Generational Communication: Flexing Your Language Style for Maximum Impact
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Stakeholder to Shareholder: Flexing Your Language Style for Maximum Impact

Understanding the generations allows individuals to flex styles to “speak” the language of customers, colleagues, and personnel for program buy-in. Learn how to modify your language and manage expectations so maximum buy-in can be created.
Diversity is a good thing

• It takes a generationally diverse staff to serve generationally diverse customers.
• Each generation has unique characteristics and strengths.
• Not everyone is going to exhibit all characteristics.
OBJECTIVES

• What are the general characteristics of the 5 generations in the workplace?
• What are some of the group’s unique contributions to the workplace and potential areas for growth?
• How does this relate to recycling?
• What are the strategies to effectively communicate cross-generationally so that there is a positive impact on instruction, business partnerships, and achievement?
WHY DOES IT MATTER

• Higher level of effectiveness
• Less conflict and tension
• Ability to manage a changing workplace
  • 5 generations (est. 7 by 2025)
  • Unprecedented labor shortages
  • Enrich professional relationships
HOW IS A GENERATION DEFINED?

“A group of people whose lives are shaped by common events and cultural milestones that form their values, attitudes, and life/work perspective.”

Formative cohort experiences
Birth Cohort, Life Cohort
Age and lifestyle
Current social and economic conditions
Be aware of the nine shift

Nine hours in your day in the year 2020 will be completely different than nine hours in your day from 2000.

We look to history as we predict trends for the future. The same shift happened 1900 – 1920.
The swinging pendulum

**Millennials** vs. **Boomers**

**What's on the minds of a millennial shopper versus a baby boomer shopper at any given point in time.**

### Boomers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>9am - 5pm</td>
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<td>Tuesday</td>
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<td>Wednesday</td>
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<td>Friday</td>
<td>9am - 5pm</td>
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</tbody>
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### Millennials

<table>
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<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
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<td>3am - 2pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>10am - 4pm</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
MATURES 70+
(AKA TRADITIONALISTS, THE GREATEST GENERATION)
Born on or before 1945

- Major influences: Depression, WWII, post WWII
- 50% ex-military
- Disciplined
- Self-sacrifice
- Expected lifetime career with one employer
- Seniority is important
- Prefer communication in writing
Leading edge BOOMERs
Born 1946-1957, traditional cohort

- Came of age during Vietnam War
- Major influences: Civil Rights Movement, women’s rights, Cold War; scientific advances
- Can-do attitude
- Experimental
- Innovators
- Serious work ethic, follow protocol
- “Live to work”
- Prefer telephone or face to face communication
Trailing Edge BOOMERs
Born 1958-1964

• Typically exhibit more Gen X characteristics—often referred to as Gen Xers.
First in an 11 year decline in births
Why is this group more “x”

• 1956, total white collar workers surpassed blue collar workers
• Raised in white collar households
• Kindergartners of JFK assassination
• High schoolers of Watergate
• College students of Iran hostage standoff
• First generation of “ADD”
BOOMERs

• Overcrowded
• New Construction
• Memorization, Good handwriting
• “Promotion” to more difficult work after correct performance
BOOMERs

- Punctuality
- After Hours
- Everything has a process***
- Process AHEAD of Outcomes
Boomer Recycling Habits

• Smaller Household size = smaller portions
• More pre-prepared/packaged food
• More likely to recycle than not, due to time, infrastructure
• Multiple surveys say just over 50% are likely to recycle (Survey 2000 people across multiple generations)
• Use energy efficient appliances and always shut off the lights
GENERATION X (AKA GEN XERS)
Born 1965-1981

- Major influences: Personal computers, MTV, dual income households, video games, Gulf War, AIDS, Latch-key kids, rising divorce
- “Work to Live”
- Career security vs. job security
- Not afraid to leave their job if they are unhappy
- Prefer electronic communications-FIRST to play video games/grow up with computers
Generation X
Impact of Title IX

• Passed in 1972 created same education opportunities for boys and girls
• Gen X girls and boys able to try out roles not available previously
• Co-ed Gym classes, home economics, wood shop, etc.
Generation X

Gen Xers Cohort Characteristics

- Work can happen anywhere
- 8-5 your time
- After 5 my time
Gen X Recycling Habits

• Least likely to recycle
• Over 80% surveyed says it is important but are ambivalent
The Children now love luxury. They have bad manners, contempt for authority; they show disrespect for adults, and love to talk rather than work or exercise. They no longer rise when adults enter the room. They contradict their parents, chatter in front of company, gobble down food at the table, and intimidate their teachers.

