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COMPANIES

The Next Generation of Workers

THE NEXT GENERATION OF WORKERS

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ABOUT THE OFFICE OF THE FUTURE

Created by Marjorie Blanchard, PhD, the Office of the Future's function is to study and report on emerging trends in leadership, technology, and other workplace issues. Another primary role is to challenge the company's status quo and act as a catalyst for change that will ensure the company's continued vitality and success. Its findings and reports are available to clients and other organizations to assist with planning for the future and to the media for their use in keeping their readers advised of trends in the workplace.

This document is a summary of research compiled and prepared by The Ken Blanchard Companies, Office of the Future. It is available in PDF format.

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The Four Generations

Following is a side-by-side comparison of four generations. Expert opinions differ on the dates of each generation—for example, some have Xers ending in 1977 and some extending it to 1980 and beyond. The following data is based on the most frequently encountered beginning and ending points for each generation (U.S. Census Bureau).

Generation	Years	Population
The Silents	1925–1945	45 million
Baby Boomers	1946–1964	80 million
Gen Xers	1965–1976	49.1 million
Gen Yers	1977–1994	73.5 million

People born between two generations are referred to as the sandwiched generation, or cuspers, born between 1940–1945 (Silents and Boomers), 1959–1964 (Boomers and Gen Xers), and 1970–1975 (Gen Xers and Gen Yers).

Cuspers carry many similarities of the preceding and succeeding generations and are considered forerunners, pacesetters, and trendsetters. They can easily adapt to the differences of two generations, and make good managers—seeing both points of view and providing a voice for those who are not heard. For example, cuspers born in 1940–1945 learned the hard lessons from their parents who had lived through the Great Depression and World War II. As a sandwiched generation, they were the trendsetters of Baby Boomers, who take credit for bringing more equality into the workplace.

Note: Grouping people based on their year of birth may be reliable for a large population and the characteristics for that group may be interesting and informative; however, the general characteristics will not fit every person born during the same span of time.

Therefore, one approach to analyzing an individual or group of people is to use their year of birth or age as a potential indicator of likes and dislikes. If people seem to fit the profile for a specific generation, leaders and managers should try to confirm that the observation is true for each individual. If not, it will be necessary to reevaluate the person and look for other ways to understand and work well with him or her.

Other ways can include understanding personality differences through instruments such as DiSC® Personel Profile System® or Myers-Briggs Type Indicator®. Cultural differences are also a different lens for viewing workplace compatibility.

Introduction: Four Generations Working—or Not Working—Together

During a recent San Diego-based radio talk show, a 21-year-old Gen Yer called in to request expert advice regarding a work issue. Although doing well in her job as an intern journalist and getting along smoothly with her coworkers, the caller was upset because she was not invited to socialize with her coworkers after work.

"Just be patient, you've only been on the job for 30 days," said the Baby Boomer talk show host. "Keep doing good work. You'll need to pay your dues and eventually earn the respect and trust of the group. In the meantime, you're lucky to have a job, so quit your whining."

Do you agree with the "Boomer" talk show host? Or, did this advice discourage the Gen Y caller even more? This scenario is based on a typical generational clash of viewpoints. First, there are plenty of low-skilled, low-paying jobs to go around and more than likely, when it comes to priorities, the company the Gen Yer works for is the last on her list of loyalties—behind her family, friends, and of course, herself. Second, unlike their Gen X predecessors who prefer individual endeavors, Gen Yers are team spirited and like to band together.

Growing up in schools and environments that fostered teamwork, consensus, and collaboration, they crave belonging and fitting in. They also want to have fun and live for the moment, combining working, learning, and playing—and that includes socializing and forming friendships with coworkers.

Finally, armed with the latest electronic devices, laptops, and cell phones, Gen Yers demand immediate gratification and tend to be impatient when they do not get what they want when the want it. They expect things to happen quickly, and they resent being told they "have to pay their dues." Do you think the Gen Y caller is going to hang around and wait to gain the respect of her coworkers?

Generational clashes, such as the one described above, are becoming more common in the workplace. These are the new faces of the workplace that will create new challenges for organizations in the years ahead. For years, Boomers have dominated the workplace, but that is changing.

For the first time in modern history, four generations of workers are working side by side—each bringing a wide range of cultural and generational idiosyncrasies with them to the workplace. According to research by Rainmaker Thinking, Gen Xers and Gen Yers made up 50.5 percent of the workforce in 2005 and that number is quickly increasing.

Many organizations are not equipped to deal with the generational conflicts that may be arising, and most managers are struggling with how to work constructively with individuals in each generation. In addition to dealing with generational differences, organizations are facing a looming surge of Baby Boomer retirement.

With a historically low five percent unemployment rate, businesses are seeking creative and effective ways to address and accommodate the demands of the new workforce. Businesses are rethinking traditional human resources practices of hiring, motivating, and retaining key talent.

The standard one-size-fits-all employee benefits, packages, and work requirements no longer serve the needs of people in a market-driven, fiercely competitive economy. As more and more organizations compete to find and hire top talent in a tight job market, they realize that leading and managing an intergenerational workforce is becoming a business imperative that cannot be ignored.

Beliefs and Values Development

A high percentage of learned behavior and attitude patterns in adults are directly correlated to their formative years. According to Morris Massey, the major factors influencing value development are:

- Family, friends

- Media

- Formal education

- Church/religion

- Income

- Geography

- Teachers, formal and informal

The most influential period of our value development process takes place during the first 10 years.

What happened to you and what was going on in society when you were 10 years old that shaped your values? These include defining moments or conditions in our environment that influenced people at every age, such as wars, historical or political events, the financial climate, and popular heroes. While people of all ages are experiencing these things simultaneously, younger people who are in this value-forming stage are most likely to be significantly shaped by the influences surrounding them. Massey identified the stages of value development as follows:

- **Birth to 7 years**: Imprint by observation or patterning. What a child experiences is accepted, internalized, and considered to be right and normal.

- **8–13 years**: Modeling by heroes or identification. A child starts to make own value decisions. He or she will look outside of family—people he or she wants to be like. The child observes qualities he or she wants to emulate and internalizes them and imitates them.

- **14–20 years**: Socialization by peers or significant other. Teens will seek their peer group and society to try out their values, test which ones will endure, and see how they compare. They will experiment, observe, and make decisions about what is right or wrong, good or bad. They will start making choices about what kind of people they will be and what they want to do.

- **21+ years**: A significant emotional experience (S.E.E.) may change or replace values. Without that, values are now set.

Established values shape and guide people and will be the basis for our decisions unless people have a significant emotional experience. An S.E.E. is something that emotionally affects an individual's perception or understanding of reality and causes them to reexamine the basic value or belief.

If powerful enough, the experience will cause the person to exchange one value for another. An S.E.E. can occur anytime in life, but the earlier it occurs, the more significant the change will be. Some examples of significant events range from a bad divorce, death of a loved one, a financial crisis, a spiritual awakening, a motivational workshop, or even a conversation that influences how we think or act.

Bridging the Intergenerational Gap

Identifying generational distinctions can provide a useful framework for building awareness and understanding of the different viewpoints, attitudes, needs, and expectations among generations as well as the implications for future changes in the workplace. Understanding these unique generational differences can become a competitive advantage for organizations in terms of higher productivity and human performance. Also, the long-term costs related to loss of talent, higher payroll costs, poor customer service, derailed careers, knowledge transfer, and stress-related issues are enormous.

