Generations in the Workplace

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Valley of the Sun United Way
What are we going to do?

- Discuss generations in the workplace
- Do an activity discussing traits and characteristics of different generations in the workplace
- Discuss tips and strategies for connecting in a multi-generational workplace
But Now a Warning!

- This is just a starting point
- People are much more diverse and complex
- There are many other factors that contribute to an individual's characteristics, traits, values and worldview
Why Does This Matter?

- Effective communication is crucial to workplace success
- We have a tendency to view issues and communication from the lens of our own generational experiences
- Different economies, socio-political landscapes, and historical occurrences impact one’s generational perspective
Generations in today’s workforce [2013]
Five Generations in the Workplace

- **Gen 2020**
- **Millennials**
- **Gen X**
- **Baby Boomers**
- **Traditionalists**

Bureau of Labor Statistics Employment Projections
Generational Types in the Workplace

• **Traditionalists**: Born 1927-1945
  - Hardworking, loyal, desiring to leave a legacy, fiscally conservative, faith in institutions, respect authority

• **Baby Boomers**: Born 1946-1964
  - Competitive, questioners of authority, desiring to put their own stamp on institutions, sandwiched, optimistic

• **Generation Xers**: Born 1965 – 1980
  - Eclectic, resourceful, self-reliant, skeptical of institutions, highly adaptive, independent, creative risk takers

• **Millenials**: Born 1981-2000
  - Globally integrated, cyber-literate, multi-taskers, "can-do" attitude, collaborative, sense of entitlement
## Generational Differences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Traditionalists</th>
<th>Boomers</th>
<th>Gen Xers</th>
<th>Millennials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current Age</strong></td>
<td>86-68</td>
<td>67-49</td>
<td>48-33</td>
<td>32 and younger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Defining Events</strong></td>
<td>Great Depression, WWII, The New Deal</td>
<td>Vietnam War, Rejection of Traditional Values</td>
<td>Personal Computers, Cold War Divorce</td>
<td>Internet, The Great Recession, War on Terror</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family/Marriage</strong></td>
<td>Close Family, Married Once</td>
<td>Dispersed Family, Divorced, Remarried</td>
<td>Latch Key Kids, Single Parent, Blended Family</td>
<td>Looser Structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Major Influences</strong></td>
<td>Family &amp; Church</td>
<td>Family &amp; Education</td>
<td>Media</td>
<td>Friends, Media &amp; Sport Stars</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Communication</strong></td>
<td>In Person</td>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>Cell Phones, Email</td>
<td>Text Message, IM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Work Style</strong></td>
<td>Team Work, Commitment to Work</td>
<td>Personal Fulfillment, Traditional work schedule</td>
<td>Fluid Careers (lateral), Work/life Balance</td>
<td>Networking, Team Work, Flexible Scheduling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Style</strong></td>
<td>Informational, Lecture, Task Specific</td>
<td>Transformational, Participation, Reflection, Feedback</td>
<td>Self-Directed, Integration of Technology and Media</td>
<td>Informal, Webinars, E-Learning, Personalized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Motivators</strong></td>
<td>Self-Worth, Build a Legacy</td>
<td>Salary, Build a Perfect Career</td>
<td>Security, Build a Transferable Career</td>
<td>Maintain Personal Life, Build Parallel Career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Career Goals</strong></td>
<td>Build a legacy, a life-time career with one company</td>
<td>Build a perfect career, excel at it</td>
<td>Build a transferable career, variety of skills and experiences</td>
<td>Build several parallel careers, have several jobs simultaneously</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ways of Giving</strong></td>
<td>Large Donations, Direct Mail, Religious Giving</td>
<td>By Check, Direct Mail/Online, Re-Careering</td>
<td>Online, Email Marketing, Word of Mouth</td>
<td>Crowdfunding, Social Giving, Volunteering, Mobile</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Generational Types in the Workplace

Traditionalists 1927-1945

- Show respect for the history and legacy of the organization.
- Make change about evolution, not revolution.
- Put them to work as teachers, coaches and mentors.
- Make sure they pass on what they know best.
Generational Types in the Workplace

**Baby Boomers** 1946-1964

- Appreciate where they have been and what they’ve accomplished.
- Remind them of the impact they are making.
- Beware of Boomer burnout.
- Continue to offer training and career-path opportunities.
- Allow time for critical reflection and feedback.
- Encourage Boomers to delegate.
Generational Types in the Workplace

**Generation Xers** 1965-1980

- Focus on career security, not job security; talk about career paths.
- Keep them learning; ensure access to simple, logically organized knowledge databases.
- Provide a clear direction, and let them take ownership of the project.
- Create opportunities for work-life balance.
- Pick up the pace of change; allow them to run with new ideas.
- Allow them to ask questions and challenge concepts.
Generational Types in the Workplace

**Millennials** 1981-2000

- Help them visualize a future career path with your organization.
- Provide opportunities to volunteer & work directly with your mission.
- Encourage them to join teams and work collaboratively.
- Create flexible options for work styles and benefits.
- Focus on how they can make a difference from the get-go.
- Utilize their ability to connect through multiple outlets.
- Provide instant feedback.
- Provide leadership and guidance.
Successfully Managing Across Generations

• Discuss expectations and ask people about their needs and preferences.
• Offer options that suit their needs and preferences
• Personalize your style and be flexible
• Build on strengths of a diverse team
• Pursue different perspectives
Generations Group Activities
Scenario Discussion
Working between Generations

• Openly communicate our needs
• Understand the impact our words, actions and decisions may have on others
• Recognize the skills and resources our colleagues from other generations have to offer
Discussion Questions

• How did you respond to the scenarios initially?

• Did you think about this from multiple perspectives? What were you thinking versus where they’re coming from?

• How do we get past this?

• What happens if we don’t get past this?

• How do preconceived stereotypes of other generations affect working relationships?
Sources

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  • W. Stanton Smith

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  • Thomas C. Reeves

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  • Winston B. Crisp

• What a Difference a Generation Makes!
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• Overcoming Generational Gap in the Workplace
  • Talent Management Team – Executive Office - United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund

• Ten Charts That Show We’ve All Got a Case of the Mondays
  • Gretchen Gavett, Harvard Business Review
Thank you