Generational Diversity in the Office
A New Challenge for HR Managers

❖ ❖ ❖

Angela Heyroth | October 2003

Daniels College of Business
Professor Douglas Allen
High Performance Management II

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Appendix Follows

INTRODUCTION

Racial, religious, ability and socioeconomic diversity dominate contemporary HR literature, but a new kind of diversity awareness is beginning to creep into corporate America: *generational diversity*. While differences in generations have always existed, the poignancy and implications of the differences of the current working American generations are more pronounced now than perhaps ever before. Three major generational groups currently dominate the American working world: Silent Generation, Baby Boomers, and Generation X. A fourth group, the Millennials, are beginning to enter the workforce as well. These four generations are defined by different life experiences, leading to varying sets of values and needs. Often, these generations conflict with one another as the gaps and resulting misunderstandings become more distinct.

Thus, a new set of issues now face HR managers as they strive to recruit, reward, and manage each generation differently, while also managing the intergenerational clashes which are becoming common. Based on a study of current literature as well as a survey of generational assumptions[*], this paper analyzes the four working generations, defining each by life experiences and work-related values and providing and implications and recommendations for HR and line managers. Additionally, intergenerational issues and implications are explored.

A NOTE ABOUT GENERATIONAL STUDIES

Experts in generational studies define generations not by a set number of years, but by shared life experiences that tend to put stamps on peer groups, creating an "underlying generational persona." These stamps influence the general attitudes towards family, institutions, politics, religion and work, creating a kind of biography for an entire group of people. (Life Course Associates, 2002) These are admitted generalizations and there are, of course, exceptions to the generalizations below. Additionally, the characteristics discussed below are unique to the Americans who have been born, lived and died in each defined generation, and these characteristics may differ sharply from peers born during the same age in other nations.

---

[*] *The survey referred to throughout this paper was conducted by the author in fall 2003. Twenty-eight people participated (two from the Silent Generation, 11 from the Baby Boom, 12 from Generation X, and three from the Millennial Generation). More details of this survey are available in the Appendix.*

THE SILENT GENERATION

Generally considered to be those born between 1925 and 1945, the Silent Generation numbers approximately 60 million people in the United States, and currently comprises about two percent of the total workforce (Saunderson, 2000). The youngest members of this generation are in their late 50s. Famous members of the Silent Generation include Aretha Franklin, Dustin Hoffman and Colin Powell ("Generation Gap" and Wendover, "From Ricky & Lucy…").

Defining the Silent Generation. The members of the Silent Generation are the children of the "GI Generation," which produced some of American history's greatest heroes, including John Wayne, Ronald Reagan, George Bush, Joe DiMaggio, John F. Kennedy, Charles Lindberg, Walt Disney, Jimmy Stewart and Lee Iacocca. In contrast, the Silent Generation produced no major heroes. This generation was marked by World War II, McCarthyism and the beginning of the Cold War, as well as the Korean Conflict and Vietnam. Most members of the Silent Generation grew up in then-new suburbs surrounded by extended families, listening to "endless stories" and consistent messages about values, good versus bad and sacrifice. Contemporary entertainment enforced such values, including *Leave it to Beaver* and *Father Knows Best*. Such life experiences led to a generation which generally behaves traditionally and conservatively, linked to the past and to family. The Silent Generation tends to be tough, highly disciplined, consistent and very conforming to expectations. (Saunderson, 2000; "Generation Gap;" Wendover, "From Ricky & Lucy…") In the afore-mentioned survey, the words most mentioned as being associated with this generation were: conservative, hard-working, dependable, patriotic, traditional, disciplined, family-oriented, loyal, survivors and dedicated. Interestingly, thirteen words were rated as having no association with this generation, including: clueless, cynical, irreverent, needy, reckless, rude and selfish. Members of the Silent Generation rated themselves with the same words that the generations at large used.

The Silent Generation at Work. As a result of these shared experiences and attributes, members of the Silent Generation are patient, dependable employees who work hard, follow rules and respect authority. Most of the working Silent Generation are employed in large, "safe" companies. This generation values loyalty and traditional, tangible rewards. Conversely, this generation can be techno-phobic and fearful of change, although this is often an unfair stereotype of a generation that has

survived and overcome major world events. (Saunderson, 2000; "Generation Gap;" Wendover, "From Ricky & Lucy…")

Implications and Recommendations for Managers. While there are few of the Silent Generation in the workforce, and the last will retire in the next ten to fifteen years, it is still vitally important for HR managers to understand this generation. According to the authors of *Generations at Work* (1999), managers should respect this generation's need for family connections by allowing for socializing time at work. Additionally, handwritten notes are valued more than emails, and tangible symbols such as plaques are suggested as honors of their hard work. (Zemke, Raines and Filipczak) HR must also prepare for the final exit of the remainder of this generation, who will expect retirement packages that reward their years of hard work and loyalty.

