### General Characteristics of the Generations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>General Characteristics*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Traditionalists/Veterans | - Born between 1900 and 1945.  
- Make up approximately 75 million of the nation's employees.  
- Loyal – often found to have worked for only one employer.  
- Many of the men have military background and are comfortable with a top-down management style.  
- May be motivated by recognition in doing a job well done.  
  *These employees often exhibit a strong work ethic that was shaped by the Great Depression with an "onward and upward" attitude.* |
| Baby Boomers             | - Born between 1946 and 1964.  
- Comprise about 80 million of the nation’s employees.  
- Typically respond to symbols of recognition: enhanced titles, more money, special perks such as parking spaces, and other status symbols or symbols of peer recognition.  
- Optimistic and idealistic.  
- As a result of their large numbers, tend to be extremely competitive (because they had to be).  
  *As this group ages, many are reflecting on their lives and are realizing that they have spent too much of their time working. They now may want to add more balance to their lives and may feel that the subsequent need to put “their time in.”* |
- Comprise about 46 million of the nation’s employees.  
- Typically have little trust in the system.  
- Freedom is often perceived as the ultimate corporate reward – they often want training that enhances their skills, and portability of benefits like 401Ks that can be taken elsewhere.  
- Can be characterized by skepticism.  
  *This generation has been effected by scandal in every institution from the stock market to the presidency. During their childhood, the divorce rate tripled and many of them were left to fend for themselves, while their parents worked (i.e. latchkey children). Many filled their time alone with computers and television. Although they became techno literate, they were not often involved in group activities. “People skills” may not generally be a characteristic. They seem to be drawn to informality and fun, and are not impressed by titles and hierarchies. Their approach to work is one of balance: they see work as a means to an end and not an end in and of itself.* |
- Are now at around 75 million entering the workforce.  
- Perceived as wanting to make a difference and knowing that their work has value.  
- If they question authority, it’s usually for the right reasons.  
- Characteristics include sociability, civic duty, and morality.  
  *This generation was born with technology and is adept at multitasking. Most had more solid upbringing than their predecessors and engaged in athletics and team sports. (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002; Dennis, 2002)* |

*These are generalizations and not applicable to all people in a generation.*

© 2004 Cook Ross, Inc.

Managing A Multigenerational Workforce

THE DIVERSITY MANAGER’S TOOLKIT