Section 4

Generational Differences

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|  | **Baby Boomers (1946-1960)** | **Generation X (1961-1980)** | **Millennials (1981-2000)** |
| Major Influences | Suburbia, TV, Vietnam, Watergate, Protests: Human Rights & Women’s Movement, Drugs, Sex, & Rock ‘n’ Roll | Sesame Street, MTV, Game Boy, PC, Divorce-rate tripled, Latchkey children, Left alone | Expanded technology, Natural disasters, Violence/gangs, Diversity, Coddled by parents |
| Characteristics | Idealistic, Competitive, Question Authority | Eclectic, Resourceful, Self-Reliant, Distrustful, Highly Adaptive to change & technology | Globally concerned, Realistic, Cyber-savvy, Suffer “ADD,” “Remote control kids” |
| Key Descriptor | Optimist | Skeptic | Realist |
| Slogan | “Thank God it’s Monday” | “Work to Live” | “It’s all about me” |
| Job Changing | Puts you behind Stay if moving up | Is necessary Follow your heart | The ultimate multitaskers Part of daily routine; expected |
| Motivators | $, title, recognition, promotion | Freedom, fun | Personal fulfillment |
| Workplace Flexibility | The nerve of those Xers! | I’ll go where I can find it. | Should suit my needs. |
| Working Long Hours | Will get ahead, $, bonus | Get a life!  Decide when, where and how | But not all AT work |
| Productivity | Input matters most | Output is all that matters | Churn lots of topsoil in many areas |
| Give me more... | Money | Time | Affirmation |
| Performance Reviews | Once a year; documented | Sorry to interrupt; How am I doing? | What do you mean I’m not outstanding? |
| Work-Life Integration | Work matters most; divorced or dual career | Family matters as much; dual career | Too soon to tell |
| Career Paths | Ladder; upward mobility | Lattice; plateaus are fine | Checkerboard |
| Career Pace | Prove yourself with long hours; pay your dues | I want to know all my options now | May switch frequently and fast |

Credit: “Traditionalists, Boomers, Xers, AND Millenials: Giving and Getting the Mentoring You Want”; Mentoring Luncheon given by Cathy A. Trower, Ph.D., October 16, 2009.

### How to Work Together

* + Be aware of differences
  + Appreciate the strengths
  + Manage the differences

### When working with Boomers

* + Show respect
  + Choose face-to-face conversations
  + Give them your full attention
  + Play the game
  + Learn the school history

### When working with Xers

* + Get to the point
  + Use email
  + Give them space—don’t micromanage
  + Get over the notion of paying dues
  + Lighten up
  + Avoid judging—look for things in common
  + Find balance between work and life

### When working with Millennials

* + Challenge them
  + Ask them their opinions
  + Find them a mentor
  + Provide timely feedback
  + Be flexible

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