

>> Janelle: As many of you have already discovered there are many different people that you supervise.

Among the different personalities is a commonality between people of certain generations.

Today there are four generations represented in the work force; traditionalists, baby boomers, generation X and millennials.

Each generation brings with them a unique perspective formed from the events they have experienced in their lifetime. These different perspectives bring you both opportunities and challenges as a supervisor.

Generational differences give you the opportunity to help carry out the mission of the service in innovative and creative ways.

The challenge for you is help your team to work effectively together by bridging these generational differences.

So what are some of the situations in which generational differences frequently occur; how employees communicate and receive feedback, their willingness to embrace new technology, balance between work responsibilities and personal time, and views on authority, hierarchy and leadership.

These are just some of the many you have already experienced in your own career.

For the purpose of the discussion today, generational theory does create stereotypes for each of the generations; however, in no way does this stereotype define each member wholeheartedly. Rather, it provides a generalization of values and attitudes based on the defining events experienced during a specific period and time.

Understanding the generations within today's workforce will help you better meet the needs of your employees and therefore you will help them better reach their full potential.

Joining us is a representative from three generations present in the workplace; Dave Lemarie is representing baby boomers, Tiffani Fiedler-Harper is representing generation X and Jamie Brown is representing the millennial generation. Welcome everybody.

The one generation we do not have is the traditionalists; those born before 1945.

It is the smallest among the service and that is one reason we couldn't find someone for this discussion today.

Some of the characteristics defining the people of this generation are hard workers, savers, patriotic, private and dependable.

They value dedication and sacrifice, law and order, respect for authority, patience, duty before pleasure and honor.

Some of the major events experienced only by this generation are the stock market crash, followed by the great depression, the dust bowl and the new deal, Pearl Harbor, WWI and the Korean war.

This is information on the smallest generation – the Traditionalists.

It is unfortunate that we don't have this generation represented with us today.

Next we will have each panel member share of the interesting characteristics of their generation.

First we start with Dave from the baby boomers.

>> Dave: I think my generation is very independent. A lot of people felt free to have their own opinions and express them.

It's an extremely optimistic generation.

We were optimistic about being able to make the changes we felt were necessary, whether they be political, environmental or any other aspects of our lives.

It's an extremely, resulting from that, it's extremely cause oriented.

In terms of political view, there were huge protests against the Vietnam War and any other changes we thought needed to be made.

Associated with that is the questioning of authority.

There was very little fear by expressing one's opinion bad things would happen to them.

And probably the most important thing for us as a conservation organization is the environmental awareness that came out at that time, being better educated in terms of our, the natural world around us and what we could do to preserve it.

>> Janelle: Thanks, Dave.

Next, we will hear from Tiffani, our generation X'er.

>> Tiffani: We are the generation that came of age at the end of the 20th century so we tended to be, or we are, self-reliant, independent people, so don't micromanage us.

We are independent because we are coined from the term latch-key children. We grew up in a generation where both parents generally were going to work so we came home by ourselves, let ourselves in from school, took care of ourselves, so became quite independent because of that.

Give us time to pursue our interests.

We are flexible. We are determined, but we are flexible.

We like autonomy.

We are skeptical; we have the "prove it to me" attitude.

We like technology. Give us technology because we will use it to our advantage or to your advantage.

We value balance. We tend to be informal in our pursuits and we value balance. In fact, Gen-X'ers aspire to have a work

life balance. In general, we like to be at work, we will give it our all when at work but when we're away from work, we don't want to be at work. In other words, we value our family and home life as well.

>> Janelle: Thanks, Tiffani.

Last, but not least, Jamie the millennial.

>> J. Brown: There are many attitudes and values that describe the millennial. Our generation is very comfortable and savvy when it comes to the use of technology.

We tend to like work environments that are fast paced, diverse and team oriented.

Social networking is a must because we like to have fun, both in our personal and our work life.

Work is a means to an end, rather than obligation.

Having projects of importance or ones that make us feel important gives us a sense of purpose and energizes us in the workplace.

Our generation has huge multi tasking capabilities.

We are confident, upbeat, and full of self-esteem.

Other core values include optimism, morality and achievement.

Millennials consist of approximately 57 million people from the years of 1980 to 2000.

This generation is soon to be the largest group in the work force.

>> Janelle: Now that we have learned a little bit about the generations, let's discuss some of the differences our supervisors may be experiencing with our employees.

The first question I have is, as we look at some of the major events that each of you have experienced within your

generation, how important is it for our supervisors to understand that we are all experiencing the same things but through very different perspectives?

>> Dave: I'll start and talk about that.

Jamie brought up the technology issue and the baby boomers; we saw incredible advances in technology.

Even before you get to talk about computers, seeing men walk on the moon and how the space program developed and how it's viewed today, it almost viewed nonchalantly.

It was an incredible event sitting late at night watching Neil Armstrong walk on the moon.

Then we didn't have computers. The pocket calculators were a major advance in the '60's. So we have come all the way through having computers on our desks now. That whole technological approach is something very different.

From an environmental aspect, I just want to mention things like the first earth day back in 1970. We were there for that. It was something everybody was starting to become aware of that together.

And then as a major event, Three Mile Island, the near disaster that happened there at the nuclear power plant and how that affected those of us in the environmental field realizing the implications of how technology is moving and what could happen to us socially and environmentally.

>> Tiffani: I can see how somebody from your generation would have quite a different perspective on things.

I come from the generation where we watched everything on television happen and it happened live. Generally I'm the MTV generation, so everything was put on TV and it was flashed up there. Desert Storm, we watched our first war on TV.

My generation is very comfortable with technology. We embrace the use of technology. We almost covet it in the workplace.