THE BABY BOOM GENERATION

Baby Boomers were born between 1946 and 1964, in the post-war boom of the United States. They number approximately 75 million Americans, and the youngest are 39 and 40. They currently comprise about 42 percent of the workforce (Saunderson, 2000), with Oprah Winfrey, Donald Trump, Bill Gates, Bill Clinton and George W. Bush being among the most famous members.

Defining the Baby Boom Generation. The Baby Boom generation was marked by the shared life experiences of war protests, the civil rights and women's lib movements, the development of the Polio vaccine, the assassinations of national leaders and the space race, as well as general economic expansion, rock music and the proliferation of television (Wendover, "From Ricky & Lucy…" and Zemke, Raines and Filipczak, 1999). This is the generation of "causes" and freedom of expression, whose role was "not to obey [society's] rules but rather to justify, purify, and force change wherever they believed it was necessary" ("Generation Gap"). As a result, Boomers are both self-indulgent and self-confident (ibid), as well as extremely idealistic, striving to "make a difference" and believing that they can do almost anything (Wheeler, 2001). In the survey conducted as research for this paper, words most associated with the Baby Boomers were: educated, achievement-oriented, hard-working, idealistic, motivated, political, demanding, risk-takers, arrogant and determined. Only two words were rated as having no association with this generation: disloyal and withdrawn. Boomers rated themselves as educated, motivated, intelligent, hard-working, achievement-oriented and stressed workaholics.

<u>Baby Boomers at Work</u>. Boomers currently manage "the majority of businesses within the United States," and they are generally optimistic and collaborative employees who tend towards workaholism (Saunderson, 2000 and Wendover, "From Ricky & Lucy…"). Because of their desire to make a difference, Boomers will jump at the chance to achieve important results, but their self-indulgent sides will expect public recognition for such successes (Zemke, Raines and Filipczak, 1999). Additionally, Boomers are rather formal, appreciating agendas, meetings and lists ("Generations & Values").

<u>Implications and Recommendations for Managers</u>. Boomers are "desperate to do something meaningful before they retire. They want to be remembered," so HR managers should try to provide the chance for them to do so. While they will begin retiring in the next fifteen to twenty years, the workaholism of Boomers means they may postpone retirement longer than prior generations.   In fact, labor force participation by this age group actually *rose* between 2001 and 2002, by two percentage points (Armour, 2003). Therefore, HR still needs to be aware of recruiting tactics to attract this generation of strong managers. Boomers are not enticed by money as much as they are by status and security, so when recruiting Boomers, they should be offered opportunities with upward mobility. (Wheeler, 2001) An additional consideration for HR is that many Boomers have taken on the burden of elder care and need the time and resources to perform this duty ("Generations & Values").

GENERATION X

Born between 1964 and 1981, members of Generation X grew up in a time of rapid societal and political change. By all accounts, they number less than 45 million Americans and total 40 to 80 percent of the workforce in most businesses (Saunderson, 2000). Michael Jordan, Tom Cruise and Mary Lou Retton are all "Xers."

<u>Defining Generation X</u>. Xers are "the survivors of what the adult world left behind" ("Generation Gap"), believing that "their mission in life is to clean up everyone else's mess" (Wheeler, 2001). They are defined by the upheavals of Watergate, Olympic boycotts, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the hostage crisis, the Challenger explosion and the Gulf War, as well as the proliferation of cable television and AIDS. Xers grew up watching *Sesame Street,* discovering that entertainment can be educational. They learned to use Macintosh computers and VCRs. Most grew up in dual-income households and 40 percent were the product of divorce. Xers watched their parents being downsized,

presidents and military heroes accused of dishonesty and ministers indicted for promiscuity and fraud. (Wendover, "From Ricky & Lucy…")

These realities have created a somewhat jaded generation, fiercely independent and self-reliant, and extremely cautious and skeptical of the institutions that previous generations have trusted. (ibid) They neither expect, nor want, to be taken care of, by parents, employers, or the government. They are, therefore, fiscally and politically conservative, as exemplified by the 1980's "Alex P. Keaton" character. Xers are also exceptionally adaptable, techno-savvy self-starters who are passionate about causes and value deep friendships (Saunderson, 2000). They are extremely well-educated – many have masters degrees or professional certifications, and they sincerely appreciate learning opportunities and personal growth. In the survey conducted for this paper, Xers were associated most with the following words: educated, multi-taskers, driven, risk-takers, adaptable, confident, impatient, demanding, determined and energetic. Words rated as having no association with Generation X included patient and rigid. Xers rated themselves as educated, driven, adaptable, risk-takers, multi-taskers, independent, hopeful, street-smart, reckless and open-minded.

