Generational Difference in Workplace Expectations

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Why are we here?

• recognize assumptions about generations in the workplace

• examine and understand how perceived generational differences can affect the workplace at Puget Sound

• consider perceived generational differences based on stage of life

• practice holding conversations to bridge perceived generational differences and improve work
Definitions

• **Generation** – a group of people born within a certain period of time who may share experiences which shape a distinct worldview
  • For example: the Watergate scandal and levels of political distrust

• **Stage of life**—one’s place in the life cycle and aging processes (young parent, middle-aged, retiree)
  • For example: voting behavior in young adults (Millenials vs. Baby Boomers)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SILENT GENERATION</th>
<th>BOOMERS</th>
<th>GEN X</th>
<th>MILLENNIALS (Gen Y)</th>
<th>GENERATION Z</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age: 80-72</td>
<td>Age: 71-53</td>
<td>Age: 52-41</td>
<td>Age: 40-25</td>
<td>Age: 24-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formative Events:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Great Depression</td>
<td>• Vietnam War</td>
<td>• Fall of Berlin Wall</td>
<td>• 9/11 Attacks</td>
<td>• Global terrorism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• WWII</td>
<td>• Watergate</td>
<td>• End of Cold War</td>
<td>• Obama election</td>
<td>• Trump election</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• McCarthyism</td>
<td>• Woodstock</td>
<td>• AIDS/HIV Crisis</td>
<td>• Great Recession</td>
<td>• Brexit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cold War</td>
<td>• MLK and JFK assassinations</td>
<td>• Rise of the personal computer</td>
<td>• Rise of global internet</td>
<td>• Social media natives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Space Race</td>
<td>• Rise of the television</td>
<td>•</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Pew Research Center, Internet and Technology 2010
HOW TO USE POLL EVERYWHERE
An interactive audience participation tool

1. Bring a Mobile Device
No downloading or installing needed.
Participation is optional.

2. Join Poll
There are two ways to participate.
In a browser ➔ Respond at PollEv.com/2018PDEC
In a text messaging app ➔ Text 2018PDEC to 37607
SMS charges may apply. Reception may vary.

3. Share Your Response
Select an option on your screen or
respond with a text message.

4. See Results
Audience responses will be shown on the
presentation screen. Results are anonymous.
Would you be classified as:

- Silent Generation
- Boomer
- Gen X
- Millennial
- Generation Z
Have you ever used the term Boomer, Silent Generation, Gen X, Millennial or Gen Z to describe a generation?
What stereotypes have you heard attributed to . . .

Boomers?

Gen Xers?

Millennials?
Empirical Support for Generational Differences?

• Some Basics about Human Perception
  ➢ We see individual cases, not large-scale trends.
  ➢ We tend to notice differences, not similarities.
  ➢ Our perceptions are often “tainted” due to confirmation bias.

• Caveats in Data Interpretation
  ➢ Generational cut-off points are somewhat subjective
  ➢ Disentangling generational differences from normal “stage of life” differences.

• What do the Data Show Us?
  ➢ Organizational experiences tend to socialize employees → more similarity with time.
  ➢ Many dimensions fail to show differences.
  ➢ Where there are differences, the “effect sizes” tend to be very small.
  ➢ Within generational variation is greater than between generational variation.
Org. Culture, Job Satisfaction, Org. Commitment, by Generational Cohort - no differences
(hired 2006+)

Chart showing favorability ratings for Org. Culture, Job Satisfaction, and Org. Commitment by generational cohort (Gen Y, Gen X, and B Boomers) with no significant differences.
Are we really that different?

Millennials and Older Workers Have Many of the Same Career Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Long-Term Goal</th>
<th>Millennials</th>
<th>Gen X</th>
<th>Baby Boomers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Make a positive impact on my organization</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help solve social and/or environmental challenges</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with a diverse group of people</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work for an organization among the best in my industry</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do work I am passionate about</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Become an expert in my field</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage my work-life balance</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Become a senior leader</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achieve financial security</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start my own business</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: IBM Institute for Business Value, 2014
Work effort questions – Gen Y different
(hired 2006+)

Only miss work when necessary. Usually show up a little early to get things ready.
The most impt things involve my work.

How likely - look for a job in the next year?

Work importance, intent to stay – Gen Y different
(hired 2006+)

Percent "agree" or "strongly agree"
Interview Comments:
Work engagement and meaning – Gen Y
(examples of within generation differences)

**Profession** – If you don’t do your job the right way and there are problems with the airplane later on ... your family could be flying on this plane. So I always think about that.

*(Male production worker, age 26, 2 years at Boeing)*

**Instrumental** - I’m more of the, “work to live, not live to work” kind of people. Actually, I don’t really like airplanes except for the fact that they help me fly on vacation, but it doesn’t define me.

*(Male engineer, age 28, 1 year at Boeing)*

**Work Itself**- The day I was hired...was one of the happiest days of my life. There are just so many directions you can take a job, or your career, with Boeing. ...yeah, a lot of different areas to get in if I get bored in one spot.

*(Male manufacturing engineer, age 25, 13 months at Boeing)*
NOW WHAT?
“Time to get new socks”

“Feedback is a gift”
Frustration  Empathy

Reaction  Learning
Knowing others is wisdom, knowing yourself is enlightenment

- Lao Tzu
While no single conversation is guaranteed to change the trajectory of a career, a company, a relationship, or a life, any single conversation can.

Susan Scott, Fierce Conversations
Pair & Share

• *In the workplace, what are some generational assumptions that have been made about you that aren’t true?*

• *What generational assumptions have you made about others, based on their behavior?*
Pair & Share

• When you think about the behavior of someone else, can you think of explanations for it that aren’t generational?

• What—at its core—really bothers you about the behavior?
Pair & Share

• How might you go about having a conversation about the behavior?

• How can you adjust your thinking when generational assumptions surface?

• How can you respond when people make generational assumptions about you?
“We need to remember across generations that there is as much to learn as there is to teach”

Gloria Steinem
Course Evaluation

Featured Speaker Online Evaluation at pugetsound.edu/pdecFeatured Survey (not case sensitive)