Four Generations Working Together

Presented
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The Reality

- There are four generations of employees represented in the U.S. workforce
- The question is not, “Will you have a multigenerational workplace?” The question is, “Are you prepared?”
- The ability to recognize and bridge generation gaps can create a powerful competitive advantage
Learning Objectives

• Identify characteristics of the four generations in the workplace
• Recognize issues and situations that may be influenced by generational differences
• Apply practical tips for working successfully in a multigenerational workplace

How Much Do You Know?
How Much Do You Know?
How Much Do You Know?

- ROTFL
- BFF
- BRB
- WOMBAT
- (((H))))
Four Generations in the Workplace

4 Generations

Traditionalists 1925-1946
Baby Boomers 1946-1964
Generation X 1964-1981
Generation Y 1982-2002

Generations at a Glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Born Between</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Stereotyped As</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditionalists</td>
<td>1925-1946</td>
<td>Hardworking; Dedicated; Respectful of rules and authority; Conservative</td>
<td>Old-fashioned; Behind the times; Rigid/Autocratic; Change/Risk averse</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baby Boomers</td>
<td>1946-1964</td>
<td>Youthful self identity; Optimistic; Team player; Competitive</td>
<td>Self-centered; Unrealistic; Political; Power-driven; Workaholic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Generation X</td>
<td>1964-1981</td>
<td>Balanced (work/life quality); Self-reliant; Pragmatic</td>
<td>Slackers; Selfish; Impatient; Cynical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation Y</td>
<td>1982-2002</td>
<td>Fast pace/Multitasking; Fun-seeking; Technology savvy</td>
<td>Short attention span; Spoiled and disrespectful; Technology dependent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Generation Differences**

- Feedback & Communication Styles
- Work Processes & Technology Focus
- Work Motivation & Rewards (work/life balance)
- Business Etiquette
- Dress & Grooming
- Authority, Leadership and Hierarchy
- Views about what is or is not respectful

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**Traditionalists**

**1925-1946**

*Work style and values*

- Respect for rules, hierarchy and authority
- Dedication; hard work
- Loyalty
- Sacrifice
- Duty before fun
- Value tradition
What Characterizes a Traditionalist?

- Traditionalists experienced the Great Depression, World War II and Pearl Harbor, FDR and Lindbergh
- Female career = mom
- Traditionalists tuned in to the radio for entertainment and the latest news

Baby Boomers 1946-1964

*Work style and values*
- Work is a priority
- Optimistic
- Personal fulfillment
- Competitive
- Strong professional networks
- Value meaning
Who are the Baby Boomers?

- Currently between the ages of 42 and 62 (born between 1946-1964)
- Make up about 45% of the US population or 76 million people

What Characterizes a Boomer?

- Most went to elementary and high school in the 50’s, 60’s and early 70’s
- They have experienced a major war - Vietnam, the Civil Rights movement, the sexual revolution, Watergate, and the race for space.
- Most were reared by Depression-era parents who wanted a better life for their kids
What Characterizes a Boomer?

- Boomers grew up watching “Father Knows Best”, “Leave it to Beaver”, and “Bonanza”
- They listened to the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, and Bob Dylan
- Boomers experienced the “if it feels good, do it” movement
- They championed freedom of speech and a distrust of the “establishment”
- Boomers are the sandwich generation - caring for both elderly parents and adult children

“When we were young, we didn’t trust anyone over 30. Now that we are over 30, we don’t trust anyone at all.”
**Generation X**
1964-1981

*Work style and values*
- Self-reliance
- Desire flexibility
- Skepticism
- Technology
- Informal
- Value Balance (work/life)

**Who are the Xers?**

- Currently between the ages of 27 and 44 (born between 1964-1981)
- There are about 41 million Xers in the US
What characterizes an Xer?

- The first “latch-key kids”. Children of divorce – grew up with single parents.
- Television has occupied a significant part of their lives. By age 5, a Gen Xer had watched 5000 hours of television.
- Xer’s have seen the debut of MTV, the technological revolution, the space shuttle Challenger explode and Ryan White educating the world on AIDS.

What characterizes an Xer?

- Xer’s grew up watching shows like the Brady Bunch, Full House and My Two Dads.
- Over 51% of Xers have completed or enrolled in more than 1 year of college.
- Xer’s are marrying later, having kids later and want to spend time with family.
- Many Xer’s still live with their moms and dads.
What characterizes an Xer?

“More Xers believe they have a better chance of seeing a UFO than a social security check with their name on it”

Generation Y
1982-2002

Work style and values
• Fast paced (multi-tasking/multimedia)
• Tenacity/Directness
• Entrepreneurial
• Global diversity (people/perspectives/access)
• Technology savvy
• Value fun
Who is Generation Y?

• Currently 25 and younger
• Makes up about 15% of the workforce
• Also called the “Millennials”, “Technology Generation” or the “Nexters”

What Characterizes Generation Y?

• Hopeful, polite and determined
• Participative style
• The Internet Generation
• Great multi-taskers
• Civic minded
What Characterizes Generation Y?

- Defining moments include: The Oklahoma City bombing, Columbine shootings, 911
- Sports heroes are Tiger Woods and Mia Hamm

What Characterizes Generation Y?

- Most protected generation
- Most educated generation
- Like the latest technology
- Like to ask questions
- Public activism
What are They All Seeking From Their Jobs?

MANY DIFFERENT THINGS……..

Recruiting

- Boomers – redefine retirement; show them the track
- Gen X – “We want you to have a life”; free time is a benefit; evaluate on merit; short term incentive programs
- Gen Y – Use the Internet; demonstrate corporate conscious

How Do We Manage Them All?
How Do We Manage Them All?

**Day-to-day Management**
- Boomers – value their experience; give them credit; reward them with perks and status symbols
- Gen X – avoid micromanaging; manage by objective; create choices; give immediate and meaningful rewards; no BS
- Gen Y – value diversity; provide guidance; show meaning; leverage experience; provide team opportunities

**Training**
- Boomers – traditional methods (classroom); limit technology; ease into change; control the class
- Gen X – create choices; use technology; make it interesting; give them the WIIFM; no lecturing; focus on need to know information
- Gen Y – use mentor programs; ramp up orientation training; technology is a must
The New “Gen Mixers”

• People of all ages have already started to dissolve the boundaries between generations as they adapt to the new workplace.
• The most successful people are the true “Gen Mixers” who bring to work every day their enthusiasm, flexibility, and voracious desire to learn.
• They are responsible for how they create their lives and how they use their talents and skills to collaborate on getting the best work done every day.
• The skills, talents, and expertise of every generation are needed more than ever to rebuild an economy that has been on a roller coaster ride for nearly two decades. In an unstable, unpredictable world, organizations must turn diversity into a strength and become fluid and flexible to meet marketplace demands.

Conclusions

• Managers must recognize and embrace differences, whether they be generational, sexual, or racial
• Managers must be flexible and may even have to abandon some old ways of doing things
• Times continue to change and the workplace is changing quickly
May we all work in harmony!