baby boomers

millennials

GEN X

traditionalists

Generation Translation

traditionalists

GEN X

cloud

Tools for Bridging the Gap

Rita M. Murray, Ph.D.
and Hile Rutledge

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GEN X

Generational gaps in today's workplace are growing as Clouds enter the workforce, Boomers retire and Gen Xers work more closely with Millennials to assume the mantle of leadership in many organizations. The ability to spot and bridge these gaps with proven tools has become a critical competency needed for everyone in today's workforce.

MIND THE GAPS

Boomers wonder why these kids don't know any better. *"Put down that cell phone and get to work."* Millennials wonder why these old guys are so slow. *"Dude, my boss is a dinosaur LOL."* Xers wonder when their older colleagues are going to retire. *"I thought they would be gone by now."*

Authors Rita M. Murray and Hile Rutledge offer generation translation dynamics that you can put to work immediately. These practical tools help you gain a better understanding of generations in the workplace to build more effective relationships and bridge costly communication gaps.

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Is a certified speaking professional (CSP), educational psychologist, executive coach, author and private pilot. Rita offers content-rich and relevant keynotes and workshops that combine high technology with high touch and include tools such as MBTI®, EQ-i and generational theory. Her business career has taken her coast to coast and includes 11 years as CEO of a national energy services company and technical leader at *GE* and *Lockheed* in Washington, DC, where she held top secret clearances. Rita hails from Boston and lives with her husband, Ron, in Norman, Oklahoma. Visit RitaMurray.com

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Tools for Bridging the Gap

Generation Translation

Business Motivation

$16.00

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10 THE TOP REASONS

WHY I SHOULD CARE ABOUT GENERATIONS

1. LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT Effective leaders know the drivers, strengths, and challenges of the people they manage and the organizations they lead. The very relevant and powerful generational lens helps leaders effectively work with individuals, teams and organizations by considering the unique motivators, perspectives and strengths of each generation.

2. MENTORING & SUCCESSION PLANNING The idea and practice of mentoring are perceived differently by the different generations. Best practices are less effective if mentors and mentees ignore the vital detail of generational outlook within these sensitive relationships.

3. KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER How do we glean critical content and cultural knowledge from those who have collected and experienced it and keep it in the system—passing it down to those newer to the group? This sounds simple, but it can be a cultural and interpersonal minefield that generational sensitivity can greatly demystify.

4. TIME TO PROMOTION One of the biggest generations gaps is the way in which generations regard movement and promotion within the organization. "*Promote me, or lose me*," and "*Pay your dues*"-- these are distinct generational outlooks that are at odds and very much alive within most organizations.

5. MOTIVATION & RETENTION Gallup reported in 2014 that over two-thirds of US workers were disengaged with their work or workplaces. The causes of this disengagement are actually quite predictable from a generational point of view.

6. COMMUNICATION LITERACY Formal correspondence, e-mail, face-to-face meetings, voice mail, Skype, Twitter--what means of communication are culturally and organizationally most appropriate? Different generations have predictably different answers, and not surprisingly, different comfort levels with these different tools and approaches.

7. TECHNOLOGY PLANNING & WORK FLOW EFFICIENCY What technology does your organization see as essential, and what is a fad? The generations tend to answer this question very differently.

8. TEAM BUILDING & GROUP COHESION Teams are complex; it is always a struggle to have groups come together, communicate, make decisions, share data and create a unified whole. Generational tensions are potential roadblocks to address. Generational interaction skills make team cohesion that much more likely.

9. CONFLICT MANAGEMENT & STRESS ALLEVIATION Not feeling heard or valued and feeling out of sync or misaligned with the larger group are potent sources of stress and conflict. Given that so many values and workplace expectations are rooted in generational perspectives, the generational lens provides many effective levers for stress and conflict management.

10. RECRUITING & MARKETING Recruiting and marketing efforts project a public face of your organization. How is it seen (and is it even noticed and seen) by the different generations? Generational sensitivity increases the likelihood that you are neither excluding certain generations nor baiting and switching by suggesting certain cultural truths that are not then followed up.

