When Generations Collide: Managing a Multigenerational Workforce

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Today’s Outcomes

• Understanding of the commonalities between the generations

• Insight into what makes each generation “tick”

• Appreciation for the contributions of each generation

• Understanding of generation-specific motivational and communication strategies
Commonalities of the Generations

1. Everyone wants to succeed
2. Everyone wants to feel valued
3. No one likes conflict
4. Everyone wants clearly defined goals/objectives
5. Everyone needs clear communication
6. Everyone likes to have fun and enjoy their work
Four Distinct Workgroups

**Traditionalists**
- Born before 1945
- 66 or older

**Baby Boomers**
- Born 1946 – 1964
- 47 to 65

**Generation X**
- Born 1965 – 1980
- 31 to 46

**Generation Y**
- Born 1981 – 1999
- 11 to 30

*2011 Statistics*
Audience Poll
What generations are represented in the audience today?
Traditionalists (aka Matures, The Silent Generation, Veterans)

- 8% of workforce
- Experienced wars and Great Depression
- Value their work
- Know sacrifice, disciplined
- Loyal
- Connected and influential
- Women in the home
Baby Boomers

- 40% of workforce
- Grew up in 60s
  - Prosperity and economic growth
  - Assassinations and Watergate
- Equality of sexes, highly educated women
- Dual income families
- Higher divorce rate
- Work-centric (AKA “Workaholics”)
- Respect for money
- 80% to work in retirement
Generation X

- 36% of workforce
- Disappointment in leaders
- Media savvy
  - MTV, internet, gaming
- Anxiety about
  - Health and safety
  - Job and finances
- “Free agency”
  - Focus on the here and now
  - Entrepreneurial
- Work/Life balance
  - 2/3 of women work PT
  - Parents divorced
  - Work hard/play hard
**Generation Y** (aka Nexters, Millennials, Echo Boomers, the Entitled or The We/Net/Google Generation)

- 16% of workforce (increasing rapidly)
- Fastest growing segment
- Born into computer/digital era
- Raised on heavy praise and self-esteem boosting curriculum
- Feel empowered and optimistic
- Change jobs every 1.3 yr. (Bureau of Labor and Statistics)
- 37% under- or unemployed during recession (Pew)
- Extended youth
  - 36% depend on family financial support from families
  - Third Gen Y employees live at home (Pew)
    - 21% married vs. Boomer at 42% (Pew)
- Comfortable with diversity
  - 40% is minority, 20% Hispanic (Pew)
Recap: What’s Important to Them

**Traditionalists**
- Loyalty and fair play
- Ethics are first and foremost
- Unconditional respect
- Giving back
- Honor commitments
- “Whatever it takes”
- Acknowledgement
- Legacy
- Value experience, “paying dues”

**Generation X**
- Results oriented
- “Works to live”
- Quality of work/life
- Self reliant, grow with independent research, online self study
- Believe they can learn from boss and boss can learn from them

**Baby Boomers**
- Process oriented
- Playing by the rules
- Rewards and money
- Work-centric, “Lives to work”
- Like process and collaboration
- Flourish with coaching and mentoring

**Generation Y**
- Optimistic
- Make a quick impact
- Seek responsibility and feedback
- Follow their passion,
- Autonomy and flexibility
- Masters at multitasking
- Question automatic respect
- Candid, express themselves openly
Technology
# Work Styles and Technology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Trad./Boomer</th>
<th>Generation X</th>
<th>Generation Y</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Email is...</strong></td>
<td>Another thing to do and learn</td>
<td>The best way to stay in touch</td>
<td>Not nearly as good as IM and blogging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instant Message (IM) is...</strong></td>
<td>Another distraction popping up on my screen</td>
<td>A good quick way to get things done</td>
<td>Like breathing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Text Messages are...</strong></td>
<td>For techie kids</td>
<td>Good for short messages</td>
<td>What I do all day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mobile video messaging is...</strong></td>
<td>No idea</td>
<td>A novelty</td>
<td>Commonplace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PowerPoint is...</strong></td>
<td>Effective and professional</td>
<td>My right arm</td>
<td>Pretty boring in a speech and hard to make interesting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Face-to-face meetings are...</strong></td>
<td>Vital</td>
<td>Key</td>
<td>Uncomfortable, confrontational and formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Search engines are...</strong></td>
<td>Useful but not trustworthy</td>
<td>How did we survive without Google</td>
<td>My super tool</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Conference calls are...</strong></td>
<td>Next best thing to a meeting</td>
<td>The way we work these days</td>
<td>An opportunity to multitask while “listening”</td>
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When Communicating With:

**Traditionalists**
- Private by nature, don’t expect them to share their thoughts
- Face to face or written communication is preferred
- Don’t let them feel their time is being wasted
- Words are critical (vs. body language)

**Baby Boomers**
- Body language important in communication
- Face to face or written communication is preferred
- Context and history are important: hey enjoy telling stories
- Speak directly and answer questions thoroughly with detail
- Values tactfulness, seriousness
- Likely to read procedural manual cover to cover
When Communicating With:

**Generation X**
- Use email primarily to communicate
- Talk in short bites to capture attention
- Ask for their feedback and give feedback to them often
- Share information and keep them in the loop
- Use informal, direct communication style

**Generation Y**
- Don’t talk down to them
- Use “just in time” communication and social networking:
  - Email, blogging, Twitter, IMing and text messaging, Facebook
- Ask for their feedback and give feedback to them often
- Use humor--don’t take yourself too seriously
- Offer alternatives to manuals/text books
- Be clear and straightforward when delegating
  - Don’t say “You might want to consider...” or “Have you thought about...”
  - Don’t be afraid to say “I need you to...”
A Generation Y member of your staff consistently shows up for meetings late (and on occasion is late for work too). He produces excellent work and has terrific interpersonal and technical skills.

- Do you bristle at his lateness?
- If so, how do you address this?
- Do you consider generational differences when planning your conversation?
Who needs to change?

- Is it the responsibility of the older/younger generations to shift their style?
## Managing Your Respected Elders

<table>
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<th>Tip</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ask opinion to understand mind frame</td>
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<td>Don’t assume there’s a problem with age gap</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Disrespect, slow, less productive, less technical savvy</td>
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<td>Remind yourself they aren’t your parent</td>
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<td>Managing challenges to your authority</td>
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<td>Leverage their technical expertise and institutional knowledge</td>
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<td>Learn what motivates them, security recognition</td>
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<td>Compliment, don’t compete</td>
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<td>Delegate and seek their counsel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Face to face communication may be preferred</td>
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<td>Show appreciation</td>
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Managing Generation Y

- Provide frequent detailed feedback and accolades
- Give them teams
- Designate shorter deadlines
- Teach them how to impact your workplace
- Coach them on written and face to face communication
- Feed their entrepreneurialism
- Facilitate their lives outside of work
How are we going to use this information?

- Innovation
- Effective Communication
- Employee engagement

Succession Planning
- Retention issues
- Internal knowledge transfer
- Leadership development
- External recruitment vs. retirement rates
5 Points to Navigating the Multigenerational Workforce

1. Remember commonalities amongst the groups:
   - 3 R’s -- Respected, Remembered and Recognized
   - 3 C’s – Coached, Consulted and Connected

2. Avoid stereotypes

3. Communicate strategically (in multiple formats)

4. Encourage collaboration (mentoring)

5. Capitalize on the diversity of thought
What’s coming with the next generation?

Answer: Generation Z (born after 1999)
Suggested References

• Motivating the “What’s in it For Me?” Workforce, Cam Marston, 2007

• Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation, William Strauss and Neil Howe, 2000

• Generations at Work, Ron Zemke, Claire Raines and Bob Filipczak, 2000

• “Did You Know”, http://www.youtube.com/v/C2jDOkzrVew&feature=auto play&list=PL8493E1D687A6049E&index=9&playnext=2

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Q&A, Wrap-Up & Evaluation

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