



“Talkin’ Bout My Generation!”

Understanding a Multi-Generational Law Firm

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We Can Do It!



Learning Goals

- To understand what makes each age group different and how generational tendencies and behaviors have developed so we can appropriately motivate and manage our workforce.
- After some brief details of events, we will explore each generation's profile, work, management, and communication preferences.



The Four Generations Currently in the Workplace

- **Traditionalists (Veterans, Builders)**
 - Born before 1943
- **Baby Boomers**
 - Born about 1943 to 1964
- **Gen X-ers (Baby Busters)**
 - Born about 1965 to 1980
- **Millennials (Y, Nexters, Gen Net, Echo)**
 - Born about 1981 to 2000



The Four Generations Currently in the Workplace

← Traditionalists (Veterans, Builders)





Traditionalists



- **Movie Trivia**

– Traditionalists can easily match these “Rat Pack” actors with the following movies:

| | |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Frank Sinatra | <i>Rio Bravo</i> , 1959 |
| Sammy Davis, Jr. | <i>Little Women</i> , 1949 |
| Dean Martin | <i>Valley of the Dolls</i> , 1967 |
| Joey Bishop | <i>Pal Joey</i> , 1957 |
| Peter Lawford | <i>77 Sunset Strip</i> , 1958 |

Their Faces



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Events That Shaped Them

- Shaped U.S. as we know it today
- FDR → Rendezvous with Destiny
- Built infrastructure of highways, bridges, dams, buildings
- Miracle vaccines
- Raised largest generation of babies
- Family values = this generation's morality
- Children in 20's and 30's; witnessed Depression, lost jobs, SM Crash, "Hoovervilles," Dust Bowl of 1933
- Mantra is "Do Without"
 - Put aside individual needs for collection good = amazing things
- Over 50% of men are/were Veterans; Woman in factories
- Tolerant, loyal and efficient generation who thrive on consistency & uniformity
 - This is an important part of their sociology
- Like things on a grand scale; car symbol of freedom
- In their hearts, they are conformers; like clearly defined roles
- Choices based on past data → future is product of history
- Dying off but influence in workplace will remain for decades
 - Top down approach only sane way to organize work & society

“Hooverville”

- Shanty “pop-up” villages that destitute families built during the depression, usually tents or structures made from wood scraps.





Traditionalists

7 Million People in the Workforce; 5% of Workers

- Profile
 - Outlook: Practical, Optimistic
 - Influenced by Great Depression
 - Work Ethic: Hard Working, Loyal
 - Empire State Building – grand, tall and built by the grit of the American people. “An honest day’s work for an honest day’s pay.”
 - View of Authority: Respectful
 - Leadership: By Hierarchy
 - Relationships: Personal Sacrifice
 - Perspective: Civic
 - Highly influenced by two World Wars

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Traditionalists - Work Preferences

- Uncomfortable with, but adapted to, technology
- Grateful for their jobs; long tenure; created Union movement; worker obedience over individualism
- Satisfaction for a job well done vs. needing meaning in their jobs
- Duty before pleasure – success and rewards come quietly
- Like to work for big companies and government who represent security and stability



Traditionalists - Managing Them

- Traditionalists are...
 - Dependable
 - Loyal
 - Wise

However

- They may...
 - Buck the authority of younger managers
 - Be overbearing because “there IS only one right answer” and “WE’VE never done it that way.”

To keep them

- Managers should.....
 - Keep them **engaged and productive**
 - **Offer little perks** – handwritten notes or newsletter recognition
 - **Understand you can rely on them to adapt their behavior** which is not necessarily the same as following their hearts (e.g. business casual)
 - **Get to know them and earn their trust** – invite for a cup of coffee
 - **Respect their experiences** but don't be intimidated by them
 - Know they will **appreciate (eventually) honest feedback**



Traditionalists - Communicating

- Traditionalists generally do not respond well to:
 - Profanity/Slang
 - Emotional language
 - Disorganization
 - Disrespect
 - Poor grammar

Adapted from Connecting Generations "Turnoffs" p. 58



The Four Generations Currently in the Workplace

← Baby Boomers





Baby Boomers



- **TV Trivia**

- Baby Boomers can easily answer these questions:

- Who can “turn the world on with her smile?”
 - Who is “moving on up to a deluxe apartment in the sky?”
 - Name the Brady kids.
 - Finish this lyric: “Cheer up sleepy Jean, oh what can it mean.....”

