

Generation Gaps

Training Manual



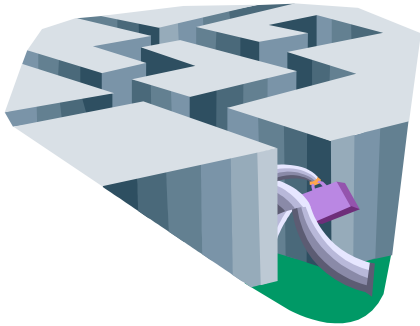
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A single conversation with a wise man is better than ten years of study.

Chinese Proverb

Module One: Getting Started



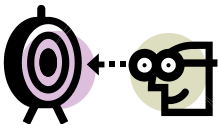
Welcome to the Generation Gaps workshop. The workplace can present challenges to management in terms of handling the different generations present. As older workers delay retiring and younger workers are entering the workforce, the work environment has become a patchwork of varying perspectives and experiences, all valuable to say the least.

While having various cultures in one workplace can present communication problems and conflicts, the benefits of such a variety in the workplace outweigh it. Both the young and older worker has many ideas to offer, which can help the organization thrive in the marketplace. Learning how to deal with the generation gap at work will help you become a better manager or co-worker.

This workshop will help you understand the various generations present at work and understand what motivates them and how to deal with them on a daily basis. Before we start learning about the generation gap at work, let us begin our session with an activity that will help us get ready for learning and learn more about each other.

Workshop Objectives

Research has consistently demonstrated that when clear goals are associated with learning, it occurs more easily and rapidly. With that in mind, let's review our goals for today.



At the end of this workshop, participants should be able to:

- Understand the history behind generation gaps
- Know what traditionalists are
- Know what baby boomers are
- Know what Generation Xers are
- Know what Generation Yers are
- Know what Generation Zers are
- Understand the differences between each type of generation

- Find common ground among the generations
- Understand conflict management

Each generation wants new symbols, new people, new names. They want to divorce themselves from their predecessors.

Jim Morrison

Module Two: History



The term generation gap is a term used to describe the different values and attitudes between one generation and another. This term is typically used to describe the gap between parents and their children.

Since the 1960's, the term generation gap has also been used to describe the clash one age group has with another in various settings. The workplace is such an environment where different generations must intermingle and deal with each other's way of thinking.

This module will discuss the following topics as it relates to the generation gap in the workplace:

- What generations exist in the workplace
- What defines a generation
- What this means in our workplace

Let us begin by understanding what generations exist in the workplace.

What Generations Exist in the Workplace



Today's workplace presents many challenges that are based solely on meeting goals, business objectives, and project deadlines. Threaded throughout the normal business activities are dynamics that could present issues and conflicts if left unchecked.

Since many older workers remain on the job longer and younger workers are entering the workplace right out of college, the work environment is fragmented into various generations. In order to understand this eclectic environment, it is necessary to understand what generations are present in today's workplace.

Because humans live on average 77 to 80 years, four potential generations may exist in the workplace today.

The five generations that could be present are the following:

- Traditionalist
- Baby Boomers
- Generation X
- Generation Y
- Generation Z



Understanding the background, attitudes, and work styles of each generation is essential for a manager or supervisor. If they want to effectively coach and communicate then understanding these differences is paramount in creating a respectful and peaceful work environment for all employees.

This workshop will help you learn the characteristics of each of the four generations and how to deal with their uniqueness.

Before we get into the details of each of the five generations, we are going to learn what defines a generation.

What Defines a Generation

A generation is a group of people born during the same period and shares the same attitudes and values. The period is the factor to dividing the generations into groups. The four generations mentioned in the previous section have time ranges that define their period.

For example, the Traditionalist Generation represents people in a generation born before 1946. The Baby Boomers are people born between 1946 and 1961. Generation X represents people born between 1962 and 1980. Generation Y represents people born in the 1980s and 1990s, and Generation Z, people born 1995 to 2010.



In each period are experiences that shaped the attitudes and values of each generation. In addition, the interaction between generations is also a factor in shaping the subsequent generation. For example, Generation X sought to be different by the larger more influential Baby Boomers. This thinking affects their behaviors and preferences.

What this Means in our Workplace

When groups have the same values and attitudes, communication and other dynamics typically go smoother. When there are multiple groups and each group brings their own style, values, and attitudes, this could create tension and other issues if not paying attention.

Multiple generations in the workplace presents challenges in many areas. Let us review two perspectives that must be managed.

