

Presented at Holland Professional Club – December 2011

Presented at Holland Young Professional Club – March 2012

GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES

TRADITIONALS

BABY BOOMERS

Xers

GENERATION Y

(1922 -- 1945)

(1943 --1965)

(1963 – 1985)

(1983 – 2002)

The Greatest Generation

The “ME” Generation

The Latch-Key Kids

The “Entitled” Generation

Bob Frey

March 15, 2012

WHAT IS A “GENERATION” ?

Introduced in sociological theory in the 1950’s ...

“People passing through time who come to share common experiences or ‘significant life events’ which provide them with a collective memory, which in turn creates a collective field of emotions, attitudes, and preferences relating to family, religion, gender roles, life styles and more (Business) that each such generation uses to create their own unique culture.”

BELIEVE IT !!

AN OVERVIEW ...

1. **“DIVERSITY”** ... The presence of four different generations in the same work environment can raise the usual diversity issues, but if properly managed can be a positive benefit:
 - > Requires *“Inclusion” ... A Seat At The Table*
 - > Can become a real benefit ... *“The Employer of Choice”*
 - > The rise of the Human Resource Officer

2. **“GENERATIONAL TENSIONS”** ... Between old and new Generations ... THE FIRST TIME ALL FOUR GENERATIONS HAVE WORKED TOGETHER ... more likely to arise due to errors in attribution and perception ... focused Management can help.

3. **“TWEENERS”** ... Those on the cusp, in transition, can share attitudes of both generations, can act as translators, sometimes called the *“Cross-Over Effect”*.

4. **IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY** ... Rapidly advancing communication technology will expedite and shorten the time between generational changes ... Management’s ability to understand and adapt will be critical.

SOME STARTING PARAMETERS

1. **“SIGNIFICANT LIFE EVENTS”** ... *We all know about these, and the belief is that they do indeed influence and define each generation; Pearl Harbor, Kennedy Assassination, 9-11 !!*
2. **COMPANY VALUES** .. *A Company’s unique culture and values can strongly influence one’s feelings about many business and personal issues ... ethics, diversity, transparency, career development ... AND too about Generational differences.*
3. **A DIVERSITY ISSUE** ... *Like any other diversity issue, generational differences need to be addressed head-on and managed; creating a diverse work environment, including all four primary generations, can bring many advantages. Awareness and Training is required.*
4. **AN IMPERFECT SCIENCE** ... *Everyone’s situation is unique. Regional, class, ethnic, and other personal differences do influence one’s values and perspectives. Perhaps surprisingly, however, research confirms that “Generational Differences” are real and do impact our business and other personal views and relationships.*

“SIGNIFICANT LIFE EVENTS” ?

- 1. Traumatic Formative Event ... *Assassinations / Vietnam / 9-11***
- 2. Demographic shift ... *Size of Baby Boomers Generation (78m !!)***
- 3. Significant Cycles of Success or Failure ... *Great Depression / 2008***
- 4. Collective Memory of a “Sacred Space” ... *Woodstock / Ground Zero***
- 5. Mentors Who Give Impetus/Voice to Their Work ... *GHANDI / MLK***

SIGNIFICANT LIFE EVENTS

TRADITIONALS <i>(1922 -- 1945)</i>	BABY BOOMERS <i>(1943 --1965)</i>	Xers <i>(1963 – 1985)</i>	GENERATION Y ** <i>(1983 – 2002)</i>
> THE GREAT DEPRESSION	> CIVIL RIGHTS PROTESTS <i>... Blacks, Women, etc.</i>	> INSECURITY ... <i>Family, Financial, Societal</i>	> PARENTAL EXCESSES
> THE GREAT MIGRATION***	> CUBA, VIETNAM and THE COLD WAR	> BOTH PARENTS WORKING	> COMPUTERS / TECHNOLOGY
> COMMUNISM / FACISM	> KENNEDYS and MLK	> SEXUAL REVOLUTION <i>... The Pill and AIDS</i>	> GLOBALIZATION
> WORLD WAR II / KOREA	> WOODSTOCK ... <i>and</i> <i>“Protests Against Power”</i>	> DRUGS	> 9-11 / The Millenials
<i>“THE GREATEST GENERATION “</i>	<i>“78 m Births ... The Greatest Impact”</i>	<i>“First likely To Earn Less Than Their Parents !”</i>	<i>“Our Most Highly Educated Generation”</i>

* A generation being defined as *“An identifiable group that shares birth years, location and ‘Significant Life Events’”*

** *Millennials, Generation www, The Digital Generation, Cyber-kids, Nothing Is Sacred Generation, The Feel Good Generation*

*** *“The Warmth Of Other Suns”* by Isabel Wilkerson

GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES ...