Generation X at Work. Xers not only deal well with change, but in fact, they thrive on it. They also enjoy challenges and multi-tasking. Given their self-reliance and independence, many are successful entrepreneurs and managers. (Saunderson, 2000) Their deep-seeded autonomy, though, means they are not always strong team-players. They are bold, savvy, results-oriented and very direct, an absolute conflict with prior generations, who may be their managers. They are highly skilled and motivated, but, disgusted by their parents' workaholism as Boomers or Silents, they value deep friendships, time off and enjoyment of life ("Generations & Values"), and they put family first (Armour, 2003). This is also a generation facing immense struggles relating to work. In fact, "as far as making enough for a decent living and a secure retirement goes, no generation since the Great Depression has had the odds so stacked against it" (Conlin, 2003). This is due to larger student loans than prior generations, higher costs for housing and insurance, as well as the demographic implications of being the smallest generation in existence. This adds to the general resentment and push towards hard work and self-management exhibited by Xers.

Implications and Recommendations for Managers. Xers should be managed from a distance, providing them plenty of control and autonomy. While they are hard workers, particularly for a project they believe in, they also want to "play hard." They appreciate time to pursue outside interests

and fun work environments, and they casually blur the lines between work and play. (Zemke, Raines and Filipczak, 1999) Xers want to be rewarded with additional freedoms, learning opportunities and results-oriented projects (Saunderson, 2000). They want direct, rather than diplomatic, feedback, and want to earn the salary they deserve based on their performance, rather than what the organization says they should receive. Because they never plan to stay at a company more than a few years, and are skeptical of any long-term promises, Xers should be offered short-term rewards such as salary and stock options. Additionally, they respond to flex-time, extra vacation, the chance to work with people they respect, a "fun" work environment and plenty of meaningful projects. (Wheeler, 2001) In fact, the office and management style exemplified by the "dot com" era is an Xer's dream come true, and one that other American businesses could emulate in order to attract the high-performing Xers.

THE MILLENNIAL GENERATION

Born between 1982 and 2000, the Millennial Generation is sometimes referred to as the "Echoboom" because their numbers closely resemble the Baby Boomers, at somewhere between 70 and 80 million. In fact, by some accounts, they actually outnumber the Boomers (Wendover, "Millennials…"). The oldest Millennial is 21, and they therefore make up less than one percent of the workforce, but that number will grow quickly in the next decade (Saunderson, 2000). Well-known Millennials include gold medalists Tara Lipensky and Sarah Hughes, as well as Hillary Duff and the Olsen Twins. A definite theme is the rise of girls in this generation.

Defining the Millennial Generation. Largely optimistic, very few Millennials know about the Cold War from first-hand knowledge, and all have grown up surrounded by technology their entire lives. This is the generation whose parents (largely Boomers) hung "Baby on Board" signs in their cars, and this parental attention is a key characteristic of the Millennials. Parents have treated this generation as "the center of the universe," leading to high self-esteem and financial power ("Generations & Values"). They have also grown up in an age of situational ethics, exemplified by reality television, the Lewinsky/Clinton scandal, OJ Simpson's trial and the Enron debacle (Wendover, "Millennials …"). This is the most racially diverse generation in the United States, and has been defined by the Oklahoma City bombing, the Columbine shootings and the 9/11 attacks.

Millennials, therefore, are a group which believes in tight national security, civic duty and collective action, directly in opposition to Xers. They are used to, and indeed crave, conformity and

close protection and supervision by parents, teachers, employers and the government (Wheeler, 2001). They are very talented and socially conservative (Raines, 2002), and are used to an overcomplicated world (Wendover, "Millennials …"). Overall, this is largely considered a generation of hope ("Generation Gaps"). In the previously mentioned survey, Millennials were associated with the following words: diverse, impatient, clueless, demanding, energetic, street smart, confused, risk-takers and self-absorbed. They were rated as having no association with the words formal and patient. Milennials rate themselves as independent, talented, street-smart, slackers, savvy, risk-takers, reckless and passionate.

Millennials at Work. As Millennials enter the workforce, two phenomena are being noticed by their employers. First, the over-complicated world they have matured in has led to "menu-driven" thinking, where Millennials expect to be able to make immediate choices rather than involved decisions. The result is "a surprising lack of critical thinking skills" as well as the inability to reflect on their choices (Wheeler, 2001 and Wendover, "From Ricky & Lucy …"). Furthermore, they are demonstrating a trend towards the situational ethics, rule manipulation and lack of accountability they have been surrounded by during their formidable years, asking teachers to re-evaluate grades and looking for easy ways out of many circumstances (Wendover, "Millennials …").

Employers are also finding that parents are still very involved with this generation, even once they are working. One employer said that he regularly receives calls from parents of his Millennial employees, calling just to "make sure everything's going okay" (Wendover, "Problem Solving …"). Because they have generally been sheltered and indulged, they are also entering the workforce with high, sometimes unrealistic, expectations about pay, protection and career paths (Raines, 2002). For all of these negatives, however, Millennials also offer a great deal of promise. They are extremely adept with technology, thrive on conformance and teamwork and respect elders, particularly from the Silent Generation. They are diplomatic, confident and energetic, as well as skilled multi-taskers. ("Generations & Values")

