Managing the Generation Gap

Participant Workbook

I n t r o d u c t i o n

This module is designed to provide employees with an understanding of and appreciation for individuals who are from a different generation and how to best communicate and work together with those individuals. This course directly ties to the Mission and Values document that is important for each employee to embrace to help your companies achieve its stated goals.

Topics Covered

- Traditionalists
- Baby Boomers
- Generation "X"
- Millennial – Generation Next
- The Cuspers
- Stereotyping
- Collaboration
- Communication

Module objectives

Why Do We Need This Kind of Training?

1. To better understand those who are different from us therefore respecting the diverse community of your company and beyond.

2. To provide us with skills to learn how to collaborate and communicate more effectively with others.

3. To help us become better team players as new employees join your companies.

4. To gain the tools to help us communicate more effectively and be more understanding of those in our workplace.

GETTING STARTED

Values

Understanding the differences between generations will be a critical skill for businesses going forward. The workplace consists of individuals from many different backgrounds and upbringings. Individuals have been raised in different eras, valuing different things, and identifying with a variety of people and situations.

Let's take a few minutes to learn what is an important value to you and why. Write down what values are important to you in the workplace and why, and then share this with another individual.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Values:

❖ Are a major component of culture

❖ Develop as early as 18 months of age

❖ Are locked in between age 10 and 20 years

❖ May change in priority, dependent upon your cycle of life

THE DIFFERENT GENERATIONS
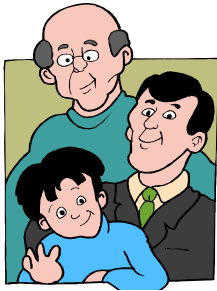
Every decade or so, we experience a new surge of individuals who hold ideals different than ours. Each of these generations has been "stereotyped" both positively and negatively. In the end, we must realize that each generation brings so much to our workplace if we would only recognize the strengths and gifts they bring.

The four generations we will focus on for this session are:

Generation	Circa
Traditionalists/Veterans	1900 – 1943
Baby Boomers	1944 – 1963
Generation "X"	1964 – 1980
Generation Next (Millennial)	1981 – 2000?

UNDERSTANDING THE GENERATIONS WORKSHEET

Let's take a few minutes to recall what we already know (or think we know) about the different generations. What are their values – what drives them on a daily basis, what motivates them, and what are people saying or thinking about them that might not necessarily be correct?

Generation	Values	Motivators	Assumptions and Stereotypes
Traditionalists			
Baby Boomers			
Generation "X"			
Generation Next			

THE TRADITIONALISTS

Traditionalists (also called Veterans, WWIIers) contribute a strong sense of self-reliance.

Events	Values	Motivators
World War II ended	Cash purchases	Money
Depression	Community spirited	Responsibility
Holocaust	Self reliant	Public recognition
A-bomb	Patriotic	Desire to lead
Proliferation of autos	Opening up of opportunities for women	Control
Radios	Work ethics – hard work	Common goals
Women in the workplace	Loyal to employer	Hierarchy
Rationing	Strong chain of command	Consistency and uniformity
GI Bill	Stability	
Vaudeville	Dedication	
Live bands	Sacrifice	
Superman	Patience	
Babe Ruth	Respect for authority	
	Honor	
	Duty before pleasure	
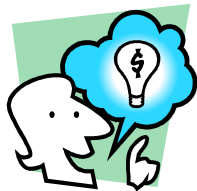
Traditionalists – Tips

The following table includes a list of hints and tips to use when communicating or working with an individual of this generation. Remember that we are generalizing an entire population so we must not assume all traditionalists will fit into this stereotype.

Communication	Conflict Resolution	Teamwork	Recognition
Realize that they have much wisdom and experience to share

Work to understand their point of view – they look at things from a holistic company perspective

Take the time to orient the new person to the company

Let them know what the expectations are up-front

Use politeness when communicating – please and thank you go a long way

Be respectful | Understand their need for control in situations

Realize that change is difficult for them

Understand that conflict is uncomfortable for them

Don't take their direct style personally – it is how they communicate | Give them as much responsibility as possible

Don't be offended if they want to lead projects all of the time

Understand their work ethic – at least an 8 hour work day, short breaks and short lunch

They are motivated, they are just more methodical and less likely to just jump in to something

Make sure they are a part of a team – they are very civic minded

They would prefer to have a leader on the team directing efforts

Let them know the rules of the team – that is important to them | Provide them with recognition in front of their peers

Recognize them for their loyalty and hard work

Recognize them for their experience and wisdom

Provide them with technology training – don't rush it! Respectfully with low stress.

