# Generations
## In the Workplace

Facilitated by

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www.fhsu.edu/pce | August 15, 2024

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# Workshop Agenda

| | |
|---|---|
| *9:00 – 9:05* | *Welcome & Introductions* |
| 9:05 – 9:25 | A Brief Review of Living Generations |
| 9:25 – 9:40 | Generations in the Workplace: Preferences & Motivations |
| 9:40 – 9:55 | Strategies for Bridging the Generation Gap |
| *9:55 – 10:00* | *Wrap-up* |
| **After Workshop** | **Go forth to improve organizational culture!** |

# Training Objectives

Objective 1: Identify the six widely accepted living generations by reviewing timeframe, major world events, and common characteristics of each.

Objective 2: Identify common motivations and workplace preferences for the working generations.

Objective 3: Create strategies for more effective communication to help bridge the generation gap.

Which objective seems the most interesting to you? Why?

What do you hope to get out of today? What's your goal?

Age cohorts can be a helpful tool when trying to gain insight on how various generations uniquely approach topics such as communication, leadership, technology, politics, and work.

Generations serve as a useful **starting place** on how best to communicate with, lead, and work with one another now and in the future.

# The Generations

What is a generation?

A generation is a group of people born around the **same time** and raised around the **same place**. People in a 'birth cohort' can exhibit similar **characteristics**, **preferences**, and **values** because of the socio-historical events they have experienced.

Did you know: There are **six** living generations that make up our society?

Based on your first impressions or previously gained knowledge about generations, **circle** which generation you think you fall within.
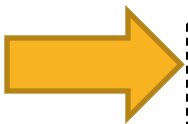
**Traditionalists – Room 1**

**Baby Boomers – Room 2**

**Generation X – Room 3**

**Millennials – Room 4**

**Gen Z – Room 5**

**Generation Alpha – Room 6**

**Consider this:** Commonalities amongst generations are not a box or tool to stereotype. Generational differences provide us with powerful clues that allow us to connect and more effectively communicate with people of different ages.

# TRADITIONALISTS

*According to the Pew Research Center: Traditionalists are born **1928 - 1945***

*Traditionalists were impacted by several historical events, which had an impact on shaping their motivations and behaviors.*

*Can you think of any examples of major historical events or popular culture between 1928 & 1945?*

*Family life?*

*Media / communication? Money? Education?*

| 1920 | 1940 | 1960 | 1980 | 2000 | 2020 |

Traditionalists, Silent Generation, or
Veterans were born in this span.

**Did you know:** The Silent Generation encompasses 55 million people! They are widely considered the 'wealthiest and healthiest' generation.

# TRADITIONALISTS:

## *1928-1945*

Common attitudes, beliefs, & values:

- Loyalty to traditional establishments
- Very strong respect for authority
- Respect for hierarchy & seniority
- Belief in 'earning your keep' or climbing the ladder
- Formal relationships in the workplace

**Motto: Pay Your Dues.**

Common characteristics and skills:

- Compliant
- Stable
- Savers
- Make more happen with less
- Detail oriented
- Dedicated
- Sacrificial / Duty-bound
- Direct

*Typical Stereotypes: Old-fashioned, behind the times, rigid, autocratic, change or risk averse*

**Did you know:** we can attribute TRADITIONALISTS for these common phrases?

**"A penny saved is a penny earned" | "Don't count your chickens before they're hatched" | "Save it for a rainy day" | "Never put off tomorrow what you can do today" | "Waste not, want not"**

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*According to Pew Research Center, SHRM, UC Santa Cruz, Univ. of Missouri, and Dept. of Transportation.*

# BABY BOOMERS

**According to the Pew Research Center: Baby Boomers are born *1946 - 1964***

*Baby Boomers were impacted by several historical events, which had an impact on shaping their motivations and behaviors.*

*Can you think of any examples of major historical events or popular culture between 1946 & 1964?*

*Family life?*

*Media / communication? Money? Education?*

| 1920 | 1940 | 1960 | 1980 | 2000 | 2020 |

The post-war generation gets its name from the population increase following WWII.

**Did you know:** Baby Boomers are considered the first generation that were inundated by advertising? This generation = **76 million** Americans!

# BABY BOOMERS:

## *1946-1964*

*Motto: Anything is possible if you work hard enough.*

Common attitudes, beliefs, and values:

- Live to work, rather than work to live
- Love for democracy
- Achievement-driven
- Strong sense of community
- Individualistic but plays well with others
- Competitive
- Unafraid of questioning status quo

Common characteristics and skills:

- Hard workers (invented the 60 hour work-week)
- Largest economic group
- Highest percentage in government
- Self-assured
- Strong sense of self
- Rational
- Focused

*Typical Stereotypes: Self-centered, my way is best, unrealistic, power-driven, unbalanced work / family life, political*

**Check out these stats** *(Nielsen):*

**35% of all U.S. homeowners are Baby Boomers | 70% of the disposable income in the U.S. is controlled by Boomers | 45% consider themselves to be entrepreneurs | 90% of Boomers are married**

*According to Pew Research Center, SHRM, UC Santa Cruz, Univ. of Missouri, and Dept. of Transportation.*

# GENERATION X

*Those born in Generation X were impacted by several historical events, which had an impact on shaping their motivations and behaviors.*

*Can you think of any examples of major historical events or popular culture between 1965 & 1980?*

*Family life?*

*Media / communication? Money? Education?*

| 1920 | 1940 | 1960 | 1980 | 2000 | 2020 |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|

These were often called 'latchkey' kids – or
children raised with less parental supervision.

