Four Generations at Work
Intergenerational Interaction in the Workplace
4 Generations at Work

- The Silents: 1925-1949
- The Boomers: 1943-1960
As Americans continue to live and work longer, today’s workforce spans four generations.

Each contributes its own values, attitudes and perceptions to an evolving workplace.

“Every person is, in many respects, like all other people, like some other people, AND, like no other person.”
We tend to think of the future as a straight line, an extension of the present, but this is never true. Howe & Strauss theorize that there are patterns to each new generation and they investigate the implications upon society.

Each New Generation:

Will break from the young-adult generation’s styles
Will correct the perceived ‘excesses’ of the current mid-life generation
Will fill social role vacated by departing elder generation
Four Generations At Work

- The critical differences among the four generations in today’s workforce
- The unique learning and development issues associated with the four generations
- Do’s and don’ts for learning climates that meet the needs of each generation
- Actions you can take to bridge the generation gap through training and development
Types of Generations

- **Idealist ( Boomers)**
  - Increasingly indulged youths after a secular crisis

- **Reactive (Gen X’ers)**
  - Grow up under-protected and criticized youths during a spiritual awakening

- **Civic (Millenials)**
  - Increasingly protected as children after a spiritual awakening

- **Adaptive (Silents)**
  - Overprotected and suffocated youths during a secular crisis

---

For the first time in U.S. history, we have four separate generations working side-by-side.

While there is no magic birthday date that makes a member of a specific generation, one’s experience and sharing of history helps shape a “generational personality” during their formative years.

When generational collisions occur, the results are:
- Reduced profitability
- Hiring challenges
- Increased turnover rates
- Decreased morale

“A lack of understanding across generations can have detrimental effects on communication and working relationships and undermine effective services.”

–Constance Patterson Ph.D.
The Silent Generation
(aka the Greatest Generation)

Born (1925-1942)
Core Values

- Dedication
- Hard Work
- Conformity
- Law and Order
- Patience
- Delayed Reward
- Duty before Pleasure
- Adherence to Rules
- Honor
Raised by the G.I. Generation (civic)

Large families (3-5 children)

Strong sense of extended family (same town/home)

Grandparents in the home

Average 10-year-old spend 4-6 hours daily with significant adult role model

Apprenticeship businesses and farming

Perception of the world as “safe”
**Silent Generation**

**Important Events**
- Stock Market Crash
- The Great Depression
- Lindbergh Transatlantic Flight
- The New Deal
- Social Security
- Pear Harbor
- End of WWII
- FDR dies
- Korean War

**Cultural Memorabilia**
- Kewpie Dolls
- Mickey Mouse
- Flash Gordon
- Radio
- Wheaties
- Tarzan
- Jukeboxes
- Blondie
- The Lone Ranger
- The McCarthy Era
The Silent Generation

Common Traits:

- Grew up in “do-without” era
- Dedication, sacrifice, savers
- Duty, honor, country
- Respect authority; comfortable with hierarchy
- Like details; uncomfortable with ambiguity and change
- Age = Seniority
"Hey, show some respect, girlie — we're the Greatest Generation!"
The Boomer Generation
(aka the Largest Generation)
Born (1943-1960)
Core Values

- Optimism
- Team Orientation
- Personal Gratification
- Health and Wellness
- Personal Growth
- Youth
- Work
- Involvement

1943-1960

The Boomers
The Baby Boomer Childhood

- Divorce reached a low in 1960 of 9%
- Families moved due to GI Bill, GI Housing and industrialization
- Family size smaller (2-3 children)
- Few grandparents in the home
- Mom stayed home and Dads carpooled
- First generation to live miles from extended family
- Children spent significant time with adult role model
- Perception of the world as “safe”
The Boomers

Important Events
- First Nuclear Power Plant
- Cuban Missile Crisis
- Kent State Massacre
- John Glen Orbits the Earth
- Martin Luther King Jr.
- The Civil Rights Act
- JFK Assassination
- Rosa Parks
- Watergate
- Vietnam War

Cultural Memorabilia
- Television
- Poodle Skirts
- Barbie Dolls
- The Ed Sullivan Show
- Fallout Shelters
- The Peace Sign
- Pop Beads
- Slinkies
- TV Dinners
- Hula Hoops
The Boomer Generation

