Millennials in the Workplace:
Understanding Generational Differences

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The children now love luxury. They have bad manners and contempt for authority. They show disrespect for adults.”

Socrates (469-399 BC)
Five Generations in the Workplace

- Traditionalists - 1900-1945 (Age 72+)
- Baby Boomers – 1946-1964 (Ages 53-71)
- Generation Z or Generation 2020 (Ages 16 and younger)

  - *Cuspers – Characteristics of two generations (edges of generation)*

  Lancaster & Stillman, 2002
Generational Journey

- Different Generations Influences/Values
  - Traditionalist
  - Baby Boomers
  - Generation X
  - Millennials
- Understanding Generational Differences in the Workplace
  - Communication, Works Styles and Feedback
Generations Poll
1. Which generation are you?
   a. Traditionalists (1900-1945)
   b. Baby Boomers (1946-1964)
   c. Generation X (1965-1980)
Changes in Workplace


In millions

![Graph showing changes in U.S. labor force by generation from 1995 to 2015.]

Note: Annual averages plotted 1995-2014. For 2015 the first quarter average of 2015 is shown. Due to data limitations, Silent generation is overestimated from 2008-2015.


PEW RESEARCH CENTER
Just the Facts – DMR STATS

- 83 million Millennials in the United States (27% of the population)

- 53 million Millennials are in the Workforce
  - 34% of the workforce
Just the Facts – DMR STATS

- 86% of Millennials own a Smartphone
- 83% of Millennial Smartphone owners text more than they talk on phone
- 87% of Millennials admit missing a conversation because distracted by their phone
67% of Millennials feel they can find a YouTube video on anything they want to learn.
- 64% of Millennials would like to work from home
- 60% of Millennials think they would be more productive working from home
- 82% of Millennials would be loyal to their employers if they had flexible work options
What Millennials Want in a Workplace

- Millennials expect close relationships and frequent feedback from supervisors
  - Positive, Affirming

- The expect open communication and to be kept in the loop of information
They prefer to **work in teams** – they perceive group-based work to be more fun/less risk

They want **meaningful work** that makes a difference and is fulfilling
Millennials in the Workplace

- **Workforce satisfaction** matters more than monetary compensation
  - Work-Life Balance is essential
- **Millennials will broadcast workplace concerns over social media**
  - They will also advocate for organizations they like
- They want to make positive changes NOW!
Frustrations in Today’s Workplace

A Millennial Speaks

A Millennial Speaks
GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES
Generation Gap?
Five Generations in the Workplace

“They don’t get it!”
Significant Life Events

- Significant life events that occur between the ages of 7 to 18 years shape our attitudes and influence our outlook.

What events shape a generation?

- National/World Events
  - War, Social movements, Political climate

- Local/Personal Events
  - Family, Culture, Education, Socio-economic status,
Think of a significant life event that happened between the ages of 7 to 18 years in your life.

Type the event into the chat box.
INDIVIDUAL PREFERENCES

OUTWEIGH

GENERATIONAL PREFERENCES
2. Which motto best describes your philosophy about WORK?

   a. I work to have fun and make a difference
   b. I work for food, clothing and shelter
   c. I work to live
   d. I live to work
“We Work for Food, Clothing and Shelter”
Traditionalists

DEFINING EVENTS

- Great Depression
- WWI & WWII – Atom Bomb
- Move from Farm to City (Rosie the Riveter)
- Prohibition
- Communism
- Sliced bread
- No TV (Radio)
  - President Roosevelt, Fireside Chats

VALUES/ATTITUDES

- Cautious
- Patriotic
- Conservative
- Loyalty – Stability in Job
- Hardworking
- Builders
- Sacrifice
- “Waste not, want not”
- Authority Figures – Seniority Respected
Media

- Top Television Shows
  - None – first broadcast in 1951

- Top Music
  - I’m a Yankee Doodle Dandy (1904)
  - Let Me Call You Sweetheart (1910)
  - Tip Toe thru the Tulips (1928)
  - On the Good ship Lollipop (1935)
  - Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy (1941)
Traditionalists in the Workplace

