



Managing Generational Differences in the Workplace

September 2019



In association with the
South Carolina Chamber of Commerce



Learning Objectives

At the end of our discussion you will be able to:

- Identify characteristics of the four/five generations in the workplace
- Recognize issues and situations that may be influenced by generational differences
- Apply practical tips for working successfully in a multi-generational workplace
- Communicate more effectively and build a respect-filled workplace
- Apply techniques to situations you are currently experiencing



Managing Generational Differences - Why This Matters

- Traditionalists – 6%
- Baby Boomers – 42%
- Generation X – 29%
- Generation Y/Millennials – 23%
- Generation Z - ?
- 2020 - 5 Generations in the Workplace;
Millennials – 50% of Workforce
- 60% of Boomers working past retirement age

Think of the last time you heard comments like these....

- I remember when.....
- Just do your job!
- You are right, but I am the boss!
- NO!
- The kid wants a promotion after six months on the job!!!

Evidence there is conflict

“They have no work ethic. They’re a bunch of slackers.”

“So I told my boss. If you’re looking for loyalty buy a dog.”

“If I hear, ‘We tried that in ‘87 one more time I’ll hurl.’”

“Lighten up! Work should be fun.”

“I wouldn’t be caught dead wearing that.”

“I have a new rule. I will not attend meetings that start after 5 P.M. I have a life.”

What have Managing Millennials heard from other Generations?

- I have children older than you.
- I have been working here since before you were born.
- You still have milk on your breath.
- I'm not your baby sitter. I won't hold your hand.
- Regarding a 5 year plan, you don't have to worry about it. I'm sure you won't be here in 5 years.
- I refuse to be told I'm doing my job right by a 12 year old!

What is a Generation?

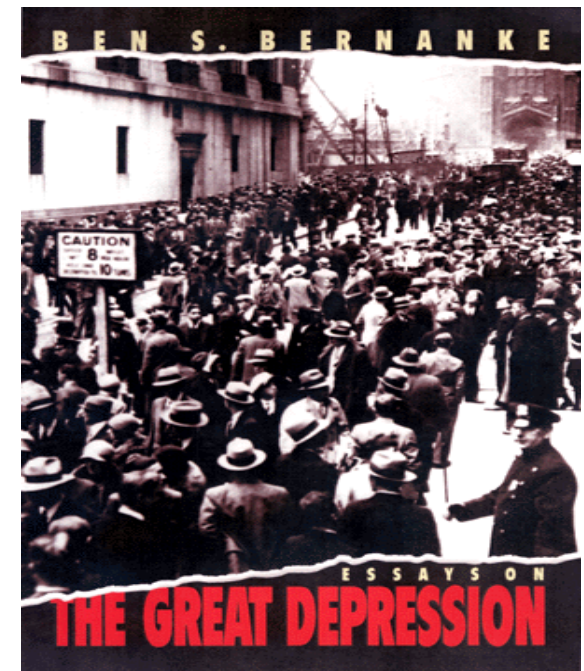
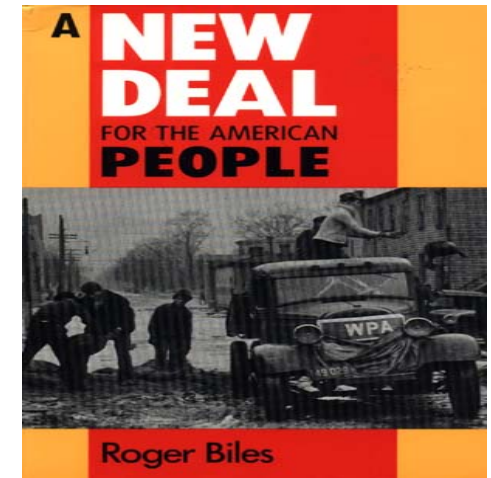
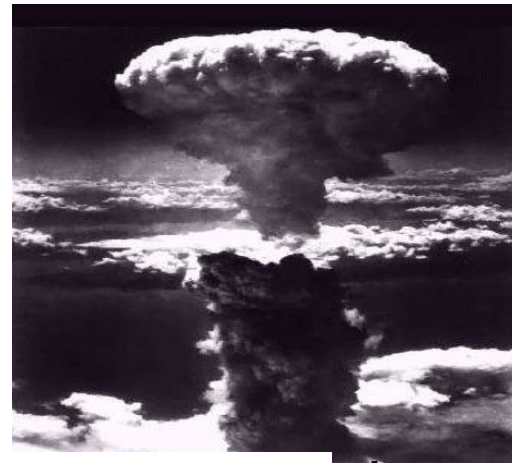


