Generations in the Workplace

<<Check slide #26 for the video clip link we couldn’t get to work at the meeting>>

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Why Study “Generational Differences”?

- Currently have 4 generations in the workplace
- 1/2 of the US workforce is now 40 or older
- 1/4 are now 50 or older
- The faster growing segment is people 85 years and older
- 8 out of 10 baby boomers expect to work past the standard retirement age
Change in Perspective…

What You Are is Where You Were When!!!
Pew Research…

- Roughly 90% of our values are set by the time we are around 10 years old
- Our values reach a final “lock in” when we are around 20 years old
- The only way we change after that is through a “significant emotional event”
Generations

Birth Cohorts 20-22 years

GI’s (WWII) 1901-1924 (87+)
Silent Generation 1925-1942 (67-86)
Baby Boomer 1943-1960 (51-68)
Generation X 1961-1981 (29-50)
Millennial 1982-2000 (≤28)
Generational Changes…

- First, each rising generation breaks with the young-adult generation, whose style no longer functions well in the new era.
- Second, it corrects for what it perceives as the excesses of the current midlife generation – their parents and leaders – sometimes as a protest.
- Third, it fills the social role being vacated by the departing elder generation.
Today’s Goals
Generations in the Workplace...

- BASIC review of the generations in the workforce
- FOCUS on characteristics
- HOW they got this way
- WHAT their work habits are
- WHAT their assumptions/expectations might be
- HOW generations might better understand other generations in the workplace
3 things must occur for a person to feel part of a “generation”

- Common age (birth cohort)
- Share common beliefs and behaviors
- Perceive membership in the peer personality

Every individual is unique - not everyone will exhibit the generational traits

People can learn with different modalities
Each Generation Has Unique Characteristics…

- Motivators
- Communication Styles
- Values
- Expectations
- Career Goals
The Silent Generation
Born between 1925 and 1942

- Also known as the Great Generation
- Grew up in an era of “be seen, and not heard”
- Heavily influenced by their own and their parents’ experiences during the Depression, WW II, the Korean War, and the Cold War
- The world has changed unbelievably in their lifetimes. They were born before TV, computers, the Internet, accessible air travel, inexpensive long-distance phone calls, and integrated schools
- They have lived through major changes in social mores, civil rights, music, fashion, etc.
- Many had poor childhoods but moderately to very affluent adulthoods, particularly because of the GI Bill
- They are generally—but not always—conservative in values if not in politics: believe in the status quo; pay by cash, save for a rainy day; duty, honor, country, national pride, loyalty, hard work, dependability, respect for authority
Silent (67–86)

- They (and GI’s) are the “We are” generation
- Dedicated, disciplined, loyal team players who work within the system
- Respect for authority
- Adherence to rules
- Have a significant knowledge legacy to leave
The Baby Boomers
Born between 1943 and 1960

- Very influenced by the Beatles, the Vietnam War, the civil rights movement, Woodstock, and TV
- Many are Hippies turned Yuppies
- Many have grown up with abundance and opportunity
- Many were the first in their family to go to college
- They question authority
- They work very hard, to the point of being workaholics (and may feel that younger employees lack a strong work ethic and commitment)
- Many are “sandwiched” between caring for their parents and their children
- They like technology but may be overwhelmed by some of it
- Often learn from and rely on their children for technology matters
Baby Boomers (51–68)

- They are the “I am” generation
- Optimistic, competitive, focused on personal gratification and fulfillment
- Fought for/protested for causes
- Never met a problem they couldn’t power through
- Parents of the Millennials
Generation X
Born between 1961 and 1981

- They have lived through a time of economic extremes: the end of the one-job-for-life economy, the dot.com boom and bust, technology millionaires
- They tend to be casual, may live with their parents while making less money, marry at an older age, value independence, challenge authority
- They may feel that Baby Boomers are self-righteous workaholics
- Many grew up in divorced families
- The latchkey generation
- They are more comfortable borrowing money and may have a lot of debt
Gen Xers (29–50)

- They are the “We differ” generation
- Well-educated, resourceful and entrepreneurial
- Like feedback on their ideas, work, initiative
- Loyal to the project and co-workers
- But, want work/life balance
- Comfortable with change
- Comfortable with diversity
Millennials
Born between 1982 to 2000

- Also known as Gen Y, Echo Boomers, Net’ers
- Second only to Baby Boomers in size
- Have been strongly affected by globalization, technology, MTV culture, more women in leadership roles
- Can’t understand why some older people have trouble with technology
- Flexible, comfortable with gender and cultural equality
- Work to live instead of live to work, seek to learn new skills, were highly praised throughout their lives and have high expectations, short attention span, cautiously optimistic
- Many have over supportive, hovering “helicopter parents”
- Many have high levels of college debt; their parents may still give them money
- Value strength, cooperation, conformity, duty
Millennials (28 or younger)