Use a personal touch for recognizing – hand written thank you notes

Use traditional awards for this group |

BABY BOOMERS

Boomers are woefully unprepared for retirement, but continue to bring a sense of collaboration to the workplace.

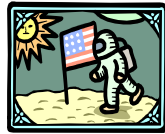| Events	Values	Motivators
Assassinations	Personal freedom	Money
Sex, drugs, rock & roll	Question authority	Opportunity for management
Vietnam War	Don't trust anyone over thirty	Care deeply what others think
The Draft	Political disillusion	Public recognition
Student deferment	It is ok as long as you don't hurt somebody	Want others to work with them
Marijuana	Sexual freedom	Team-focused
Catholic president	Women's liberation	Genuine mission statements with real purpose
Cold War	College education	Must win – competition
Khrushchev	Work ethic	Committed employees
Cuban Missile Crisis	Loyal to employer	
Hippies	Career Focused	
Love beads	Diplomacy	
Peace signs	Driven	
Chicago Democratic Convention	Relationship and results oriented	
Kent State	Optimistic	
Bra burners	Growth and expansion	
Credit cards	Health and wellness	
Woodstock	Involvement	
Television	Personal growth and satisfaction	
Watergate		

Baby Boomers – Tips

The following table includes a list of hints and tips to use when communicating or working with an individual of this generation. Remember that we are generalizing an entire population so we must not assume all boomers will fit into this stereotype.

Communication	Conflict Resolution	Teamwork	Recognition
Watch your body language – it is important to them

Speak in an open, direct style but avoid controlling language

Answer questions thoroughly and expect to be pressed for the details

Present options to demonstrate flexibility in your thinking

Sensitive to feedback

Let them know how they fit into the future with the company | Realize that it is not as easy to change for some

Don't be offended if they challenge the rules

They are uncomfortable with conflict | Understand that teamwork is important for them

Don't be offended by their competitive attitude and focus on career development

Realize that they are accustomed to a long work day – often called workaholics

Reluctant to go against peers | Understand their loyalty to the company

Give them feedback in front of others – recognition

Let them know they are important in the process

Let them know they are valued and make a difference

Provide them with many developmental experiences

Provide them with books and training tapes as a bonus

Give them a chance to prove themselves and their worth

Give them perks

Reward their work ethic and long hours |

Generation "X"

Gen Xers contribution is work-life balance, flex time, and technological savviness. 14% of all Executives today are Xers.

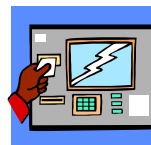| Events	Values	Motivators
Assassinations	Political cynicism and apathy	Work-life balance
Vietnam and POWs	Question authority	Telecommuting
Lunar Landing	Feminism	They aren't attracted by the promise of a rosy future
Oil crisis	Challenge traditional roles and values	Customized for us
Munich Olympic Games	Global leadership	Flexibility
Sexual revolution	Entitlement of rights	Immediate feedback
MTV	Make it work for me	Skill building
Disco	Convenience	They resist hierarchy
CNN	Innovation	Cross-training
Downsizing	Embrace change	They doubt the wisdom of authority
Roe vs. Wade	Disposable consumption	Dynamic work environment and mission
Computers	Lifestyle comes first - balance	Time off
Civil Rights legislation	Don't care what others think	Stock options
Iran Hostage Crisis	Prefer to work alone, not in teams	Highly adapted to an environment that is unstable, without clear lines of authority
Cable TV	Techno literacy	Less oversight – more empowerment
VCRs	Task and result oriented	Software and hardware
Fax Machines	Job focused	Lack of rules
Microwaves	Straightforward	Not corporate - informal
Pagers	Self-reliant	
Cell phones	Skeptics	
Palm Pilots	Diversity	
Personal Computer	Informality	
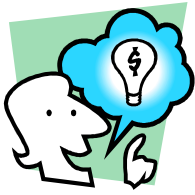
Generation "X" - Tips

The following table includes a list of hints and tips to use when communicating or working with an individual of this generation. Remember that we are generalizing an entire population so we must not assume all Generation Xers will fit into this stereotype.

