





Understanding Generations in the Workplace



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Why do we care...???


- Traditionalist / Veterans: Before 1945
- Baby Boomers: 1945 - early '60s
- Generation X: Early '60s - 1980
- Nexters/ Millennials: 1980 - 2000



Cusper: Born on the border of two generations




Failure to Understand Them




"Take a load off, Leonard—we're watching Generations X and Y like it hot."

- Professional relationship conflicts
- Work expectation problems
- Recruiting & Retention difficulties
- Unneeded expense & wasted time




Benefits of Understanding




"You're five. How could you possibly understand the problems of a five-and-a-half-year-old?"

- Target recruitment, development, & retention.
- Build cross-gen teams
- Avoid generational conflict potential
- Create organizational culture for all employees.




Understanding them



"They're baby boomers—oh, you know, real old."


- Impacted by events, people, experiences in the first 10 years of life.
- Experiences drive motivation, work style, job satisfaction, everything.
- You need to appreciate them to manage and lead them.



Generation Shapers

- What events, people, etc shaped each generation???

Traditionalists	Boomers
Gen Xers	Nexters



Generation Shapers

- **Traditionalists:**
 - **Events:** Depression, Dust bowl, WW II, Social Security, 50% of men are veterans
 - **People:** FDR, MacArthur, Eisenhower, Churchill, Babe Ruth, Joe DiMaggio
- **Boomers:**
 - **Events:** Civil Rights, Korea, Vietnam, Arms Race, Women's Lib, Space Race, Television
 - **People:** The Kennedys, MLK, John Glenn



Generation Shapers

- **Gen X:**
 - **Events:** Watergate, economy bust, energy crisis, divorce, Peace movement, Kent State
 - **People:** Bobby Kennedy, Gloria Steinem
- **Nexters:**
 - **Events/Trends:** Iran-Contra, Child focused, violence, desert storm, (Oklahoma City, Columbine, etc), technology, over planned lives, stress
 - **People:** Princess Dianna, Mia Hamm, Chris Reeves



Generational Values

- What does each generation value in work & life???

Traditionalists	Boomers
Gen Xers	Nexters



Generational Values

- **Traditionalists**
 - **Values:** Dedication, sacrifice, hard work, conformity, rules, authority
- **Boomers:**
 - **Values:** Team oriented, optimism, personal gratification, wellness, work, personal growth



Generational Values

- **Gen X:**
 - **Values:** Diversity, thinking globally, balance, tech-literacy, fun, independence, informality, pragmatism
- **Nexters:**
 - **Values:** Optimism, civic duty, confidence, achievement, sociability, morality, street smarts, diversity



Recruiting Generations

- What are some of the challenges?
- What are some of the benefits?
- How do we entice generations to our organization???



Recruiting Generations

- **Current Employee Pool:**
 - **Xers**
 - 46 million of them
 - 24-39 years old
- **Today's & the Future's Hiring Pool:**
 - **Millenials/Nexters**
 - Larger @ 76 million
 - 5-23 years old



Recruiting Generations

- **Traditionalists:** Focus on organization's history, the value of their experience, emphasize long-term goals
- **Boomers:** need to know experience will be valued, like to be change agent, stress dynamic, but warm/human work environment, career path, make a difference




Recruiting Generations

- **Gen Xers:** Want to know they can have a life, stress ideas judged on merit not years of experience, change = opportunities to move up or gain skills, fun workplace, hands off supervision.
- **Nexters:** Want job that fits into their heavily scheduled lives, expect flexibility, require technology, need to multi-task, & want to be managed.



Recruiting Generations

- **US Army**
- **Who was this campaign targeted at?**
 - Uncle Same wants you!
 - The power of one
 - Be all you can be
 - Join the people who've joined the army



Career Goals



- **Traditionalists** ... "Building a legacy."
- **Baby Boomers** ... "Build stellar career."
- **Gen Xers** ... "Build a portable career."
- **Millennials** ... "Build parallel careers."