Common Traits:

- Grew up in one of the healthiest economies
- Optimistic
- Workaholics; created the 60-hour workweek
- Defined by their job
- Consumers; success is largely visible
- Love-hate relationship with management
- Likely to challenge authority but want leadership positions
"But Dad, I don't want to grow up to be smug like you!"
"You young folks have it easy. When I was your age, I walked 10 blocks to the stock exchange to place a trade."
Members of Boomer Generation

- Kathy Bates
- Jon Bon Jovi
- Roseanne Barr
- Oprah Winfrey
- Bono (U2)
- Tom Hanks
- Bill Clinton
- Madonna
- O.J. Simpson
- Jerry Seinfeld
- Whoopi Goldberg
- Denzel Washington
- Bill Gates
- Stevie Nicks
- Johnny Depp
- Whitney Houston
- Ron Howard
- Wynonna Judd
- Stevie Wonder
- Tommy Lee Jones
- Drew Carey
The Generation X
(aka the Lost Generation)
Born (1961-1981)
Core Values

- Dedication
- Hard Work
- Conformity
- Law and Order
- Patience
- Delayed Reward
- Duty Before Pleasure
- Adherence to rules
- Honor
The Generation X Childhood

- Divorce reached an all-time high
- Single-parent families became the norm
- Latch-key kids were the major issue of the time
- Children not as valued – seen as hardship
- Families spread out (miles apart)
- Family size = 1.7 children (many only-child families)
- Perception of the world as “unsafe”
- Average 10 year old spent 14 ½ minutes with significant adult role model
- When they became parents they decided, “we need to do better for our children”
Important Events:
- Women’s Liberation Protests
- Watergate Scandal
- Three Mile Island
- Energy Crisis Begins
- Iran Hostage Crisis
- Mass Suicide in Jonestown
- John Lennon Assassination
- Ronald Reagan Inaugurated
- Challenger Disaster
- Exxon Valdez Oil Tanker Spill

Cultural Memorabilia:
- Super-hero Cartoons on TV
- The Brady Bunch
- Pet Rocks
- Platform Shoes
- Cabbage Patch Dolls
- School House Rock
- The Simpsons
- Evening Soaps
- E.T.
The Generation X

Common Traits:

- Grew up when national institutions came under question. Ex: inflation, oil shortage, Watergate
- Layoffs; end of lifelong employment for their parents
- No common heroes
- Wary of commitment, professionally and personally
- Cynical & pessimistic
- Comfortable with change
- Self-reliant; fend for themselves, they were the latch-key children
DOCTOR FUN

YEP, BACK IN MY DAY SONNY, I HAD A NUMBER OF PIERCINGS MYSELF.

OF COURSE THINGS CHANGE: OUR FATHERS WERE REPLACED BY MACHINES—WE’LL BE REPLACED WITH NEW SOFTWARE.
Members of Generation X

- Barack Obama
- Jennifer Lopez
- Tom Cruise
- Michael Jordan
- Jennifer Aniston
- Kurt Cobain
- Pam Anderson
- Mike Tyson
- Demi Moore
- Cameron Diaz
- Mariah Carey
- Douglas Rushcoff
- Marshall Matthers (Eminem)
- Michael J. Fox
- Sheryl Crow
- Reese Witherspoon
- Leonardo DiCaprio
- Ashton Kutcher
- Mike Myers
- Macaulay Culkin
- Janeane Garofolo
- Quentin Tarantino
The Millennial Generation
(aka the Generation Y)
Born (1982-2000)
Core Values

- Timeliness
- Making a Difference
- Tolerance
- Environmental Stewardship
- Authenticity
- Family
- Global Perspective
- Technology
- Personal Freedom
- Team Work
The most monumental financial boom in history

Steady income growth through the 90’s

Still great disparity between races

- Saw their parents lose all their stocks and mutual funds (college funds) during the early 2000’s

- Average age of parents higher than ever before

- Smaller families (10% of families with single child)

- More parental education: 1 in 4 families at least one parent with college degree
Millennial Childhood

A Generation Y child...