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CHARACTER TRAITS / VALUES

TRADITIONALS <i>(1922 -- 1945)</i>	BABY BOOMERS <i>(1943 --1965)</i>	Xers <i>(1963 – 1985)</i>	GENERATION Y <i>(1983 – 2002)</i>
> CONSERVATIVE , RISK AVERSE, CONFORMERS	> OPTIMISTIC, INVOLVED ... <i>High Achievers</i>	> INDEPENDENT, SELF- RELIANT, ELITES <i>... The Latch-Key Kids</i>	> CONFIDENT, DEMANDING, CURIOUS, REALISTIC
> DISCIPLINED ... <i>with Fiscal Restraint,</i> INDEPENDENT	> PROCESS MORE THAN RESULTS	> RESULTS ORIENTED > SKEPTICAL	> FUN, HAPPY !! > VALUE TEAM WORK and COMPANY TRAINING
> STRUCTURED and ORGANIZED, RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY	> WORKAHOLICS ... <i>Equate work with self-worth, sacrifice with success, accept Authority</i>	> QUESTION AUTHORITY <i>... Not overly Loyal, Seek Clarity from Leadership</i>	> EMBRACE DIVERSITY, GOAL ORIENTED ... <i>Respect for Leaders Must Be Earned</i>
> UNCOMFORTABLE WITH CONFLICT or CHANGE	> FEEL SPECIAL , IDEALISTIC ... <i>Can Change The World</i>	> ADAPTABLE TO <i>CHANGE ... But Work Must Be Fun</i>	> <i>MULTITASKERS, FLEXIBLE ...“If It Feels Right”*</i>
	> MICRO-MANAGERS	> SEEK LIFE BALANCE	> SEEK LIFE BALANCE

* *David Brooks*

WORK RELATED CHARACTERISTICS

TRADITIONALS

(1922 -- 1945)

BABY BOOMERS

(1943 --1965)

Xers

(1963 – 1985)

GENERATION Y

(1983 – 2002)

1. WORK ETHIC

- > Hardworking
- > Duty and Sacrifice

- > Workaholic
- > Exciting Adventure

- > Only As Needed
- > A Contract !

- > Ambitious, Demanding
- > Tenacity, Goal Oriented
- > Fulfillment ... *A Means*
to an end

2. ATTITUDES: AUTHORITY/RULES

- > Value conformity, authority
and rules
- > 13% included authority
in top 10 values

- > Uncomfortable
interacting with
authority
- > 5% included authority
in top 10 values

- > Comfortable with
authority but not
impressed with titles
- > 6% included authority
in top 10 values

- > Believe respect must
be earned
- > 6% included authority
in top 10 values

3. EXPECTATIONS REGARDING RESPECT

- > Deference
- > Special treatment
- > More weight given their
opinions
- > Team building

- > Deference
- > Special treatment
- > More weight given
their opinions
- > Skills training

- > Want to be held in esteem
- > Want to be listened to
- > Do not expect deference
- > Team building

- > Want to be held in esteem
- > Want to be listened to
- > Do not expect deference
- > Computer training
Expertise

WORK RELATED CHARACTERISTICS

TRADITIONALS <i>(1922 -- 1945)</i>	BABY BOOMERS <i>(1943 --1965)</i>	Xers <i>(1963 – 1985)</i>	GENERATION Y <i>(1983 – 2002)</i>
4. <u>FEEDBACK AND SUPERVISION</u>			
> May be insulted by continuous feedback	> Attitudes closer to traditionals	> Immediate and continuous	> Immediate and continuous
5. <u>LOYALTY TO THEIR EMPLOYER</u>			
> Considered among the most loyal workers	> Value company commitment and loyalty	> Less loyal to companies	> Committed and loyal when dedicated to an idea
> 70% would like to stay for rest of working life	> 65% would like to stay for rest of working life	> 40% would like to stay for rest of working life	> 20% would like to stay for rest of working life
6. <u>WORK/LIFE BALANCE</u>			
> Hard work 9 to 5	> Sacrificed personal life for work	> Value work/life balance	> Value work/life balance