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Their Faces



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Events That Shaped Them

- Reversal of a downward US population trend
 - One baby born every 17 minutes for 19 years!
 - Healthiest, most advantaged, cherished, doted on babies in US history
 - Sheer numbers make them influential in the workforce
- End of rural lifestyle in US; beginning of a new world hundreds of thousands had died to make possible
- TV made it possible to witness events that permanently changed and energized these kids → Kent State, Watergate, Vietnam, Space Race, Civil Rights and Women's movements
 - Women were no longer worked just in the home
- Spirit of optimism → motto "if you don't like it, change it!" So many of them as children, had to work in teams and cooperate
 - COMPETITION → sheer numbers made it mandatory – they had to fight for their place!
- Boomers relentlessly pursue dreams
 - Sometimes to their detriment Business is their WAR; Competition is their enemy; Boardroom is their battlefield
- Eternally cool! Just ask one!
 - Anything possible for this forever young generation who were encouraged to pursue their dreams.
- **Change** management replaced **chain-of-command** style
 - More inclusive, diverse style, more humane, fairer, flatter organizations



Baby Boomers

60 Million People in the Workforce; 38% of workforce .

- Profile
 - Outlook: Optimistic
 - Boomers can change the world; they are forever young
 - Work Ethic: Driven
 - Can be anything you want to be
 - View of Authority: Love/Hate
 - Highly influenced by the war in Vietnam
 - Leadership: By Consensus
 - Relationships: Personal gratification
 - Perspective: Team



Baby Boomers - Work Preferences

- Grandparents and parents instilled importance of work
- Winning the “war” of work defines them; “work ethic” and “worth ethic” synonymous
- May be anti-establishment but are not anti-hard work; invented fifty-sixty hours per work week
- Opportunity is the key to where Boomers work, not glitz, glamour or security
- Love learning and made an industry out of business books; view authors as heroes
- Need for affiliation evident in team building, quality circles and participative management styles
- Will redefine goals if they can’t obtain them!



Baby Boomers - Managing Them

- Boomers are...
 - Driven, dedicated
 - Team oriented
- **However**
- They ...
 - Will not suffer in silence if you are making their life hell AND
 - Will let everyone know about it!
- **To keep them**
- Managers should.....
 - Treat Boomer employees **as equals**
 - Put them in “**charge**” of **something**; make them a change agent
 - Give them **credit when due**; show them how they can be a star
 - Create a **warm and respectful work environment**
 - Demonstrate how your **Firm is a leader** in the industry and does not take a “back seat” – this will be a bragging point for proud Boomers!



Baby Boomers - Communicating

- Baby Boomers generally do not respond well to:
 - Abruptness, Unfriendliness
 - Manipulation
 - Disinterest
 - Displays of power, “one-upmanship”
 - Political incorrectness
 - Overused sports and war analogies

Adapted from Connecting Generations “Turnoffs” p. 58



The Four Generations Currently in the Workplace



← Gen X-ers (Baby Busters)



Gen X-ers



- **Music Trivia**

- Gen X-ers can easily answer these musical questions:

- Who “just wants to have fun!”
 - What “killed the radio star?”
 - When should “you wake WHAM! up?”
 - Where does Guns and Roses welcome you to?

