

Managing the Challenges of a Multigenerational Workforce

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Generational Issues: Often Overlooked

- Most companies focus on diversity in regard to gender and ethnicity
- Why Focus on Generational Issues?
 - More than 60% of employees report experiencing generational conflict at one point in their career
 - Age discrimination claims are reduced through employment practices based on fairness and equal opportunity for all generations
 - **State and local laws do not always include an age threshold to support a claim*
 - Happier workers result in higher productivity and an inclusive work environment

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Generations

Name	Estimated Years	Age in 2024
Post War / Traditionalists	1925-1945	79-99
Baby Boomers	1946-1964	60-78
Generation X	1965-1980	44-59
Millennials	1981-2000	24-43
Generation Z	2001-2020	4-23

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TRADITIONALISTS

Born: 1925 – 1945


Dependable | Straightforward | Tactful | Loyal

Shaped by:
The Great Depression, World War II, radio, and movies

Motivated by:
Respect, recognition, providing long-term value to the company

Communication style:
Personal touch, handwritten notes instead of email

Worldview:
Obedience over individualism; age equals seniority; advancing through the hierarchy



BABY BOOMERS

Born: 1946 – 1964


Optimistic | Competitive | Workaholic | Team-Oriented

Shaped by:
Vietnam War, Civil Rights Movement, Watergate

Motivated by:
Company loyalty, teamwork, duty

Communication style:
Whatever is most efficient, including phone calls and face-to-face

Worldview:
Achievement comes after paying one's dues; sacrifice for success



49%

Baby Boomers who expect to or already are working past age 70 or do not plan to retire*

10,000

Baby Boomers reach retirement age every day*

GENERATION X

Born: 1965 – 1980


Flexible | Informal | Skeptical | Independent

Shaped by:
The AIDS epidemic, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the dot-com boom

Motivated by:
Diversity, work-life balance, their personal-professional interests rather than the company's interests

Communication style:
Whatever is most efficient, including phone calls and face-to-face

Worldview:
Favoring diversity; quick to move on if their employer fails to meet their needs; resistant to change at work if it affects their personal lives



55%

Startup founders who are Gen Xers—the highest percentage*

BY 2028

Gen Xers will outnumber Baby Boomers*

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<https://www.purdueglobal.edu/education-partnerships/generational-workforce-differences-infographic/>

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MILLENNIALS

Born: 1981 – 2000


Competitive | Civic- and Open-Minded | Achievement-Oriented

Shaped by:
Columbine, 9/11, the internet

Motivated by:
Responsibility, the quality of their manager, unique work experiences

Communication style:
IMs, texts, and email

Worldview:
Seeking challenge, growth, and development; a fun work life and work-life balance; likely to leave an organization if they don't like change



75%

Percentage of global workforce to be made up of Millennials by 2025*

18% men

12% women

Millennials ages 25–34 living at home with their parents*

GENERATION Z

Born: 2001 – 2020


Global | Entrepreneurial | Progressive | Less Focused

Shaped by:
Life after 9/11, the Great Recession, access to technology from a young age

Motivated by:
Diversity, personalization, individuality, creativity

Communication style:
Social media, texts, IMs

Worldview:
Self-identify as digital device addicts; value independence and individuality; prefer to work with Millennial managers, innovative coworkers, and new technologies



67%

Gen Zers who want to work at companies where they can learn skills to "advance their careers"*

80%

Gen Zers who believe government and employers should subsidize, pay full tuition or provide direct training for students.*

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<https://www.purdueglobal.edu/education-partnerships/generational-workforce-differences-infographic/>

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Challenges in a Multigenerational Workforce

- Assumptions made about the others
 - Various stereotypes about persons in a different generation
- Different time frames and expectations for accomplishing tasks
- Different attention spans
- Stereotype Examples:
 - Baby Boomers think Generation X-ers are too impatient and willing to throw out time-tested strategies
 - Generation X-ers see Baby Boomers as too political and inflexible
 - Traditionalists may see Baby Boomers as too self-absorbed

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Common Complaints

- They don't follow directions
- They don't dress appropriately for work
- They want to work from home
- They aren't committed to the job
- They are so set in their ways

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Questions to Ask When Motivating Employees