First, the employee-to-employee perspective is critical; it shows how different generations interacting with each other may lead to miscommunication or misunderstanding. Furthermore, the way each generation handles confrontation may also be a point of friction.

The generation gap between employees could be seen more in the modes of communication, the words, and gestures used.

The manager-to-employee perspective is another sensitive area. Generation gaps in this situation could be difficult if the relationship starts on the wrong foot. For the manager, knowing that there are differences in the way generations communicate, view authority, life-work balance, and relationships is just the beginning.

The manager must also plan how to address these issues proactively, avoiding difficult or tense situations. Having difficult situations at work could lead to poor morale and productivity, which will reflect on the manager's performance.

Generation gaps at work means more work is needed to cultivate an environment that respects each generation's perspective and way of life. This also means the manager has to be observant and knowledgeable of the various traits associated with each generation.

Over the next several modules, we are going to learn about each of the five generations in detail. We will begin with Traditionalist first.

Every generation laughs at the old fashions, but follows religiously the new.

Henry David Thoreau

Module Three: Traditionalist



In this module, you will learn the traits and behavior of the Traditionalist generation. This generation is probably the oldest generation you may encounter at work. The members of this generation were born before 1946. You are going to learn the following about this generation:

- Their background
- Their characters
- Their working style

Let us take a look at the background of the traditionalist to begin this module.

Their Background



Being born before 1946 is what classifies a Traditionalist. Their background touched on dealing with some incredible social issues. For example, a traditionalist may have experienced the Great Depression, World War I and World War II. The military influenced their way of life since war was a great part of their cultural event and many served during this era.

The traditionalists were brought up during “tough times” where scarcity of resources was caused by economic troubles and war. Since the country was in a military and social program mode, individuality was not celebrated. The culture saw a uniform thought pattern, which was brought on by rallying against a visible foe.

Traditional values in terms of family structure and gender roles influenced the workplace during this generation. Men mostly dominated the workplace. In essence, the traditionalist had to work hard and see that as the way to live life.

Their Characters



Traditionalists are considered hardworking because they grew up during a time when jobs were not abundant. They are willing to put in long hours and believe that hard work is the way you earn a better position in the company.

Traditionalists are loyal to their employers and tend not to move from employer to employer. They stay where they are if possible. Furthermore, traditionalists are submissive because they were taught to respect authority.

Traditionalists will avoid causing trouble and are good team players. They are the least likely to initiate conflict at work. There is also a tendency to resist change. They value safety, security, consistency, and commitment.

Their Working Style

Today, traditionalists comprise of about five percent of the working population. Most traditionalists are retired.



Nonetheless, Traditionalists bring a strong work ethic to the job place. They are dedicated to their employers and value leadership and hierarchy.

Characteristics:

- Traditionalists like to be recognized for their hard work.
- Traditionalists also see work as a team effort and avoid conflict.
- This group is also technically challenged and they may struggle to learn new technology.
- They also prefer lecture style training over web-based.

Since traditionalists are near retirement, their zeal for working their way to the top may be less than the other generations. They tend to be satisfied with their life situation and do not see advancement or achievement as important as the younger generations.

Motivating a traditional employee may be a challenge because of their tenure at work and lack of desire to prove something. They will usually conform and strive to keep the status quo.

Each generation goes further than the generation preceding it because it stands on the shoulders of that generation.

Ronald Reagan

Module Four: Baby Boomers



In this module, you will learn the traits and behaviors of the Baby Boomer generation. This generation has members that were born between 1946 and 1964. You are going to learn about their background, character, and working style. The first thing we are going to learn is the Baby Boomer background. Let us begin.

Their Background

Baby Boomers were the product of post war efforts to absorb soldiers returning home from battle. The government passed the GI Bill of Rights in 1944, which gave soldiers a means to obtain a home, job and start a family.



The result was a boom in childbirths, which is where the title Baby Boomer is derived. Baby Boomers grew up in an era of prosperity and growth in the United States. Baby Boomers grew up mostly in suburbs and experienced a similar experience in education and upbringing.

Baby Boomers grew up in the year of innocence during the 1950s and seen model lives portrayed on television. Television was a large component of the Baby Boomers' upbringing. As mothers began working outside of the home, Baby Boomers grew up more and more with television.

As the Baby Boomers moved through the 1960s, their generation was becoming more defined. The 1960s brought about social changes like Civil Rights, a different kind of war in Vietnam, and rebellion against established institutions like the Hippy Revolution.