So I can see where somebody from your generation had to learn kind of that progression over time whereas for me it's very natural, I grew up with it.

>> Jaime: That's something that we definitely need.

>> Janelle: I think that's a really good point to bring up, the technology and how that really does highlight the different perspectives from a generation who kind of was at the forefront of it down to us as Millennials do really need it and thrive on it in the workplace. So that's an excellent way to highlight the different perspectives for our supervisors out there.

Next question is, how does each of you manage the balance between your work and personal life? Tiffani, how about you?

>> Tiffani: I'll start with that one.

My generation generally, I think, coined the phrase of "when you are away from work, work is at work and home is at home."

We value work life balance. Work life balance was created by my generation. I prefer to live rather than prefer live to work. I prefer flexible work schedules.

My generation prefers to not have that nine to five schedule. We want to come in at ten and leave at six if we want. We want to be able to come in at eight and leave at four. When we leave at four, we leave work behind.

>> Dave: Coming from the generation that probably was a bit on the workaholic side, I make sure I get everything done in a reasonable amount of time and go home and not worry about it.

>> Jaime: And that's the thing, a lot of people think we're rushing in the workplace but we like to get our stuff done and go home, because the balancing act between our generation is, it's fast paced at work, it's fast paced at home and balancing those two can be very stressful for us.

>> Janelle: That is something that has progressed through

the different generations and kind of highlighting the importance of it so I'm glad it's gotten there but I think it hasn't always been there so you might get a few from your generation that still might struggle some with the work life balance.

>> Dave: Sure.

Something interesting I would like to add in terms of my generation, now in my generation we have aging parents and so we have to be a lot more cognizant of some of the issues we might have having to balance our lives to take care of our aging parents, not just have to deal with issues surrounding children.

It's like having a whole different perspective now.

>> Tiffani: For me, I don't want to have to think or worry about work when I'm home.

I value very much my family life, my home life, and my personal life, so when I'm home I don't want to have to think about work.

Work life balance is very important to me.

>> Janelle: We're going to move on to the next one, I think in our work, when we are at work, a lot of the work we do is through team work.

Often times teams can be comprised of people from different generations.

What does team work look like to you?

>> Jaime: Our generation has the perception of what's in it for me so if we can get something out of it, we are definitely all about team work.

>> Tiffani: I think with my generation, we value team work.

We work very well in teams and like teams.

We are very independent people.

We come from a very independent mindset so we like to be left alone to do our thing, do our independent thinking, and then get together in our groups or teams and function with that independent thought stimulating that team work.

>> Dave: And I think we have the expectation of complete dedication to the team.

There would be altruistic actions there to make sure the entire team is working together and getting the job of the team done no matter what it takes.

>> Janelle: Wow, there are some definite differences with teamwork. I think it can work well and it obviously does and we accomplish great things out there, and for a supervisor, I think this is a good one to pick up on the different needs for each of the different generations, very interesting.

Our last question, maybe our most important, what advice would you give to supervisors how to coach you and others in your generation?

I think we'll start with Dave.

>> Dave: Sure.

I think the supervisors have to appreciate the breadth of experience contained within their work force and within the baby boomers.

Especially with respect to technology.

A baby boomer, and baby boomers cover such a wide age range, 18, 19 years long, they may not have a complete grasp of the technology being applied on the job but the supervisor can't assume they have the complete grasp. There is a lot of technological savvy among the baby boomers.

That's kind of a tough consideration for a supervisor. Some may not have any grasp of it at all and others have a vast experience. You can't make any assumptions and you have to get to know the abilities of the employee that

they' re supervi si ng.

>> Tiffani: For me, in terms of coaching me or mentoring me, I need to receive immediate and continuous feedback.

I want it to be something that happens right away, I need it to be constructive and on a continual basis, both positive and negative.

I can take constructive criticism and negative feedback but I need it right away, right as the situation happens.

I value continual learning and I think that is something Generation X values as well, so implement continual learning, continual training within my training process, within my feedback process, within the coaching and mentoring process is important to me and to us as a generation.

>> Jaime: It's definitely important for supervisors to help us incorporate work and play into the work force because we do want to have fun.

By maybe providing time off awards or monetary awards so we can go out there and do that, that's a very important thing for us.

Help us prioritize and become more structured.

Sometimes you have to reel us in because we are out multi tasking so much that we get a little lost sometimes.

Say motivating things to us, to our co-workers and about our co-workers and about the company.

Most importantly, be open and honest.

You can learn from us just as much as we can learn from you.

>> Janelle: Thank you for sharing that.

I think a fun way to end our discussion today would be to come up with a motto or share a motto that you believe represents you and your generation.

So, I think or I hope that this will represent the traditionalist and that would be "pay your dues."

Dave?

>> Dave: Well, again, the baby boomers represent a fairly long period and it was kind of hard to try to encapsulate that all in one phrase.

One that came to mind for me was "do your own thing."

Again, going back to the independence there.

Do your own thing.

>> Janelle: Great.

Tiffani?

>> Tiffani: This will sound kind of silly but I'm going to say, "where's the beef?" which clearly encompasses the skeptical attitude that Gen X'ers have - the what's in it for me attitude that Gen-X'ers have.

For those out there, they probably remember the Wendy's commercial of where's the beef.

>> Janelle: Jamie.

>> Jaime: I'm going to say short and sweet like Mikey does, just do it.

>> Janelle: For more information around generational differences, please check out our website at the address below.

I would like to thank you all for being here today and spending your time with us.

I know that you have shared a lot of information and insight about yourselves and others in your generation.

I know that will be helpful to our supervisors out there in getting the best out of their employees.

Thank you for being here today.

>> Dave: Thank you.

>> Tiffani: Thank you.

>> Jaime: Thank you.