

# MANAGING ACROSS GENERATIONS

*PARTICIPANT'S MANUAL*

*Comprehensive Public Training Program (CPTP)*

*Sponsored by the Louisiana State Civil Service*

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## MANAGING ACROSS GENERATIONS

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is a one-day course that enables participants to identify and understand the characteristics of the four generations in the workforce. This course also provides information and strategies for managing across the generations as well as targeted strategies on how to manage each generation specifically.

### JOB OUTCOMES

- Works with others to achieve goals.
- Shows understanding, friendliness, courtesy, tact, empathy, concern, and politeness to others.
- Develops and maintains effective relationships with others.
- Considers and responds appropriately to the needs, feelings, and capabilities of others.
- Adjusts approaches to suit different people and situations.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Evaluate how generationally friendly an organization is.
- Build an awareness of the various generations and their traits.
- Brainstorm strategies to achieve maximum productivity from members of each generation.
- Reframe perceptions and interpretations of others' behaviors.

## MANAGING GENERATIONS

For the first time in our history, four generations are sharing the workplace. This diversity is resulting in a clash of work ethics and is creating cultural friction. Generations have identifying factors that distinguish us from one another, but should not divide us. This is also known as the generation gap, which is a noticeable difference in cultural norms between a younger generation and their elders. This generation gap occurs when older and younger people do not understand each other because of different values, attitudes, experiences, opinions, habits, behaviors, interests, and communication styles.

A generation is defined as a group of people in society who are born in the same general time span who share key life experiences. Those shared experiences during our childhood help define who we are, how we view the world, the way we think, and our value systems. The generation we grow up in is just one of the influences on adult behavior. Generational differences may influence behavior; however, this does not mean that generational differences are the only thing that determine why we act the way we do.

At work, generational differences can affect nearly everything, including recruiting, managing, increasing and maintaining productivity. Employees from different generations can work effectively together and can learn from each other. Generational differences allow various perspectives to be seen, and quality of work can actually improve based on the variety of generational perspectives. If generations are not managed effectively, higher turnover and unhealthy competition can possibly occur.

The demographics of employees in the workplace have changed dramatically over the last 30 years. Knowing about the four generations can help to increase personal competency in communication and management, and promote teamwork.

### **Individual Activity**

*What:* How cross-generationally friendly is your workplace?

*How:* Take the survey on the following pages to see how cross-generationally friendly your workplace is.

Cross-Generationally Friendly Workplace Activity

		Never 1	Rarely 2	Occas- ionally 3	Usually 4	Always 5
<b>Accommodating Employee Differences</b>						
1.	There is no one successful “type” in this organization: Managers, leaders, and those in the most desirable jobs are a mix of ages, sexes, and ethnicities.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	When a project team is put together, employees with different backgrounds, experiences, skills, and viewpoints are consciously included.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Employees are treated like customers.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	There is a lot of conversation – even some humor – about differing viewpoints and perspectives.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	We take time to talk openly about what different cohorts – and the individuals within them – are looking for on the job... what makes work rewarding... which environment is most productive ... what types of work load, schedule, and policies work best.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Creating Workplace Choices</b>						
6.	Our atmosphere and policies are based on the work being done, the customers being served, and the preferences of the people who work here.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	There is behind-the-back complaining, passive-aggressive behavior, and open hostility among groups of employees.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	There is a minimum of bureaucracy and “red tape” here.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	The work atmosphere could be described as relaxed and informal.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	There’s an element of fun and playfulness about most endeavors here.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Operating From a Flexible Management Style</b>						
11.	Managers here are a bit more “polished” or professional than in most agencies.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Managers adjust policies and procedures to fit the needs of individuals and teams.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Managers here are known for being straightforward.	1	2	3	4	5

		Never 1	Rarely 2	Occas- ionally 3	Usually 4	Always 5
14.	Managers give those who report to them the big picture along with specific goals and measures, then turn their people loose.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Respect for Competence &amp; Initiative</b>						
15.	We assume the best of and from our people; we treat everyone – from the newest recruit to the most seasoned employee – as if they have great things to offer and are motivated to do their best.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Nourishing Retention</b>						
16.	We are concerned and focused, on a daily basis, with retention.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	We offer lots of training, from one-on-one coaching to a varied menu of classroom courses.	1	2	3	4	5
18.	We encourage regular lateral movement.	1	2	3	4	5
19.	Work assignments here are broad, providing variety and challenge, and allowing each employee to develop a range of skills.	1	2	3	4	5
20.	We market internally, “selling” the agency to employees and continually looking for ways to be the employer of choice.	1	2	3	4	5

**Total:**

<b>Scoring:</b>	
Under 70	Your agency is likely to have a long-term negative impact from high turnover.
70-79	Your agency is typical. Although you are doing some good things, you must make major improvements to your work environments to your work environment if you are going to thrive.
80-89	Your turnover rate is probably lower than average. You are going a good job, but there’s room for improvement.
90-100	Not only should your agency turnover be lower than average, but the work atmosphere you have created is attractive to employees and recruiting nearly takes care of itself.

