

Leveraging Generational Diversity: Maximizing Team Functioning

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Our Agenda

- Understanding Generational Differences
- What's happening in our workplaces?
 - Older workers/Veterans
 - Net Generation
 - Impact on team functioning
- GD impact on teams
 - Learning preferences of each generation
 - Learning methods preferred by each generation
 - Strategies to leverage GD

Talkin' About My Generation....

- Five generations for the first time in history
Veterans – Baby Boomers – Gen X – Millennials/Net – Digital Natives
- Significant implications for classrooms, workplaces and teams
- Diversity includes generational diversity
- Each generation has distinct values, expectations, habits and learning preferences
- Values drive behavior both personally and professionally
- Cautions!

Defining a Generation

- A group of people born during the same period with similar attitudes and values. The *time period* is the factor
- Each period has seminal events that shaped the attitudes and values based on shared experiences during formative years
- The *interaction between generations* is also a critical dynamic

Veterans, Traditionalists

Age 65 and older

- **Core Values:** Respect for authority, Conformity, Loyal, Respectful, Highly disciplined, Respect process
- **Education:** “A dream”
- **Communication :** Rotary phones, Face to face, Memos
- **Influences:** Depression, WW II, Loss of family & friends
- First time since 1940s, Vets will outnumber teens in the workplace due to people working longer
(AARP 2012)

Baby Boomers

Ages 46 - 64

- **Core Values:** Optimism, Involvement, Hard workers who work long hours and extra days, Grew up challenging authority, “Will work as long as it takes to get the job done”
- **Education:** A “Birthright”. Highly encouraged and valued by parents. “How could you NOT go to college?”
- **Communication:** Cell increases their availability to work. “Call Me Anytime”
- **Influences:** Peters and Waterman’s MBWA, Leadership Development, Vietnam war, Civil Rights & Women’s Rights movements, Turbulent times, Working towards a cause
- **Accounts for more than 40% of faculty and administration in HE and health care**

Generation X, Gen X, Xers

Ages 30 - 45

- **Core Values:** Skepticism, Fun, Informality, Self-Reliant, Less willing to place work as first life priority
- **Education:** Their technology skills will drive and change education at all levels
- **Communication:** Cell phones, “Call me at work”
- **Influences:** The environment, TV, “Latchkey” kids

Often referred to as “the forgotten generation”

Millennials or the “Net” Generation Ages 16 - 29

- **Core Values:** “What’s next?”, Multi-taskers, Tenacity, Entrepreneurial, Tolerant, Goal Oriented, Strong sense of identity (Barnes, 2007)
- High maintenance but also highly productive . They desire flexible jobs with advanced technology and rapid advancement opportunities. Seek steady feedback . Work not first life priority but will engage *if they believe in outcome and the employer’s values*
- **Education:** An expense. “What’s the value added?”
- **Communication:** Internet, Camera phones, Texting, No home phones, No need for in-person meetings
- **Influences:** Volunteerism, Giving Back, Helicopter parents with structured time and activities

Digital Natives

Birth – 15 years

- **Core Values** – most entrepreneurial of all generations
- They are intuitive learners rather than linear. (They do not use or easily relate to manuals.)
- They learn via participation rather than passively, as illustrated in the difference between Wikipedia and Britannica.
- Their brains have developed a high capacity to multitask and to rapidly task-switch (hopping).
- They see the world in less hierarchical terms - the Internet levels the playing field, making everyone more equal online
- **Education** – relevant, interactive and highly engaging
- **Communication** – better on-line, may be less skilled with FTF
- **Influences** - Mark Zuckerman,

Significance of GD in our workplaces

- Impacts recruitment, workforce satisfaction, retention, patient satisfaction...and productivity
- The greater the variation of age groups within an organization, the overall engagement scores for all generations (Branham, 2009)
- Each generation calls for a slightly different leadership skill set (Fox, 2011)
- Policies and procedures can be huge dissatisfies if not generationally appropriate

Impact of Millennials

Our new college graduates entering the workforce

- High interest in “giving back” and altruism
- High interest in health care to “make a difference”
- Challenge to organizations – especially health care!
- High turnover rate: 30% in 1st year of practice, 57% in second year (Mills & Mullins, 2008)
- Connectivity and interactivity are the way they learn
- Live and expect 24/7 connections
- They have been socialized to multitask (listen to music, do homework, work in a study group, answer their phone – simultaneously!)
- They want to learn information that is interesting to them and practical for their lives
- Will not stay in a job that “does not make sense”

“When I’m 64”

Impact of Veterans staying in the workforce

- Increasing number of older workers in the workplace
- Older workers needed to transfer knowledge, reinforce org commitment and engagement, mentor younger employees
- Need a plan to mitigate knowledge loss
- Strongest **organizational commitment and engagement**
- Age-related EEOC discrimination claims remain high partly due to recession strategy of downsizing older workers to save salary \$/health care costs.

