FOCUS FALL 2011
Managing the Generations

Linda H. Harber
Associate Vice President
Human Resources & Payroll
George Mason University
Assumptions

- The identification of generational group characteristics in people are generalizations and so do not necessarily apply to whole populations.
- Multigenerational conflict is becoming a concern within the workforce.
- Current hiring patterns reflect a generational difference from those currently on your staff.

It’s more than chronological age…

- Generational age
- Life-Stage age
- Career Stage age
- Psycho-Social age
Agenda

- Introductions and welcome
- Values exercise
- Demographic trends
- Who’s who & why?
  - Silent Generation/Traditionalists
  - Baby Boomers
  - Generation X
  - Generation Y
- How they compare
Complaints about Gen Y:

- They have no loyalty!
- They spend too much time online.
- They have no communication skills!
- They have no work ethic.
- “She wants a career map?”
- She wants a performance bonus? She should be lucky to have a job.
- He’s been here 4 months and he wants a promotion.
Complaints from Gen Y:

They spend way too much time in meetings.

They don’t treat me with respect.

They don’t know how to use technology to make their jobs easier.

Go to the office?...I can do my job from anywhere!

They don’t respond in a reasonable timeframe.

If I hear “we tried that in 1990” one more time.....
Values Exercise

- What do you value about your work?

- What do you want from your work?

- What Generation are you?
  - Traditionalist  < 1946
  - Boomers 1946 - 1964
  - X 1965 – 1977
  - Y > 1977
Top 10 Demographic & Social Trends for 2011

- 10. Rise in the number of employees with untreated physical and mental health conditions in the workplace
- 9. Growth in the number of employees with English as a second language
- 8. Increased concerns about safety and security in the workplace
- 7. An increased proportion of older workers in the workforce
- 6. Increased employee demand for workplace flexibility
Top 10 Demographic & Social Trends for 2011

- 5. Employee backlash against rising benefits costs
- 4. Growth in the number of employees with caring responsibilities (elder care, child care, and both at the same time)
- 3. Increase in chronic health conditions such as diabetes, heart conditions, etc. among employees
- 2. A global shortage of skilled workers
- 1. Large numbers of Baby Boomers (1945-1964) leaving the workforce at around the same time

Source: SHRM Workplace Forecast (SHRM, 2011)
Silent Generation/Traditionalists

- Born before 1946
- 5% of Workforce

- When in command, take charge
- When in doubt, do what is right
- Key word: Loyal
Defining Historical events

- The Great Depression
- Social Security
- New Deal
- WWII
- Pearl Harbor
- Korean War

Silent Generation/Traditionalists

Personality

- Disciplined
- Dutiful
- Conformist
- Loyal
- Conservative
- Patriotic

Baby Boomers

- Born between 1946 - 1964
- 40% of Workforce
- “Me” Generation
- Key word: Optimistic
Boomer’s Defining Historical events

- Civil Rights Act
- JFK Assassination
- MLK Assassination
- RFK Assassination
- Vietnam
- Man walked on moon
- Woodstock

PHOTOGRAPHS BY FLIP SCHULKE/CORBIS
Baby Boomers - Personality

- Optimistic
- Achievement-oriented
- Self importance
- Individuality
- Consumption
- Cool
Generation X

- Born between 1965 - 1977
- 21% of Workforce
- Techno literate
- “Free Agent” mind set

Key word: self Reliant
Gen X - Defining Historical events

- Watergate
- 1970’s energy crisis
- Iran Hostage crisis
- Three mile Island near melt down
- Challenger explosion
- Fall of Berlin Wall
- Desert Storm
Gen X - Personality

- Independent
- Skeptical
- "disloyal"
- Tech Savvy
- Survivors
- Institutional malaise
Gen Y/Millennials

- Born after 1977
- 34% of Workforce

- Fastest growing segment of the workforce
- Gen X on Fast forward with self esteem
- Most high maintenance and high performance
- Key word: realistic
Gen Y - Defining Historical events

- OJ Simpson Trial
- Oklahoma City Bombing
- Princess Diana’s death
- Clinton/Lewinsky scandal
- Columbine High School massacre
- Dot.Com boom

Google™
Gen Y – Personality

- Optimistic
- Ordered
- Respectful
- Open-minded; nonjudgmental
- Technologically supreme
“Though the echo boom rivals its parent’s generation in size, in almost every other way, it is very different. This generation is more racially diverse: One in three is not Caucasian. One in four lives in a single-parent household. Three in four have working mothers. While boomers are still mastering Microsoft Windows 98, their kids are tapping away at computers in nursery school.”

- Business Week Online, February 15, 1999
How they compare?