-Socrates (469-399 B.C.)
MILLENNIALS (AKA GENERATION Y)
Born 1981-1995

• Major influences: Expanded technology, helicopter parents, diversity/tolerance education, 9/11
• “Work my Way”
• Social Activists/Entrepreneurs
• Multi-taskers, especially via multimedia
• Want choices
• Prefer instant everything – feedback, communication, information, entertainment (Google/Facebook)
MILLENNIALS

Baby Boomer Career Path Expectation

- Hard work over many years

Baby Boomer Career Path Reality

- Positive Net Happiness, Satisfaction
- Reality
- Expectations
MILLENNIALS

Lucy's Career Path Expectation

Because just wait till the world sees how amazing I am

Expectations
Frustration, disappointment
Reality

SUCCESS

YEARS

waitbutwhy.com
Millennials now largest cohort in the workforce.

- Millennials - 56 Million
- Gen X – 53 Million
- Boomers - 41 Million
- Linksters (Z) – 9 Million
- Matures – 3 Million
Cohort experience
• School shootings, Columbine
• September 11, 2001
• Great recession of 2009
• Social Media coming of age
• Cell phones and Ipods
• First African American President
• Weather events-Hurricane Katrina, Indian Ocean Tsunami
• Introduction of the “Play date”
MILLENNIALS

• They don’t believe “the experts,” they believe their friends
• Most media savvy generation
• Most diverse generation in history
• 75% of Millennials spent their youth in organized, structured activities, therefore desire structure!
• Activists—social movements are abundant and more to come
Millennial Recycling Habits

• Do not recycle as much as the Boomers
  • Lack of infrastructure
  • Shared space
• Most likely to spend more for greener packaging
• Most likely to utilize re-usable bags
• Believe in the We, will support corporations/companies that have a green mission
LINKSTERS (AKA GENERATION Z, centennials)
Born after 1995

- Economic Downturn
- School violence
- Realistic
- Apps/Social Games/Tablet devices
- Comfortable with global context
- Innovation and social change
- Trouble with face to face
- High Expectations
Gen Z (Potential) Recycling Habits

• Environmental Interest and Activism
• Upcycling, Customization of packaging
Personality and Behavioral Differences
Being a jerk not a generational characteristic

• Know your own Generational Characteristics—you can figure out if you are being misread
STYLE FLEXING

• Starting with your most comfortable and aware self, then, in response to behavioral cues, gradually adjusting to better reflect the other person’s style.

• Learn how to make adjustments so that even if a situation is not ideal for you, you can still be successful.

• Style flexing is a skill anyone can develop.
  -takes energy and practice!
VALUING DIFFERENCES

TRADITIONALISTS
Honor the chain of command
• Value the legacy they have built and their experience
• Appreciate their dedication
• Communicate one on one
• Learn the corporate history

DON’T: Use slang, be late, change appointments.
VALUING DIFFERENCES

Boomers

- Show Respect
- Choose face to face conversations
- Give people your full attention
- Learn the corporate history
- Ask them to be mentors

Boomers don’t feel their experience is valued – “Too old to understand”

They will do whatever it takes to stand out, they are super competitive!

DON’T: Ignore their contributions, be politically incorrect, tell them instead of ask them
Boomer Promotion of Recycling

• Events to meet people-be involved
• Convenience of infrastructure, curbside
• Highlight the savings of money
VALUING DIFFERENCES

Gen Xers

- Get to the point, be direct
- Give fast feedback
- Groom for management
- Allow to multi-task
- Use email to communicate

DON’T: micromanage, talk too much, or treat them like slackers

Gen Xers—seek work-life balance

Boomers—Strong commitment to employer
Gen X Promotion of Recycling

• Make it Easy
• Get their children involved
VALUING DIFFERENCES

Millennials

- Challenge them, communicate the WHY
- Ask them for their opinion/collaborate
- Encourage finding a mentor
- Keep them busy
- Allow to multi-task
- Compensation based on performance, not time
- Define the ladder (AMR)
- They love working in teams as equals

DON’T: Treat them like children, or work them too much

Millennials expect flexible and less formal workplaces

Boomers and Traditionalists don’t like slang, tardiness, poor business etiquette.
Millennial/Z Promotion of Recycling

• Make it Easy
• Promote the purpose
• Incentives for Companies both large and small
Attract, Motivate, retain (stop “Engaging”)

Manage Expectations

Training

Succinct
Mobile
Self-directed
Entertaining!

Ideas:
Weekly work from home days
Unconventional office/breakroom
What does Gen Y want in a job

1) Flexibility
2) Fun environment
3) Money
4) Being Green
VALUING DIFFERENCES
Linksters (Gen Z)

• Provide clear written vs. verbal instruction
• Ride hard on them – they need close supervision
• Provide them with job descriptions – they need to know what to do.
• Lead by example – they often look to you as a surrogate parent.
• Orient them to the obvious
• Welcome them with open arms
BRIDGING THE GENERATION GAP

• Clarify ground rules for what’s expected
• Use MULTIPLE communication forms
• Ask, don’t assume
• Find commonality
• Share perceptions
• Understand work styles
• Be willing to learn AND teach
  - Need to LISTEN to your younger colleagues.
  - Let them do it their way.
• Show RESPECT
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

http://www.nineshift.com/

http://www.penduluminaction.com/the-theory/