**Did you know:** Generation X is the first cohort to come of age with MTV? This generation encompasses **55 million** Americans!

# GENERATION X:

## 1965-1980

Common attitudes, beliefs, and values:

- Value work/life balance
- Individualistic
- Independent / self-reliant
- Value flexibility
- Adaptable
- Tendency to be more skeptical
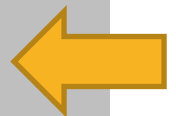- Results-oriented

**Motto: Prove It.**

Common characteristics and skills:

- Technologically adept
- Resourceful
- Self-sufficient
- Tolerant of alternative lifestyles
- Works to live rather than live to work
- Antiestablishment
- Pragmatic

*Typical Stereotypes: Slackers, latchkey-kids, no respect for authority, cynical, impatient, selfish*

*Paul Taylor, Former Exec. VP of the Pew Research Center had this to say about Generation X:*

**"From everything we know about Xers, they're savvy, skeptical, and self-reliant; they're not into preening or pampering, and they just might not give much of a hoot what others think of them."**

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*According to Pew Research Center, SHRM, UC Santa Cruz, Univ. of Missouri, and Dept. of Transportation.*

# MILLENNIALS

**According to the Pew Research Center: Millennials are born 1981 - 1996**

*Those born in the Millennial Generation were impacted by several historical events, which had an impact on shaping their motivations and behaviors.*

*Can you think of any examples of major historical events or popular culture between 1981 & 1996?*

*Family life?*

*Media / communication? Money? Education?*

| 1920 | 1940 | 1960 | 1980 | 2000 | 2020 |

Millennials have also been dubbed Echo
Boomers or Generation Y

**Did you know:** The Millennial Generation is expected to peak in 2050 with a projected **74.3 million** members due to immigration *(Pew Research Center)*

# MILLENNIALS:
## 1981-1996

Common attitudes, beliefs, and values:

- Highly tolerant of diversity
- Highly competitive
- Individualistic
- Self-confident
- Sense of belonging to a broader community / purpose
- Desire to see / experience the world
- Focus on charity / goodwill
- Optimistic to a fault

*Motto: You Only Live Once*

Common characteristics and skills:

- Ambitious but not entirely focused
- Technologically savvy
- At ease in team-settings but unafraid to put self first
- Open to new ideas
- Constant desire to acquire new skills
- Family/friend oriented
- Good with money
- Avid consumers

*Typical Stereotypes: Spoiled, disrespectful, technology dependent, Me – Me – Me, sensitive, snowflakes*

**Did you know: Millennials LOVE their dogs?**

**In fact, Millennials prioritize their dogs over getting married and starting a family! In 2018, The CDC released data showing that birthrates in the U.S. have dropped to an all-time low.**

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*According to Pew Research Center, SHRM, UC Santa Cruz, Univ. of Missouri, and Dept. of Transportation.*

# GENERATION Z

**According to the Pew Research Center: Generation Zs are born *1997 - 2012***

*Those born in the Generation Z were impacted by several historical events, which had an impact on shaping their motivations and behaviors.*

*Can you think of any examples of major historical events or popular culture between 1997 & 2012?*

*Family life?*

*Media / communication? Money? Education?*

| 1920 | 1940 | 1960 | 1980 | 2000 | 2020 |

Have you heard the terms iGen or Digital Natives?
Those are two alternative names for this cohort.

**Did you know:** Gen Zers are on track to become the largest, most educated, and the most ethnically diverse generation? *(Pew Research Center)*

# GENERATION Z:
## *1997-2012*

Common attitudes, beliefs, and values – still being shaped:

- Independent (lack of community focus)
- High standards of inclusivity and openness
- Focus on individual expression
- Avoidance of labels & emphasis on uniqueness
- Realistic
- Search for Truth
- Open-minded

**Motto: Do It Yourself**

Characteristics and skills:

- Very little fear
- Entrepreneurial
- Ability to multi-task
- Less of an attention span
- Demanding consumers
- Mastery of technology
- Pragmatic / practical
- Showing to be less rebellious
- Change is welcome

*Typical Stereotypes: Loners, FOLO (fear of living offline), Ghosts, Negative, Cheaters, Hoppers*

**Gallup, an analytics company, says Generation Z is entrepreneurial!**

**42% of Gen Zs plan to start their own businesses. 38% say they are planning to invest in something that will change the world.**

*According to Pew Research Center, SHRM, UC Santa Cruz, Univ. of Missouri, and Dept. of Transportation.*

# GENERATION ALPHA

**According to the Pew Research Center: Generation Alpha begins around 2012**

*Those who are born after 2012 will be influenced by historical events.*

*Can you come up with examples of possible events from 2012 – 2020 that might influence our next generation?*

| 1940 | 1960 | 1980 | 2000 | 2020 | 2040 |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|

We are unsure if the "Generation Alpha" label will stick. Based on past cutoffs, this cohort will likely span from approx. 2012 - 2022

**Did you know:** Demographers begin to attach attitudes and beliefs to generations closer to the cohort's teenage years? It's still too early to tell for Gen Alpha.

