

# Bridging the Gap:

*Understanding the  
Multi-Generational Workforce and Ideas for  
Capitalizing on its Opportunities*



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# A BRAVE NEW WORKFORCE

**Never** in the modern world have there been four generations in the workplace; all bring vastly different beliefs, expectations and values.



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# A BRAVE NEW WORKPLACE

“To an extent that few people have recognized, our organizational world is no longer a pattern of jobs....there are part-time and temporary work situations. That change is symptomatic of a deeper change that is subtler but more profound. The deeper change is this: today's organization is rapidly being transformed from a structure built out of jobs into a field of work needing to be done.”

Fortune Magazine, 1994

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# A BRAVE NEW WORKPLACE

“The end of the job, as a way of organizing work, it is a social artifact that has outlived its usefulness. Its demise confronts everyone with unfamiliar risks—and rich opportunities.”

Fortune Magazine, 1994

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# A BRAVE NEW WORKPLACE

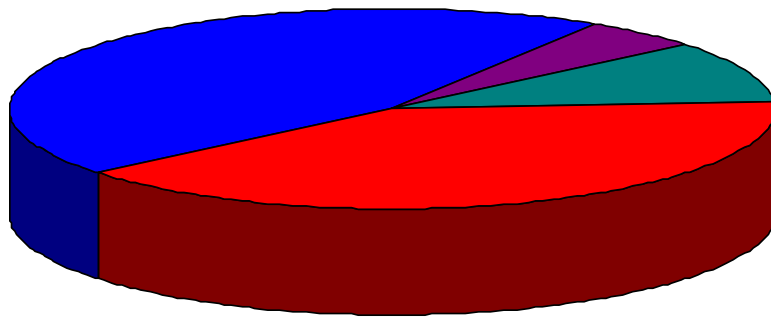
"We used to read predictions that by 2000 everyone would work 30-hour weeks, and the rest would be leisure. But as we approach 2000, it seems more likely that half of us will be working 60-hour weeks and the rest of us will be unemployed."

Fortune Magazine, 1994

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# SHIFTING WORKFORCE DYNAMICS



- **Millennials 10%**
- **GenXers 40%**
- **Baby Boomers 45%**
- **Traditionalists 5%**

Workers older than 40 currently make up half of the workforce, a 33 percent increase since 1980.

Workers older than 55 are anticipated to make up 13 percent of the workforce by 2020.

Millennials are anticipated to account for 47 percent as early as 2014.



# SHIFTING WORKFORCE DYNAMICS

About half of the industry's workforce will retire within the next 15 years.

There is a scarcity of employees between 30 to 40 years of age.

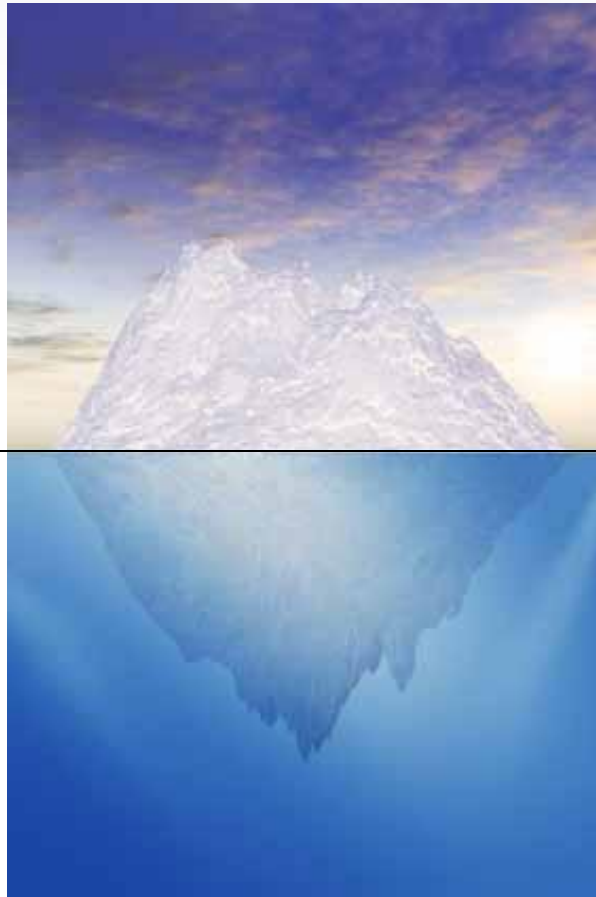




# THE GENERATIONAL ICEBERG

Initial and natural awareness:

They are “younger,”  
“older,” “my age.”



The deeper connection:

We learn of shared values, history, communication styles, technology.

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# MEET THE GENERATIONS

**Traditionalists**  
**1900-1945**



**Baby Boomers**  
**1946-1964**



**Gen Xers**  
**1965-1976**



**Millennials**  
**1977-1995**



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**What are the common  
preconceptions we have about  
each generation?**

*Let's generalize...not stereotype.*



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# COMMON PRECONCEPTIONS

What group might we associate with these descriptors?