Though these distinctions may raise concerns about stereotyping, some generalizations can be made. Neil Howe and William Strauss, authors of *Millenials Rising: The Next Great Generation,* say that although everyone in a particular generation does not hold the exact same values or beliefs, overall people share similar formative experiences, thus creating a generational identity. A generational cohort shares a common history and collective knowledge that define and shape who they are. The work expectations and the influences of a generation are often a by-product of that generation's unique upbringing and life experiences.

For example, look at your own experience. What happened to you when you were a child? What was going on in society that shaped your values? According to Morris Massey, author of *The People Puzzle,* the first 10 years of a person's life are the most influential years and shape the individual's values, beliefs, and attitudes.

Our culture, technology, society, media, and events have a powerful influence on what we do and think. Those influences shape our decision making and life choices, including how we approach work. Massey states that our values get embedded by age 20, and from that point forward, impact our professional and personal life—unless we have a significant emotional experience that shatters those values. Massey also points out that while people of all ages are experiencing these events at the same time, those who are in the value-forming stage (under 21 years of age) are most significantly impacted by their influence. Most adults, to a lesser degree, are filtering these factors through an existing value system.

According to demographic experts, each generation adopts its generational identity through people, places, events, and conditions that became reference points. For example, historical events such as the Vietnam War, President Kennedy's assassination, and the Clinton scandal, or conditions or forces at work such as the Cold War, Great Depression, and 9/11, or major changes in family structure such as divorce, marriage, or single parenting, have affected millions of people. Baby Boomers, who are notorious for challenging the status quo, have a different point of view than their parents—the Silents—about patriotism. The Silents, although too young to participate in World War II, are nevertheless very patriotic—a by-product of their parents' upbringing and strong belief in national pride and civic duty.

To bridge the generation gap, organizations can provide opportunities for workers to share insights and resolve misunderstandings, "clear the air," and remove age-based prejudgments that hinder their working relationship. Dr. Carolyn A. Martin and Bruce Tulgan, authors of *Managing the Generation Mix,* suggest that organizations begin by addressing questions such as: What is the generational mix and what has shaped each generation's perspectives?

How does the generation's work history impact behaviors at the work site? How do you bridge the misunderstandings and remove the barriers among the generations in order to produce more successful relationships? How do organizations leverage each individual's contributions and unique traits? What skills and competencies do managers need to effectively lead and manage collaborative multiple generations? What urgent multigenerational challenges demand our immediate attention? And so forth. By acknowledging and honoring the differences and strengths of all generations, organizations can leverage and maximize the learning, productivity, and innovation of the entire organization.

Workplace Traits Most Attributed to Generations

The Silents

- Plan to stay with the organization over the long term
- Respectful of organizational hierarchy
- Like structure
- Accepting of authority figures in the workplace
- Give maximum effort

Baby Boomers

- Give maximum effort
- Accepting of authority figures in the workplace
- Results driven
- Plan to stay with the organization over the long term
- Retain what they learn

Gen Xers

- Technologically savvy
- Like informality
- Learn quickly
- Seek work-life balance
- Embrace diversity

Gen Yers

- Technologically savvy
- Like informality
- Embrace diversity
- Learn quickly
- Need supervision

The results shown are the top five traits for each generation listed in order from highest to lowest.

Source: SHRM *Generational Differences Survey Report*, 2004.

Intergenerational Differences and Similarities

A 2004 Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) report identified potential differences in points of views that sometimes lead to intergenerational conflict. The report noted that a large percentage of HR professionals deal with generational conflicts frequently. The report showed that in addition to differences based on formative experiences, different generations value training and development, retirement, benefits, and childcare differently based on current needs. According to the report, common intergenerational clash areas include:

- Gen Xers rate "high on preference for informality and desire to seek work-life balance." In contrast, older workers rate "high on their respect for organizational hierarchy and plan to stay with organization over the long term." This clash raises complaints by older workers about the poor work ethic of the younger generation. Younger workers, however, perceive this as a "time or work-life balance issue."

- Younger workers are less likely than older workers to value "face time." This could be attributed to the increase of flexible work options available, such as telecommuting, that allow workers to work outside the physical office.

- Older workers focus more on time spent on the job, and younger workers focus more on quality of output.

- Younger workers feel they are unable to advance in their careers because upper management positions are filled by older workers.

- Larger companies (more than 500 employees) report more intergenerational conflict than small and medium-sized companies.

- Regardless of age, generations share similar views about good benefits and compensation, job security, and a safe work environment.

The results from Randstad's nationwide 2006 Employee Review Report of 3,000 Americans further confirms the widening gap of generational differences, specifically regarding expectations and needs in the workplace:

- Gen Y workers are less interested in pay increases (27%) than are Silents (40%), Boomers (33%), and Gen Xers (31%)

- Gen Yers rate job training high (10%) compared to Silents and Boomers (4%) and Gen Xers (3%).

- More Gen Xers (52%) and Gen Yers (58%) want their employers to provide career paths compared to Boomers (41%) and Silents (29%).

- Gen Xers and Gen Yers are more experience-focused rather than status-focused on job title, position, and wealth.

- Job training most appeals to Gen Yers (10%) compared to Silents and Boomers (4%) and Gen Xers (3%).

- Only 3% of Gen Yers and 8% of Gen Xers consider increased responsibilities important to their careers; unlike Silents (15%) and Boomers (11%).

- Gen Xers and Boomers value promotions (11% and 9% respectively) more than Gen Yers (4%) and Silents (2%) do.

- Silents (84%) want more recognition and appreciation from their job than do Boomers (78%), and both Gen Yers and Gen Xers (74%) said this was important.

- Gen Yers (60%), Boomers and Silents (both at 55%) are willing to tolerate more stress for more money.

The Generation Matrix

There are pros and cons to generational mixing in the workplace. One positive outcome is that it can bring creativity and innovation in decision making and problem solving as people come together to share different perspectives. On the flip side, blending generations can cause conflicts or clashes due to differences in values, ways of working, communication styles, and so forth. Learning and understanding the unique differences of what makes each generation "tick" is helpful in creating awareness and common trust among all people in the workplace.

The Generation Matrix (see Appendix) provides a framework to engage workers in a lively discussion in order to share generational viewpoints, attitudes, needs, and expectations at work—why people work they way they do, what they believe in, and what motivates them. They can compare and contrast how their differing viewpoints play into potential generational conflicts or clashes in the workplace such as Leadership/View of Authority, Technology, Relationships, Diversity/Change, Job/Career/Retirement, Management, Job Loyalty/Security, Work Ethic/Work-Life Balance, Motivation/Rewards/Recognition, and Generation Characteristics.

Workers have an opportunity to share their insights and understandings about cross-generational issues and potential conflict areas that may get in the way of their working relationship. It provides a place for individuals and teams to acknowledge and honor their differences, focus on their strengths, and see how each benefits from one another. We have extracted workplace generational characteristics and attitudes of four generations—Silents, Baby Boomers, Gen Xers, and Gen Yers—from the Generation Matrix and created four scenarios to demonstrate how differing generational points of views may lead to misunderstandings and misinterpretations.

The key question is how can the four generations benefit from each other's different perspectives and strengths. The Silents, or the Silent Generation, as described by Neil Howe and William Strauss, authors of Generations, are the children of the Great Depression and World War II generation who adopted many of the strong beliefs and values about patriotism, loyalty, and hard work from their elders. The Silents grew up during an unstable economy, learned not to take their jobs for granted, and believed in putting in an honest day's work for an honest day's pay. They are the trendsetters and pacesetters who helped nurture, teach, and produce the Baby Boomers. Although Baby Boomers take credit for the culture wars of the 1960s, it was the Silent Generation who silently paved the way to bring more equality into the workplace. In a booming manufacturing economy, a command-and-control style of leadership was an efficient way of getting things done along with specialized roles and strong central authority.

