GENERATIONS AT WORK

An Interactive Workshop Designed to Bridge the Generational Divide in the Workplace and Maximize Employee Productivity

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Department of Energy
Office of Human Capital Management

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Office of Human Resources Management
Questions You May Be Asking...

- Why am I here?
- What will I learn?
- How will this session help me in my job?
- What will be expected of me as a next step?
Today you will …

• Learn the characteristics of the four generations currently in the workplace

• Identify “truths and myths” about each of the four generations

• Learn how to improve work team communication through understanding cross-cultural communication

• Identify mechanisms and strategies on how to motivate individuals from different generations and create more productivity and/or reduce conflict
“…The children now love luxury. They have bad manners, contempt for authority, they show disrespect for adults and love to talk rather than work or exercise. They no longer rise when adults enter the room. They contradict their parents, chatter in front of company, gobble down their food at the table and intimidate their teachers…”

Socrates 5th Century B.C.
WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT

Generation as a Cultural Lens

Veterans/Traditionalists

Baby Boomers

Generation X

Echo Boomers (Generation Y/Nexters)
WHAT DO YOU SEE?
IDENTIFY THE NUMBER OF SQUARES?

“WE DON’T SEE THINGS AS THEY ARE... WE SEE THINGS AS WE ARE.” - ANAÏS NIN
**CULTURE: IT’S LIKE AN ICEBERG**

Only 10-15% of an iceberg is visible to the naked eye

- Facial Expressions
- Religious Rituals
- Holiday Customs
- Work Ethic
- Eating Habits
- Styles of Dress
- Paintings
- Music
- Foods
- Language
- Values
- Concept of Self
- Religious Beliefs
- Importance of Time
- Childraising Beliefs
- Concept of Fairness
- Rules of Social Etiquette
- Nature of Friendship
- General World View
- Concept of Leadership
- Concept of Personal Space
- Notions of Modesty
- Understanding of the Natural World
Organizations: They’re like icebergs

Only 10-15% of an organization is visible to the naked eye

- Level 1: Content
- Level 2: Overt Group Issues
- Level 3: Covert Group Issues
- Level 4: Individual Characteristics
- Level 5: The Unconscious
GENERATION AS A CULTURAL LENS

THE VETERANS/TRADITIONALISTS - 1922 TO 1944

- Like consistency and uniformity
- Conformers to traditional roles and hierarchies
- Disciplined and value a self-denial work ethic
- Past oriented and history absorbed
- Have faith in organizations and leaders
- Conservative spending style

CORE VALUES

- DEDICATION/SACRIFICE
- CONFORMITY
- RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY
- PATIENCE
- HARD WORK
- LAW AND ORDER
- DUTY BEFORE PLEASURE
- HONOR
"Those Were The Days"

Boy, the way Glen Miller played. Songs that made the hit parade.
   Guys like us, we had it made. Those were the days.
   Didn't need no welfare state. Everybody pulled his weight.
   Gee, our old LaSalle ran great. Those were the days.
And you know who you were then, girls were girls and men were men.
   Mister, we could use a man like Herbert Hoover again.
   People seemed to be content. Fifty dollars paid the rent.
   Freaks were in a circus tent. Those were the days.
   Take a little Sunday spin, go to watch the Dodgers win.
   Have yourself a dandy day costing under a fin. Those were the days.
   Hair was short and skirts were long. Kate Smith really sold a song.
   I don't know just what went wrong. Those Were The Days.
## THE VETERANS/TRADITIONALISTS - 1922 TO 1944

### Generational Issues: Myths and Truths

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Myth</th>
<th>Truth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have more accidents, sick more often</td>
<td>Fewer on-the-job accidents, no difference in insurance claims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can’t learn new technology</td>
<td>Are willing students when training is in format they are comfortable with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t want to work</td>
<td>Many retirees prefer to be working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not as productive as younger employees</td>
<td>U.S. Dept. of HHS say older workers just as productive as younger ones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not as bright as young people</td>
<td>Psychologists find intelligence remains constant until at least 70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The material on myths and truths for each generation was adapted from *Generations at Work: Managing the Clash of Veterans, Boomers, Xers, and Nexters in Your Workplace* by Ron Zemke, Claire Raines and Bob Filipczak, Amazon, 2000.
• Take time to add personal touches