Workaholics

Inflexible

Trouble reporting to younger supervisors

Expensive (higher healthcare costs/salaries)

Uncomfortable with technology



# COMMON PRECONCEPTIONS

## Traditionalists

Workaholics

Inflexible

Trouble reporting to  
younger supervisors

Expensive (higher  
healthcare costs/salaries)

Uncomfortable with  
technology



# COMMON PRECONCEPTIONS

What group  
might we  
associate with  
these  
descriptors?

Lack current skills

Won't stay in the job for  
long

Require too high salary

Are unwilling to learn new  
technology



# COMMON PRECONCEPTIONS

## Baby Boomers

Lack current skills

Won't stay in the job for long

Require too high salary

Are unwilling to learn new technology



# COMMON PRECONCEPTIONS

To what group  
do these  
descriptors get  
attached?

Disloyal

Not team players

Slackers

Cynical

Whiners



# COMMON PRECONCEPTIONS

Gen Xers

Disloyal

Not team players

Slackers

Cynical

Whiners

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# COMMON PRECONCEPTIONS

What group  
might we be  
talking about  
now?

Inability to accept failure

Job-hoppers

Need for constant praise

Attention seekers

Lazy

Self-centered

Sense of entitlement

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# COMMON PRECONCEPTIONS

## Millenials

Inability to accept failure

Job-hoppers

Need for constant praise

Attention seekers

Lazy

Self-centered

Sense of entitlement



## **ANOTHER WAY TO DESCRIBE THIS GROUP...**

### **Traditionalists**

Strong work ethic

Value work and job

Loyal

Patient

Place duty before  
pleasure

Reluctant to technology  
changes

Rarely say “no”



## **ANOTHER WAY TO DESCRIBE THIS GROUP...**

**Boomers**

Goal-oriented

Focused on individual  
choices and freedom

Able to adapt to a diverse  
workplace

Positive attitudes



**HOW ABOUT...**

**Gen Xers**

Value productivity

Work-to-live mindset

Comfortable with authority

Technically competent

Independent, resourceful

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# **OF COURSE, THIS IS THE SO-CALLED MILLENNIAL GENERATION...**

## **Millenials**

- Want to make an impact
- Feel work is an expression
- Multi-taskers
- Goal-oriented
- High employer expectations
- Technology savvy
- Collaborative



# DIFFERING EXPECTATIONS... MAYBE?

Traditionalists	Boomers	Gen Xers	Millenials
Flexibility	Liberalized benefits	Work/life balance	Team work
Privacy	PTO/Flexibility	Flexibility	Corporate image/brand
Respect	Privacy	Job sharing	Money
Traditional recognition	Respect	Feedback	Training
	Public recognition	Challenge	Upward mobility/career path
		Autonomy	
		Informal recognition	Flexibility in hours and dress code

**Making generational  
connections can be  
challenging-**

***Is it worth it?***



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# COMMON ATTRIBUTES OF HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL ORGANIZATIONS

*(and their people)*

Trust in leadership

Alignment with mission  
and values

Direction and belonging



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# COMMON ATTRIBUTES OF HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL ORGANIZATIONS

*(and their people)*

Harmony between talents, skills,  
experience and job

Opportunity

Recognition





# STAGES IN GETTING THERE



Source: Marcus Buckingham "First, Break All the Rules"

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# THE OVERWHELMING RESULTS

“ A 10-15 percent increase in employee satisfaction will result in a 42 percent increase in profits. ”



**What does, "*How can we all grow together?*" look like?**



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## **WHEN ROLLED UP**

**It's four fundamental  
things . . .**

**. . . Regardless of  
generational differences.**



# FOUR ESSENTIALS

1  
2  
3  
4

**Clarity**

**Caring**

**Learning**

**Accountability**

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## EMPHASIS...

How many of us do our best work—*smarter, better, faster—when* we are confused?

People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.

No matter our age or station in life, when we stop learning we're "*toast.*"

There is no such thing as the "self-made" man/woman. We need each other to achieve.



# What can we do to connect with other generations in the workplace?



*Start with considering what we all have in common...*

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# WHAT ASSETS DO WE ALL HAVE IN COMMON?



Relationship capital

Reputation capital

Creative thinking  
talents and skills

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# NATURAL AREAS OF CONNECT OR DISCONNECT

**External**



**Internal**

WHO	WHAT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Who will be affected?</li><li>2. Who should be included?</li><li>3. Who needs help?</li><li>4. Who isn't encouraged?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. What other opportunities can we pursue?</li><li>2. What ideas can we explore?</li><li>3. What new realities require our attention and response?</li></ul>
WHY	HOW
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Why is this something we should do?</li><li>2. Why is this a priority?</li><li>3. Why change? Why not resist change?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. How can we get the results we need?</li><li>2. How can we overcome this barrier to progress?</li><li>3. How can we accomplish this high-priority goal?</li></ul>