Hardworking and competitive, Baby Boomers have dominated the workplace for years. As challengers of the status quo, Boomers made tremendous strides in the workplace during the shift from an industrial to a knowledge-based economy. Boomers were instrumental during the 1980s in introducing more democratic, humane, and informal concepts to the workplace.

> "Hardworking and competitive, Baby Boomers have dominated the workplace for years."

They brought in participative management, employee involvement, and team building, flattening the traditional hierarchy. Boomers entered the workplace believing they could find security and good pay in corporations. The corporate restructuring, downsizing, and layoffs during the early 1980s and late 1990s shattered their dreams—leaving many people feeling disenchanted with corporate America and insecure about their jobs.

"Work is just a job—families come first!" Balance between life and work is the key to happiness according to most Gen Xers. Xers have chosen to schedule their careers around large periods of time off to enable them to do things they want to do between jobs. Unlike

their Boomer counterparts, Xers reject the idea of putting in 60-hour workweeks. Gen Xers are sometimes viewed as cynical and may not trust or respect large institutions, corporate or otherwise. Lacking faith in job security and career permanence, they prefer to seek opportunities to become independent value adders, constantly reinventing themselves and their roles in organizations. Xers tend to have a casual approach toward authority—judging leadership on merit rather than status and titles.

The most overprotected and coddled generation in history are the Gen Yers. First wave Gen Yers are currently entering the workforce and will be moving into positions vacated by Xers. Yers are not as concerned about job security as much as finding their dream job. Highly optimistic and confident, they want to succeed immediately in their jobs, and if they don't, they will jump ship and find another job rather than climb the corporate ladder.

Like Xers, Gen Yers saw their parents lose their jobs due to corporate downsizing, layoffs, and mergers and they are more loyal to their teams, managers, and coworkers than to institutions. If they are not satisfied in their present job, they will leave for better benefits, more flexible working arrangements, and greater promotional opportunities.

Like their Gen X cohorts, work-life balance is a priority—many are unwilling to put in the long hours and hard work of Boomers and Silents. These scenarios show how differing points of view and contrasting expectations among generations can lead to misunderstandings, false assumptions, and conflicts in the workplace. The Generation Matrix can help leaders and managers build awareness of and understanding of these differing generational attitudes and expectations, and the importance of using flexible leadership styles to address the needs of multiple generations at work. Key coaching questions leaders and managers can ask:

- Are things as you had expected they would be?

- Are there talents you aren't using right now that would benefit the team? The organization?

- What work would you like to be doing more of? Less of?

- Are you being challenged enough? What would make your job more satisfying?

- Are you being trained enough? What new skills would you like to learn in order to enhance your performance or just to widen your knowledge of business?

- Are you being given enough feedback? Are there any opportunities you would be interested in pursuing?

- Are you being recognized enough? How would you like me to recognize and reward you for the contributions you make to the team?

- What about your job makes you want to take the day off?

- Why do you stay? What might lure away?

It is important to note that generational cohorts share many similarities while there are many differences among generations.

According to Jennifer Deal, author of *Retiring the Generation Gap: How Employees Young and Old Can Find Common Ground,* and research scientist with the Center for Creative Leadership, research suggests that generational cohorts frequently share common values and beliefs such as integrity, achievement, balance, competence, happiness, and so forth. Deal surveyed more than 3,000 corporate leaders and found that, more than likely, misperceptions about values are associated with context, not age. Deal argues that all generations essentially value the same things.

For example, "People of all generations, at all levels, trust people they work with directly more than they trust their organization." Although generations may have the same value, however, they do not define it in the same way. Deal says that generational conflict is "the result of miscommunication and misunderstanding, fueled by common insecurities and desire for clout."

The Generation Matrix

According to Deal's research:

- All generations have similar values. The most striking result of the research is how similar the generations are in the values that matter most.
- Family is listed as the top priority for all of the generations.

- Everyone wants respect. All workers want respect, but the generations don't define it in the same way. In the study, older individuals talked about respect in terms of "giving my opinions the weight I believe they deserve," while younger respondents characterized respect as "listen to me; pay attention to what I have to say."

- Leaders must be trustworthy. All workers want leaders they can trust.

- No one really likes change. People of all generations are uncomfortable with change. It has less to do with age but rather how much people stand to gain or lose as a result of the change.

- Loyalty depends on context. The amount of time a worker puts in each day has more to do with his or her level in the organization than with age. The higher the level, the more hours worked.

- Everyone wants to learn. Learning and development opportunities were important for all generations.

- Everyone likes feedback. Everyone want to know how they are doing and how to improve through learning and training opportunities.

Finally, generations adjacent to one another may share more similarities than those that are two or more generations removed. For example, Gen Xers and Gen Yers are known for changing jobs more frequently than people in the preceding generations.

Both generations are viewed as somewhat cynical and as lacking faith that job security and career permanence exist, mostly because they saw their parents or other adults lose their jobs to corporate downsizing, layoffs, and mergers.

Thus, they do not trust and respect large corporations. They are, however, loyal to their coworkers, teams, and bosses—and demonstrate this by constantly acquiring new skills or experience to prepare themselves for the next job.

Best Practices for Leading and Managing an Intergenerational Workforce

It is important for leaders and managers to be aware of and understand the different attitudes and expectations of an intergenerational workforce and how to manage them effectively and to manage the potential clash points that may arise such as work ethics, managing change, and so forth. Best practices such as good communication and flexible leadership styles will increase the likelihood of successfully managing a productive workforce and meet the expectations and needs of individuals, as well as those of the entire organization.

For example, Gen Xers and Gen Yers share similar needs and expectations such as a more innovative workplace, flexible hours, inclusion, and supervisors who care and listen. Younger people are more interested in hearing that organizations want them to have a life, not just a job. Consequently, they desire more choices and freedom to pursue their career development. They may require a different leadership and coaching style with immediate, ongoing feedback Understanding these unique needs and offering them training opportunities to increase their career growth will enhance their productivity and support retention efforts. The following cross-generational experts and authors provide practical solutions and best practices for creating a friendly intergenerational organization.

Generations at Work

Ron Zemke, Claire Raines, and Bob Filipczak, authors of Generations at Work, point out that best companies to work for must be sensitive to the unique differences and needs of each generation and what individuals are looking for, such as what makes work rewarding, which environment is most productive, and what types of workload, schedules, and policies contribute to a workplace that attracts and retains top talent. Best companies to work for leverage the diverse backgrounds, experiences, and skills of their employees and use these differences to maximize the organization's overall mission and goals. The authors emphasize that the two keys to creating a successful workforce are "overcommunication" and difference deployment (using employees' differences to strengthen teams, departments, etc.). In the book *Generations at Work,* the authors profiled five organizations that have successfully tapped into and leveraged the strengths of their intergenerational workforce, including Chevy's Fresh Mix, TGI Friday's, Ben & Jerry's Homemade, Inc., Lucent Technologies, and West Group. These organizations have creatively and successfully applied five critical operating principles into their workplace:

1. **Accommodate employee differences**—This means treating their employees as they do their customers. They identify and try to serve their employees' preferences such as work-life balance, flextime, and scheduling options to accommodate a diverse workforce.