The Baby Boomer generation represents a departure from the traditional and movement towards changes in society, beliefs, and attitudes.

Their Characters

Baby Boomers are known to be confident and independent. They were exposed to a changing world where challenging the established culture was normal. Baby Boomers are willing to confront others and they will challenge the status quo.



Baby Boomers are well educated and are exposed to more financial resources than the past generation. Baby boomers are hard-working and they define themselves by their careers and professions. Baby Boomers are disciplined and they mirror some of their parents' work ethics.

Since Baby Boomers know they make up most of the working population, they tend to have more of their generation connect with work, making it more difficult for non-Baby Boomers to affect the organization. On the other hand, Baby Boomers support change and will advocate for it if they see it being a benefit.

Their Working Style

Baby Boomers are work-centric. They are hard-working and they are motivated by incentives. Baby Boomers tend to work long workweeks. They tend to be workaholics and think that everyone should do the same in order to advance in their careers.

Characteristics:



- Baby Boomers are career focused and enjoy achieving at work.
- They like doing complicated work that makes a difference.
- Baby Boomers are very competitive and they equate their worth by their status and position at work.
- Baby Boomers are resourceful and look for different ways to win.
- Baby Boomers do prefer a hierarchal work structure and may find it difficult to work in a flexible environment.
- Finally, Baby Boomers tend to favor face-to-face interaction instead of remote means like emails, text, etc.

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

Module Five: Generation X



This module discusses the traits and behaviors of Generation X. This segment of the culture was born between the mid-1960s and the mid to late 1970s. You are going to learn the following about them:

- The Gen X background
- The Gen X character
- The Gen X working style

Let us begin this module with understanding the Generation X background.

Their Background

Generation Xers were born between 1965 and 1980. They are the generation right after the decline of the baby boom of the post war era. Generation Xers live during a time when the country shifted from manufacturing to servicing.



This generation grew up with technology as a part of their lives. They experienced computers, video games, cell phones, email, etc. They have seen the evolution of technology and understand its origins.

Generation Xers also experienced difficult times in the 1980s and learned to live in tough times. Finally, Generation Xers were raised in two-income homes or single-parent homes. These situations forced many Generation Xers to be placed in day care.

Their background allowed them to develop new characteristics that went against the Baby Boomers.

Their Characters



Generation Xers are individualistic people and independent. They are self-sufficient and flexible. This character trait enables them to change jobs more frequently than the previous generations. They usually see this as a way of moving up the corporate ladder.

This generation is more ethnically diverse and is better educated over their previous generation. More than half of Generation Xers attended college.

Generation Xers also believe in more balance between their work and home life than the previous generation. They rather focus on family than work and value jobs that allow flexibility in their schedules to meet the demands of their family.

Generation Xers are more willing to try new things because of their technical experience and they welcome new technology into their lives easily and adapt to them quickly. Generation Xers are also tolerant of other lifestyles and accept this as part of the change in their environment.

Generation X's perspective allows them to foster a more accepting environment at work.

Their Working Style

Generation Xers enjoy freedom at work. They crave responsibility and politely reject authority and fixed work schedules. This generation does not do well in a micro-managed environment. They will thrive in a workplace where management allows them to complete their tasks without too much supervision.



Generation Xers will be the first ones to take advantage of technology and incorporate it into their work. They see technology as a tool and a way to do things more efficiently.

Generation Xers will look for other employment opportunities if it promises advancement of their career. They are less committed to their employers than the Baby Boomers. On the other hand, Generation Xers adapt well to change in their workplace and are key drivers of change.

Finally, this generation believes in a healthy balance between work and their personal life. They also like to have fun at work and believe in a work and play hard ideal. Generation Xers like a dynamic work environment that challenges them yet support their need for fun and balance between work and home life.

Nothing so dates a man as to decry the younger generation.

Adlai E. Stevenson

Module Six: Generation Y



You are going to learn about Generation Y or the millennial generation in this module. This group was born between 1979 and 1994. This module will teach you the background, characters and working style of Generation Y. Let see what Gen Y is.

Their Background



Generation Yers are those born from the mid to late 1970's through the 1990's. The earliest part of this generation is just entering the workplace. The Generation Y group had technology as a normal part of live and do not know what it is to be without a computer, cell phone or any other electronic device the older generation had to adapt into their lives.

This generation can thrive on electronic communication and prefer that than face-to-face conversation. Generation Y prefers using the Internet as a means of learning and making purchases. They are exposed to vast amounts of information, music, and media than the older generations.

