
Shining the Light on Millennial Staff - Engaging Millennials in the Intergenerational Workplace

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Children today are tyrants. They contradict their parents, gobble their food, and tyrannize their teachers.

Socrates (469 BCE – 399 BCE)

Presentation Outcomes

- Describe the diversity that different generations bring to the workplace
 - Demonstrate the need for a shift in workplace practices in response to the changing demographics
 - Provide strategies to engage Millennials at the organizational / institutional level
 - Share strategies and best practices for Millennials both as young supervisors and young professionals
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Limitations on Generational Differences

- Generalizations & stereotypes
 - Continuum within a generation
 - Exemplars
 - Globalization and role of other types of diversity
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Generations in our workplace

- The Traditionalists - 1900 to 1945
 - The Baby Boomers - 1946 to 1964
 - The Gen. X-ers - 1965 to 1980
 - The Millennial Generation - 1981 to 2000
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The Traditionalists

- Born 1900 to 1945
 - 6% of the Canadian workforce
 - Defining Characteristics:
 - Patriotic
 - Loyal
 - Fiscally conservative
 - Have faith in institutions
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The Traditionalists

Feedback & Communication

- Direct style of communication
- Good mediators
- Do not expect frequent feedback

Supervision & Team Dynamics

- Other focused
 - Traditional leadership styles
 - Respect for authority
 - Appreciation for the whole system
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The Traditionalists

Work-Life Balance

- Not on list of priorities
- Sought stability
- Respect and are loyal to employers

Ways to work well with Traditionalists:

- Respect this generation's legacies
 - Focus on evolution, not revolution
 - Tap into their abilities to mentor
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The Baby Boomers

- Born 1946 to 1964
 - 40% of the Canadian workforce
 - Defining Characteristics:
 - Idealistic
 - Competitive
 - Question authority
 - Work to stand out
 - Put their own stamp on things
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The Baby Boomers

Feedback & Communication

- Yearly performance reviews
- Healthy workspace through communication and respect

Supervision & Team Dynamics

- Consensual decision-making
 - Focused on individual success
 - Institution can change
 - Question authority
 - Risk Takers
 - Aggressive in their pursuits
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The Baby Boomers

Work-Life Balance

- Not traditionally their first priority
- Sense of identity and sense of value both tied to career
- Value individual recognition and personal development
- More and more likely to adopt the work characteristics of younger generations

Ways to work well with Boomers:

- Acknowledge their desire to make a difference
 - Recognize their need for balance
 - Support their professional creativity
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The Gen. X-ers

- Born 1965 to 1980
 - 33% of the Canadian workforce
 - Defining Characteristics:
 - Eclectic
 - Resourceful
 - Self-reliant
 - Skeptical
 - Highly adaptive
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The Gen. X-ers

Feedback & Communication

- Expect immediate feedback
- Thrive on positive feedback
- Less patient
- Faster pace of communication
- Creative, adaptable and good with technology

Supervision & Team Dynamics

- Value independence, education and skill development
 - Expect to move up the corporate ladder quickly
 - Prefer egalitarian situations
 - Prefer to have information shared directly
 - Distrustful of institutions
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The Gen. X-ers

Work-Life Balance

- Expectation of work-life balance
- Flexible work environments

Ways to work well with Generation Xers:

- Realize their skepticism is valid (realists)
 - Understand their need for flexibility
 - Adapt to their swift pace of communication
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The Millennial Generation

- Born 1981 to 2000
 - 21% of the Canadian workforce
 - Defining Characteristics:
 - Globally concerned/environmentally conscious
 - Collaborative – value team work
 - Realistic
 - Cyber-literate
 - Media savvy
 - Value feedback and embrace career change
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The Millennial Generation

Feedback & Communication

- Expect frequent feedback
 - Expect instantaneous responses
 - Communication via technology
 - Excellent multi-taskers
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The Millennial Generation