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7. PERCEIVED ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS :

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| > Meet deadlines (84%) | > Use computers (82%) | > Use computers (79%) | > Use computers (66%) |
| > Willingness to learn (84%) | > Willingness to learn (80%) | > Meet deadlines (75%) | > Meet deadlines (62%) |
| > Get along with people (81%) | > Get along with people (78%) | > Willingness to learn (74%) | > Multitasking (59%) |
| > Use computers (78%) | > Meet deadlines (77%) | > Speak concisely (72%) | > Willingness to learn (58%) |
| > Speak concisely (78%) | > Organizational skills (73%) | > Get along with people (71%) | > Articulate (55%) |

8. TOP DEVELOPMENTAL AREAS :

- | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| > Skills training in area of expertise | > Skills training in area of expertise | > Leadership | > Leadership |
| > Computer training | > Leadership | > Skills training in area of expertise | > Problem solving, decision making |
| > Team building | > Computer training | > Team building | > Skills training in area of expertise |

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9. PREFERRED LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTES* :

> Credible (65%)

> Listens well (59%)

> Trusted (59%)

> Credible (74%)

> Trusted (61%)

> Visinary (57%)

> Credible (71%)

> Trusted (58%)

> Farsighted (54%)

> Listens well (68%)

> Dependable (66%)

> Dedicated (63%)

* Top Three Attributes

BABY BOOMERS ... THE GRAY DIVORCEES

- 1. Boomers' divorce rates have doubled over the past 20 years ... this is unprecedented !! All other generations going down since 1980s ?***
- 2. One in four Boomers over the age of 50 are getting divorced ... 600, 000 in 2009. Only 27% cite infidelity as cause ... national average.***
- 3. Boomers' original marriage goals related to "self-fulfillment" ... the "ME GENERATION" ?***
- 4. Of those getting divorced, over 53% have been previously divorced .***
- 5. WHAT's UP: Empty-nesters ... Last Chance ... Going Solo !***

**MANAGING THE YOUNGER GENERATIONS ... A fundamental
Shift Is Occuring In How Companies are Thinking Strategically
About COMMUNICATION With the X and Y Generations ...**

“In a recent poll of 637 working Americans ...68% said that they felt the X and Y Generations were less motivated to assume responsibilities and produce good work than their older counterparts. There’s a significant disconnect in the workplace regarding how managers perceive the motivation and work ethic of these “Millennials”. But this is much more of a communication gap than a generation gap. ... Increasingly, companies are expecting both managers and Millennials to compromise on their communication styles and work habits, with a goal of meeting somewhere in the middle”*

Fortune Magazine

December 1, 2011

** Sometimes used to refer to the Y and X Generations collectively*

**MANAGING THE YOUNGER GENERATIONS ... A fundamental
Shift In How Companies are Thinking Strategically About
COMMUNICATION with the X and Y Generations (And Politicians Too ?) ...**

1. Generations X and Y are a tough audience ... *bombarded with communications from an early age .*
2. Business must involve all generations in the crafting the communications ... *develop processes to show X and Y you're listening and to generate their great ideas.*
3. **TRANSPARENCY**, communicate the whole truth ... *make X and Y feel trusted.*
4. Communications should be shorter, direct and more frequent .
5. No Filler or Rhetoric ... *X and Y find it insulting and maybe deceiving !*

GENERATION Y's EXPECTATIONS OF MANAGEMENT

- **MANAGEMENT** ... Consistency and Continuity in Supervisory Practices
- **TRANSPARENCY** ... *Communication which respects differing perspectives, allows for upward communication*
- **AWARENESS** ... *Responds to the unique needs of each generation (Flexible Work Hours, Continuous Training, and Career Development)*
- **CHALLENGE** ... *Challenging work that really matters*
- **NOTE:** *64 % of today's leadership does not understand the X and Y Generations*