2. **Create workplace choices**—They allow the workplace to shape itself around the work being done, customers being served, and people who do the work. This translates to decreased bureaucracy, casual dress code, short chain of command, a relaxed and informal environment, and having fun.

3. **Operate from sophisticated management style**—Leaders and managers are direct but tactful; and effectively articulate the bigger vision, specific goals, and measures. They provide autonomy to do the work and reward performance. Seven key attributes that characterize their flexibility:

   • Their supervisory style is not fixed. Direct reports are managed by individual track record and personal preferences.

   • Their leadership style is situationally varied.

   • They depend less on position power and more on personal power.

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Best Practices for Leading and Managing an Intergenerational Workforce

- They know when and how to make policy exceptions for people.

- They are thoughtful when matching individuals to a team assignment.

- They balance concern for tasks and for people.

- They understand the elements of trust, and work to gain it from their employees (fair, inclusive, good communicators, competent).

4. **Respect competence and initiative**—They assume the best of their people. Companies hire carefully to assure a good match between the person and the job.

5. **Nourish retention**—They are concerned and focused on retention—offering lots of training, one to-one coaching, and training opportunities. They encourage regular parallel movement between jobs with broadened assignments.

Leadership Styles: Different Generations

In the SHRM article Leadership Styles: Generational Differences, by Nancy R. Lockwood,the author stresses the importance of using flexible leadership styles to address the needs and expectations of multiple generations at work. The article recommends the following best practices to better equip leaders and managers and to increase productivity and retention. The data was based on extensive research by expert sources and findings from the SHRM Generational Differences Survey Report, 2004.

Silents

- Create positive working relationships by gaining trust and respecting their experience without being intimidated by it.

- Gain their confidence by demonstrating compassion and understanding.

Baby Boomers

- Preferred leadership style is collegial and consensual.

- Gain their confidence by demonstrating compassion and understanding.

- Approach them with respect for their achievements.

- Involve them in participating in the organization's direction and implementation of change initiatives.

- Challenge them to contribute as part of a team to solve organizational problems.

- Offer opportunities to serve as a coach as part of the change process.

- Support work–life balance.

Gen Xers

- Respect the experiences that have shaped their beliefs and thinking.

- Tell them the truth.

- Honor sense of work–life balance.

- Offer mentoring programs.

- Clearly communicate that repetitive tasks and quality checks are part of the job.

- Offer learning opportunities.

Gen Yers

- Take time to orient with respect to the organization's culture.

- Provide structure and strong leadership.

- Be clear about expectations and long-term goals.
- Offer mentoring programs.

Best Practices for Leading and Managing an Intergenerational Workforce

Suggested recommendations to successfully communicate included:

- Delegate work in a way that involves the strengths of each group (e.g., on a cross generational team, the team leader could suggest that the Gen Xers do the research and Baby Boomers process the information).

- Hold fewer and shorter meetings for Gen Xers and Gen Yers.

- Customize educational programs (e.g., communicating across generations may mean packaging messages in several ways so that everyone understands).

Leading a Multigenerational Workforce—12 Best Practices

Dr. Susan Murphy, a senior consultant with Claire Raines Associates, a consulting firm specializing in generational differences, offers 12 best practices:

1. Study generational composition; use the information in many HR strategies.

2. Train people about the generations, using a variety of formats.

3. Match workforce to customer base.

4. Include all generations on boards and councils.

5. Support continuing education (lifelong learning, tuition reimbursement, etc.).

6. Reward managers for retention.

7. Reward performance and productivity (without regard to age).

8. Offer horizontal movement (to gain experience and break down silos).

9. Plan for succession (knowledge management transfer).

10. Offer mentoring programs (to transfer knowledge from senior to junior employees).

11. Offer flexible scheduling (part-time work, temporary positions, job sharing, telecommuting).

12. Offer a wide variety and choices of benefits (auto, life, and health insurance, 401(k) match, alumni group, etc.).

Why Should Organizations Care? Emerging and Intersecting Trends Impacting the Workplace

The following emerging and intersecting trends build a convincing business case for creating a business-friendly intergenerational workforce. In light of the emerging trends, where there is intergenerational mixing, there is potential intergenerational conflict, especially in the way people approach their work, how they communicate, and how they perform in the workplace.

Leadership Gap

Organizations are concerned about the looming Baby Boomer retirement surge and the resulting urgent need to fill critical leadership positions. The pool of 25- to 65-year-olds is shrinking rapidly. The unemployment rate is just 5 percent, and we can only expect it to go lower. According to the Conference Board, 64 million skilled workers will be able to retire by the end of this decade. That equates to two employees leaving for every new hire entering. The Hudson Institute predicts the supply of skilled labor in the United States will not catch up to the demand until 2050. Simply put, there are not enough workers from younger generations to take their places. The Gen X population is a little more than half the population of Baby Boomers, leaving a gap in upper management positions when Boomers begin to retire in the next few years. Gen Yers are considered too young and inexperienced to fill these gaps. Some organizations, such as IBM, are adding special programs for their middle- management employees and providing more perks to retain key talent.

Custom-Built Life

According to a National Study of the Changing Workforce, 26 percent of workers of all ages plan to be self-employed or own their own business at some time in the future. Many young people are electing to start their own businesses rather than join the corporate ranks. With confidence, skill, and new technology on their side, they are inventing their own jobs and even their own companies. In a recent study, 43 percent of employees under the age of 30 plan to be self-employed. According to a recent poll conducted by the Pew Research Center, self-employed workers are considerably more satisfied with their jobs than are other workers. Why? There is less risk. Advanced technology is breaking down the barriers for anyone to create a start-up with very little capital. Savvy entrepreneurs can have a company up and running in a matter of weeks versus years. The surge in entrepreneurialism is causing concern for many companies that are facing an impending shortage of skilled workers. The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics projects the self-employed category will grow 5 percent from 2004 to 2014, compared with 2 percent growth for the decade that began in 1994.

Lack of Management Skills

Many Gen Xers have been in the workforce for 10 to 15 years and are beginning to move into more senior-level positions in their companies. Many are now managing coworkers who are 10 to 20 years older than they are, and in many cases, are more experienced than they are. Some Gen Xers have been promoted so rapidly or have had so little mentoring that they have never learned management basics.

Many others need to learn interpersonal and communication skills to effectively manage up as well as learn how to effectively work with corporate politics and get things done through others. A recent report published by Personnel Decisions International revealed that management skill and competencies differ between generations and that organizations need to plan ahead for a fundamental change in management practices, especially as Boomer managers are replaced by Gen Xers.

The Retention Challenge

What are the costs for hiring and replacing key talent? According to research by T&D Magazine, in the United

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Why Should Organizations Care? Emerging and Intersecting Trends Impacting the Workplace

States, the cost of replacing an employee averages $17,000. Workers making more than $60,000 per year will cost organizations more than $38,000 to replace. Replacing experienced employees includes intangible costs such as loss of corporate knowledge when employees walk out the door with corporate know-how. Another intangible cost associated when workers leave includes adding more work for existing employees, thus affecting their morale and productivity. Many businesses are struggling to keep pace with a new generation of young people entering the workplace.

According to workplace experts, younger workers want a more collaborative work environment, less boring work, and more work-life balance. An online survey of 320 graduates by Experience, Inc., found an average tenure of 1.6 years at a first full-time job. More than 36 percent stayed less than a year.