- Work is a privilege (Great Depression)
- Loyal to Company
- Hardworking
- Adhere to rules
- Sacrifice – Commitment to Duty
- Respect for Authority
Traditionalists – 1900-1945

- Age 72 or older (38 million born)
- 3% of workforce

Why are they Important?
- Built organizations
- Trained the Baby Boomers – Suits and Ties
Baby Boomers (1946-1964)

“We Live To Work”
Baby Boomers - 79 million born

- Peace – economy boomed after WWII
- Many babies were born
  - Hospitals, schools, communities unprepared
  - Smaller families – more parent attention 3.5 kids

- Affluence – High Expectations
  - Most productive generation

- Think old age begins at .......
  - Active Living Communities
When Does Old Age Begin...

- Millennials
  - 59 years old
- Gen X
  - 65 years old
- Baby Boomers
  - 73 years old
- Traditionalist
  - 73 years old

Survey by US Trust, 2017
Baby Boomers – 1946-64

DEFINING EVENTS
- Civil Right Movement
- Women’s Rights
- Vietnam
- Watergate
- Space Race
- Woodstock
- Penicillin
- TV – JFK Assassination

VALUES/ATTITUDES
- Strong Work Ethic
- Equity
- Money & Titles
- Power of Many
- Competent
- Self-expression
- Optimism
Top Television Shows
- The Wonderful World of Disney
- Gunsmoke, Bonanza
- The Andy Griffin Show
- All in the Family

Top Music
- Rock Around the Clock (1955)
- All Shook Up (1957) Elvis Presley
- Surfin’ U.S.A (1963) Beach Boys
Boomers in the Workplace

- Team oriented (love meetings and committees)
  - Process important
- Competitive/Driven
- Personal growth
- Hard working/workaholics
- Eager for change
- Challenge the status quo
Generation X – 1965-1980

“We Work to Live”
**Generation Xers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DEFINING EVENTS</th>
<th>VALUES/ATTITUDES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Double-digit Inflation</td>
<td>Self-Reliant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iranian hostage crisis</td>
<td>Skeptical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sony Walkman</td>
<td>Realists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIDS</td>
<td>Individualistic</td>
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<tr>
<td>MTV</td>
<td>Ask Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borrowing grows twice as fast as income</td>
<td>Getting work done faster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space Shuttle Challenger</td>
<td>Staying Put</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berlin Wall Torn down</td>
<td>Close to Friends</td>
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<tr>
<td>Persian Gulf War</td>
<td>Control over time</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Generation X – 60 million

- Recession – Global competition
  - No chance to win – to be the leaders – focus on life outside work
  - First generation that will not do as well as parents

- Entrepreneurial
  - *Carpe diem* attitude
  - Reject rules
  - Mistrust institutions
Generation X in the Workplace

- Flexibility and balance
- Internal motivation
- Question authority
- Think globally
- Tech-literate
- Resourceful and self-reliant
- Informal communication style
Generation X – 60 million

- Donkey Kong
  - New Equipment – New Levels

- Divorce Rate Triples
  - Latchkey children
  - Two homes – 2 sets of rules
  - Missing children on milk cartons
Media

- Top Television Shows
  - Dallas
  - Roseanne
  - The Simpsons
  - Friends – Seinfeld

- Top Music
  - My Sharona
  - Ebony and Ivory
  - That’s What Friends are For
“We Work to have Fun and Make a Difference”
Millennials

DEFINING EVENTS
- Oklahoma City Federal Building Bombing
- Columbine High School Shooting
- 9/11 World Trade Center attack
- Dow Jones hit record high
- The Great Recession begins - Slowest job recovery
- First Black President

VALUES/ATTITUDES
- Technology Use
- Social Networks
- Think outside the box
- New Ideas
- Creative
- Want to be taken seriously
- Parental involvement
- Multi-tasking
- Meaningful Work
Tomorrow May Never Come (9/11)
- Metal detectors
- Airport search, scans
- Armed SWAT teams
- Nowhere is SAFE
Media

- Top Television Shows
  - ER
  - Family Guy
  - Survivor
  - CSI

- Top Music
  - Gangsta’s Paradise
  - Candle in the Wind
  - Boom Boom Pow
Millennials – 83 million born

- Second Baby Boom
  - “Wanted” generation
  - Multiple births – Hands-on dads

- Heavy parent involvement “Helicopter Parents”
  - First generation where children had schedules
  - 77% seek parent advice regularly
  - 1 in 5 still live with parents as adults (36% female, 43% male)
When Does Youth End....