Let's get started. ▶▶▶

MILLENNIALS

THE MOBILE (M) GENERATION

The oldest of this generation were young adults in the late 1990s and began entering the workforce in 2000, thus the term Millennials is most often used to refer to this generation. They expect businesses to honor a culture of "work life integration" as not just the ability to do work from a life setting but the ability to participate in life from a work setting. Web 2.0 appeared in 1999 and signified the dissemination of information and communication technologies into all aspects of our lives.

On its heels appeared "social media" which refers to the many relatively inexpensive and widely accessible electronic tools that enable anyone to publish and access information, collaborate on a common effort, or build relationships. They are accustomed to receiving information instantly and constantly, in bursts, high definition video and real-time streaming sound, which has led most Millennials to learn how to shortcut and/or game their workplace systems.

TECHNOLOGY
Internet Age

Entering the wireless workplace of the 21st Century is natural to a Millennial. More than eight-in-ten say they sleep with a cell phone glowing by the bed. Multitasking can be good, but many see this Millennial tendency as more of a challenge, accusing this group of lacking an attention span and/or the ability to focus over long projects or periods of time.

- Dubbed "digital natives," they have never known an unwired world.

- Communication, connection, collaboration and contribution have always been web-enabled, mobile activities.

MILLENNIAL'S "FIRST TECHNOLOGY" IMPLICATIONS

- Prefer informal workplace structures and being constantly connected.

- Most Millennials have an email account only to set up their social networks, not to actually send/receive mail.

- Millennials' tools allow them to reach and be influenced by a larger group of people than any other generation.

- New games and apps are constantly being released (often for free); revolutions take place on Twitter; YouTube turns people into pop stars.

- Millennials not only own the most devices, they also take advantage of a wider range of functions.

- Millennials spend up to five hours a day reading, creating and clicking on user-generated content (UGC), any content from social media wherein users add their own opinion.

- This has led to Millennials' wanting to work for companies that value their comments and opinions.

- Electronic conversations in soundbites help shortcut conversations in the workplace.

- From a young age, they've managed information and expect to do so in the workplace.

- They bring a more open approach to collaboration than other generations are comfortable with.

- Accustomed to immediate feedback, they expect performance feedback in the same manner.

ORGANIZATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Attracted to their careers and loyal to their employers, most Baby Boomers find their worth in their work ethic and are willing to continually take on new responsibilities while adhering to a politically sensitive and consensus-driven work environment. Having been educated and initially employed in high-engagement and relatively technology-free systems, Baby Boomers learned the value of face-to-face, non-verbal and written communication skills, and their experience within the organization has taught them to be both sensitive and politically savvy.

EXERCISE   Name some Baby Boomers you interact with on a regular basis:

-
-

-
-

To improve the relationship you have with the Boomers in your life, commit to engaging (or avoiding) two or three of the following Do's and Don'ts behaviors. Check the ones to which you will commit.

DO
- ☐ Respect what came before—remember that history matters
- ☐ Act in the organization/team's best interest
- ☐ Show respect for authority and personal relationships
- ☐ Pay your dues
- ☐ Actively listen, be present (put away your phone)
- ☐ Be accountable for your work—focus and finish
- ☐ Commit
- ☐ Be on time, and don't blame your being late on your commute
- ☐ Focus on goals, values and outputs

DON'T
- ☐ Get caught in "what's in it for me" (WIIFM) thinking
- ☐ Multi-task when we're talking
- ☐ Assume my wanting you to focus means I want you to slow down
- ☐ Assume I'm anti-technology
- ☐ Whine—do your job and make it work
- ☐ Assume we've never created something new or exciting—we can and have
- ☐ Assume we are thinking about or planning for retirement
- ☐ Assume we never enjoy taking time off

NOTES:

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GENERATIONAL BLIND SPOTS

These two pages summarize the blind spots of each generation and contain data intended for you to engage mostly with your own generation's content. Remember, once you know you have a blind spot and focus upon it, the blind spot goes away.

EXERCISE: Put a check mark by the comments of your generation's description – i.e., blind spots that currently do, or have, played a role in your life and interactions.

If you are a Traditionalist, check your Blind Spots:

Concentration on knowing, practicing and recalling past experience and procedures in the name of efficiency leads this generation to be more backward than forward looking, more historical than visionary.

Being well into middle age before computers became a workplace reality, Traditionalists tend to be late adopters, if at all, of new technology and slow to pick up on new trends.