**People**



**Task**

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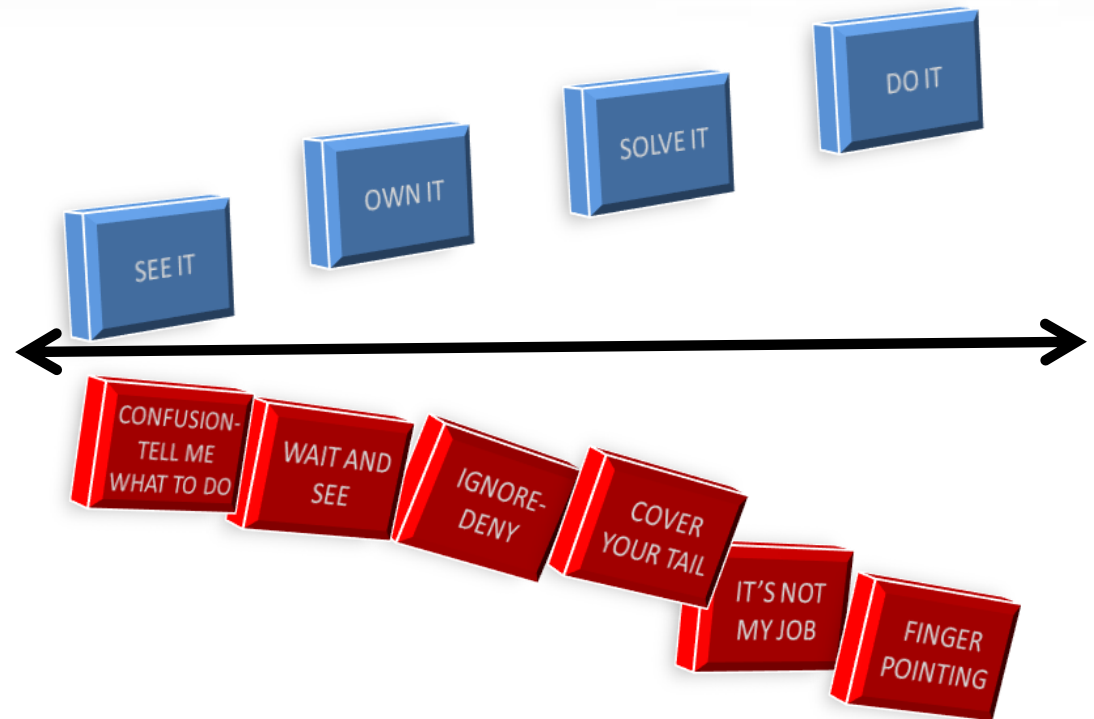
# WORKING WITH...

Traditionalists	Boomers	Gen Xers	Millenials
<p>Propose changes as evolutionary steps.</p> <p>Show respect.</p> <p>Honor the chain of command.</p> <p>Value their experiences.</p> <p>Communicate face-to-face.</p> <p>Take a more formal approach.</p> <p>Present ideas logically.</p>	<p>Be patient with their need to work through bureaucracy.</p> <p>Acknowledge that you have less experience (when appropriate).</p> <p>Be clear.</p> <p>Be their cheerleaders.</p> <p>Give them your full attention.</p> <p>Know the company's history.</p>	<p>Do not micromanage.</p> <p>Allow them to multi-task.</p> <p>Make work fun.</p> <p>Be open and honest.</p> <p>Use technology.</p> <p>Be direct and to the point.</p> <p>Talk casually.</p> <p>Ask for their opinions.</p>	<p>Create a collaborative environment.</p> <p>Commit to diversity.</p> <p>Support them.</p> <p>Assign multiple projects.</p> <p>Give them rules.</p> <p>Encourage new ideas.</p> <p>Show respect.</p> <p>Be flexible.</p> <p>Make work fun.</p>



# THE PATH FOR COMMUNICATING WITH OTHERS... AND FOR GETTING THINGS DONE

Great organizations work “above the line,” especially in challenging situations and circumstances.



Source: Roger Connors, The Oz Principle

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# **GREAT LEADERS GROW THE LEADERSHIP CAPACITY OF OTHERS**

Companies can't have too many  
leaders today.

Everyone needs to demonstrate  
situational leadership.

It is not a responsibility associated  
with generation, title, office space,  
money or size of our entourage.



# A BRAVE NEW WORKPLACE

"It's a brave new world of uncertain jobs, variable pay, and heaps of financial anxiety. But this strange terrain offers opportunity too."

Fortune Magazine, 1994



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# QUESTIONS

Contact: The Jacobson Group  
+1 (800) 466-1578  
[www.jacobsononline.com](http://www.jacobsononline.com)

**THANKS!**

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## **DISCUSSION IDEAS**

In your daily interactions and experiences, what is the most challenging aspect of working across multiple age generations?

Make a list. Who could you learn from? And what would it be?

What generation category are they in? Are all your categories represented?

Leaders grow the capacity of others. That's your perpetuating legacy. Who are you growing?