave an imprint. Some don’t contribute, some take the job and do it really well, but they do it using only what they are given. (hmmm). Which ever tools they are given to do the job with.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>I</th>
<th>And, I mean, You mentioned that some of those, um, imprints come in the forms of processes and systems: that the guys see efficiencies or see small tweaks that need to be made? Can you think of other ways that they leave an imprint?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Ja. I think knowledge of the, the advertising and communications. So it they’ve done, what courses they’ve done and what experiences they’ve had. And I think our industry is quite sadly lacking in terms of account management people having enough exposure to marketing and to strategy. So I think a lot of them come into account management and thinking that it’s a, unfortunately, that it’s a glamorous job. And unfortunately for them it isn’t and they think that it’s just about going to and from. Liaising between client and agency. That’s just the vehicle and they don’t use it properly. So, I think that, knowledge and skills are a huge plus if they have them, you know, but they don’t all have them, and I must add, like experience. People who are interested in life and business and to have a great general interest bring a lot to any function that are in the agency. I’m speaking more about account management – is that right?</td>
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<td>I</td>
<td>Ja, that’s right ja. That’s very much the focus. Ja.</td>
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<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Because, and I think it’s an important point, because, very often account management lack the general knowledge and the strategic information, while other people, like in creative, have it. cos they realise that their end product is the end product of something that has a huge back end: Knowing your consumer, understanding the market you operating in, understanding your competitors. All of that stuff that you know, I mean I’m not, I don’t wanna give you a lesson on strategy, but I think Account management could go a long way in getting that kind of, up-skilling themselves in that area.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>And when you look at a a prospective new account manager or a new account executive, if you’re hiring someone quite young, what are the kind of attributes that you look for?</td>
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<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>I think it depends entirely on the level that you are... or the level of the position that you are hiring them for...</td>
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<td>I</td>
<td>Let’s talk junior.</td>
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<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Okay. So junior... I look for basic intelligence, like good, a good brain, someone that wants to learn and someone that wants to grow. Okay. Someone that wants to be in business, not just in advertising, because I think more and more, we are, we’re not in an old fashioned framework of being a glamorous ad agency: just get a pretty girl to do the running.</td>
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you know. I think it’s someone who’s interested in business and who’s interested in Marketing, specifically. Um, I look for that and I look for the kind of qualities in terms of their character that will fit into our culture. And our culture, I think, is becoming more and more of a very defined thing now. It wasn’t. We’re young. So we’re starting to define our culture. So our culture is, very glass half full, very positive, very committed to South Africa, and committed to doing more than what is expected of you. So it’s not good enough just to be a good South African agency. You must be a bloody good, brilliant, world-class agency. (hmmm). And the ones that shine at [Agency] are the ones that have that in their characters. And there are plenty that don’t and they eventually give up and move on, you know. So I think, good strong character. Ja. (brilliant). In a junior. And someone who’s open to more! (Ja, Ja) but starting point is always intelligence and interest in the field that they operate in. (Those being very key). And I hate it when they use words like “I’m a passionate person”. I don’t understand how you can do anything if you’re not completely committed to it. If you don’t give yourself hundred and ten percent, then you shouldn’t be doing it. (exactly, Ja). So I think if you say you’re passionate you’re not, but you can see the people who are really passionate. The same with being cool! (Ja, laughs). It’s a boring response. A lot of people say, “I’m Passionate” (Ja, Ja) and I’m going “Oh dear!” (Ja, Ja, I know exactly what you mean). Driven! To me is more important. Ambitious! Is more important, you know. And some values, they must have some really hardcore values, that the alternative of that value is just unacceptable to them. Nothing mediocre. If somebody says “I want to be good”, it’s not god enough. If somebody says “I want to be brilliant!” is what I want. Because then we all land up being mediocre anyway (laughs).

I

Too true. Okay, Um, that’s really the first part. So I’ll come back to you with a few discussion points. Thanks so much.

R

Cool! Thank you!
2. Round 2: Semi-structured interviews

2.1. Generation Y cohort

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I
Hi, okay, as before, I just need to read through the policy document and get you to say yes for me for the University ethics.

R
Okay

I
(Reads consent form)

R
Yes

I
Okay, Um, the first thing that is of interest to me is – Do you think that there is a culture of knowledge sharing here at [Agency]?

R
No there isn’t. There isn’t even a culture of training.

I
Oh really?

R
Absolutely not.

I
And, um, is you, I mean, do you feel that you can ask people for help about things?

R
Absolutely. You can ask for help, um, but I can only ask about what I know. You see the difference is that with training, when someone approaches you with something new, it’s an opportunity to expose you to something new. I’m only asking about the things that I already know which are probably limited, because I’ve known the same information now for the past three years. There hasn’t been anything new imparted onto me, where I could say there is knowledge being shared. No. Umm, we are constantly encouraged and motivated to be our best, but to answer your question, no there isn’t consistent, constant knowledge sharing, um, there isn’t that.

I
Brilliant. Okay, in your mind, is this agency changing?

R
Hmmm. I’ve been here for long, so I should be able to give you…. I think that we’re getting better with the quality of the work are producing. Ahhhh… but by change what do you mean?

I
Ahhhh Culturally, is the vibe changing?

R
The vibe…. Is changing for the better, it becomes, it always becomes a better place to work at, ummm, the people, we’re encouraged to be nicer to each other, we just one big family and that doesn’t. That is not compromised, people have left and new people have come on. I think the core team that have remained have been, have been able, you know to impart, to share the initial vibe that I found when I came here. We’ve had a lot of staff come in and leave, but the core
people, and I think the people that are responsible for maintaining that are the people at the helm, who are the executive creative director and the MD. So ja. If one of them leaves then the dynamics do change. I meant to go to leave, then it becomes a different place. So... they are at the centre of the culture of the agency.

I: Brilliant. Um... if you think about your work on a daily basis, the work that you do. Who makes a lot of those final decisions? So, if I can give you an example, if you were to prepare a layout for your client, when you see that layout, who who, gives it the final checkbox to say that it can go to client? Is it you, or?

R: The executive creative director. Ja, we don't have a lot of influence as client service to the extent that over time, I can't help but feel like I'm just, you know, there to facilitate something. I'm sort of the in-betweener. I used to feel like the gate-keeper, but to be the gate-keeper you've got some kind of influence. You just, you just make it pass through to this other group of people, who, who, who you are the responsible for making sure that they deliver the creative on time and that the client is smiling and that the client is kept abreast in terms of all developments. But in terms of us actually influencing what is the final product. No. I don't sign off on anything. And even if I do, my signature has some waiting in terms of the things we spoke about in the beginning where you asked me if there's knowledge, if there's information that I hold, and I said to you yes, and I know that other people don't know it, because of the things I'll sign off on which are the things which could get the client into trouble legally, but they're not creative. It's like, on insurance, whether you mentioned that the SMS number that you mentioned there, that the client will be charged R1.50 for responding to. Whether you've got the financial services board line on there, you always have to have the line on there. That your disclaimers are legible, those little thing are the things that I become obsessed with, which are, which are, I become obsessed with them, because those are the only things that I’m really adding to the layout. The layout, um, is someone else’s work, ja, it's creative.

I: Cool, Um, If you think about the agency. Are there any kind of traditions or things that you guys do on a regular basis that you think help conversations and the sharing of knowledge within the agency?

R: Hmmmm. I wish we had more. That’s my only criticism about this agency. The training bit and the fact that we don’t have a lot of ah, ah, opportunities to be social and to bond and to get to know each other over and above the fact that you’ve got to deliver this to me in the next hour. We’ve got an agency breakfast meeting that we have every Monday,
that’s quite nice, because we get to talk about what we did the week before and what’s coming in the next week, but again, there is no information being imparted. We’re informed that we’ve just shot four commercials, they’re flighting tomorrow, we’re sharing them with you. But. It’s not really imparting of, of, of information that I think would remain in the institution, or would add to a database or a memory at [Agency].

I: Very cool. Um. When you deal with outside parties and I mean this in a very broad sense, so your client, as an outside party, but also even a supplier, a media house, whatever the case. Any outside party. What are the kind of rules of engagement in terms of what you can tell them and what you can’t tell them?

R: Hmmmmm. About my clients, or particularly about [Agency]?

I: Either or...

R: Ahhh there aren’t, there aren’t any strict, off the top of my head, nothing comes to me, that I know for sure that for instance I can’t mention, but obviously I, I need to speak on behalf, firstly of the agency because I’m an ambassador of [Agency], I represent [Client], I work for [Agency]. And then secondly I need to put my clients in the best possible light. Ummm, A, I wouldn’t say there are specific rules of engagement.

I: But just a need to represent...

R: Absolutely. The best, represent the interests of your agency and obviously represent the interest of your client and try to get as best a deal out of whoever you’re interacting with as you can. For your agency and for your client.

I: Brilliant. Okay, um, do you think that people help each other here?

R: Yes, absolutely. It’s like a family. It’s absolutely like a family, it’s more like a family than like an institution in terms of how you would define an institution in your research and in the thesis that you’re writing. It’s more of a family.

I: Um, Tricky question. (Ja). Do you everybody heres’ name?

R: Yes! Absolutely! (laughs)

I: Um, okay. I’m going to use a term here which I’m kind of interested to know what your response to is. Would you say that there’s any information politics going on here?

R: Hmmmm. Ja. No... I wouldn’t say that. The place is, is, is so small and they’re trying so hard for all of us to work so well that it wouldn’t be to their interest. I mean, I’m sure that there are things that the MD knows and the executive creative director knows, but pretty much no, I wouldn’t say that there’s information politics. I would say there isn’t a sharing of knowledge and a building up of memory, because it’s not part of the culture of the agency. It’s not done. It’s
like there isn’t time allocated in the day, where, even once a week there’s an hours where we kind of talk. Some type of information transfer. It’s just not there. But otherwise I wouldn’t say that there’s politics.