The Ladders

- **Traditionalists** – Piece of the single big picture
- **Boomers** – Climb the Company Ladder
- **Xer's** – Climb the Career Ladder
- **Nexter** – Climb the Growth Ladder



Training



- **Traditionalists** ...
 - What they believe: “I learned it the hard way; you can too!”
 - What they need: computer training, don't rush, orient slowly, want to know the rules.
- **Baby Boomers** ...
 - What they believe: “Train 'em too much & they'll leave.”
 - What they need: Strategic planning, budgeting, & coaching skills. Tend to have a know-it-all attitude, but aren't good at practicing it.



Training

- **Gen Xers** ...
 - What they believe: “The more they learn, the more they stay.”
 - Gallup Org: 80% report it's key to job choice; job satisfaction increases with training
 - What they need: Frequent & diverse training; materials brief & scannable
- **Millennials** ...
 - What they believe: “Continuous learning is a way of life.”
 - What they need: Multimedia & multi format, short & informative, all the time.



Life Balance



- **Traditionalists** ... “Support me in shifting the balance.”
- **Baby Boomers** ... “Help me balance everyone else and find meaning myself.”
- **Gen Xers** ... “Give me balance now, not when I'm 65.”
- **Millennials** ... “Work isn't everything; I need flexibility so I can balance all of my activities.”



Generational Management

- Every generation comes with their own assets & liabilities
- Need to be understood them to manage them.



Generational Management

- **Traditionalists**: use personal touch – no e-mails, like status symbols, want to know rules
 - **Assets**: stable, detail oriented, thorough, loyal, hard working
 - **Liabilities**: have trouble with sex roles, inept w/ambiguity/change, reluctant to buck system, uncomfortable with conflict, restrained when they disagree.
- **Boomers**: personal touch, public recognition, perks, consensus, gadgets
 - **Asset**: service oriented, driven, willing to go extra mile, good at relationships, want to please team players.
 - **Liabilities**: not budget minded, conflict avoiders, reluctant to go against peers, process before result, overly sensitive to feedback, judgmental of free thinkers, self-centered.



Generational Management

- **Xers**: like simultaneous projects, constructive feedback, FREEDOM, leading edge technology, don't like old boy network inequality
 - **Assets**: adaptable, techno literate, independent, not intimidated by authority, creative
 - **Liability**: impatient, poor people skills, inexperienced, cynical
- **Nexters**: interweave personal goals w/ expected job performance, teams w/ strong leaders,
 - **Assets**: collective action, optimism, tenacity, heroic spirit, multitasking capabilities, techno savvy.
 - **Liabilities**: need for supervision & structure, inexperienced, especially w/ difficult people issues.



Understanding Generations Workplace

Feedback



- **Traditionalists** ... "No news is good news."
- **Baby Boomers** ... "Feedback once a year, with lots of documentation!"
- **Gen Xers** ... "Sorry to interrupt, but how am I doing?"
- **Millennials** ... "Feedback whenever I want it at the push of a button."



Rewards



- **Traditionalists** ... "The satisfaction of a job well done."
- **Baby Boomers** ... "Money, title, recognition, the corner office."
- **Gen Xers** ... "Freedom is the ultimate reward."
- **Millennials** ... "Work that has meaning for me."



Job Changing



- **Traditionalists** ... "Job changing carries a stigma."
- **Baby Boomers** ... "Job changing puts you behind."
- **Gen Xers** ... "Job changing is necessary."
- **Millennials** ... "Job changing is part of my daily routine."



Retirement Is?



- **Traditionalists** ... "Reward."
- **Baby Boomers** ... "Retool."
- **Gen Xers** ... "Renew."
- **Millennials** ... "Recycle."



The End

- Want to learn more? 2 Great Resources:

– **Generations at Work** by R. Zemke, C. Raines, & B. Filipczak

– **When Generations Collide** by L. Lancaster & David Stillman

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Thank You!!!