This generation was exposed to more group interactions through playgroups, team sports and other group activities than the previous generation. This was due in part to their parents' higher education and success.

Finally, this generation is used to getting what they want when they want it. The speed of technology and information coupled with rapid delivery systems has made this generation expect things to be done faster and better.

Their Characters



Generation Y is prone to communicating via electronic devices and is capable of multi-tasking while carrying a text messaging conversation. This generation relies on technology to do their jobs and expect to have the resources available when they are at work.

Generation Y is family-centric and value family over work. This generation looks for flexible schedules at work and a balance between work and life. They are willing to take less pay for this benefit.

This generation is achievement-oriented and is confident. Generation Y will question authority without fear and challenge ideas and motives. Generation Y enjoys meaningful work and are ready to keep on learning new ideas and things.

Generation Y works well in a team environment. They seek positive reinforcement from others and believe no one should be left behind. They rather slow the process down in order to give a teammate the opportunity to catch up.

Finally, the Generation Y group appreciates feedback and being kept updated on the latest developments. They do require periodic recognition and praise for their work.

Their Working Style



Generation Y's working style is vastly different from those of the previous generation. This generation is motivated by benefits that give them the ability to have flexible schedules. They are less motivated monetarily.

They are not happy with long working hours and this may send the message that they do not care about work or are lacking discipline. Family is first for Generation Y and they will push back on work that crosses this boundary.

This generation does expect a lot from their employer in terms of new challenges and the opportunity to achieve things. Generation Y does see promotions and climbing the corporate ladder as a way to demonstrate their worth.

Generation Y is loyal to their employer and seeks to be included in important activities at work. They will call attention to themselves by suggesting bold ideas and challenging the status quo. However, they do become concerned with what others think about them and need affirmation every so often.

Since this generation is relatively young in the workplace, there is a need for mentoring. They see this as normal and expect it from their leaders. They like guidance and development when it comes to their careers.

Parents who wonder where the younger generation is going should remember where it came from.

Sam Ewing

Module Seven: Generation Z



We have covered Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y. It is time that we examine the Generation Z category. This group of people make up a little over a quarter of the U.S. population and are generally thought of as being all those who are born from 1995 to 2010. Like the previous generations that we have discussed, Generation Z also has its own personality in its background, the group's characters, and working style. Let's take a look at Generation Z.

Their Background



If Millennials reach adulthood around the year 2000, the Generation Z population would be considered “post-millennials.” The post-millennials contribute over \$44 million to the American economy, and will soon make up a third of the US population. These all make good reasons to learn more about this generation of the population.

- Also known as “The Centennials.”
- Most ethnically diverse generation of Americans.
- Grew up with internet, smart phones, and social media.
- Mirrors the Generation Y in their political and social issues.
- Will soon contribute the most money to the American economy.

Characters

The Generation Z population has its own characteristics and traits.

- **Global**—although this generation may be completely immersed in their digital devices, they are still by far the most globally aware generation as of yet. More informed due to their technology use, they are more in tune to the world around them.
- **High Expectations**—The “centennials” generally have very high standards for where and what they spend their time and money. If a product is not delivered fast enough, or at the quality there are expecting, this generation will change suppliers immediately.
- **Self-starters**—Generation Z research is showing a higher rate of business startups. Many of this group of people is choosing to not only continue their educations, but also start their own businesses before graduation.
- **Striving for Uniqueness**—This generation has had an internet presence from an early age. With many social media accounts to choose from, these adults are striving to stand out from the crowd and be recognized.

Working Style

Generation Z workers are showing signs of being less focused, with shorter attention spans when compared to those of their predecessors. This age group was raised with instant gratification from the use of new technologies that deliver nearly real time results. They are, however, wonderful multi-taskers, having been raised completing many tasks at the same time, using many different gadgets and other technologies. For example, talking on speaker phone while posting a YouTube video and while ordering groceries via Alexa.



When compared to previous generations, the centennials are more likely to be in school, and less likely to be in the workforce. Many times living at home, this generation often chooses to focus on furthering their education. Due to this group’s need for individuality and credit for their accomplishments, when they enter the workforce, they are often very strong individual workers. Most are very flexible, very independent workers that are self-starters.

That which seems the height of absurdity in one generation often becomes the height of wisdom in another.