I

Great. That’s all I need! Thank you!

R

Oh! It’s a pleasure!
I  Consent form read aloud (no interruption)
R  Yes
I  The first point I want to discuss is: would you say that there is a culture for sharing knowledge here, and can you give any examples of that kind of thing?
R  In the organisation?
I  Mmmmmm. In the agency.
R  Is there a culture, for sharing? (Ja). No. I don't think. A culture for me is something that's quite defined, something that's almost like a ritual. I don't think we have that here. I think we just have the normal traditional way like in email or check this out, I saw this in YouTube, but there's no like, for me, maybe it's different with creative, because they all sit upstairs, maybe there's a different way of sharing up there. Maybe they put stuff on walls, but, in terms of overall as an organisation I don't think there's enough of a defined culture as such. It's mostly email or even in reviews. But that's, but that's about it, Ja.
I  Um, on quite a different note, do you think the agency is changing? Do you think it's going through any kind of change?
R  Um... (pause) Ja. Ja. I think we growing, I think that's the first thing that comes to my mind. We're growing in terms of numbers, um, and I just think, I don't think we're growing in other areas where we should be growing, um, I think our creative, our creative is quite, we at a good place, but we actually need to take it a step further. Um, Ja but other than that, I think in the long-term, there's definitely a long-term goal to be, you know, the best black agency there is, I think we, we definitely heading in that direction. I just think we need to get past this year because it's been quite a busy year and it's, you know, there's been just a lot of work in the system so I think in the years to come, we'll get there eventually. There's a lot of things that we want to do, projects that we want to do, but obviously you can only do that once you employ more people and you start streamlining the work more. Ja
I  And do you think these changes have meant that people communicate more? Communicate less?
R  We communicate more, because I think we rely on each other so much more, because traditionally, I've been to other agencies where the type of work I do, two other people can do in a normal agency. So here we all pull in together more, work as a team more, help each other. Help each other get
there. That’s the culture of [Agency] we all do everything. There’s no like, oh you do this, we all just work as a team, we all just get in there. When something comes up and there’s nobody here we all just get in there. Like I’ll help [Production Manager] in production or I’ll phone, like helping [Art Buyer] with art buying. You know we all just get in there, it’s quite, there’s no like, defined like scope of work so to speak. I think that’s the advantages of being in a small agency, you kinda, you get to know a bit of everything, and every area of what you do on a daily basis. Whereas in a normal big agency you kind of work in silos, like “Oh that’s productions issue” or “Oh that’s Art Buying”, but here you kind of, it kind of overlaps.

I And do you think that’s everyone or do you think it’s more the younger guys?

R (Pause) Ja, it’s everyone.

I Um, let me see what else I need to ask you. Okay, do you feel that when guys in the department really go above and beyond, when they research something onto themselves or they write a proactive brief, is that well received? Do you think there are incentives and things?

R Absolutely! I think it’s well received. When you say incentives (pause) there’s no like real incentive, except when the idea gets bought, it gets done, and you win and award, you know what I mean! That’s, that’s, that’s the reward of it! You know!.

I And it’s encouraged?

R Ja, absolutely! Ja and our clients, when you think of [Client] um, we encourage proactive creative, you know, you’re always on the pulse. You always want to be the first to say something topical. So, I mean, [Agency] encourages that, even [Client] encourages tactical advertising, so it doesn’t necessarily have to come from the client. When we see something, like with the carbon emissions, when the tax law started coming in, into effect, I mean there was an opportunity for us to do something tactical and we did! We did an emailer, cos you know [Client]’s are quite fuel efficient, so definitely encouraged.

I Where did that idea come from? Was it briefed through by client service, or was it from the studio?

R Actually, you know what, it came from client, just as an emailer, but um, I’m just trying to think of an example where... You know what, the [Campaign] campaign, I don’t know if you were exposed to that? (hmmmm) It was around the World Cup, we did for [Client]. That wasn’t a brief from the client, that was completely the agency’s ideas. We were proactive on that and we though “How do we get... How do we stand above the clutter around the World Cup?” and we thought of just putting [Campaign] on [Campaign] and that
idea just grew and grew and grew and grew and grew. So that wasn't actually necessarily, it wasn't actually a client brief. It was just us presenting an idea that we thought, you know it was a big idea and could develop into something bigger. (and it did) And it did! And we won awards for it, so there you go!

I

Ja that was brilliant! Okay, um, if you think about the work that you do, say for instance you've got a layout that you want to present to client, who's the person who has the last say on what goes to client? Is it you? Is it somebody else?

R

It's normally, well, it's normally me, because the layout only comes to my desk once it's been thoroughly checked in studio. So the CD will check it, the copywriter will check it, DTP will check it, the Art Director will check it and then I do the final checking before it gets sent to client, Ja.

I

So you have that final say

R

I have that final signature, Ja.

I

Okay, um, do you feel that at [Agency] there are any kinds of traditions or things that you guys do as an agency that really help you get to know people and have conversations and learn stuff from other people?

R

Um... look these Monday morning breakfasts that we have, I think it's a lovely way of us just softening the blow of a Monday morning and that's where a lot of conversations happen. Where we're all a little bit relaxed and share a little bit of tea or a muffin or whatever, that's the one thing I think is one forum, I think we actually do share and do a little bit of interaction with one another. We also try and use that forum to share the work that everybody else is doing, because sometimes I don't even know what the latest [Client] ad looks like. I mean this morning was a good example, we did, um, new commercials for [Client] and it was nice to see, you know, what, what, everybody else's working on. But it's, it's Monday morning breakfast and... what else do we do? Sometime we'll have like what we did for Spring Day this year. We all just downed our tools and we went to the Melrose, Melrose Arch Piazza and we had, we went to the Greek restaurant there and we just had drinks and stuff, so we small enough to do things like that. Um, so we do like little things just spontaneously, so the other example I can give you is like, that, I don't know if you remember it was that Million Man March at the Union Building and we went! As an agency, we, we, came here, met in the morning and then all got on a taxi and we went to the Union Buildings and we just marched. So it was cool, so we do little things like that, and we small enough to do it, like I say.

I

That's very cool. Um, okay, when, when you deal with parties outside of the agency and I mean this very broadly, so your
clients as well as a media house or a supplier or whoever it is, would you say that there are any specific rules of engagement? Things that you can say and things that you can’t say?

R

Um... Hmmm. That’s a tough one. I would say you know there’s, Ja, if you deal with the client, um, I’m giving a silly example, and you don’t want to give how much it costs just yet, you know, like with a client, let me just break it down. If it’s with a client, you need to make sure that everything that you tell the client is 100% correct, that you’ve researched it properly that you’ve spoken to the relevant people, um, and it’s dealt with professionally. I think that’s quite important. Everything, say it’s a project that I’m doing now for [Client] for December. We couldn’t meet with the client until we knew what we were doing, you know, and we needed to meet with our other suppliers before we met with the client, and the client must never interact directly with the supplier for instance. We are the people that they channel everything through. So the supplier will go through us, the client will go through us, so that’s, I probably would think that’s the number one rule of engagements, you know, that we the main contacts. And. Ja. So everything only gets uh, fed through to the client once all our information has been researched. And in terms of the suppliers, um, obviously everything is very confidential, because you don’t want anybody to latch onto an idea or anybody else to be exposed to an idea in case somebody tries to duplicate it and then you’ve got no idea so the confidentiality, we deal with loads of confidential information on a daily basis, you now. Even the, you know, any, any campaign actually, you don’t want anybody to be revealed, to see that campaign until it starts flighting. So I think the confidentiality issue is quite a big one. Um... Ja and suppliers, ja, no direct contact with the client, strictly comes through the agency, ja ja.

I

That’s cool. Um, would you say that people within the department help each other a lot?

R

Within our department? Um... Yes, you know we, we’re an awesome team of people. Um, I mean, I experienced that first hand, because I, I experienced a loss a month ago and, [Gen Y], she just, she just took over completely. She just ran with everything, I mean I was out of the agency for a week and when I cam back everything was just sorted. (amazing) So whenever someone is not there or there is something, or someone is overloaded, we all, we help each other. Ja so there’s definitely team effort from our department.

I

And do people ask each other a lot of questions?

R

Um... Ja! I mean like sometimes I’ll get an email, from a client, and I’m like, guys what is this mean, or can you believe they’re asking me this. You know we all have that
type of conversation. I think that’s the advantages of having an open plan office. Because you can just look up and say “Do you guys know what this means?” or “Where is this place?” or “Do you think I’m doing the right thing by saying this?”, I mean I ask a lot of questions when it comes to production, like [Production Manager] I, I, I, ask her “Am I saying the right thing?”, “Am I over-promising?”, “Is there something I’m missing”, um, you know so we, ja, there’s a lot of conversation and dialogue going on.

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<th>I</th>
<th>That’s very cool. Okay, bit of a loaded question, but do you know everybody in the agency’s name?</th>
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<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Mmmm, mmmm, definitely, definitely.</td>
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<td>I</td>
<td>Uhmmm, okay, ahhh, then the last one, I’m going to use a term here, which is also quite a loaded terms, but I just, I’m interested to hear what your response is. Do you think that within the agency, there’s any information politics?</td>
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<td>R</td>
<td>Define information politics...</td>
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<td>I</td>
<td>Is there ever a circumstance where either you, um, yourself feel “I’m going to hold this little bit of information back” or you feel like somebody else is keeping something back, um, just until the right time or until they feel it could advantage them.</td>
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<td>R</td>
<td>Oh definitely, definitely, I mean from, I, I, I haven’t had a lot when it comes to deadlines, so, If I get a material deadline of the 17th, I’ll put it in as the 14th so that I have a little bit of string to work with, because, you know, there’s always things that will happen. Something else will come in, that’s urgent and then they’ll say “Please can we get an extension, please can we get an extension!” and then I know that I’m comfortable because I know that I’ve given myself at least two days grace or three days grace. That’s the, the, the area where I hold a little bit of information back, when it comes to deadline, because deadlines in an agency, it’s a very funny thing, you know. So...</td>
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<td>I</td>
<td>Ja, ja ja. [Interviewee] that’s it! Thanks so much!</td>
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<td>R</td>
<td>You sure?</td>
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<td>I</td>
<td>Ja that’s great, thank you!</td>
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I  Consent form (no interruption)
R  Yes

I  Okay, cool. Um, so I have a few other quick discussion points that I need to chat around. At this agency, do you think there’s a culture of sharing knowledge?