Traditionalists: 1922-1945

- Value: Privacy, Hard Work, Trust, Sacrifice, Patriotism, Tom Brokaw's "Greatest Generation"
- Work: Obligation
- Leadership Style: Command and Control
- Communication: Memo
- Feedback: *"No News is Good News"*
- Motivation: Power and Prestige
- TV: Ed Sullivan, Bonanza, Father Knows Best
- Retain: Mentor

Major Events:

- Great Depression
- New Deal
- WW II
- Korean War
- Atomic Bomb



Baby Boomers: 1946-1964

- Value: Teamwork; Competition; Body Language, Optimistic
- Work: Exciting Adventure
- Leadership Style: Consensual
- Communication: In Person: Face to Face
- Feedback: *“Once a year and lots of documentation”*
- Motivation: Reward and Recognition
- TV: Laugh In, Westerns, Lassie, Mod Squad, Carson, MASH
- Retain: Etiquette, Flex Work

Major Events:

- Civil Rights
- Space Travel
- Cold War
- Sexual Revolution
- Vietnam War
- Assassinations



Exercise:

Your CEO claims he is so busy during the day that he prints his emails and takes them home to read. Each morning he hands them out to members of his team with directions for action.

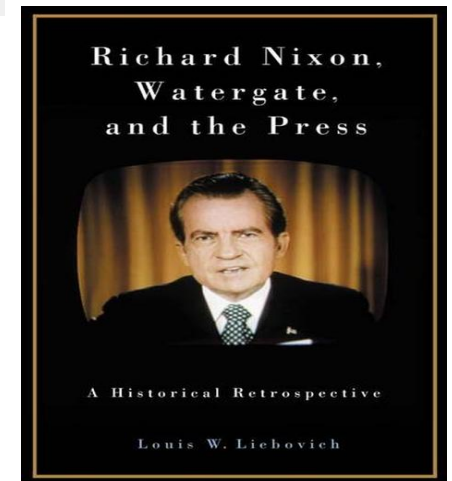


Generation X: 1965-1980

- Value: Information; Creativity; Independence; Entrepreneurs
- Work: A Contract; Work Life Balance
- Leadership Style: Everyone is the Same
- Feedback: *“Sorry to interrupt, but how am I doing?”*
- Motivation: Collaborations/Connections
- TV: SNL, Friends, 90210, Cosby
- Retain: Current Tech; Multi-task; Freedom; Career Path; Fun

Major Events:

- Fall of Berlin Wall
- Iran Hostages
- Women's Liberation
- Challenger
- Watergate
- Energy Crisis
- Cynical
- Latchkey Kids



Generation Y / Millennials: 1980-2000

- Value: TECHNOLOGY; Diversity; Autonomy; Internet;
- Work: Fulfillment
- Leadership Style: TBD
- Communication: Email; Social Networking
- Feedback: *“Whenever I want it, at the push of a button.”*
- Motivation: Change and Challenge
- TV: Dawson Creek, The WB, Millionaire, That 70’s Show
- Retain: Orientation; Giving Back; Mentor

Major Events:

- Oklahoma City
- Columbine
- VA Tech
- Technology
- Y2K
- WTC 9/11
- Clinton/Lewinsky
- Berlin Wall
- Gulf War



Exercise:

Your team member comes to you on Wednesday afternoon and informs you she is “all caught up” on her assignments and is planning to leave early on Friday to go away for the weekend with her friends.



Gen Y: Career Enhancement vs. Job-Protection



- Millennials may have as many as 14 jobs by the time they are age 38
- Average tenure: 2.2 years
- Focused on multi-faceted career path vs. traditional succession planning

The Demise of Retention



An episode of *60 Minutes* entitled “The Age Of The Millennials” proposed that members of the Millennial generation have limited loyalty to any particular employer.

Gen Y / Millennials

- 2020 – 50% of the workforce
- Goals - to get rich (81%) and become famous (51%).
- 96% believe that they will do something great in their lives and want to make a difference.
- 20% of adults aged 18 to 29 are married.
- Biggest generation in history, 1/3 of the world's population.
- 1/3 have friends of different race
- 3/4 live with grands

Gen Y/Millennials

- 77% have “helping others” as one of their chief motivations in life.
- 87% say that caring for the environment is their responsibility.
- 79% want to work for a company that cares about how it affects or contributes to society.
- 65% of adult Millennials have college degrees, the single most educated generation ever.