Adlai E. Stevenson

Module Eight: Differentiations Between



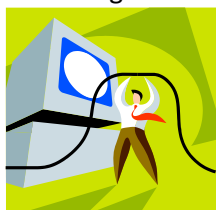
Now that you have a better understanding of each generation found in the workplace, let us take a moment to compare the differences. In this module, you will learn the differences between the generation gaps on the following topics:

- Background
- Attitude
- Working style
- Life experience

First, we are going to learn about the differences the generations have in terms of their background.

Background

The background differences among the four generations are the main factor in the formation of their attitudes and values.



Effects of technology: The use and understanding of technology is a main difference among the generations. The Traditionalist had very little exposure and need for computers and other devices that we take for granted today. Even some Baby Boomers may struggle with technology. They tend to use it only as needed, and usually only at work. On the other hand, Generation X, Y, and Z grew up with technology and they use it more as a part of daily life. Technology changed the way humans communicate and process data. The use or nonuse of technology creates a gap that could be seen by a generation as either an advantage or disadvantage.

For example, a Generation X or Y could become easily frustrated with their older generation counterpart when they struggle with technological issues they see as easy.

Effects of media: Media has boomed over the last 20 years. Television, computers, Internet, and smart phones have increased the amount and availability of entertainment programming. Many Generation X, Y, and Z's were

raised with media as a large part of their diet. On the other hand, the older generations relied on human interaction for their daily entertainment. This affects how the generations interact with each other.



For example, an older generation may prefer to speak with a coworker face-to-face, but the younger would rather text or instant message their conversation.

Finally, social events like war and culture revolutions distinguish a generation's background. Traditionalist lived through many years of war and it became a real part of their lives. Baby Boomers experienced the Hippie revolution of the 1960s, which opened the door to changes in our society. Generation X and Y's enjoy the benefits of the changes, but they have not lived through such dramatic social events.

Attitude

Attitudes among the generations are different. This has to do with their background and the way each generation interacts with other humans during their time.



Attitude towards authority: As the generations progressed, their attitude towards authority is one that will challenge them. The older generation was taught to revere authority due to the military presence in the culture during wartime. As the decades passed, the generations rebelled and eventually created an attitude of challenging the status quo in the younger generation.

Attitude towards individuality: The younger generations were brought up during a time where most parents worked outside the home leaving them in day cares. This environment taught the younger generation to be independent and self-sufficient. The older generation seeks to work with groups and think of others over themselves.

Loyalty to their employers: The older generation is more likely to stay with one employer their entire life, if that is possible. This tendency was brought on by living through difficult times. The older generation believes that devoting themselves to their job will bring rewards. The younger generations are not as loyal. They see changing employers as opportunities to advance their careers by themselves—again this is an individualistic perspective of the younger generation.

Working Style

As we learn about the background and attitudes of the generations, we see a pattern that moves the focus from a group to individual perspective. This is true of the working styles between the older and younger generation.

Flexible hours: The younger generation values flexibility in the workday to attend to personal things. They value their family life over their work life and seek to find employers that will provide working arrangements that will

allow them to work and manage their family life. The older generation value hard work and see a clear separation of work and their family life. They value their jobs and see the work hours as a fixed part of their day.

Challenge the status quo: The younger generation sees it as a benefit to challenge other thinking and is quick to present their point of view. The older generation is more submissive and sees challenging the status quo as disrespecting the authority. Challenging the status quo could cause tension between the older and younger generation.

Motivation: What motivates each generation varies greatly. The older generation values a stable work environment where conformity is valued. The younger generation is motivated by achievement and they will create an environment of competition, which may be threatening to the older generation.

Life Experience

Life experience is another area where the generations vary. These activities represent unique experiences for that generation.

Hard times: The older generations experienced harder times and lived without for long periods. This taught them the value of having the basics like food and clothes. Baby Boomers know what it is to fight for civil rights and protest against the government. The younger generation did see economic hard times, but were sheltered by their parents, diminishing the effects.

Entertainment: The older generation experienced entertainment as traditional events like the movies and non-technical activities. The younger generation grew up with video games, 4D rides at amusement parks and other activities that are designed to stir the senses. Reading books and doing manual things are appreciated by the older generation, but may be seen as boring activities for the younger generation.



Technology: The younger generation experienced technology as a way of life. Generation X had technology grow into their lives and Generation Z never did without it. The older generation was slow to adapt and use technology as a social tool. The advent of social networks and electronic communication gave the younger generation exposure to more detailed information about each other than the older generation.

Field of Dreams is probably our generation's It's A Wonderful Life.