Taking his first steps.

Taking his first steps to independent living.
The Millennials

Important Events
- Clinton/Lewinsky Scandal
- September 11th
- Columbine High School Shooting
- OJ Simpson Murder Trial
- First Cloned Sheep Dolly
- Iraq War & Peace-keeping mission
- Princess Diana’s Death
- Oklahoma City Bombing
- McGuire/Sosa Homerun Chase

Cultural Memorabilia
- Pokémon
- Harry Potter
- Power Rangers
- Beanie Babies
- Super Mario Bros
- Britney Spears
- Barney & Friends
- Tickle Me Elmo
- Bart Simpson
"YOU GET FIVE MINUTES BETWEEN SOCCER AND PIANO? WHAT DO YOU DO WITH ALL THAT FREE TIME?!?"
The Millennial Generation

Common Traits:

- Grew up in mini-vans, protected by car seats, “Baby on Board” signs and Child Protection Laws
- Strauss & Howe’s 7 Characteristics of Millennials:
  - Confident, Achieving, Special, Pressured, Sheltered, Team-Oriented, Achieving
- Technology Savvy, social networking, online lives
- Multi-taskers, short attention span, high expectations,
GÉNÉRATION

SO GRAMPS, DID YOU FIGHT THE WORLD WAR ON NINTENDO, OR PLAYSTATION?
Members of Millennial Generation

- LeBron James
- Anne Hathaway
- Natalie Portman
- Nick Cannon
- The Jonas Bros
- Michael Cera
- Ellen Page
- Daniel Radcliff
- Rihanna
- Megan Fox
- Miley Cyrus
- Mary-Kate & Ashley Olsen
- Scarlett Johansson
- Paris Hilton
- Lady Gaga
- Lindsay Lohan
- Evan Rachel Wood
- Shia LaBeouf
- Dakota Fanning
- Haley Joel Osment
- Shaun White
Generation Gap 2008

MP3s

JAMBA JUICE

FLAMING LIPS

FACEBOOK

OBAMA

VINYL

OVALTINE

ROLLING STONES

PHONE BOOK

HILLARY
Each generation views the next generation cynically and feels nostalgia about the “good old days.”

“Kids these days...”
Isn't that nice how the birds are twittering?

It's called "tweeting", grandma.

And I don't think these creatures are able to do it.

Clash of generations.
HA! Finally, I'm going to get you generation Xers to read the Trib!

Actually, I consider the Trib to be boring, patronizing and rather irrelevant.

Yeah, but now our boring, patronizing and irrelevant paper is on the Web!

Rock against racism

Classical against antisocial behaviour
Millennials in the Workplace

"Bad news Seymour, the CEO's grandson is visiting and the boss needs you to design something to bridge the generation gap."

"He's our youngest director."
Four Generations in the Workplace

Bridging the Generation Gap
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social, Political, &amp; Economic Influences</th>
<th>Interaction with Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family Structure &amp; Influence</td>
<td>Preferred Approach to Feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>View towards Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values/Morals</td>
<td>Work vs. Personal Life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Ethic</td>
<td>Desired Rewards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferred Leadership Approach</td>
<td>Financial Behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Style</td>
<td>Relationship with Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivational Buttons</td>
<td>General Expectations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2/3 Boomers think “Smart Phones” contribute to the decline in workplace etiquette

17% Boomers think laptops and PDAs during in-person meetings is “efficient”

28% of Boomers think blogging about work-related issues is acceptable

62% of Millennial professionals access social network sites at work – only 14% of Boomers do

Millennials spend 10.6 hrs a day on social networks – Boomers spend 5.6 hours per day

40% of Millennials think blogging about work-related issues is acceptable

Source Perez, Sarah. The Technology Gap at Work is Oh So Wide. Read Write Web. April 24, 2009.
## Personal and Lifestyle Characteristics

