Bridging the Generation Gap in the Workplace

Presented By:
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Today, We’ll Cover....

- The Five Workplace Generations and Their Influences Growing Up
- Best Practices Across Generations for:
  - Communication and Conflict Management
  - Rewards and Recognition
  - Professional Development
- Younger Supervisors Working with Older Direct Reports and Vice Versa
By Way of Introduction

Let’s Play Generations BINGO
Generations in the U.S. Today

- Radio Babies
  - 1930 – 1945 (70 – 85 years old)
- Baby Boomers
  - 1946 – 1964 (51 – 69 years old)
- Generation X
  - 1965 – 1976 (39 – 50 years old)
- Generation Y
  - 1977 – 1990 (25 – 38 years old)
- Millennials
  - 1991 and later (24 or younger)
Let’s Have a Little Competition!

Generations Jeopardy
Radio Babies

- Born Between 1930 – 1945
- Many Appreciate Tradition and Loyalty
- Tend to be Thrifty and Cost Conscious
- Mantra: “You Get a Job…You Keep a Job”
Baby Boomers

- Born Between 1946 – 1964
- 77 Million Strong!
- Grew Up During Times of Societal Change
- Mantra: “Work Hard…Pay Your Dues”
Generation X

- Born Between 1965 – 1976
- Named by a Canadian Novelist
- More Likely to be Children of Divorce
- Became Disenchanted as Parents Were Downsized
- Grew Up with Technology
Generation Y

- Born Between 1977 – 1991
- Relate Most to Radio Babies
- Street Smart and Savvy
- Goal Oriented (Towards *Their* Goals)
- Respect Accomplishments Rather than Authority
- Mantra: “Why do we have to do this your way?!”
Millennials

- Born 1992 or later
- Live a fast-paced, hectic lifestyle
- Close to their parents and family members
- Technology is a part of life; new name for this age group is “Linkers”
- Do not handle conflict well
- Mantra: “I’m wonderful…accept it.”
Discussion Question

What are Your Biggest Challenges in Working Across Generations?
Challenges Across the Country

- Workforce is getting older faster than it can be replaced
- In 2008, the median age of the U.S. worker was 41
- Exodus of older workers creates a leadership deficit
- Simply not enough Gen Xers to fill the need: two people leave for each person entering the workforce
- Generation Y and Millennials are entering in droves – however; they need skills and experience
Critical Issues Uncovered in Research*

Different Work Ethics
Varying Communication Styles
Younger Bosses with Older Workers and Older Bosses with Younger Workers

Poll

One reason why Radio Babies and Gen Yers “connect” is because they are both:

- Competitive
- Security-minded
- Informal
- Assertive
One of the values most associated with Generation X is that they:

- Respect authority
- Like to have fun at work
- Encourage teamwork
- Exert independence
Myths and Truths

**Myth:** Boomers are not capable of learning technology.

**Truth:** Many Boomers grew up with technology, believe in its value and learn new technology every day.
Myths and Truths

**Myth:** Gen Xers are just complainers.

**Truth:** Xers are concerned about the state of the world and the state of the planet.
It’s Your Turn

Scenario Discussion
Responses to Conflict*

- **Radio Babies**
  - Are not prone to confront authority

- **Baby Boomers**
  - Prefer to obtain team consensus

- **Gen Xers**
  - Tend to be straightforward and tell it like it is

- **Gen Yers**
  - Want to understand the reasoning behind misunderstandings

- **Millennials**
  - Often don’t cope well with conflict; need coaching

*Gravett research for 2nd Ed., Bridging the Generation Gap*
# Communication Pointers Across Generations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Preferred Style</th>
<th>Message that Grabs Attention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Radio Babies</td>
<td>Face to Face</td>
<td>Show appreciation for knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boomers</td>
<td>Meetings, in Person or by Phone</td>
<td>Ask how to improve processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen Xers</td>
<td>Email; virtual meeting</td>
<td>Tell me the results you want and get out of my way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen Yers</td>
<td>Email, IM or Text</td>
<td>What’s efficient and clever?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millennials</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td>Recognition; praise</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Younger Supervisors with Older Direct Reports

- Engage in Active Listening
- Utilize Experiences and Expertise
- Establish an Individual Development Plan
- Provide Opportunities for Team Involvement
Older Supervisors Working with Younger Direct Reports

- Provide frequent constructive feedback
- Encourage creativity and big-picture thinking
- Set expectations with options for fulfilling the expectations
- Provide up-to-date technology resources
RETENTION OF ALL GENERATIONS

- Foster a Sense of Family
- Invest in Training and Mentoring
- Provide Lateral Moves
- Create a Culture of Exclusivity
For Additional Resources

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Question and Answer Time