• Look for freedom to socialize, particularly between assigned tasks

• Honor their hard work with plaques and at symbolic stage
THE BABY BOOMERS - 1945 TO 1964

- Believe in growth and expansion
- Value self-fulfillment and pursue own personal gratification
- Question traditional roles
- Question authority, but desire to hold higher ranks
- Big trendsetters, continuously morphing - hippies, yuppies, graying of the workforce - a lot of media focus -
- In school and at home learned about teamwork

CORE VALUES

- OPTIMISM
- PERSONAL GRATIFICATION
- PERSONAL GROWTH
- WORK

- TEAM ORIENTATION
- HEALTH AND WELLNESS
- YOUTH
- INVOLVEMENT
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MYTH</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are on their way out</td>
<td>Are expected to work longer than any previous generation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will grow up</td>
<td>Sales of Harley-Davidson motorcycles doubled in early 90s, majority of buyers were Boomers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always had it easy, assured of comfortable retirement</td>
<td>Of all generations Boomers have highest credit card debt, have an average of 20 years remaining on their mortgages, and started late saving for retirement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have quit learning</td>
<td>Boomers partly responsible for booming industry of adult education programs for everything from sushi making to economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are workaholics</td>
<td>Have tended to work grueling hours for past 30 years, but have begun to slow their pace. Boomers are known as the most stressed generation in history and many are working less hours and trying to simplify their lives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Seek to prove their worth
• Seek to be asked for their input and expertise.
• Seek to build consensus
• Look for public recognition and awards for their work ethic
• Look to receive perks in keeping with their professional status
• Look to build name recognition in the company through their projects and input.
**GENERATION AS A CULTURAL LENS**

**GENERATION X - 1965 TO 1979**

- Self-reliant
- Seeking sense of family
- Nontraditional orientation about time and space
- Technologically savvy - have effectively dealt with what others think is information overload
- Approach to authority is casual
- Value flexibility and risk taking - see change as normal and desirable
- Survival instinct - loyalty is situational

**CORE VALUES**

- DIVERSITY
- INFORMALITY
- BALANCE
- TECHNO LITERARCY

- FUN
- THINKING GLOBALLY
- SELF-RELIANCE
- PRAGMATISM
## Generational Issues: Myths and Truths

### Generation X – 1965 to 1980

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Myth</th>
<th>Truth</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are materialistic</td>
<td>Many struggling to make ends meet. Gen X first generation that probably won’t be able to replicate or improve on their parents’ lifestyle. Worry about not having enough money to buy home etc. Tend to reject material wealth &amp; status symbols.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are whiners</td>
<td>They face many challenges - college loans, rising health care costs- but most remain philosophical about the problems they are inheriting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have a “you owe me” attitude</td>
<td>No more so than any other generation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not willing to work hard</td>
<td>Very willing to work hard, but don’t want to be taken advantage of. Many think not fair to work a 70-hr week for 40-hrs of pay. Committed to having life outside of work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are living the easy life</td>
<td>People over 60 can expect to get back about $200 for every $100 they put into Social Security. Gen Xers will lose over $100 for every $450 they contribute.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Like lots of projects to prioritize as they see fit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Look to receive regular constructive feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Look to have time to pursue other interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seek to have fun at work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Look to work with latest computer technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are conscious of perks higher up the ladder</td>
</tr>
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GENERATION AS A CULTURAL LENS

GENERATION Y/NEXTERS - 1980 TO 2000

• Excited about working in teams
• Few feel supervising is an important career step
• Feel most important criteria for work is getting along with a widely diverse group
• High values on helping others
• Conservative of traditions like marriage and family

CURRENT CORE VALUES

- OPTIMISM  - SOCIABILITY
- CIVIC DUTY  - MORALITY
- CONFIDENCE - STREET SMARTE
- ACHIEVEMENT  - DIVERSITY
### Generational Issues: Myths and Truths

#### Myth

**Today’s kids are getting a great education**

**Need to spend more time reading and less time watching TV and playing video games**

**Kids today have no morals**

#### Truth

Not all of them. Gap and disparity between the have and the have-nots has grown. More Nexters grew up in affluence, but more also grew up in poverty, with the middle class shrinking. Students living in poverty not having access to technology is a huge problem.

