



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL SERVICES

Cultivating a Multigenerational Workforce

Spring 2024 BPRO Conference



Description

Today's workforce consists of five generations functioning together in one workplace which presents unique challenges for frontline staff and leadership. During this workshop, we will examine each generations' attitudes, beliefs, habits, and expectations and discuss how to cultivate the multigenerational differences into a positive workplace environment where all generations can thrive and be successful. This workshop will also detail the world events that have contributed to the unique characteristics of each generation with a focus on how each age group can be used as a touchstone for allowing workers understanding to better manage their work-life balance.

Defining the Modern Multigeneration Workforce

A multi-generational workforce is comprised of employees from different generations. The generations are defined by significant world events that have occurred during their lifetime, as well as the general parenting style during the time they were raised.

The age diversity in the current workforce is the widest ever. As the average lifespan for humans has increased, individuals are choosing to work well past the typical retirement age. It is now common for organizations to have employees working side-by-side who represent four to five generations.

This unprecedented diversity brings an array of skills, expertise, perspective, life experiences and unique challenges to organizations.

The Five Generations

Silent Generation

Individuals born between
1925 and 1945

Baby Boomers

“Boomers” were born
between the years of
1946 and 1964

Generation X

Comprised of people
born between 1965
and 1980

Millenials

Consists of individuals
born between the years
of 1981 and 1994

Generation Z

“Zoomers” were born
between 1995 and
2009

Examining Each Generation

As we examine the individual generations think about which of the traits/characteristic are representative of you. Do you match with your generation, or do you belong to another? Consider how your habits, attitudes, expectations and behaviors overlap with the generation before yours and the one after. Even though world events that have occurred may define a specific generation, ruminate regarding how this event also impacted you and your generation.

Interactive #1

Identify your generation and tell us about the world event(s) that had the most influence in shaping you.

***Generation begin dates and end dates have slight variances depending on the source.**

The Silent Generation

The silent generation was born between the years of 1925 and 1945. Some of the common traits of this generation are:

1. Traditional values
2. Financial prudence and discretion
3. Interpersonal Respect
4. Determination
5. Resilience
6. Strong work ethic
7. Prefer face-to-face communication
8. Willingness to make sacrifices
9. Loyalty
10. Rule followers



World Events that Defined the Silent Generation

- The Great Depression
- Dust Bowl
- World War II-Attack on Pearl Harbor, Holocaust, Atomic Bomb, and D-Day
- Women entered the workforce because of WWII
- Movies with sound
- Invention of rotary phones
- Parents experienced the “roaring twenties”

Baby Boomers-Born during the years 1946-1964

Common traits of this generation:

1. Optimism
2. Competitive nature
3. Strong work ethic
4. Self-Assured
5. Resourceful
6. Activism
7. Value personal growth
8. Youthful outlook
9. Team oriented
10. Workaholic
11. Raised by hard working parents



World Events that Shaped Baby Boomers

- McCarthy Hearings
- Rosa Parks-Refusal to move to the back of the bus
- First nuclear power plant
- John F. Kennedy elected president
- Cuban Missile Crisis
- Assassination of President Kennedy
- Martin Luther King, Jr.-March on Washington, DC
- Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Vietnam War
- Man walking on the moon
- Assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Assassination of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.

Characteristics of Generation X: 1965-1980

- Independent thinkers
- Self-Sufficient
- Results-Oriented
- Educated
- Entrepreneurial
- Strong communication skills
- Value work-life balance
- Technologically savvy but not reliant on technology
- Latch-key generation-raised with a more hands off parenting style

Historical Events that Impacted Generation X

1. Watergate Scandal
2. Fall of the Berlin Wall
3. Jonestown
4. Manson murders
5. Lockerbie flight bombing
6. Vietnam War
7. Cold War
8. Space Shuttle Challenger Disaster
9. Iranian hostage crisis
10. Exxon Valdez oil tanker spill
11. Rodney King beating
12. Rise of the personal computer
13. MTV launch



The Millennial Generation-1981 to1994*

- Socially aware
- Challenge the hierarchy and status quo
- Technologically savvy
- Passion for lifelong learning
- Open to change and adaptive
- Crave recognition
- Challenge authority
- Multitaskers
- Unafraid of risks
- Millennials were raised during a massive shift in the ways society functions

*Some sources extend the generational years to 1996 and others through 2000.

Events that Influenced Millennials

1. Rise of Social Media
2. TV talk shows and reality television
3. Oklahoma City Bombing
4. Video games
5. Iraq War-Weapons of Mass Destruction
6. The Great Recession
7. Hurricane Katrina
8. Election of Barack Obama-Our first black president
9. Columbine
10. September 11, 2001



Generation Z-1995 to 2009*

- Competitive
- Focused on authenticity
- Value personal identity
- Social activists
- Love to travel-value experiences
- Prone to anxiety
- Money savers
- Compassionate and thoughtful
- Open-minded
- Loyal
- Raised in smaller families by older parents who spend more time outside of the home

*Some sources date this generation as 1997-2012.

World Events that Influenced Generation Z

1. The creation of smartphones
2. Rise of influencers
3. Me Too Movement
4. Election of Donald J. Trump
5. Gun Violence
6. Global Pandemic-Covid 19
7. Opioid Crisis
8. No Child Left Behind Act
9. Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill
10. Climate Change
11. Artificial Intelligence



Interactive #2

Tell us about something that you learned from an individual belonging to another generation that has helped you be successful in your role at Social Services.

Why a Multigenerational Workforce is Important

- Allows for multi-perspectives
- Increases problem solving capabilities
- Leads to mentoring opportunities
- Knowledge transfer
- Builds a talent pipeline
- Meaningful unique relationships are formed
- Better equipped for customer service
- Retention of workforce/greater job satisfaction
- Better work/life balance
- Greater readiness to innovate

Challenges with Cultivating a Successful Multigenerational Workforce

1. Generational Stereotypes

Generational stereotypes are assumptions made about people based on the era they were born in. These stereotypes often highlight the differences between generations which can create bias and conflicts in the workplace

Examples:

“Millennials are lazy and want recognized for everything”

“Xers are slackers”

“Boomers got cash to splash”

“The Silent Generation has no imagination”

“Zoomers cannot interact face to face”



Challenges with Cultivating a Successful Multigenerational Workforce

2. Generational Gaps

A generational gap separates the beliefs and behaviors belonging to members of two different generations. More specifically it can be described as the difference in thoughts, actions and tastes of younger generations vs. older generations.

Generational Gaps can lead to misunderstandings and disagreements in the workplaces due to:

1. Jealousy
2. Judgements regarding lifestyle and attire
3. Mistrust
4. Different communication styles
5. Varying political views
6. Division in technological skills
7. Discreet vs. open-book mentality

Tips for Building a Positive Multigenerational Workforce

- Create teams with mixed ages
- Establish respect
- Focus on the big picture
- Provide flexible solutions to diverse needs
- Be aware of communication preferences
- Adapt your messaging to meet the needs of all employees
- Reward productivity and longevity
- Set clear expectations
- Promote age inclusivity
- Lead with action and set good examples
- Understand your employees
- Create opportunities for growth
- Offer training in different formats

Interactive #3

Please share a multigenerational success that your agency has experienced.

**WE NEED TO REMEMBER
ACROSS GENERATIONS
THAT THERE IS AS
MUCH TO LEARN AS
THERE IS TO TEACH.**

Gloria Steinem

**Thank you for attending.
Enjoy the rest of the
conference.**

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