"The generation we belong to is one of the many differences we may have with our co-workers. These differences can cause stress, discomfort, conflict, and frustration. They can also become a source for creativity and productivity." Claire Raines.

The ability to relate and communicate effectively with all types of people is one of today's leadership skills. There are many situations that are, and many that are not, generational in nature. Today's most effective organizations seek out the diversity represented by our multi-generational workforce. Today's best companies also recognize and appreciate the variety of perspectives, styles, and opinions of these groups.

Let's identify these Generations:

1. SILENT GENERATION / MATURES/ VETERANS / TRADITIONALISTS / WORLD WAR II : Born before 1940-45

2. BABY BOOMERS / GREAT MAJORITY: Born about 1940-45 to 1964

3. GENERATION X / X'ers/ POST BOOMERS / THE 13TH GENERATION : Born 1960-54 to 1980

4. MILLENNIALS / GENERATION Y / ECHO BOOMERS / BABY BUSTERS / GENERATION NEXT: Born 1981 to 1999

ACTIVITY: Handout #1
Ask participants to separate themselves into generational smaller groups. Have them identify the following profiles for their groups:
a. How would you introduce yourself today? Where are you on your career path?

b. What was the mood of the era you grew up in? What compelling programming messages did you get from the media, in school, and at home?

c. How did those messages affect who you are on the job today? How did they impact your work ethic?

Post profiles on flip chart. In light of their answers, which generation do individual participants associate with the most?
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Let's look at the different profiles:

Profile	WW II	Baby Boomer	Generation X	Millennial
Outlook	Practical	Optimistic	Skeptical	Hopeful
Work Ethic	Dedicated	Driven	Balanced	Ambitious

View of Authority	Respectful	Love/Hate	Unimpressed	Relaxed/polite
Leadership By	Hierarchy	Consensus	Competence	Achievers
Relationships	Personal sacrifice	Personal gratification	Reluctant to commit	Loyal
Perspective	Civic	Team	Self	Civic
Technology	Adapted	Acquired	Assimilated	Integral
Focus	Task	Relationships and results	Task and	

Discuss these differences.

Now let's look at some of the compelling messages each generation has:

Generation	Messages
WW II	- Make do or do without - Stay in line - Sacrifice - Be heroic - Consider the common good
Baby Boomers	- Be anything you want to be - Change the world - Work well with others - Live up to expectations - Duck and cover
Generation X	- Don't count on it - Remember – heroes…*aren't* - Get real - Survive – stayin' alive - Ask "why"
Millennials	- Be smart - you are special - Leave no one behind - Connect 24/7 - Achieve now! - Serve your community

Discuss the validity of these messages and see if participants can add any more.

Here are the Parenting Styles for the Generations:

Generation	Parenting Style
WW II	• Discipline • Schedules • Conformity • Strict obedience • "Spare the rod and spoil the child"
Baby Boomer	• Dr. Spock • Throw away the schedule • Love and nurture, pamper and cherish • Stay-at-home moms
Generation X	• Parenting by proxy • Working moms • Latchkey kids • Soaring divorce rates • Autonomy and independence
Millennials	• Parent advocacy • Put children first • Soccer moms • Supervision • Strictness on drugs, drinking, and driving

Discuss these styles and see if participants can come up with any additional styles.

Have you ever had an experience when you simply "connected" with someone else? Wherever the encounter took place, there was a special quality to the interaction. You "clicked" with the other person. The conversation seemed effortless, relaxed, and enjoyable. The two of you seemed to be on the same wavelength, cut from the same cloth, a good fit.

Of course, we've also had just the opposite experience – the encounter from hell, a complete disconnect. The interaction was exhausting, as if the two of you were speaking a different language. It took all of your concentration to keep up with the topics you were discussing.

Many times, these disconnects happen when two people are from different generations. So how is it that some of these work and others just don't? It's a matter of establishing rapport. When we adjust our styles to the other person's preferences, we can become more effective communicators. Establishing rapport is based on the principle that *people connect with people who are like them.*

Didn't we all learn the Golden Rule – Do unto others as we would have them do unto us?

Well, when it comes to different generations, we should **do unto others, keeping their preferences in mind.**

Whenever we feel that disconnect, there are three things we can do to deal with it:
1. Acknowledge it and let it go.
2. Change our behavior.
3. Use a generational template to talk it over.

So with #1 – we simply acknowledge that there's a generational difference involved and we move on, letting go of our frustrations or annoyances. If you choose the #2 response, you actually change something you do- what you say or don't say, the words you choose, or they way you respond.   For the #3 response, both of you need to "speak the language of generations" – you make agreements about more effective ways to communicate with each other.

