

Bridging the Generational Communication Gap

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“Each generation imagines itself to be more intelligent than the one that went before it and wiser than the one that comes after it.”

George Orwell (1945)

What We Are Going To Cover...

- Explore the uniqueness of each generation



- Discuss how to best communicate to each generation

Why a Generations Challenge Now?

- Shift of required leadership paradigm ...
- Challenges facing organizations to attract, retain and engage employees...
- Pace of global change ...
- Changing demographics...

Generation Influences

Values and attitudes are shaped by

- Life Stage
- Current Environment Conditions
 - Shared Experiences & Collective Memory
 - Formative Years (8 – 13)
 - Coming of Age Years (16 – 23)
 - Economic, world events, heroes, villains, music

Other Influences

- Culture
- Significant life events
- Birth order
- Personality

“People resemble their times and
their peers more than they
resemble their parents.”

Alan Foote

Four Generations at Work

Traditionalists
1932-1945

Gen X
1965-1978

**Baby
Boomers**
1946-1964

Millennials
1979-1998

Canadian Workforce 2007

Millennials

1979 - 1998

27%

Traditionalists

1932 - 1945

6%

Gen Xers

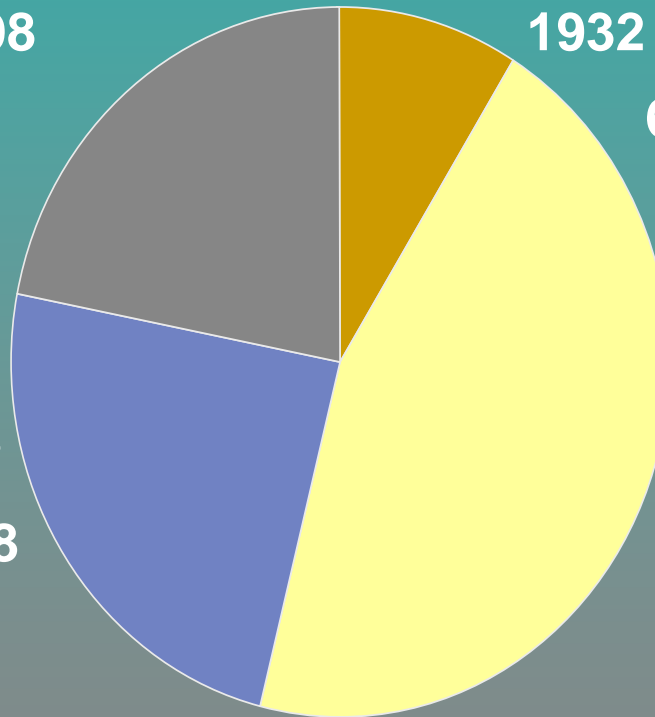
1965 - 1978

22%

Baby Boomers

1946 - 1964

45%

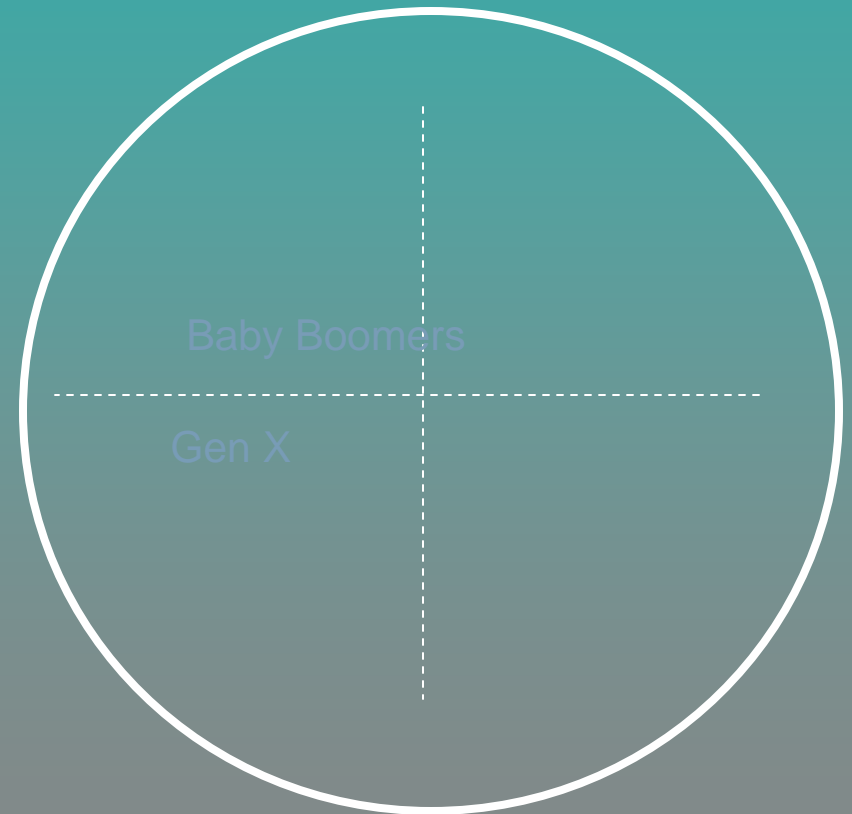


Conference Board of Canada - 2007

Your Generational Make Up

What is the % of each Generation in your workplace?

- Traditionalists 1932 - 1945
- Baby Boomers 1946 – 1964
- Gen X 1965 – 1978
- Millennials 1979 - 1998



Traditionalists: Work First

Career = Opportunity

- Comfortable with command / control leadership
- Work and family are kept separate
- Advancement based on tenure ladder
- Like consistency and uniformity
- Future should be extension of the past
- Unlikely to buck the system

Baby Boomers: Live to Work

Career = Self Worth

- Participative management
- Loyalty to the team
- *“I am my job.”*
- Politically connected at work
- Challenge the rules
- Push to change everything
- Process over results
- Hesitant to engage in conflict

“Man of the Year Recipient: Twenty-five and Under”

Time Magazine (1966)

Gen X : Work to Live

Career = One Part of Me

- Loyal to good leadership -- competency driven
- Promotions based on results and expertise
- Frustrated by office politics
- Get to the point communication style
- Old rules can get in the way
- Work independently with virtual connections
- Results are everything (24/7 for projects)

Nike on behalf of Gen X

“Don’t insult our intelligence. Tell us what it is. Tell us what it does. And don’t play the national anthem while you do it.”

Millennials: Live then Work

Career = Add Value

- Loyal to their group
- Casual relationship to work