Even with their differences, there are some things that are the same across all generations. Some of the commonalities are:

- Employees have evolved into “consumers of the work experience,” wanting customized work arrangements: full-time, part-time, on-site, offsite, consulting, and specific projects only.
- Family has become a top priority since September 11, 2001.
- 25% of U.S. households include a family caregiver involved in elder care.
- Fewer college-educated employees of all generations want jobs with more responsibility.
  - Younger workers consider jobs with greater responsibility less desirable because they’ve observed their parents and grandparents work up the ladder for a lifetime only to be outsourced or downsized, and they don’t want to repeat the experience.
  - They are also quite aware of the amount of conflict and stress at upper levels of management, which makes reaching those points less desirable.

The key to working together lies in our ability to understand the generational motivations, values, distinctions, and to appreciate and utilize these differences to enhance the workplace environment.

### THE FOUR GENERATIONS

To begin to understand how individuals in different generations act and react, one must first start with an understanding of oneself. You must see which generation fits you. There is some debate as to what the actual starting and ending birth years of the generations are, but it does not pose a significant enough impact on the big picture of a generation's description.

<b>Generational Timeline</b>			
1922-1945	1946-1964	1965-1980	1981-2000
Veterans Also known as: Greatest Generation, Traditionalists, Depression Generation	Baby Boomers Also known as: Beat Generation	Generation X Also known as: Nexters, Boomlets, Me Generation, MTV Generation	Generation Y Also known as: Millennials, Boomerang Generation, MySpace Generation

#### **Class Activity**

<p><i>What:</i> Cultural References that Shape Generations</p> <p><i>How:</i> Follow the directions given by your instructor to label each of the following items with one of the four generations. The reference does not have to have occurred during the time period of the generation for it to have influenced the generation. For example, the Vietnam War happened during Generation X, however, it was highly influential over the Baby Boomer generation.</p>
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John F. Kennedy	President Ronald Reagan	Rodney King videotape & LA riots
Compact Discs	Cabbage Patch Dolls	Stock Market Crash of 1929
Fall of the Berlin Wall	Charles Lindbergh	Martin Luther King, Jr.
Korean War	Peace Corps	<i>The Real World</i>
<i>Star Wars</i>	Tiger Woods	Frank Sinatra
The Beatles	FDR	Grunge Rock
<i>The Simpsons</i>	Winston Churchill	Michael Jordan
"The Pill"	Vietnam	Clinton/Lewinsky scandal
Bill Gates	Pearl Harbor	Challenger Explosion
Babe Ruth	Joe DiMaggio	The Great Depression
Space Race	Barney	AIDS Epidemic
Ritalin	Salk Vaccine	Elvis
Gandhi	Adolf Hitler	Watergate
Columbine	Diversity in schools	The Feminist Movement
D-Day	E-mail	Bing Crosby
Text Messaging	Ed Sullivan Show	iPod/iTechnology
Fallout Shelters	Tomagotchi	Cuban Missile Crisis
The New Deal	O.J. Simpson Trial	Green Movement

### THE VETERAN GENERATION: 1922-1945

Many world-changing events occurred during the formative years of the Veterans. A major shift was in the American economy, when America changed from a primarily agrarian society to one based on industry and manufacturing. This shift in the economy, coupled with political and social turmoil abroad, helped shape this generation. Characteristics of the members of this generation include:

- Dedication/Sacrifice
- Conformity
- Respect for authority
- Honor
- Adherence to the rules—they believe policies and regulations must exist for a purpose and should be equally and consistently enforced
- Hard work
- Law and order
- Delayed rewards
- Patient

Working with Veterans is different from working with members of younger generations. The ways in which they see the world are different, but very important. They are responsible for shaping the workforce into what it is today. This generation offers a wealth of knowledge and should be appreciated.

Veterans tend to get satisfaction from doing the work themselves. They need a strong leader who will enforce rules and policies, especially when working on a team. They want very clear direction. They are willing to work hard, they are loyal and dependable, and they have strong values. These characteristics should be reminders that this generation can continue to make a valuable contribution and have opportunities to grow and learn.

#### **1. Create knowledge transfer programs.**

In all businesses and organizations, the mass exodus of Veterans in recent years will only continue to occur and leave a massive void in the institutional knowledge and organizational culture that make your particular workplace unique. The knowledge that Veterans hold about their organization is critical. In both federal and state agencies, the number of Veterans (and Baby Boomers too) retiring is ever increasing at an alarming rate. It is critical for you as a manager/supervisor to capture the knowledge that these employees have before they walk out the door. This knowledge transfer can be done in formal or informal ways and should be a significant part to any succession plan.

If your organization has already identified the critical need for this knowledge transfer, here are some strategies that can help enhance your knowledge transfer process:

- Create a “go-to” list of Veteran subject matter experts whom younger employees can contact when they need immediate information on a process, project, or

- customer. This is also a reward to the Veterans by being recognized for their knowledge and experience.
- Have your Veteran employees create a FAQ list with answers for the questions they answer the most. This can be a very good resource to add to new employee orientation programs.
  - Formalize job shadowing, cross-training, and job-sharing programs so that younger workers can benefit from the experience Veterans have to provide.