Implications and Recommendations for Managers. With the Baby Boom retirement looming, and a larger generation poised to enter the workforce *en masse,* HR must begin preparing for the unique challenges and opportunities offered by the Millennials in the workplace. "Early signs indicate that HR professionals may struggle initially to deal with some of [this generation's] attitudes toward the workplace" (Wallace, 2001). Millennials need a sense of security and structure, stemming from clear

and consistent messages with plenty of guidance and straightforward delegation of tasks (Wendover, "Problem Solving …"). This may be particularly difficult for an Xer manager who assumes the new employee thrives off of autonomy.   Millennials also seek learning opportunities and chances to interact with friends, so managers should assign projects that allow them to grow and develop among a group of cohorts. More than previous generations, Millennials will enjoy open office spaces which encourage collaboration and shared goals. (Raines, 2002) They respect leaders, so a mentoring program may succeed well with this generation, and they appreciate extensive training and development opportunities (Zemke, Raines and Filipczak, 1999). In addition to training classes, collaborative environments, direct supervision and mentorship, money and well-developed career paths are important rewards for Millennials (Wallace, 2001 and Wendover, "Millennials …").

To recruit Millennials, most of the focus over the next few years will be on college recruiting. Recruiters should strive to recruit groups of friends from clubs on campuses, rather than individuals, because of their sense of camaraderie and conformance. Additionally, Millennials want to be met on their own turf; in fact "you may need to recruit these individuals in different places such as the internet, a snowboarding tournament, or cable TV" ("Generations & Values"). When recruiting Millennials, recruiters should promote the supportive, nurturing environment in the office, the sense of collaboration, as well as the available career paths. Such tactics will result in successful recruitment and retention of the Millennial generation.

While it is imperative to understand each generation's major touchstones, it is also necessary to know how these generations interact with one another as well as sources of potential conflict in the workplace.

INTERGENERATIONAL CLASHES

Generational conflict is certainly not new, but because the differences between generations are more pronounced, tensions regarding these differences are growing, and affecting relations and results in the workplace.

The survey conducted for this paper reveals that 12.5 percent of the respondents have experienced office conflict related to generational misunderstandings. Why? The first reason is because the needs, drivers and life experiences of each generation are drastically different, as was explained above, and often generations do not acknowledge these differences in one another.

Additionally, the vast majority of Americans (almost 80 percent of survey respondents) report to someone in a different generation than their own, and if their manager does not understand their needs and motivations, conflicts can often arise. Even more significant, though, is the growing trend of older workers, namely Silents and Boomers, working for younger managers, primarily Xers. Almost 21 percent of survey respondents currently report to someone in a later generation than their own, and this number will likely grow in the next decade.

Intergenerational conflicts are primarily related to intense misunderstandings and differences in value sets. For example, Boomers and Silents, who feel they have worked hard and bided their time, are often frustrated by Xers' and Millennials' plans to move up the corporate ladder too quickly, whereas Xers and Millennials often feel that Boomers and Silents are holding on to their jobs too long. There is actually a growing trend in the United States, of Xers suing for "reverse ageism," claiming they "are experiencing career stalemate as graying baby boomers become reluctant to retire" (Armour, 2003). Other typical office conflicts include:

- ❖ **Work styles**: Xers are results oriented, Millennials task oriented, and Boomers and Silents process oriented. Additionally, Xers value autonomy more than the other three generations, while Millennials value teamwork more than the others.

- ❖ **Communication styles**: Xers tend to be more direct than the other three generations. Some see this as lacking in communication and social skills. Boomers tend to be more diplomatic and subtle than the other three, sometimes leading to misunderstandings.

- ❖ **Work ethic**: Xers and Millennials both seek enjoyment of life and family now, rather than waiting for retirement. They tend to take more vacation time and value flex time more than their older counterparts, who may see them as "slackers," lacking in work ethic and loyalty. Whereas, Xers and Millennials view Boomers as workaholics.

- ❖ **Management styles**: Xers value autonomy and hate conformity while Millennials embrace it. Millennials' desire for close management directly conflicts with Xers' management style.

- ❖ **Workplace design and interactions**: Millennials have grown up in a casual world, and often do not understand Boomers' and Silents' formality. Silents value social connections at work and an extended family feel in the office, but a distinct boundary between work and play, whereas Millennials and Xers want to have fun at work and strive to blur the boundaries. Additionally, Silents' well-defined ethics and sense of duty often clash with Millennials' more situational ethics.

(Survey; Raines, 1999; Raines, 2002; and Zemke, Raines and Filipczak, 1999)

As generational differences become more distinct, the potential for conflict grows, as does the need for HR and line managers to be able to anticipate and address such problems. HR should also

seek ways to exploit these differences, however. For instance, if a direct, motivated Xer and a diplomatic, motivated Boomer are paired on a major client-facing project, they may be able to combine their traits to achieve far-reaching results.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The rate and number of economic, technological, societal and political changes which have occurred on the American landscape over the last half-century have created more pronounced generational differences than have ever existed in the past. And with not one or two, but four distinct generations in the American workforce today, managers must be able to change management styles readily, in order to manage according to the varying values, attitudes and needs of each generation. Key recommendations for HR managers and others include:

1. **Understand** generational issues at large, including defining characteristics and needs of each.
2. **Recognize** the generational diversity in your own firm, researching the demographics, trends, misunderstandings and general needs of your office.
3. **Apply** this research to HR and general management strategies, policies and procedures, recognizing that people perform better and are retained longer if their needs are addressed.
4. **Acquire** new advantages by combining generational strengths on project teams.
5. **Ensure** employees adequately understand the generational diversity in the firm, particularly if they are managing or working with others in different generations.

