

Generations in the 21st Century Workplace

- With Another on the Way

Marietta Watts
University of Kentucky
HR Training and Development

Think About This...

The people who started college this fall were born in 1998;

- The United States has always been at war.
- The Ali/Frazier boxing match for their generation was between the daughters of Muhammad and Joe.
- They have never had to watch or listen to programs at a scheduled time.
- Each year they've been alive the US population has grown by more than one million Latinos.
- "Nanny cams" have always been available to check up on the babysitter.
- X-rays have always been digital allowing them to be read immediately.
- A Bush and/or a Clinton have always been campaigning for something big.
- Deceased men have always been able to procreate.
- They have never seen billboard ads for cigarettes.
- Airline tickets have always been purchased online.

Objectives

- Define generations and characteristics;
- Identify value systems and behaviors;
- Define generations' search for success;
- Determine coaching, managing strategies.

Why Is it Important?

- First time in history that four generations interact in the workplace side by side – and another is on the way.
- Each generation views the world differently.
- These differences can cause strife in the how we exist with each other.
- Each generation has something valuable to add to our society.

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- Each generation has a perception of how the world operates, based on their experience
 - Each generation is “right”

Generational Tension

- Conflict in the workplace (work hours, work ethics, etc.)
- Communication breakdowns
- Problems dealing with change
- Discomfort with rapid progress of technology
- Problems with ideas of service
- Confusion over issues of respect

Matures

- **Major Events That Affected Values of Matures:**
 - Great Depression
 - World War II
 - Social Security Mandate
 - Industrialization Society
 - Racism, Jim Crow Laws, Economic Discrimination

Matures

- Born 1909-1945
- Often retired from workplace
- Rose through the ranks of organizations
- Driven, have high standards
- Loyal to organizations – not individuals
- High respect for authority
- Duty before pleasure
- Adhere to rules and regulations
- Strong work ethic

Matures

- Influenced by family and religion
- Uncomfortable with change
- Believe children should:
 - Be seen and not heard;
 - Speak only when spoken to;
 - Respect the elderly;
 - Have lots of structure;
 - Do only what they are told to do.

Baby Boomers

- **Major Events That Affected Baby Boomers**
 - Invention and Availability of TV
 - Civil Rights Movement
 - Protests
 - Rock and Roll Music
 - Charismatic Leaders

Baby Boomers

- Born 1946-1964
- Often in management positions
- Driven, high work ethic
- Understand workplace politics
- Believe in titles and status
- Define productivity by number of hours invested
- Value personal growth, time
- Relationships are important

Baby Boomers

- Uncomfortable with conflict
- Reluctant to go against peers (value teamwork)
- Sensitive to positive feedback
- Seek visible feedback
- Believe children should:
 - Develop independence and reliability early;
 - Be obedient;
 - Be held accountable;
 - Be respectful of family hierarchy;
 - Be given lots of permissions.

Generation Xers

- **Major Events That Affected Value of Generation Xers:**
 - Man walking on the moon
 - Challenger Explosion
 - AIDS
 - Video games
 - Latchkey upbringing
 - Invention of personal computers

Generation Xers

- Born 1965-1979
- Found in middle management positions
- Techno literate
- Not intimidated by authority
- Creative, like ownership
- Value quick promotion
- Not money driven
- Not afraid to leave a relationship/work situation

Generation Xers

- Cynical, have “prove-it-to-me” attitude
- Demand work/life balance
- Little respect for hierarchies
- Productivity not measured by time invested
- Value diversity

Generation Xers

- Believe children should:
 - Be protected from strangers;
 - Be treated as equals;
 - Speak their minds; have a say in family decisions (cars, food, etc.);
 - Be reasoned with – not told what to do;
 - Be treated as individuals;
 - Own spaces (home and school)
 - Own toys/electronics
 - Have scheduled recreation and fun;
 - Stay busy;
 - Be best friends with their parents;
 - Always be connected;
 - Not be exposed to failure.

Millennials

- **Major Events That Affect Values of Millennials**
 - Creation of the Internet
 - Fall of the Berlin Wall
 - Columbine School shooting
 - September 11th tragedy
 - Global technology
 - Global Multiculturalism
 - Controversy over illegal immigration



Millennials

- Born between 1980-1998
- Optimistic
- Multi-taskers
- Technology savvy
- Never known a time without cell phones
- Like teamwork
- Love of and willingness to learn
- Seek open, constant feedback (from leaders)



Millennials

- High need for structure
- No understanding of politics
- Not motivated by money (have always had what they wanted)
- Very comfortable with diversity
- Highly energetic, like distraction
- Travel in groups but value individuality
- Seek instant gratification

Millennials

- Believe children should:
 - Be protected from everyone at all costs, but given free range;
 - Be encouraged to display their character;
 - Express their creativity, but follow the rules;
 - Have others appreciate their uniqueness;
 - Fail from time to time.