Communication	Conflict Resolution	Teamwork	Recognition
Teach them how to work in a corporate culture – don't assume they already know Tell them about the "unspoken" rules Be clear about expectations, roles, and acceptable behaviors Help them understand the bigger picture of the organization and how things impact one another Provide them with access to information Use email as a primary communication tool Talk in short sound bites Ask them for their feedback Use an informal communication style Don't use company jargon	Don't assume they are not intelligent Don't assume they are not ambitious Realize that they learn and adapt to change quickly Don't be offended by all of their questions Don't take advantage of them	Mentoring – begin a program (formal or informal) They function best in highly decentralized work environments where they are empowered to make decisions Allow them to think entrepreneurially within the organization Recognize their impatience and don't take it personally Make it fun	Appreciate their technical savvy Recognize more often Incorporate more onetime bonuses, non-cash awards, and long-term salary increases Value them – they are credible individuals Give them new challenges/projects – often Teach them new skills – often Allow them to make their own career choices – build a plan together Performance evaluations must be frequent, accurate, specific, and timely – constant feedback Value their work-to-life balance – time off, flex-time, and have a more flexible workplace Let them know that promotions are based on merit not tenure

GENERATION NEXT – MILLENNIALS

Generation Next – also referred to as Millennials, nexters, echo boom, generation Y, and the baby busters, have had the most experience around diversity, but having proximity doesn't necessarily mean you have the skills. They are mostly upset about what is being left for them to clean up by the previous generation. They are 76 million strong and growing!

| Events	Values	Motivators
Columbine	Stopping violence	Time off
Oklahoma City	Sense of civic duty	Portable skills
Random violence	Self-confidence	Meeting own goals
Clinton-Lewinsky	Tolerance	Loyalty to self
Computers/technology	Technically savvy	Flex time
The Internet	Lifestyle first	Personal safety
Talk shows with no limits	Live with parents	Opportunities to collaborate and participate with others
Multi-culturalism	Sports	Involvement
Exposure to diversity from birth	Fitness	Diverse workforce – not just token diversity
High speed video games	Doers and achievers	Technology
ATM	Education	Allowing for creativity
Speed dial in	Responsible	Ability to multitask
Barney (older Y's)	Diversity	Defined career path
9/11	Equality for all	New opportunities
Brittany Spears	Integrity	Portable benefit packages
Text messaging	Realistic	Short training sessions – "boot camp" style
Facebook and beyond	Collaboration	Opportunities for mentorship
	Negotiation	
	Work ethic	
	Professionalism	
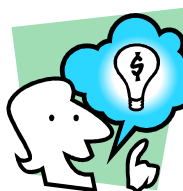
Generation Next - Tips

The following table includes a list of hints and tips to use when communicating or working with an individual of this generation. Remember that we are generalizing an entire population so we must not assume all Generation Nexts will fit into this stereotype.

Communication	Conflict Resolution	Teamwork	Recognition
Set performance expectations and goals – as a joint effort Provide training in short bites with follow-up sessions Realize that they move fast and you must keep their attention Ask them their opinion on cultural diversity – they have very little biases Let them know how what they do helps the company and customer Use action words and challenge them at every opportunity Do not talk down to them Use email for most communication Seek their feedback Encourage them to take risks	They will work hard but don't abuse Don't take their confidence and lack of fear personally Don't be offended if they question your authority – they believe there is not always one way or one answer Help them learn how to deal with people They are ambitious – don't squelch it!	Provide opportunities for collaboration Get them involved in civic/community activities Use humor and create a fun work environment Allow them more input into how they do their job Have a leader on the team Partner them up with a mentor Realize that they can work on multiple functions at the same time – they are not just distracted Coach them – don't dictate to them Involve them in decision making Provide them with lots of challenges and meaningful work	Allow for flexible work schedules Performance evaluations must be frequent, accurate, specific, and timely Provide positive reinforcement Incorporate more onetime bonuses, non-cash awards, and long-term salary increases Recognize more often – value their presence Value their technical savvy – internet knowledge Appreciate their creativity Value them – they are credible individuals Give them quick and easy tangible rewards (gift certificates) Keep them challenged and learning new skills – often/training

Looking at Your Own Team

Take a few minutes to map out the generational "make-up" of your work team. Draw lines out from the center circle and place the names of the different individuals within your work team along with their generation.

