GENERATIONS IN THE WORKPLACE:
Managing Through the Ages
“Work Ethic! They have no work ethic! What a bunch of slackers.”

“So I told my boss, if you’re looking for loyalty, get a dog.”

“A bonus? Are you kidding? When I was his age I was just grateful to have a job!”

“Note to self…..I refuse to attend meetings after 5:00! I have a life you know.”

“He asked me if I had an email address….I felt like telling him yeah, since you were in diapers sonny!”

“Why do I need to be in the office? I have a laptop, iPad, voicemail, Skype, and TWO cell phones.”

“If I hear we tried that in ‘87 one more time, I think I’m gonna hurl in his wrinkly old face!”
“I don’t like that man. I must get to know him better”

- Abraham Lincoln
The Legions of Ancient Rome were comprised of ten cohorts each: Cohesive units of 300-600 men who trained, ate, slept, fought, won, lost, lived and died together. Their strength was the ability to think, act, and more importantly, react as a unit. They were intrinsically the “same”.

Today, the term cohort is used to refer to people born in the same general time span who share key life experiences that shape their attitudes and behaviors.
Traditionalists
(Veterans) Born Between 1922-1943

“The Generation whose vision and hard work shaped our Nation as we know it – bold, powerful, prosperous and vital.”

Current Age 73-94
Traditionalists
(Veterans) Born Between 1922-1943

LIFE FORMING EVENTS
Traditionalists
(Veterans) Born Between 1922-1943

Shook off a Recession

Won a world War

Built National Infrastructure

Built a Space Program that reached the Moon

Created miracle Vaccines

Raised the Largest Generation of Children

Currently hold \( \frac{3}{4} \) of all the Nations assets

Ushered in the Golden Age of Media

Established the “Great American Value System”
Traditionalists  
(Veterans) Born Between 1922-1943

Core Values

Dedication and Sacrifice

Hard Work

Conformity

Law and Order

Respect For Authority

Patience

Delayed Reward

Duty Before Pleasure

Honor
Traditionalists
(Veterans) Born Between 1922-1943

On The Job

**Assets**

- Stable
- Detail Oriented
- Thorough
- Loyal
- Hard Working

**Liabilities**

- Inept with ambiguity and change
- Reluctant to buck the system
- Uncomfortable with Conflict
- Reticent when they disagree
Traditionalists
(Veterans) Born Between 1922-1943

Messages That Motivate

“It’s valuable to us to hear what has and hasn’t worked in the past.”

“Your experience is respected here.”

“Your hard work and loyalty is valued and will be rewarded.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditionalists</th>
<th>(Veterans) Born Between 1922-1943</th>
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</thead>
</table>

**What Others Think**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Baby Boomers Say</th>
<th>Gen X Says</th>
<th>Gen Y Says</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They’re dictatorial</td>
<td>They’re too set in their ways</td>
<td>They are trustworthy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They need to adapt better</td>
<td>They too shall pass</td>
<td>They are great leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are inhibited</td>
<td>Jeez man, use your email!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Much more than just a post war – “Welcome home sailor”!”

Current Age 52-73
Baby Boomers
Born Between 1943 - 1964

LIFE FORMING EVENTS
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Baby Boomers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Born Between 1943 - 1964</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beginning of a new world</th>
<th>Economic achievers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Healthier</td>
<td>Account for the largest part of the workforce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doted on and attended to as babies</td>
<td>Like to play nice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stable Economy</td>
<td>Technology introduced</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Baby Boomers
Born Between 1943 - 1964

Core Values

Optimism
Team Oriented
Personal Gratification

Health and Wellness
Personal Growth
Work
Involvement
Baby Boomers
Born Between 1943 - 1964

On The Job

Assets

Service Oriented

Driven

Willing to go the extra mile

Good at relationships

Want to please

Liabilities

Not “naturally” budget minded

Uncomfortable with Conflict

May put processes ahead of results

Overly Sensitive

Judgmental of those that disagree
Baby Boomers
Born Between 1943 - 1964

Messages That Motivate

“You’re important to our success.”

“Your contribution is unique and important.”

“We need you.”
Baby Boomers
Born Between 1943 - 1964

What Others Think

Traditionalists Say

They talk about things that should be kept private

They are self absorbed

Gen X Says

They’re self-righteous

They are workaholics

What’s the management fad this week?

Will you please retire or die so I can run things right?