What do Millennials want at work?

- Work/Life Balance
- Flexibility
- Collaboration
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Professional and Personal Development
- Meaningful, challenging work.
- Tangible results
- Basically, the exact same things that everyone else wants.

Generation Z: 2001-

- <http://youtu.be/qypKjzUOhBM>

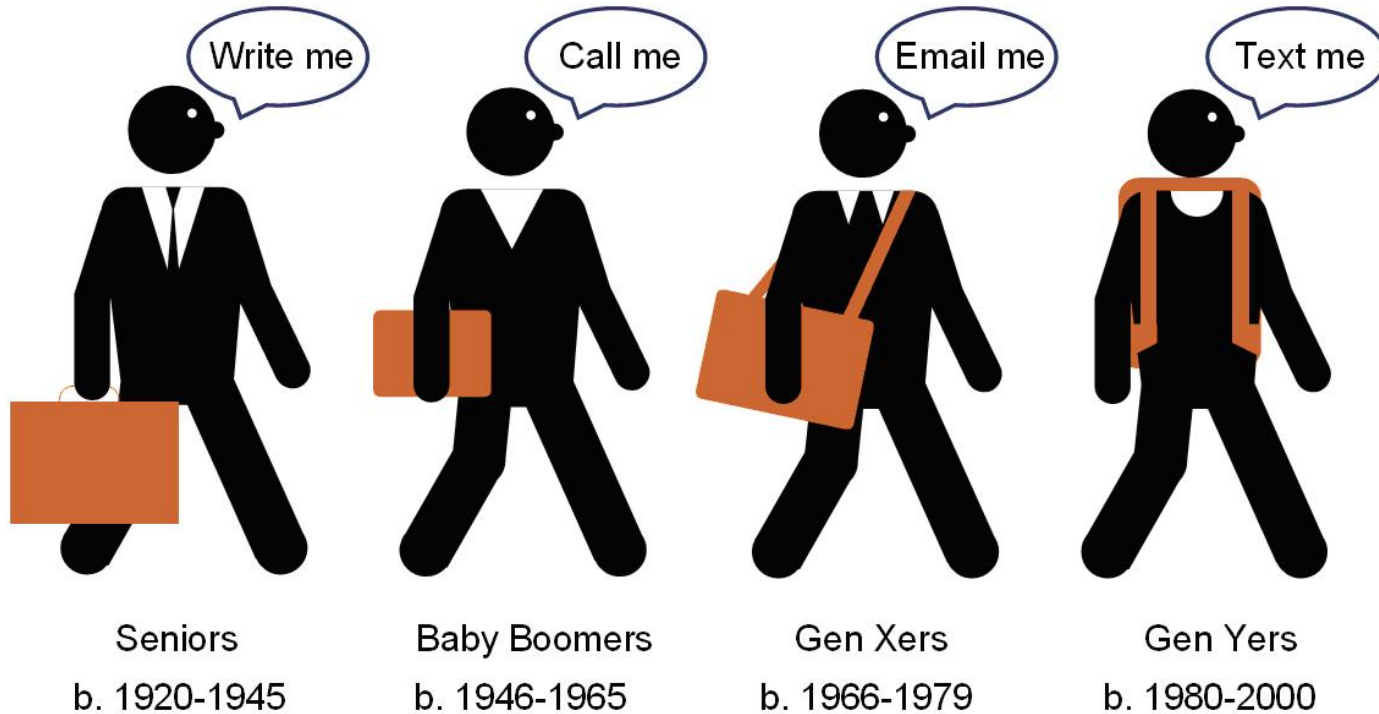
off the mark

by Mark Parisi
www.offthemark.com



When Generations Collide

Our four generation workforce provides challenges



Small Group Exercise

- Break into groups by your generation. If you are a “cusper”, select the generation you identify with the most.
- Discuss the work style and values of your generational group, as well as what you want others to understand about your generational group.
- Be prepared to present to the large group.



