



FACILITATING A SUCCESSFUL MULTI-GENERATIONAL WORKPLACE

The workforce of today is multigenerational, featuring members from at least four generations.

Generational trends shape ideas on issues such as the value of teamwork and the relationship between the individual and society. Generational differences manifest themselves in the workplace in a variety of ways:

Compensation, benefits,
and “company culture”
that workers want from
their employers

How employees think
about teamwork and
handle conflict
resolution within their
jobs

Communication strategies
and the most effective
ways to get employees on
the “same page”

Job-changing and job-
seeking behavior,
including a sense of
company loyalty or lack
there of

The relationship between
home and work, including
issues like remote
options, overtime, and
vacation



GENERATION X – BORN 1965 – 1980

This entrepreneurial and individualistic group grew up as two-income households became more common and became the first “latchkey kids.” Gen X is seen as independent and self-directed. They tend to be adaptable, focused on results, and motivated by a need for security.

Their self-sufficiency causes them to ask for feedback only when they need it, and they would rather work alone.

They like to learn, explore, and grow, and have brought these values to work; when work clashes with those values, they tend to go their own way. They are very technologically literate. After witnessing the burnout or layoff of their hardworking parents, Gen X entered the workplace with a different work ethic than previous generations. Unlike the Boomers, **Generation X places a premium on family time and has a different attitude toward work. They are ambitious and hardworking, but value work/life balance.**

Gen X dislikes rigid work requirements. They value the freedom to set their own hours. Flexible work schedules and work-from-home options help to retain and motivate this generation.



A hands-on attitude works best when supervising or working with this generation. Members of Gen X value freedom and autonomy to achieve desired goals and often prefer to work alone rather than in teams. They dislike “meetings about meetings” and don’t want face time. Flexible hours and challenging assignments will motivate this generation.

MILLENNIALS – BORN 1981 – 2000

Millennials are on track to comprise 50% of the workforce worldwide by 2020. They represent a departure from individualism and return to conformity thanks to nurturing, highly-involved parents who maintain authority long into their lives. They were raised by Boomer parents, that told them they could be anything and they deserve everything, resulting in a very confident generation. Millennials are the first generation to grow up using the internet and technology. Their early lives were overscheduled making them comfortable with multitasking. Millennials expect lots of feedback and rewards in the workplace and are considered to be idealistic.



Work/life balance is more important to them than salary and they want to do work that improves society, putting emphasis on social responsibility, sustainability, and diversity. They crave more frequent learning and advancement opportunities.

Millennials are smart, creative, optimistic, achievement-oriented, and tech-savvy. They seek out creative challenges, personal growth, and meaningful careers. They seek supervisors and mentors who are highly engaged in their professional development. Millennials are excellent multi-taskers and prefer communications through e-mail and text messaging over face-to-face interaction.

Millennials demand work/life balance, employers will need to accommodate them by creating a culture of flexibility. **When working with or supervising Millennials, create structure and stability and cultivate a team-oriented environment. Immediate feedback and praise will help motivate and reassure this young generation. Frequent communication and reassurance will help keep this generation eager and involved.**

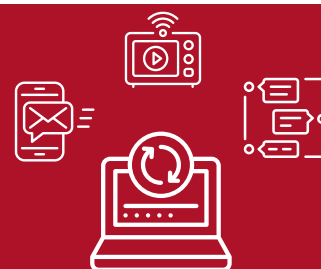


GENERATION Z – BORN AFTER 2001

The oldest members of this generation are just entering the workforce. Gen Z are digital natives; they began using cell phones and technology very young. Gen Z does not know a world without smartphones, Wi-Fi, Google or social media. They seem to have shorter attention spans and limited interpersonal skills. This generation is best described as realistic. Gen Z grew up in the recession of the 90's, therefore they are looking to get ahead in life, survive and thrive at a young age, because they are very aware that nothing in life is guaranteed. **Gen Z is very competitive, driven, with an intense desire to win.**



Gen Z is creative, especially with technology. They are open-minded and desire opportunities to use their skills. Like Millennials, they expect feedback and rewards and are not principally motivated by money, but by a flexible lifestyle. They also have strong commitments to social responsibility.



Gen Z is entering the workforce earlier than past generations; 75% say they believe there are alternate ways of getting a good education other than going to college. Attracting Gen Z for employment is much different than previous generations. Before Gen Z goes to college, they've already chosen a career path. Digital recruiting needs to be highly visual, using social media platforms.

Online employer branding matters to Gen Z. It is imperative for recruiting Gen Z that money and benefits be top of the line and competitive in order to get them to consider working for you.

A digitally enabled workplace is a must for Gen Z. They are willing to work their way up. Gen Z are independent thinkers and prefer to work alone and succeed on their own merits, rather than on team efforts. This is something to consider if your corporate culture is currently team-oriented.

The entrepreneurial spirit is strong in this generation. 72% of Gen Z want to start their own business. They value social causes, working for a better world or a higher purpose is very important to Gen Z. **They subscribe to work-life blend, where work and life happen 24 hours a day, seven days a week.** The concept being, if I step away from my desk for a few hours in the middle of the day, it shouldn't be that big of a deal if I am getting my job done.



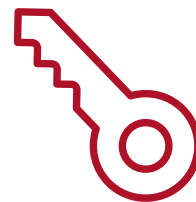
When managing or supervising Gen Z, understand their form of communication. Companies have to embrace the language differences and understand Gen Z will need mentoring on professional style communication. Gen Z also needs the “why” explained to them. Gen Z is a generation of survivalists, and just because it is not broke, doesn't mean it can't get better. They're always looking to streamline. So, explaining “why” helps, but be prepared for a little pushback, and it's not being disrespectful. It's being innovative.



CONCLUSION

Understanding the uniqueness of each of the generations in our workplace is a first step to ensuring our organizations as well as each population are given the best opportunities to thrive in a multi-generational workplace.

The key to a workforce that is productive and works well together is understanding where each person is coming from.



One strategy being used to facilitate this is the utilization of mentorship and reverse-mentorship programs. Reverse mentoring is when older workers work with younger worker mentors for the purpose of increasing digital knowledge and challenging hierarchical norms, while also developing a professional relationship. The traditional mentorship style; an older worker mentoring a younger one, is still an effective practice across professional fields. These mentorship programs facilitate relationship building and cultivate understanding and empathy between the different generations.

Book knowledge of generational differences will only take a business so far if they do not thoughtfully implement educational and professional growth initiatives into their workforce management. Increasing your knowledge of the common characteristics that each generation brings to the table helps create that understanding, improve communications, increase satisfaction, and help foster success for your employees and your business.

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