Supervision & Team Dynamics

- Enjoy sharing contributions and ideas
 - Team environments
 - Want to be allowed to figure it out for themselves
 - Seek ownership of their work
 - Virtual teaming and virtual work
 - Expect recognition for their contributions
 - Prefer to have opportunities to question rules or feedback
 - Tend to trust centralized authority
 - Expect customization and question authority as rules can and should be flexible
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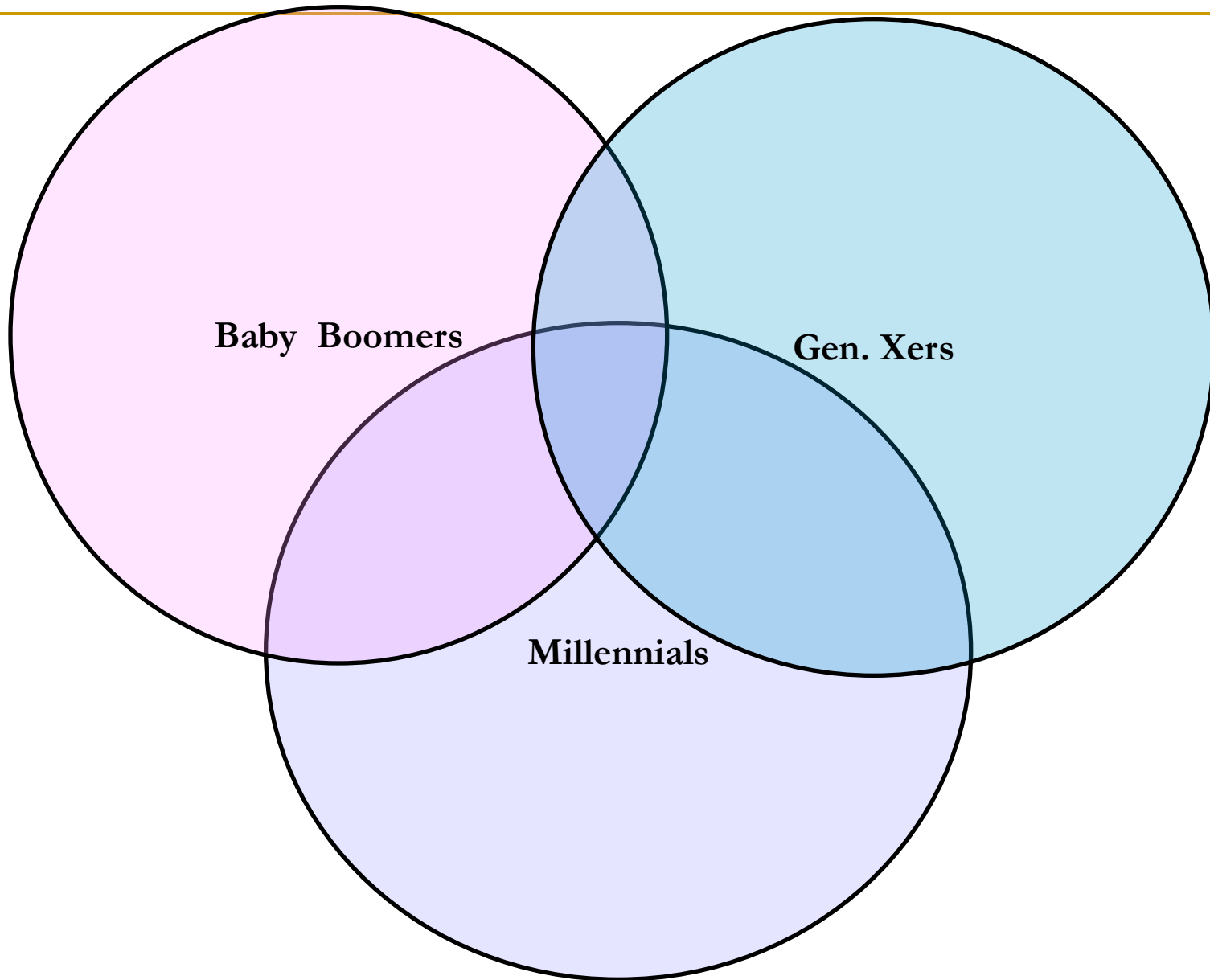
The Millennial Generation

Work Life Balance

- Expect work life balance
- Seek employment that fulfills
- Prefer flexible work schedules

Ways to work well with Millennials:

- Recognize their need to see how they contribute
 - Use technological means to inform them about work
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Baby Boomers

Gen. Xers

Millennials

Advice for Organizations & Supervisors

Anticipate turn over

- ❑ Exit interviews
- ❑ Don't take it personally
- ❑ On-boarding documents and processes

Feedback and recognition

- ❑ Processes to provide feedback to our staff more frequently
 - ❑ Avenues for staff to seek information
 - ❑ Collaborative feedback strategies
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Advice for Organizations & Supervisors

Employee benefits

- ❑ Child care benefits
- ❑ Seniors care
- ❑ Professional development

Non traditional work environments

- ❑ Clear expectations
 - ❑ Flexible work hours as projects allow
 - ❑ Incorporating FUN
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Advice to Millennials in the Workplace

Professionalism

- ❑ Division between work life & home life
- ❑ Union & company policies
- ❑ Budget limitations

Workplace values & culture

- ❑ Learn formal institutional structures
 - ❑ Be aware of informal power structures
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Advice to Millennials in the Workplace

Evolution not revolution

- ❑ Be patient
- ❑ Not everyone is eager for change
- ❑ Learn and show respect for what came before

Communication & Feedback

- ❑ Your role and questions are important, but they are situated in a larger context
 - ❑ Ask your supervisor about their preferred style
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Varying Opinions

- Research findings on generational differences do not agree:
 - Trzesniewski & Donnellan, 2008
 - Terracciano, McCrae, Brant & Costa, 2005
 - McCrae & Costa, 2003
 - Achenbach, Dumenci & Rescorla, 2002
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Discussion

1. What are some best practices you've seen as employers engaging Millennials in a multi-generational workforce?
 2. What advice would you give to each generation?
 3. What are your experiences with multi-generational workplaces?
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Closing

- Negative stereotypes are self-perpetuating
 - N#1 indicator of engagement is whether the manager thinks the employee is worth it
 - Institutions should focus on three things: speed, desire for connection (feel part of) and being able to communicate their company narrative
 - Our follow up research plans
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