

The Generational Leader

Viewpoints on
Work-Related
Issues

How to effectively manage and lead the generations in your workplace

Growing up in very different times in society, generations have developed unique personalities of their own. Each generation has differing viewpoints when it comes to the workplace. Understanding the way different generations view various aspects of the work environment can help leaders effectively lead and unite each generation in the workplace.

Authority Issues

Silent Generation (1925-1942): Silents are always respectful of titles.

Baby Boomers (1946-1960): Boomers are respectful of titles but are at times suspicious of those in authority. This is due in part to growing up in a time of political scandals.

Generation X (1965-1977) and Y (1978-1985): These two generations respect those in authority as long as their leader has the credibility to back up their title. They are most respectful to those who know their field and those who know how to effectively manage.

**EFFECTIVE
LEADERSHIP**

Silents automatically respect your authority because of the title you hold. Be sure to build a trusting relationship with Boomers. Gaining the trust and respect of Xers and Yers requires that you be well educated on your field and offer the kinds of management traits that suit the kind of work environment they work best in.

Work Ethic

Silent Generation (1925-1942) and Baby Boomers (1946-1960): Both generations believe in putting in your time and "paying your dues."

Generation X (1965-1977) and Y (1978-1985): Life experiences are important to both of these generations. They are devoted to work but do not want to necessarily spend a lot of time at work. They prefer flexibility in work schedules and in turn will put more energy into their work.

**EFFECTIVE
LEADERSHIP**

Offer flexible scheduling for all generations, especially Xers and Yers. Make a point to acknowledge the time and experience Silents and Boomers bring to the workplace.

Management Expectations

When it comes to spending time at work, there are two types of management styles. *Face time* management calls for employees to be onsite during specific hours of the day. *Results* management allows employees to get their work done whenever/wherever as long as they are meeting standards and deadlines.

All Generations: Most managers are starting to adopt results management and have found that employees of all ages appreciate the flexible scheduling that results management offers. Organizational leaders are also noticing more productivity among their employees under results management.

**EFFECTIVE
LEADERSHIP**

Since results management seems to be applicable for all generations, offer flexible scheduling for all employees.

Patience Versus Speed

Silent Generation (1925-1942): Silents are interested in solving problems and they solve problems by gathering the opinion of others. They also like to receive a significant amount of background information when it comes to things like problems, changes in the workplace, training, etc. In general, Silents are interested in the entire process of organizational activities.

Baby Boomers (1946-1960): Boomers have a devotion to consensus. Like Silents, they like slowing things down so everyone has the opportunity for input and ownership.

Generation X (1965-1977) and Y (1978-1985): Both generations are into instant gratification and want everything in an instant. In contrast to Silents and Boomers, they want to get to the bottom line of things instead of processing everything.

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

Understanding that Silents and Boomers are interested in processes, it would be a good idea to offer a good amount of patience. Be as detailed as possible and have younger workers slow things down a bit. Slowing things down should be looked at as a wise investment and not a waste of time. Boomers and Silents have a lot of good information to share. When leading Xers and Yers, it is not as necessary to give so much detail but be sure to have quick responses to their questions and/or concerns.

Experiencing Changes in the Workplace

Every organization faces change at some point in time. Currently, many organizations are experiencing changes such as globalization, technology, downsizing, restructuring, and reengineering.

Silent Generation (1925-1942): Every organization faces change at some point in time. Silents are able to bring experience, institutional memory, and the highest degree of wisdom when it come time to face change. They view change as revolutionary.

Baby Boomers (1946-1960): Boomers are conflicted on their feelings of change. Boomers are able to bridge the gap between the oldest and youngest individuals working together. They are able to relate to the perspective of experienced individuals and they can also relate to the entrepreneurial impulse of younger individuals.

Generation X (1965-1977) and Y (1978-1985): Change is exciting to Xers and Yers. They are able to bring fresh ideas and energy to organizational change.

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

Every organization needs some kind of competitive edge, whether it be to compete in today's economy or meet specific and ever-changing mandated standards. Every employee, regardless of age, needs to be flexible and continue learning the new ins and outs of their field and technology. Encourage employees to be lifelong learners and provide opportunities for them to learn. By sharpening their skills and utilizing their talents, employees will produce the quality work leaders need.