With so much changing within the landscape of the American workforce in the next decade, it is imperative that companies understand generational diversity and adjust HR policies appropriately, in order to reap bottom-line rewards.

REFERENCES

Armour, S. (2003, October 8). Young workers say their age holds them back. *USA Today.*

Conlin, M. (2003, June 30). For gen X, it's paradise lost. *Business Week.*

Generations and values. Retrieved September 26, 2003 from
http://jsd.dli.state.mt.us/local/polson/employers/hrt/generations_values.html
  - *Research conducted by Montana's Department of Labor regarding generational diversity and the implications for employers*

Generation gap. Retrieved September 26, 2003 from
http://library.thinkquest.org/23440/index.html?tqskip1=1&tqtime=0921
  - *Site devoted to analyzing, comparing, and learning from the five different generations of today*

Life Course Associates (2002). What we believe. Retrieved September 26, 2003 from
http://www.lifecourse.com/whatwebelieve/generations.html
  - *Company specialized in publishing, speaking, and consulting to employers regarding generational discoveries*

Raines, C. (2002). Managing millenials. Generations at Work. Retrieved September 26, 2003 from
http://www.generationsatwork.com/
  - *Claire Raines is considered one of the nation's leading experts on the generations at work*

--. (1999). The boomers and the Xers. Generations at Work. Retrieved September 26, 2003 from
http://www.generationsatwork.com/

Sauderson, R. (2000). Managing generational differences in the workplace. Recognition Management Institute. Retrieved September 26, 2003 from
http://www.realrecognition.com/TLOMA.doc
  - *Saunderson specializes in the art and practice of giving people recognition that motivates and keeps great employees*

Wallace, J. (2001, April). After X comes Y. *HR Magazine.* Society for Human Resource Management.

Wendover, R. From Ricky & Lucy to Beavis & Butthead: Leading the new generations. Center for Generational Studies. Retrieved September 26, 2003 from
http://www.gentrends.com/articles.html
  - *The Center for Generational Studies conducts research, produces seminars and publishes resources on how the generations can better relate to one another in American society*

--. Millennials, nexters, and other strangers. Center for Generational Studies. Retrieved September 26, 2003 from http://www.gentrends.com/articles.html

--. Problem solving approaches: It can depend on the generation. Center for Generational Studies. Retrieved September 26, 2003 from http://www.gentrends.com/articles.html

Wheeler, K. (2001, May). Recruiting the generations: Different strokes for different folks. Global Learning Resources. Retrieved September 26, 2003 from http://www.glresources.com/columns/recruitingthegenerations.htm
- *Global Learning Resources provides advice, analysis, strategic planning assistance, workshops and on-going consultation focused around human capital including corporate education, staffing and retention*

Zemke, R., Raines, C. and Filipczak, B. (1999). Tips for motivating the different generations. American Management Association. Retrieved September 26, 2003 from http://www.amanet.org/books/catalog/0814404804_d.htm
- *Key points from a book dedicated to managing the clash of generations in the workplace, by three of the nation's foremost experts on the subject*

Survey Informants:
28 people were surveyed via the web-tool Survey Monkey. Questions related to personal experiences with other generations as well as asking what words are associated with each of the four working generations. The same set of words was provided for each generation, and both positive and negative words were included. Results of the survey are attached.

Intentionally Blank – Appendix Follows

Appendix

1. What generation are you in, given the birth years specified below?

	Response Percent	Response Total
Silent (born 1926-1945)	7.1%	2
Boomer (born 1946-1964)	39.3%	11
X (born 1965-1981)	**42.9**%	**12**
Millennial (born 1982-2000)	10.7%	3
Total Respondents		28
(skipped this question)		0

2. What words do you associate with the SILENT GENERATION? Members of the Silent Generation are currently ages 58-77 and were shaped by World War II, the Korean and Vietnam conflicts, the Golden Age of Hollywood, and heroes like Jackie Robinson.