R  I think that there’s meant to be. I think that’s the goal, the ideal. I just think that due to the nature of the size of the agency and the magnitude of work that needs to be done and the demands that the clients put on the, aaah, on the agency, we don’t have the opportunity to share as much as we’d like to. It’d be great if we could share everything and do a post-mortem of every campaign that we’ve ever done and what worked and what didn’t work and what the processes and systems worked, but sadly we don’t have the luxury of time. And it’s all because, it boils down to the fact that agencies and clients are not partners anymore. Agencies are seen as suppliers and as a result we get treated as suppliers and that is why, we, we’ve allowed the relationships to deteriorate to the point where we have to do as they say and we’re almost powerless. So it’s not a balanced, healthy relationship. It’s not always mutually beneficial, but it’s a business relationship.

I  Absolutely. Okay, on quite a different point, do you think that, that the, that [Agency] is changing? Do you think there’s some sort of, some evolution that’s happening?

R  I think there definitely is. I think that, uh, I think that’s mostly due to the fact that people (laughs) are finally starting to realise that the resource is way to small for the magnitude of work that’s being done. And I think it’s phenomenal that we’re doing so much work, but the big problem with this change and what might be inhibiting it and stopping us from evolving as much as we’d like is that we don’t have the security of retainer clients. And if [Client] was a retainer client then we could grow much more easily. And it’s also evident that we’re expanding and evolving in a sense that they want to start up and entire design team and a design unit and a design department and differentiate themselves quite substantially from the art directors. Whether I think it’ll be successful, I don’t know, because they don’t shout out enough about it. They don’t talk enough about it and therefore we don’t get as much exposure or as much word of mouth and they don’t get as many jobs as they should.

I  And these changes, do you think that that would help
communication throughout the agency or do you think it will hinder it?

R  I think it would help. But I don't know if it would necessarily... I think it would help communication throughout the agency and the reason I say this is because coming from a bigger agency background they've got much better systems and processes and as a result, things go a bit more smoothly, because you've got more resources as well. And you've got more people all having to commit to the same processes, whereas now, due to the lack of resources, they look for shortcuts to do everything and get things out in time. So that's the problem.

I  Ja no, absolutely. Okay, um. Do you feel that if you take time to really go above and beyond the call of duty. If you kind of apply an insight or an idea that you have through the process of your work, that that would be recognised and rewarded, or is there no real incentive to do that?

R  (pause) I think it would be, but I think it would be greeted with mixed emotions (laughs). I think it would be recognised and rewarded from a management perspective, I think they would like that and I think that every employer wants that sort of employee. I fear though that it may be interpreted as others as stepping on toes, So for instance if an account manager came up with an amazing idea for a campaign it would be, frowned upon more so than if a creative had come up with it because it's not your role, your job description. It's not what you, not your special set of skills.

I  Okay.

R  And I think they might feel threatened.

I  Okay, interesting.

R  That's just my interpretation, maybe I'm being to cynical.

I  No, no, no. It's very valid. Um, okay if you think about [Agency] are there any traditions or things that you guys do that you feel create great opportunities for people to learn from each other and chat and...

R  Ah... That's a very good question. I don't think there's nearly enough of that. I don't think there's nearly enough... um... I want to use the word "cross-pollination" (laughs).

I  Go for it!

R  Cuz I think what would really benefit the entire agency is if there was one day where everyone switched roles. Where everyone encountered each other's role and understood the frustrations and the pressures that each person feels in their designated areas. I think that would force you to find out about, I don't... to be honest, we've had parties and we've gone to the Loeries together, but I don't think that I know everyone all that well. So I think that getting to understand what, getting to grips with their frustrations and encountering it first hand would make a huge difference.
And I’m not talking about cheesy team-building “let’s all walk on fire”, no, but I’m saying taking a creative who gets upset with the ridiculous deadlines and putting them dealing, interfacing with the client who’s wanting XV and Z by then and making sure that they, hold their tongue and are very polite, or stuffing a suit into a creative role. And forcing them to come up with a campaign in this amount of time and staying late. I think a role reversal would be very beneficial. I think it would also build a hell of a lot of tolerance and respect.

I

That would be interesting! Very interesting! Okay, um, when you think about your daily work, who kinda makes the final decisions. So let me give you a scenario, um, you’ve briefed a campaign and you’ve got a couple of layouts on your desk and they’re about to be presented. Who, who’s really that person who’s had to have the final say, “yes theses can go to client now”. Is it you? Is it somebody else?

R

Ah… (pause) Ah, I think the biggest decision maker is always the creative director, because they determine and then they finesse the layouts until they arrive at my desk. Granted I do have the final say, in terms of, if for instance I glance over a final layout and I see something that “Oooh that doesn’t resonate with the client, I know” or “There’s a spelling error there”, then I do have a bit of persuasion, but essentially if the creative director is comfortable and happy with the work going out of the agency then that’s where the key decision is generally made. Or if there’s obviously, client approving it which would be the final most important step (laughter) in the whole process.

I

For sure, okay um… Do you think that people help each other out at [Agency]?

R

I… I think they do sometimes, I think some definitely more than others. I think it just, it really just depends on the work ethics of the individual that you’re dealing with and also in addition to that, their kind of work pride. Certain creatives really like to craft their layouts to the nth degree and really making sure that everything is absolutely perfect, where the others are more relaxed about it and less worried, because they feel that it will get watered down anyway. Um… I think on the whole, the people do, want an easier work life so they’ll help to get everything out on time and just…

I

And within your department, do you think everyone is helpful?

R

Ahhhh… some more than others… (laughs), but no, not completely. No. I think each man is for himself more than anything else!

I

Oh really, okay. And do you find that, um, within your department do the girls ask each other a lot of questions on a daily basis, or is everyone just kind of head down in their
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<td>R</td>
<td>I think it depends on the, ah, it depends on how much work they have. I think if you've got less work, then you can afford to be quite flamboyant and ask a lot of questions and have a lot of chats about irrelevant things and just be more jovial, which is great, ahhh, but if you've got a lot of work to do, then you don't really have time for that kind of distraction. Ahhh... in addition to which, I think the relationships are quite strained and I think that's due to previous, political things... ja...</td>
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<td>I</td>
<td>Okay, um, do you know everyone at [Agency]'s name?</td>
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<td>R</td>
<td>Yes, save the one, the two interns. I don't know the two interns names and I have no excuse (laughs).</td>
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<td>I</td>
<td>Most people have said the same thing... (laughs). Okay, um, do you ever feel a need or a will, or that it would be to your advantage to maybe hold some information back at any given time?</td>
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<td>R</td>
<td>Yes. For instance, if a deadline isn't necessarily the deadline that I've put on the brief, just to ensure that we make the one that's put on the brief, so yes I do do that at times.</td>
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<td>I</td>
<td>Um, and as further to that, would you even go so far as to say that there's some kind of information politics that goes on within the agency?</td>
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<td>R</td>
<td>I think so, but I wouldn't say. Yes, I think that management definitely hides a lot from, from the general, staff. I think that what happens in management meetings is stuff that we're not necessarily privy to. Should they always be open about it though? I don't know. Do they fear that it will instil panic if they are? So definitely, yes, of course.</td>
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<td>I</td>
<td>Okay, cool, that's all I need!</td>
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<td>R</td>
<td>Is that it?</td>
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<td>I</td>
<td>Ja, thank you!</td>
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<td>R</td>
<td>Easy huh! (laughs)</td>
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<td>R</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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| I | Okay, there a couple of other just sort of more specific questions, points that I want to chat about, um, the first thing is, in your opinion, would you say that there is a culture for sharing knowledge at [Agency]?
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<td>R</td>
<td>There is, ahhh, I think, most of the time, work is just, everyone is too busy, if you want to learn something, they very open, they share knowledge, it's fine. [Managing Director] always encourages you to, you know, fine, go sit with people, you know, if they not busy, just be, just talk to them, ten minutes, you know. Share, you know. Let them share stuff with you, with what they do, you know. So there is, there really is, like, for me, coming straight out of varsity to [Agency], I don't, I don't fear, you know, I’m not scared to ask them, you know, if I need help, it's fine. [Managing Director]'s always, like “ask for help”. “Ask for the opinion, it's fine”. I'm not scared of that at all.</td>
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<th>I</th>
<th>That's really great, okay, um, how long have you been here? Just under a year hey? (ja) and would you say that, um, the agency is in a state of change? Could you judge that?</th>
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<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Ja. Ja. It's growing. It's growing. A lot. I think that's the one point and I think they didn't expect that, to grow, like as much as it's growing now, especially with the load of work, but we're growing, and you can see upstairs, you know. There's the two interns in the clubhouse, like, it's just growing, um. I'm not sure how it's going to affect everyone in the future, I just hope, I hope it doesn't get to a point where everyone, just everyone’s pulled away from each other, because right now, you talk, you sit and talk to each other and you sit there and you talk. We're tight like that, you know. Good working environment.</td>
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<th>Do you think that this change and this growth might prevent that. Might...</th>
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<td>R</td>
<td>If we grow, big, big. Because you know, in other advertising, um, agencies, they've literally got departments. Right now we're, we've got departments, but it's not, it's not bounded you know. It's not, we've got access to everyone. In other agencies you don't really have that, you know, you'll find that the design department, they just know each other and there’s not really a lot of interaction going through the departments themselves.</td>
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| I | Okay, that's great, that's very cool. Okay, if you, um, say through the process of another job that you're doing, you |
stumble upon a really great insight, or a really great opportunity. Or maybe it’s something that you read about in the newspaper that applies to [Client] and, um, and you go in, and you go above-and-beyond the call of duty, and without a client brief, you go and put in a brief to do something great, or you propose and idea to [Managing Director] or to [Head of Strategy]. Do you think that that would be rewarded, and do you feel encouraged to do that?