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Their Faces



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Events That Shaped Them

- Living in Boomer's shadow; called the "lost generation"
 - Passively resist everything boomers embraced
 - Lack appreciation for big picture; "is this going to be on the test" mentality
 - Really a statement of efficient survival
- Self reliant and independent group. Understood no one would hand-hold
- Product of high divorce rates, mom's in workforce, latchkey kids
- Survival mentality further cultivated by early political memories
 - Iran hostage crisis, failing economy, losing Vietnam war (decline of a superpower)
- Generation inspired "Friends" → close friends are important and create a sense of family. Want to be with people they love
- Very accepting of diversity and equality because boomer moms were in the workforce
- Work to live; seek balance in work/private life and are distressed by price boomers paid for success and for what? Layoffs, downsizing, rightsizing.
- Do not trust companies are not generally loyal → "have to move out to move up"
- Holding a position of power is earned, not a given
- They think about the "job" not the "work hours"
 - Job security = building skills
 - Enjoy self command and don't like being micro-managed



Gen X-ers

51 Million People in the Workforce; 32% of Workers.

- Profile
 - Outlook: Skeptical
 - Work Ethic: Balanced
 - Changing jobs is a strategic imperative to acquiring skills and making yourself marketable
 - View of Authority: Unimpressed (especially with Boomer bosses)
 - Leadership: Competence
 - Relationships: Reluctant to commit
 - They want balance now when they can enjoy their family, friends, hobbies and intellectual enrichment
 - Perspective: Self

Profile from "When Generations Collide" p. 19; Statistic Leading a Multi-Generational Workforce, AARP.



Gen X-ers - Work Preferences

- Extreme opposite of Baby Boomers
- Independent and self-reliant; little hierarchy
 - (first of “latch-key” children); just enough supervision works for them
- “Work will be there when I get back” attitude; enjoy life
- It’s just a job; no loyalty
- Want flexibility; informal, casual environments
 - Casual days seen as a way to “neutralize” environment
 - Many are entrepreneurs right out of college
- To embrace a workplace trend, technology would have to be involved
- Excellent parallel processors and can simultaneously absorb and deal with a lot of diverse information
 - may seem like “not paying attention” or “ignoring me” to Boomer managers



Gen X-ers - Managing Them

- Gen Xer's are...
 - Adaptable, independent
 - Challenge-oriented

However

- They ...
 - Look out for “number one”
 - Will jump ship if too closely supervised

To keep them

- Managers should.....
 - **Train, train, train!** Realize that the “skills acquisition” process is important to X-ers and satisfying their appetite can be accomplished internally – **keep them on a path**
 - Let them **do some things their way**; give them freedom
 - Provide them with the proper, most innovative **technological tools**
 - Offer **sincere feedback/attention** when needed
 - Yearning for this stems from many absent parents
 - **Don't glamorize a repetitive task.** Be frank and honest about routine, but necessary tasks..



Gen X-ers - Communicating

- Gen X-ers generally do not respond well to:
 - Schmoozing
 - Inefficiency
 - Flashiness
 - Hyperbole or corporate-speak
 - “I nearly died trying” or “think outside of the box”
 - Incompetence
 - Bureaucracy/complex policies

Adapted from Connecting Generations “Turnoffs” p. 58



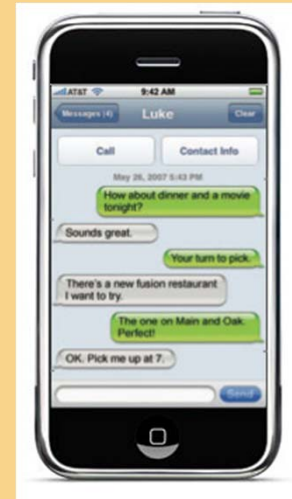
The Four Generations Currently in the Workplace



← Millennials



Millennials



- **Instant Messaging Trivia**

- Millennials can instantly tell you what these “instant messaging” acronyms mean:

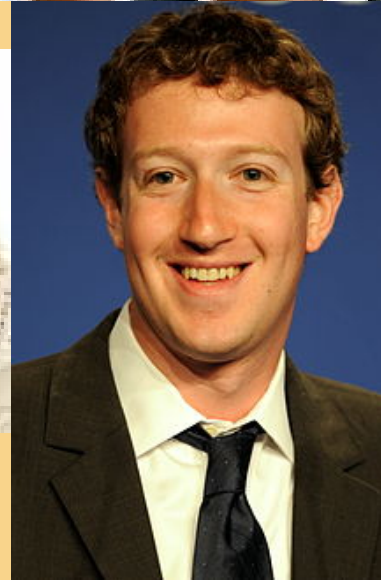
- RUS
- BRB
- G2G
- ROTFL
- TTYL
- IDK, IDC