Your name here

Sₘₘₘₐᵣₙₜₑₛ
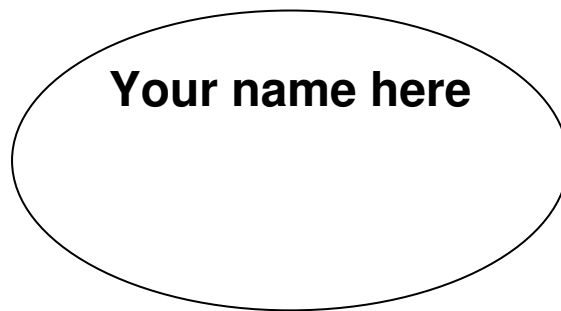
S IMILARITIES

So far, we have focused on the differences between the generations. Let's take a few minutes to look at the similarities and discuss how that can help us in the workplace.

Please write down the similarities with each of the generations.

Traditionalists and Baby Boomers	Public recognition
Traditionalists and Gen "X"ers	Task and results oriented
Traditionalists and Gen "Y"	Civic minded
Baby Boomers and Gen "X"ers	Question authority
Baby Boomers and Gen "Y"	Team focused
Gen "X" and Gen "Y"	Technical savviness

How can these similarities benefit the workplace?

STEREOTYPING AND THE ASSUMPTION CYCLE

Everyday, we stereotype and make assumptions that are incorrect. The key to managing diversity for yourself is to recognize the assumptions you make and how those assumptions can impact others.

Assumption

Action

The Assumption Cycle

Belief

Behavior
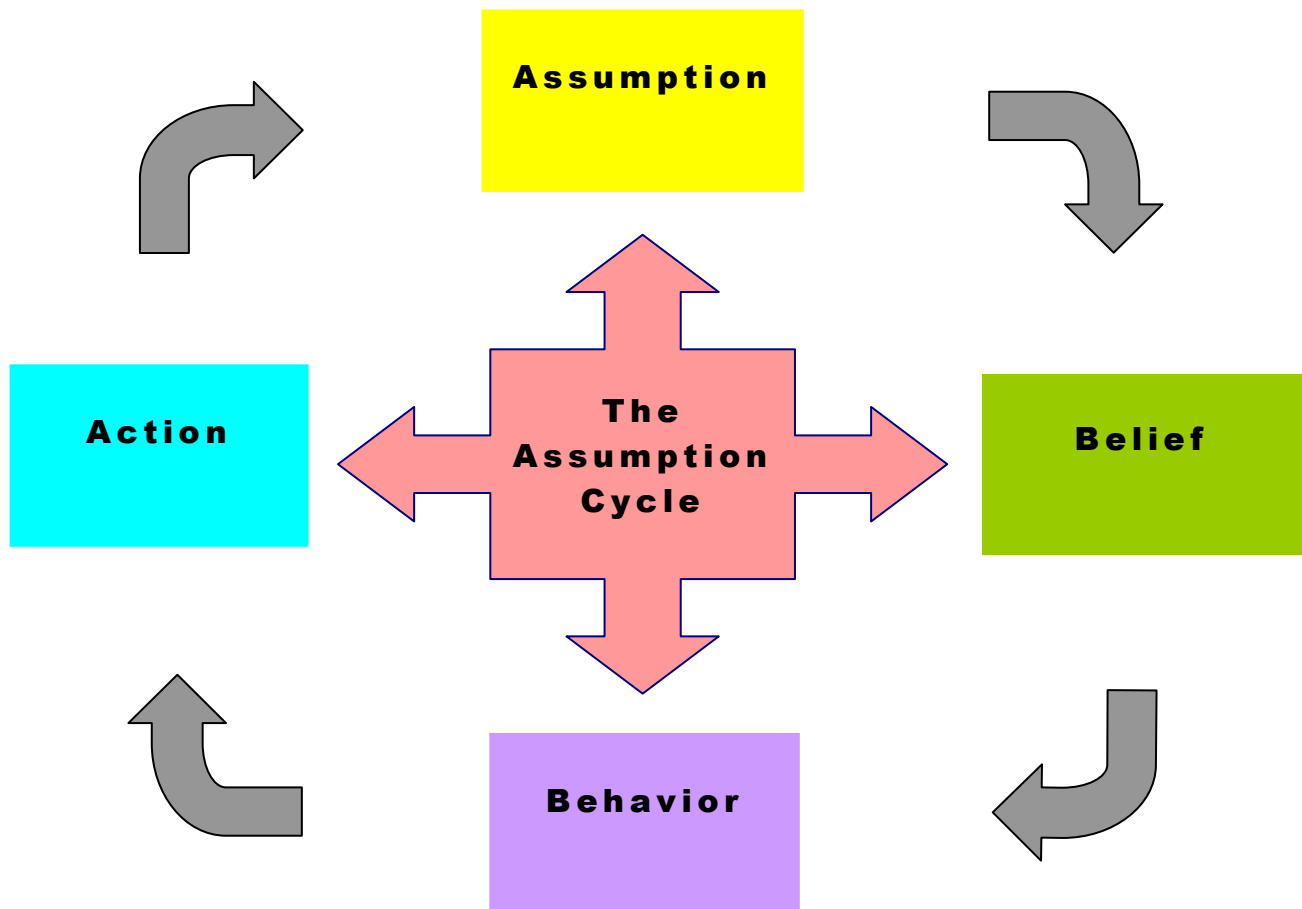
PROMOTING TEAMWORK AND COMMUNICATION

