

MANAGING A MULTI-GENERATIONAL WORKFORCE

2018 Local Government Officials Conference



CONSULTANTS TO MANAGEMENT

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DEFINITION OF GENERATION

- What is a Generation group?
 - Group defined by common values, attitudes, ambitions, and experiences
 - Group "programmed" at the same time by shared experiences
 - Group whose values, beliefs, and work ethics are formed by the same political, social, and economic realities

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INTRODUCTION

- For the first time in history, we have **FOUR (4) generations** working side-by-side
- What are they?
- Do we have **FIVE (5) generations** working side-by-side?

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INTRODUCTION

- We are encountering "generational diversity" in the workplace
- Each generation tends to be shaped or influenced by its environment and experiences
- It is important to narrow any "generation gaps" in order to work well with others

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GENERATIONS IN THE WORKPLACE

- Traditionalists (born before 1945)
- Baby Boomers (1945 – 1964ish)
- Generation X (1965 – 1980ish)
- Millennials / Generation Y (1981 – 2000ish)
 - a.k.a. "Generation Me," "Boomerang Generation"
- Generation Z (2001 –)

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EXERCISE 1

- What were some of the historical and cultural factors that influenced people during the ... 30s & 40s, 50s, 60s, 70s, 80s, 90s, 2000s?
- Write down for the decades assigned to you:
 - Historical Events, Famous People, Movies, TV Shows, Music, Influences (U.S./Global)

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EXERCISE 1

- My factors:
 - Historical – Oklahoma City Bombing, Columbine, 9/11, Iraq War, Virginia Tech, Great Recession, Obama
 - Famous People – Mark Zuckerberg, Jon Stewart, Steve Jobs, Obama, David Karp (Tumblr), Jessica Alba
 - Pop Culture – Napster, Myspace, Facebook, AOL, Will Ferrell/Amy Poehler/Tina Fey/Adam Sandler, Reality TV, Nirvana, GreenDay, Weezer, Eminem, Daft Punk, Radio Head, Rage Against the Machine, Jay Z, Drake, Kendrick Lamar, Outkast, Phish, Dave Matthews Band, Beyonce, The Roots

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TRADITIONALIST

- Born before 1945
- Characteristics:
 - Loyalty
 - Respectful of rules / authority
 - Frugal
 - Reserved
- Usually won't speak their minds, question instructions, or abuse privileges

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TRADITIONALIST

- Work Ethic
 - Conformer – work is an obligation
 - Hard working, stable, loyal
 - Avoids conflict
 - Dislikes change
 - Enjoys one-on-one communication
 - Technology is cold and impersonal, confusing
 - Feels “no news is good news”

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TRADITIONALIST

- How to Communicate/Motivate
 - Respect their experience
 - Reward and value perseverance
 - Use expert endorsements or testimonials of those they trust
 - Promote patriotism, teamwork
 - Allow time for decisions
 - Use “top-down” chain of command approach
 - Provide detailed directions
 - Communicate face-to-face

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BABY BOOMERS

- Born between 1946 – 1964ish
- Characteristics:
 - Optimism and involvement
 - Respect for power and accomplishment
 - Team orientation (holds lots of meetings)
 - Serious about work (works long hours and feels you should, too)
 - Not afraid of confrontation
 - Prefers traditional office environment

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BABY BOOMERS

- Work Ethic:
 - Competitors
 - Driven
 - Workaholic
 - Work is a source of personal identity
 - Rewarded with "tangibles"
 - Live to work – career first
 - Must develop technological skills before they can progress

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BABY BOOMERS

- How to Motivate/Communicate:
 - "You are valued, worthy, and needed"
 - Enjoy and need human interaction
 - Provide them with knowledge (the "big picture")
 - Offer new ideas / proposals as a new experience
 - Provide multiple choices
 - Communication should focus on the future
 - Communicate through one-on-one or meetings
 - Seek them out as mentors
 - Use them as "sounding boards"

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GENERATION X

- Born between 1965 – 1981ish
- Characteristics:
 - Independent & Resourceful
 - Accepting of Change
 - Comfortable with diversity
 - Expect a balanced lifestyle
 - Dedicated to people, ideas, and tasks

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GENERATION X

- Work Ethic:
 - Not looking for longevity or lifetime employment (free agent)
 - Technology literate
 - Flexibility – work whenever, just get it done
 - Want to be developed, engaged, and appreciated
 - Challenger (a.k.a. skeptic)
 - Enjoys discretion
 - "Work hard, play hard"

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GENERATION X

- How to Communicate/Motivate:
 - Cutting edge technology
 - Continuing education and development
 - Freedom to use their own resourcefulness
 - Involve them in projects of significance
 - Avoid micro-managing (offer to be a mentor)
 - No "hard sell" techniques – let them make a decision at their own pace
 - Provide a range of choice
 - Keep your promises
 - E-mail communication is expected
 - Suggest rather than order (but get to the point, no hinting)