Workplace Characteristics

(Hammill, 2005)

WORKPLACE CHARACTERISTICS

	Veterans (1922–1945)	Baby Boomers (1946–1964)	Generation X (1965–1980)	Generation Y (1981–2000)
Work Ethic and Values	Hard work Respect authority Sacrifice Duty before fun Adhere to rules	Workaholics Work efficiently Crusading causes Personal fulfillment Desire quality Question authority	Eliminate the task Self-reliance Want structure and direction Skeptical	What's next Multitasking Tenacity Entrepreneurial Tolerant Goal oriented
Work Is ...	An obligation	An exciting adventure	A difficult challenge A contract	A means to an end Fulfillment
Leadership Style	Directive Command-and-control	Consensual Collegial	Everyone is the same Challenge others Ask why	*TBD
Interactive Style	Individual	Team player Loves to have meetings	Entrepreneur	Participative
Communications	Formal Memo	In person	Direct Immediate	E-mail Voice mail
Feedback and Rewards	No news is good news Satisfaction in a job well done	Don't appreciate it Money Title recognition	Sorry to interrupt, but how am I doing? Freedom is the best reward	Whenever I want it, at the push of a button Meaningful work
Messages That Motivate	Your experience is respected	You are valued You are needed	Do it your way Forget the rules	You will work with other bright, creative people
Work and Family Life	Ne'er the twain shall meet	No balance Work to live	Balance	Balance

How generational differences affect research teams

- Collaboration among the actual and extended research team
- Dealing with change
- Organization & accountability
- Productivity and decision making
- Delegation of tasks/activities by Study Coordinators
- Training of new clinical research associates
- Attendance at research meetings and PD activities

Strategies to leverage generational diversity

- Build a strong age-diverse culture – one that ensures that all workers are respected and appreciated

Explicit commitment to GDtalk about it!

Leadership development programs that teach research coordinators to manage multiple age groups and use GD

- Clear understanding of the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 & amendments

More Organizational Strategies

- Focus on teams/teamwork as an attribute of high performing, successful organizations
- Include workshops on **giving feedback** (thought of and received VERY differently by different generations and a critical aspect of high performing teams)
- The importance of formal succession planning
- Be explicit about the need to retain older team members to mitigate knowledge loss (2006 RWJ Foundation white paper)

Even more.....

- Explicit org commitment to retain older employees to mitigate knowledge loss.
- Match leadership styles with team members
- Transformational leadership, which is relationship-based, is most generationally appropriate
- AARP's: Best Employers for Workers Over 50
- Assessing current HR policies and practices for multigenerational needs

Who is on your research team?

- The importance of individual self assessment
- The importance of explicit focus on team “chemistry”
- The importance of continuous work on teambuilding
- The importance of finding out what motivates each team member and their work preferences
- The importance of the study coordinator’s role in addressing diversity

One more thing.....working with research subjects and patients

- GD applies to research subjects as well
- Despite protocols, no “one-size-fits-all”
- Emphasis on *how research subjects learn*
- Different generations teach differently – ensure an effective match
- Age matters!

Learning Preferences of Veterans

- Face to Face Interaction
- Individual learning and studying
- Well written notes and instructions
- Their educational upbringing: “The 3 “R’s”
- Focus is on memorization
- Step-by-step instruction, sequential learning
- Humble about what they already know
- May lack self-confidence

Learning preferences of “Boomers”

- Face to face of meetings
- Team building activities
- In person communication
- Motivated by learning being valued or needed
- Committed, life long learners
- Enjoy lecture format
- Prefer detailed handouts
- Preference towards taking notes (sometimes by hand)
- Learn best when life experiences are tapped

Learning Preferences of Gen Xers

- Direct, immediate communication
- Rules are not important: “Why?”
- Distance learning is a must
- Learning best done independently, on their own time, at their own pace
- Require detailed study guides
- Detailed test reviews BEFORE the test
- Learn best by solving problems

Learning Preferences of Millennials

- Actual coursework, access and learning must be technology based and advanced (Garner, 2007)
- Fastest growing market for wireless & data services in the US
- They are active information seekers (Barnes, 2007)
- Easily bored with traditional teaching methods
- Games, interactive simulations, participation

Summary

- GD matters as much as all other types of diversity
- The greater the diversity of our research teams, the more important is the leadership of those teams
- “Lead to Succeed” through leveraging GD
- Availability of marvelous, specific resources
- Who doesn’t want to talk about themselves???????