Generation Y'S Fourteen Expectations for Their Managers: “ ... balance clearly delegated assignments with freedom and flexibility, offer increasing responsibility as a reward, get to know staff members and their capabilities, provide ongoing training opportunities, promote mentoring relationships, create a low-pressure environment, flexible work scheduling, focus on work but be personable with a sense of humor, balance role as ‘boss’ and ‘team player’, treat Y’s as colleagues and not as teenagers, be respectful, consistently provide constructive feedback, and reward Y’s when they have done a good job.” *(How about for the Boomers too ?!)*

GENERATION Y ... LIFESTYLE CHARACTERISTICS

TRADITIONALS <i>(1922 -- 1945)</i>	BABY BOOMERS <i>(1943 --1965)</i>	Xers <i>(1963 – 1985)</i>	GENERATION Y <i>(1983 – 2002)</i>
1. <u>WORK IS ...</u>			
> An Obligation	> An Adventure	> A Difficult Challenge	> A Means To An End
2. <u>FAMILY IS ...</u>			
> Traditional / Nuclear	> Disintegrating	> Latch-Key Kids	> Merged Families
3. <u>EDUCATION IS ...</u>			
> A Dream	> A Birthright	> A Way To Get There	> Incredible Expense
4. <u>COMMUNICATION IS ...</u>			
> Rotary Phones	> Touch Phones	> Cell Phones	> Internet
> Write A Letter	> Call Me Anytime	> Only At Home	> Picture Phone
5. <u>MONEY IS ...</u>			
> Save, Pay Cash	> Buy Now, Pay Later	> Cautious, Save	> Earn To Spend

GENERATION Y ... THE “ENTITLED GENERATION” ??

1. 61 % Feel Responsible for Making a Difference in the World.
2. 81 % have Volunteered in the Past Year.
3. 69 % Consider a Company’s *“Social and Environmental Commitment”* When Deciding to Accept a Job or Where to Shop.
4. 83 % Will Trust a Company More if it is Socially and Environmentally Responsible ... *CSR and Sustainability* .
5. Generation Yers are the *“Most Socially Conscious Consumers”* to Date !!

THE GENERATION GAP AND THE 2012 ELECTION*

TRADITIONALS** <i>(1922 -- 1945)</i>	BABY BOOMERS <i>(1943 --1965)</i>	Xers <i>(1963 – 1985)</i>	GENERATION Y <i>(1983 – 2002)</i>
<i>Solidly Behind Romney</i>	<i>Less Behind Obama Than They Were in 2008 ... On The Fence *** > Most financially impacted</i>		<i>Backing Obama By Wide Margin (If They Vote?)</i>
<i>Generally Conservative and Angry; now politically energized ... more than any</i>			<i>Generally Liberal On Social Issues But Disappointed and Now Less Engaged</i>
<i>ONLY Generation To Favor McCain Over Obama</i>			<i>61% Now Favor Obama Over Romney</i>

* Assumes Romney vs. Obama ... Who will be Faulted for the Economy ??? All Generations Still Put Obama Job Approval below 50% !

** Nervous About Social Security and Medicare ... Their "TOP ISSUE" Could Favor Swing To Obama

*** Diversity and Other Social Issues Could Swing These Generations to Obama, while The Traditionals are "uneasy" about growing diversity

NOTE: These Results are from a Survey Conducted by The PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Managing Generational Diversity ... Any Benefits ?

1. **Marketing and Sales ... Understanding ALL of your Customers and other Stakeholders**
2. **Creativity and Innovation ... An internal Cross-Cultural Generational exchange of information has been shown to achieve these benefits**
3. **Orderly Transfer of Expertise and Knowledge driven by mutual respect and communication**
4. **“Employer Of Choice” ... In an increasingly competitive market for Talented Employees (of all ages)**
5. **Overall Competitiveness and Profitability**

PERSONAL CONCLUSIONS ...

1. **REALITY and COMMUNICATION**: Generational Differences are real *AND* require pro-active communication ... *good and timely communication solves many problems.*
2. **I'M A "TWEENER"** : On the cusp between Traditional and Baby Boomer, no wonder I'm confused !
3. **UNDERSTANDING MY KIDS**: Understanding Generational Differences can help a lot, but I need to stay in touch ... *leap frogging to the grandkids ?*
4. **DIRECT RELEVANCE** : Is my teaching still relevant ... *no more "I remember when ..."; awareness helps, and I need to be careful !*
5. **AND NOW YOU ARE AWARE !**

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