R

I do. I think, um, that’s the one thing they do well at the agency. They acknowledge the work that you do, you know, um, I wouldn’t necessarily put in a brief at the same time, at that moment, but I’m confident enough to go to [Managing Director], to go to one of the creatives, the strategist [Head of Strategy], go to [Head of Strategy] and put my thoughts out there and she’ll tell me if she thinks it’s a good idea. And if it is, then she’ll back me you know and I’m confident that when I go and tell the creatives about it she’ll also put in her little bit of knowledge and back me with that. If she feels that it’s good enough.

I

That’s great. And from the agencies perspective, do you feel that would, that would benefit you to do that kind of thing?

R

It would, it would. It helps you grow. You know, it helps you grow, it helps you become your own person, you know. I think it would, I think it would. Um, it’s just, me, at this point, I’m learning slowly but surely I’m getting there. And I wanna, I wanna get to that stage, where you know, if I read something, I literally, you know, I feel confident enough. This, this may actually work for [Client]. And I’m confident, um, I’m confident that I’d be able to do it.

I

Cool. Okay, um, here’s a scenario. You, at a point, you’ve been briefed with a new campaign by [Client], and you’ve got the presentation book on your desk, and you’re about to go to client and present the work. Okay, um, that work that’s in front of you – who had the final say on it. You has the final say that said “Yes, okay, this can go to the client now”. Was it you? Or was it somebody else in the agency?

R

(pause) us. Because, um, at the end of the day, we guide the process, the creative process upstairs, so it will be [Line Manager] and I who have the final say, you know, this client, this client will like this. You know. I think that this, that’s even why we have the reviews that we have, so that we, we can have our say and guide that process so that at the final presentation we’ll be confident to say, you know, um. You didn’t meet our creative director [Head creative director]. (I know [Head Creative Director]). [Head Creative Director], is, is, it’s like [Client] is his baby. He always knows, like, he knows the brand so well, he knows what works. He’s great. Um, I think he teaches us more. I think sometimes we’ll go into a review and you’ll be like, “I’m thinking, this, this, this
and that” and you’ll be like “Maaaybeee... are you sure?”, but he’s able to turn that around and make us think the way he does so that we understand what he’s talking about and you know, true, talking stuff that makes sense. So it, it’s ja. Ja.

I

That’s great. So there’s a lot of stuff in [Head Creative Director] that exists there in terms of understanding [Client]’s business. Who, who else in the agency has that same kind of understanding, do you think?

R

Hmmmm. (pause) ummm. [Managing Director], [Managing Director], knows she knows the technicalities of the client. Ja. Like how they think. [Managing Director]’s also got that, um, knowledge and I can say [Copywriter]. She usually does most of the copywriting on [Client] so she understands, um, the feel they always want, you know, that feminine quirky feel. Ja.

I

Do you enjoy it?

R

I do! I do! You know, it’s horrible wake sometimes, like, I wake up in the morning and I’m so tired! It gets so hectic some times! I just I feel, I feel, very privileged, you know to come into and agency like [Agency] and learn as much as I’m learning. You know, I’ve learnt so much in the time that I’ve been here. And, it gets hectic, sometimes I wake up and I’m like “I don’t want to go to work!” but I realise that it’s stuff I have to go through, you know to grow as a person, to grow in my skills and everything. So it’s good. It’s good!

I

That’s very cool. Um, okay. Do you think that there are and traditions at [Agency] things that you guys do, either at an annual basis or semi-regularly, or even just spontaneously, um, that give you a cool opportunity to sit and chat to other people and learn stuff from other people? To have great conversations?

R

We love food! We’re an agency that loves food! So, and [Managing Director] loves food, so whenever she sees an opportunity for us to have lunch, we take it up. You go out and we just get there and you chill with everyone and you really get, get to know people, you know, what kind of people there really are, and we eat! (awesome!) I think that’s the nicest thing about it, we eat. Like we sit there and we drink and we eat. That’s what we do. E do that very well as an agency. We do that very well.

I

Awesome. The whole agency?

R

The whole agency! We do that very well.

I

That’s fun. Okay, um. When you’re dealing with parties outside the agency, and when I say parties outside of the agency I mean you clients, but also media houses, suppliers, anybody who’s not part of the agency. What would you say are the kind of general rules of engagement that you need to follow?

R

Um, I think the biggest thing, you have to stay true to your
client. We deal a lot with um, like, ah, cos we don't do the media for [Client], but we send stuff through to the media house or to the printers, because they've got their own printers and stuff. So, at the end of the day, as much as they may call me, they're frustrated, I'm frustrated, [Client]'s you know, taking their time on a approving stuff, I have to be like, it's fine, like, I'm waiting on client. I need to stay true to client and not bad-mouth them to their suppliers. I need to keep that professional etiquette. That you know, going forward, will never come back and bite me in the but. You know (laughs). You have to like, I thinkone of the biggest things I've learnt is to humble myself. I've always been humble, but I think I've just taken it a step further. I don't like to fight! I really don't like to fight, so like people call, like supplier will sometimes call because material is late, you know, and it's not even my fault, but I'll take that and I'll be like “No, it’s fine, I get what you, where you’re coming from. I understand your concerns, but I need you to understand that I’m trying hard on my side to get material to you and I’ll get it to you as soon as possible”. I don’t like to fight, because it really, it really just breaks that working relationship. I don’t like to fight at all.

I And... Do you feel you deal with a lot of sensitive information?
R (pause) no
I Not really?
R Not really... No.
I Not a big deal.
R No, no, no. Not really, not on [Client]. Like on [Client], there’s sometimes, they deal with a lot of sensitive information, but um, you would have to respect that. If it’s sensitive and you know it, you’d have to respect that, to take that going forward, until, until it's done. But not really on [Client].
I Would you say that people at [Agency] help each other out a lot?
R A lot! A lot! We help each other out wherever possible. Wherever possible. And the nice thing is that people just don’t mind. They don't feel obliged to, they just want to help wherever they can.
I That's awesome. Um... Do you know everyone at [Agency]'s name?
R Ja, except for the two new interns at the top – I don’t know their names.
I They’ve only been here this week though hey? (Ja) So, they’re pretty new. Okay, um, in your department. In client service, or account handling, whatever you call it. Do you feel like the girls ask a lot of questions amongst each other?
R They do, They do. Especially. I find that [Gen Y] and [Line Manager] will ask each other a lot of questions because they
both work on [Client]. The only difference is that [Line Manager] works on [Client] SA and [Gen Y] works on [Client] international. Though they’ll ask, because sometimes they have to do similar campaigns but in a totally different way. So they’ll ask each other a lot of questions, but generally we do ask. We find that [Managing Director] is our core source of knowledge, so if the girls don’t understand. If I don’t understand, I’m confident to go to [Managing Director] and be like “[Managing Director], what is this? What’s going on here?” So ja. We do.

I Um, okay. Do you ever fell a will or a need to sometimes hold a bit of information back?

R (pause) about work?

I Ja, about work, or something pertaining to a job...

R (pause) I don’t know. (laughs) Well there’s times when client will talk about something, but we won’t be able to go into the agency and talk about it at that time, cos, it’s still sensitive and they’re still trying to work out issues on their side. We cant now, you know, let the agency know that this is going on. We have to be sure that we know what’s going on so that we can be able to talk about it correctly in the agency. Sometimes it is necessary, but not all the time. Not all the time.

I Okay. And I’m gonna, I’m gonna use a really loaded term here and I want to see what your response is to it.

R (laughs)

I But would you ever say that there’s any information politics? Do you think people use the information that they have to get power or to dominate a situation?

R No. No. Not really. No, not at all. I’m not sure if that’s just me, because I like to see the good in everyone, but Naaaaaaah!

I Okay, that’s great. That’s very cool. Okay, that’s the bulk of my interview. Ja, we’re done!

R It wasn’t bad!

I It wasn’t so bad!
2.2. Line manager cohort

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<tr>
<th>Interview number</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>Gen Y</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>10:45</td>
<td>Line Man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>15 Nov</td>
<td>Senior Man</td>
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I

Reads consent for (no interruption).

R

Yes.

I

Okay. These are just a few discussion points. So the first thing is, when you think about [Gen Y]'s involvement in the agency. Do you think she's part of a culture of sharing knowledge. Do you feel that there's a culture of sharing knowledge at the agency?

R

Um... Ja I do, but where it's not filtered through, it's only done in small groups. So we don't share knowledge on a large scale. The only forum we do it in is probably on the Monday morning at breakfast, but you generally find that it's normally creatively driven or led you know, so I think for someone like her to have an opportunity, she doesn't get that, she doesn't have that, she's overlooked and what she has to offer is probably quite sufficient, but it's quite contained in smaller outlets, you know like break-away rooms if you want to call it that. So if we just discussing a creative idea, she probably doesn’t have the confidence to say it, or it's just shared amongst a small group of people, you know. So I think form a young person, and being able to understand and have an opportunity to have her voice heard, she probably need to do something like what we have on a Monday but probably to see whatever else you may have learnt. Did you go see a nice show on the weekend and you know, did you go to the theatre, what movies did you see? All that kind of stuff just adds different dimensions to advertising. It could be the way a movie is shot, you know, and you might not be creatively minded, but you could say, check out his movie, it was shot in this new camera, you know, ummm, and they’re into that shit you know. And I just talk about it from myself, because, you know, I'm a mom, and I don't get to do those things and I do every now and again, but she lives in that world, you know, she’s in it, so ja.

