

# **Managing the Multi-Generational Workforce**

## **FermiLab April 22-23, 2020**

### **Participant Worksheet**

#### **Part I.**

#### **Is Your Work Culture “Generation Friendly”?**

After the first portion of the presentation, read the following questions and reflect.

What words would you use to describe your work culture?

If you were to personify your work culture, what generation would it be a member of?

How does your work culture enhance or inhibit the way you serve clients?

Is there a generation of employee in your organization who most likely feel undervalued and/or underutilized?

Is a change called for in your work culture? If so, how might it be accomplished?

**Managing generationally diverse workgroups requires diplomacy, understanding generations, and helping them to understand each other, getting them to communicate more effectively, negotiating differences, resolving conflicts, and suggesting ways they might work together more effectively.**

***Look at your own workgroup and answer the following statements that reflect a generations-friendly workplace:***

- There's not just one type of person who's successful here.**
- When we put a project team together, we consciously include a variety of perspectives.**
- We treat employees like clients / customers.**
- We talk about – sometimes even joke about – different viewpoints.**
- We talk openly about what we want from our jobs.**
- Our policies are based on what customers and employees want.**
- We have a minimum of bureaucracy and “red tape.”**
- Our work atmosphere is relaxed and informal.**
- We have a lot of fun together.**
- We're known for being straightforward with each other.**
- The people who work here have the big picture along with specific goals and measures, and feel free to find their own best way of reaching them.**
- We expect the best from everyone here, and we treat them as if they have great things to offer and are motivated to do their best.**
- We focus on retention every day.**
- Our work assignments are broad, providing a variety and challenge, and allow each employee to develop a range of skills.**

How many items did you check?

How many items do you think you SHOULD check?

## *PART II*

### *Communicating in a Multi-Generational Workplace*

Sometimes we need to think in terms of what we might be contributing to the miscommunication. Here are some things to think about:

#### **If you're a Silent Generation...**

##### **And the other person is a Baby Boomer:**

- Are you coming across as too rigid?
- Do you seem "old school?"
- Might you seem unwilling to "Share the power?"
- Are you seen as moralistic?

##### **And the other person is GenX:**

- Do you seem too corporate?
- Are you too "by the book?" not open to different approaches?
- Are you seen as suspicious of new ideas?

##### **And the other person is a Millennial:**

- Are you out of touch?
  - Do you appear technically inept?
  - Are you closed to new ideas?
- 

#### **If you're a Baby Boomer...**

##### **And the other person is a Silent Generation:**

- Do you share details of your life that may seem too personal?
- Might it seem to the other person that you take him for granted?
- Do you come across as more interested in the process than results?
- Are you viewed as someone who overspends budget?

##### **And the other person is Gen X:**

- Are you seen as overly ambitious?
- Do co-workers think you say one thing and do another?
- Do you come across as rigid?
- Do you use "corporate-speak" – too many buzzwords?
- Are you considered judgmental?

##### **And the other person is a Millennial:**

- Are you seen as too serious?
- Do you seem to be too wrapped up in your job?

- Do you appear to lecture too much?
  - Do you do what someone else might think is too much reminiscing?
  - Are you perceived as someone who has trouble making unpopular decisions?
- 

## **If you're a Gen Xer...**

### **And the other person is a Silent:**

- Are you seen as disloyal?
- Are you considered impolite or disrespectful?
- Are you viewed as irreverent?
- Are you perceived as too casual?
- Are you seen as intolerant of regularity and routine?

### **And the other person is a Boomer:**

- Are you seen as not taking your job seriously?
- Are you viewed as too challenging, maybe even challenging the other's competence?
- Might you be perceived as abrupt or aloof?
- Are you seen as too independent, not a team player?
- Are you viewed as someone who neglects relationships?

### **And the other person is a Millennial:**

- Are you seen as cynical?
  - Does the other person feel you don't listen to his ideas because of youth and inexperience?
  - Are you considered not inclusive?
  - Are you seen as someone whose standards are unrealistically high?
- 

## **If you are a Millennial...**

### **And the other person is a Silent:**

- Are you perceived as not knowledgeable about history and tradition?
- Are you viewed as egotistical?
- Might you seem inexperienced?
- Might you come across as impatient?

### **And the other person is a Boomer:**

- Are you seen as inexperienced?
- Are you considered overconfident?
- Might you seem overly competitive?

### **And the other person is a Gen Xer:**

- Are you considered too naïve?
- Might you be perceived as overly optimistic?
- Might you seem unfocused?

You might try to cover all of our bases by using a combination of styles and make sure you include some points that will appeal to each. This may take some time to think through the preferences of each one in attendance.

You might adapt your style to the most persuasive person there, or the one you think might be the “hardest sell.”

Some Persuasive Language You Might Use:

<b>Generation</b>	<b>Persuasive Language</b>
<b><i>Silent</i></b>	Authority, discipline, leader, rank, respect, sacrifice, consistent, dependable, great, orderly, stable, trustworthy
<b><i>Baby Boomer</i></b>	Consensus, human rights, involvement, relationship, team, tolerance, trust, democratic, equal, fair, humane, interpersonal
<b><i>Generation X</i></b>	Alternative, numbers, operations, reality, results, system, competent, efficient, functional, independent, pragmatic, sensible
<b><i>Millennial</i></b>	Achievement, challenge, collaborate, community, discovery, future, goals, fun, positive, come together, overcome cutting edge

Managing generationally diverse workgroups requires diplomacy, understanding generations, and helping them to understand each other, getting them to communicate more effectively, negotiating differences, resolving conflicts, and suggesting ways they might work together more effectively. Here are some suggestions for mixing generations successfully:

1. Initiate conversations about their generations.
2. Ask people about their needs and preferences.
3. Offer options.
4. Personalize your style.
5. Build on strengths.
6. Pursue different perspectives.

Please make a list of 3 “commitments” you will make to create an environment that is more conducive to multiple generations working together, bring this list with you to the follow up session tomorrow. They should read:

1. Within the next 2 weeks, I will \_\_\_\_\_ in an attempt to \_\_\_\_\_
2. Within the next 4 weeks, I will \_\_\_\_\_ in an attempt to \_\_\_\_\_
3. Within the next 8 weeks, I will \_\_\_\_\_ in an attempt to \_\_\_\_\_