### Personal and Lifestyle Characteristics by Generation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Core Values</strong></td>
<td>Respect for authority</td>
<td>Optimism</td>
<td>Skepticism</td>
<td>Realism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conformers</td>
<td>Involvement</td>
<td>Fun</td>
<td>Confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td></td>
<td>Informality</td>
<td>Extreme fun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family</strong></td>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>Disintegrating</td>
<td>Latch-key kids</td>
<td>Merged families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nuclear</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td>A dream</td>
<td>A birthright</td>
<td>A way to get there</td>
<td>An incredible expense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication</strong></td>
<td>Rotary phones</td>
<td>Touch-tone phones</td>
<td>Cell phones</td>
<td>Internet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Media</strong></td>
<td>One-on-one</td>
<td>Call me anytime</td>
<td>Call me only at work</td>
<td>Picture phones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Write a memo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>E-mail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dealing with</strong></td>
<td>Put it away</td>
<td>Buy now, pay later</td>
<td>Cautious</td>
<td>Earn to spend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Money</strong></td>
<td>Pay cash</td>
<td></td>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Save, save</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Work Ethic and Values</strong></td>
<td>Hard work</td>
<td>Workaholics</td>
<td>Eliminate the task</td>
<td>What’s next</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Respect authority</td>
<td>Work efficiently</td>
<td>Self-reliance</td>
<td>Multitasking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sacrifice</td>
<td>Crusading causes</td>
<td>Want structure and</td>
<td>Tenacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Duty before fun</td>
<td>Personal fulfillment</td>
<td>direction</td>
<td>Entrepreneurial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adhere to rules</td>
<td>Desire quality</td>
<td>Skeptical</td>
<td>Tolerant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Work is ...</strong></td>
<td>An obligation</td>
<td>An exciting adventure</td>
<td>A difficult challenge</td>
<td>Goal oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A contract</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership Style</strong></td>
<td>Directive</td>
<td>Consensual</td>
<td>Everyone is the same</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Command-and-control</td>
<td>Collegial</td>
<td>Challenge others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ask why</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interactive Style</strong></td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Team player</td>
<td>Entrepreneur</td>
<td>Participative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Loves to have meetings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communications</strong></td>
<td>Formal</td>
<td>In person</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>E-mail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Memo</td>
<td></td>
<td>Immediate</td>
<td>Voice mail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Feedback and Rewards</strong></td>
<td>No news is good news</td>
<td>Don’t appreciate it</td>
<td>Sorry to interrupt,</td>
<td>Whenever I want it, at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Satisfaction in a job well done</td>
<td>Money</td>
<td>but how am I doing?</td>
<td>the push of a button</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Title recognition</td>
<td>Freedom is the best</td>
<td>Meaningful work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Messages That Motivate</strong></td>
<td>Your experience is respected</td>
<td>You are valued</td>
<td>Do it your way</td>
<td>You will work with other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>You are needed</td>
<td>Forget the rules</td>
<td>bright, creative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Work and Family Life</strong></td>
<td>Ne’er the twain shall meet</td>
<td>No balance</td>
<td>Balance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Work to live</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chart copyright: Hammill, Greg. “Mixing and Managing Four Generations of Employees. FDU Magazine Online. Winter/Spring ’05
Boomers may think Gen X’ers are too impatient and willing to throw out the tried-and-true strategies.

X’ers may view boomers as always trying to say the right thing to the right person & inflexible to change.

Traditionalists may view Boomers as self-absorbed and prone to sharing too much information.

Boomers may view Silents as dictatorial and rigid.

Gen X’ers may consider Millennials too spoiled and self-absorbed.

Millennials may view Gen X’ers as too cynical and negative.

http://www.apa.org/monitor/jun05/generational.html
To Silents: “Your experience is respected,” or “It is valuable to hear what has worked in the past.”

To Boomers: “You are valuable, worthy,” or “Your contribution is unique and important to our success.”

To Gen X’ers: “Let’s explore some options outside of the box,” or “Your technical expertise is a big asset.”

To Millennials: “You will be collaborating with other bright and creative people,” or “You have really rescued this situation with your commitment.”

4 Generations at Work

X’ers and Millennials who have had different life experiences and communicate with people differently, may fail to actively listen to Boomers and Traditionalists thereby missing valuable information and guidance.

