The Impact of Generational Differences in the Workplace

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Diversity Specialist and Workgroup Consultant

Learning Objectives

• Understand the differences between generations as they relate to their communication, work, and social styles.
• Learn ways to ensure that our workplaces support, rather than inhibit, the way generations individually behave and interact with each other.

About the Speaker

• Educator for 10 years
• Market Manager in the office furniture industry for over 26 years
• Master's Degree in Psychology, Diversity Management and Organizational Development
• Diversity Consultant, Facilitator and Trainer

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Generations and Social Change

The children now love luxury. They have bad manners, contempt for authority; they show disrespect for adults, and love to talk rather than work or exercise. They no longer rise when adults enter the room. They contradict their parents, chatter in front of company, gobble down food at the table and intimidate their teachers.
Socrates (469 - 399 B.C.)

Generational Learning Styles

Julie Coates

A Few Generational Statistics

- By end of 2010 50% of the workforce will be at retirement age
- There will be a 31% drop in 35-45 yr. olds
- Gen Xers have started 80% of the new businesses since 2000

A Few Generational Statistics

- “Interesting work” is a top priority for 62% of people under 30
- Gen Xers are most likely to leave their current job

Development Dimensions Int’l

Traditionalists 1900 - 1945

- GI Generation 1900 - 1924
- Silent Generation 1925-1945
- Veterans, Builders
- 75 Million

Traditionalists 1900 - 1945 (cont’d)

- 50% of the men are veterans
- Linear thinkers
- Motto: Duty First
- Work to Live Generation

Traditionalist Influences | People

- George, Dorothy
- Henry Ford
- Wright Brothers
- FDR
- Frank Lloyd Wright
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditionalist Influences</th>
<th>People (cont’d)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• John Wayne</td>
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<td>• Joe DiMaggio</td>
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<td>• Dr. Spock</td>
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<td>• Betty Crocker</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditionalist Influences</th>
<th>Places</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Pearl Harbor</td>
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<td>• Normandy</td>
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<td>• Hiroshima</td>
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<td>• Movie theaters</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Dance halls</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Factories</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Church pews</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Kitchen tables</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Front porches</td>
<td></td>
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<td>• Sun Belt</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditionalist Influences</th>
<th>Things</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• War bonds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Eagle Stamps</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Pennies saved</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Drive-ins</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Cigarettes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Technology</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Radio</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Jukebox</td>
<td></td>
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<td>• Television</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditionalist Influences</th>
<th>Events</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Roaring Twenties</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Stock market crash</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Great Depression</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• World Wars I and II</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Presidency of FDR</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• GI Bill</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• 1950’s economic growth</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Assassination of JFK</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditionalist “Personality”</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Pyramid shaped organizations accomplish goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Have faith in institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• There is no safety net</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Polite, reserved, obedient</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Compliant and loyal</td>
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</tbody>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditionalist “Personality” (cont’d)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Waste not, want not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Respect the rules and your elders</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Work to live and support your family</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Traditionalist “Personality” (cont’d)

- Spending style: Conservative
- Work characteristic: Top down
- Job satisfaction need: Acknowledgement
- Work method: Chain of command
- Work: Lifetime Careers
- Affected by: Real war
- Farmer’s tan to blue collar

Baby Boomers 1946–1964 (cont’d)

- 80 million strong
- Raised by traditionalists who wanted them to have a better life
- Tend to be idealists
- Optimistic
- We are the center of the generational universe

Baby Boomers 1946–1964

- Competitive
- The “Me” generation
- Live to work
- Motto: Anything is possible

Baby Boomer Influences | People

- Tom, Linda, Michael
- JFK
- Martin Luther King Jr.
- Eldridge Cleaver
- Beaver Cleaver
- Bill Clinton
- Bill Gates

Baby Boomer Influences | Places

- Dallas
- Watergate Hotel
- Kent State
- Woodstock
- The suburbs
- The bedroom
- The delivery room
- The classroom
- The court room

Baby Boomer Influences | People

- Rosa Parks
- Charles Manson
- Captain Kangaroo
- Captain Kirk
- Gloria Steinem
- Janice Joplin
- Mick Jagger
- Bauhaus

Baby Boomer Influences | Places
Baby Boomer Inflences | Things

- Hula hoops
- Bellbottoms
- Brooks Brothers suits
- Bottled water
- Junk food / bonds
- LSD / SEC
- Television
- Telemarketing

Baby Boomer Inflences | Events

- JFK and MLK assassinations
- Vietnam
- Watergate
- Human rights movements
- OPEC oil embargo
- Recession

Baby Boomer “Personality”

- Consumers
- Changed everything from the supermarket to the job market to the stock market
- They are what they do

Baby Boomer “Personality” (cont’d)

- Live to work generation
- Work hard, get to the top
- They want advancement, titles, tangibles - office furniture, parking spaces

Baby Boomer “Personality” (cont’d)

- Spending style: Buy now, pay later
- Work characteristic: Loyal workaholics
- Job satisfaction need: Make a difference

Baby Boomer “Personality” (cont’d)

- Work method: Discussion and consensus
- Work: Stellar careers
- Affected by: Cold war
- Blue collar to white collar
Generation X 1965-1980

- 46 Million
- Latchkey generation
- Take care of number one
- Skeptical
- The world is not as safe as it once was

Generation X Influences | People

- Brad, Jennifer, Leshawn
- Brat Pack
- Bill Clinton
- Ted Bundy
- Quentin Tarantino
- O.J
- Mr. Rogers
- Supermodels
- Michael Jordan
- Mark Andreessen