I

So it happens there.

R

Ja

I

Okay, on a different note, um, do you feel that the agency is changing? Is it going through some kind of evolution?

R

Um... (pause) Ja, it's grown. That's been a big change I think, because all of a sudden it's almost leapt by about X-Y people. I know that doesn’t sound a lot in the big scheme of things, but when you're an agency and you've constantly only been on the threshold of only Z. We're now topping XY. So, um, I
think that’s a big change, cos there’s new voices and people
and um, more energy in the agency. Um, [Head Creative
Director] has not been here, so I think that the last couple of
months has been a change for us. New systems in place. We
have a traffic lady that’s actually functioning! That’s a big
change! Um... and then also, obviously there’s new medias
now that we can actually advertising on. We’re looking at
things like online blogging and being in tune and in touch
with what’s actually done on the internet. Things that we’ve
never done before, now starting to track it and see how far a
message can go, you know. So, I think the agency has
definitely seen a change in that because we’re going to have
to try and structure the business to allow for that. And to
probably include it on all briefs you know. There’s now this
whole other place that you can advertise in without actually
putting a budget aside for it. You know what I mean. So Ja, I
think that’s a change.

I

But you mentioned that there’s lots of new voices, but
they’re still being heard, they’re still part of the brew?

R

They are to a point you know, but I mean it’s you know.
We’ve got a whole lot of new interns, um, they’ve only been
there a week or so, but I don’t, I haven’t had an opportunity
to, they’ve sat in that little room in the back you know, so I
think for them there’s no voice. And when do you be able to
have a voice, you know. Is there a time when, after six
months someone says “Okay cool, you’re qualified, you can
now speak!” (You can talk!). Ja! And I think in client service,
there isn’t much of a voice. There is depending on who you
are and, but, in most advertising the voice is driven by
creative and possibly strategy. But the rest it’s to a point.

I

Um, and are you happy with the kind of incentive structures
that are available to the younger guys in terms of being able
to come up with something new and really put the whole,
more of themselves into, maybe a proactive brief, based on
something that they know?

R

Oh definitely. I think our creatives have amazing
opportunities. You know, I look at someone like that
[Campaign], [Campaign] campaign that I did for [Client]. I
mean, it was huge, it was the biggest I’ve ever worked on, on
[Client], and there were two juniors or three juniors that
worked on it with [Head Creative Director]. I mean [Gen Y]
did her internship last year, you know she’s like out of
college. [Gen Y] same thing – out of college, been at the
agency for a year and a half. [Gen Y] a little bit more, but
they’re young girls you know and where do you get the
opportunity, you know. You didn’t see, you didn’t even go
into an edit suite or a radio recording for at least two years.
You kind of did briefs you know and not even the nice briefs!
You did, like, amendments! So I think at our agency you get a
hell of a lot of opportunity to do stuff at a very young age and they welcome it you know. It’s fabulous, you’ve been on a, a, campaign that was seen. It was a Loeries finalist, it got a silver, and you’re like a year out of college.

I
Hmmmm. That is amazing. Um...hmmm. Do you feel that the guys help each other a lot?

R
On what level, just through the?

I
Just generally, do you hear a lot of conversations, people asking each other advice?

R
Ja, we’re small enough to allow for that, and because we’re open plan, you kinda hear stuff. Somebody might mention stuff and the you kind of add to the conversation, so definitely ja.

I
Brilliant. Okay a bit of a loaded question, but Ah, Do you know everyone here’s name?

R
Not the new interns. (laughs) cos it’s something like Waka – waka blab la, or something! (laughs). So ja, I know most ja, but I actually haven’t been formally introduced to them so I’d have to say no.

I
And the younger guys? Do you feel that they always like, aware of who everybody is, or does it take some time, or?

R
We don’t do a great job of welcoming people to the agency. (laughs). We could go up a few points on that, particularly even if we don’t have a gathering, it’s like an email “we’re going to see three new faces upstairs – it’s X, Y and Z. They’re going to be doing this”, you know. We kind of do fall short on that one.

I
Okay, um, and then the last question that I have is, it’s a bit of a strange one, but I’m going to use the term, information politics. Do you ever feel that within the agency there’s some kind of information politics. “I’ll tell you this much... no more...”

R
(long pause). Ahhhh... Ja I thinkthere is. I don’t know if it’s like. I dunno, I think there is a bit, but I think creatively there’s certain things that you should know – there’s certain points. It might be “Oh we’ve got this fabulous idea, but we’ll share it with you later”, so I don’t think that’s a bad thing, um, but I don’t think it’s detrimental. I don’t think there’s reason behind it, if it’s not shared.

I
Okay great that’s all.

R
Cool.
I: Consent (no interruption)

R: Yes

I: Okay great. I just have a couple of discussion points that I’d like to talk through. Would you say that there’s a culture for sharing knowledge at [Agency]?

R: Yes, actually I would. In. Definitely. It’s a lot different, because it’s a small agency I think that um, there is, because, you don’t actually have a choice. You have to go and communicate with somebody and make sure that they do know about your job, have the conversation and let them in on all the details and everything that’s necessary. Yes I’d say that in the bigger agencies, sometimes that’s not present, there might be a lot more systems and structures in place. But at [Agency], even though we do try and desperately try to put systems and structures in place, we absolutely are. I mean, we definitely communicate a lot. I think there is a culture. You know what, maybe it’s not a 100% there, but it’s definitely on its’ way there. We really do try and I think especially with [Managing Director] and the systems that she’s tried to introduce, she’s really tried to like, push that way of thinking and introduce it to the agency. And even with Ahmed, I think he likes the fact that there’s a culture of constantly being able to communicate. Definitely!

I: And within your department, I mean, do the guys ask each other a lot of questions? For a lot of help?

R: We do talk to each other. Um, I, it would probably be valuable to talk to [Gen Y], because I think that at the moment I think that the one thing that’s happening is that she’s not transferring the things that she hears, or well, maybe she’s not transferring everything that she hears. And it’s potentially because maybe she doesn’t understand everything, but, um, but that’s a different conversation, I think with the rest of us, we do try. I think if there’s a conversation. If somebody asks somebody for an opinion or advice on something said or something that needs to be done, we try. We really do try. Although there are also times where we really don’t have time. And when you don’t have time, you don’t. But certainly when we do have time, when there are opportunities. We do try. Absolutely. You might not only do it with your colleagues, you might try, you might go directly to the likes of a [Managing Director] or to the likes of [Executive Creative Director], but we do try.

I: And is [Gen Y charge] inclined to ask questions?

R: Um... I think she’s learning. She’s very junior. She’s basically
finishing off her studies now, but um, she's been in advertising for almost a year now. And I think it was, initially it was a lot easier teaching systems and structures and [Agency] was going through a little bit of a change and then, all of a sudden we swamped with work and I don't spend that time that I need to spend with her to make sure that she understands that she needs to transfer as much information as she possibly gets. Back to creatives. It is actually, it is a little bit of a problem at the moment. And it's not a problem because she has a problem, but um, I think it's just because she is junior and she doesn't understand that the more information they have the better it is. The better it is to get the job done. The more you know about the client and their business, the better it is.

I And you mentioned, um, changed in systems and things. I mean do you think, do you think the agency is having a bit of a change? Is it going through a change phase?

R I think it is. I think that um, I started at [Agency] almost three and half years ago. So, where we were to where we are know, I think we, we leaps ahead, because things have changed and as I said, [Managing Director] has tried to introduce systems. It doesn't mean, they've always been of the opinion that if you need to bypass, if you have to go speak directly to a creative about something, then you absolutely can do that. That's not, you know, I'm not meaning that! But, umJa, I would thing that there have been changes within [Agency] and I think that it's allowed for more communication. And the creatives also ask a lot more questions. So. Because there are some creatives that will take your job or your brief as is and work on it, and there are others that will question you on it, like you have no idea. And those are probably more the senior creatives anyway. So...

I That's great. Um... okay, Are you happy with, sort of, I use the word incentive here, but it's not really a financial incentive, it could be a matter of you know, praising somebody or offering opportunity on a trip. But do you feel that there are enough incentives to, particularly the young people in production you, when they really go above and beyond and construct something from their own knowledge and their own insight, is that rewarded? Do you think it's encouraged?

R I would think it's not encouraged and not rewarded. Definitely not. But it's not, it probably wouldn't be because [Managing Director] and [Executive Creative Director] are are bad people, because they far from that. I just think that it's never happened. Some instances, there is one particular girl in client services who does want to move into strategy and I do know that [Managing Director] does encourage her. But in terms of giving them some kind of acknowledgement,
it is minimal. It’s definitely minimal. I’m sure that especially in client service it would be greatly appreciated, because client service tend to be the people that everybody forgets about. You know, when there’s a big TV ad or something gets doesn’t, it’s you know, it’s the creative team that’s always recognised and maybe the TV producer, but people forget about client service and the role that client service plays.

I

Okay, and when, when you guys are busy in the process of a job and you’ve got a layout that arrives on your desk that needs to be presented to client. Who’s the one that really takes a look at that layout and says “okay this is ready”. Who has that final say?

