



Understanding each generation

Although you should be wary of generalizing, here's a look at the events that shaped the values of the four generations that make up today's workforce, and a glimpse at their expectations and attitudes.

Veterans: These employees were born before 1944 and their values were shaped by the Great Depression, World War II and the Korean War. At work, they are dedicated and hard-working. They believe in leadership by hierarchy and have great respect for the institutions they work for.

Baby Boomers: These employees were born post-World War II and were raised in an era of extreme optimism, opportunity and progress. Their values were shaped by the moon landing, the Vietnam War, Woodstock and the Civil Rights movement. At work, they are driven and competitive. They believe in leadership by consensus and can be counted on

Hello Deborah,

Effectively manage your multi-generational workplace

A big challenge faced by many businesses today is figuring out how to best manage the age diversity in their workforce. Because, for the first time in history, the labour market is made up of four distinct generations, each of whom bring different values, wants, needs, motivations and expectations to the workplace.

Each generation – the Veterans (or Traditionalists), the Baby Boomers, Generation X and Nexters (or Millennials/Generation Y) – has different perspectives on issues such as work ethic, leadership and authority. To successfully integrate everyone, businesses need to respect the dedications of the Veterans, appreciate the drive of the Baby Boomers, recognize the competence of the Generation Xers and value the determined approach of the Nexters. If not well managed, everyone's perspectives on life and different approaches to work can cause conflict, frustration and misunderstandings.

Generational differences offer significant benefits to any business. To capitalize on this, organizations need to build and promote a working and learning environment that is conducive and attractive to everyone.

Understand the generational differences

While it's important to treat your employees as individuals, learning how each generation views the world and supporting the values of each will go a long way.

Ask about preferences and offer choices

Without realizing, people often project their own preferences onto others. But their way doesn't

to go the extra mile.

Generation X: These employees often see themselves as sandwiched between the ever-present Baby Boomers and the privileged Nexters. Their values were shaped by Watergate, the Challenger disaster, terrorism and computers. At work, they strive for balance between their personal and professional lives. They are unimpressed by authority and often pride themselves on being self-reliant.

Nexters: These employees are recent graduates who grew up with hyper-involved parents and overscheduled lives. In the workplace, they speak out and have a positive, can-do attitude. They believe in pulling together to get the job done so that they can move on to do the things they enjoy.

always work for everyone. Ask about someone else's needs and approaches to the job and then provide appropriate assignments.

Communicate in as many different ways as possible

Just because communication has changed, doesn't mean everyone responds well to the latest and greatest. So when communicating with your employees, use them all – email, newsletters, blogs, staff meetings and the simple method of walking around to check in with employees.

Encourage mentoring

Everyone can learn something from someone else, regardless of their age. Encourage employees of different generations to work together and share their knowledge, skills and ideas.

Build on strengths

The best multi-generational teams recognize the unique strengths of everyone on the team. Urge everyone to become more of who they are rather than trying to blend in with the rest of the team – generational strengths only makes the team stronger.

Target learning and development to each generation

Offering opportunities that target the unique needs of each generation in your workplace engages and empowers your employees, and keeps your organization from getting stale. We work with you to customize learning and development plans that best meet your needs.

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