Kids are spending more time reading than previous generations. Study found that playing video games cuts into TV time not reading time.

Many Nexters have shown a return to traditional moral values. Nexters shown to be better educated about topics like pregnancy and AIDS. They have so far shown to be less promiscuous than Baby Boomers & Gen Xers.
• You be the leader
• Challenge me
• Let me work with friends
• Let’s have fun
• Respect me
• Be flexible
EXERCISE

DEFINING THE GENERATIONS
DOC vs. GOVERNMENT DEMOGRAPHICS

CURRENT AGE GROUP PROPORTIONS IN FEDERAL WORKFORCE (FY 2005)

Sources: OPM Fedscope

# of Gov’t Employees
FY 2005 1,860,949

# of DOC Employees
FY 2005 40,093
### DOC vs. GOVERNMENT DEMOGRAPHICS

#### CURRENT AGE GROUP PROPORTIONS IN FEDERAL WORKFORCE (FY 2005)

![Bar chart showing age group proportions in the federal workforce.](chart)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE GROUPS</th>
<th># of Gov’t Employees FY 2005</th>
<th># of DOC Employees FY 2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Millennials</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen X</td>
<td>27.0%</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boomers</td>
<td>64.1%</td>
<td>57.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterans</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sources:** OPM Fedscope

- **# of Gov’t Employees FY 2005:** 1,860,949
- **# of DOC Employees FY 2005:** 40,093
DOC vs. GOVERNMENT DEMOGRAPHICS

PERCENT CHANGE IN AGE GROUPS OF FEDERAL WORKFORCE
(between FY 02 & 05)

Sources: OPM Fedscope

# of Gov’t Employees
FY 2002 1,819,107
FY 2005 1,860,949

# of DOC Employees
FY 2002 38,359
FY 2005 40,093
DOC vs. GOVERNMENT DEMOGRAPHICS

GENERATIONAL PERCENT CHANGE IN FEDERAL WORKFORCE (FY 2002 vs. 2005)

Sources: OPM Fedscope

<table>
<thead>
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<th>AGE GROUPS</th>
<th>DOC vs. GOVERNMENT DEMOGRAPHICS</th>
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<td># of Gov’t Employees</td>
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<td>FY 2005 40,093</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Bar chart showing the percent change in different age groups between FY 2002 and FY 2005.
GENERATIONAL HIRING PROPORTIONS GOVERNMENT vs DOC (FY 2002-2005)

Sources: OPM Fedscope

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Gov't Hires FY 02-05</th>
<th>Doc Hires FY 02-05</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Millennials</td>
<td>22.9%</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen X</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>44.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boomers</td>
<td>35.8%</td>
<td>29.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterans</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# of Gov't hires FY 02-05 - 557,315

# of Doc hires FY 02-05 - 8,321

DOC vs. GOVERNMENT DEMOGRAPHICS
DOC vs. GOVERNMENT DEMOGRAPHICS

GENERATIONAL SEPARATION PROPORTIONS GOVERNMENT VS. DOC (FY 2002 to 2005)

Sources: OPM Fedscope

| Generation   | GOV’T | DOC
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Veteran</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boomer</td>
<td>30.1%</td>
<td>36.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen X</td>
<td>37.8%</td>
<td>83.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millenial</td>
<td>28.9%</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# of Gov’t seps FY 02-05 - 336,364
# of DOC seps FY 02-05 - 9,078
GENERATIONAL CORE VALUE CLASHES

VETERANS
- DUTY BEFORE PLEASURE
- DEDICATION/SACRIFICE
- PATIENCE
- HARD WORK
- CONFORMITY
- LAW AND ORDER
- RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY
- HONOR

BABY BOOMERS
- PERSONAL GRATIFICATION
- TEAM ORIENTATION
- OPTIMISM
- WORK
- PERSONAL GROWTH
- CHALLENGE AUTHORITY
- HEALTH AND WELLNESS/YOUTH INVOLVEMENT

GENERATION X
- DIVERSITY
- FUN
- INFORMALITY
- THINKING GLOBALLY
- BALANCE
- SELF-RELIANCE
- TECHNOLITERACY
- PRAGMATISM

NEXTERS/MILLENIALS/GEN Y
- DIVERSITY
- CIVIC DUTY
- OPTIMISM
- SOCIABILITY
- MORALITY
- CONFIDENCE
- STREET SMARTESTS
- ACHIEVEMENT
How the generations are viewed...