Many organizations have revamped their recruiting and retention programs to attract and retain older and younger workers. Digital Natives versus Digital Immigrants. According to author Marc Prensky, who has studied the technologically savvy generation, a typical 21-year-old entering the workforce today has, on average, played 5,000 hours of video games; exchanged 250,000 emails, instant messages, and phone text messages; and spent 10,000 hours on a cell phone and 3,500 hours online.

Generational clash? This experience creates a great divide between the generation that grew up with technology and is easily assimilating it and customizing their digital world around it, and the generations that are "playing catch up" and trying to accommodate these new changes. Tech savvy Gen Yers will expect the latest technology and gadgets in the workplace. Their experience with interactive media has led many young people to develop new skills, assumptions, and expectations about their employers.

Some experts warn, however, that the heavy reliance of technology such as cell phones, instant messaging, and email—in addition to relying on their parents and friends at the other end of the technology—is affecting the brain development of younger people—especially in area related to independent thinking and decision making.

Getting Blindsided by Hiring Only One Generation

Companies will be at risk of losing their competitive edge if they become too locked into employing only one generation of workers. For example, a company that is staffed exclusively by Boomers will not be able to tap into the energy and experiences of Gen Yers and may lack the ability to connect with customers from other generations. Cam Marston, author of Motivating the "What's in It for Me" Workforce, says that there are key differences in customer service between the generations. Silents and Boomers define service as care, concern, interaction, and conversation. Gen Xers and Gen Yers measure service in time and seek service that is quick and reliable. Learning what different generations prefer and providing service according to customers' preferences is not only key in retaining good talent but also good customers.

Work-Life Balance

As we continue to see rapid developments in information and communication technologies, workers will be pressured to do more with less. Stress-related problems affecting employee morale and wellness will continue to grow as a result of a fast-paced and time-pressured environment. According to a survey conducted by Edge International, a legal management consulting firm, Gen Yers ranked "time for personal life" as their number one priority. According to the Undergraduate Ideal Employer Ranking Survey conducted by Universum Communications, an employer-branding specialist that helps companies develop their brand image, students ranked "balance personal and professional life" and "pursue further education" as their two top priorities in the workplace.

Gen Yers are less willing to sacrifice family and personal time for the office and less likely to be loyal and committed to working long hours. Boomers are catching on as well, seeking more work-life balance such as flexible work schedule options. While studies show that improvements in employees' work-life balance can improve organizational results, many organizations still do not offer these benefits.

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Boundaryless Workforce

New work arrangements such as telecommuting, virtual teams, and use of temporary professionals have changed the makeup of the workplace. Organizations are relocating to the suburbs where land, resources, and labor are cheaper. More workers are telecommuting or working out of remote offices or from their own homes. To compete globally, many multinationals are offshoring or outsourcing to low-cost emerging economies such as India and China. The United Nations projected a growth rate for India at 8 percent over 2006 and 9 percent in China. One of the biggest challenges for multinational companies is learning how to mobilize their human resources globally and getting workers to adopt a collaborative mind-set regarding a wide range of cultural and generational idiosyncrasies. Many younger workers are coming into the workforce with networking, multiprocessing, and global-mindedness skills that older generations can learn from. However, the Silents and the Baby Boomers report performance concerns involving the "If you don't see them, are they performing?" mentality.

One-Size Does Not Fit All

In the past, companies did not worry about an individual's wants and desires. They usually implemented a one-size-fits-all management philosophy to fit everyone's needs. If some employees did not or could not conform to the organization's policies and practices, companies encouraged these people to leave. That is no longer true. Research conducted by Mercer Human Resource Consulting found that different generations of employees required different management strategies for recruiting, retaining, and motivating workers. Employers are rethinking traditional practices as the era of standardized benefits and work requirements gives way to a more custom-built model. Many organizations are helping young workers create customized career paths; they may offer professional development opportunities such as training, adding new responsibilities, or offering monetary rewards and stay-on bonuses. In contrast, Boomers are looking for roles that offer an opportunity to do meaningful work, reliable job security, retirement pensions, and health care.

Unprepared to Enter the Workforce

According to a recent report by SHRM, Are They Really Ready to Work?, at the high school level, well over one-half of new entrants are not prepared in the most important skills such as oral and written communications, professionalism/work ethic, and critical thinking/problem solving. College graduates did not do much better. A Human Resource Institute survey showed that 85 percent of young people who attend a two-year college and 45 percent who attend a four-year institution have to take a full year of remedial training. One of the largest and fastest growing groups of young people in the United States is college dropouts—rising to almost one out of three Americans in their mid-20s, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Some experts state overreliance on computer programs that correct spelling and grammar errors perpetuates poor written communication skills. Email and instant messaging also rob the opportunity for developing face-to-face interpersonal skills. Therefore, many organizations are opting to recruit and hire Gen Yers in high school and college to get them up-to-speed faster in order to involve them earlier in more important roles and critical tasks.

The Flatter, Superfast, Efficient Organization

The traditional brick-and-mortar organization with a full-time staff and highly structured hierarchy is making way for a more fluid and flexible organizational structure, with a core of ever-shifting network of suppliers and vendors all working together—permanently or temporarily—to accomplish a single project. Portable computing devices are revolutionizing how we work and share information. Wireless technology is enabling more individuals to access the Internet from more locations. Software organizations such as Yahoo!, which recruit and manage a diverse workforce made up of individuals who work well with a lack of formalized processes, are able to deal with ambiguity and are adept at multitasking. Less separation by job description exists. The work is information-focused, and the person in charge may be younger than the people he or she manages.

Next Steps

Reasons for Proactively Addressing the Multiple Generational Issue

1. Managing and leading multiple generations in the workplace is an important current and future issue.

2. The way people learn and want to learn is changing and is generation-related. Companies need to move or provide alternatives that are tested and that work.

3. Companies that want to be an Employer of Choice have to find new ways to attract and retain top talent. To do this a company needs to rethink policies and practices regarding work-life balance, flexible schedules, and so forth.

4. The war for top talent is heating up and the big talent pool is Gen Yers. Companies need to find ways to bring them up to speed quickly due to the shortage of Gen X workers and increasing competition for highly skilled workers.

Critical Questions

- What major changes are needed in the company's HR policies and practices to address and meet the needs and demands of different generations?

- How does the company create a work environment that fosters and leverages generational and cultural differences, diverse backgrounds, and knowledge?

- How can the company recognize the individuality that each person brings to work and engage employees of all ages to maximize their performance?

- What are the differences between generations that play out in the workplace and make it challenging to manage or be managed by younger coworkers?

- How does the company effectively transfer and share knowledge from experienced workers to a new, younger group?

- Given advances in technology and experiences that different generations have had with training are there learning preferences across generations?

- Do managers need to adjust their motivational and leadership styles to fit each generation?

- How does the company accelerate getting younger workers on board given their lack of experience, skills, and training?

- How does the company motivate and engage mature workers to continually upgrade their skills and participate in continuous learning activities?

- What is the generational composition of the company's workforce? Is the company hiring and promoting airly to address any disparity in treatment?

- What will the generational composition of the workforce be in five years?

- What is the generational composition of the company's customers? Is the current company's workforce equipped to understand their needs?

"Companies that want to be an Employer of Choice have to find new ways to attract and retain top talent."