- Challenged by constructive feedback
- Take multitasking to a new level
- Expect constant connection
- Open access to information

“...people are looking for a new center of gravity for the country, both socially and culturally.

The Millennials will be the generation in which people see that hope.”

Neil Howe (1998)

Back in your Table Groups

How are Generational differences showing up in your work?

Communicating....

Traditionalist

- Respect, courtesy, formality and order
- Respect of their past work
- Top down communication
- Silence

Baby Boomers

- Customized messages
- Like information first and fast
- May appear impatient for more information
- Fluid and be in the know

Generation X

- Authentic, honest, blunt
- Transparent communication
- Straight up with no meandering around the point
- Tend not to share information

Millennials

- Clear and quick
- Accept any information
- Limited organizational communication
- Dislike being excluded from information

Comparison of Communication Styles

Digital Immigrants

- Linear acquisition of information
- Focus on facts & knowledge
- Face to face
- Repetition

Digital Natives

- Nonlinear – hyperlinked
- Application of the information
- Interactive, virtual & asynchronous
- Analogical – similarity to ..

“we now have a generation that is better at taking in information and making decisions quickly, better at multi-tasking and parallel processing; a generation that thinks graphically rather than textually, assumes connectivity, and is accustomed to seeing the world through a lens of games and play.”

Marc Prensky, 2004

What Can You Do....

- Acknowledge your own Generational shared memories, associated values and preferences
- Get to know your audience from a generational perspective
- Create communication plans for both Digital Immigrants and Digital Natives

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eNewsletter. Simply leave me your
business card before you go.

I would love to hear your stories
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Useful Resources on Generational Diversity

- Deal, J. (2007). *Retiring the generation gap: How employees young and old can find common ground*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Howe, N. & Strauss, W. (2000). *Millennials Rising: The next great generation*. Toronto: Random House.
- Lancaster, L. & Stillman, D. (2003). *When generations collide: Who they are, why they clash, how to solve the generational puzzle at work*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Mitchell, S. (1998). *American generations: Who they are, how they live, what they think*. Ithaca, NY: New Strategist Publications.
- Zemke, R., Raines, C., & Filipczak, B. (2000). *Generations at work: Managing the clash of veterans, boomers, xers, and nexters in your workplace*. New York: AMACOM