R

(pause) I would definitely say client service. Because even if a creative looks at it and the creative is happy with it and we look at it and we see something that might not be right or something that client may not like, um, we are able to have them change it or to rethink it. Um, look creative also has quite an important role to play. They also look at it and say it can definitely go out. Maybe what client service do is that they pick up on things that maybe relate more to, what’s good and wouldn’t be good for the business. But creative also, creative also get a final say, but I would say that client service look at it and say “It’s final and it’s ready to go to client”. We have to, We absolutely have to, although if we’re being honest here – that doesn’t always happen. You trust judgement based on what the creative gives you and if you’re hectically busy, it goes. So…

I

And in your team structure. I mean do you have to sign off on everything or does [Gen Y charge] have the authority...

R

[Gen Y Charge] does have final sign-off on most of the things and it’s mostly because, especially now, and lately working on [Client] and [Client] and [Client] launched at the same time and I work 100% on [Client] and I’m only supposed to have a certain percentage of my time dedicated onto [Client], she did see a lot of things that went out, but there were a lot of errors, um, we did get a lot of flack with regard to that, but that was part of a bigger thing, of client also not understanding systems and procedures within an agency that that things have to go through the system before they get it and in order to rush the job the systems were bypassed and when the job got to client it was wrong, so, ja, I think I should see everything, but I don’t though. I don’t. [Gen Y charge] is aware that she has to bring everything past me, even if it means that it is delayed buy half an hour or forty-five minutes, I need to see it before it goes out. Alternatively she needs to check the client debrief and if I’m not here and go through every little thing that was supposed to change or that they were supposed to do before she sends it to client. And that has happened. Look it’s, were not there yet… big
learning now with [Client] and [Client] launching at the same time, but the poor thing, she was thrown in at the deep end and I’m also partly to blame, so you know, at the end of the day it’s my responsibility, so...

I

Um, okay, within [Agency], do you feel that there are any kind of traditions or things that you guys do on any regular basis or even an annual basis that help everybody come together and share ideas and share knowledge?

R

At one stage we were having these breakfasts, and, a, every week creative was coming back to us with something. And initially it wasn’t just creative, it was you know, anybody at the agency who had something that they thought was valuable, they thought they could share. But that very quickly fell away. It fell away and I think probably like in any agency and anything that becomes something that you do over and above work fades away when you have too much work in the system. So now we’ll meet for our breakfasts but we’ll have to quickly like leave, because there’s things to do or there’s meetings or whatever. At one point it was happening, but it lasted a few weeks.

I

So everyone just got to busy.

R

Ja, I think creative is trying, especially since we had [Creative Director] and [Creative Director] on board, I mean they were pushing for it, but it did fade away.

I

I guess that happens. Do you know everyone here’s name.

R

Yes, other than the three interns that started last week. And to be very honest when I first saw them I thought that they were IT guys that were coming in, because they were in the little boardroom, sitting with [IT Manager], who is our IT manager, so I thought, Ja, they were like IT guys and then a couple of days late they were introduced. Ja, because usually they introduce everybody at breakfast on a Monday morning, so if you’re not here before then it rolls over to the next week. But it did happen the following week, but, but names are, you know. We should know them, but Ja, otherwise I should know everybody’s name.

I

And [Gen Y charge], does she tend to know everybody’s name? Is she quite?

R

She is. She’s very friendly, which is very helpful, and um, she’s a hard worker. She really is, but she doesn’t generally know. And also, you know, because people move in circles, so she might know his name, because she thinks he’s cute, so you know, I think it would be difficult not to know everybody’s name, because it’s such a tight-knit team. Ja I must say, those three interns were a shock! I didn’t even know interns were arriving! So... but that would happen, that would go through creative, so account management wouldn’t know about it until it’s introduced in our sessions on Monday morning, but if somebody came into client
service, that’s then that’s the same thing.

I  Okay, they’d be sitting ‘round you. (Ja). Okay. Do you find that the girls, um, would just sort of randomly ask one another, even if it’s not necessarily related to their business per say, ask each other for help on something? You know, “what does this email mean?”.

R  Oh Ja we do that. We definitely do that. Now we do. Absolutely. Absolutely. And definitely not always relating to work. Sometimes relating to personal issues, ja definitely.

I  So it’s close?

R  Yes. I think we’ve had out ups and downs, but I think the teams that’s currently there has come a long way. There’s also, I mean, most of us have been there for at least three years now, so we all there.

I  Schjoe that’s quite a long-standing, that’s great!

R  Ja, absolutely, [Gen Y] and [Gen Y] are the youngest people on our team, and even them, just now they’re going to have been there a year and the rest of us, [Line Manager] has been here the longest and them it’s myself and then it’s [Line Manager] and the other guys and obviously [Managing Director].

I  Okay, um, the last question, I’m going to use a slightly loaded term, but do you ever feel that there’s ever any information politics. Do you ever feel that guys maybe hold back a little on something, just because it might give them a little leeway, or…

R  What do you mean? Information politics from client?

I  Un, no, within the agency. Within the agency particularly.

R  (uncertain) Sometimes. Although, I understand that in particular circumstances, the information may not be, not just not relevant to you, but maybe highly sensitive information that cannot be passed on. But I think if the information is pertinent to the job, then it should be, absolutely. If it’s information about how their business does and they don’t really want everybody to know, but the particular team that’s working on it, should know because it’ll add value to their campaign and whatever they prepare. But I do understand in certain instances, I think I have on e of those clients where certain information may be transferred to [Managing Director] and [Executive Creative Director] and we don’t 100% know about it. So they try and tell us as much as they can, but there are definitely sensitivities around that.

I  Okay, and just as a corollary to that, um, what do you think [Gen Y charge]’s attitude is towards sensitive information? Is she quite cautious, is she still learning about what’s sensitive and what’s not?

R  I don’t think she’d be able to tell you what’s sensitive and what’s not at the moment. So I honestly don’t think so. She
probably doesn’t know, she probably might think she knows, but she probably doesn’t know what’s sensitive information. Like how many leads and sales [Client] make a month, I mean that sales are very sensitive, because if any other insurance brand or whatever would find out, how they doing, or the launch of new products, that’s also very sensitive, so um, but you know, she’s young, she’s junior. But I think you’d probably get a lot more out of her!

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<th>Okay great. That’s it! That’s all I need!</th>
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<td>R</td>
<td>Okay thank you!</td>
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## 2.3. Senior manager cohort

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<th>Interview number</th>
<th>14</th>
<th>Gen Y</th>
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<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>09:30</td>
<td>Line Man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>16 Nov</td>
<td>Senior Man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code</td>
<td>KG014</td>
<td>Head of Strategy</td>
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I  Consent (no interruption)
R  Yes

I  Okay so just a couple of conversation points. The first thing is, would you say, or what is your opinion about the idea of there being a culture of sharing information at [Agency].

R  I think it would be fantastic. I think that the culture is better than a lot of places that I’ve worked at, because it’s smaller, so people interact a lot easier with one another. The sort of, flow of communication, is sort of seamless. But I think an actual dedicated sharing session would be fantastic because as small as we are, we do tend to miss things that each of use are doing, whether it be actual campaigns that each of us are working on, clients or just information that we happen to come across.

I  Read or whatever...
R  Ja, and we’re actually going to be doing that soon. I’ve rallied to try and do that, just sort of speak about trends and what’s happening internationally from a communication perspective, because I get to see that, and sending out an email I don’t think is enough.

I  Ja sure. And would that be across the whole agency, or just within the...

R  It would be across the whole agency. We have a Monday morning breakfast, we have every Monday. We’re trying to make use of that time a lot better, so instead of it just being a social sort of catch up and [Managing Director] and [Head Creative Director], just mentioning the agenda, we want the guys to present some of their ads and for me to look into some new trends and talk about anything interesting that’s out there. Just so that there is that culture of sharing, because a lot of time the production people miss out, and client service misses out, because you know, they don’t have time to see those things

I  Ja, and they not working across it all. Very cool. On your opinion, and I know you haven’t been here all that long, but would you say that [Agency] is in a state of change?

R  I think so. I think they’re growing quite quickly and I think that the culture, the culture is key here and I think they’ll retain that, it’s just about hiring the right kind of people to fit into the agency. Um, but I do think they’re changing and I think it’s natural. It has to happen, as long as you can evolve the agency with that change and hang on to what you stand
for. Because I worked in an agency where we totally lost what we stood for, because we got so many new clients in such a short space of time. That unfortunately they were hiring people that weren’t necessarily suited to the agency.

I

And um, the changes that are taking place, do you think that they’re encouraging or maybe inhibiting the communication that’s taking place in the agency?

R

Um, look it is a little bit difficult for me to tell, because I haven’t been here long enough to make a comparison, but I don’t think that it’s inhibiting it. It might not be as free-flowing as it used to be, because the numbers are growing and people are not necessarily all familiar with each other. I think [Agency] has always had a family vibe. But when you start introducing new faces and people, I suppose you do tend to lose a bit of that free-flow conversation.

I

Um... Do you feel that within the account management department specifically, if the guys have an insight or kind of come onto something by themselves, um, and maybe pitch that idea proactively to you, or to [Managing Director] or whoever it needs to be pitched to, do you think they’re encouraged to do that? Do you think it’s well received?

R

Um, I think they’re encouraged to do it, I’m not so sure if they’re comfortable to do it. Um... so... there is this sense in the agency that an idea can come from anyway, but sometimes you think, and having just worked in client service, you feel like that’s not necessarily your speciality, so whether you’re comfortable enough with actually presenting it, or telling someone is another story. So I think there would need to be a little more comfort, a sense of ease, and maybe it’s about entrenching a person that you speak to that’s a little bit less, creative, you know what I mean, because I think you do almost feel that you’re coming up against someone who’s better than you, so maybe it’s difficult to sell your idea to a person that you’re a little bit afraid of, if that makes sense. And I think I sense a lot more collaborative energy here than I’ve experienced in the past, but there is the sense of where the creative guys will come with the ideas and you as the account management team will make things happen. So... I think it’s quite difficult to get over that and find that happy space where people can get over that and not feel like they’re being judged.