In whatever your organization chooses to do in order to capture the institutional knowledge and organizational culture of the Veterans, it is imperative that they are recognized, honored, and rewarded for the sharing of their experiences.

### **Class Discussion**

*What:* Working with the Veteran Generation

*How:* When thinking of the Veteran generation and how to maintain a healthy working relationship with them in the workplace, the following questions should be asked and answered:

- What are the negative stereotypes that surround this generation in our workplace? How can we show the truths about this generation in order to tear down the stereotypes? How can we make the workplace generationally friendly to this age group?
- How can we publicly recognize this generation for all of their hard work and dedication?
- The definition of retirement is changing, how can we retain those Veterans who want to remain in the workforce, but not in a full-time capacity? What would these programs look like?

Notes:

### THE BABY BOOMER GENERATION (1946-1964)

The post-war years brought prosperity to America. Baby Boomers are also the largest generation in American history. Individuals in this generation have some very unique characteristics that cannot be ignored because of their numbers. They were the first generation to grow up in a child-centered upbringing. Boomers were born to enjoy life, not out of economic necessity. Boomers also focus on being individuals and staying youthful. As this generation ages, they are doing more than ever before. They are responsible for children, grandchildren, and aging parents, as well as planning for their own retirement. Boomers can be characterized in the following ways:

- Personal growth
- Desire quality
- Personal gratification
- Team-oriented
- Work efficiently

When Baby Boomers entered the workforce, the Veterans managed with a command-and-control leadership style. Boomers worked hard and did not make demands in the workplace. Boomers knew that their hard work would pay off and that they would be recognized for their commitment. They believe in job security and that their organization will take care of them until retirement.

For Boomers, one of the most important things to them at work is respect. This is the key to managing the Baby Boomers at work.

- **Respect for their contributions.**
- **Respect for their skills, knowledge, and wisdom.**
- **Respect for what they can still offer organizations before they retire.**

Baby Boomers have been in the workforce for decades, like their Veteran predecessors. They have “paid their dues” and have established their credibility through their hard work and loyalty. The workforce is now changing and including more of Generations X and Y. This shift in the workforce is causing some conflict between the Boomers and their managers/supervisors. Managers/supervisors are now focusing more of their attention on the younger generations and no longer keeping the Boomers in the spotlight. This is contrary to what Boomers want most: **respect.**

In order to manage Baby Boomers effectively, managers/supervisors should pay attention to what the Boomers want from them. The following are what Baby Boomers expect from their managers/supervisors:

**1. Honor their historical memory.**

Like Veterans, Baby Boomers have a lot of institutional knowledge to share. Their resistance to change can be frustrating for those of younger generations, but Boomers should explain why the change should not occur. It is up to the Boomers to explain to the younger generations that the reasons they do things is because “we’re doing this because of a safety or legal issue” and not because “this is the way we’ve always done them.”

**2. Give them recognition.**

Honor their opinions, skills, knowledge, potential, and contributions. Recognition has always been a necessary for Boomers. Very few Veteran managers/supervisors ever praised their employees in more of a manner than a paycheck. Find appropriate ways to honor the contributions of this generation.

The most basic way to recognize Boomers is to listen to them. Some Boomers feel that they are overlooked by their managers/supervisors when there are more Generation X and Ys on the team.

**3. Let them try out new ideas.**

Give Boomers the flexibility and authority to experiment. Having been in the workforce for years, their perspectives can lead to important innovations.

**4. Help bridge the team-individual divide.**

Many Boomers are conflicted between their competitive nature to get ahead and the desire to lead/participate on a team. As a manager/supervisor, you should convince Boomers that being a good team player in the short term is the best way to distinguish themselves in the long term.

**5. Coach and challenge.**

Offer coaching-style feedback on a consistent basis so Boomers know what they are doing well and what they need to improve; provide guidelines for improvement with goals and deadlines.

Discuss new projects with Boomers and any leadership opportunities they might like to explore. Although many leaders will be from the younger generations, there are many Boomers who are ready and willing to take on leadership positions – challenge them to do this.

Another way to challenge Boomers is to encourage them to mentor high-potential Gen X and Y employees. Value the experiences of Boomers by encouraging them to share their knowledge and skills with the younger generations.

As with members of any other generation, Boomers want to be seen as treated as individuals. They value creating personal relationships and building rapport. Boomers will still be influential in the workforce for the next 15 years, they need to be happy. Many have commendable performance records and a strong work ethic; unless they feel respected and recognized for their accomplishments, managers/supervisors will have little success in getting them to be team players.

### Small Group Activity

*What:* Baby Boomer Questions

*How:* Answer the following questions when thinking about Baby Boomers in the future:

- How can the workplace be generationally friendly to those employees in their forties, fifties, and sixties?
- How much does the organization value and rely on the experience of the Boomers? How do we as managers/supervisors publicly acknowledge and reward our Boomers for their expertise?
- Baby Boomers who are nearing retirement need to be identified. How can we keep them so they stay with us for as long as possible? How do we include them in succession planning and knowledge transfer?
- Which Boomers hold leadership positions within our organization? How can we encourage them to identify and develop high-potential employees so that there will be enough bench strength to take over leadership roles as they retire?