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MILLENNIALS / GENERATION Y

- Born between 1980 – 2000ish (Nation's largest living generation)
- Characteristics:
 - E-learners
 - Used to instant communication (a.k.a. impatient)
 - Optimistic; confident in self
 - Sense of civic responsibility
 - Achiever
 - Family-centered
 - Concerned for environment
 - Most educated, most diverse, most tolerant
 - Wants balance of family, hobbies, and work

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MILLENNIALS / GENERATION Y

- Work Ethic:
 - Technocrats
 - Work is a way to fill time between weekends
 - Not likely to seek out additional responsibilities
 - Difficulty understanding and accepting rules and protocols
 - "I'll do the job you hired me to do, that's all"
 - Goal/achievement oriented
 - Need mentorship

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MILLENNIALS / GENERATION Y

- How to Communicate/Motivate:
 - Allow communication online for convenience
 - Consider using blogs, social media, text, IM-ing
 - Give PROMPT feedback on their ideas
 - Find ways to include and make them feel valued (but manage expectations)
 - Make sure YOU have researched the issue – expect that they have done so

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GENERATION Z

- Born after 1995
- Emerging generation – The youngest cohort of Generation Y
- Global, well-connected, and have encountered a lot of uncertainty
- World's first true digital natives
- Entrepreneurial spirit

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GENERATIONAL STEREOTYPES

- Baby Boomers
 - Live to work
 - Can't text / Out of sync with technology
 - Can't tolerate change
- Generation X
 - Apathetic
 - Cynical
 - Disengaged

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GENERATIONAL STEREOTYPES

- Millennials / Generation Y
 - Lazy
 - Entitled
 - Over eager
 - Technology obsessed
- Generation Z
 - Highly skeptical
 - Fact-check anything and everything
 - Short attention span
 - Technology obsessed

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REMINDERS ON DEALING WITH WORKPLACE DIFFERENCES

- Don't label or stereotype
- How do you want to be perceived?
- You're a coworker, not a parent
- Focus on job performance
- Praise in public, punish in private

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COMMON ATTRIBUTES

- Everyone is comfort seeking
- Most people resist change, but don't like status quo either
- Everyone wants information, to be kept "in the loop"
- Everyone likes some level of control

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SIMILARITIES WITH GEN X AND GEN Y

- Loyal to persons not the "employer"
 - Good Supervisors are Critical!
 - Get to know them on a personal level
 - Notice and comment on their successful efforts
- Need prompt (immediate) feedback
 - Evaluate performance constantly
 - Be wary of too much praise for Gen-X and be mindful that Gen-Y will likely have a harder time with negative evaluations

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CLASH POINTS

- Agency loyalty
 - From organizational to individual
- Chain of command
 - From rigid to freedom
- Work ethic
 - From corporate to individual
- Workplace diversity
 - Diversity in the classic sense (race, religion, gender, etc.)
- Feedback and mentoring
 - Differences in communication styles

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MINIMIZING FRICTION

- Eliminate the Stereotypes – do not assume that what you read applies to everyone
- Know your audience and understand the influences that shape each generation; how they think and what the expectations are
- Practice positive, constructive work habits in the workplace; work cooperatively towards a common goal
- Live up to the social contract; contribute to your fullest potential; strive for excellence
- Recognize and respect others and their individuality
- Think before you speak and be sensitive to others
- Talk about your differences and ask tactful questions about how people want to be treated

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TO BRIDGE THE GAP, USE THE A-LIST

- **A**ccept your “mutual rightness”
- **A**cknowledge your interdependency on each other/generation
- **A**ppreciate what you have in common
- **A**ssume responsibility for making your relationships better
- **A**dopt the “Platinum Rule”

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WHAT IS THE “PLATINUM RULE”

- The “Golden Rule”:
 - Treat others the way YOU want to be treated
- The “Platinum Rule”:
 - Treat others the way THEY want to be treated

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BRIDGING THE GAP WITH VOCABULARY

- 10 Key words to 1 Key word
- 10 – We have a lot more in common than I thought
- 9 – How can we help each other be more successful
- 8 – I'd like to share my ideas with you
- 7 – Neither of us can do it alone
- 6 – Please tell me what you're feeling
- 5 – Let's learn from each other
- 4 – What do you think?
- 3 – We're both right
- 2 – Thank you
- 1 – We

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HOW CAN EMPLOYEES BRIDGE THE GENERATION GAPS?

- Appreciate differences
- Appreciate what you have in common
- Accept and appreciate another's perspective
- Take responsibility for making your relationships better
- Discuss expectations
- Inquire about immediate tasks
- Keep up with technology

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DOs FOR EVERY GENERATION

- Accept that your generation type may influence your ideas and behaviors
- Give everyone the same "benefit of the doubt" that you want
- Be open and honest about your own "hot buttons"
- Focus on what really matters
- Accept the fact that you choose how to treat and deal with others
- Be flexible with your preferences
- Know that everyone wants to be treated with respect

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BRIDGING THE GENERATION GAPS

- Remember that all generations want:
 - To be treated fairly
 - Work that provides personal satisfaction
 - Employers who understand personal lives are important
 - Work that is valued
 - A clear sense of purpose

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QUESTIONS?



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