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# GENERATION ALPHA:
## *2012-?*

*What we know so far:*

- They're young, but they will have major spending power because they influence the shopping behavior of their parents.
- They will grow up with more technology and will learn to interact with AI and robots.
- Possibility of turning away from higher education.
- Likely more focused on diversity.
- High percentage of children who have foreign-born parents and children who are foreign born themselves.
- Research is showing Gen Alpha will have more children growing up without both biological parents.
- Trend toward moving out of suburbs and into urban areas.
- Trend toward moving more often, more frequently.

Did you know: Generation Alpha gets its name from being the first cohort to be born entirely in the 21st century?

Alpha is the first Greek letter, so it represents the fact that this cohort is the 'first' in the 21st century.

*According to Pew Research Center, SHRM, UC Santa Cruz, Univ. of Missouri, and Dept. of Transportation.*

# Generations in the Workforce

The first step to overcoming generational differences and friction is being aware of the differences. Applying a generational lens can help us explore leadership and communication in different ways to become more effective.

Baby Boomer Workplace Preferences

Generation X Workplace Preferences

Millennial Workplace Preferences

Generation Z Workplace Preferences

*Changing organizational culture starts with you.*

# Your Own Workplace

Successful work-teams don't simply tolerate others – they pursue, encourage, and capitalize on different backgrounds and perspectives. Think about your own team. Does your team fall within effective? Or ineffective?

**Ineffective**

- Prescribe one way of doing things ('My Way or the Highway' leadership).
- Expect team members to be (or become) carbon copies of themselves.
- Focus on mistakes and problems.
- Ignore positive contributions.
- Avoid risk and encourage others to do the same.
- Resistance to change is high.

**Effective**

- Encourage new/creative approaches to work.
- Avoid judging ideas until they're fully explained.
- Allow a variety of behaviors and attitudes, unless they violate core values.
- Emphasize and celebrate personal successes.
- Encourage risk-taking and learning from mistakes.
- Development is encouraged.

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

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# Bridge the Gap

Provide a 'sand-box' for all employees or team members to live in a new world using new methods outside their comfort zones.

Bring people together by pointing out similarities.

Encourage employees to identify a weakness and partner with someone from a different generation who is strong in that area.

Conduct an audit on your current workforce. Is there more of one generation than another? Why?

Implement cross-generational training for all employees.

Openly give value to both new perspectives and history – we need both.

Request employees forego technology-dependent communications for the day and only engage in face-to-face conversations. Do the opposite the next week.

Respect diversity, respect individuality, and know your people – regardless of what generation they fall within.

Check your own bias.

Language matters! Call out instances of ageism – no matter how small.

Consider learning styles. The way we think about information has a huge impact on our motivations and preferences.

Find ways to create shared values and common ground. Share that information with everyone.

Understand, and help others understand, the way we react to change.

Consider the level of formality and the comfort surrounding it.

Implement some type of organizational assessment to find out about people's preference without the 'generational lens.'

See it their way.

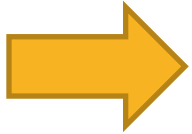Be patient. Be polite.

Develop a mentorship, coaching, or high potential program.

Purposefully build work teams with diverse members and communicate the desire for openness and creativity.

# Making a Difference at Barton Community College

How are you going to make a difference when you leave today? What can you do to improve organizational culture? Answer the questions below to begin thinking about how you can make an impact.

Identify one generational issue that is having some negative effects in your workplace.

Without identifying anyone by name, describe what's happening and explain how it's affecting you and/or others.

What efforts have been made to address the situation? What efforts, based on what you've learned today, could you undertake?

# Working Effectively with Others

**Believe the best in people**. Most of the time, misunderstandings happen due to differences in learning style, communication style, view of authority, and use of language.

Recognize that generational differences influence our ideas, expectations, values, and behaviors; however, **people are FAR more complex than the generation they fall within**.

Treat others how THEY want to be treated. Do not treat others how YOU want to be treated. **Flex your natural style** and preferences in order to work more effectively.

Challenge assumptions and raise awareness regarding your workplace. It's up to **YOU** to make a difference. Improving workplace culture starts with self.

**Focus on what really matters** – productivity, teamwork, customer relationships, or a great product. Differences are an advantage to your workplace.

*What is one strategy you will implement leaving here today? How can you make a positive impact?*

# Notes

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**Session Facilitator:**

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