ACTIVITY: Handout #2
Think of a situation where you experienced a disconnect with someone from another generation – where no matter how hard you tried, things simply didn't click. How did you respond? – Level 1, 2, or 3? How might you have responded at each of these 3 levels?

Level 1: Acknowledge it and let it go.
Level 2: Change our behavior.
Level 3:   Use a generational template to talk it over.

IDENTIFYING PEOPLE'S GENERATIONAL PROFILES:

You can observe people's generational profiles by observing their:
- Perspectives on work
- Communication style
- View of authority
- Need for approval
- Perspective on resources
- Response to policies and procedures
- Relationship to "the team"
- Work ethic
- Focus on work projects
- Relationship to technology
- General outlook

ACTIVITY: Handout #3
In small groups, have participants identify a common work assignment you need to give others. Construct messages for each generational style.

Discuss the implications for supervisors as they manage their staff.

Managing generationally diverse workgroups requires diplomacy, understanding generations, and helping them to understand each other, getting them to communicate more effectively, negotiating differences, resolving conflicts, and suggesting ways they might work together more effectively.

Here are some suggestions for mixing generations successfully:

1. Initiate conversations about their generations.
2. Ask people about their needs and preferences.
3. Offer options.
4. Personalize your style.
5. Build on strengths.
6. Pursue different perspectives.

ACTIVITY: Handout #4a-b

Here's a **checklist** to see if your workgroup is generations-friendly. Have participants complete the checklist and discuss their findings.
Ask and discuss:

"Bring to mind a work situation in which you felt you were tolerated. What was it like to feel merely tolerated? How would you evaluate your performance? Did skills and talents go untapped? How did feeling tolerated affect your relationships with co-workers?"
Ask and discuss:

"Bring to mind a work situation in which you felt you were actually *appreciated.* What was the experience like? How would you evaluate your performance? Were more of your skills and talents tapped? How did feeling appreciated affect you relationship with your co-workers?"

Successful work-teams don't simply tolerate others- they pursue, encourage, and capitalize on different backgrounds and perspectives.

MIXED GENERATION TEAMS: HOW THEIR LEADERS DIFFER

Leaders	*Differences*
Managers of Poor-Performing Teams	*Prescribe one way of doing things* *Expect team members to become carbon copies of themselves* *Focus on mistakes and problems* *Avoid risk and encourage other to do the same* *Ignore positive contributions*
Managers of High-Performing Teams	*Encourage people to create new approaches to the work* *Avoid judging ideas until they're fully explained*

	• **Allow a variety of behaviors and attitudes unless they violate core values** • **Emphasize and celebrate personal successes** • **Encourage risk-taking and learning from mistakes**

How might you communicate with a mixed-generation group?

1. You might try to cover all of our bases by using a combination of styles and make sure you include some points that will appeal to each. This may take some time to think through the preferences of each one in attendance.

2. You might adapt your style to the most persuasive person there, or the one you think might be the "hardest sell."

Some persuasive language you might use for each style includes:

Generation	Persuasive Language
WW II	Authority, discipline, leader, rank, respect, sacrifice, consistent, dependable, great, orderly, stable, trustworthy
Baby Boomer	Consensus, human rights, involvement, relationship, team, tolerance, trust, democratic, equal, fair, humane, interpersonal
Generation X	Alternative, numbers, operations, reality, results, system, competent, efficient, functional, independent, pragmatic, sensible
Millennial	Achievement, challenge, collaborate, community, discovery, future, goals, fun, positive, come together, overcome cutting edge

ACTIVITY: Handout #5
Think of a concept you might, at some point, like to "sell" to some of your colleagues. If you were using your most natural style, how would you approach them? What language would you use? Write down some of your ideas and discuss them with the group.

Now think of two different co-workers of different generations, perhaps two you need to be especially persuasive with. Write their names on your activity sheet. Under each name, make notes about how

What are some turn-offs for each generation? Here are some examples:

Generation	Turn-Offs
WW II	Profanity, slang, emotional language, disorganization, lack of respect for tradition, poor grammar, disrespect for experience
Baby Boomer	Brusqueness, unfriendliness, not showing interest in the Boomer, shows of power, one-ups-man-ship, political incorrectness, sports and war metaphors
Generation X	Schmoozing, inefficient use of time, flashiness, hyperbole, acronyms, corporate-speak, incompetence, bureaucracy, complex policies
Millennial	Cynicism, sarcasm, unfairness, condescension

Ask participants: Handout #6
What words would you use to describe your work culture?

If you were to personify your work culture, what generation would it be a member of?