	Response Percent	Response Total
Accomplished	46.4%	13
Achievement-oriented	39.3%	11
Adaptable	32.1%	9
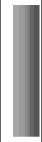
Trait	Percent	Count
Aloof	0%	0
Angry	10.7%	3
Arrogant	10.7%	3
Autocratic	10.7%	3
Balanced	32.1%	9
Bold	10.7%	3
Burnt-out	7.1%	2
Cautious	50%	14
Clueless	0%	0
Collaborative	3.6%	1
Concerned	32.1%	9
Confident	25%	7
Confused	3.6%	1
Conservative	**78.6%**	**22**
Consistent	35.7%	10
Cynical	0%	0
Dedicated	53.6%	15
Demanding	10.7%	3
Dependable	75%	21
Determined	35.7%	10
Disciplined	60.7%	17

Attribute	Percent	Count
Disloyal	0%	0
Disrespectful	0%	0
Diverse	7.1%	2
Driven	21.4%	6
Educated	39.3%	11
Energetic	7.1%	2
Ethical	53.6%	15
Family-oriented	57.1%	16
Flexible	7.1%	2
Focused	28.6%	8
Forceful	3.6%	1
Formal	21.4%	6
Friendly	35.7%	10
Fulfilled	14.3%	4
Global	3.6%	1
Goal-oriented	32.1%	9
Hard-working	**78.6%**	**22**
Healthy	7.1%	2
Heroic	32.1%	9
Homogeneous	14.3%	4

Generational Diversity in the Office | Angela Heyroth

Trait	Bar	Percentage	Count
Hopeful		14.3%	4
Idealistic		21.4%	6
Impatient		10.7%	3
Independent		21.4%	6
Influential		28.6%	8
Innovative		10.7%	3
Intelligent		39.3%	11
Intense		3.6%	1
Irresponsible		0%	0
Irreverent		0%	0
Loyal		57.1%	16
Manipulative		3.6%	1
Motivated		17.9%	5
Multitasking		3.6%	1
Needy		0%	0
Open-minded		3.6%	1
Optimistic		10.7%	3
Overloaded		3.6%	1
Passionate		21.4%	6
Patient		17.9%	5
Patriotic		71.4%	20

Pessimistic	7.1%	2
Political	35.7%	10
Realistic	32.1%	9
Reasonable	32.1%	9
Reckless	0%	0
Reflective	39.3%	11
Relaxed	7.1%	2
Reliable	50%	14
Respectful	53.6%	15
Responsible	50%	14
Rigid	17.9%	5
Risk Takers	3.6%	1
Rude	0%	0
Savvy	3.6%	1
Self-absorbed	3.6%	1
Self-centered	3.6%	1
Selfish	0%	0
Self-reliant	25%	7
Self-righteous	7.1%	2
Self-starters	17.9%	5
Situational	3.6%	1

ethics			
Skeptical		10.7%	3
Slackers		0%	0
Street-smart		7.1%	2
Stressed		7.1%	2
Survivors		57.1%	16
Talented		14.3%	4
Task-focused		21.4%	6
Team-players		17.9%	5
Traditional		71.4%	20
Understanding		28.6%	8
Unethical		0%	0
Victims		3.6%	1
Violent		3.6%	1
Whiners		0%	0
Wise		53.6%	15
Withdrawn		3.6%	1
Workaholics		14.3%	4
	Total Respondents		**28**
	(skipped this question)		**0**

3. What words do you associate with the BABY BOOMER GENERATION? Members of the Baby Boomer Generation are currently ages 39-57 and were shaped by the civil rights movement, women's lib, the JFK assassination, the space race with the Soviet Union, and the growth of television and rock music.

	Response Percent	Response Total
Accomplished	41.7%	10
Achievement-oriented	54.2%	13
Adaptable	25%	6
Aloof	16.7%	4
Angry	16.7%	4
Arrogant	45.8%	11
Autocratic	4.2%	1
Balanced	8.3%	2
Bold	33.3%	8
Burnt-out	37.5%	9
Cautious	16.7%	4
Clueless	4.2%	1
Collaborative	25%	6
Concerned	20.8%	5
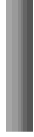
Trait	Percentage	Count
Confident	41.7%	10
Confused	12.5%	3
Conservative	25%	6
Consistent	8.3%	2
Cynical	41.7%	10
Dedicated	33.3%	8
Demanding	50%	12
Dependable	25%	6
Determined	45.8%	11
Disciplined	20.8%	5
Disloyal	0%	0
Disrespectful	4.2%	1
Diverse	37.5%	9
Driven	41.7%	10
Educated	**83.3**%	**20**
Energetic	20.8%	5
Ethical	25%	6
Family-oriented	29.2%	7
Flexible	33.3%	8
Focused	29.2%	7

Generational Diversity in the Office | Angela Heyroth

Forceful		29.2%	7
Formal		8.3%	2
Friendly		33.3%	8
Fulfilled		12.5%	3
Global		12.5%	3
Goal-oriented		45.8%	11
Hard-working		54.2%	13
Healthy		37.5%	9
Heroic		8.3%	2
Homogeneous		16.7%	4
Hopeful		37.5%	9
Idealistic		54.2%	13
Impatient		37.5%	9
Independent		41.7%	10
Influential		20.8%	5
Innovative		33.3%	8
Intelligent		45.8%	11
Intense		37.5%	9
Irresponsible		16.7%	4
Irreverent		12.5%	3
Loyal		12.5%	3

