



Leveraging generational differences in the work place

Sarah Gibson

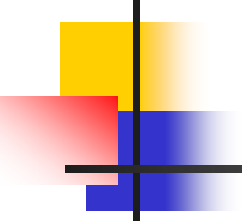
Accent Business Communication

Madison, WI



"The young people of today think of nothing but themselves.

They have no reverence for parents or old age. They are impatient of all restraint.



They talk as if they alone knew everything and what passes for wisdom with us is foolishness with them.

As for girls, they are forward, immodest and unwomanly in speech, behavior and dress."



Agenda

- Descriptions of each generation
- Characteristics of each generation
- Predicted changes caused by the generational shift



Stereotypes—Warning!

- Generalizations are generally dangerous
- Exceptions abound
- Group *trends* based on research



What Makes a Generation?

- Cohort: a group that shares the same experiences
- Generation: cohort defined by birth years

Defining events: memorable events impacting someone during their formative years
(before age 18)



Who are the generations?

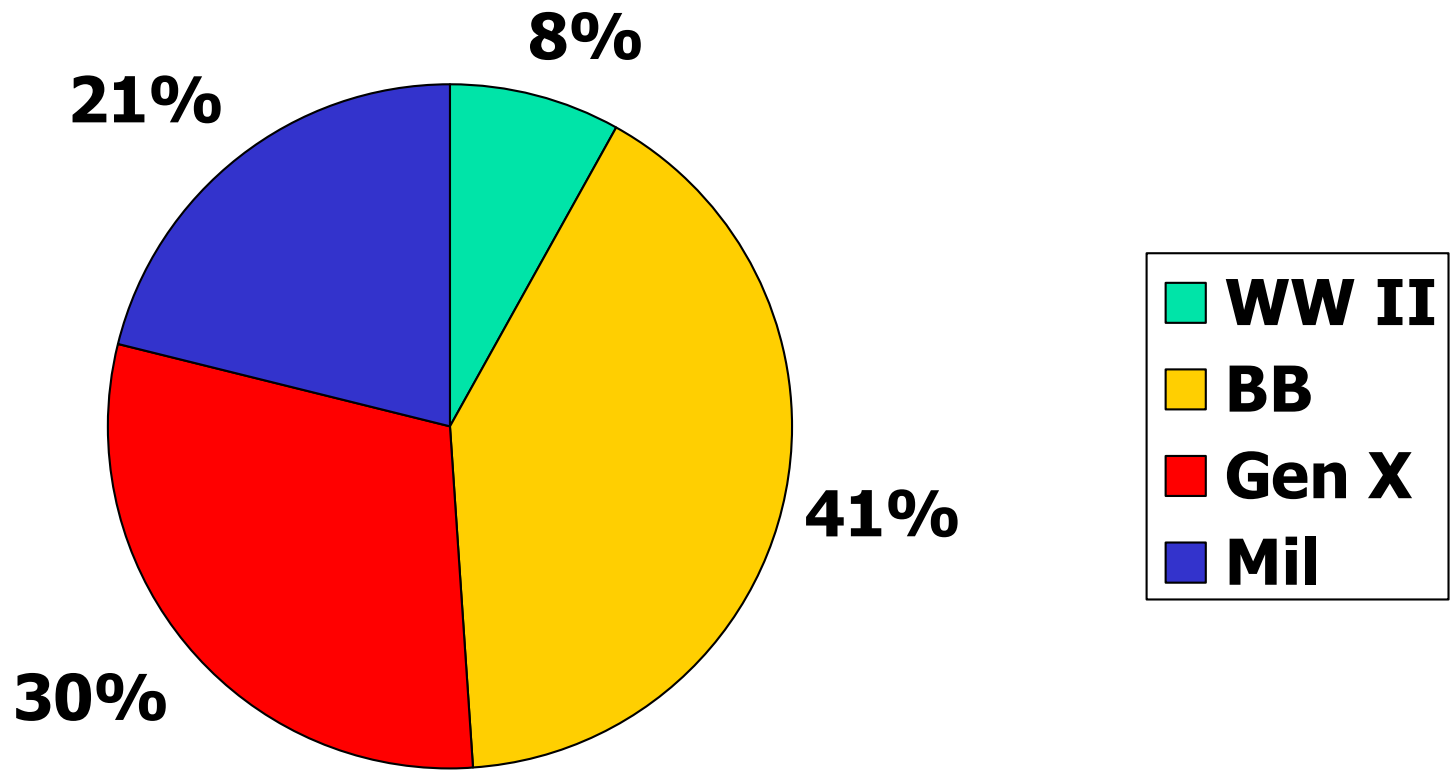
WWII	Baby Boom	Gen X	Millennial
1932-1945	1946-1964	1965-1980	1981-2000
(in 2008, age 63-76)	(in 2008, age 44-62)	(in 2008, age 28-43)	(in 2008, age 8-27)



Why Do We Care about Generational Stereotypes

Today's Workforce

HR Executive July 2006





Generational Impact-Major Concerns

- Boomers retiring, Millennials entering
- Succession planning and knowledge transfer
- New styles and preferences from employees

