Five Generations Walk into an Office...

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Equity & Inclusion Program Director
Agenda

Characteristics of different generations

Areas of friction between generations

Resolving differences between generations

Wrap-up
Characteristics of Different Generations

And What We Mean By “Generation”
A Word of Caution

1. We will make some generalizations.
2. Generalizations don’t apply to everyone, but they provide a useful frame of reference.
3. We will use generalizations to understand & accept differences between generations.
Pair & Share: Significant Events

• Think of 1-2 significant historical, social, cultural or scientific events that happened when you were between the ages of 7 and 18.

• How do you think these events might have shaped the way you think and see the world?
What Do We Mean by Generation?

A group of people born in the same time span, whose members have similar life experiences including being shaped by similar major historical events.

The events must happen when individuals are of a young age.

Generations are defined by common tastes and attitudes.

Generations are not homogeneous.
5 Generations in the Workplace

Silent Generation
Born between 1928-1945

Baby Boomers
Born between 1946-1964

Generation X
Born between 1965-1980

Millennials
Born between 1981-1996

Generation Z
Born between 1997-2013
Silent Generation

Born around 1928-1945; ages 79-96 years old today

**Significant Events:**
- Great Depression
- World War II
- Rotary dial phones

**Their Values:**
- Sacrifice
- Loyalty
- Respect for authority
- Frugality
Baby Boomers

Born around 1946-1964; ages 60-78 years old today

**Significant Events:**
- Civil Rights & Women’s Rights Movements
- Vietnam War
- TV

**Their Values:**
- Anti-war
- Work hard
- Optimism
- Question authority
Generation X

Born around 1965-1980; ages 44-59 years old today

**Significant Events:**
- End of the Cold War
- 1987 Stock market crash
- AIDS epidemic

**Their Values:**
- Independence
- Adaptability
- Skepticism
- Work-life balance
Millennials

Born around 1981-1996; ages 28-43 years old today

**Significant Events:**
- 9/11
- Growth of social media, smart phones
- 2008 crash

**Their Values:**
- Diversity & equality
- Making a difference
- Cyberliteracy
Generation Z

Born around 1997-2013; ages 11-27 years old today

**Significant Events:**
- Rising living & education costs
- School gun violence
- COVID-19 pandemic

**Their Values:**
- Social consciousness
- Personalization
- Realism
Possible Areas of Friction Between Generations

And Stereotypes That Can Lead To Prejudice
# Different Generations at Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Silent</th>
<th>Boomers</th>
<th>Gen X</th>
<th>Millennials</th>
<th>Gen Z</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Feedback</strong></td>
<td>When and how often.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Decision Making</strong></td>
<td>Who should make decisions and how.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Communication</strong></td>
<td>How they prefer to communicate.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Silent Generation in the Workplace

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Feedback</strong></th>
<th>If you did something wrong the boss will let you know.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Decision Making</strong></td>
<td>The boss decides.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication</strong></td>
<td>Formal &amp; professional style; writing or face-to-face.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>Documented; annual performance appraisal.</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision Making</td>
<td>Use a decision-making process and then the boss decides.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Semiformal; like personal interaction; writing, face-to-face or phone calls.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Generation X in the Workplace

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Feedback</strong></th>
<th>Frequent; accurate; specific; timely.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Decision Making</strong></td>
<td>Most savvy on the topic decides.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication</strong></td>
<td>Casual; direct; immediate; email; face-to-face if really needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Feedback</strong></td>
<td>Frequent; instant; using humor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Decision Making</strong></td>
<td>Group decision making; like their ideas to be valued.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication</strong></td>
<td>Fun; positive; immediate; instant messages; email; text messages.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Generation Z in the Workplace

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feedback</th>
<th>Real-time; honest; direct; regular; constructive.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decision Making</td>
<td>Want to be involved; like testing limits &amp; trying out new ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Face-to-face; digital; instant; concise; visual; honest; personalized.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Stereotypes and Misconceptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Stereotyped as</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Silent</strong></td>
<td>Old-fashioned, rigid, autocratic, risk-averse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Boomers</strong></td>
<td>Self-centered, unrealistic, power-driven, workaholic, inflexible to change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gen X</strong></td>
<td>Slackers, selfish, impatient, cynical, negative, no loyalty, lack focus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Millennials</strong></td>
<td>Spoiled, disrespectful, technology dependent, self-absorbed, no loyalty, lack focus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gen Z</strong></td>
<td>Short attention span, technology dependent, high expectations, no loyalty, lazy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Resolving Differences Between Generations

And How To Foster Collaboration
Quick Discussion

What Do You Think Are The Benefits Of Different Generations Working Together?
Generational Diversity Benefits

- Better range of skills and experience.
- Decisions based on multiple perspectives.
- Better creativity and innovation.
- Create mentoring environment.
Discussion Questions

• What do you think the strengths of each generation are?

• What can you learn from each generation?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Silent</td>
<td>Loyal, practical, personal sacrifice, hard working.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boomers</td>
<td>Optimistic, team players, loyal, responsible, dedicated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen X</td>
<td>Adaptable, tech-literate, self starters, problem solvers, good work-life balance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millennials</td>
<td>Tech-savvy, optimistic, concerned with ethics, independent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen Z</td>
<td>Digital natives, entrepreneurial, ambitious, pragmatic, value relationships, ethical.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Quick Discussion:

What do you think are the things that *all* generations want in the workplace?
Things that All Generations Like

- Good pay and benefits
- Some degree of flexibility
- Interesting and meaningful work
- Being valued and appreciated
- Being treated with respect
- Learning and growth opportunities
- Work-life balance
- Clear communication
Bridging the Gap: Tips for Multigenerational Inclusion

- Encourage mentoring
- Build on commonalities
- Share a common purpose
- Avoid stereotyping people
- Create cross-generational teams
- Mix up communication styles
Wrap-Up

• Generations have different styles and strengths.

• We all want similar things out of work.

• Be careful about operating under stereotypes.

• The key to a successful multigenerational workplace is YOU.
  • What is one action you are going to take to encourage different generations to work well together and feel included?