



*Center for Business and Workforce Education*

## **Different Stokes for Different Folks The Multigenerational Workforce**



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## Workshop Description

*“They have no work ethic.” “Why do they need so much attention?” “They just don’t get it.”* People have been saying things like this for years about their co-workers from other generations. However, it is our differences in perspectives and experiences that make our workplace great. During this session, participants will learn about the differences in the various generations in today’s workplace. By understanding what makes other generations tick, we can work to build bridges between groups and create even stronger teams and organizations.

## What do you remember?

What are key moments you remember from your childhood – news events, pop culture, politics, and economic conditions?

## When was it said?

*“...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...”*

## Course Objectives

- Compare and contrast generational characteristics
- Practice skills in working with employees from multiple generations

## What Makes a Generation?

### gen-er-a-tion

*noun*

1. the entire body of individuals born and living at about the same time: the postwar generation.
2. the term of years, roughly 30 among human beings, accepted as the average period between the birth of parents and the birth of their offspring.
3. a group of individuals, most of whom are the same approximate age, having similar ideas, problems, attitudes, etc.

[www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com)

## The Making of a Generation

Year born	Who was president
Defining moments	Economic circumstances
Social influences	Life laws

## Generations

Traditionalist/Vets (1922 – 1945)

Baby Boomers (1946-1964)

Generation X (1965-1980)

Millennials/Gen Y (1981-1995)

Gen Z (1995 - )

## Your Team

Baby Boomer	Gen X	Millennials	Gen Z

What makes your team effective?

What a challenges does your team's generational make-up cause?

What does a successful team look like to you?

## Hallmarks of the Different Generations

### Personal Lifestyle Characteristics

	<b>Traditionalists</b>	<b>Baby Boomers</b>	<b>Generation X</b>	<b>Millennials</b>	<b>Gen Z*</b>
<i>Motto</i>	"Work before play."	"Work and then you die."	"Life first, work second."	"Work as a part of lifestyle."	"I'm still learning."
<i>Core Values</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respect for authority</li> <li>• Conformers</li> <li>• Discipline</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Optimism</li> <li>• Involvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skepticism</li> <li>• Fun</li> <li>• Informality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Realism</li> <li>• Confidence</li> <li>• Real fun</li> <li>• Social</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acceptance</li> <li>• Technology</li> <li>• Individualism</li> </ul>
<i>Family</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traditional</li> <li>• Nuclear</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disintegrating</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Latchkey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blended</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child-centered</li> </ul>
<i>Education</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A dream</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A birthright</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A way to get there</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An incredible expense</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An incredible expense</li> </ul>
<i>Communication/ Media</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rotary phone</li> <li>• One/one</li> <li>• Write memo</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Touchtone phones</li> <li>• Call me anytime</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cell phones</li> <li>• Call me only at work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internet</li> <li>• Smart phones</li> <li>• Email</li> <li>• Texting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cell phones</li> <li>• Texting</li> <li>• Social media</li> </ul>
<i>Dealing with Money</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put it away</li> <li>• Pay cash</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buy now, pay later</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cautious</li> <li>• Conservative</li> <li>• Save, save, save</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Earn to spend</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Still learning</li> </ul>

*\*Too soon with many items. Those entering the workforce share many of the same qualities as Millennials.*

Source: Mixing and Managing Four Generations of Employees, Greg Hammill (2005). <http://www.fdu.edu/newspubs/magazine/05ws/generations.htm>

## Workplace Characteristics

	<b>Traditionalists</b>	<b>Baby Boomers</b>	<b>Generation X</b>	<b>Millennials</b>	<b>Gen Z*</b>
<i>Work Ethic/Values</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hard work</li> <li>• Respect authority</li> <li>• Adhere to rules</li> <li>• Sacrifice</li> <li>• Duty before fun</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workaholics</li> <li>• Work efficiently</li> <li>• Crusading causes</li> <li>• Personal fulfillment</li> <li>• Desire quality</li> <li>• Question authority</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliminate unnecessary tasks</li> <li>• Self-reliant/independent</li> <li>• Skeptical</li> <li>• “Tell me what to do then let me do it.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What’s next</li> <li>• Multitasking</li> <li>• Tenacity</li> <li>• Goal orientated</li> <li>• Tolerant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multitasking</li> <li>• Diversity/inclusion</li> <li>• Goal orientated</li> <li>• Pragmatic</li> </ul>
<i>Work is . . .</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An obligation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An exciting adventure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A contract</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A means to an end</li> <li>• Fulfillment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A means to an end</li> <li>• Fulfillment</li> </ul>
<i>Leadership Style</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Command and control</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collegial</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informal</li> <li>• Challenge others</li> <li>• Question why</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Egalitarian</li> <li>• Creative and inclusive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Too soon to tell</li> </ul>
<i>Interactive Style</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team player</li> <li>• Loves meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entrepreneur</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through peer-to-peer technology</li> </ul>
<i>Positional Power</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respect it</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crave it</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unimpressed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Polite</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Polite</li> </ul>
<i>Political Savvy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See no point</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See the point/plays the game</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See no point</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See no point</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See no point</li> </ul>
<i>Communications</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal</li> <li>• Memo</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In person</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct</li> <li>• Immediate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cell phone</li> <li>• Texting</li> <li>• Social media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smart phone</li> <li>• Texting</li> <li>• Social media (peer-to-peer)</li> </ul>