Gen Y Says

They are cool

They’re fun

They take care of me
It’s no wonder we are angst ridden and rudderless. We got to the party so late that all that was left were those little cocktail wieners and a half empty wine cooler!
Generation X
Born Between 1964-1980

LIFE FORMING EVENTS
The middle child syndrome

Watched America fail

Decline of the family

Birth control to prevent them was prevalent

Fallen heroes

Technology boom

Cable TV

Yuppies
Generation X
Born Between 1964-1980

Core Values

Diversity
Balance
Techno literacy

Fun
Informal
Independent
Pragmatic
Generation X
Born Between 1964-1980

On The Job

Assets

Adaptable

Independent

Un-intimidated by authority

Resourceful

Creative

Liabilities

Impatient

Poor people skills

Inexperienced

Need an informal work environment

Cynical
Generation X  
Born Between 1964-1980

Messages That Motivate

“Do it your way.”  
We have the latest and greatest for you to work with.”

“Come and go as you please as long as you get everything done.”
Generation X
Born Between 1964-1980

What Others Think

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditionalists Say</th>
<th>Baby Boomers Say</th>
<th>Gen Y Says</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They don’t respect experience</td>
<td>They’re slackers</td>
<td>Cheer Up!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They don’t follow procedures</td>
<td>They are rude</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They don’t know what hard work is</td>
<td>They are only happy if it’s their way</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They won’t wait their turn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Generation Y (Millennials)
Born Between 1980-2000

Current Age 16-36

“When summoned, these ordinary youth transform themselves into thunder bolting evil fighters”
Generation Y
Born Between 1980-2000

LIFE FORMING EVENTS
**Generation Y**

*Born Between 1980-2000*

- Techno savvy
- Child focused
- Abundant stress
- Born to a diverse group of parents
- Trendy
- Large disposable incomes
- Internet dependent
- Still a work in progress
Core Values

Optimism
Civic Duty
Confident
Achievement
Social
Street Smart
Diverse
# Generation Y

**Born Between 1980-2000**

## On The Job

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assets</th>
<th>Liabilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collective Action</td>
<td>Need supervision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenacity</td>
<td>Desire structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heroic spirit</td>
<td>Inexperienced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-taskers</td>
<td>Difficulty handling people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Techno savvy</td>
<td>Immediate gratification</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Generation Y
Born Between 1980-2000

Messages That Motivate

“You’ll be working with other bright people.”

“Your boss is in his (or her) sixties.”

“You and your coworkers can turn this company around.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditionalists Say</th>
<th>Baby Boomers Say</th>
<th>Gen X Says</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They have good manners</td>
<td>They need more discipline</td>
<td>Neo Boomers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are very smart</td>
<td>They can do my web page for me</td>
<td>Here we go again, another generation of self absorbed, spoiled brats.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They spend too much time on that I-thingy</td>
<td>They need too much attention</td>
<td>They don’t know as much as they think they do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Everybody wants a trophy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Quick Comparison
Traditional and Gen X

Traditional
- Conformity
- Hard Work
- Technology Challenged
- Duty Before Pleasure
- Patience
- Delayed Reward
- Law and Order
- Traditional

Generation X
- Diversity
- Balance
- Techno Literate
- Fun
- Impatient
- Need for Recognition
- Informal
- Innovative
Achieving Generational Peace

The Keys to creating a successful intergenerational workforce:

Communication and Difference
Communication

Generational differences are typically based on unarticulated assumptions

Encourage group discussions, integrated staff meetings, informal chats, differing viewpoints

Understand problems are not like wine, they don't get better with age
Difference Deployment

Assign employees based on strengths and talents

View diversity as a strength
Don’t stereotype based on false assumptions

Make sure everyone feels accepted
The ACORN Approach

Growing Strong Leaders
The ACORN Approach

A
C
O
R
N

Accomodate employee differences
Create workplace choices
Operate with a sophisticated management style
Respect competence and initiative
Nourish retention

SOURCE: Generations At Work: Zemke, Raines, Filipczak
Looking Towards
The Future
One may expect Traditionalists to finish their tour in the workforce soon; but not so fast. As people are living longer, they are working longer as well. Expect Traditionalists to continue their top down, centrally controlled, bureaucratic corporate structure. Learn from their experience while there is still time.
Baby Boomers have spent a lot of their time tearing down the corporate bureaucracy and flattening the hierarchies. When they end up as leaders, expect them to personify humane behavior and be concerned executives in tune with the feelings of the group. It wouldn’t be surprising to find them coveting positions where they will sit quietly until forced into retirement.
Generation X will anxiously wait their turn for leadership roles and power. It’s quite likely that their task orientation will dictate their management style. As leaders they will be much more concerned about getting work done than anything else although they may be accused of absentee management. Bureaucracy will be their Achilles heel and a source of constant frustration.
Don’t expect Generation Y to sit around as the new kids on the block. Collectively optimistic about their future and less individualistic overall, they will work hard to move into the future together. Technology will be their ticket for success while their need to be recognized could cause them emotional distress.
“Great things in business are never done by one person. They’re done by a team of people.”

- Steve Jobs