Appendix

How to Use the Generation Matrix

The findings in this white paper are based on a compilation of best thinking and ideas from experts and researchers on generational differences in the workplace today. Their thinking and ideas are based on extensive research studies and interviews. The statements on the Generation Matrix are generalizations, and certainly are not true for all people of a certain generation. They are offered as commonly held perceptions, stereotypes, observations, and interpretations about different generations that may help explain the generational conflicts and misunderstandings frequently occurring in the workplace.

The Generation Matrix is intended to build awareness and possibly open a dialogue among coworkers, managers, and leaders with their direct reports or other people about their differing expectations, desires, and beliefs about working together. It may help people within a generational cohort find words to better explain their feelings, beliefs, and expectations and to "clear the air" regarding intergenerational conflict areas.

For example, younger people who grew up surrounded by digital media are able to rapidly adapt to new technologies released into the market and quickly assimilate them into their daily lives. They may assume this is true for older adults. However, people who grew up with radio and television as their primary medias may be uncomfortable using new technology and find it intimidating and confusing. Leaders and managers should use the Generation Matrix as a tool to help groups of people compare and contrast their similarities and differences, and ultimately help them look for ways to leverage all their strengths, thus creating a healthy and productive work environment.

GENERATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

The Silents (1925-1945, 45 million)	Baby Boomers (1946-1964, 80 million)
- Worked together toward a common goal - Delayed gratification - Self-sacrifice for greater good - Are patriotic and civic-minded - Tend to be conservative; risk adverse - Are dependable, reliable, and self-reliant - Have obedience and respect for authority - Have strong work ethic—work is duty - Value dedication and commitment - Value tradition, rules, and conformity - Are considered forerunners, trendsetters, and pacesetters for Baby Boomers	- Pursues personal gratification at expense to others - Self-enlightenment—search for spirituality and meaning of life - Believe in growth and expansion - More liberal and idealistic - Make the world a better place - Competitive - Celebrate individualism - Internally motivated - Optimistic—see the world in terms of infinite possibilities - Team orientation - Personal growth - Involvement - Work defines who they are
Gen Xers (1965-1976, 49.1 million)	**Gen Yers (1977-1994, 73.5 million)**
- May appear disillusioned, defensive; want high quality of life - Self-reliant and resourceful - Think and act according to their instincts - May listen to counsel, but make own decisions - Emotionally neglected by parents (first generation latchkey kids left on their own by divorced and/or working parents) - Individualistic and diverse (ethnically, culturally, attitudinally) - Independent, resilient, and adaptable - Techno literate (grew up with PCs, VCRs, and video games) - Entrepreneurial spirit - Work-life balance a priority - Informality - Results oriented - Global thinkers	- Civic-minded and like to be involved in community - Celebrate diversity - Individualistic - More narcissist than previous generations—not good at taking criticism - Independent and open-minded; optimistic - Display confidence and sense of entitlement; have high expectations of self - Grew up feeling special—coddled and protected by parents and society; have distorted view between self-esteem and reality "Been there. Done that." attitude - Want to know they are making a difference—local and global 40% raised in single parent households; are 4–5 times more likely to have experienced divorce than previous generations

Clash Point: View of Authority

The Silents (1925-1945, 45 million)	Baby Boomers (1946-1964, 80 million)
• Value loyalty, dedication, and commitment to the organization • Experienced command-and-control leadership in hierarchical organizations • Seek clearly defined specialized roles and a strong central authority figure • Have respect and trust for authority, leaders, and institutions • Value rules and traditions, uniformity, standardization • Experienced the power of unions and collective action under strong leadership to protect frontline • Sacrificed individual needs for the greater good • Are patriotic and civic-minded • Are keepers of organization's history and founding principles • Have strong beliefs in law and order	• Question rules and traditions of previous generation and either push for change or ignore irrelevant ones • Challenge the establishment (divorce, living together, illegal drugs, radical rule breaking) • Have tendency toward a collegial and consensual leadership style • Although advocates of participative style management—find it difficult to practice it • Brought up in a work environment that began to question authority and hierarchy approach to business and are eager to shed command-and-control style • Made profound changes in the 80s, such as participative management, flattened pyramids, employee involvement
Gen Xers (1965-1976, 49.1 million)	**Gen Yers (1977-1994, 73.5 million)**
• Question institutions (presidency, military, organized religion, corporations) and authority • Tend to be skeptical toward authority • Distrust hierarchy and prefer more informal arrangement • May judge on merit rather than on status; are not impressed by titles or authority • Are less concerned with office politics or playing the game within the system • Dislike hidden agendas and secrecy • Value independence and individuality—think of themselves as free agents or independent contractors • Like to question policies and procedures that seem ambiguous, unclear, outdated • Are flexible workers and independent agents and are uncomfortable with hierarchies and rigid structure	• Grew up with lack of central authority in schools (teachers acted as facilitators) • Are less likely to follow social rules • May not have automatic respect for authority—will make suggestions if it will improve situation • Tend to have irrelevance and distrust of government and politicians, journalists, institutions • Respect competency • Are not impressed by position, titles, or authority • See leadership as a participative process and are upfront with superiors • Want leaders who are competent and inspire and motivate them • Choose rules that make sense to them and allow others to follow different rules

Clash Point: Technology

The Silents (1925-1945, 45 million)	Baby Boomers (1946-1964, 80 million)
• Grew up in a manufacturing era where physical manpower and assembly line work were more common than knowledge work • Increasingly common usage of electrical appliances and new technology in transportation provided more mobility • Developed skills with new technology slowly • Tend to be uncomfortable with new electronic technology and may find it intimidating and confusing—but will adapt to it if necessary, e.g., ATM cards, voice mail • Prefer personal contact or live person on the telephone rather than voice mail message	• Rise of television (from 172,000 in 1948 to 15 million in 1952) transformed social habits • Were in the forefront of creating digital revolution; 70s technological revolution was beginning to replace manufacturing as center of our economy • Technology is important to current lifestyle at work and home, but is a challenge to learn
Gen Xers (1965-1976, 49.1 million)	**Gen Yers (1977-1994, 73.5 million)**
• Technology literate—first generation to grow up with PCs, VCRs ,and video games • Grew up in environment of instant information such as open investigative reporting on TV and access to many types of information • Technology is important to daily life and work and feel comfortable with it • More educated than previous generations • Expect employers to supply the latest technology to maintain their skills • PC movement brought quest for equality, opportunity, individualism, and justice in the workplace	• Grew up surrounded by digital media and are more comfortable, knowledgeable, and literate than previous generations • Assimilate new technology whereas previous generations accommodate it • Customize their digital world as new products come on the market • Facility with technology has empowered them—are consultants to older adults in using technology • Have a tendency to think quickly and juggle many tasks at one time • Are heavy online users and can locate information easily and instantly on Web and through networking • Have grown up with heavy reliance on technology, which has negatively affected basic spelling and writing skills • Use of technology has created demands for instant digital gratification