- One-third of respondents said they were often offended by someone from another generation at work.
- 24% of Traditionalists, 30% of Baby Boomers, and more than 60% of Xers said their generation is not viewed positively by the other generations.
- When asked which generation they felt most comfortable managing only 14% chose Generation X, and this included the Xers themselves!

Employees are dissatisfied...

- One-third of Gen Xers said that for them to stay another two years in their job either "hell would have to freeze over" or "there would have to be major changes made."
- 43% of Boomers said they lack opportunities to be mentored where they work, and, 30% of Boomers said that not having a mentor contributes to their job dissatisfaction.
- 40% of Traditionalists said their company does a poor job of making them want to stay.

Feedback is challenging...

- 90% of Xers said they want feedback immediately or within a few days, but almost 30% of Xers said they receive their phone bill more often than they get relevant feedback!
- 50% of all respondents said they had ever received any training in how to give feedback.
Values Inform Organization Culture

Loyalties are different...

• 40% of Xers said having a mentor directly influenced their decision to stay at their current company.
• When asked who they are most loyal to at work, Xers put co-workers first, their boss or projects second, and the company last.
• Xers' number one reason to stay was "autonomy."
• Boomers' number one reason for staying was "making a difference."
• Traditionalists' number one reason for staying was "loyalty to clients and customers."
• 70% of Traditionalists said that a "lifetime career" with one company was a good goal, while only 35% of Boomers and a mere 17% of Generation Xers agreed.
• The majority of Boomers said it would be easier for them to recite the ingredients in a Big Mac than their company's mission statement!

Training is an issue...

• 45% of Boomers and 48% of Traditionalists agreed that "training opportunities play a role in my staying at my company."
• When asked, "Have you ever left a job because of a lack of training opportunities?" only 3% of Traditionalists said "yes" compared to 15% of Boomers and 30% of Xers!
VALUES INFORM ORGANIZATION CULTURE

Career paths are important...
• 60% of Traditionalists said they do not have a clearly defined career path where they work.
• When asked what activities convinced them that their company is concerned about their career development, 31% of Traditionalists said "they don't seem to care." Yet, when asked what they are likely to do when they formally retire, 73% of Traditionalists said they planned to continue working in some capacity.
• When asked if they would feel comfortable talking with their manager about a different career track within the company," one-third of Traditionalists said "no."

Balance and fairness are issues...
• When asked "Which generation is the best at finding work/life balance?" all three generations picked Gen X.
• Over half of respondents agreed that, "when it comes to compensation and benefits where I work, we have issues about fairness."
• Twice as many Traditionalists felt that employees' needs for balance are not handled with fairness as Boomers or Xers.
The Gamer Generation – A New Discovery

• Identified as members of generation X & Y

• Researched based on a two-year study by (Baby Boomers)

GENERAL BELIEF AMONGST GAMERS
• Are confident about their abilities
• Prefer to be paid according to their actual performance, rather than a title or a set salary
• Believe connecting with the right people gets things done faster
• Who are Gamers?:
  – 80% of managers under the age of 34 have significant video game experience
  – 40% of Gamers are women
  – The Gamer Generation is larger than the Baby Boom generation (90 million vs 77 million)
Gamers at Work:
– Strive for excellence and believe winning matters
– Believe in learning by “trial and error”
– Value heroism and making a difference

– Games have taught this generation:
– You are the star
– You are the boss
– You are the customer
– You are an expert
– You need the help of others to succeed

The mind of a gamer is mapped in a way where they naturally think of all sides to an issue
What to Expect from Gamers as Leaders:

– Prefer a balanced leadership style
– Global thinkers
– Different learning style
– Relentless drive to make things better
– Comfortable with flexible organizations
– Rational embrace of risk
GENERATIONAL CLASHES AT WORK

VETERANS
No news is good news

BOOMERS
Once a year with a lot of documentation

FEEDBACK

GEN-X
Sorry to interrupt, but how am I doing?