What the Generations Look Like



Defining Events and Characteristics



WW IIs



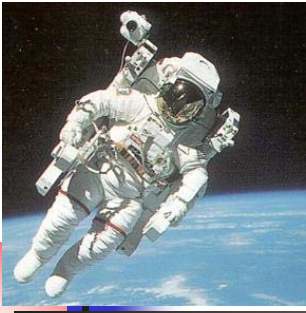
Roosevelt Events

- World War II
- Stock Market Crash
- Great Depression
- Korean War
- GI Bill
- Radio



Characteristics

- Patriotic
- Loyal, hard working
- Military-style leadership
- Follow orders, no questions
- Duty rules conscience



Baby Boomers



Events

- Civil Rights
- Women's lib
- Sex, drugs and rock-n-roll
- Vietnam
- Assassinations of JFK, RFK, Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Television

Characteristics

- Rebellious
- Movers and shakers
- Love/hate authority
- Optimistic
- Competitive





Generation X

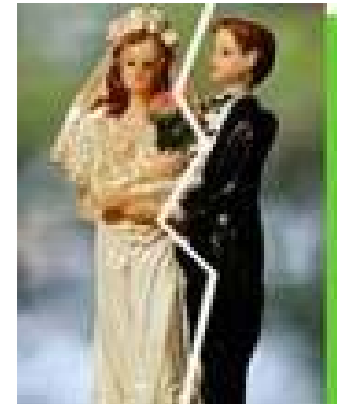


Events

- Watergate
- Rise of MTV and AIDS
- Single-parent homes, latch-key kids
- Challenger explosion
- PC in home, Internet begins

Characteristics

- Skeptical
- Independent
- Self-preservation key
- American dream not realistic



Millennials



Events

- Fall of Berlin Wall
- Columbine shootings
- 9/11
- War in Iraq
- Tsunami aid
- Cell phones, ipods

Characteristics

- Global
- Optimistic
- Patriotic
- Fast-paced, multi-taskers
- Street smart
- Function as a group





Who are the Millennials?



By the Age of 21, Estimates Show Millennials Will Have:

- Spent 10,000 hours playing video games
- Sent 200,000 emails
- Spent 20,000 hours watching TV
- Spent 10,000 hours on their cell phone
- Spent under 5,000 hours reading

~Terri M. Manning, Ed.D., Associate Vice President for Institutional Research, Director, Center for Applied Research, Central Piedmont Community College



What Millennials Say about the Workplace

(Charlotte Observer, Sunday, March 5, 2006)

- “The technology is too slow.”
- “Just because I’m young doesn’t mean I should be given low pay and a poor work schedule.”
- “I expect to be treated fairly.”



What Millennials Say about the Workplace

- “My dad worked 60 hours a week and then lost his pension – no way I’m doing that.”
- “I can get my work done in 40 hours – sorry if you can’t.”



Generational Norms

How the Generations Think of Their Jobs

WWII	Baby Boom	Gen X	Millennial
Work = duty	Work = self-fulfillment	Work = a job, not a life	Work = opportunity to grow self and help others



My Career

WWII	Baby Boom	Gen X	Millennial
One job	A couple of jobs, but all change made with purpose	Several jobs, some as long as 4 or 5 years	Many jobs, all used to further or explore self



How the Generational Rules have Changed—the Job Search

WWII	Baby Boom	Gen X	Millennial
Why would I look for a new job?	Why would I tell anyone I was looking for a new job?	Why would anyone care if I am looking for a new job?	Why wouldn't I be looking for a new job? They might have better hours.



My Resume

WWII	Baby Boom	Gen X	Millennial
A handshake	A monument to what I've done	A way to get an interview	An online formality

How the Generations Prefer to be Managed

WWII	Baby Boom	Gen X	Millennial
Chain of command, military style	Change of command	Self-command, independent	No command, instead collaborate



View of Authority

WWII	Baby Boom	Gen X	Millennial
Respectful	Love/ Hate	Unimpressed	Polite, reserved



View of Leadership/Respect

WWII	Baby Boom	Gen X	Millennial
Hierarchy	Consensus	Competence	Likeability and Skill



View of Coworkers

WWII	Baby Boom	Gen X	Millennial
Part of the chain	Competition	Independent partners	Essential key to team



So What Now?



Generational Trends

1. More flexible work worlds (part-time, flex time, telecommuting)
2. Employees who act like customers
3. Benefits world expands to include PDAs, cell phones, small-everyday rewards, laptops, cafeteria style paid time off



Generational Trends

4. Skill set becomes the focus of the employee, drives loyalty
5. Retention won't be harder, it will be different though



Generational Trends

6. More difficulty in finding managers who want to put in extra time to be a manager, at least not without flexibility
7. Change happens so fast that perfectionism is a nearly impossible mentality



Generational Trends

1. More flexible work worlds (part-time, flex time, telecommuting)
2. Employees and customers who act like customers—24/7 access
3. Benefits world expands to include PDAs, cell phones, small-everyday rewards, laptops, cafeteria style paid time off



Generational Trends

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Similarities Between Generations

Everyone wants:

- to be respected
- to like their jobs
- to make a difference
- to value family, integrity, achievement, love and competence

~Center for Creative Leadership (Nov. 07)



Strengths of Each Generation

- WWII—loyal, hard working, put work first
- Baby Boomer—want the best for all, challenge convention, fight to win
- Gen Xer—independent, flexible, balanced
- Millennial—optimistic, creative, energetic, fun