Clash Point: Relationships

The Silents (1925-1945, 45 million)	Baby Boomers (1946-1964, 80 million)
• Pleasant and at ease with customers • Personal sacrifice—put aside individual needs for common good • Respect for authority • Prefer formal communication that is limited to work issues only—may be uncomfortable discussing personal life issues • May get stuck in "we've never done it that way" mentality or seek one right answer • Reticent when they disagree • Later Silents produced leaders known more for their human relationship skills and their ability to negotiate than for their decisive leadership	• Like to work for a manager who cares for them personally, treats them as equals, provides opportunities to pursue new endeavors, and empowers them • Equality is important; want to be treated as equals • Value teamwork and participative leadership • Competitive and like standing out in the crowd • Interpersonal communication is important • Relationships are important • Good at delivering service—want to please • Uncomfortable with conflict • Reluctant to go against peers • Personal gratification is important
Gen Xers (1965-1976, 49.1 million)	Gen Yers (1977-1994, 73.5 million)
• Prefer strong commitment to people and relationships; desire to build lasting relationships • Seek sense of family, but family is not necessarily in terms of traditional or legal concepts but as to level of emotional commitment and support • Can count on peers and themselves to get things done • Tend to be self-directed; nonhierarchical • More independent than Boomers or Silents	• Lack of face-to-face interaction is due to heavy reliance on communication technologies • Admire and respect parents and are open to input, but on their own terms • Tend to be more loyal to peers, coworkers, boss rather than to organization • Socializing and relationships are what makes work fun and are more important than productivity, profitability, and achievement • Like working and learning from colleagues they respect and hope to socialize and form friendships with them • Are inclusive and value collective action • Relationship with immediate manager is a critical factor in whether they stay in job or not • Form close bonds of loyalty with those who share their differences and honor their uniqueness

Clash Point: Diversity; Change

The Silents (1925-1945, 45 million)	Baby Boomers (1946-1964, 80 million)
• Value conformity, consistency, rules, and duties • Grew up during shift from agriculture to manufacturing economy • Experienced racial and gender inequality • Gender roles stereotypical—dad was breadwinner, women worked as nurses, teachers, secretaries • Maintained traditional values and history of organization • Male-dominated workplace—left-brained, rational, with confidence in scientific approach • Uncomfortable with ambiguity and change • Uncomfortable being around people with a different backgrounds or lifestyles than theirs	• Spearheaded cultural wars of 60s, i.e., equal rights movements—for example, racial integration and women's rights • Preference for democratic, humane, and casual work environment • Worked for equality in the system, although women and minorities reached glass ceiling • Tend to be judgmental of those who see things differently • Try to be sensitive to others' differences (background and lifestyles) but prefer to be separate and with people who are similar
Gen Xers (1965-1976, 49.1 million)	**Gen Yers (1977-1994, 73.5 million)**
• Little concern about traditions or what honors the past • Comfortable with and thrive on change; accustomed to fast-paced action and lack of stability • Skeptical and attracted to the edge • Comfortable with competing points of view or allowing contradictory perspectives or actions to coexist • Work well in multiculturalism settings; accept divergent approaches to religion, politics, relationships • Very receptive to women and minorities in management and leadership roles and believe in equality in people, not necessarily equality in systems • Treat people with different background/lifestyles in politically correct ways and enjoy building relationships with them	• Due to surge in immigration, are American's most racially and ethnically diverse and least-Caucasian generation; are aware and accepting of diversity • Have easy attitude toward gender differences; readily willing to accept individual differences • Thrive on innovation and always looking for a better way to get things done • Move in sync with change—not rocked by unstable events in world • Appear to be adept at working in larger and more diverse social networks than previous generation • Want equal attention and treatment

Clash Point: Job/Career; Retirement

The Silents (1925-1945, 45 million)	Baby Boomers (1946-1964, 80 million)
29% have lifetime careers; not quick on reinventing their careers; waited for employers to create career path - Strong union loyalty to protect workers, i.e., limit on hours worked and minimum wage - One income family—dad worked; mom stayed at home - Retirement is well-earned reward after lifetime service - Partnered with institutions to get things done - Work is duty; didn't take job for granted—were grateful for it - As senior citizens, many are safeguarding their entitlements (Social Security, Medicare) - Moved up the ladder through perseverance and hard work - Do not demand "deep" meaning from jobs—having work is satisfying in and of itself	14% have lifetime careers - Many started out wanting to build stellar career - Chose few job changes—too many didn't look good on resume - Key factors in job choices include opportunity, glamour, and security - Are questioning their careers and want work that is satisfying and fulfilling - Those over 50 are now beginning to start own businesses; many want to make a difference for people around them—not just for personal fulfillment - Have redefined retirement—more than 2/3 plan to work after retiring out of necessity or because they want to - Due to erosion of corporate retirement programs and Social Security uncertainty, many feel insecure about future - Are the sandwich generation—helping kids through college and caring for elderly parents
Gen Xers (1965-1976, 49.1 million)	Gen Yers (1977-1994, 73.5 million)
- Only 11% have lifetime careers - Want responsibility, opportunity, and professional development and will move on if not provided - Change careers more often than previous generations - Self-managed and aggressive in creating own career path—constantly gaining many new skills and experiences to add value to themselves - Have experienced limited mobility and career advancement due to Boomers' prominence in the workplace - Approach a career lattice, moving laterally rather than climbing up the ladder - Growing percentage becoming entrepreneurs - Seek opportunities to become independent value adders—reinventing themselves and their roles in organizations	- Have a sense of entitlement - Don't want to climb the ladder and pay their dues - Are the best educated generation ever - Value institutionalized learning, i.e., professional certifications, credentials, degrees - May explore many career paths before settling down; shifting from one profession to another - Want meaningful roles and meaningful work that helps others—are struggling to find meaning and purpose at work - Want to learn, succeed, and earn money to fuel high level of consumption habits - Want to succeed immediately and if they don't see quick rewards will change jobs - Many see themselves as independent contractors—don't expect to remain loyal to one company

Clash Point: Loyalty; Job Security

The Silents (1925-1945, 45 million)	Baby Boomers (1946-1964, 80 million)
• Lifetime employment—get the gold watch; most held only one to four jobs over a lifetime • Stayed in one place because they were loyal to company or were supporting families • Valued job security; not big on rocking boat • Didn't take job for granted—were grateful to have job • Values shaped by Great Depression, WWII—tend to be loyal and risk averse • Honor tradition and history • Attracted to the stability and security of large corporations • Widespread loyalty to unions that helped protect workers against unfair labor practices, tyrannical bosses, unsafe working conditions • Moved up the ladder through perseverance and hard work • Driven by duty before pleasure • Likely to stay with the same career even if they changed employers	• Unlike parents, experienced a workplace that was less stable • Experienced insecure job environment—workers were fired (even when they were doing great)— to improve profitability and cut costs • Believed in few job changes—didn't look good on résumé • Loyalty to company was rewarded through promotions based on seniority • Because of corporate restructuring, downsizing, and layoffs, many have changed jobs more frequently than parents did • Tend to be self-centered but give their careers priority over personal lives • Believed in working long hours and getting the highest possible salary; thought they could find security and good pay in corporations
Gen Xers (1965-1976, 49.1 million)	Gen Yers (1977-1994, 73.5 million)
• Entered workforce when economy was in downturn and saw parents get laid off or face job insecurity, therefore prefer free agency over loyal corporatism • Lack faith that career permanence exists—prefer to be free agents, part-time workers, temporary employees • Commitment and loyalty to team, coworkers, peers, bosses, rather than to organization • Don't find identity in office—less committed to employers and less willing to work long hours • Change careers and jobs more often than previous generations; work is just a job • Loyal to employer until better job comes up • Loyal to employer if there are different opportunities within organization	• Job security is not a big deal—there are a lot of low-level, low-paying jobs; the bigger concern is finding dream job that provides financial security and personal fulfillment • Saw parents lose their jobs due to downsizing, layoffs, mergers, and acquisitions and don't trust and respect large institutions • Loyal to peers, managers, coworkers, not organizations • Are more likely to consider leaving their current jobs for better benefits, more flexible working arrangements, and greater promotional opportunities if they are not satisfied with job • Place less importance on hard work and do not want to put in long hours and work as hard as parents • Look for company whose mission and values focus on more than making profits

