Looking Beyond Age: Managing Across Generational Differences

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Agenda

Generational Data
Stereotype Much?
Practical HR Advice
Scenarios
Discussion/Questions
Food for Thought

“Just as effective use of gender and ethnic diversity initiatives can boost the productivity and effectiveness of an organization, preparing employees to appreciate generational differences can benefit workplace teams.”

-How Generational Differences Impact Organizations & Teams, Birkman eBook
Generational Data

Millennials became the largest generation in the labor force in 2016

U.S. labor force, in millions

- Millennials: 56
- Gen X: 63
- Baby Boomers: 54
- Post-Millennials: 41
- Silent/Greatest: 9

Note: Labor force includes those ages 16 and older who are working or looking for work. Annual averages shown.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/03/01/millennials-overtake-baby-boomers/

Generational Data

Percentage of the U.S. Labor Force (Pew Research, Apr. 11, 2018)

- Millennials: 35%
- Gen X: 33%
- Baby Boomers: 25%
- Silent/Greatest/Traditionalist: 2%
- Gen Z: 5%

Generals are the largest generation in the U.S. labor force, Pew Research Center (Apr. 11, 2018)

More than a third of the workforce are Millennials

% of the U.S. labor force

- 2017:
  - Silent/Greatest: 21%
  - Boomers: 25%
  - Gen X: 33%
  - Millennials: 29%
  - Post-Millennials: 5%

- 1994:
  - Silent/Greatest: 50%
  - Boomers: 33%
  - Gen X: 5%
  - Millennials: 5%
  - Post-Millennials: 21%

Note: Labor force includes those ages 16 and older who are working or looking for work. Annual averages shown.
**Generational Data: University of Florida - Faculty**

- Traditionalists: 1.89%
- Baby Boomers: 38.33%
- Generation X: 40.43%
- Millennials: 19.33%
- Gen Z: 0.02%

**Faculty Data**
- Youngest = 23
- Oldest = 89
- Average = 50

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**Generational Data: University of Florida - Staff**

- Traditionalists: 0.14%
- Baby Boomers: 29.80%
- Generation X: 34.55%
- Millennials: 34.55%
- Gen Z: 0.96%

**Staff Data**
- Youngest = 19
- Oldest = 83
- Average = 45
Basic HR Guidance

Consider possible generational differences in:

- Displaying work ethic and role of work in life
- Notions of loyalty toward employer vs profession
- Learning and communication preferences
- Forms of feedback and supervision that engage
- Working independently or with collaborative team
- Attitudes toward technology and change
- Thinking *status quo* is good and/or bad
- Why people stay with an employer
- What perks and benefits matter
Stereotype Much? Traditionalists

**Attributes**
Strong values of honor, hard work, **very loyal**, independent, self-sacrifice, respect for authority, command and control

**Do**
Be respectful, punctual, honor the chain of command, communicate **face-to-face**, be accountable and honorable

**Don’t**
Don’t be late or change appointment or meeting times, don’t be informal, use slang, or be vulgar (no emojis 😊)

**Likes**
Favor top-down management and stability, formality, detail-oriented processes, community involvement, feeling respected

**Dislikes**
Uncomfortable with change and conflict, informality, waste of time or resources, laziness, excuses, technology

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Stereotype Much? Baby Boomers

**Attributes**
“Me Generation.” Optimistic, social reformers, **workaholics**, believe in working long hours—expect the same from others

**Do**
Value their experiences & accomplishments, let them mentor, give them credit & offer perks, help them with technology

**Don’t**
Don’t ignore their contributions or neglect to give them credit, don’t tell them instead of ask, don’t be politically incorrect

**Likes**
Responsibility, acknowledgement, career advancement, competition, teamwork, a serious work ethic, “**can do**” attitude

**Dislikes**
Laziness (“work from home” is a joke), improper business etiquette, conflict, sharing credit, **honest performance reviews**
Stereotype Much? Gen X

Attributes
“Latchkey kids,” independent, skeptical, and creative, self-command style, value work-life balance, tech-savvy

Do
Help with social skills, give regular & timely feedback, allow to multi-task, challenge them, encourage and allow for creativity

Don’t
Don’t micromanage or treat them like slackers, don’t presume loyalty, don’t talk too much (bite-size), waste time pontificating

Likes
Freedom and flexibility in schedule and managing work, Technology, working autonomously, learning and training