Traditionalists and Boomers may have a tendency not to question or challenge authority or the status quo. This may cause confusion and resentment among the Xers and Millennials who have been taught to speak up.
Issues and Areas of Conflict

Issue

- Silents and Boomers have sacrificed everything for the company/organization. They built their lives around the company.
- Millennials appear to have no loyalty to the organization.

Common Ground

- Millennials do seem to form more loyalty to the project, their co-workers, and perhaps the values of the company.
- Millennials are looking for companies that value social responsibility, diversity, and the environment.

Source: Gerdes, Lindsay. The Best Places to Launch a Career. Business Week. 4001.(September, 2006)
Silents and Boomers feel devalued, as if their experience and contributions are no longer important.

 Millennials are not willing to pay their dues.

 Millennials are impatient to make an impact. But they are eager for feedback, and while they want to be respected they are also looking for mentors.

 Several organizations are giving new employees senior level mentors.

Source: Gerdes, Lindsay. The Best Places to Launch a Career. Business Week. 4001.(September, 2006)
Issues and Areas of Conflict

**Issue**

- Silents, Boomers, and especially X’ers are highly independent
- The Millennials’ involvement of parents and need to work on teams is seen as childish. “They just need to grow up!”

**Common Ground**

- The biggest complaint about X’ers was their inability to work with others. Millennials do this well and can teach us all.
- They also have a great deal to contribute especially in regard to technology and optimism.

Source: Gerdes, Lindsay. The Best Places to Launch a Career. Business Week. 4001.(September, 2006)
### Issues and Areas of Conflict