Generation X Influences | Places

- Sesame Street
- Jonestown
- Soviet Union
- Internet
- Somalia
- Chernobyl
- Starbucks
- Space Station
- Hoteling stations

Generation X Influences | Things

- Pet rocks
- Grunge
- Nintendo
- Cable, digital, satellite, internet TV
- Palm pilots
- Microwaves
- Cell phones
- Personal computers

Generation X Influences | Events

- Munich Olympics
- Energy crisis
- John Lennon
- Exxon Valdez
- Berlin Wall
- Monica-gate
- Holes in the ozone
- AIDS epidemic

Generation X 1965-1980 (cont'd)

- Be ready for change
- Dot com, Dot gone
- Entrepreneurial
- Motto: Achieve a work/life balance
The world isn’t as safe as it once was
Pragmatic and practical
Resourceful and rely on themselves
Question authority
Community builders yet independent

Group oriented - “Friends”
Direct and to the point
Tolerant of differences
Working for money, not for fun

Spending style: Cautious and conservative
Work characteristic: Bottom line oriented
Job satisfaction need: Balance work and home

Work method: Efficient, ignore chain of command
Work: Portable careers
Affected by: Economic war

76 Million
Generation Y, Baby Busters, Net generation
One third born to single/ unwed mothers
“Baby on Board” - child focused lives

Grown up in a busy, over-planned world
Techno-savvy generation
Born into the information age
Non-linear thinkers
Motto: Technology rules
Millennial Influences | People

- Brandon, Crystal, Simon
- Prince William
- Tinky Winky
- Leonardo DiCaprio
- Ricky Martin
- Marilyn Manson
- Mark McGwire
- Venus and Serena

Millennial Influences | Places

- Back seat
- Chuck E Cheese
- Dawson’s Creek
- Oklahoma City
- Columbine
- New York City
- Outer Space
- Cyberspace

Millennial Influences | Things

- Gameboys
- Cell phones
- Text messages
- Virtual reality
- Information superhighway
- Local mall
- Virtual mall

Millennial Influences | Events

- World wide web
- Challenger
- Columbia
- September 11
- US Embassy in Iran
- Hanging chad dispute
- Iraq
- Columbine
- Virginia Tech

Millennial “Personality”

- Multitasking, multimedia
- Short attention span
- Self-absorbed, self assured
- Feel valued and wanted

Millennial “Personality” (cont’d)

- Global view
- High expectations of self and organization
- Experienced missing classmates
- Personal safety is the #1 workplace issue
Generations
Working Together
Laura E. Bernstein, VisionPoint
www.visionpoint.com

Key Workplace Dimensions | Work Style

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tradationalists:</th>
<th>Baby Boomers:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By the book; How is as important as what gets done.</td>
<td>Get it done; Whatever it takes (including nights and weekends)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation X:</td>
<td>Generation Y:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take fastest route to results; Protocol is secondary</td>
<td>Work to deadlines and goals - not necessarily to schedules</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key Workplace Dimensions | Authority/Leadership

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<thead>
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<th>Traditionalists:</th>
<th>Baby Boomers:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Command and control; Rarely question authority</td>
<td>Respect for power and accomplishment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation X:</td>
<td>Generation Y:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egalitarian; Rules are flexible; Collaboration is important</td>
<td>Value freedom and autonomy; Less inclined to pursue leadership positions</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Key Workplace Dimensions | Communication

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Traditionalists:</th>
<th>Baby Boomers:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formal yet personal; Through proper channels One on one</td>
<td>Somewhat formal through structured network; Mix of electronic and face-to-face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation X:</td>
<td>Generation Y:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual, direct, and electronic; Sometimes skeptical; Need feedback, hate supervision</td>
<td>Fast, casual, direct, and high-tech; Eager to please</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Key Workplace Dimensions | Work/Family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditionalists:</th>
<th>Baby Boomers:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work and family should be kept separate</td>
<td>Work comes first</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation X:</th>
<th>Generation Y:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Value a work / life balance</td>
<td>Value blending personal life into work</td>
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### Key Workplace Dimensions | Technology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditionalists:</th>
<th>Baby Boomers:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complex and challenging “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.”</td>
<td>Necessary for progress and achievement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation X:</th>
<th>Generation Y:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Practical tools for getting things done</td>
<td>What else is there?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Traditionalists
- Private offices
- Size matters
- Establish authority
- Colors need to be richer
- Not technology driven

They are also retiring and reinventing themselves

### Baby Boomers
- Private offices and open
- Establish authority
- More contemporary
- Colors tend to be lighter
- More technology driven
- Ergonomic issues
  - Keyboards
  - Seating
  - Lighting

### Generation X
- If I don’t like it, I am out of here!
- Open offices - less formal
- Technology driven
- Ergonomic issues
- Quality is more important than brand
- Demand good design, graphics, and color

### Millennials
- Need visual stimulation
- Technology first
- Teamwork
- Look for value
- Demand good graphics, contemporary images, color
- Have more fun at work
Workplaces for Generations

- Primary purpose is to support an organization’s mission
- Productive workplaces: people grow and learn as they improve organization
- A comfortable workplace setting provides:
  - Shelter and security
  - Social contact
  - Task accomplishment
  - Identification
  - Pleasure and growth

Questions?

Thank you for your time.

Please complete our survey so we can continue to improve and provide quality programs to you.

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216-214-5641