Notes:

### GENERATION X (1965-1980)

This is the first generation of Americans to be told that they would not be as well off financially as their parents. Generation X differs greatly from their parents and grandparents. Primarily the children of Baby Boomers who devoted themselves to work, Generation X tries to find a balance between work and family. Flexible scheduling is extremely important to this generation.

Many in Generation X do not have a close connection to traditional institutions (schools, churches, corporations). Because of this lack of connection, many in Generation X are cautious of these institutions and rely more on personal resourcefulness to make it in the world. As a generation, they are the most unsupervised generation, which contributes to the independence and self-reliance of Generation X.

Generation X can be characterized by:

- Flexible—ready to adapt to new people, places, and circumstances
- Outside-the-box thinker and worker
- Wants to manage as much of his/her own time as possible
- Entrepreneurial
- Eager to prove him/herself
- Tries to invest in self, create security from within
- Comfortable with information and technology
- Independent
- Goal-oriented
- Creative
- Wants to see results every day

## Class Activity

*What:* Awareness-Raising Questionnaire

*How:* Test your knowledge of Generation X by responding to the questions below.

1. Upon entering the workforce, what is the most important incentive Gen X looks for from employers?
  - a. Lifelong security with one company
  - b. Opportunities to develop skills that will help them on their next job
  - c. Money
2. Gen X grew up during an information and technology revolution affecting entertainment, telecommunications, education, and everyday home life. What was the impact on most of Gen X?
  - a. They developed short attention spans
  - b. They became disenfranchised cynics
  - c. They developed a unique comfort and facility with information and technology
3. Some perceive Gen X as being disloyal. What reality does this perception reflect?
  - a. Job security is dead and dues-paying is an obsolete concept
  - b. Gen X is immature and arrogant
  - c. Gen X wants to climb the corporate ladder as fast as possible
4. Many of Gen X spent a great deal of time alone as children, either because both of their parents worked, because their parents did not live together, or because their parents were permissive. As a result, what is the most common personality type among Gen X?
  - a. Gen X is nihilistic and unfocused
  - b. Gen X is independent and self-reliant
  - c. Gen X is neurotic and dependent
5. Economic conditions often have a considerable impact on a generation's perspective on their economic future. What is the most common perspective among Gen X regarding their economic future?
  - a. They are likely to have careers based on long-term jobs in established companies
  - b. Their economic future is hopeless
  - c. They must rely on their own skills and abilities to achieve any measure of security
6. How does Gen X generally view established institutions like the federal government and large companies?

- a. They are wary of institutions because they have witnessed so many institutions falter
  - b. They find institutions more trustworthy than individuals
  - c. They believe in established institutions because those institutions are powerful and efficient
7. Gen X is eager for rapid feedback and constant markings of recognition for their hard work. Why?
- a. Gen X does not want to work hard for their rewards
  - b. In an uncertain world, Gen X is always trying to measure the return on their investment
  - c. Gen X wants to get as much as they can from any situation and then exit quickly

Given that Gen X composes the majority of the bench strength for leadership talent within organizations, it is important for their managers/supervisors to keep them challenged and engaged in the workplace in order to create career employees.

The seven expectations below are some suggestions that Generation X employees have been asked to find out what will motivate them in the workplace as well as what is important to them in a job.

**1. Opportunities to attain marketable skills and experience.**

Generation X believes in career security, not job security. From the beginning of their entrance into the workplace, Generation X has tried to gain as many skills and experiences as possible in order to be marketable to their employers. Generation X desires training. In order to recruit and retain this generation, training must be made available.

**2. Career development opportunities.**

Committing to training is only part of what motivates Generation X to remain at a particular workplace. A distinction must be made between training and development. Training is necessary for all employees, not just Generation X, in order to improve skills and increase performance of a specific task. Development, on the other hand, is a process of transferring knowledge and wisdom.

Because Generation X is slowly making up the majority of the workforce, it is important that their career development is marked as a high priority by senior management when developing succession plans.

**3. Flexible work arrangements.**

This may mean flexible schedules, telecommuting, or assignments. Gen X ranks flexible work arrangements only second to training. Telecommuting and flexible scheduling are two major initiatives that are gaining popularity within the workplace; job-sharing should also be seen as another possible way to retain more of Gen X.

**4. Access to coaching-style managers and wise mentors.**

The independence that often characterizes Generation X is often misinterpreted as disinterest in being a part of a mentoring program; in reality, Generation X wants and greatly values the long-term relationships that can be developed with those who have years of experience within the organization. Many in Gen X welcome the opportunity of having a mentor or coach that they can turn to and provide them learning experiences that cannot be found from other resources.

**5. Access to decision makers.**

Like their predecessors, Generation X wants the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process. However, Generation X wants more than just give input, they want contact with decision makers. This means that they may be willing to bypass chains of command in order to get the resources or answers they desire.