- Strengths & Challenges
- Workplace values
- Top generational values
## Strengths/Challenges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths/Challenges</th>
<th>Silent</th>
<th>Boomers</th>
<th>Gen X</th>
<th>Gen Y</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How to use these strengths at work?</td>
<td>Disciplined</td>
<td>Residual idealism</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Multi-taskers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experienced</td>
<td>“can do” attitude</td>
<td>Results-oriented</td>
<td>Global mindset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Committed</td>
<td>Seek to please</td>
<td>Creative/Adaptable</td>
<td>Team players</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How would you impact challenges at work?</td>
<td>Change</td>
<td>Judgmental</td>
<td>People and political savvy</td>
<td>Long term thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Control/competition</td>
<td>Impatient</td>
<td>*Lofty expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meritocracy</td>
<td>vulnerability</td>
<td>cynical</td>
<td>Helicopter Parents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*90% anticipate staying with employers 5 years or less
## Top 5 Values by Generation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Silent</th>
<th>Boomers</th>
<th>Gen X</th>
<th>Gen Y</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Integrity</td>
<td>Integrity</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Wisdom</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Integrity</td>
<td>Love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Self-respect</td>
<td>Wisdom</td>
<td>Happiness</td>
<td>Happiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Self-respect</td>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>Self-respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Competence</td>
<td>Competence</td>
<td>Love</td>
<td>Friendship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Information taken from the Center for Creative Leadership
Exercise Time

- Pair up- 2 different generations
  - One as Employee
  - The other as Supervisor
  - Then reverse roles with new topic

- Choice of topics:
  - Work Attire/Office Etiquette
  - Work Hours
  - Use of Vacation Time
  - Technology/Email Use
  - Health & Wellness
  - Telework/Remote Work Request
The Angry Bird Effect

Americans spend 866,666,667 hours on Angry Bird per year

If 5% of those hours are Americans playing at work, that’s 43,333,333 on-the-clock hours of Angry Birds per year

Multiply $35/hr as average pay of America’s smartphone owners and the wages lost due to Angry Birds is:

$1,516,666,667

Karen I. Michael Esquire, Virginia HR Leadership Symposium 2011
Based on Analysis of Pew smartphone adoption demographic data
Business Loyalty

- Silent – **Loyal** to the Organization
- Boomers – **Loyal** to the Team
- Gen X – **Loyal** to the Manager
- Gen Y – **Loyal** to colleagues
Relationship with Authority

Traditionalist ……. “Tell me what I should do for you”

Boomer………….. “Let me show you what I can do for you”

Gen X ……………… “Tell me what you can do for me”

Gen Y ……………… “Show me what you can do for me… right now”

http://ngenperformance.com/briefing.php
# Communications Style

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Silent</th>
<th>Boomers</th>
<th>Gen X</th>
<th>Gen Y</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formal</td>
<td>In person</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Email</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memo</td>
<td>In meetings</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
<td>Voicemail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Participative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Clash Point: Career Perspective

- Traditionalist: “Build a legacy”
- Boomer: “Build a stellar career”
- Gen X: “Build a portable career”
- Gen Y: “Build parallel careers”
Clash Point: Work Life Balance

- Boomer: “Work hard now so I can enjoy life later”
- Gen X: “Give me balance, now, not when I’m sixty-five”
- Gen Y: “Work isn’t everything; I need flexibility so I can balance all of my activities”
# Executive Perceptions of Most Effective Retention Initiatives by Generation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>Gen Y</th>
<th>Gen X</th>
<th>Baby Boomers</th>
<th>Silent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Additional Compensation</td>
<td>Additional bonuses or financial incentives</td>
<td>Additional benefits (i.e., health and pensions)</td>
<td>Additional benefits (i.e., health and pensions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Additional bonuses or financial incentives</td>
<td>Additional Compensation</td>
<td>Additional bonuses or financial incentives</td>
<td>Flexible work arrangements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Flexible work arrangements</td>
<td>Flexible work arrangements</td>
<td>Flexible work arrangements</td>
<td>Additional Compensation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Managing Talent in a Turbulent Economy, July 2009*
Clash Point: Performance Management and Feedback

- Traditionalist: “No news is good news”
- Boomer: “Feedback once a year, with lots of documentation”
- Gen X: “Sorry to interrupt, but how am I doing?”
- Gen Y: “Feedback whenever I want it at the push of a button”
### Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National</th>
<th>Silent</th>
<th>Boomers</th>
<th>Gen X</th>
<th>Gen Y</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>39.5%</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
<td>34.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>39.4%</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
<td>34.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As of September 2011

Annual Census
Working with Traditionalist

- Appreciate and respect their experience
- Use them as mentors
- Provide flexible work options to retain them
  - Encore careers
  - Part time work after retirement
- Provide them continuing opportunities to learn and develop
- Structure technology training carefully
- Human interface
- Tokens that indicate their experience (status) and/or affiliation
Working with Boomers

- Recognition/Rewards/Credit
- Opportunity to work in teams
- Work to build consensus; gather their input
- Opportunities for personal & professional development
- Capture their experience
- “Soft” benefits
  - Perks
  - Leave
  - Flexibility
  - Tuition waiver
Working with Xers

- Allow autonomy
- FAST Feedback
  - (Frequent, accurate, specific, timely)
- Opportunities for continued learning & development
- Notion of non-linear retention (also for Millennials)
- Open communication, information
- Flexibility: soft benefits
- Access to info and decision-makers
- Challenge, fun & excitement
Working with Millennials

- Provide structure and guidance
- Ask for their input (they may give it anyway)
- Team orientation
- Maintain technology
- Manage projects, not time
- Challenge & increasing responsibility
- Stress mission and values
Implications for Generations at Work

- One size does not fit all
- Respect and appreciate differences
- All ages value security and balance
- Leverage generational strengths
Contact

- Linda Harber
- E-mail: lharber@gmu.edu
- Phone: (703) 993-2602

- HR/Payroll Website: http://hr.gmu.edu