

# Generational Differences in the Workplace

## Timeline and Historical Influences

	<b>Traditionalist</b>	<b>Baby Boomers</b>	<b>Generation X</b>	<b>Millennials</b>
<b>Timeline</b>	1922-1945	1946-1964	1965-1980	1981-2001
<b>Historical Events</b>	Great Depression The New Deal World War II FDR – One president Korean War	Civil Rights Movement Sexual Revolution/Rock & Roll Cold War Space Travel Assassinations	Watergate Women's Liberation Energy Crisis Space Shuttle Challenger Explodes Desert Storm	Oklahoma City Bombing Columbine School Shootings Technology Child Focused World Clinton/Lewinsky 9/11

## Generational Differences – Core Values

	<b>Traditionalist</b>	<b>Baby Boomers</b>	<b>Generation X</b>	<b>Millennials</b>
<b>Outlook</b>	Respect authority, Conform, Discipline	Optimism, Involvement	Skepticism, Informality, Fun	Realism, Confidence, Social, Extreme Fun
<b>Family</b>	Traditional, Nuclear	Disintegrating	Latch-Key kids	Merged families, Coddled kids (they got a trophy for coming in 8 <sup>th</sup> place)
<b>Education</b>	A dream	A birthright	A way to get there	An incredible expense
<b>Communication</b>	Rotary phones, One-on-one, Write a memo	Touch-tone phones, call me anytime	Cell phones, if it's about work, only call me at work	Internet, E-mail, picture phones, I-pods
<b>Money</b>	Put it away, pay cash, save, save, save	Buy now, pay later	Cautious, conservative, save	Earn to spend

## Generational Differences in the Workplace

	<b>Traditionalist</b>	<b>Baby Boomers</b>	<b>Generation X</b>	<b>Millennials</b>
<b>Work Ethic</b>	Work hard. Pay your dues. Follow rules. Loyal and unquestioning. Respect authority.	Workaholic, Live to work, Long hours to establish self-worth, Identity and fulfillment	Work smarter not longer, Work to live, Want structure and direction, Skeptical	Hard workers but like to have fun. Multi-tasking, entrepreneurial. Tolerant
<b>Work/Life Balance</b>	Work hard to maintain job security.	Were hesitant of taking too much time off from work for fear of losing their place on the corporate team. As a result, there is an imbalance between work and family.	Have a clearer balance between work and family, Do not worry about losing their place in the corporate team if they take time off	Not only balance work and life, but balance work, life and community involvement and self-development. Flex time, job sharing, and sabbaticals will be requested more by this generation.
<b>Career Development</b>	Not really an option for the Matures. Just taught to keep their nose to the grindstone. The ultimate goal was simply to move up within the organization, but realized this happened only to a few.	Focus on developing their careers through opportunities within one organization or at least one industry. Moved up based on seniority, not always based on skill or expertise.	Pro-active approach to career development through more degrees and experiences both within the organization and without. This is often seen as being disloyal to the company, but Gen X-ers see it as being loyal to themselves.	More experience entering work force, Want more experience and opportunities, If they don't get it at work, they will seek it elsewhere .
<b>Job Expectations</b>	Do what you know needs to be done.	Needs clear and concise job expectations, and will get it done. Like to achieve work through teams.	Need reason for task, May question, Need to be engaged or may seek engagement in another position	Don't want boring jobs; they want to make a difference. Because of being a product of the "drop down and click menu," they may need to be given a list of options.
<b>Training &amp; Development</b>	Training should contribute to the organization's goals.	Training is a contribution to the organization's goals, but is also a path to promotion and additional compensation.	Training enhances their versatility in the marketplace and investment in their future. Not necessarily loyal to the company who trained them.	Willing and eager to take risks; don't mind making mistakes – consider this a learning opportunity.

## Generational Differences in the Workplace

<b>Rewards and Compensation</b>	“A job well done” is reward enough, especially if it contributes to the good of the company and community.	Take pride in a lot of work being achieved; like to be recognized for those achievements.	Fair compensation, Earn extra for doing extra, Value time off, Seek an enjoyable atmosphere	Seek opportunities to take on and be a part of projects. They need to have fun, and have a sense of control over their environment.
<b>Providing Feedback</b>	No news is good news.	Official feedback once a year. Job coaching began with the Baby Boomers.	Are self-sufficient, so give them structure, some coaching, but implement a hands-off type of supervisory style.	Embrace teamwork. Like to be given feedback often and they will ask for it often.
<b>Retirement</b>	Put in 30 years, retire and live off one’s pension/savings.	If I retire, who am I? I haven’t saved any money so I need to work, at least part-time. I’ve been downsized so I need to work, at least part-time.	I may retire early; I’ve saved my money. I may want different experiences and may change careers. I may want to take a sabbatical to develop myself.	Jury is still out, but will probably be similar to Gen Xers.

Source: Megan Martin, Training Development Coordinator, Human Resources, University of Missouri Extension.