Category	Percent	Count
Manipulative	8.3%	2
Motivated	54.2%	13
Multitasking	37.5%	9
Needy	8.3%	2
Open-minded	37.5%	9
Optimistic	25%	6
Overloaded	16.7%	4
Passionate	45.8%	11
Patient	8.3%	2
Patriotic	25%	6
Pessimistic	16.7%	4
Political	54.2%	13
Realistic	12.5%	3
Reasonable	8.3%	2
Reckless	12.5%	3
Reflective	20.8%	5
Relaxed	20.8%	5
Reliable	25%	6
Respectful	25%	6
Responsible	37.5%	9
Rigid	4.2%	1

Category	Percent	Count
Risk Takers	50%	12
Rude	12.5%	3
Savvy	4.2%	1
Self-absorbed	29.2%	7
Self-centered	20.8%	5
Selfish	16.7%	4
Self-reliant	16.7%	4
Self-righteous	12.5%	3
Self-starters	16.7%	4
Situational ethics	8.3%	2
Skeptical	20.8%	5
Slackers	8.3%	2
Street-smart	12.5%	3
Stressed	45.8%	11
Survivors	29.2%	7
Talented	29.2%	7
Task-focused	16.7%	4
Team-players	25%	6
Traditional	16.7%	4
Understanding	12.5%	3

Unethical	4.2%	1
Victims	8.3%	2
Violent	4.2%	1
Whiners	20.8%	5
Wise	16.7%	4
Withdrawn	0%	0
Workaholics	37.5%	9
Total Respondents		**24**
(skipped this question)		4

4. What words do you associate with the X GENERATION? Members of the X Generation are currently ages 22-38 and were shaped by Watergate, the 1980 Olympic boycott, the fall of the Berlin Wall, Glasnost, the Iran Contra hearings, the hostage crisis, Sesame Street and MTV, the Challenger explosion, divorce, the beginning of AIDS, the invention of VCRs, the Wall Street frenzy, latchkey kids, and the Apple Computer.

Generational Diversity in the Office | Angela Heyroth

Category	Percentage	Count
Aloof	29.2%	7
Angry	20.8%	5
Arrogant	41.7%	10
Autocratic	8.3%	2
Balanced	20.8%	5
Bold	33.3%	8
Burnt-out	20.8%	5
Cautious	4.2%	1
Clueless	16.7%	4
Collaborative	16.7%	4
Concerned	29.2%	7
Confident	54.2%	13
Confused	16.7%	4
Conservative	12.5%	3
Consistent	8.3%	2
Cynical	33.3%	8
Dedicated	16.7%	4
Demanding	50%	12
Dependable	25%	6
Determined	50%	12
Disciplined	16.7%	4

Generational Diversity in the Office | Angela Heyroth

Trait	Percentage	Count
Disloyal	4.2%	1
Disrespectful	20.8%	5
Diverse	41.7%	10
Driven	58.3%	14
Educated	**83.3%**	**20**
Energetic	50%	12
Ethical	8.3%	2
Family-oriented	25%	6
Flexible	29.2%	7
Focused	25%	6
Forceful	33.3%	8
Formal	0%	0
Friendly	25%	6
Fulfilled	4.2%	1
Global	16.7%	4
Goal-oriented	45.8%	11
Hard-working	41.7%	10
Healthy	45.8%	11
Heroic	4.2%	1
Homogeneous	8.3%	2

Generational Diversity in the Office | Angela Heyroth

Trait	Bar	Percentage	Count
Hopeful		29.2%	7
Idealistic		25%	6
Impatient		54.2%	13
Independent		33.3%	8
Influential		8.3%	2
Innovative		41.7%	10
Intelligent		33.3%	8
Intense		41.7%	10
Irresponsible		12.5%	3
Irreverent		25%	6
Loyal		4.2%	1
Manipulative		16.7%	4
Motivated		41.7%	10
Multitasking		62.5%	15
Needy		16.7%	4
Open-minded		45.8%	11
Optimistic		33.3%	8
Overloaded		37.5%	9
Passionate		33.3%	8
Patient		0%	0
Patriotic		29.2%	7

	Count	Percentage
Pessimistic	3	12.5%
Political	5	20.8%
Realistic	3	12.5%
Reasonable	2	8.3%
Reckless	6	25%
Reflective	3	12.5%
Relaxed	1	4.2%
Reliable	4	16.7%
Respectful	3	12.5%
Responsible	6	25%
Rigid	0	0%
Risk Takers	14	58.3%
Rude	2	8.3%
Savvy	11	45.8%
Self-absorbed	9	37.5%
Self-centered	7	29.2%
Selfish	5	20.8%
Self-reliant	7	29.2%
Self-righteous	5	20.8%
Self-starters	11	45.8%
Situational	5	20.8%

ethics		
Skeptical	20.8%	5
Slackers	12.5%	3
Street-smart	45.8%	11
Stressed	25%	6
Survivors	20.8%	5
Talented	41.7%	10
Task-focused	25%	6
Team-players	29.2%	7
Traditional	4.2%	1
Understanding	16.7%	4
Unethical	0%	0
Victims	4.2%	1
Violent	8.3%	2
Whiners	16.7%	4
Wise	8.3%	2
Withdrawn	4.2%	1
Workaholics	29.2%	7
Total Respondents		**24**
(skipped this question)		4

5. What words do you associate with the MILLENNIAL GENERATION? Members of the Millennial Generation are currently ages 2-21 and have been shaped by 9/11, Columbine, Oklahoma City, talk shows and reality TV, the growth of the internet, the Clinton/Lewinsky scandal, Enron, "Baby on Board" signs, and credit card debt.