**6. Increasing spheres of responsibility.**

Like many of their Boomer parents, Gen X wants challenging work. For Generation X (and Generation Y too), the work needs to be challenging, but also needs to allow for increased responsibility. Responsibility, for members of Generation X means, that their managers/supervisors trust them, have confidence in them to do the task, and have concern for their training and development. A direct result of increased responsibility is the increased feeling of empowerment.

**Small Group Activity**

*What:* How to Manage Generation X Today

*How:* What can you and your organization offer talented members of Generation X today so they consider committing to your organization rather than going somewhere else?

What Gen X Says They Want	What You Can Offer
1. Opportunities to attain marketable skills and experience	
2. Career development opportunities	
3. Flexible work arrangements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schedules</li> <li>• Assignments</li> <li>• Locations</li> <li>• Coworkers</li> </ul>	
4. Access to coaching-style managers/supervisors and wise mentors	
5. Access to decision makers	
6. Increasing spheres of responsibility	

### GENERATION Y/MILLENNIALS (1981-2000)

The Millennials are the newest generation in the workforce. They are also the fastest growing segment of the workforce, currently close to 32 million people. Millennials have a global perspective because of the use of technology in all aspects of their lives. As they enter the workforce, Millennials are causing problems, but at the same time, are creating great opportunities to change the workforce.

Like Generation X, the Millennials are searching for organizations that promote training and development that will offer them opportunities to gain large amounts of experience and make them a valuable asset to the organization and in the future. Also like the previous generation, Millennials believe in “career security,” not job security.

Some characteristics of the Millennials are:

- Optimistic
- Social
- Goal-oriented
- Technologically savvy
- Confident
- Diverse
- Multi-taskers
- High achievers

Generation Y has very high expectations for their managers/supervisors. The relationship they have with their direct manager/supervisor can be a major deciding factor on whether a Generation Y employee will stay or leave an organization. The major characteristics that Generation Y looks for in their managers/supervisors are:

- Openness to giving and receiving feedback
- Respect for the opinions of Generation Y
- The interpersonal style of a colleague rather than a boss
- A “let’s fix it” attitude
- The ability to recognize individual as well as team performance

## Class Discussion

*What:* Management of Generation Y

*How:* Think about the Generation Y employees you supervise and reflect on the following questions:

- How would your Generation Y employees describe the relationship they have with you currently?
- Which of your managerial characteristics are effective in managing your Generation Y employees? Which are ineffective?

Notes:

Keeping the following eight practices in mind, will help you better manage, recruit, and retain members of Generation Y.

**1. Get to know Generation Y employees and their individual capabilities.**

Building a relationship with each member of Generation Y is not only about accomplishing goals, it is what will make the difference between someone staying or leaving your organization.

**2. Establish Coaching Relationships.**

Managers should teach and coach Generation Y in order to help them grow and improve. Generation Y learns best when they are given the skills they will need to accomplish a task “just-in-time.”

**3. Treat Generation Y as Colleagues.**

One of the biggest problems Generation Y has when entering the workforce comes from being treated like interns or “know-nothing kids.” They want to feel like an associate and not like a subordinate. Treating them with respect, as well as asking for it in return creates a strong relationship.

**4. Be Flexible Enough to Customize Schedules & Assignments.**

Like Generation X, Generation Y values having flexible schedules. Some members of Gen Y are still in school and appreciate a manager/supervisor who is supportive of their other commitments and is willing to work with them to balance their work assignments with their extracurricular activities. Because of the environment that they have grown up in, Generation Y are great multi-taskers. This means they work faster than others; it is the manager’s/supervisor’s responsibility to coach them to understand their expectations. Empower this generation by allowing them to be creative within the boundaries you have set for them. As a reward for good performance, give the best schedules and assignments to them.

**5. Consistently Provide Constructive Feedback.**

Generation Y wants feedback; they want it daily. Let them know what they are doing well and what they can improve on for tomorrow. Being an effective coach to this generation means giving feedback immediately. Avoid focusing on the negative and praise the positive.

Talented Generation Y employees want dedicated mentors and coaches who are not just willing to offer skill training, but also share the knowledge, experience, and wisdom that can shorten their learning curve.

#### **6. Help Gen Y Meet Their High Expectations of Coworkers.**

Identify those employees you have that are subject matter experts and would be willing to become mentors and coaches to your Generation Y employees. Give them a list of “go to” people. Make sure to reward those on your team that help the Generation Yers fit into the organization.