Dislikes
Micro-managing, expectation of being at their desks from 9-5, red tape, “This is the way we’ve always done it”

Stereotype Much? Millennials

Attributes
Ease-to-Communicate-with generation, thrives on change, the Internet Generation, determined, optimistic, tenacious

Do
Provide orientation and social interaction, allow multi-taking, give them mentors and buddies, collaborate and engage

Don’t
Don’t treat them like children, let them get bored, make them do the same thing over & over, give them outdated technology

Likes
Open communication, feedback, collaboration, learning and training asking questions, the latest technology, rewards,

Dislikes
Negativity, focus on tenure over competence, monotony focus on process over outcomes, anything slow or outdated
**Stereotype Much? Gen Z**

**Attributes**
- Collaborative and team players, but also entrepreneurial, multi-taskers, innovative, passionate, will change the world

**Do**
- Talk to them as adults, give them recognition and feedback, have colleagues & leaders collaborate, challenge them!

**Don’t**
- Don’t give too much information at once, don’t be impersonal
- Don’t be inflexible, don’t assume they know how they are doing

**Likes**
- Opportunities to learn, volunteer, grow, experience new things, feedback, the latest technology, “bite-sized” information

**Dislikes**
- Micro-managing, talk too much, using formal communication (don’t letters sent to their home), lack of or dated technology

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**Stereotype Much? Common Ground**

- **Working with people who are nice**
- **Feeling the job is rewarding and the work is important**
- **Recognition (private vs public) for ideas, time, effort, sacrifice, success**
- **Work environment where it’s okay to ask questions, make suggestions**
- **Work environment free of nepotism, cronyism, favoritism**
- **A work environment free of bullying, fear of retaliation**
- **Having an ethical/honorable employer**
- **Being allowed to make mistakes and be human**
- **Working with people who are smart and capable**
- **Culture of accountability & fairness**
- **Sense of community**
- **Opportunities to grow & learn**
- **Competent and kind leadership**
- **Being heard and feeling valued**
Scenario #1

Robert is a baby boomer manager and leading a multi-generational team meeting...

*What should Robert do?*

*How might he most effectively address Jose and Jenna’s conduct?*

*What could have prevented this scenario?*

*And are these **really** generational issues...?*

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More Food for Thought

“Organizations that understand how to successfully address generational conflict and leverage each generation’s strengths will be better able to keep employees motivated and productive amidst the social and economical changes that continue to face our nation.”

_How Generational Differences Impact Organizations & Teams, Birkman eBook_
Practical HR Advice

Recruitment & Hiring:
✓ Branding matters
✓ Tailor perks to age-diverse workforce
✓ Include diverse groups during interview and on-boarding activities
✓ Diverse approaches to on-boarding (e.g., not a 4-hour orientation)

“...that will allow you to achieve everything you want in life. All I ask in return is that you stop saying I look like an older version of your dad.”

Practical HR Advice

✓ Mix and Match Project Teams
  • Create groups with complementary skills & diverse perspectives
  • Encourage employees with varied backgrounds to bond
✓ Learn From One Another
  • Each generation has knowledge, experience, & different perspectives to share
  • Successful multi-generational teams identify, value, & build on one another’s skills and experiences
Practical HR Advice

✓ Champion a culture of camaraderie and respect
✓ Manage change management
✓ Emergency and crisis management
  • Not everyone wants to talk about their feelings
  • First rodeos (hurricanes, controversial speakers, ...)

Practical HR Advice

✓ Use Varying Communication Styles and Mediums
  • “How do you like to receive information?” (ASK!)
  • Use different methods to keep employees informed
✓ Loosen Up!
  • Are you really still bothered by pink hair and tattoos?
  • Remote work arrangements
  • Flexible schedules
Practical HR Advice

- Use quantitative data to understand your employees
  - Candidate pools
  - Retention rates
  - Performance evals
  - Exit interviews
  - Climate surveys...
- Avoid a one-size-fits all management style
- Ditto for perf evals
- Develop a formal and informal mentoring, reverse mentoring, and buddy programs (especially for new and advancing employees)

Practical HR Advice

- Lastly...avoid stereotyping!
- Treat employees as individuals
- Supervisors need to get to know their employees (irrespective of age!):
  - What makes them tick?
  - What interests/motivates them?
  - What are their career goals?
  - What’s the best way to deliver feedback?
  - How do they most effectively work with others?
Scenario #2

Monika is new to a supervisory role. She’s 32 but has people reporting to her from all different backgrounds and ages...