Easy enough… we got it… can we stop now? No. Not until we figure out how we are going to truly integrate all individuals into our work teams. More importantly, how will we change or improve our communication style to make us more effective and productive in our working relationships with others?

In small groups, respond to the following questions:

1. What should we do to communicate more effectively (by phone, email and face-to-face communications in the office and field) with individuals from other generations within our own workplace? Be specific.

2. How will the improved communication help the workplace (improving customer service, workflow, etc.)?

3. What will need to happen to make sure individuals feel included and valued in the "team" environment as our workforce demographics continue to shift and change?

PERSONAL APPLICATION

Take a few minutes individually to complete the following questions.

1. List a person(s) with whom you would like to improve your communication skills (someone who is a different generation from you).

2. What would you like this person to know and appreciate about your generation?

3. What are the major value differences you have observed?

4. How are the two of you similar?

5. How might you communicate with this person in the future (what style, words and approach)?

6. What else can you do to improve the relationship you have with this person?

R E S O U R C E S

Website Links – Additional Reading

http://www.bcnepa.com/news_releases/dress_code.htm

http://www.rdc.noaa.gov/~Diversity/genarticle.html

http://home.earthlink.net/~dboals1/diversit.html

http://www.workplaceissues.com/ardiversity.htm

http://www.opm.gov/employ/diversity/stats/profiles.htm#veterans

Book References

Ameln, Ron. "Managing Generation X: Are They Spoiled Brats? Or Talented Entrepreneurs?" St. Louis Small Business Monthly web site, url: www.sbmin.com.

Coopersmith, Aryae. "Generational Values Transforming the Workplace". SiliconValley.Com web site, url: www.siliconvalley.com. (May 14, 2000).

Cox, Judy. "Management Strategies: The A-B-C's of Managing Generation X". Media 3 Publications web site, url: www.media3pub/firstar.com.

Daniels, Aubrey, C. "Post Generation X: What You Should Know About the Nintendo Generation". Media 3 Publications web site, url: www.media3pub/firstar.com.

Massey, Morris. "The Massey Triad, Part B". The Video Publishing House, Inc. (1986).

Mieszkowski, Katherine. Book Review on Generation *##@**##@!!. Fast Company, Issue 28 (October 1999).

Tulgan, Bruce. "The Manager's Pocket Guide to Generation X". HRD Press, Amherst, MA (1997).

Wellner, Allison Stein. "Generational Divide". American Demographics. (October 2000).

Zemke, Ron. Generations at Work. AMACOM, New York.

Zust, Christine W. "Baby Boomer Leaders Face Challenges Communicating Across Generations". Emerging Leader.Com web site, url: www.emergingleader.com.