#### **7. Help Generation Y Meet Their High Expectations of Themselves.**

A very admirable characteristic of Generation Y is that they want to make meaningful contributions; they want to make these contributions immediately. However, it is important to stress to them that sometimes it takes some time to create a meaningful contribution. In order for this to be a smooth transition, make sure to do the following:

- Even though Generation Y is highly educated, they still need to be schooled in what it means to work for an organization. As a new employee, you will need to tell them about the goals, expectations, and policies and procedures of both the organization and the individual work group in which they belong.
- Do not assume that Generation Y has learned everything they need in order to be prepared for the workforce. Areas that they will need some help in are:
  - **Organizational Culture:** Every organization has its own culture. You will need to show your Generation Y employees what the culture is like at the organization.
  - **Customer Service Skills:** Help develop the skills of listening and problem solving in order for them to better handle irate customers.
  - **Time Management:** Some members of Generation Y may need help in managing their time. Their formative lives have been overly scheduled with activities. Because of this, some find managing their time at work rather difficult. Even though time management may seem very easy to you, it may not be so for them.

### Individual & Small Group Activity

*What:* Self-Evaluation of Management of Generation Y

*How:* Evaluate how well you are using the eight practices to manage Generation Y.

In your small groups, brainstorm some strategies on how to incorporate these eight practices into your management style.

Generation Y Management Strategy	Am I Using This Strategy?		How Can I Incorporate This Strategy in the Workplace?
	Yes	No	
1. Get to know Generation Y and their individual capabilities.			
2. Establish coaching relationships.			
3. Treat Generation Y as colleagues.			
4. Be flexible enough to customize schedules and assignments.			
5. Consistently provide constructive feedback.			
6. Tie rewards and incentives to performance only.			
7. Help Generation Y meet their high expectations of co-workers.			
8. Help Generation Y meet their high expectation of themselves.			

## Small Group Activity

*What:* Initiating Strategic Imperatives for Generation Y

*How:* In your small groups, discuss the following about how to address the needs of Generation Y:

- How effective is our current orientation program in engaging the enthusiasm and energy of our new recruits from day one? How can we create a program that gets them up to speed faster and has them making important contributions sooner?
- Are our managers/supervisors trained to coach younger employees in all aspects of their jobs including time management, customer service, and work ethic? If not, how can we get our managers/supervisors up to speed?
- How can we get our current Generation Y employees to become peer leaders to help with the transition process of young new hires into our organizational culture that is fun?
- How can we offer our Generation Y employees a sense of ownership over their tasks?
- How can we help Generation Y employees meet their high expectations of our organization, their managers, coworkers, and themselves?

Notes:

## Small Group Activity

*What:* Who Said It?

*How:* In your small groups, identify which generation said each of the following quotations. Record your answers using the key below:

**V** for Veterans                      **X** for Generation X  
**BB** for Baby Boomers            **Y** for Generation Y

- \_\_\_\_\_1. "I respect authority and follow the rules – but the authority has to earn my respect by being ethical and fair. Otherwise, I will do all I can do to circumvent the rules."
- \_\_\_\_\_2. "I think working from home is a bad idea. Out of sight, out of mind."
- \_\_\_\_\_3. "I wouldn't want [my managers] to be intimidating, but at the same time I want them to display that they have more knowledge than me. I want my bosses to respect me, but I also want to feel challenged by them. I don't want to feel like I'm on the same level as them. You want to look up to your bosses and feel that there is something you can learn from them. But at the same time, I want to be able to be comfortable around them."
- \_\_\_\_\_4. "The quality of my work is very important to me, and I want to be appreciated for that. I have other priorities besides my work; namely my family and faith. I prefer to work in a team environment. I need to feel that I'm making a difference in someone's life. I have a strong sense of loyalty to what I do and who I do it for."
- \_\_\_\_\_5. "I'd rather be the authority than be subject to it."
- \_\_\_\_\_6. "Above all else, I want my life to make a positive difference. I place a high value on learning – both academic and experiential. I am mistrustful of 'the System,' but expect government to play an active role in social services. Change is inevitable – it's both a challenge and a pleasure. Change is difficult but exciting."
- \_\_\_\_\_7. "When it's all said and done at retirement, I want to look back and be able to say that I was happy with my choices."
- \_\_\_\_\_8. "I still feel more comfortable with the hierarchy. But I want to be able to have input in decisions. I want my input to be considered."
- \_\_\_\_\_9. "I want lots of free rein in a creative, flexible, non-traditional environment and [to] be treated with utmost trust, or else forget it – I'm leaving to find security and recognition elsewhere."
- \_\_\_\_\_10. "Ideally, I wouldn't have a boss, but someone who assigns projects and gives me free rein – some kind of guidance, especially when I am new to the job, but free rein to do as I see fit and as I think is best. I will be responsible for the consequences, but let me do my own thing with as little supervision as possible."

## **COMMUNICATION ACROSS THE GENERATIONS**

Research indicates that people communicate based on their generational backgrounds. Learning how to communicate with the different generations can eliminate some major confrontations and misunderstandings in the workplace.

The workplace is becoming more and more hectic every day. In this hectic world it is making it more difficult for managers/supervisors and direct reports to be in communication with each other.

Feedback styles that may appear informative and helpful to one generation might seem formal and “preachy” to another. Some older generations have been told that there is a time and place for feedback. Younger generations have not been taught this approach – they communicate with e-mail, text messages, or instant messaging. Older generations want to speak face-to-face, or at least over the telephone. That can create problems where older employees are expecting personal feedback from a younger boss, while the boss thinks the e-mail he/she sent should cover all the bases.

