



# Understanding the Four Working Generations

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# Generation

A group of people born and living during the same time

Generations are like different countries;  
they speak different languages, dress differently, etc.

What do you think?



# Insights into Traditionalists



<b>Generation</b> (date of birth)	<b>Age</b> <b>Now</b>	<b>Cultural Influencers</b>
<b>Traditionalists</b> (1900-1945)	70-90+	Great Depression; WWI and WWII; Post War Boom Era; GI Bill
Boomers		
Gen X		
Millennials		

## Characteristics of Traditionalists

(1900 – 1945) 75 Million

aka Greatest, GI or Radio Generation, Builders

- Keep Calm and Carry On
- **Loyal**
- Patience
- Moved from the Farm to the City
- Feel Lucky to Have a Job; Job for a Lifetime
- Patriotism and Hard Work
- Respect for Leaders, Chain of Command

# Insights into Boomers



<b>Generation</b> (date of birth)	<b>Age</b> <b>Now</b>	<b>Cultural Influencers</b>
Traditionalists (1900-1942)	70-90+	Great Depression; WWI and WWII; Post War Boom Era; GI Bill
<b>Boomers</b> (1946-1964)	51–71	Sex, Drugs and Rock n’ Roll; TV; Watergate; Vietnam War; Women’s and Civil Rights Movements; First Moon Walk
Gen X		
Millennials		

# Characteristics of Boomers

(1946 – 1964) 80 Million

- Do Your Own Thing
- **Optimistic**
- Brought Teamwork into the Workplace
- Seniority is Important, Corner Office, Title
- Lead by Consensus
- “Live to Work” and Career-Oriented
- Competitive

# Insights into Gen X



<b>Generation</b> (date of birth)	<b>Age Now</b>	<b>Cultural Influencers</b>
Traditionalists (1900-1945)	70-90+	Great Depression; WWI and WWII; Post War Boom Era; GI Bill
Boomers (1946-1964)	51-71	Sex, Drugs and Rock n' Roll; Watergate; TV; Vietnam War; Women's and Civil Rights Movements; First Moon Walk
<b>Gen X</b> (1965-1980)	35-50	Fall of Soviet Union and the Berlin Wall; Challenger Disaster; 24 Hour Media; Personal Computer; Birth of the Internet
Millennials		



## Characteristics of Gen Xers

(1965 – 1980) 46 Million

aka Gen X, Baby Bust, Busters, Slackers

- Get Real
- **Change is Necessary; Challenge Status Quo**
- Skeptical, Self-reliant, Latch Key Kids
- Leadership by Competency, Performance
- “Work to Live” - Time for Family and Friends
- Gave us Flex Time, Compressed Work Week and Dress Down Fridays

# Insights into Millennials



<b>Generation</b> (date of birth)	<b>Age Now</b>	<b>Cultural Influencers</b>
Traditionalists (1900-1945)	70-90+	Great Depression; WWI and WWII; Post War Boom Era; GI Bill
Boomers (1946-1964)	51-71	Sex, Drugs and Rock n' Roll; Watergate; TV; Vietnam War; Women's and Civil Rights Movements; First Moon Walk
Gen X (1965-1980)	35-50	Fall of Soviet Union the and Berlin Wall; Challenger Disaster; 24 Hour Media; Personal Computer; Birth of the Internet
<b>Millennials</b> (1981-1999)	16-34	Internet, Cell Phones, Columbine, September 11 Attacks

## **Millennials, aka...**

(1981 – 1999) 76 Million

- Gen Y
- Gen Next
- Nexters
- Echo Boomers
- Internet Generation
- Digital Natives
- Tethered Generation

# Characteristics of Millennials

(1981 – 1999)

- Can We Fix It? Yes We Can!
- **Want to Make a Difference**
- Realistic and Optimistic; Positive Expectations
- Problem Solvers – Think Out of the Box
- Care what Mom/Dad Think; Helicopter Parent
- Comfortable with Team Process
- Diversity is Okay and Expected
- Work to Get the Things they Want

# Why this Matters



<b>Generation</b> (date of birth)	<b>Age</b> <b>Now</b>	<b>Number of People</b>
Traditionalists (1900-1945)	70-90+	75 Million (2% still in workforce) ±32 Million Between 1925-1945
Boomers (1946-1964)	51-71	80 Million
Gen X (1965-1980)	35-50	46 Million
Millennials (1981-1999)	16-34	76 Million

# 12 Sticking Points



1. Communication
2. Decision Making
3. Dress Code
4. Feedback
5. Fun at Work
6. Knowledge Transfer
7. Loyalty
8. Meetings
9. Policies
10. Respect
11. Training
12. Work Ethic

# 5 Steps to Work Through the Sticking Points



1. Acknowledge: Talk about the generational differences
2. Appreciate: Focus on the “why” not the “what” and the common needs
3. Flex: Agree on how to accommodate different approaches based on business necessities and generational preferences
4. Leverage: Maximize the strengths of each generation
5. Resolve: Determine which option will yield the best results (when flexing is not enough)

## **Working with Traditionalists**

(1900 – 1945)

- Have Wisdom and Experience
- Bring Continuity to the Corporate Culture
- Are the Historical Memory of the Organization
- Seek out their Advice



## Working with Boomers

(1946 – 1964)

- Prefer Consensus Decision Making
- Reward Seniority and Work Ethic
- Focus on Career Paths
- Stress that “We Need You”

## **Working with Gen Xers**

(1965 – 1980)

- Give them Defined Projects: Work Activity with Beginning and End
- Frequent Feedback: 4 to 6 Times per Year
- Provide Training and Opportunities to Grow Competence
- It's Not about Awards
- Ask for Input – Want to be Asked

## **Working with Millennials**

(1981 – 1999)

- Need Structure, Time Management Skills
- Provide Constant Feedback
- Want to do Something of Value
- Great Capacity, Not Ready to be Independent

# Conclusions



- Be aware of differences
  - No one is right or wrong; they're just different
- Appreciate strengths
- Lead through the differences

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