



# Successfully Navigating the Multi-Generational Workplace

# The Challenge



“Managing multigenerational workforces is an art in itself. Young workers want to make a quick impact, the middle generation needs to believe in the mission, and older employees don’t like ambivalence. Your move.”

Source: Harvard Business School “Working Knowledge” Newsletter - April 17, 2006: “Can you manage different generations?”

# Objectives

- Identifying Multi-Generational Cohorts
- Recognizing generational characteristics
- Understanding the values of each generation
- Evaluating communication styles
- Managing conflict within generations
- Benefiting from differences



# Identifying Multi-Generational Cohorts

# Multi-Generational Cohorts

## **Multi-Generational Cohorts defined...**

***“An indefinable group that shares the same birth years, age location, and significant life events at critical developmental stages of their lives.”***

# Generation Types

## Traditionalists

(before 1946)



## Baby Boomers

(1946 – 1964)



## Generation X

(late 1960's–late 1970's)



*GENERATIONS*

## Millennials

(1980's – 1990's)





# Recognizing Generational Characteristics

# Traditionalists (before 1946)



- Disciplined
- Dislikes conflict
- Detail oriented
- View history as a way to plan for the future



# Baby Boomers (1946-1964)



- Adaptive
- Goal-oriented
- Focuses on individual choices and freedom
- Adaptive to a diverse workplace
- Positive attitudes

# Generation X (late 1960's-late 1970's)



- Adaptability
- Independence
- Self-reliant
- Family oriented

# Millennials (1980's – 1990's)



- Craves change and challenges
- Creative
- Exceptionally resilient
- Committed and loyal
- Accepts diverse backgrounds easily

# Meet Herb...

- Herb has been working in the leather tannery business for 23 years. He originally started out as a hide dyer but due to his strong work ethic he was promoted to his current role as a plant supervisor. His wife often complains about him not spending enough time around the house due to his loyalty to the job.



# Meet Herb...

What generation is Herb?

- A. Traditionalist
- B. Baby Boomer!!
- C. Generation X
- D. Millennial



# What is a value?

**According to Merriam Webster...**

***“a relative worth, utility,  
or importance”***



# Understanding Generational Values and Work Styles

# The 10 Truths...

1. All generations have similar values
2. Everyone wants respect
3. Trust matters
4. Everyone wants credible, trustworthy leaders
5. Office politics is an issue



# The 10 Truths...

6. No one really likes change
7. Loyalty depends on context
8. Retention is about doing the right things,  
not age
9. Everyone wants to learn
10. Almost everyone wants a coach

# Traditionalists

- Believe in conformity, authority and rules
- Logic
- Defined sense of right and wrong
- Loyalty and respect for authority

# Baby Boomers

- Individual choice
- Community involvement
- Ownership
- Prosperity
- Health and wellness

# Generation X

- Contribution
- Feedback and recognition
- Autonomy
- Time with manager

# Millennials

- Self-expression vs. self-control
- Marketing and branding
- Acceptance of violence
- Lifestyle enjoyment
- Earning respect

# Myths and Reality



Baby Boomers are workaholics...



Generation X'ers aren't willing to work hard...



Millennials are only in it for themselves...