In order to promote a work environment in which communication is not a challenge, a manager/supervisor should:

- Have the expectation that although we are all busy, communication on all projects, tasks, and other important issues should be done just-in-time, all the time.
- Help teams create easy-to-use communication systems that promote clear communication.

**MANAGING ACROSS THE GENERATIONS:**  
**The ACORN Imperatives**

The following strategies are being used to build strong working environments in which generational differences are minimized and productivity is maximized.

**A**ccommodate employee differences.

**C**reate workplace choices.

**O**perate from a sophisticated management style.

**R**espect competence and initiative.

**N**ourish retention.

- **Accommodate employee differences.**
  - Treat your employees as you do your customers. Learn all you can about them, work to meet their specific needs, and serve them according to their unique preferences. Make an effort to accommodate personal scheduling needs, work/life balance issues, and nontraditional lifestyles.
    - Let employee's control schedules. For all ages, flexible scheduling remains one of the most desirable work arrangements. Organizations that want to attract and retain talent must become more creative at providing flexible schedules.
    - Control over location. Allow employees to have control over their location. Allow them to add a little creativity to their workspace.
  - Treat everyone as a peer: Effective generational management means putting age and status in the background.
  - Personalize career-development opportunities with flexible ways to learn (beyond classroom training and traditional mentoring).
    - Training in marketable skills. Generations X and Y are not the only ones who seek training and development.
- **Create workplace choices.** Instead of adhering to outdated organizational models, allow the workplace to shape itself around the work being done, the customer being served, and the people who work there.
- **Operate from a sophisticated management style.** Managers tend to be direct with their employees. They give their employees the big picture, specific goals and measures, and

then they turn their people loose – giving them feedback, rewards, and recognition as appropriate. The seven attributes that characterize their flexibility are as follows:

1. Their supervisory style is not fixed. How closely they monitor and manage is a product of each individual's track record and personal preference. Control and autonomy are not the only options.
  2. Their leadership style is dependent upon the situation. Some decisions are made; others are made by the manager, but with input and consultation.
  3. They depend less on positional than on personal power.
  4. They know when and how to make personal policy exceptions, without causing a team riot.
  5. They are thoughtful when matching individuals to a team or a team to individuals.
  6. They balance concern for tasks and concern for people.
  7. They understand the elements of trust and work to gain it from their employees. They are perceived as fair, inclusive, good communicators, and competent.
- **Respect competence and initiative.** People live up to or down to expectations. Managers who expect more from their employees and provide support will get more from them.
    - Control over assignments. Give high performers control over their assignments. It is seen as a reward to high performers.
  - **Nourish retention.** Organizations are becoming aware of the costs associated with turnover and with the challenge of hiring the best person for the job. Generational friendly policies will keep the best employees while attracting other qualified candidates.

**Small Group Activity**

*What:* ACORN Imperatives  
*How:* Develop strategies to implement the ACORN imperatives within your organization.

<b>A</b>
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<b>O</b>
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<b>N</b>

## CONCLUSION

The bottom line is this: everyone wants respect. Older people want respect for the experience and knowledge they can share; younger people for their technology skills and adaptability.

Seek common ground or at the very least, seek to hear and understand the other person. Transform liabilities into assets where possible. Emphasize positive traits. Focus on your mutual goals and vision. Your organization will thrive from the diversity and your employees will gain intangible rewards from working in a place where they are appreciated and recognized for their unique contributions.

The most important aspect of managing across generations is to regard each employee as an individual with a valuable contribution to make. Taking time to understand their perspectives will make managing less of a challenge.

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# **JOB AIDS**

**JOB AIDS**

Veterans (1922-1945)

**Management Best Practices**

- Create knowledge transfer programs.

Baby Boomers (1946-1964)

**Management Best Practices**

- Honor their historical memory.
- Give them recognition.
- Let them try out new ideas.
- Help bridge the team-individual divide.
- Coach and challenge.

Generation X (1965-1980)

**Management Best Practices**

- Opportunities to attain marketable skills and experience.
- Career development opportunities.
- Flexible work arrangements.
- Access to coaching-style managers and wise mentors.
- Access to decision makers.
- Increasing spheres of responsibility.

Generation Y (1981-2000)

**Management Best Practices**

- Get to know Generation Y employees and their individual capabilities.
- Establish coaching relationships.
- Treat Generation Y as colleagues.
- Be flexible enough to customize schedules and assignments.
- Consistently provide constructive feedback.
- Help Generation Y meet their high expectations of co-workers
- Help Generation Y meet their high expectations of themselves.