Traditionalists tend to believe work is done at the work-site, and if you are not at work and at your desk (or place of actual labor), you are not working. This mindset blocks this generation from embracing telework and/or flex hours or trusting their colleagues who engage these more technology-enabled ideas.

For most the Traditionalists' careers, the pace of growth and organizational change was more deliberate than it is today. As a result, most in this generation believe that career growth and advancement are things that happen more slowly—earned one success after another over time.

When managed by a younger worker, but especially a Gen-X'er or a Millennial, Traditionalists often chafe and struggle when their years of general life and work experience are not acknowledged, respected and consulted.

If you are a Baby Boomer, check your Blind Spots:

Orientation to the organization leads Boomers to become too bureaucratic and hierarchical, letting rank too often define status and importance.

Organizational adherence and experience leads many Boomers to expect everyone to conform to the established, "one-size-fits-all" office protocol and procedure.

Boomers see inherent value in time at your desk and push to be the first one on in and last one out of the office, struggling to see value provided by someone working a more flexible or variable schedule.

Desire to meet, train and talk face-to-face can lead to inefficiencies and an under-use of newer technologies.

The values of learning by trial-and-error and "paying your dues" leads many Boomers to expect less experienced workers to take more time working through issues and learning the organization's culture than these workers want or believe needs to be taken.

When managed by a Gen-X'er or—even more challenging—a Millennial, Boomers can chafe and struggle when their years of general life and work experience are not acknowledged and consulted.

GENERATION ACTION PLAN

My generation is: *(circle one)*

Traditionalist   Baby Boomer   Generation X   Millennial   Cloud

The focus of this action plan is greater self-awareness and self-management—helping you derive generational insights that you can use immediately to better manage your own reactions and interactions.

What are 3 to 5 descriptions or details of your generation with which you identify most strongly?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Identify ways in which your generational outlook and style have benefited your career and served you well.

1.

2.

3.

Identify ways your generational outlook and style may prove challenging to others and may have limited your career.

1.

2.

3.

What two actions will you take to put any of these generational insights to work in the next week?

1.

2.

PUTTING GENERATION TRANSLATION TO WORK

Understanding yourself from a generational perspective yields insights both to your own behaviors as well as the motives and drivers of others. As a powerful and unique self-awareness tool, the generational lens yields insights and applications on the personal, relational, group and systems levels.

SELF-AWARENESS – SELF-MANAGEMENT
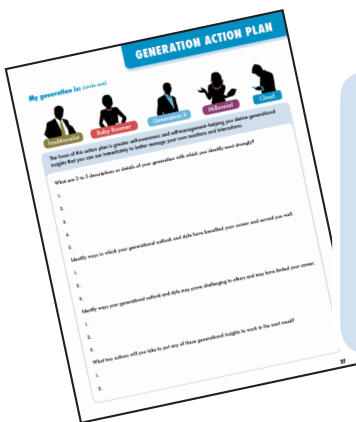
Throughout this workbook are a number of exercises and interactive passages designed to help you apply you apply this information to your to your relationships, work and life—culminating in the action plan on page 29. These thought-provoking activities and this action plan should be seen as critical first steps in integrating and applying generational insights.

TEAM AND LEADERSHIP TOOLS

The profile of each generation within the Workbook contains a list of Do's and Don'ts designed to make each generation more accessible --easier to lead, follow and work with. Consider committing to specific behaviors (that you will do and NOT do) and discussing these goals within your teams and with your direct reports.

ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT
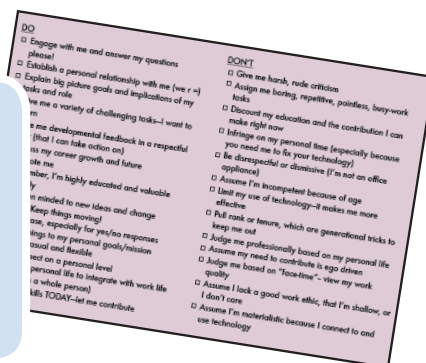
Organizations that have effectively integrated this model have policies and procedures rooted in generational sensitivity, such as:

- Generational Diversity Training
- Generational Team and Communication Training
- Mentorship Programs
- Generational Audits
- Technology Utilization and Training Programs

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