Kevin Costner

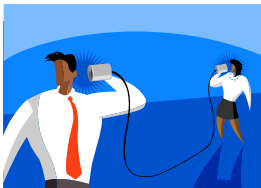
Module Nine: Finding Common Ground



In order to be successful bridging the gap across the generations, you must find common ground that enables you to close the gap and effectively reach your opposing generation. In this module, you will learn the following:

- Adopting a communication style
- Creating an affinity group
- Sharing knowledge

Let us see how adopting a communication style helps you find common ground.



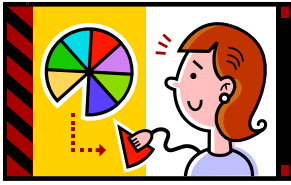
Adopting a Communication Style

Being sensitive to the way you communicate will help you bridge the generation gap at work. Understanding that the older generation prefers face-to-face communication and the younger prefer electronic methods should give you a base to form a flexible communication style that reaches all generations at work.

Here is an easy way to adopt your communication style. Use the **TAP** method for communicating. You will have to think a little before you communicate to someone, but the investment is well worth it. **TAP** stands for the following components:

- **To-the-Point:** Make your communication brief and succinct. The older generation will appreciate the clarity and the younger generation will appreciate the brevity.
- **Adapt:** Change the method of communication for your audience. If you are going to engage an older worker, make the effort to either call them or better yet, see them in person. They will feel respected and valued. For the younger generation, use email or instant messaging, etc. to reach them. They will feel independent and not micro managed.
- If you need to address the entire group, younger and older, in an email, make yourself available for follow-up by telling the group to reply, call or see you in person if they have questions.

- **Professional:** When in doubt, communicate professionally. Avoid jargon and text abbreviations in your communication. Use salutations and close your communication properly. You will show the older generation that you respect them and set the example for the younger generation on how to communicate professionally.



Creating an Affinity Group



Affinity groups are groups of people sharing common interests. You can create such groups at work that give different generations a chance to work with each other with an activity, which is not directly work related.

These groups provide a way for the generations to learn more about each other's interests and values. You can create several affinity groups, promoting cohesion among the various generations. Affinity groups are usually non-hierarchical. They are typically small and do not require centralization.

Affinity groups could tend to become closed. That is why allowing groups that focus on non-polarized topics are the best way to introduce affinity groups in your workplace.

Here are some groups to consider:

- Work newsletter group
- Professional book club
- Recycling task force
- Community service group
- Improving work morale group
- Work safety group
- Speech club group

Sharing Knowledge

The lack of knowledge could breed fear between generations or lead to misinterpretations. Sharing knowledge helps to break down barriers and create an understanding and collaborative environment. There are many ways knowledge can be shared.

Here are some ways to share knowledge at work:

- You can set up a blog where a topic is introduced and then the team can submit comments. Blogs provide a safe and open structure to hold discussions. If you use a blog, be sure to set up clear rules of what and how to share. You want to avoid sensitive topics for discussions. This can undermine the sharing process.
- Form focus groups to resolve an issue or generate new ideas. Focus groups containing various generations is a great way to get different perspectives from your diverse work group. Read up on how to facilitate meetings so you can better manage the dynamics in such a meeting.
- Create a newsletter where employees get to share their thoughts in an interview. This can be a creative way of sharing knowledge.
- Place an ideas box where employees can submit ideas for review by you team. This can be a real box or an electronic version via email or other form of communication.

*Every generation revolts against its fathers
and makes friends with its grandfathers.*

Lewis Mumford

Module Ten: Conflict Management (I)



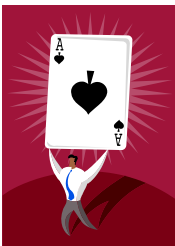
Conflict is normal in the workplace, but it could happen more often between two people of opposing generations. Understanding how to manage conflict across the generations will help to reduce the confrontation and perhaps avoid them in the future.

This module will teach you the following:

- Younger bosses managing older workers
- Avoid turnover with a retention plan
- Breaking down the stereotypes

Let us begin with our first topic of younger bosses managing older workers.

Younger Bosses Managing Older Workers

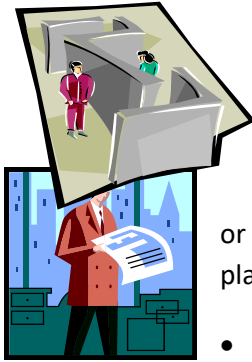


Managing older employees could be a source for conflict. Older employees may feel they should be in charge or that you lack experience. The key to avoiding conflict with an older employee is to demonstrate respect and showing them that they are valued.