Clash Point: Work Ethic/Work-Life Balance

The Silents (1925-1945, 45 million)	Baby Boomers (1946-1964, 80 million)
- Intrinsic value of work; it is a duty; sacrifice will pay off over the long term - Periodic layoffs impacted blue-collar workers but did not last and workers were often called back to original employer - Sacrificed individual needs for the greater good - Dependable—on time and ready to come to work - Did not believe in rocking the boat, i.e., do not voice concerns and frustrations or complaints out loud or publicly - Strong work ethic; work is noble and ennobling - Work life and family life are separate and distinct	- Competitive and like standing out in the crowd - Are aspiring to the freedom to work that is closer to their passions, to their heart, and gives sense of satisfaction - Insecure about their jobs due to downsizing, layoffs, restructuring in workplace and distressed about early retirement - Generation of workaholics that increased workweek from 40 hours to 70–80 hours per week—now showing signs of stress and burnout - Feel they have paid their dues—long hours, years of experience and waiting in line—and want more work-life balance - Tremendous pride in career accomplishments, persistent and unwavering work ethic - Define themselves through their work
Gen Xers (1965-1976, 49.1 million)	Gen Yers (1977-1994, 73.5 million)
- Want to enjoy things that are important to them throughout career not at end of it and will plot careers around large chunks of time off to enable them to do things they want to do in between - Freedom and balance are important; are less committed to employers and less willing to work long hours - Balance in life and work is viewed as the key to happiness—carpe diem prevails as rule of thumb - Unlike Boomers, do not identify themselves by jobs they hold - Job not their number one priority - Family and friends come before work	- Tend to be loyal to causes and purposes they believe in - Work is a means to end - Want to feel they are making difference—not quest for meaning in their work - Greatly value and desire work-life balance—unwilling to put in long hours at work - Not motivated by feelings of duty—working hard is not virtuous in itself—but it is worth it if they are singled out and recognized - Look for organizations whose mission and values focus on more than profits - Tend to have exceptionally high expectations of themselves and set unrealistic targets and goals - Have unrealistic expectations about what it means to work—many are unwilling to work hard and make sacrifices to get ahead as previous generation - Combine working, learning, and playing at work

Clash Point: Motivation; Rewards and Recognition

The Silents (1925-1945, 45 million)	Baby Boomers (1946-1964, 80 million)
• Delayed rewards; driven by duty before pleasure • Expect to receive a paycheck for job performed • Seniority and age correlated • Move up the ladder through perseverance and hard work • Satisfaction of doing job well • Rarely received praise and recognition; were grateful to have a job and did not take it for granted • Older workers want to be rewarded with travel time, challenges, money, flexibility • Want financial gain and security	• Deep identification of who they are by what they achieve at work • Want to do great things—work on exciting projects • Value time off as they are getting older • Like to be rewarded with money, title, better shift, seniority, office parking spot perks • Find satisfaction and meaning in work • Paid their dues and want to slow down
Gen Xers (1965-1976, 49.1 million)	**Gen Yers (1977-1994, 73.5 million)**
• Appreciate good schedule, time off, flexible hours, casual dress • Like professional development/training opportunities • Expect to be rewarded for small chunks of goal-directed behaviors (based on specific objective criteria) • Want to meet financial needs without too many demands on personal time	• Salary is important to keep up with high cost of living • Will insist on being able to do their work at the most convenient times and places • Want to succeed immediately—do not see quick rewards at one firm, they will move somewhere else • Appreciate flexible schedules and time for personal life • Value opportunities for continuing professional growth and career advancement • Like public acknowledgment, frequent recognition, and rewards at shorter intervals • Want to have fun while doing helpful, meaningful work

Clash Point: Management

The Silents (1925-1945, 45 million)	Baby Boomers (1946-1964, 80 million)
- Accustomed to more directive style leadership—leaders that take charge, delegate, and make the bulk of decisions - Boot-camp style coaching; top-down feedback - Punctuality a given—arrive on time and ready to work - Service oriented and value obedience - Disciplined, loyal team players who work within system under a strong leader - Believe in law and order, following the rules (guiding principles, standardized policies and procedures, templates) - Dedicated, dependable, hardworking; be reliable, stay in line, do the right thing attitude - Have definitive sense of right and wrong, good and bad	- Passionate and concerned about participative management and employee involvement; work environment with fair and level playing field for all - Although like the idea of participative management and sharing information, don't necessarily practice it - Not good at calling out conflict or dealing with it directly; dislike aggressiveness - Team work and interpersonal communication important - Competitive due to large numbers competing for same jobs in the workplace - Highly communicative—initiated formalized process for feedback on job such as performance appraisals - Search for meaning in work - Turning to coaching for personal and professional development
Gen Xers (1965-1976, 49.1 million)	Gen Yers (1977-1994, 73.5 million)
- Have nontraditional orientation about time and space; if performing satisfactorily and achieving goals, don't need to be seen; tend to be results oriented - Take pragmatic and practical approach to get things done; seem to lack a sense of mission or a worldview—cope on a situational basis - Don't like to be micromanaged; place great value on their ability to think for themselves; want ownership in the process - Want a comfortable and casual work environment—avoid corporate politics; resent corporate compulsion to have meetings - Want to be told what is expected of them, provided constant and appropriate feedback, and empowered to get the job done	- Appreciate people being direct with them; can come off as disrespectful when being friendly and informal - Are accustomed to feeling important and having their work praised; don't take criticism well - Can be impatient and demand instant results; don't want to pay their dues - Work quickly, creatively, and in their own way; find rigid schedules stifling - Capable of learning/doing several tasks simultaneously - Feel loyalty to complete projects but will question status quo and authority - Are inclusive and work well in group or team-oriented environment with committed people - Comfortable with rules and regulations as long as rules don't compromise their individuality, free time, and fun

Clash Point: Management continued …

The Silents (1925-1945, 45 million)	Baby Boomers (1946-1964, 80 million)
• Like things on a grand scale (bigger, better, improved) • May silently keep in frustrations rather than speak out publicly • Value decisions based on data and guided by traditions and history; learn from past to create the future—what worked, what didn't • Strong loyalty to unions to overcome unfair labor practices, tyrannical bosses, and inhumane working conditions • Uncomfortable with conflict • Communication style of direct report may be indirect and circuitous • Value obedience over individualism on the job	• Accept hierarchical style management but prefer participation • Basic apprentice structure—started with no real responsibilities and earned more responsibility through their actions • Like working in small, community-sized teams with shared leadership • Can be overly sensitive to feedback • May put process ahead of results • Very service oriented and like to please • Willing to go extra mile if necessary to look good • Prefer face-time management—employees onsite during specific hours
Gen Xers (1965-1976, 49.1 million)	**Gen Yers (1977-1994, 73.5 million)**
• Tend to be independent, want freedom and trust to be productive and make decisions to do what seems right in the situation • Prefer small teams with no defined leadership	• Strong curiosity and desire to better understand history/background of situation—the why behind the what • Want and expect a fun work environment • Want managers to act as teachers and facilitators rather than traditional bosses • May need more supervision and structure • Respond well to constant direction; immediate, positive feedback; frequent rewards • Like freedom to do job any place, anytime if it is not location-specific job • Are accustomed to working with teams and may struggle to make decisions independently

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