How does your work culture enhance or inhibit the way you serve clients?

Is there a generation of employee in your organization who most likely feel undervalued and/or underutilized?

Is a change called for in your work culture? If so, how might it be accomplished?

Here are the work cultures the generations tend to thrive in:

Generation	Work Culture
WW II	Stable, secure, respectful, clearly defined roles, clear direction
Baby Boomer	Advancement, recognition, team

	orientation, vision, mission, non-hierarchical
Generation X	Flexible, results-oriented, efficient, informal, fun, with opportunities for development
Millennial	Positive, collaborative, flexible, respectful, achievement oriented

Here is a way to balance the work culture for all generations:

- Flexible – with lots of options for people to choose from
- Open – with lots of communication about differing perspectives, including conversations about generations
- Responsive – meets individual's needs and preferences
- Positive – expects the best from everyone
- Diverse – consciously seeks a variety of perspectives
- Developmental – helps people to advance on their chosen career paths
- Retention-oriented – focuses daily on keeping good people

Benefits of the balanced work culture include:
- lower turnover
- increased morale
- improved attendance
- better safety
- greater client satisfaction

ACTIVITY: Handout #7
Ask participants:
When it comes to having a satisfying, balanced life, what, besides your job, is important to you?

Are there important parts of your life that you feel are neglected because of your job? If yes, what are they?

What, specifically, could your organization do that might help you achieve a more balanced life?

What can you do to create more balance yourself?
Within the next few years, all members of the WWI generation will have retired and a big chunk of the Baby Boomers will consider themselves semi-retired. Recruiting top people isn't just a top priority – it's an art form. While you will need "young blood" you will also need to search for Boomer and Generation X'ers who can contribute their experience and knowledge. The trouble is, members of each generation are attracted to different qualities in the workplace. Effective recruiting requires figuring out what you have to offer, then determining how to make it appealing to diverse groups of potential employees.

ACTIVITY: Handout # 8 and 9 (Recruiting & Retention)
Develop an "Employee Value Proposition", or laundry list, of all you have to offer to appeal to potential employees.

1. Write down everything you can think of that someone might find attractive about working for you (physical location, schedule, benefits, culture, opportunities, recognition).

2. Think about the 4 generations – or people you know from each generation. Go through your list and put a W in front of each item you think would be especially appealing to a WW II gen. Go through the entire list and put either a W, or B, or G, or M for each corresponding generation. Some may appeal to all, some may not appeal to all.

3. Evaluate your list. Are there plenty of items for one generation, but very few for another? What's missing from your list? Are there qualities you should add to you Proposition in order to attract and retain top members of one of more generations?

4. Write a Proposition for each generation you want to attract and recruit. Use each as a centerpiece for a recruiting campaign.

You could pull together 20 employees, five from each generation. Put them is groups by generation and ask them to come up with a list of what they like about working for your organization. Ask them to be specific as possible. Be sure to ask them to also answer "why?" For example, knowing why they like flexible hours allows them to be home when the kids get home from school, will be helpful to you in crafting Propositions.

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Powerful Communication for Recruiting:

Here are some suggestions for your recruiting communication:

Generation	Messages
WW II	- keep your message linear & logical - use impeccable grammar - anchor your message to history & tradition – how old is the org?
Baby Boomer	- take time to establish rapport - use person's first name or learn what is important to him/her - emphasize org mission, vision, and values along with his/her power to affect them
Generation X	- be direct and straightforward - avoid buzzwords and company lingo - tie your messages to results – how many, how much, to what end?

Millennial	• be positive • look for ways to communicate electronically • find out what the recruitee's goals are and tie your messages to those

What are they looking for?

Generation	What they're Looking For
WW II	Consistency, structure, respect for their experience, clear rules, worthy venture
Baby Boomer	Leadership opportunities, team environment, warm, friendly atmosphere, opportunities to prove themselves, good cause
Generation X	Development opportunities, flexibility, fun, informality, quality products or services, efficiency, functionality
Millennial	Positive work environment, future-oriented org, collaboration, challenges, fun, flexibility

Managers who understand how to work with employees to create personal satisfaction will find that the benefits are tremendous – committee employees who believe in long-term success of the organization, who care about the quality of their work, and who are more productive.

Four core behaviors characterize today's successful managers:

1. Believing in your employees
2. Helping your employees achieve balance
3. Developing career plans with employees
4. Adapting to differences

Some of the communication that bridges the generation gaps:

Employee needs: WW II wants involvement in decision; Boomers want to juggle work and family responsibilities; Gen-X'ers want employability; Millennials want help finding their career paths.