- Millennials
  - 40 years old
- Gen X
  - 31 years old
- Baby Boomers
  - 31 years old
- Traditionalists
  - 35 years old

US Trust Survey, 2017
What Age Do You Consider the Prime of Life?

- Millennials
  - 36 years old
- Gen X
  - 47 years old
- Baby Boomers
  - 50 years old
- Traditionalist
  - 52 years old

US Trust Survey, 2017
Millenials – 83 million born

- Trophy Kids
  - Prize with every meal
  - Trophy with every team (win or lose)
  - Special events documented and shared (Facebook)
  - Center of Attention
  - Seek instant gratification/recognition for effort

- Individualistic and yet group-oriented
  - Diverse, Tech natives
Millennials

- Difficult job Market
  - Lower wages
  - Work-Life Balance

- Tribe of Friends – texting

- Higher rate of Volunteerism
Millennials in the Workplace

- Optimistic
- Self-confident
- Wants rewards for efforts (prize in every box)
- Like personal attention
- Digital natives
- Desire innovation and creativity in work
- Casual/immediate communication style
- Diverse, Educated
Generational Artifacts
Do you remember these?
Millennials

- Technology Important (Natives)
  - Freedom to explore the Internet

- Smart Phone – 83% sleep with or near phone

- Use more than one kind of media
  - 53 hours of media use/week
3. Which type of reward at WORK would motivate you the most?

a. Money  
b. Vacation  
c. Title and Recognition  
d. Knowing the job was well done
3. WHICH TYPE OF REWARD AT WORK WOULD MOST MOTIVATE YOU THE MOST?

a. Money
b. Vacation
c. Title and Recognition
d. Knowing the job was well done

- Generation X
- Millennial
- Baby Boomer
- Traditionalist
INDIVIDUAL PREFERENCES

OUTWEIGH

GENERATIONAL PREFERENCES
Areas Generational Friction

- Communication
- Work Ethic and Work Style Preferences
- Dress Code
- Feedback
- Fun at Work
- Meetings
- Decision Making
- Policies
Understanding Generational Difference in the Workplace
4. How do you **prefer** to communicate with colleagues at WORK?

   a. In-person
   b. Phone call
   c. Email
   d. Text
Generational Communication

- Write me
- Call me
- Email me
- Text me
Generational Perspectives

Native Communication
Each Generations Native Communication

- Traditionalists – In-person - Letter Writing
- Baby Boomers – Phone Calls – TV
- Generation X – E-mail – Web – Cell phone
- Millennials – Texting, Social Networking, Blogs
Generation Friction: Communication

- Texting versus Phone Call
  - Efficient
  - Abrupt
  - Impersonal
  - Rude (during meetings)
  - More frequent feedback
  - Connect more quickly

- What do you think?
- *How does the world look from each point of view?*
Resolving Differences

- Talk about Generational/Personal Differences
- Focus on “why” (unites) not “what” (divides)
  - Necessity or Preference
- Is there room for flexibility?
  - Agree on how to accommodate
- What really is the Best Option(s) for All?
Communication Millennials

- Millennials – Texting, Social Networking, Blogs
  - Half of Millennials polled stated they would give up their sense of smell before their computer/cell phone
  - 56% would turn down a job if social media wasn’t allowed or ignore the policy
Understanding Generational Difference in the Workplace

WORK ETHIC AND WORK STYLE PREFERENCES
Work Environments

a. Consistent Work Hours
   - Traditionalists
b. Interesting work
   - Baby Boomers
c. Be my own boss
   - Generation X
d. Flexible Schedules
   - Millennials
Work Hours

a. Essential to work long hours (60+ hours/week)
b. Work 8 to 5 unless something is really important
c. Why have standard working hours?
d. Love Flexible Hours
Why does it matter how many hours you work if you get your work done?

