Managing Five Generations in the Workplace

AASPA Webinar – March 29, 2018

© 2018, Battelle for Kids. All Rights Reserved.
Presenter

Emily Douglas-McNab,
MLHR, MBA, pHCLE, SPHR, SHRM-SCP,
LSSBB, CDR

Battelle for Kids,
Sr. Director of Improvement & Impact

Email: EmilyHC@bfk.org
Twitter: @EmilyDouglasHC

- pHCLE instructor
- Speaker on HCMS, strategy, workforce shortages, Future of HR, social media
- EducationWeek K-12 Talent Manager blogger
We are a not-for-profit organization committed to collaborating with school systems and communities to realize the power and promise of 21st century learning for every student.

Our team of experienced educators alongside communications, technology, and business professionals innovates and partners with school systems to offer an educational experience that prepares all students with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to succeed in college, careers, and life. We advance our mission by strengthening the coherence, capacity, and connections districts and communities need to redefine learner success and accelerate the design and implementation of 21st century learning systems for all students.

Our approach involves the entire school community—educators in partnership with students, parents, businesses, and other community leaders—to ensure enduring impact in schools.
Presentation Outline

• A little humor...
• Unpacking different generations and their differences
• 3 Myths and 3 Uncomfortable Truths, IBM
• How do we manage 5 generations in the workplace?
• Resources

Presentation Alignment to Human Capital Leaders in Education (HCLE) Standards:

• P.CL.1 Serve internal and external customers.
• S.SR.2 Develop a recruitment strategy.
• C.EE.1 Foster employee engagement.
• C.OC.1 Foster a culture that supports learning.
• C.OC.2 Promote diversity and inclusion.

For more information on the HCLE standards, visit:
http://www.HCEdLeaders.org
Start with a little humor...

- Millennials in the Workplace Training Video – https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p8UxNJa0KC8
Workforce Generation Management

Just when you thought you had Millennials figured out...

Traditionalists (Born before 1945)

**AKA:** Depression-era babies, Silent, Veterans, The Forgotten, Radio Babies

**Generation Descriptors (Warning: Stereotypical):**

- Strong work ethic
- Patriotic
- Believe in hierarchical management – respect authority
- Organization-loyal
- Dependable
- Independent (maybe even stubborn)
- Appreciate flexibility in work schedules
Baby Boomers (Born 1946 – 1964)

AKA: “Me” Generation, Moral Authority

Generation Descriptors (*Warning: Stereotypical*):

- Hard-working, loyal, strong work ethic
- Well educated
- Value equal opportunities
- Extremely loyal to their children
- Value cooperation and face-to-face communication
- Work status (and job value) = self-worth
- Organization-loyal
Generation X (1965 – 1979)

AKA: Baby Bust, Post-Boomers, Xers, The Doers, 13th Generation

Generation Descriptors (Warning: Stereotypical):

- Independent
- Critical thinkers
- Think globally, Value diversity
- Lack organizational loyalty
- Skepticism/Cynical
- Suspicious of Boomer values
- Technology literate (50/50)
- Seeks life balance -- Family-focused, Patriarchal (male) focused families
Generation Y (Born 1979 – 1995)

**AKA:** Millennials, GenY, GenNext, EchoBoomers, 24/7s, CFOs- Chief Friendship Officers

**Generation Descriptors (Warning: Stereotypical):**

- Steady work ethic (when it matches their focus)
- Not found of traditional hierarchy (respect is earned – not longevity-based)
- Technology literate
- Family-focused, working towards gender equivalency (at home)
- Little to no organization loyalty – loyalty is to self
- Values flexibility and control
- Impatient
- Highly socialized, needs constant feedback
Generation Z (Born 1996 – 2012)

**AKA:** Post-Millennials, iGen, iGeneration, Linksters, Plurals, Founders, or the Homeland Generation

**Generation Descriptors (Warning: Stereotypical):**

- Technologically integrated
- Global
- Individuality
- Less-focus
- Multi-taskers
- Little loyalty (brands, organizations, program/rewards)
Generation Alpha (Born after 2012)

- Children of millennials – more than 2.5m born per week (Williams, 2015).
- Not in the workforce
- “Born to digital technology like it’s a fifth element of nature, Alphas will be the wealthiest, the most intensely educated and most dynamic generation that human society has yet seen.”
  - Joe Nellis, Prof of Global Economy, Cranfield School of Management (2017)
- AI is a part of life – for example, more than likely will never drive a car
What are the challenges HR faces in managing and leading a five generation workforce?

• Doing more with less, which means teamwork is necessary
• Showing employees and managers how to communicate with each other.
• Keeping up with new workplace trends and regulations.
• Supporting work/life balance to create a happier workforce.
• Understanding what motivates each generation.

3 Myths and 3 Uncomfortable Truths...

What really are the difference between generations in our workplace?

How does that alter how we ‘do’ people related work and support?
Myth 1: Millennials want constant acclaim and think everyone on the team should get a trophy.
Myth 2: Millennials are digital addicts who want to do—and share—everything online, without regard for personal or professional boundaries.