- Achievement-oriented, collaborative
- Optimistic, sociable and civic-minded
- Exhibit confidence beyond traditional measures
- Avid learners, multi-takers, very tech-savvy
- Make their work and life personal, team-oriented, and interactive
- Want clear goals and expectations and due process in carrying them out
Work Habits
A Quick Snapshot…

Born Before --- 1960 --- Born After

Hours Works ↔ Time Off
Loyalty to Company ↔ Loyalty to Skills
Work First ↔ Lifestyle First
Patience ↔ Instant Results
Hierarchy ↔ Collaboration
Whinners ↔ Walkers
Work Habits: Silent

- Loyal to company
- Reluctant to change jobs
- Grew up in a world where work/life balance was not an issue
- Believe that age should equal seniority
- Hard work leads to success
- May be critical of younger employees, finding them less dedicated and more demanding
- Older people call in sick less often
- Expect life-long employment
Work Habits: Boomers

- Boomers demanded and developed more casual work environments
- More loyal to company than younger workers but not as loyal as Silent
- Many do not plan to or want to retire; may be looking for flexible hours or part-time work rather than retirement
- Used to 9-5 (or longer) and may be critical of younger employees who seek more flexible hours
- Many are workaholics
- For many, self-identity is tied up with work
- Don’t leave one job without another lined up
- May want to simplify lives and reduce stress
Work Habits: Gen Xers

- More adventurous than older generations
- May quit a job without a new job lined up; may try various careers before choosing; understand that they may have to change careers in the future; understand that they may have periods of unemployment*
- Work hard to keep skills up to date*
- Hard workers – own terms; not loyal to company but to people*
- Don’t live to work – work makes their lives possible*
- Want work/life balance; Silent and Boomers may complain that they’re slackers, because they don’t have the same work habits as the older generations*
- Want recognition, quick promotions and raises; stock options, performance bonuses
- Have had their advancement blocked by the large Baby Boomer cohort
Work Habits: Millennials

- Similar to Gen X in some ways*
- Have strong technology skills
- Downside – may lack equivalent writing and interpersonal skills
- Hard workers – but impatient, multi-tasking the norm
- Prefer structured work environment but with flextime
- Want to learn; education very important
- Will dominate the workforce for decades
What Will be the Challenges?

Born Before --- 1960 --- Born After

Hours Works ↔ Time Off
Loyalty to Company ↔ Loyalty to Skills
Work First ↔ Lifestyle First
Patience ↔ Instant Results
Hierarchy ↔ Collaboration
Whiners ↔ Walkers
Each Generation Has Its Themes…

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Boomers</th>
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<th>Millennials</th>
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Source: Center for Generational Studies.
Clashing of Values...

- **Silent Generation**: many in supervisory and leadership roles: believe in hard work, paying dues, conformity; and long-term commitments
- **Baby Boomers**: tend to define themselves through their jobs; equate work with self-worth. Like to change things and willing to work long hours
- **Gen Xers**: latchkey childhood has made the independent. They seek connection with others on an equal footing. Techno-comfortable
- **Millennials**: Technologically savvy; optimistic and street smart; they accept diversity and crave structure
The Missing Video Clip…
If You Think There’s Clashes Now…

- Think about the next 20 years
- Check out what Sony presented at the Annual Shareholders Meeting 6/2009…

If only some of this comes true…


If link breaks – check YouTube
### Shift in Birth Years/Age...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Birth years/ Age in 2010</th>
<th>% of total adult population</th>
<th>Age shift</th>
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<tr>
<td>Millennials</td>
<td>1977-1992; 18-33</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>(77 vs 82) 5 yrs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gen X</td>
<td>1965-1976; 34-45</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>(65 vs. 61) 5 yrs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Young Boomers</td>
<td>1955-1964; 46-55</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older Boomers</td>
<td>1946-1954; 56-64</td>
<td>14% (34% total)</td>
<td>(46 vs. 43) 3 yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silent</td>
<td>1937-1945; 65-73</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>(37 vs. 25) 12 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GI</td>
<td>≤1936; 74+</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>(36 vs. 24) 12 yrs</td>
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Source: Generations 2010: Pew Research, 12/10/10
Caution…

- Lumping individuals into whole groups – risk of stereotyping
- Danger of ‘psychoanalyzing’ whole generations
- Some of the differences – who cares???
Things to Consider…

- How you interact with perceptors
- How you interact with health care staff
- How you interact with patients
What Does This Mean for the Workplace?

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