<i>Feedback/Rewards</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No news is good news</li> <li>Satisfaction is a job well done</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Money</li> <li>Title recognition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“How am I doing?”</li> <li>Freedom</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Immediate</li> <li>Meaningful work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Immediate</li> </ul>
<i>Messages that Motivate</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your experience is respected</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You are valued</li> <li>You are needed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do it your way</li> <li>Forget the rules</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You will work with other bright, creative people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You contribute to a greater good</li> </ul>
<i>View of change</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very wary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Somewhat wary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See as inevitable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See as inevitable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See as inevitable</li> </ul>
<i>Work/Family Life</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ne’er the two shall meet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No balance</li> <li>Work to life</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Balanced</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blend</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blend</li> </ul>

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## Closing the Generation Gap

**Find commonalities.** Look for opportunities to find common ground and focus on the similarities versus the differences between you and your co-workers.

**Listen to understand first the other's perspective.** Demonstrate empathetic listening by paraphrasing or asking questions to show you understand the other person's point of view. Then, share your opinion. After all, we know what can happen when one assumes.

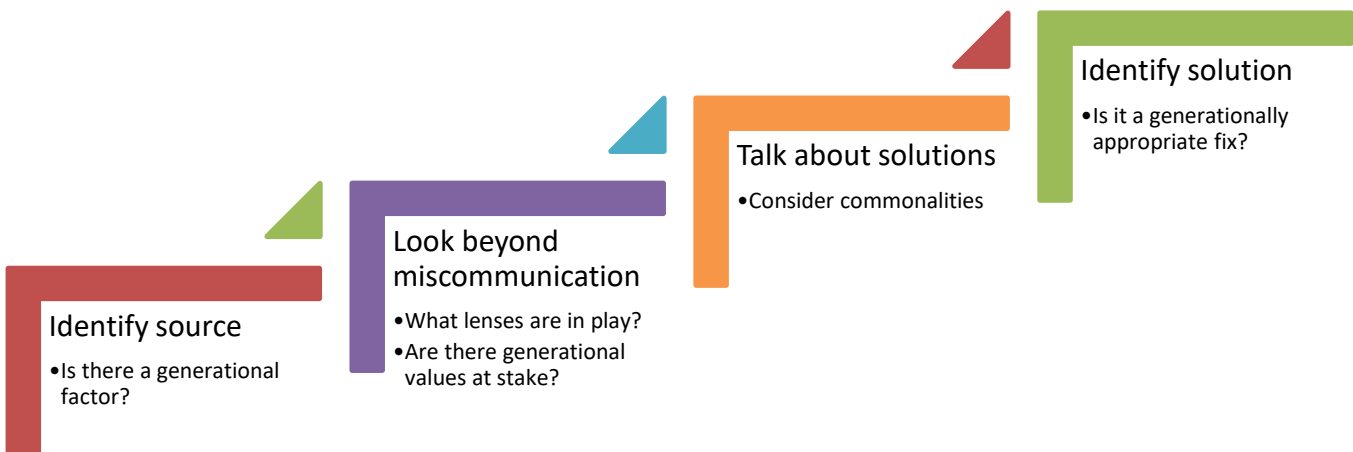
**Focus on organization and/or team mission and objectives.** The majority of people want the team and organization to be successful. Continual reminders regarding the mission and objectives of the organization and/or team helps keep everyone focused on reason we are working together.

**One Size Does Not Fit All - Create choices.** Everyone has different needs or methods for achieving tasks. Whether it is using web conferencing or allowing people to work when it's convenient for them, create options for people to participate and be successful.

**Flexibility and open communication are key.** Be willing to try new methods and tools. Discuss your and your co-worker's needs and expectations early. Address conflicts immediately.

**Show appreciation.** A "way to go" and "thank you" still go a long way towards building strong relationships.

## Communication Strategy





## Let's Practice

In your group, read the following situations and identify the generational concern and then, using the tips above, how would you address the situation.

1. Bob sits at his desk while Ann, his co-worker, explains the details of a very important project. Bob looks down to type a response to a message he's received on his phone, glancing up from the screen to occasionally make eye contact with Ann. Soon, she stalks off in anger, saying, "I'll tell you about this later. It's clear this isn't important to you!"
2. Lee, a new hire in your organization, just sent you a Facebook invite which you accepted. You notice that Lee posts a lot of comments about your organization, co-workers and customers, some of which are not very flattering.
3. Susie was recently promoted to manager of your area. Susie is a Millennial with 10 years of experience and is highly qualified for her position. Her team is made up of many individuals who are older than her and have more years of experience. In team meetings, some of the senior team members often disregard Susie's ideas saying "we've tried that before and it didn't work."
4. Ken is 24 and a relatively new recruit to your company. He is very bright and shows much potential. He's definitely a person your company doesn't want to lose. However, lately he's been coming into the office late and leaving early. His work is completed and done well, yet it's bothering several of your older employees to see Ken's lack of commitment to the company and disregard for the understood working hours.

## **Action Plan**

Based on the material presented, what are . . .

Three Things You Will KEEP Doing.

Three Things You Will IMPROVE.

Three Things You Will STOP Doing.

Three Things You Will START Doing.