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Issue</strong></th>
<th><strong>Common Ground</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>AUTHORITY</strong></td>
<td><strong>X’ers and Millennials are highly self-accountable, and therefore do not see need for authority.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Silents respect it</td>
<td>- <strong>You can trust them;</strong> however, they will not understand chain of command. Offer them freedom with guidelines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Boomers have a love-hate relationship with it, but now are the authority</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- X’ers are unimpressed with authority</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Millennials do not see a need for it</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Gerdes, Lindsay. The Best Places to Launch a Career. Business Week. 4001.(September, 2006)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Silents</th>
<th>Baby Boomers</th>
<th>Generation X’ers</th>
<th>Millennials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Population Size</strong></td>
<td>59 million</td>
<td>80 million</td>
<td>50 million</td>
<td>76 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Influencers</strong></td>
<td>The Great Depression, World War II, the GI Bill, the Cold War</td>
<td>Booming birthrate; economic prosperity; Vietnam; Watergate; Protests and human rights movements; sex, drugs and rock’n’roll; suburbia; dual incomes</td>
<td>Sesame Street and MTV; personal computers; children of divorce; AIDS’ crack cocaine’ loss of ‘world’ safety</td>
<td>Expansion of technology and media; drugs and gangs; pervasive violence; widening chasm between haves and have-nots; unprecedented immigration growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>View of Institution</strong></td>
<td>Loyal to institution</td>
<td>Want to put their stamp on institution</td>
<td>Are skeptical of institution</td>
<td>Judge institutions on their own merit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>#1 reason for staying on the job, or for changing jobs</strong></td>
<td>Loyal to their clients and/or customers</td>
<td>Making a difference</td>
<td>Building a career</td>
<td>Work that has meaning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The workplace as an institution</th>
<th>Silents</th>
<th>Baby Boomers</th>
<th>Generation X’ers</th>
<th>Millennials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40% say their companies don’t do a good job at making them want to stay; 70% think a one-company career is good; 48% say training opportunities play a role in staying; 73% plan to return to work in some capacity after they retire</td>
<td>43% say they lack mentoring opportunities and 30% say that contributes to job dissatisfaction; 75% say time off would be the greatest reward; 35% think a one-company career is good; prone to workplace burnout</td>
<td>30% have left a job due to a lack of training opportunities; 80% of Gen X’er men put time with family about challenging work or a higher salary; only 17% think a one-company career is good</td>
<td>Globally aware, cyber literate, techno-savvy, personal safety is #1 workplace issue; they expect diversity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improving Feedback and communication</th>
<th>“No news is good news.”</th>
<th>“Once a year, formal and documented.”</th>
<th>“So how am I doing?”</th>
<th>“I want it with the push of a button. Let’s all talk about it.”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May not be sending enough info down the ladder, nor receptive to info coming up the ladder; provide training in feedback skills (50% haven’t received feedback training); assume they can change behaviors</td>
<td>Initiate weekly informal talks and formally document them</td>
<td>Give feedback all the time and to the point: be available; allow freedom to keep them learning and focused on career paths; immediate and regular feedback; tell it like it is (X’ers have a well-turned BS-omerter)</td>
<td>Initiate the connection; consider electronic connection and newsletter; make it visual; allow them an active role in creating their own education and work plans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Performance Rewards | Seek high-performing traditionalists and mix them with high potential Xers to transfer the learning; to consider alternative scheduling or job sharing; recruit them actively; make them feel part of the culture’ help them ease in to retirement; recognize the satisfaction of a job well done | Money, title, recognition; recognize them as the first ‘sandwiched’ generation caring for children as well as parents; provide time off with pay; provide life skills and balance training; provide second-career avenues | X’ers have shaken up the rewards system; skeptical about jobs and organizations; prefer time with family and outside interests; provide opportunities for development of personal and professional life. | Providing work that has meaning |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traits</th>
<th>Silents</th>
<th>Baby Boomers</th>
<th>Generation X’ers</th>
<th>Millennials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traits</td>
<td>Patriotic; loyal; heads down; onward and upward; polite; fiscally conservative’ faith in institutions; high work ethic; graciousness; work experience; may feel overlooked and underappreciated; “I’ve acquired wisdom over the years but there doesn’t seem to be much demand for it.”</td>
<td>Idealistic and optimistic; highly competitive; overwhelming need to succeed; question authority; divorce; death of parent; kids in college; may be turning inward; difficulty admitting something is wrong; don’t like to ask for help; experienced; team-workers;</td>
<td>Eclectic; resourceful; comfortable with change; self-reliant; adaptable’ skeptical about relationships and distrust institutions; high divorce rate; info-highway pioneers; full of energy; fun at work; the generation that “got rid of the box”</td>
<td>AKA “the Digital Generation”; globally concerned; integrated; cyber literate; media and technology savvy’ expect 24-hour info; realistic; probably have too much stuff to sort through; acknowledge diversity and expect others to do so too; environmentally conscious; will try anything</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Stereotypes</td>
<td>Can’t use technology; refuse to give up the reins; non-engaged</td>
<td>Materialistic; work hard not smart; sold out their ideals; heavily in debt; not loyal</td>
<td>Haven’t paid their dues; too young for management; say what they think; slackers; aggressive; annoying; loud</td>
<td>Unaware of lack of skills; require excessive affirmation; MTV generation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td>Job stability; long-term careers; great reputation; fiscally responsible; take care of possessions and responsibilities</td>
<td>Who am I? Where did my passion go? Is it too late to get it back? Seek organizations with integrity; politically correct; eager to put their own stamp on things; good pay; community involvement</td>
<td>Be my own boss; team environment contrasted with entrepreneurial spirit; advancement opportunity</td>
<td>High value on education; high value on life style balance; work is not the most important thing; stepping stone for future opportunities; high tech, innovative; diverse workforce; be my own boss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment, engagement, management, and retention</td>
<td>Recognize their loyalty and experience; select activities that help them show what they know; remember that traditionalists have career paths tool; focus on evolution, not revolution.</td>
<td>Be aware of Boomers’ competitive nature; acknowledge their contributions; focus on how they can make an impact; offer continued training opportunities especially life skills and balance.</td>
<td>Respect their skepticism; establish your credentials; show you have a sense of humor; let them know you like them; talk about how training applies to their careers, not just their jobs</td>
<td>Don’t assume they are all at the same level in training; expect to do more remedial training; teach in shorter modules, testing often and making it fun; help them visualize how the training applies to their jobs; understand they learn best by collaborating</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“I’ll have someone from my generation get in touch with someone from your generation.”
Works Cited


Hammill, Greg. “Mixing and Managing Four Generations of Employees.” *FDU Magazine Online*. Winter/Spring ‘05


Perez, Sarah. *The Technology Gap at Work is Oh So Wide*. Read Write Web. April 24, 2009