Employer messages to convey: WW II – we trust your experience and want you to try new things; Boomers – we trust that both work and family are very important to you; Gen X - we trust your work ethic and want you to trust us that the job will still be here in the morning; Milennials – we trust that you want to build a career with the organization and we'll invest in you.

What types of leaders do they prefer?

Generation	Preferred Leader
WWII	• Directive, logical, fair and consistent, respectful • Identifies a clear direction, sets long-term goals, spells out clear job responsibilities
Baby Boomer	• Consensual, democratic, warm, caring • Treats them like a friendly equal, is a "people" person, works with the group to define mission & vision, assures them they're making a difference
GenX	• Competent, genuine, results-oriented, informal • Direct and straightforward, gives project deadlines and turns them loose to accomplish them, looks for opportunities to develop them
Millenial	• Educational, positive, collaborative, achievement-oriented • knows their personal goals, coaches & supports them, helps them find ways to spend time with friends while getting the work done

Why they leave:

Generation	Why They Leave
WW II	• physical reasons • inconsistent enforcement of policies & procedures
Baby Boomer	• Burnout • Didn't feel they made a contribution
Gen X	• Inability to get ahead without becoming managers • Opportunities with other orgs – particularly ones that help them strengthen their resumes
Millennial	• Job doesn't meet expectations • Job is repetitive or boring, without challenges and opportunities for development

Why they stay:

Generation	Why They Stay
WW II	• Loyalty to employer and clients • Good schedule, reasonable hours
Baby Boomer	• Making a difference
Gen X	• Autonomy • Good schedule • Time off
Millennials	• Professional growth • Personal satisfaction

Final Activity – Handout 10

Sometimes we need to think in terms of what am I contributing to the miscommunication? Here are some things to think about:

Review the handout for this activity.

If you're a WW II Generation…

And the other guy is a Baby Boomer:
- Are you coming across as too rigid?
- Do you seem "old school?"
- Might you seem unwilling to "Share the power?"
- Are you seen as moralistic?

And the other guy is GenX:
- Do you seem too corporate?
- Are you too "by the book?" not open to different approaches?
- Are you seen as suspicious of new ideas?

And the other guy is a Millennial:
- Are you out of touch?
- Do you appear technically inept?
- Are you closed to new ideas?

If you're a Baby Boomer…

And the other guy is a WW II:
- Do you share details of your life that may seem too personal?
- Might it seem to the other person that you take him for granted?

- Do you come across as more interested in the process than results?
- Are you viewed as someone who overspends budget?

And the other guy is Gen X:
- Are you seen as overly ambitious?
- Do co-workers think you say one thing and do another?
- Do you come across as rigid?
- Do you use "corporate-speak" – too many buzzwords?
- Are you considered judgmental?

And the other person is a Millennial:
- Are you seen as too serious?
- Do you seem to be too wrapped up in your job?
- Do you appear to lecture too much?
- Do you do what someone else might think is too much reminiscing?
- Are you perceived as someone who has trouble making unpopular decisions?

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If you're a Gen Xer…

And the other guy is a WWII:
- Are you seen a disloyal?
- Are you considered impolite or disrespectful?
- Are you viewed as irreverent?
- Are you perceived as too casual?
- Are you seen as intolerant of regularity and routine?

And the other guy is a Boomer:
- Are you seen as not taking your job seriously?
- Are you viewed as too challenging, maybe even challenging the other's competence?
- Might you be perceived as abrupt or aloof?
- Are you seen as too independent, not a tem player?
- Are you viewed as someone who neglects relationships?

And the other guy is a Millennial:
- Are you seen as cynical?
- Does the other person feel you don't listen to his ideas because of youth and inexperience?
- Are you considered not inclusive?
- Are you seen as someone whose standards are unrealistically high?

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If you are a Millennial…

And the other guy is a WWI:
- Are you perceived as not knowledgeable about history and tradition?
- Are you viewed as egotistical?

- Might you seem inexperienced?
- Might you come across as impatient?

And the other guy is a Boomer:
- Are you seen as inexperienced?
- Are you considered overconfident?
- Might you seem overly competitive?

And the other guy is a Gen Xer:
- Are you considered too naïve?
- Might you be perceived as overly optimistic?
- Might you seem unfocused?

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Handout #11 Training the Generations Graphic

- Generational context is not about age, but common experiences by groups of people.
- Different is neither right nor wrong, just different.
- Technology is not universal – assess your tem members' individual skill levels before making communication assumptions.
- Ageism, like most "isms" can erode workplace inclusion and productivity.
- Different generations may have different approaches to problem solving or project management.