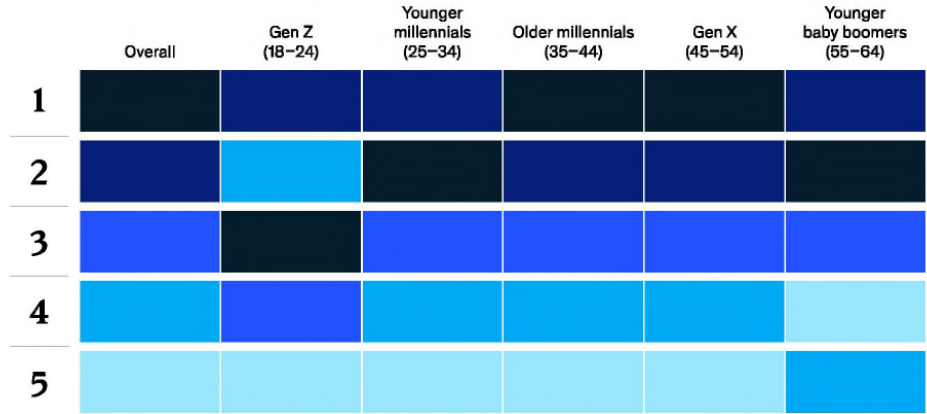
- What is their work ethic?
- How do they learn?
- How do they communicate?
- What are their priorities?
- What are their expectations?
- What kind of team building works best with them?

Millennials and Generation Z: Myths and Misconceptions

- Myth # 1 – they want constant praise “everyone deserves a trophy.”
- Myth # 2 – they want to do everything online.
- Myth # 3 – they are more likely to “jump ship.”

Top reasons why respondents left their previous jobs, by age group¹

- Inadequate total compensation
- Uncaring and uninspiring leaders
- Unsustainable work performance expectations
- Lack of career development and advancement potential
- Lack of meaningful work



¹Out of 12 answer choices that were offered in the original question. Analysis includes only respondents reporting a traditional employer-employee relationship, in which an employer hires the employee, pays them directly, and manages their work. Total, n = 8,961; Gen Z, n = 1,170; younger millennials, n = 2,624; older millennials, n = 2,185; Gen X, n = 1,579; younger baby boomers, n = 1,403.

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<https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/gen-what-debunking-age-based-myths-about-worker-preferences#/>

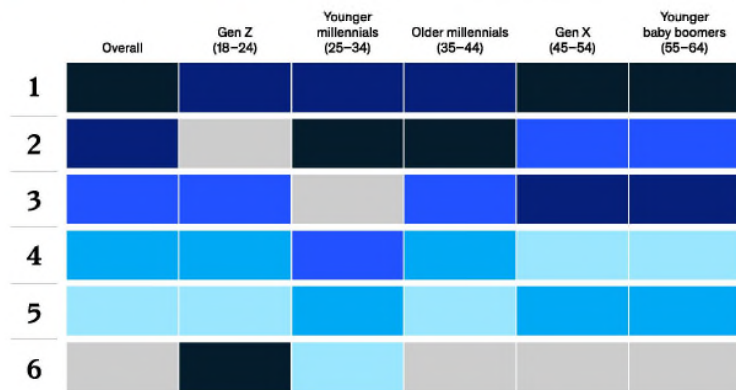
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When workers stay, their top preferences vary much more by age—and Gen Z is motivated by more than money.

Top reasons why respondents chose to stay in current job, by age group¹

- Adequate total compensation
- Meaningful work
- Safe workplace environment
- Workplace flexibility
- Reliable and supportive people at work
- Career development and advancement potential



¹Out of 12 answer choices that were offered in the original question. Analysis includes only respondents reporting a traditional employer-employee relationship, in which an employer hires the employee, pays them directly, and manages their work. Total, n = 15,975; Gen Z, n = 1,280; younger millennials, n = 3,629; older millennials, n = 3,948; Gen X, n = 3,950; younger baby boomers, n = 3,190.

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<https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/gen-what-debunking-age-based-myths-about-worker-preferences#/>

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New Challenges in the Workforce

- Information is communicated more quickly and publicly
 - Social Networking: Facebook, X, Instagram, SnapChat
 - Email
 - Instant Messaging
 - Cell Phones
 - Text Messaging
 - New Areas of Liability for Corporate Exposure

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Bridging Generational Gaps

Employers must be prepared to mentor, educate, and manage a unique and much more diverse mix of employees to bridge generational gaps

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Tips for Managing Multigenerational Employees

- Recognize differences in the generations and manage accordingly
- Understand how each generation prefers to communicate and implement different methods of communication
 - Hard Copies
 - Online
 - E-mail
 - Podcasts

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Tips for Managing Multigenerational Employees

- Include generational issues in diversity training
- Create multi-generational teams
- Assign mentors- matching newer employees with more experienced employees
- Offer options
 - Consider telecommunicating alternatives
- Allow collaborative decision-making and discussions

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Tips for Managing Multigenerational Employees

- Use appropriate motivations for each generation
- Train appropriately
- Think outside the box in team building
- REMEMBER, all generations want:
 - To be treated fairly
 - Work that provides personal satisfaction
 - Employers who understand personal lives are important
 - Work that is valued by employers and customers/clients
 - A clear sense of purpose from employers

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Questions?

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