Do you have to come into the office, or can you work from someplace else?

Do you have to work standard work hours or can you flex your time?
Millennials

- High expectations but not as intense

- Told by parent to NOT do what they did
  - It’s not worth it
  - Acceptable to move back in with parents (less financial pressures)

- Grown up in global, electronic age where work never stops
  - See work hours as more porous
  - They are hardworking – they can make it up later
  - 24/7 – go back online anytime
Millennials – How much can you flex?

- Business necessity or Generational preference?

- Results versus Hours worked
  - Hours worked is not a good measure of outputs
  - Harder to make people accountable for performance

- Flexible schedules
  - Right technology
  - Regular communication
  - Balance remote and office working
  - Clear expectations of outputs
  - Accountability for results
Mentoring Millennials

- Value mentoring opportunities in the workplace
- Millennials need leadership, not management
- Leaders who ...
  - Team Oriented
  - Inspire Involvement
  - Attribute Value to Team
Resolving Differences

- Talk about Generational/Personal Differences
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Focus on the Strengths of each Generation

- Traditionalists – Hard work matters
- Boomers – Good processes save time, prevent errors
- Gen Xers – How to cut to the chase
- Millennials – Figure out the shortcuts
Millennial Preferences
DRESS CODE
DRESS CODE

- Traditionalist
  - Formal dress showed respect at work and home

- Baby Boomers
  - Wore the expected dress code at work, more casual at home

- Gen X
  - Preferred casual at work and home
Every generation has been less formal than the last one.

Millennials prefer Informal Dress, but they also like to dress up for a night out on the town.

Ask yourself:

- What clothing communicates a professional image to the clients?
  - That Depends.....
FEEDBACK AT WORK
## FEEDBACK AT WORK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditionalist</th>
<th>If you do something wrong, the boss will let you know</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baby Boomer</td>
<td>Annual performance appraisal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen X</td>
<td>You don’t need a form or meeting, say what you think (real time feedback)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Instant and frequent feedback is best.

Why?
Millennials received lots of feedback from their parents who listened and helped them problem solve. Video games give instant feedback. Texting feedback is instant and frequent.
FUN AT WORK
FUN AT WORK

- Traditionalist
- Baby Boomers
- Gen X

- I’ll relax when the work is done
- The work itself is FUN!
- It’s work...
Fun at work is essential to getting more done.

Why?
Millennials grew up having fun learning as they watched Sesame Street. School included interactive, fun activities.

All generations want to have fun, they just don’t agree on how much fun is appropriate.
MEETINGS

- Traditionalist
  - Infrequent, boss does most of the talking

- Baby Boomers
  - Place to receive information

- Gen X
  - Are they relevant and needed??
Meetings need to have a purpose and be interactive. If the information doesn’t apply, I have other work I can do (text, tablet).

Why?
Millennials like to stay connected, communicating. Constantly. To them, texting is not rude, it’s part of being efficient and engaging with others.

49% of all employees think meetings are a waste of time.
DECISION MAKING

- Traditionalist
- Baby Boomers
- Gen X
- The Boss decides
- We use a decision making process and then the boss decides
- Most Savvy on topic decides
They like group decision making. They want their ideas and contributions to be valued.

Why?
Millennials practiced group decision making skills in school and worked to gain consensus from all group members.
POLICIES

- Traditionalist
  - Do what you are told

- Baby Boomers
  - Let’s create policies and procedures so everything is fair

- Gen X
  - Work shouldn’t be managed by rules and policies
Policies need to make sense if they are to be followed. If not, question and negotiate.

Why?
Millennials have been allowed to question rules given by parents and negotiate.
Problem to Solve or Opportunity to Leverage

Gain Understanding to Decrease Generational Fiction
A great relationship is about two things:
First, find out the similarities
Second, respect the differences
Summary

- Examined the significant life events that influenced four generations
- Gained a greater understanding of each generation's viewpoint
- Focused on Millennials and understanding generational differences in the workplace
  - Communication
  - Work Styles
Look who’s coming.....

GENERATION Z: CONNECTED FROM BIRTH.

Born mid-1990s to 2010.
Questions?

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