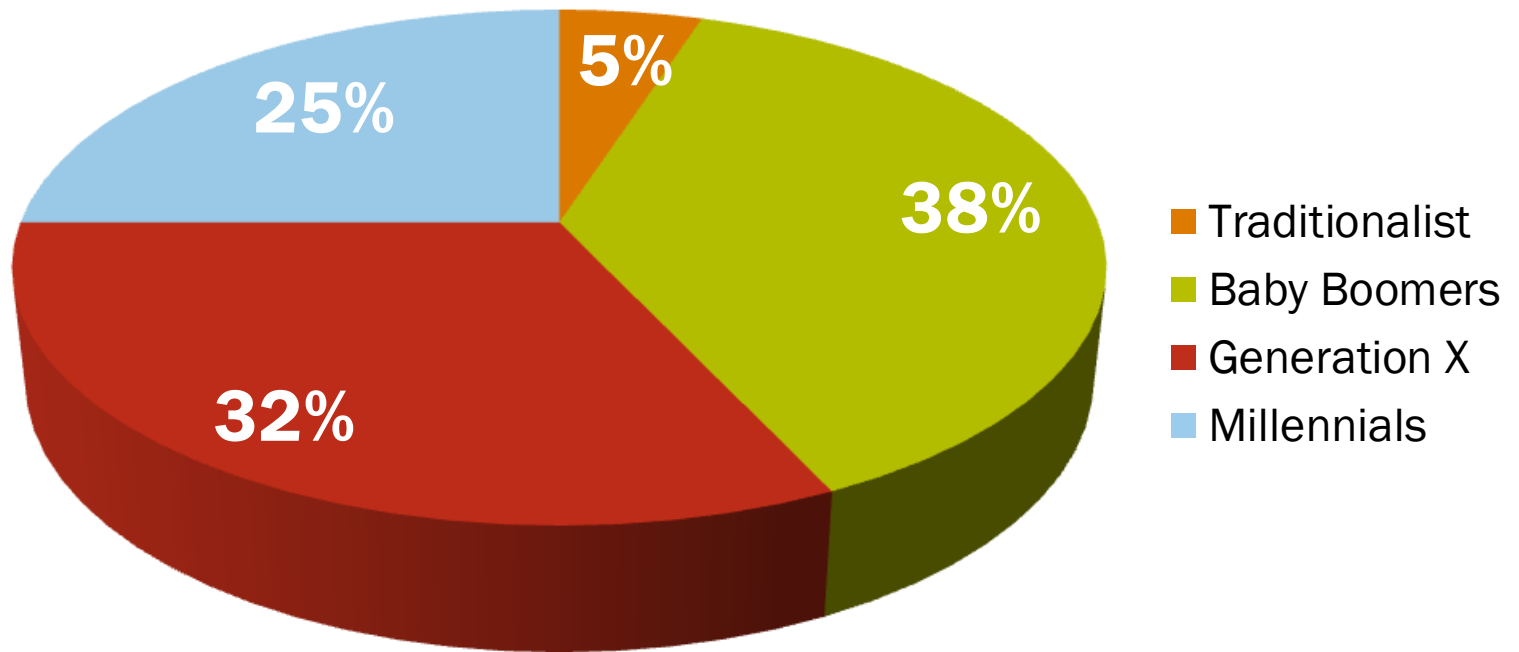
**MYTH**

# Variations of Work Styles

***“Each generation has unique characteristics, influences, work ethics, core values, and respect and tolerance for others that affect how its members interact, communicate and learn in the workplace.”***

# Variations of Work Styles

## U.S. Working Population



Source: 2011 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics



# Variations of Work Styles

## **Traditionalists**

- Seek consistency and uniformity
- Past-oriented
- Prefer organizational structure
- Like command-and-control leadership

# Variations of Work Styles

## **Baby Boomers**

- Confidence in tasks
- Emphasize in team-building
- Avoid conflict
- Seek collaborative, group decision making

# Variations of Work Styles

## **Generation X**

- Productivity
- Work/life balance
- Technologically competent
- Ethnic diversity
- Free agents

# Variations of Work Styles

## Millennials

- Likes to know the big picture perspective
- Flexibility (work/dress)
- Views work as self-expression
- Feeling of entitlement
- Instant gratification

# Ricky and Tammy

Ricky has just been hired as a pharmaceutical representative in his hometown. His supervisor Tammy, 46, is having a hard time adjusting to Ricky's work style versus the older employees she supervises. He comes in exactly at the start of his scheduled time (while the others come in 30 minutes prior) and is occasionally found surfing the internet. She thinks he's lazy!



# Ricky and Tammy

Is Tammy's opinion of Ricky's work ethic accurate?

A. Yes

B. No





# Evaluating Communication Styles

# How do we communicate?

- Facial expressions
- Gestures
- Pointing/Using hands
- Writing
- Drawing
- Touch
- Eye contact
- Using equipment (text/computer)



# Communication Rules

## **Golden Rule**

Do unto others as you would  
have them do unto you

## **Titanium Rule**

Do unto others, keeping their  
preferences in mind

# Four Types of Communication Behaviors

- #1 Passive
- #2 Aggressive
- #3 Passive - Aggressive
- #4 Assertive

# Passive Communicators



A. Fail to assert for themselves ...



B. Allow others to deliberately or inadvertently infringe on their rights ...



C. Tend to be very impulsive ...

C

# Aggressive Communicators



A. Interrupt frequently ...



B. Use facial expressions that don't match how they feel (such as smile when angry)...



C. Use humiliation to control others ...

**B**

# Passive-Aggressive Communicators



A. Tend to speak softly or apologetically ...



B. Appear cooperative while purposely doing things to annoy and disrupt ...



C. Deny there is a problem ...

**A**

# Assertive Communicators



A. Feel in control of self ...



B. Will not allow others to abuse or  
manipulate them ...



C. Use subtle sabotage to get even...

C

# Communicating within Generations

Communication Preferences	
Traditionalists	Baby Boomers
Written	Auditory
	Face-to-face

# Differences within Generations

Communication Preferences	
Generation X	Millennials
Email	Email
Face-to-face	Text messaging
	Prefer written instructions
	Blogging



# Meet Jessica

Jessica is a new employee at Badger Enterprises. Her supervisor Jack developed a policy indicating that staff must call him if they cannot come to work. However, Jessica prefers to email or text him and has verbally indicated that she believes her method is more efficient and he should consider a policy revision.



# Meet Jessica

Based off of Jessica's communication preference, what generation is she?

- A. Traditionalist
- B. Baby Boomer
- C. Generation X
- D. Millennial





# Managing Conflict within Generations

# Six Management Principles

1. Initiate conversations about generations
2. Identify needs and preferences
3. Offer options
4. Personalize management styles
5. Build on strengths
6. Pursue different perspectives

# Six Management Principles

## **1. Initiate conversations about generations**

- Minimizes judgments
- Eliminates communication barriers

## **2. Identify needs and preferences**

- Establishes relationship
- Creates a platform for success

# Six Management Principles

## **3. Offer options**

- Creates opportunity for flexibility
- Establishes boundaries/expectations

## **4. Personalize management styles**

- Makes yourself relatable
- Culture of interest

# Six Management Principles

## **5. Build on strengths**

- Diversifies your team
- Highlights accomplishments

## **6. Pursue different perspectives**

- Encourages support and opportunity



# Benefiting from Differences



# Benefits

- Attract and retain talented people
- Flexible teams
- Greater marketing ability
- Broad-based perspectives
- More innovative and creative
- Meet the diverse needs of the public

***“The rich diversity of generational perspectives, when valued, nurtured, and integrated, can lead to a more robust and adaptable work environment as well as spur teams to new heights of productivity.”***

Source: [kellyservices.com](http://kellyservices.com)



**Thanks for Attending**