Generation Z

- **Major Events That Affect Values of Generation Z**
 - Invention of MySpace, Twitter, Virtual Communities
 - Capture of Saddam Hussain
 - Election of Barak Obama
 - Discovery and death of Osama bin Laden
 - Major Recession
 - Penn State/Joe Paterno sex scandal

Generation Z

- Born after 1998
- Never known a time without Internet (true digital natives)
- Used to instant action and instant gratification
- Major communication is through online communities
- Little respect for protecting personal information
- Lack confidence and interpersonal skills

Generation Z

- Very individualistic, independent
- Not team players, not used to sharing
- No ethnic, gender distinctions/roles
- Highly intelligent but easily distracted
- Process lots of information at lightning speed
- Will join workforce in 2-3 years

Leaders' Challenges

- Loyalty, work ethics, freedom, and rewards mean something very different to each group
- Perspective, work habits and communication styles vary based on generational preferences
- Workplace/professional conflicts are often identified in more personal ways: “He has a poor work ethic,” or “She is not committed to the job.”

No Customers, No Ketchup

The restaurant was empty when my family and I arrived on a Sunday afternoon. We ordered our food and went to sit down. My wife went over to the condiment bar to fill a couple of little cups with ketchup. She pushed down on the lever and nothing emerged from the dispenser. She tried again, and again, and again. Finally she went back to the counter and said, “Your ketchup is out.”

How would a working member of each of the generations respond?

Mature –

“I’m very sorry, Ma’am. I’ll get that filled right up for you.”

Baby Boomer –

“Wow, thanks for letting me know. We’ll get someone to fill that right up.”

Generation X –

“Would you mind taking this bottle of ketchup and filling up the jar? Thanks.”

Millennial –

“Yeah, I know. We need to fill it. You want some packets?”

Generation Z –

“Uh huh,” while gazing down at their Smartphone.

The Generations' Search

- ***Matures*** search for *Quality* and have a “*Work First*” attitude.
 - You must earn their respect.
 - Personal relationships mean more than data.
 - Ask them questions about the past and then listen to them.
 - Use a personal touch (face-to-face, phone calls, notes, etc.).
 - Take time to explain new ideas.
 - Show respect for people and institutions that have reputable histories.

The Generations' Search

- ***Boomers*** search for *Control* and “*Live to Work.*”
 - They have a strong desire power and purpose.
 - Team relationships is an most important aspect of business.
 - Time is highly valued.
 - They are driven to compete, they seek to improve, and they work hard.
 - They have a need to be challenged and valued.
 - Respect their skills, knowledge and potential.
 - Give them clear goals and freedom to do things their way.
 - Be constructive in giving feedback.

The Generations' Search

- ***Generation Xers*** search for *Truth* and “Work to Live.”
 - They are the most cynical of the generations, so approach them as a provider of information, not as a *manager*.
 - Be prepared to answer “Why” questions.
 - They are not interested in long-term solutions – what can you do for them *today*.
 - Have a backup or contingency plan.
 - Give this group clearly defined goals and freedom to accomplish them.
 - Show trust and confidence in their decisions.
 - Reward them with training, increasing responsibilities, and a chance to have fun.

The Generations' Search

- *Millenniums* search for *Identity* and “*Live, then Work.*”
 - They desire customization that reflects their individuality.
 - They are unprepared for the real world but are anxious to find their way.
 - Build rapport by showing genuine admiration for their individuality.
 - Develop short-term plans to meet their need for immediate gratification.
 - Provide a wide range of projects that are challenging yet entertaining.
 - Help them learn and develop.

The Generations' Search

- **Generation Z** will search for *answers* and “*Work and Life will be one.*”
 - Most have an “acquired Attention Deficit Disorder” since their dependence on technology is high and their attention span is low.
 - They severely lack interpersonal skills and are poor listeners.
 - They have strong opinions and do not take suggestions well.
 - Give them clear goals and don't try to manage their methods.
 - Expect that they will not *know* answers to problems; instead they will know how to *access* answers.
 - Help them to learn collaboration skills and to develop face-to-face relationships.
 - Allow them quiet time.



It all comes down to this...

- Be aware.
- Respect differences.
- Communicate on their level.
- Reinforce good performance.
- Train and retain – younger generations are the future.
- Working side by side, all generations have something to offer to each other.



Thank You!

Marietta Watts
Senior Training Specialist/Performance Consultant
(859)257-9429
Marietta.watts@uky.edu