ECHO BOOMERS
Feedback is available at the push of a button
GENERATIONAL CLASHES AT WORK

VETERANS
Respect it

BOOMERS
Crave it

POSITION POWER

GEN-X
Unimpressed

ECHO BOOMERS
Polite
GENERATIONAL CLASHES AT WORK

VETERANS
Trust hierarchy

BOOMERS
Want Consensus

GEN-X
Value competence

ECHO BOOMERS
Pulling together

LEADERSHIP
GENERATIONAL CLASHES AT WORK

VETERANS

Hardworking, but not a compulsion

BOOMERS

Career and company first

WORK-FAMILY BALANCE

GEN-X

Seek equal balance

ECHO BOOMERS

Hardworking, but not a compulsion
GENERATIONAL CLASHES AT WORK

VETERANS
- Prize honor

BOOMERS
- Covet status

PERKS

GEN-X
- Disdain Vets’ and Boomers’ views

ECHO BOOMERS
- Prize Sociability
GENERATIONAL CLASHES AT WORK

VETERANS
High priority

BOOMERS
High priority

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

GEN-X
Low priority

ECHO BOOMERS
High priority
GENERATIONAL CLASHES AT WORK

VETERANS
See no point

BOOMERS
See the point

GEN-X
See no point

ECHO BOOMERS
See no point

POLITICAL SAVVY
GENERATIONAL CLASHES AT WORK

- VETERANS
  - Very wary

- BOOMERS
  - Some what wary

- GEN-X
  - See as inevitable

- ECHO BOOMERS
  - See as inevitable

CHANGE MANAGEMENT
What you can do to motivate individuals from different generations

**Veterans**
- Emphasize your belief and trust in them to “complete their duty”.
- Acknowledge their specific history in your organizations, and the skills they bring to a project and what their contributions has been to your organization

**Baby Boomers**
- Praise them in public for the work they have completed
- Give them a chance to prove themselves and their worth
- Give them perks
- Invoke the personal approach (“I really need you to do this for me.”)
- Get consensus. Boomers often believe they invented participative management, and they can be mightily offended when you don’t involve them
- Give them opportunities to build consensus
What you can do to motivate individuals from different generations

**Generation X**
- Encourage creativity
- Commit yourself to providing feedback (both positive and negative)
- Encourage Xers pursuit of other interests (not directly related to their job)
- Provide state-of-the-art resources: Encourage utilization of technology

**Generation Y**
- Promote in-house education and training
- Encourage autonomy, diversity, communications, teamwork, openness to ideas, and respect.
- Act like a coach
- Offer challenging assignments
- Provide state-of-the-art resources - Encourage utilization of technology
- Keep up with their pace -- Fast-paced communication is key to keep their interest.
- Involve them in a partnership -- Solicit their ideas and contributions, and work with them as a team.
QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

In the Workplace...

• Which generation are you a part of (Traditionalist, Baby Boomer, Generation X, Millennial, or Cusper)?
• Which generation is most dominant in your workplace?
• Where is your organization the most generationally unbalanced?
• How does this create problems or opportunities?
• Where/how do the generations collide most often where you work (recruiting, retention, communication, rewards, training, work ethic, loyalty, favoritism)?
• What is the best way to bring the generations together at work?
• Do you ever experience gaps with your own generation?
• Where do you see the positives of a multigenerational culture where you work?
• What do you most wish the other generations could appreciate about your generation?
• Which generation do you admire, and why?
• What concerns you most about the other generations?
• How have you successfully bridged a generation gap?
• What bothers you about your own generation?
• Are you doing anything to change that?
• Identify the “generational make-up” of your team

• Identify actions you can take to motivate your team

• Identify actions or programs you can put into place or actions you can promote that will encourage others to join your team

• Take action yourself

• Measure your success

• Re-evaluate your actions and continue to encourage your workforce by addressing generational differences
CONTACT INFORMATION

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