I

Okay, okay so there is almost a political line between the studio and the...

R

Ja, I think so, and I think that’s a difficult thing to get away from in any agency, because you almost come in with a role and you’re expected to do what you’re expected to do. And if you are proactive and you show some signs of creativity on the account management side, creatives respect you more, but it doesn’t necessarily mean that they listen to you.
I: Okay cool. Um. You spoke about the Monday morning breakfasts, but are there any other traditions or spontaneous practices that [Agency] does that really facilitate great conversations between all the different parties and lots of sharing?

R: No, no, I think as far as I'm aware, breakfast is it. Um, and I think we do need to have more of those things in place, because even just, even just going for drinks sometimes allows you to just have a social conversation that can lead to other things and lead to thoughts, but we don't have any set time when we engage with each other unless it's for a client. So a creative review or whatever the case may be. So I definitely think that can be worked on. Because there's schools of thought and there's a brains trust in each of the departments that you could very nicely tap into if you had the time and the opportunity to do it.

I: Okay, um, would you say there's, particularly now within the account management department, would you say that the girls there have a culture of helping each other? Just from what you observe...

R: Yes, absolutely. I think they're all very willing to dig in and I think it's beyond account management, I think it's production, they really do support one another, particularly when something goes wrong. Then you just see everyone come to the fore and help one another out. Um, so there's definitely a sense of help and support. I think that comes naturally, but I'm just not sure that there's enough of a structure in place to help the help and share outside of a crisis or outside of somebody going "I need a hand".

I: So maybe like a mentoring program or something like that?

R: Ja, mentoring, sharing some experiences, because some of the account management guys are a lot more senior than others, so you can just pass on their experiences and just talk about their learnings. I'm not sure if that, it that happens?

I: Do you ever hear them asking each other for advice?

R: I do. But as I said, it almost only happens when it's like "Oh shit I've got a problem, and I'm not so sure how to handle this". So ja I think mentorship is a key thing and I've been to very few companies where mentorship is regarded as something that you should be doing and it's a time issue, you know, the people that you want to spend time with and the people that you think you can learn from, never have the time to spend with you, you know, so I definitely think that in my experiences mentorship has been a serious lack and it's a time issue. When you've got the person in front of you, it's absolutely fantastic, because you learn so much and even if you spend half an hour with that person you absorb what you can, but that's on such an infrequent basis.
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<th>I</th>
<th>Cool, okay, um. Do you know everyone at [Agency]'s name?</th>
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<td>R</td>
<td>Ja, I do.</td>
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<td>I</td>
<td>Okay, now, just one, one last question, and I don’t know if it’s necessarily appropriate to you, but I’m going to throw a term out there just to kind of see what the reaction is... Would you say that there’s ever any politics with information. We discussed the political boundary between studio and account management, but do you ever experience someone kinda holding back...</td>
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<td>R</td>
<td>...holding on... not here. I haven’t experienced that here before. Um, I guess information in this day and age is power so you would experience politics naturally, because as soon as somebody knows something or feels like they know something more it almost puts them a step ahead of a person that’s a step ahead of them. I think that there is definitely politics of information, I haven’t necessarily see it here, but I’ve definitely experienced in other places that I’ve worked. And I think it’s natural, because that’s your source of power at the end of the day, especially in the environment that we work in, if you’ve got something that’s going to get you somewhere, you’re going to hang onto it and it’s terrible but it’s true. I think it’s more prevalent in corporates, because that’s where time is such and issue and information is not easily shared, so once you’ve got it you can use it to your advantage, whereas I find an agency is a far more collaborative far more, boundary free type of environment, so information is shared much more easily instead of where everyone is trying to get on top of each other because those hierarchies naturally exist.</td>
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<td>I</td>
<td>Mmmm mmm. Okay great, that’s all I need.</td>
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<td>R</td>
<td>That’s it!</td>
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<td>I</td>
<td>Ja, thanks very much [Interviewee]</td>
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<td>R</td>
<td>My pleasure.</td>
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<td>Consent (no interruption)</td>
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I Right, um, this part, what I’ve got here are not really questions per say, but rather discussion points. Would you say that there’s a culture of knowledge sharing at [Agency], at large?

R Yes, I would.

I And how would you exemplify that?

R I would say that everyone’s’ opinion counts, so, and the only way you learn a lot once you’re in the practical stages doing something and not studying it anymore, or theorising about it. Only way you learn is to express an opinion, get feedback on it and then reach a consensus amongst the people who maybe know better than you, or have more experience than you, as to whether your opinion is a valid one, or could be improved, or, or whether you learn something in it. And I think that open and discussing opinions and allowing everyone to table their opinions is a very good way of doing it in the practical environment. Ja.

I One thing that I’ve noticed, with regard to the study is that, um, you guys don’t hold on to very rigid hierarchies. There’s a lot of encouragement for the different departments to speak to one another quite freely, even outside of, or over-and-above of structures and processes. I mean, is that incidental, or is that intended.

R No! It’s intended! cos everyone’s opinion counts. If we don’t. If we have people there whose opinion does not count then they shouldn’t be there. We have them there for a reason, they have something to contribute.

I That’s great. Okay, um, I’m not going to ask you if [Agency] is changing, because I know it’s changing, it’s growing at a phenomenal rate! (Ja we young, so we have to change!) So you have to change all the time.

R And I think in advertising if you don’t change and if you stay the same, you’re going backwards. You’re in the industry of change and keeping abreast of the times, growing, developing. You have to be a bit malleable.

I No, you do. And I mean you spoke earlier about the organisational culture changing slightly as well in terms of who [Agency] is and what they stand for. Can you talk a little bit about what that change has come from and to. What has that change been about?

R I think is started out as some handful of really driven people
who were ambitious and had a vision of what advertising should be in [Partner], [Partner], [Executive Creative Director]. I think it started out with them going: “This is how advertising should be” and “hey man we can do it here [Cape Town], let’s do it in Johannesburg!”. And I think their ideals of doing it perfectly were always in place, but in reality I think it became about, just do it brilliantly and survive, because if we survive long enough and we grow and all of that, then we’ll be successful. So I think it was pretty spontaneous, quite unplanned and quite unstructured. And I think it’s gone from that, it’s taken all those inspiring things and it’s put it into parameters and some goals and some vision. It’s always still in formulation (yes, yes), but I think it’s become more professional. Or becoming, not become, it’s becoming! More professional. Ja.

I But in that, am I correct in understanding that it’s not professional as in, um, kinda the rigid banking structures. I mean it will always be... Ja

R No it’s not corporate, It’s definitely not corporate! It’s very professional, you that’s what we, you know, we’re becoming that way. And I think there’s a big difference, because I think some corporates have this superficial thing, all this structure and all this stuff in place, but beneath that they’re nothing, they’re just structures. We would never want to be that. We always want to be, like organised chaos. That’s what we want. We want a place where it’s organics and it’s full of ideas and it’s growing and it’s changing and it’s moving with the times and it’s meeting consumer needs and it’s understanding what’s happening in our country and all of that stuff. But it has to always come across as “This is a serious business”, it is! We spend a lot of clients money, we shape people’s opinions. Hell that’s big you know! I mean, I’m not trying to make advertising something that it’s not! But it’s a serious business, so you you, have to do that in a professional manner, you know. If you went to a surgeon and he was all shabbily dressed and slouching around in his office and eating while he was telling you that you are going to have you abdomen cut open, I wouldn’t be feeling so happy, even if you knew he was the best surgeon in the world for the job that you’re about to get done! You know! (Ja, no, absolutely) You wouldn’t! So there is a way to do stuff that gives people a sense of confidence and professionalism and that helps you realise that it’s not just superficial and that there’s depth to everything that you’re hearing and doing, the recommendations that you’re getting. For me it’s a really important thing.

I No, absolutely. Very much so.