	<b>Veterans Pre-1945</b>	<b>Baby Boomers 1946-1964</b>	<b>Generation X 1964-1980</b>	
<b>Formative Events</b>	Great Depression World War	Post-war prosperity Largest generation	Globalization Downsizing Technology boom	Pros Viol Outs emp
<b>Socialization</b>	Scarcity/hardship Parent at home	Prosperous/safe Anything is possible Parent’s focal point	Latchkey kids	Stron Struc Non Acti

	<b>Veterans Pre-1945</b>	<b>Baby Boomers 1946-1964</b>	<b>Generation X 1964-1980</b>	
				Fallo Non Mul
<b>Imprint Made</b>	“Greatest Generation” Dual incomes	Free generation Redefined norms Civil Rights	“Me” generation Dot.com stars Free agency	“We Wire Wor
<b>Work and Family Life</b>	Separate	No balance, work to live	Balance	Bala
<b>Work is...</b>	An obligation	An exciting adventure	A difficult challenge; a contract	A m
<b>Pattern</b>	Stay with company	Loyal Workaholic Sink or swim	Live on edge Embrace change Devalue long hours Job hop Will find a way	Expe Nee Curi Dist Disl
<b>Rewards</b>	Satisfaction in a job well done	Money, title recognition	Freedom is the best reward	Mea
<b>Interactive style</b>	Individual	Team player, loves to have meetings	Entrepreneur	Part
<b>Communications</b>	Formal, Memo	In person	Direct, immediate	E-m
<b>Liabilities</b>	Technology skills	Technology skills	Social skills	Dire Inter
<b>Value</b>	Family Patriotism	Success/materially Free expression Reform Equity	Skill more than title Work-life balance	Her Elde Serv mon Wor
<b>Leadership style</b>	Directive, command-and-control	Consensual, collegial	Everyone is the same, challenge others, ask why, not intimidated by authority	Ded over
<b>Leadership challenges</b>		Mastering soft leadership skills, dealing with conflict directly, practicing what they preach	Tact vs. brutal honesty, corporate politics	Intin supe
<b>Messages that Motivate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Your experience is respected here.”</li> <li>• “It’s valuable to the rest of us to hear what has – and hasn’t – worked in the past.”</li> <li>• “Your perseverance is valued and will be rewarded.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “You’re important to our success.”</li> <li>• “You’re valued here.”</li> <li>• “Your contribution is unique and important.”</li> <li>• “We need you.”</li> <li>• “I approve of you.”</li> <li>• “You’re worthy.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Do it your way.”</li> <li>• “We’ve got the newest hardware and software.”</li> <li>• “There are not a lot of rules here.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Y bri</li> <li>• “Y six</li> <li>• “Y hel arc</li> </ul>

	<b>Veterans Pre-1945</b>	<b>Baby Boomers 1946-1964</b>	<b>Generation X 1964-1980</b>	
<b>Recruiting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider part-time employment for these people. They do not want to leave the workforce and want to share the lessons they have learned.</li> <li>• Let them know that their age and experience will be considered assets to the organization.</li> <li>• Speak clearly and use proper grammar.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Let them know their experience will be valued.</li> <li>• Show them places where they can excel.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure to include that having a life outside of work is important.</li> <li>• Ideas are evaluated on merit, not experience.</li> <li>• Fun, relaxed work environment is important.</li> <li>• The organization is technologically innovative.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ma</li> <li>• to</li> <li>• En</li> <li>• en</li> <li>• En</li> <li>• ol</li> <li>• W</li> <li>• co</li> <li>• un</li> <li>• int</li> <li>• Ser</li> </ul>
<b>Orienting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take plenty of time to orient Veteran employees. They are not very comfortable with jumping into new situations and learning as they go.</li> <li>• Show them the “big picture.”</li> <li>• Emphasize the long-term goals of the department and organization and how they will be contributing to them.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss the near future of the organization.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Let them show themselves around.</li> <li>• Make it easy for them to ask questions about anything.</li> </ul>	To b
<b>Opportunities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate to them in the long-term.</li> <li>• Keep gender roles in mind.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get to know them as an individual.</li> <li>• Show them that this is an opportunity to make a difference.</li> <li>• Stress that they will learn a lot and improve the organization.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on the opportunities of building and developing new skills.</li> </ul>	To b

	<b>Veterans Pre-1945</b>	<b>Baby Boomers 1946-1964</b>	<b>Generation X 1964-1980</b>	
<b>Developing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will need to be trained in technology.</li> <li>• Do not rush the training of Veteran employees. Make sure the environment is stress free.</li> <li>• Find trainers that can speak to the Veteran. Many feel awkward learning from someone in their twenties.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need development in strategic planning, budgeting, coaching, and soft skills.</li> <li>• Provide developmental experiences and assignments.</li> <li>• Encourage them to read business books.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give them lots of resources so they can learn to do their jobs.</li> </ul>	To b
<b>Mentoring</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find a coach who is respected as a leader.</li> <li>• Coach tactfully. Be respectful. Ask permission to coach.</li> <li>• Establish rapport by acknowledging the employee's background and experience.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coach tactfully.</li> <li>• Ask questions to get to the issue.</li> <li>• Be sensitive when correcting performance that they do not see as below standards.</li> <li>• Respect them, but not the same way as a Veteran.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not talk office politics.</li> <li>• Make them feel like insiders as quickly as possible.</li> <li>• Coach young employees to take responsibility for their own actions.</li> </ul>	To b