Use the **ACE** technique in avoiding conflict with your older employees. ACE stands for the following process:

- **Acknowledge** your older employee's experience and the value they bring to the team. Older employees may feel as if they are no longer valuable because of their age. Show them you value them by reflecting on their achievements and contributions to the team.
- **Caring** for your older employee comes in many ways. Become interested with their personal life or hobbies. Take note of special things that took place in their lives. Show interest in their family and listen to them when they talk and mirror back what they have said to show you were listening.
- **Exchange** ideas and ask for input from your older employees on issues and demonstrate that you value their opinions and solutions. Implement good ideas and give them recognition. When you implement their ideas, your older employee will be more willing to take in your ideas. Create a give-and-take environment between you and your older employee.

Avoid Turnovers with a Retention Plan



Avoiding turnover is easier when you are prepared. If you let turnover surprise you, then you are not paying attention to your environment. Whenever you are speaking with your employees, always attempt to gauge their level of engagement with their job and try to determine any issues before it is too late.

A retention plan should be made for each of your employees. You can make it as specific or general based on your needs. Here are some things to consider when creating a retention plan for your employees based on generational traits:

- Determine what values this person has based on their generational trait. Think of things that could be a motivating factor like schedule flexibility, incentives and recognition.
- Prepare several focused questions that may lead to underlying issues. For example, you may ask questions about the reasons why they are dissatisfied with their job. Be frank with your employees and tell them that you want to keep them and will set up a follow up meeting to discuss possible solutions.
- Ask questions about their personal goals and career milestones and see how you can help them achieve them.
- Be ready to become an advocate for your employee. This means that you may need to do some research or speak with key people in human resources to help find more solutions.
- Work with your human resource contact to develop a retention plan. They can give you solutions that are aligned with your company's policies.

Breaking Down the Stereotypes

Stereotypes are formed when there is lack of information from the other side. Stereotypes are difficult to break because the thought process is difficult to detect. The best way to address stereotypes is to get your team involved in activities that helps build the team and places them in a situation that challenges all the participants.

For example, you can have your team take on a project that you team never done before. Perhaps you can engage your team with a friendly competition with another group or department where the focus is on the team.

Many activities can challenge your team. When your team is challenged, their best traits will come through. You may encounter resistance at first, but your job is to coach them through it.

Once you are done with your activity, hold a debrief meeting to spotlight the team and their achievement. Share commonalities that span the entire team. Finally, relate those commonalities to work related activities like project work, etc.

*Struggle is a never-ending process.
Freedom is never really won; you earn it
and win it in every generation.*

Anonymous

Module Eleven: Conflict Management (II)



This module continues on the topic of conflict management across the generations. You will learn the following over the next few sections:

- Embrace the hot zone
- Treat each other as a peer
- Create a succession plan

Let us learn what the hot zone is and how to embrace it.

Embrace the Hot Zone



When dealing with generation gap issues, there is a hot zone that you must recognize and address. The hot zone is an area you know there is conflict. It could be between two employees or groups within your team.

Take a moment and jot some of these ideas down:

- First, you must acknowledge the hot zone exists. Ignoring it could result to more widespread hot zones.
- Next, you should engage the hot zone as soon as possible and provide feedback to all the parties involved.
- Set expectations with your employees on how to handle future conflicts.
- Hold one-on-one coaching with each employee involved in the hot zone and have him or her come up with ideas on how to make things better avoiding hot zone issues.

Treat Each Other as a Peer



Treating each other as peers requires some key behaviors that demonstrate this characteristic. It is not enough to tell your employees to treat each other as peers. They need a guideline and coaching in order to achieve this.

The **CARE** model is a good way to start this process and they should be coached at the individual level. **CARE** stands for the following behaviors:

- **Collaborate.** Your team should be exposed to an environment where ideas are exchanged and at times challenged. Set ground rules in your meetings on how to handle disagreements. Encourage other points of view. Make sure all participants are involved. Be fair in your assessments and use objective means to determine the best ideas.
- **Acknowledge.** Teach your team to acknowledge each other's value. In addition, teach them how to deliver the feedback. Do not assume they know how to do this. Remember that feedback is behavior-based.
- **Respect.** Teach your team how to show respect to each other by using proper greetings and posture towards each other. Set the expectation that derogatory remarks about age are not tolerated by anyone.
- **Equal.** Teach your team that all members of the team are equal in value and contribution they bring. Age is not a factor.

