Bridging the Gap: How Understanding Generational Differences Can Grow Your Association

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“Children today are tyrants. They contradict their parents, gobble their food, and tyrannize their teachers.”

Socrates (470-399 B.C.)
For the first time four generations are working side by side.

Silents: 1926-1945
Baby Boomers: 1946-1964
Gen Xers: 1965-1975
Gen Y: 1976-1999
Which of the following is important for a Baby Boomer (Born 1946-1964)?

Build parallel careers.
Build a stellar career.
Build a legacy.
Build a portable career.

Silents (Born 1926-1945)  
Build a legacy.

Baby Boomers (Born 1946-1964)  
Build a stellar career.

Generation Xers (Born 1965-1975)  
Build a portable career.

Generation Y (Born 1976-1999)  
Build parallel careers.

Which of the following is important to Generation Xers (Born 1965-1975)?

Give me balance now, not when I'm sixty-five.

Support me in shifting the balance.

Help me balance everyone else and find meaning myself.

Work isn't everything; flexibility to balance my activities is.

Silents (Born 1926-1945)
Support me in shifting the balance.

Baby Boomers (Born 1946-1964)
Help me balance everyone else and find meaning myself.

Generation Xers (Born 1965-1975)
Give me balance now, not when I'm sixty-five.

Gen Y (Born 1976-1999)
Work isn't everything; flexibility to balance my activities is.

Which of the following feedback does Gen Y (Born 1976-1999) prefer?

Sorry to interrupt, but how am I doing?

Once a year, with lots of documentation.

Feedback whenever I want it, at the push of a button.

No news is good news.

Silents (Born 1926-1945)
No news is good news.

Baby Boomers (Born 1946-1964)
Once a year, with lots of documentation.

Generation Xers (Born 1965-1975)
Sorry to interrupt, but how am I doing?

Gen Y (Born 1976-1999)
Feedback whenever I want it at the push of a button.

You know you’re a “Silent” if . . .

You remember when TV was all black & white

You remember actually ballroom dancing, not watching it on TV

You use a computer, but you’re still afraid you’ll break it

You listened to Ricky Nelson on the radio
Silents - Influential People & Events
You know you’re a “Boomer” if . . .

You thought you might one day join the Mickey Mouse Club

You used a typewriter to write your term papers

You saw every episode of “Leave it to Beaver”

You remember Woodstock
Baby Boomers - Influential People & Events
You know you’re a “Gen Xer” if . . .

You remember Atari and Asteroids

You couldn’t wait until 1999 to play “1999” by Prince

One of your first favorite movies was “Star Wars” or “ET”

You typed your term papers on a word processor
Gen X - Influential People & Events
You know you’re a “Gen Y” if . . .

You’ve always had an answering machine or voice mail

You were using a computer by the time you were learning to read

You’ve always had cable TV with remote control

The Internet has existed as long as you can remember
Gen Y - Influential People & Events
Consider this . . .

Fundamentally, people want the same things regardless of their generation.

You can work with all generations without driving yourself crazy.
By nature, men are nearly all alike; By practice, they get to be wide apart.
- Confucius (551-479 B.C.)
Who are we?

Silents (Born 1926-1945)
A sense of community, loyalty, “waste not, want not”

Baby Boomers (Born 1946-1964)
Pay your dues, competitive, optimistic

Generation Xers (Born 1965-1975)
Rewarding work now, self-reliant, highly adaptable

Generation Y (Born 1976-1999)
Work-life balance/ blending, flexible, motivated, globally concerned
What Different Generations Expect
Create a Member Value Proposition
What do we want? What’s important to us?

Silents and Baby Boomers: Show appreciation for their experience, use their expertise, let them know they are needed, put them to work, keep them engaged.
What do we want? What’s important to us?

Generation X and Y: Rewarding work now, self-reliant, highly adaptable, work-life balance/blending, flexible, motivated, globally concerned.
Custom tailor your message.

What might be very exciting to one generation may be boring to another.
Satisfaction & Retention of Younger Members

Service

Accountability

Career advantages

Community

Opportunities to serve

Satisfaction & Retention of Older Members

Enhancing career satisfaction

Finding semi-retirement options

Keeping senior members involved

Building a Bridge Across Generations

- One size does not fit all
- Leverage the skills and competencies available in all age groups
- Build a brand that values diversity
- Respect differences in communication styles
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