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Events That Shaped Them

- Helicopter generation
 - Boomer parents will “hover over” and advocate for them
- Wanted and planned children and this creates in them a sense of confidence but also entitlement.
- Have grown up in an inclusive world and they appreciate diversity and collaboration
- Fast-paced workers who need to be challenged and motivated
- Has seen more “school violence” (Columbine, Nickle Mines, Virginia Tech) than any other generation – this has motivated them to seek change!
- Occupy Movement
 - Politically Active/Vocal
- Demanding generation who are used to getting what they want
 - Good negotiation skills because parents included them in decisions (vacations, room decoration, restaurants, etc...)



A Word About How Millennials Communicate

- Highly influenced by digital age; authority on the Internet (cannot remember a time without it).
 - Work in collaborative media
 - Posters = webpages
 - Diaries = blogs
 - Phone calls = text messages
 - PowerPoint = movie clips
- Limitless connectivity enables and allows them to test boundaries combining work and play → cyberspace communities
 - facebook, twitter, YouTube, blogging
 - Verbal communication skills suffer → on-line communication
- “Intellectual Tapas”
 - Tend to skim things for interesting or relevant content. Are they absorbing or assimilating anything?
- “Narrative Depravation”
 - Tend to watch an entire series all at once, often alone. No cliff hanger or hook to discuss “what if’s” with companions.
 - How will this change/enhance their ability to understand and produce work?
- Will revolutionize the workplace, **BUT will need and want mentors**



Millennials

40 Million People in the Workforce; 25% of Workers

- Profile
 - Outlook: Hopeful
 - Work Ethic: Ambitious
 - View of Authority: Relaxed, polite
 - Leadership: Achievers
 - Respect bosses who are credible, collaborative
 - Relationships: Loyal
 - Seek professional growth, satisfaction
 - Perspective: Civic
 - Actively involved in classroom “mock” elections and charitable causes

Profile from “When Generations Collide” p. 19; Statistic Leading a Multi-Generational Workforce, AARP



Millennials - Work Preferences

- Oldest members are now in the workforce
 - Many unemployed/underemployed
 - There will be enough in the future to fill all jobs but need to train/prepare them!
- Teamwork ethic (learned in the classroom!) of Boomers and “can do” attitude of Traditionalists
 - Hard work and goal setting will help achieve a dream
- Education system has prepared them well for the workforce, as does their technological sophistication, positive expectations and capitalization on collective action with Boomers
 - Very literate (soaring book sales), fast-paced and busy
 - Economists predicting an **increase in productivity** with Millennials; **ready to sacrifice personal pleasure for collective good**; will demand equal pay, fewer job definitions, may very well downgrade executive salaries, revitalize the union movement and establish more labor standards/regulations.



Millennials- Managing Them

- Millennials are...
 - Tenacious
 - Technologically savvy and expect to be able to use these tools at work
 - Teamwork oriented

However

- They may ...
 - Be a very demanding workforce
 - clear view of how work should be and are used to getting what they want; may insist on “mobile media”
 - parents will advocate for them
 - Require supervision and structure
 - Need to be coached on how to handle difficult issues – remember they are young!

To keep them

- Managers should.....
 - Send plenty of **motivating messages** – “You will be working with bright people.”
 - Spend lots of time **orienting; explain** the work environment, expectations and long-term goals
 - Make sure to “**Gender Blend.**” Toss out preconceived notions about traditional gender roles.
 - Create **diverse teams** and appoint a team leader
 - Provide **OTJ** and recognize that it is viewed as an **extension of their education**
 - Assign them to a **credible and seasoned mentor** – they will learn from each other



Millennials - Communicating

- Millennials generally do not respond well to:
 - Cynicism
 - Sarcasm
 - **Unfairness**
 - Condescension
 - Phoneyys
 - Avoid trying to come across as “hip”

Adapted from Connecting Generations “Turnoffs” p. 58



But Wait.... A Fifth Generation?