R So I think ja, we’ve ssss, we’ve become slicker. (Slicker?) Ja. And we have much higher expectations now. (okay, okay). I
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<td>think we came from a place where it was about happy people doing really good work that they were proud of and business isn't like that. We want everyone to be happy and to be proud of the work that they do, but tough conversations have to happen and not everything is ivory tower. It’s business. I always tell people we might be called [Agency] but actually we’re a company, we’re a business. So we can do all the bells and whistles and have all the fun, but at the end of the day, we’re a business and that’s where I look for that level of professionalism.</td>
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<td>I</td>
<td>I mean, you said something quite interesting, you said that expectations have been defined. I mean, as part of this growing up into a business and that’s, that’s quite interesting. And that’s part of that maturing in your mind?</td>
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<td>R</td>
<td>Ja, definitely. And I mean, I now, It’s my big thing. We need to manage our client’s expectations. And so everyone at [Agency], needs to be focussed on that goal. So we tell them what we believe. We don’t tell them what we believe, we tell them what we collectively agree. What we believe, we don’t really tell them. cos we do, because we say, “This is how we do it” but then we collectively agree on what the best way is to do whatever it is that we are dong. And ja, I think the expectations are high.</td>
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<td>I</td>
<td>Brilliant. Very very cool. Um, okay. The guys in the account management department. If you try to get into the head, and again let's talk about a junior and try to get into the head of a junior, what... What do you think are the things that drive them? What are the incentives, that drive them towards great performance?</td>
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<td>R</td>
<td>Recognition, acknowledgement, and if they’re really ambitious they can see their path, they just want to get onto the pathway and start walking or running, depending on how ambitious they are, so I think that excellent, someone who’s working really really hard and contributing a huge amount and they don’t ever get any acknowledgement or recognition... I think that’s death to any human being. So I think recognition and acknowledgement are very important. And a sense of empowerment at any level that you’re in. So when you’re a junior, the sense that your opinion counts, that you are empowered to do certain things, gives you a sense of accountability, and then you do it really well, you get the recognition and the acknowledgement in return for it. And yes... always money. (Ja, sure, sure).</td>
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<td>I</td>
<td>Do you have formal review systems?</td>
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<td>R</td>
<td>Yes we do. We have an appraisal system, whereby the person being appraised gets to fill in a form, which I think is really crappy at the moment! (laughs). It’s something that I want to work on a lot. And where you get X number of their peers to appraise them and to say, what are their strengths...</td>
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in their opinion. What is the person being appraised good at relatively weak at, ah, why they fun to work with, why they not fun to work with, um, general likes and dislikes about the working relationship, and then also, I always ask the question: Are they, do you think this person is a [Agency] person and an asset to the company? I ask the peers to say whether they believe they are or not. And it's amazing what you get out of that, because, sometime you'll get “This person is absolutely amazing, does a great job, but no, not a [Agency] person. Because they negative about certain things” or because “they are too focussed on their own goals ands their own happiness and not on their contribution”. It's interesting stuff. So Ja we do, do appraisals. We do them in the first three months of a new person's arrival so that we can give them some feedback as to how they're going. And then annually, after that. Unless people are star performers or bad performers. (Ja) If they star performers we do a quick appraisal and we give them some recognition for it. So either a salary adjustment or a spot bonus. Or it depends on the level of contribution or whatever they've done. Sometimes it's just a treat. So we do that quite often. And then, um, I'm saying we do them in three months.... Oh yes if they good. And if they bad, we do them more regularly to get them up to speed. And if they don’t come up to speed, well then they go and we've had two or three examples of that where we've tried everything to get people up to speed and they couldn’t get up to speed and then we’ve had to, in a firm and polite as possible way, say “it's not working”. You know, all within the HR rules, but it's essential. (Ja people need to hear those things). And I think appraisals are meaningful, and this kind of thing is meaningful and I really believe this, because an agency is only as good as its weakest link. So if it's a group of people or one person, or a function that is weak. That's the only count that we can reach. You can’t have weakness. Ideal world stuff, but anyway, Ja.

I

No totally. Okay, on a slightly different topic. A lot of the guys have spoken quite warmly about the Monday morning breakfasts. What other traditions does [Agency] have?

R

I think we're young, we're a bit young to have traditions, but there's things that are starting to become traditions. So the Monday morning breakfast is one, the December, let's relax and be together and celebrate the end of the year in the form of a lunch or a party, but only us, is a little bit of a tradition. It’s only us, meaning only agency people. And then in February, our birthday party where we invite clients and supplier and anyone that we interact with – as many people as we can afford to invite, we invite. And anyone who's inspired us, or helped us along the way. And people really look forward to it. This year we didn't have our party in
February, we had it in May, or, Ja in May, for some very practical reasons. But people were like, over the moon about the fact that we kept on putting it off, putting it off, but we said that we’re not going to miss it. (Ja, Ja) So when it came it was like, “We must never ever put it off that long again, you know”. And then, I think they’re not traditions but they are big things where we make it known that we share the wealth. So if there are profits, we have bonuses, whenever we possibly can. And we’re very transparent about it. So we say “This year we made some profit. This is how the bonuses are gonna be paid, they’re going to be on a sliding scale for how long you’ve been here and X percentage of your salary, or they’re going to be performance based, or whatever it is”. So I think people know that about us and I hope that they believe it to be true and I hope that we can always deliver on it. It’s difficult because you’ve always gotta be profitable. That’s obviously our goal. And then if there’s any like Loeries or trips away or stuff like that. I think they know that we always do our very best to take everyone, so I think they know that we’re not, the management or the leadership of the agency isn’t so self absorbed or selfish. We share. And I hope that becomes a tradition. I hope that as we grow and as we have more to share and I include knowledge in there. I hope that we become a place where young people can come and get experience. And even, I’m not precious about people moving on. I mean I get sad, and I don’t want to lose good people. But I think if you’re a stepping stone in life for people to be successful and start something up of their own, and employ more people and contribute in a positive way to the economy of our country, then fantastic. We must create opportunity. So they’re not traditions yet, or even things that we’ve got in place, but I hope that those are things that we do get in place. We’re too young, you know. But the word out there is that if you’re a young creative person and you wanna do work, not just be a junior in the studio, [Agency] is the place to come. So that to me is a fantastic thing. And even young account management people. If people are good and they excel, you get the power. So, Ja, I don’t know if the re are any other traditions (laughs)

I  Juniors and a policy of asking questions. Are they inclined to do you find?

R  I think they do. I think I can be a bit intimidating sometimes. I think sometimes if they ask the same question too many times I get ratty and irritable. Which is wrong. Um, I think people feel that they’re okay, that they’re alright to ask questions. I’m not aware that they are not comfortable to ask questions, no matter how junior.

I  And do you find peers asking each other for quite a lot of help and assistance.
R: I think so. I think also, because I’m sometime too busy or a bit unapproachable, I think that there do, they do. And when I say I’m a bit unapproachable, there are only days or hours when I’m unapproachable. I don’t think it’s an overall thing. I become that way when people become inefficient and repeatedly make the same mistakes. I don’t like bad performance. So I think then people rally together and help each other out. So I think my answer to that, in a very long-winded way, is I think yes, juniors are encouraged to ask questions and I think, I think they feel comfortable asking questions.

I: Great, great. Okay, um. We’ve actually covered just about everything.

R: Are you mostly interested in juniors?

I: Ja, mostly the generation Y guys, so Ja, 1980 to 2005, so 30 and younger.

R: So how many people at [Agency] fell into that category?

I: Um, we had four I think. Ja, four.

R: That’s good.

I: Ja! It was brilliant. Brilliant. One last question is, do you ever, or are you ever frustrated by anything that you would term as information politics. People holding back a bit of knowledge to gain power or outperform, outshine somebody else?

R: Two answers. I don’t think people, unless I’m completely delusional, have held knowledge back to gain power. I think they may have held it back because they were afraid of having made a mistake. But it always comes out and it’s always well handled and they get reprimanded if they have and a solution is... you now not reprimanded in a way that is destructive, but it’s in a way that helps them not to do it again, or in a way that is helpful.

I: Okay, that’s it (really?) Ja that’s it! That’s the lot.

R: There was something I wanted to say to you. This is a really important thing. I don’t think there are courses that are offered to people who want to come into account management. That set them up properly for what they’re going to do. (Ja) So on any level. Whether it is on a pure junior servicing level, or on a senior person who doesn’t want to be a strategist, but who wants to be a brilliant account director. There’s nothing that can facilitate people in this country and help them and give them the basic skills to do that. Even people that come out of the AAA and the Vegas
and the, the technicons, having done account management or planning courses. They come out with so little knowledge of how it’s going to be in the real world, it’s frightening. There is a real lack of a course or something that will just set them up for a good starting point. You can’t obviously teach everyone, everything. They have to learn it in the practical environment, but I don’t think they really understand what they’re getting into. I really don’t. It’s a big problem and I don’t think on the flip side, the counter part on the client side, really understand what the account management does. I don’t even think... After years of experience some people do, but I don’t think that they really understand. I mean I see students coming in from these various schools doing their internships and they don’t even know how to conduct themselves in an interview or how to present their CV. Or how to prepare for an interview. Let alone when you ask them “Please send a fax...” (laughs) or I guess we don’t send faxes anymore, or send an email. They “Hi!” to a client! It’s ridiculous! “howzit!” they have no grounding on how to, doing business now. Granted, it’s advertising, it can be a more casual approach, but remember you’re talking about a business transaction as a way to do everything. Remember that you’re in a meeting with a client who is a final decision maker. Obviously you’re in a meeting, and you need to conduct yourself in a business manner. Obviously you learn all of that with experience but, don’t come into an agency knowing what the end result is, where they’re going. What their ambition is. They come in thinking, they’re going to make ads. (Ja). It’s frightening. We need some good lecturers at universities.

I completely, I’m going to stop it there, I completely agree with you...
Appendix C: Research consent

To be read aloud to the interviewer, by the interviewee, before the interview begins.

This form is being read to you in order to ensure that you are fully consenting to the research in which you are participating. You will not be required to sign any documentation, as all consent will be oral. This is done to protect your anonymity.

Please note that the following points pertaining to this interview:

1. This interview will be recorded for the purposes of transcription. All recordings and transcriptions will be digitally stored and will only be available to the researcher and his research supervisor.
2. If you become uncomfortable at any stage during the interview, you have the right to terminate the interview immediately.
3. The researcher will ask you for some demographic information, namely your age and nationality, which are required for the research. No other personal information will be required.
4. In accordance with Graduate School of Business Ethics in Research Policy you need to be informed of the following:

   There are no known risks or dangers to you associated with this study. The researcher will not attempt to identify you with the responses to your interview, or to name you as a participant in the study, nor will he facilitate anyone else's doing so.

5. I am conducting this research in partial fulfillment for a Masters Degree in Business Administration. The study seeks to examine successful practices implemented within an advertising agency to effectively manage institutional memory among Generation Y employees.

6. The study will be published in the Graduate School of Business Library and the researcher may choose to publish this study in a journal of his choice, should the findings be worthy of publication.
For the purposes of this study, the following definitions apply:

- **Institutional Memory**: Institutional memory can be understood as the means by which knowledge from the past is brought to bear on present activities within an organisation (Ozorhon, Dikmen, & Birgonul, 2005).

Please confirm the following statement:

>I acknowledge that I am participating in this study of my own free will. I understand that I may refuse to participate or stop participating at any time without penalty. If I wish, I will be given a copy of this consent form. I understand the nature of the study and my involvement in the study.

[Interviewee to confirm statement]

Thank you.