Create a Succession Plan

A succession plan is a map of the career path for your employee. When you create a succession plan, you give that employee something to focus on in terms of a career goal. When they are focused on a plan, they will be less susceptible to conflict because they are doing what it takes to achieve the goals of this plan.

Building a succession plan takes time. It requires you to know the personal goals of your employee and their gaps. You also have to be committed to their succession plan. If you do not show commitment, your employee will disengage and may become frustrated and confrontational.

Here are some tips to creating a succession plan:

- Determine a clear career goal
- Make sure it is a real goal
- Make sure it is attainable
- Make sure it is time driven

- Consult with your human resources department to determine what their requirements are
- Consult with the head of the department if the career path takes them to another area
- Determine any educational requirements and provide guidance
- Set up a mentor program with someone currently doing what they want to achieve
- Track their progress
- Meet with them periodically to specifically discuss their progress on their succession plan

Education is simply the soul of society as it passes from one generation to another.

Gilbert K. Chesterton

Module Twelve: Wrapping Up



Although this workshop is coming to a close, we hope that your journey to improve your Generation Gap skills is just beginning. Please take a moment to review and update your action plan. This will be a key tool to guide your progress in the days, weeks, months, and years to come. We wish you the best of luck on the rest of your travels!

Words from the Wise

- **Marcus Tullius Cicero:** “What nobler employment, or more valuable to the state, than that of the man who instructs the rising generation.”
- **F. Scott Fitzgerald:** “My idea is always to reach my generation. The wise writer writes for the youth of his own generation, the critics of the next, and the schoolmasters of ever afterward.”
- **Charles M. Schulz:** “If I were given the opportunity to present a gift to the next generation, it would be the ability for each individual to learn to laugh at himself.”

RETURN ANSWER SHEET WITH YOUR TELEWORK LOG

1. What is the term “generation gap” used to describe?
 - a) Prejudice or discrimination on the basis of a person's age
 - b) A person reaching young adulthood around the year 2000
 - c) The different values and attitudes between one generation and another
 - d) All the people born and living at about the same time, regarded collectively

 2. Why the work environment is fragmented into various generations?
 - a) Because there is a lack of training on generation gaps at most organizations
 - b) Because many older workers remain on the job longer and younger workers are entering the workplace right out of college
 - c) Because many older workers are leaving their jobs and younger workers are entering the workplace right out of college
 - d) Because generations have a history of having a difficult time working with each other

 3. Which statement is not true about the Traditionalist Generation?
 - a) The Traditionalists were brought up during “tough times” where scarcity of resources was caused by economic troubles and war
 - b) The Traditionalists grew up during a time when individuality was celebrated
 - c) The military influenced their way of life since war was a great part of their cultural event and many served during this era
 - d) Being born before 1946 is what classifies a Traditionalist

 4. What social changes did the Baby Boomer generation see take place?
 - a) The Great Depression
 - b) The evolution of technology
 - c) The Civil Rights movement
 - d) The aftermath of World War I

 5. What is not a characteristic of a Generation X?
 - a) This generation is more ethnically diverse and is better educated over their previous generation
 - b) This generation tolerant of other lifestyles and accept this as part of the change in their environment
 - c) Generation X’s perspective allows them to foster a more accepting environment at work
 - d) Generation X believes in less balance between their work and home life than the previous generation
-

6. Which statement is true of the work style of Generation Y?
- a) Generation Y is work-centric and career-focused
 - b) Generation Y works well in an autonomous environment
 - c) Generation Y would rather speed up the process than wait for a co-worker to catch up
 - d) Generation Y is willing to take less pay for the benefit of work and life balance
7. Generation Z'ers are much better suited for _____.
- a) Working on large teams
 - b) Working outside
 - c) Working on long, detailed projects
 - d) Working independently on short projects
8. For older generations, what did the experiencing of harder times teach them?
- a) The value of technology in the workplace
 - b) The value of having the basics like food and clothes
 - c) The value of praise and recognition
 - d) The value of protesting and standing up for their rights
9. What could breed fear between generations or lead to misinterpretations?
- a) An increase in technology
 - b) A lack of compassion
 - c) A lack of knowledge
 - d) An increase in face-to-face meetings
10. What is an example of a way to break stereotypes?
- a) Get your team involved in activities that help build the team
 - b) Get your team involved in activities that place them in a situation that challenges all the participants
 - c) Have your team take on a project that you team never done before
 - d) All the above