Communicating Across the Generations

Traditionalists

- Build trust through inclusive language (we, us)
- A leader's word is his/her bond
- Face to face or written communication
- Use more formal language
- Don't waste time; they have work to do
- Don't expect them to share their innermost thoughts immediately

Communicating Across the Generations

Baby Boomers

- “Show me” generation: use body language to communicate
- Speak in open, direct style – not formal
- Answer questions thoroughly, and expect to be pressed for details
- Avoid controlling, manipulative language
- Present options –show flexibility in your thinking
- Use face to face or electronic communication

Communicating Across the Generations

Gen X'ers

- Use email as your primary tool
- Learn their language and speak it
- Talk in short sound bytes to keep attention
- Present the facts, use straight talk
- Ask them for their feedback
- Share information immediately and often
- Use informal communication style
- Listen...you might learn something!

Communicating Across the Generations

Gen Y/Millennials

- Let your language paint visual pictures
- Use action verbs to challenge them
- Don't talk down to them; they will resent it
- Show respect through your language
- Use email and voicemail – primary tools
- Constantly seek their feedback
- Encourage them to break the rules
- Use humor-don't take yourself too seriously

Group Project

- Prepare an invitation to a business event that the opposite style would want to attend.
- Write you invitation on an easel paper provided.
- Select a “Spokesperson” from you group to read the invitation to the invited group.



Differences Between Generations Can Be Seen In...



Differences Between Generations Can Be Seen In...

- Feedback & communication styles
- Work processes & technology focus
- Work motivation & rewards
- Business etiquette
- Dress & grooming
- Authority, leadership and hierarchy
- Views about what is or is not respectful

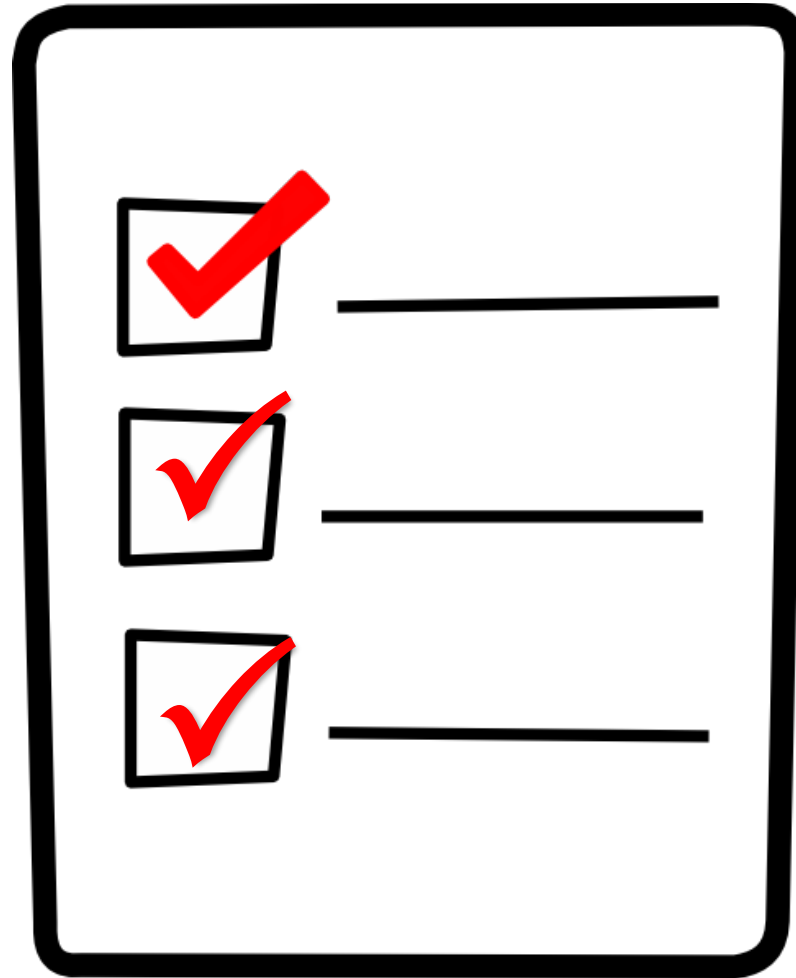
Making it Work!

- Not right or wrong...just different
- Ask questions rather than make statements
- Avoid characterizations based on age
- One size does not fit all
- Paraphrase before answering
- Be careful about cultural or historical references
- If that other age-group worker was right after all, say so
- Develop a curiosity for things unknown to you

Making it Work!

- “Money for time” vs. Results
- Technology Upgrade
- Be aware that “new” technology may not be
- Flexibility
- Focus on similarities rather than differences
- Recognize that change does occur
- Recognize the value and the perils of the “tried and true”

Summary



Questions or Comments?



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