	Response Percent	Response Total
Accomplished	9.1%	2
Achievement-oriented	18.2%	4
Adaptable	31.8%	7
Aloof	27.3%	6
Angry	13.6%	3
Arrogant	27.3%	6
Autocratic	4.5%	1
Balanced	18.2%	4
Bold	18.2%	4
Burnt-out	4.5%	1
Cautious	13.6%	3
Clueless	50%	11
Collaborative	18.2%	4
Concerned	13.6%	3
Confident	13.6%	3

Generational Diversity in the Office | Angela Heyroth

Label	Percentage	Count
Confused	45.5%	10
Conservative	13.6%	3
Consistent	9.1%	2
Cynical	13.6%	3
Dedicated	18.2%	4
Demanding	50%	11
Dependable	9.1%	2
Determined	27.3%	6
Disciplined	4.5%	1
Disloyal	9.1%	2
Disrespectful	36.4%	8
Diverse	**54.5%**	**12**
Driven	22.7%	5
Educated	36.4%	8
Energetic	50%	11
Ethical	9.1%	2
Family-oriented	22.7%	5
Flexible	22.7%	5
Focused	22.7%	5
Forceful	18.2%	4

Generational Diversity in the Office | Angela Heyroth

Label	Percentage	Count
Formal	0%	0
Friendly	40.9%	9
Fulfilled	4.5%	1
Global	18.2%	4
Goal-oriented	27.3%	6
Hard-working	9.1%	2
Healthy	36.4%	8
Heroic	4.5%	1
Homogeneous	4.5%	1
Hopeful	40.9%	9
Idealistic	31.8%	7
Impatient	**54.5**%	**12**
Independent	40.9%	9
Influential	4.5%	1
Innovative	18.2%	4
Intelligent	31.8%	7
Intense	18.2%	4
Irresponsible	27.3%	6
Irreverent	18.2%	4
Loyal	13.6%	3
Manipulative	22.7%	5

Trait	Percentage	Count
Motivated	18.2%	4
Multitasking	22.7%	5
Needy	36.4%	8
Open-minded	36.4%	8
Optimistic	27.3%	6
Overloaded	9.1%	2
Passionate	22.7%	5
Patient	0%	0
Patriotic	27.3%	6
Pessimistic	4.5%	1
Political	13.6%	3
Realistic	9.1%	2
Reasonable	4.5%	1
Reckless	31.8%	7
Reflective	9.1%	2
Relaxed	18.2%	4
Reliable	9.1%	2
Respectful	13.6%	3
Responsible	18.2%	4
Rigid	0%	0
Risk Takers	45.5%	10

Generational Diversity in the Office | Angela Heyroth

Category	Percentage	Count
Rude	13.6%	3
Savvy	18.2%	4
Self-absorbed	45.5%	10
Self-centered	36.4%	8
Selfish	13.6%	3
Self-reliant	18.2%	4
Self-righteous	4.5%	1
Self-starters	9.1%	2
Situational ethics	9.1%	2
Skeptical	4.5%	1
Slackers	27.3%	6
Street-smart	50%	11
Stressed	18.2%	4
Survivors	13.6%	3
Talented	31.8%	7
Task-focused	9.1%	2
Team-players	9.1%	2
Traditional	4.5%	1
Understanding	13.6%	3
Unethical	4.5%	1

Victims	4.5%	1
Violent	4.5%	1
Whiners	22.7%	5
Wise	4.5%	1
Withdrawn	4.5%	1
Workaholics	4.5%	1
Total Respondents		**22**
(skipped this question)		6

6. Is your direct manager …

	Response Percent	Response Total
In an earlier generation than yours? (e.g., an Xer working for a Boomer)	**50**%	**12**
In a later generation than yours? (e.g., a Boomer working for an Xer)	20.8%	5
In the same generation as yours?	25%	6
Not Applicable	4.2%	1
Total Respondents		**24**
(skipped this question)		4

7. Have you had any conflicts that you would attribute to generational issues/misunderstandings?

	Response Percent	Response Total
Yes	12.5%	3
No	**66.7**%	**16**
Comments	20.8%	5
Total Respondents		**24**
(skipped this question)		4

View Comments

8. Do you feel that your generation is misunderstood and/or underappreciated?

	Response Percent	Response Total
Yes	20.8%	5
No	**58.3**%	**14**
Comments	20.8%	5
Total Respondents		**24**

View Comments

(skipped this question) | 4