Generation “C”

Generation “C” for **CONNECT**
...the youngest Millennials!

- By 2020, the youngest generations will account for nearly half of the employees in the world and will be dominant in the workforce
- By 2016 the earliest of the Millennials will be 35, some holding leadership roles.
- Need to encourage “Social Learning”
 - Employees learning from each other, in a pragmatic, interpretive way.
 - Not just consuming knowledge, but imparting, deciphering and deconstructing what methods work as workplaces change and grow



Texts and Tweets

- Truncated and quick writing of twitter and text messages....
 - Some fear tweeting and texting will “dumb down” the English language affecting the appropriate use of language, grammar, spelling, word choice and ultimately, writing skills.
 - Others argue that tweeting and texting encourage shorter, more concise and deliberate expression, word choice and sentence structure...Less is more.



Feedback

What it means...

- Traditionalists seek no applause but appreciate a **subtle acknowledgement** that they have made a difference.
- Boomers are often giving feedback to others but seldom receive, especially positive, **feedback**.
- Xers need **positive feedback** to let them know they're on the right track.
- Millennials/Generation C are used to praise and may mistake **silence for disapproval**. They need to know what they are doing right and what they are doing wrong.

Slide from Duke University "Cross Generational Communication" presentation

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To sum it up...

- **Traditionalists** just want to be valued. They create **legacies**.
- **Boomers** just want to be loved. They create **exceptional** careers.
- **Xers** just want to be respected. They create **portable** careers.
- **Millennials/C's** just want to be taught. They create **parallel** careers.



Mixing it up!

- Get employees talking about their generation
 - Storytelling is a great way to get to know and to understand those from different generations and their particular “baggage.”
 - If we understand differences, we are less likely to judge.
 - Create opportunities through employee activities.
- Ask employees about needs/preferences
 - Don't assume what works/ed for you will work for others
 - Older workers prefer private work spaces; younger workers thrive in collaborative environments
 - While workers tend to favor working with and seeking advice from those in their own age category, different generations are willing to and capable of working together
 - Workers generally appreciate and learn from the point-of-view of other generations, as well as their contributions to the work community

Adapted from Connecting Generations “Successfully Mixing Generations” p. 44



Mixing it up!

- Recognize that one size does NOT fit all
 - Offer **options** → schedules, job sharing, work spaces and tools
- Be flexible
 - Manage each person as an individual
- Watch for emerging strengths
 - Encourage employees to work with “**emotional intelligence**” by developing their natural talents, strengths and skills.
- Create generationally-diverse teams
 - Actively recruit multi-generational and culturally diverse employees so that different perspectives are supported and encouraged. Let teams develop naturally

If you are sensitive to these issues, it is possible to enjoy a wonderfully integrated and harmonious workforce



How To Help!

- Recognize that your website is a valuable recruiting tool. Include less about history and tradition and focus on firm innovations, career pathing, mentoring, rewards, work-life balance and diversity.
- Include information in printed marketing and recruiting materials that is relevant to a diverse candidate base.
- Consider using technology to gather and improve the frequency and quality of various feedback.
- Allow the appropriate use of twitter, facebook, blogs and other social media.
- Include young professionals on teams or committees...they are used to being asked for their opinions and will be motivated by being included!
- Remember that the new generations are **respectful of authority, but not awed or intimidated by it.**

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Music

- **Traditionists**
 - I've Got You Under My Skin, Frank Sinatra
- **Baby Boomers**
 - I Wanna Hold Your Hand, The Beatles
- **Gen-Xers**
 - Orange Crush, R.E.M.
- **Millenials**
 - Somewhere Only We Know, Keane
- **Generation C**
 - Call Me Maybe, Carly Rae Jepsen