

WORKING WITH THE GENERATIONS

Alabama City County Management Association

Introduction

- Owner: Smith Consulting, LLC
- Former Fortune 500 employee
- Supervised all four generations in workplace
- Combined 15 years of experience in business and education

Icebreaker

- You are assigned the task of creating a blueprint for the perfect employee. What knowledge, skills, experiences, and attitudes would he or she possess?
- Draw a stick figure with all extremities. Write your ideas on the stick figure in the appropriate place. (Multiples are ok)
 - Head = Knowledge
 - Hands = Skills
 - Heart = Attitudes
 - Feet = Experiences
- You have two minutes to write your characteristics.

Why Understand Generations

- ❑ Leadership Approach
- ❑ Communication Style
- ❑ Motivational Buttons
- ❑ How They Interact with Others



Defining A Generation

Each generation imagines itself to be more intelligent than the one that went before it, and wiser than the one that comes after it.
George Orwell

- ❑ What is the definition of generation?
- ❑ What makes one generation different from another?

Generations

- ❑ Silents 1927-1945
- ❑ Baby Boomers 1946-1964
- ❑ Generation X 1965-1980
- ❑ Generation Y 1981-2000
- ❑ Generation Z 2001-



Generation Y

- Age 17-36
 - September 11th
 - 75 million
 - Internet- Technological integration
 - Berlin Wall
 - Columbine
 - Attended day care, very involved "helicopter" parents



By the numbers



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- 3.6 million Baby Boomers potentially retired in 2016.
- The labor force is at the lowest rate since the 1930's and the US birth rate continues to decline.
- By 2019, Generation Z will make up over 20% of the workforce.
- By 2025, 1 in 5 workers will be over age 55. The slowing of the workforce translates to an estimated shortfall of 20 million workers over the next 20 years.

Recap.....

MULTIPLE GENERATIONS @ WORK

Five Generations Working Side by Side in 2020

| TRADITIONALISTS <i>Born 1928-1945</i> | BOOMERS <i>Born 1946-1964</i> | GEN X <i>Born 1965-1980</i> | MILLENNIAL <i>Born 1981-1997</i> | GEN 2020 <i>Born 1998-2012</i> |
|---|---|--|---|---|
| Great Depression World War II Disciplined Workplace Loyalty Move to the Burbs Vaccines | Vietnam, Moon Landing Civil/ Women's Rights Experimental Innovators Hard Working Personal Computer | Fall of Berlin Wall Gulf War Independent Free Agents Internet, MTV, AIDS Mobile Phone | 9/11 Attacks Community Service Immediately Confident, Diversity Social Everything Google, Facebook | Age 15 and Younger Optimistic High Expectations Apps Social Games Tablet Devices |

Why should we understand the four generations?

- This is the first time in American history that we have had four different generations working side-by-side in the workplace.
- Each generation has distinct attitudes, behaviors, expectations, habits, and motivational buttons.
- These four generations often collide, as their paths cross.
- They have different values, different ideas, different ways of getting things done, and different ways to communicating in the workplace.

Why should we understand the four generations?

- Generational context may affect the way we work
- Diverse workforce
- The PSY and SOC of managers

Working with Traditionalist 5%

Assets

- Adhere to rules
- Respect Authority
- Loyal
- Formal
- Rewards later
- Work the hours needed to get the job done
- Team players

Liabilities

- Inflexible
- Resist change
- Lectured style vs web based
- Technology-challenged

Working with Baby Boomers 45%

Assets

- Responsible and Dedicated
- Confident and Independent
- Loyal
- Team player
- Workaholic
- Well-educated
- Very competitive

Liabilities

- Uncomfortable with conflict
- Technology-challenged
- Adaptability
- Sensitive to feedback

Working with Generation X 40%

Assets

- Fast-paced
- Independent
- Confident
- Value personal time
- Challenge the status quo
- Flexible

Liabilities

- Believes in 40-hours work for 40-hours pay
- Skeptical
- Loyalty
- Motivation
- Push back on ideas

Working with Generation Y 10%

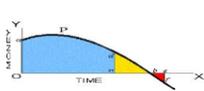
Assets

- Tech savvy
- Innovative
- Creative
- Works well in a team environment
- Goal-oriented
- Work the hours to get the job done.

Liabilities

- Impatient
- Lacks focus
- Impulsive
- High cost to the company
- Loyalty
- Not happy with long working hours. Set their own working hours. I want Saturdays off.

Generational challenges found in the workplace



03 Engaged employees are less likely to quit



Generational Gap



How to close the generational gap?

- Groups
 - Maintenance, Secretaries, Mangers, Community Service
- Communicate
 - Professional, adapt, and concise
- Sharing
 - Use idea boxes to keep employees involved
- Motivate
 - Encourage, develop, and empower

What is the generational shift?

- Baby Boomers will exit the workforce
- A whole new set of expectations
- Retention challenges
- Staff shortages

What does the generational shift mean for YOU?

- Managing will become more difficult.
- High degree of anxiety or stress
 - Workers will need more direction, coaching, & guidance.
 - Millennials are being raised by "helicopter parents."
- Severely under-managed with experience

Recruiting a multigenerational workforce

- Understand their motivation
- Job description and social media presence
- Be aware of similarities
 - Baby boomers know they have a lot to contribute
 - 75% of millennials are interested in having a mentor
- People work for people not a company
- Hire the best person for the job
- Equip people with the necessary skills

Retaining a multigenerational workforce

- Older generations like monetary rewards, younger generations like time off work.
- Set goals
- Provide latest technology
- Communicate is key
- Employee learning style
- Professional development
- Respect work-life balance

+ 11 Ways to Minimize Generational Differences in the Workplace

1. Focus on similarities rather than differences
2. Recognize that change does occur
3. Recognize the value and the perils of the "tried and true"
4. Be aware that "new" technology may not be you
5. Develop a curiosity for things unknown to you
6. Ask questions rather than make statements
7. Avoid characterizations based on age
8. Define your acronyms
9. Paraphrase before answering
10. Be careful about cultural or historical references
11. If that other age-group worker was right after all, say so.

Adapted from: Calvin Sun - 1.18.11

+ Ways to Encourage Teamwork

1. Talk about generational differences
 - Generational information awareness/sharing sessions
2. Expand communication strategies
 - Keep in mind each team member's communication preference
3. Offer mentoring programs/focus on team building
 - Ensures critical skills sets and job knowledge is transferred to and from all generations
4. Create workplace choices & accommodate differences
 - Treat employees as you do your customers. Where and when possible, work to meet their working preferences.
5. Respect competence and initiative
 - Treat everyone, from newest to most seasoned employee as if they have the great things to offer & are motivated to do their best.

Adapted from: www.birkman.com

+ Always Use the ACORN Approach

- Accommodate employee differences
- Create workplace choices
- Operate from a flexible management style
- Respect competence and initiative
- Nourish retention



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