Figure 6
Gen X employees use their personal social media accounts for work purposes more frequently than other employees do.

Communicate with colleagues and/or business partners
- Millennials: 55%
- Gen X: 59%
- Baby Boomers: 41%

Get information about my industry/market
- Millennials: 55%
- Gen X: 59%
- Baby Boomers: 40%

Market/sell my organization's products/services
- Millennials: 54%
- Gen X: 62%
- Baby Boomers: 46%

Source: IBM Institute for Business Value Millennial Survey 2014. Percentage of respondents who use social media frequently or all the time for a given business purpose. Millennials n=803, Gen X n=258, Baby Boomers n=251. Q32: How often do you reach out to one of your personal social media networks for business purposes to... Q32.1: Communicate with colleagues and/or business partners? Q32.2: Get information about my industry/market? Q32.7: Market/sell my organization's products and services? (5-point scale: 1=never, 2=rarely, 3=occasionally, 4=frequently, 5=all the time).
Myth 3: Millennials are more likely to jump ship if a job doesn’t fulfill their passions.

Figure 8

*Employees of every generation have much the same reasons for changing jobs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for changing jobs</th>
<th>Millennials</th>
<th>Gen X</th>
<th>Baby Boomers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enter the fast lane</strong> (make more money and work in a more creative, innovative environment)</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shoot for the top</strong> (assume more responsibility in an organization with a first-rate reputation)</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Follow my heart</strong> (advance my career while doing work I’m more passionate about)</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Save the world</strong> (make a positive social/environmental impact and have more job security)</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: IBM Institute for Business Value Millennial Survey 2014, Millennials n=1,153, Gen X n=353, Baby Boomers n=278. Q26: Why would you leave your current job for a job with a different organization?
**Uncomfortable truth 1:** Employees are in the dark. Many aren’t sure they understand their organization’s strategy—and their leaders are partly to blame.

*Figure 9*

Many employees aren’t confident that they fully understand key elements of their organization’s business

- I don’t fully understand my organization’s business strategy
- I don’t fully understand my manager’s expectations of me as an employee
- I don’t fully understand what my customers want
- I don’t fully understand my organization’s brand

Source: IBM Institute for Business Value Millennial Survey 2014. Percentage of respondents who said they had some, little or no understanding. Millennials n=803, Gen X n=258, Baby Boomers n=251. Q22: To what extent do you understand… Q22.1: Your organization’s business strategy? Q22.6: Your manager’s expectations for you as an employee? Q22.2: What your customers want? Q22.3: Your organization’s brand promise in the marketplace? (5-point scale: 1=no understanding, 2=little understanding, 3=some understanding, 4=mostly understand, 5=completely understand).
Uncomfortable truth 2:

All three generations think the customer experience is poor.

---

**Figure 11**

Most employees, irrespective of age, are critical of their organization’s ability to effectively address the customer experience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Millennials</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen X</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby Boomers</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: IBM Institute for Business Value Millennial Survey 2014. Percentage of respondents who said their organization was ineffective (selected 1 or 2 on a 5-point scale). Millennials n=1,153, Gen X n=353, Baby Boomers n=278. Q21: To what extent does your organization effectively address customer experience? (5-point scale: 1=very ineffective, 2=ineffective, 3=neither ineffective nor effective, 4=effective, 5=very effective).
**Uncomfortable truth 3:** Employees of all ages have embraced the technological revolution. The problem? Their enterprises are slow to implement new applications.

![Figure 12](image)

*Employees of every generation point to the same obstacles in implementing new technologies.*

- **Impact on current customer experience:** 72%
- **Leaders’ lack of technological savvy:** 44%
- **Complexity of technology:** 44%
- **Leaders’ inability to envision future needs:** 36%
- **Organizational culture that is resistant to change:** 32%

What are the big takeaways from this report?

• Generational differences certainly do exist.
• They may not be as stark as we have been led to believe.
• Research, experience, and intuition can point us toward some important information, but the only true and clear way to know what your employees want is to ask them!
How do we manage 5 generations in the workforce?

1. Value diversity and inclusion (and do something about it)
   - For example: Ensure you’re hiring diverse individuals into ALL levels of the organization
2. Understand your employees – know that personal preferences differ from person to person
   - Work-life balance? Work-life integration?
   - Compensation vs. benefits?
3. Unpack and educate people on biases
4. Know that stereotypes are just that – stereotypes
5. Help everyone understand that each individuals has different knowledge, skills, and abilities to bring to the table – the question is how to do best engage these people effectively
6. Build mechanisms for people to be on teams and projects with diverse individuals
7. Set-up cross generational mentoring opportunities
8. Engage different generations in the creation of policies and procedures for the organization
9. *Be a leader* – speak up when you see stereotypes being used for decision making
QUESTIONS?
Contact Information

Emily Douglas-McNab

- EmilyHC@bfk.org
- @EmilyDouglasHC
Sources

• Official Comedy. (n.d.) Millennials in the Workplace Training Video. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p8UxNJJa0KC8