



Generations at Work

Traditionals

Born between 1928 and 1945

Commonly referred to as: "the silent generation", "WW II generation", "Veterans generation", "the mature generation", and "the greatest generation"

summary:

Traditionals are considered the most loyal group of the 4 generations. They have a strong commitment to the organizations they work for and the people they work with. Traditionals tend to deal with distractions poorly, but are good at prioritizing and accomplishing assignments without guidance. On certain levels they relate well to the Millennials and when they are valued, they are very comfortable in mentorship roles.

characteristics:

dedication, sacrifice, hard work, conformity, law & order, respect for authority, patience, delayed reward, duty before pleasure, adherence to rules, honor, loyalty, tenure

assets

stable
detail oriented
thorough
loyal
hard working

challenges

unresponsive to ambiguity and change
reluctant to rock the boat
reluctant to rock the boat
uncomfortable with conflict
unexpressive when they disagree



Generations at Work

Baby Boomers

Born between 1946 and 1964

Commonly referred to as: "boomers", hippies & yuppies", "the 'me' generation"

summary:

Baby Boomers are generally a very performance and competitive driven generation. They tend to place career ahead of family with optimism that they can "do it all". They work well in groups and are driven to achieve with an expectation of career advancement. This generation accepts change more easily than previous generations. They are also responsible for the "Me Generation" with its emphasis on personal gratification. This has shown itself in the rise of personal debt, and "me" focused industries such as spas, cosmetic surgery, and so on. This attitude is translating into retirement as well, as many Boomers continue to work part time, and pursue very active hobbies.

characteristics:

optimism, team orientation, personal gratification, health & wellness, personal growth, work involvement, individuality, exploring creative retirement, forever young

assets

service oriented
driven
good w/relationships
aim to please
team players

challenges

not naturally budget minded
uncomfortable w/conflict
process ahead of results
overly sensitive
self centered
judgmental of those w/different opinions



Generations at Work

Generation X

Born between 1965 and 1980

Commonly referred to as: "genX", "Xers", "twenty-somethings", "baby busters", and "latch-key kids"

summary:

Gen Xer's are the smallest of the 4 generations in terms of population size. In general, this generation is very independent and possesses strong technical skills. This is the first generation to be very comfortable with changing technologies. They tend to be unintimidated by authority and are comfortable with conflict. Generation X tries to strike a balance between work and life and will pursue companies which allow for this balance. They are comfortable moving from company to company having very little loyalty to an organization, but greatly value meaningful work and diversity in the work place. This group introduced casual dress to the work environment and as a percentage is more entrepreneurial than the generations before it.

characteristics:

diversity, global thinking, balance, technology, fun, informality, detached, self-reliance, pragmatism, entrepreneurial

assets

adaptable
techno literate
independent
unintimidated by authority
creative

challenges

impatient
different manners
inexperience
skeptical
perceived as slackers
quick to criticize





Generations at Work

Millennials

Born between 1981 and 1999

Commonly referred to as: “nexters”, “gen y”, internet generation”, and “echo boomers”

summary:

Millennials are the second largest generation next to the Boomers. They have grown up globally aware and are the most highly educated of the generations. They are very comfortable transitioning between tasks and doing multiple activities at once. They tend to value diversity and inclusion, while having a strong sense of civic duty. Millennials are very comfortable moving between jobs and will often strategically plan the length of stay and what they are wanting to get out of a particular job before moving on. They tend to blur the line between work and life and often mix the two together with their technology and social networks.

characteristics:

optimism, civic duty, confidence, achievement, sociability, morality, street smarts, diversity, automation in every aspect of life, nurtured, do not want to be lumped with genXers

predicted assets

meaningful work
realism
tenacity
heroic spirit
multitasking
technological savvy

predicted challenges

need for supervision and structure
inexperience
job hopping
multi-tasking
work isn't everything
dependence on technology





Generations at Work

Traditionals

Born between 1946 and 1964

Considerations When Designing Workspace

Traditionals View of the Workplace:

High importance of home base, personal space reflects accomplishment, identity derived from place within the organization

Workspace Considerations;

- Hierarchical structure (how to express it within the organization)
- Boundaries that are created to define departments, personal workspaces, and meeting areas
- Varying degrees of privacy from personal workspace to different meeting environments
- Formal, structured work environment vs. casual, loose work environment
- Adjacencies of co-workers and amenities





Generations at Work

Baby Boomers

Born between 1946 and 1964

Considerations When Designing Workspace

Baby Boomers View of the Workplace:

Desire team/group spaces for collaboration, but still prefer a home base. They are less hierarchical but still want status recognized within the organization. Prefer a limited amount of privacy but still want to easily interact with co-workers. Boomers tend to be very concerned about their role in how work gets accomplished and how they will be viewed within that role.

Workspace Considerations:

- Private Office/Open-office blend is a comfortable environment
- Break-away areas for privacy
- Non-reservable and reservable teaming/collaboration areas
- Easy to use technology throughout and non-technology options
- Shared use areas in centralized locations (resource areas, break areas, etc.) for impromptu meeting areas





Generations at Work

Generation Xers

Born between 1965 and 1980

Considerations When Designing Workspace

Generation Xers View of the Workplace:

Gen Xers prefer a home base for concentrated work and the look and quality of the overall space is important. They are comfortable with open work environments but do not like a sea of cubicles. Gen Xers tend to prefer a more casual atmosphere (remember they introduced casual dress in the work environment). Availability of technology tools and its integration in the workplace are important and the space should support opportunities for personal expression.

Workspace Considerations:

- Informal, relaxed atmosphere (home like)
- Accessibility and proximity to upper management
- Alternative officing (work at home, etc.)
- Technology integrated into work environment (wireless)





Generations at Work

Millennials

Born between 1981 and 1999

Considerations When Designing Workspace

Millennial View of the Workplace:

The workplace is an extension of home. The culture of the company is as important as the space. The seamless integration of technology should allow Millennials the option to work in multiple locations, including away from the office. Personal expression throughout the space is important. A home base is preferred, but easy accessibility to upper management is highly desired. The more relaxed the atmosphere, the better. A variety of open and closed, formal and informal meeting spaces are desired. The “cube” is a highly negative influence, yet an open environment is preferred. Alternatives to a “cube” environment are highly treasured.

Workspace Considerations:

- Technology seamlessly integrated (wireless) and personal
- Relaxed, homelike quality; work anywhere; flexible, fluid space
- Accessibility and proximity to upper management
- No cubes!



Steelcase®



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