What suggestions or “food for thought” might you offer Monika? What ideas do you think are good and not so good? How could she find out what would work with her team?

Closing Thoughts

✓ Think of age as a facet of diversity
  • Create diverse teams & work groups
  • Promote culture where people learn skills and experience from each other
    • “Buddy” for new employee
    • Mentor for rising stars
✓ Strive for inclusivity (note merely “tolerance”)
✓ Variety is the spice of life, esp re engagement, communication
✓ Remember we are shaped by our experiences and respond differently
Questions / Discussion

Thank You!

Resources
Looking Beyond Age: Managing Across Generational Differences
June 21, 2018

The "Must-Reads"

[List of resources]

Online Resources

[List of online resources]

Questions / Discussion

Thank You!
**Looking Beyond Age:**
**Managing Across Generational Differences**

June 25, 2018

**Scenario #1**

Robert is a baby boomer manager and leading a multigenerational team meeting. Robert is summarizing the findings of a report completed by some of the team members. The meeting is taking more time than Robert expected, and it is now about 5:15pm.

Jose is a 23-year old employee who is new to the university. His head is down, and he is clearly texting.

At the same time, Jenna, a 35-year old employee is fidgeting and visibly impatient (looking at the clock on the wall every couple of minutes) as the meeting drags on.

Robert is frustrated by the apparent lack of commitment of Jose and Jenna.

**Discussion**

*What should Robert do?*

*How might he most effectively address Jose and Jenna’s conduct?*

*What could have prevented this scenario?*

*And are these really generational issues…?*

**Scenario #2**

Monika is new to a supervisory role. She’s 32 but has people reporting to her from all different backgrounds and ages. She’s decided she wants her team to get regular updates on what the unit is doing, progress on their goals and important news related to their field, etc.

Monika is debating between a weekly e-mail newsletter, extending standing team meetings that occur every-other week, or starting a closed group Facebook page for the department and then direct the entire team to “like” and follow the page.

Monika asks you for advice on what way or ways to engage her team and keep them apprised of information she believes is important.

**Discussion**

*What suggestions or “food for thought” might you offer Monika?*

*What ideas do you think are good and not so good?*

*How could she find out what would work with her team?*
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The “Must Reads”

Levine, Alaina G., *From Selfies to Selfless: Managing Multigenerational Teams*, SCIENCE MAG. (Sep. 14, 2017) (focus on science, but applicable higher educ. context)

_Navigating the Multigenerational Workforce*, HRDive (Apr. 2, 2018) (series of articles available)

**Online Resources**

*Employers Say Accommodating Millennials Is a Business Imperative*, SHRM (Apr. 26, 2018)

Kline, Missy, *The Faculty Workforce Is Aging...Is the Pipeline More Diverse?*, CUPA-HR (Apr. 11, 2018)

Fry, Richard, *Millennials are the largest generation in the U.S. labor force*, Pew Research Center (Apr. 11, 2018)


DelPonte, Robert, *3 Touch Points to Better Engage a Multigenerational Workforce*, ENTREPRENEUR.COM (July 24, 2017)


- See more blogs about generations & generational differences: [http://www.generations.com](http://www.generations.com)

Gausepohl, Shannon, *Tackling 4 Key Challenges of the Multigenerational Workforce*, BUS. DAILY NEWS (Dec. 5, 2016)

Biermeier-Hanson, Benjamin & Baltes, Boris, *Generational Differences in Work Ethic: Fact or Fiction*, J. OF BUS. & PSYCH (Oct. 2016)


*Your Guide to Engaging a Multigenerational Workforce: From Generation Z to the Traditionalists, Here’s How to Thrive with a Modern Workforce*, Cornerstone (July 1, 2016)

*The Secrets to Hiring and Managing Gen Z*, Robert Half (June 4, 2016) (pdf is downloadable)

*How Generational Differences Impact Organizations & Teams*, Birkman eBook (2016)


Knight, Rebecca, *Managing People from 5 Generations*, HARVARD BUS. REV. (Sept. 25, 2014)

*5 Training Must Haves for a Multi-Generational Workforce*, Axonify (May 7, 2014) (download presentation)

*How to Thrive in a Multi-Generational Workplace Avoiding Conflict and Creating Opportunity*, MindTools.com