

Bridging Generational Differences

DEFINITION OF GENERATION: Group of individuals born and living during the same period of time who have **common knowledge and experiences** that affect their thoughts, attitudes, values, beliefs and behaviors.

GENERALITIES ABOUT EACH GENERATION

	<u>Veterans (Traditionalists)</u>	<u>Baby Boomers</u>	<u>Gen X'rs</u>	<u>Millennial/Gen Y'rs</u>
Born*	1922-1945	1946-1964	1965-1980	1981-late 90s
Current Age	71-94	52-70	36-51	19-35
Outlook	Practical	Optimistic	Skeptical	Hopeful
Work Ethic	<i>Dedicated ("Work First")</i>	<i>Driven ("Live to Work")</i>	Balanced ("Work to Live")	Determined ("Live then Work")
Authority	Respectful	Love/Hate	Unimpressed	Polite
Leadership Style	Hierarchy & Directive	Collegial & Consensus	Challenges & Coaches	TBD (Pull Together)
Relationships	Personal Sacrifice	Personal Gratification	Reluctant	Inclusive
Interactive Style	Individually Focused	Team Player / Meetings	Entrepreneur	Participative

*Dates vary depending on resource

IDEAS FOR WORKING WITH EACH GENERATION

<u>Veterans (Traditionalists)</u>	<u>Baby Boomers</u>	<u>Gen X'rs</u>	<u>Millennial/Gen Y'rs</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask for their advice • Value their input • Respect their wisdom • Thank them in writing • Find opportunities for them to mentor • Appreciate their experience and loyalty • Offer excellent benefits and traditional recognition • Encourage them to volunteer after they stop working (explore creating those opportunities for them) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let them know they are valued and needed • Show them respect for their skills, knowledge and potential • Offer flexible scheduling and benefits (allow them to accommodate life demands) • Help them visualize their career path (even if it's almost over) and their options • Public recognition (company newsletter, gifts, etc.) • Ask to capture their best practices and help transfer the knowledge to prepare future team members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Praise for job well done • Let them have fun at work • Don't micro-manage • Promote a healthy work/life balance and respect their time off • Likes informal recognition (day off or other perks) • Be straight-forward (don't sugar coat) • Give freedom to complete tasks at own discretion (with guidelines) • Increase learning potential and earning potential by identifying potential for growth opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give them access to latest and greatest technology • Show respect for their education • Offer freedom and flexible work schedules • Respect their ability to multi-task (with guidelines) • Make work teams part of your system • Give tasks that are challenging/rewarding • Give them structure, supervision, and immediate feedback • Honor their value of social responsibility • Enable them to grow by communicating their opportunities to learn and setting expectations for their career path • Include them in making decisions

COMMUNICATION TIPS

<u>Veterans (Traditionalists)</u>	<u>Baby Boomers</u>	<u>Gen X'rs</u>	<u>Millennial/Gen Y'rs</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They prefer traditional/ formal communication (letters, memos) • Honor the chain of command • Don't push technology on them • Prepare them for change (avoid surprises) • Don't rush them • Avoid jargon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like personal interactions • Prefer face-to-face and phone calls (at work) • Give your full attention • Like to be asked for their input and experience • Motivated by pep talks • Can expect them to go above and beyond the call of duty • Political correctness is important 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email is their favorite communication tool • Direct, straightforward, and informal communication • Get the point quickly and don't waste their time • Like immediate and direct feedback • Focus on the WHAT not the HOW • Avoid workplace politics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective communication is meaningful, brief and informal • More coach-y, less boss-y • Immediate helpful, encouraging feedback (careful to not criticize) • Recognize and reward efforts • Make effort to be responsive • Don't make jokes about age or any groups (not political correctness as much as concern for equal rights)
Learned technology for family	Probably joined Facebook to watch grandkids	Uses Facebook to stay in touch	Uses multiple technology channels for multiple purposes/connections

AVOID STEREOTYPING

Stop giving others reasons to stereotype!

- **Don't make snap judgments**
- **Check yourself** - be aware when you are making assumptions based on stereotypes
- **Get to know individuals** (preferences, strengths, characteristics, knowledge, skills, abilities...)
- **Don't blindly make changes** – research what people want and how (build what makes sense for YOUR organization)
- **Don't support stereotyping** – see something, say something (call others out on it)
- **Don't use stereotyping phrases** like “always” and “never” or “me generation” or “entitlement generation”



TEAM MEMBER SUGGESTIONS TO HELP BRIDGE THE GAP

Encourage individuals/teams/peers to:

- Get to know each other
- Think before they speak
- Respect others' experiences and opinions
- First understand and appreciate the old approach (when and how it came to be, successes and learning opportunities)
- Be open to new ideas/ways to do things
- Find opportunities to learn from each other
- Manage the pace (based on team members)
- Treasure opportunities to share experiences
- Brainstorm without judgment

