

Supervision of Intergenerational Dynamics

Committed to Excellence through Supervision

Developed by Patricia Gilbaugh
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Overview

- Understand Generational Cohorts, Markers, and Values
- Explore Implications in the Workforce
- Develop Organizational Strategies for Today's Age Diverse Workforce

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Impact of Generational Diversity

- Staffing
- Values and Beliefs about the Workplace
- Communication Styles
- Bias and Discrimination
- Group Dynamics



"Keeping your Edge: Managing a Diverse Corporate Culture"
<http://www.shrm.org/diversity/members/0601edge.pdf>

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Generational dynamics in the workplace

- **Generational Cohorts**
- **Evaluating Generational Competencies**

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Generational Cohorts

- Intended to serve only as rough shorthands for particular age cohorts with significant common experiences.
- Need to distinguish between life cycle effects and generational change.

- Source: Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies,
<http://www.jointcenter.org/publications/details/political/n-diverging-generations.html>

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Generational Markers

- Events which have an impact on all members of the generation in one way or another.

- Wendover, Robert W.

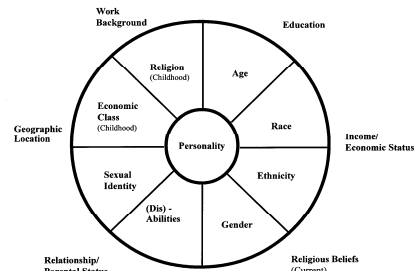
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Spheres of Society and Generational Markers

- Social
- Technological
- Economic
- Political
- Cultural Transmission

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Diversity Within Generations



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Adapted from Loden and Rosener, 1991

Categories for Generational Diversity

- **Silent Generation** (approx ages 64 and older)
- **Baby Boomers** (ages 45 to 63)
- **Generation X** (ages 29 to 44)
- **Millennial Generation** or **Generation Y** (age 28 and younger)

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The Silent Generation

- Also known as the "Matures" (Yankelovich); "The Veterans," Rosie the Riveters; Traditionalists
- Born 1922-1943; prior to 1946
- **Markers:** WWII, the Great Depression, Korean War, FDR's New Deal
- **Cultural Transmission:** extended families; consistent in media (e.g., Father Knows Best, Ozzie and Harriet)
- **Core values:** respect for authority, loyalty, hard work, dedication, sacrifice for the common good: family, God, country

Adapted from AORN Journal, 9/03

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"Silent Generation" in the Workplace

- Accepting of hierarchy; belief in meritocracy;
- Witness numerous technology changes, least familiar with Information Technology
- Strong loyalty to company where they are employed
- Rigid respect for authority and rules
- Least embracing of diversity and different ways of problem-solving
- Career identifies who they are

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Baby Boomers

- Born between 1946-1964 (1943-1960)
- **Markers:** Post WWII economic growth and prosperity; the Civil Rights movement, women's liberation, space program, Cold War, Vietnam War
- **Cultural Values:** Grew up with sense that security was taken care of - left room for exploration and protest; place high value on youth, personal gratification, health, material wealth
- Generally optimistic, value hope and peace, and believe their generation changed the world
- **Cultural Transmission:** More likely in nuclear families; surrounded by television and neighbors

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Boomers in the Workplace

- Define themselves through jobs and work performance
- Competitive, self-driven, do what it takes to complete task (e.g., 50-60 hrs per week)
- Desire recognition for job well-done
- Comply with civil rights laws as adults; raised in segregated environments as youth - creates internal conflict on diversity issues
- Mass effects on organizational/societal policies

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Generation X

- Born between 1965-1980
- Product of self-centered, work-driven Baby Boomer parents
- **Markers:** Vietnam, Watergate, first post Civil Rights Act generation, advent of MTV, latchkey experiences, higher rates of divorce (40%)
- **Values:** Desire balance in their lives, welcome diversity, motivated by money, self-reliant, value free time and having fun; "Work to live, not live to work"
- First generation to embrace the personal computer and Internet

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Gen X in the Workplace

- Effective use of technology for communication; less emphasis on face to face skills
- May resent work requests that interfere with their social lives/fun (partner & children often delayed)

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Millennial Generation

- Also called Generation Y, Nexters, Generation Next, 1980-2000
- Approx 30% of the current population; greater in number than Baby Boomers
- **Markers:** technology/menu driven society; most racially/ethnically diverse (1 out of 3 is a person of color); 25% from single parent families; most educated generation - pressure to excel academically
- No recollection of the Reagan era, do not remember the Cold War, have known only one Germany, world has always had computers, AIDS, answering machines, microwave ovens, VCRs

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Millennial Values

- **Self-reliant:** take responsibility for their own success independent of others; self-advocacy ("entitlement")
- **Family-oriented:** rely on family as a sanctuary against the difficulties of life
- **Brand-conscious:** place high value on brand name identification
- **Consumerist:** Nexters shop, but are discerning shoppers
- **Mobile:** Nexters promise to be the most mobile generation ever
- **Multi-tasking:** Do homework, listen to a CD, watch TV, and communicate on-line simultaneously
- **Fun-seeking:** Presented with many options
- **Hopeful:** Expect to be happy adults

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Millennials in the Workplace

- Most globally oriented generation; planet as ever-shrinking
- Thought patterns influenced by computers: more 'mosaic mode' of thinking than 'linear' process; able to integrate complex data before drawing conclusion. Allows for faster processing and great absorption of materials
- Combined work ethic of Baby Boomers with the can-do attitude of Silent Generation/Veterans and the technological savvy of Generation Xers.

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Millennials in the Workplace

- Apt to change jobs 5-8 times during lives
- Interested in health, exercise, body adornment
- Assume technology is integrated in workplace
- Flexible working hours to balance work/life
- Need more structure/supervision/direction: present clear picture of expectations, outcomes, accountability; involve in decision-making
- Want to work hard to do a good job, and believe saving money is important
- Investigate everything, question rules that have created the organizational culture

- Source: Clausung, Sherry I. AORN Journal, Sept 2003

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Activity!

Recruitment Posters
Perspective Taking
Opportunities



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Benefits of Intergenerational Workplace

- Attract and retain talented people
- The team is more flexible
- Decisions are stronger
- Team is more innovative
- Can better meet the needs of the public



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Generational Conflict

- **The workplace is dominated by two generations: Boomers & Xers**
- **Life cycle effects**



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Active Supervision of Generational Dynamics

- **Awareness**
- **Communication**
- **Ability to manage conflict productively**
- **Working proactively to develop the generational strengths in your workplace**

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General Recommendations

- Understand the way in which your generational cohort influences your perceptions of the workplace
- With an age diverse workforce, it is important to stay clear about a workplace system not being compared to a "family" system
- Create an age profile of your workforce and share it with your staff for conversation and learning

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Recommendations

- Performance standards need to be consistent across age groups
- No one generation's values should rule the workplace; the organizational mission must drive the work and generational strengths brought to the group's approach



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Go forth...and be
Generationally
Competent!



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