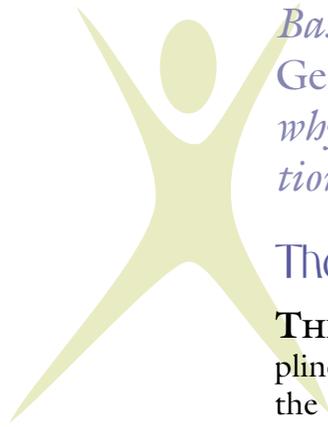


Retaining the Four Generations in the Workplace

Members of every generation want to work in a positive, satisfying work climate. So retaining your talented employees, regardless of generation, should be easy, right? The task is trickier than it seems. Based on research from the program Engaging the Generations™, there are distinct differences in the whys and hows of retaining each of the four generations in the workplace.



The Silent Generation (born 1933-45)

THE SILENT GENERATION built its success on hard work, discipline and postponement of material rewards. They are often called the “facilitative” generation because many members have taken leading national roles as diplomats, civil rights leaders and distinguished civil servants and politicians. “Giving back” and contributing to the collective good is an emblem of this generation.

At work, members of the Silent Generation are looking for due process and fair play. When they find it they are loyal to the company and work within the system. For most, their word is their bond and they expect others to behave responsibly and to honor commitments, whether or not they’re the bosses.

Contrary to the popular belief that they have reached a career plateau, many Silents are still very interested in their futures and in trying new things at work. They want to know that their employers value their work and that they are making a financial contribution. Let them know how their contributions drive profitability and impact the bottom line.

SILENTS TIPS

- Verbally and publicly acknowledge their experience.
- Provide proactive technology support services if they aren’t techno-savvy.
- Use due process and explain the reasoning behind decisions.

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This article has been adapted from Engaging the Generations™ workshop materials, developed and published by The Learning Café.

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The Baby Boom Generation (born 1946-64)

BABY BOOMERS grew up with idealistic longings and changed the social structure of the country. They created a place for themselves in history as rebels who initiated many causes: civil rights, nuclear disarmament, consumer advocacy and women's rights. And when they joined corporations, Baby Boomers took their priorities of change with them and made their organizations their new causes.

Baby Boomers are famous for being process-oriented and relationship-focused at work. As a group, they have been optimistic corporate citizens who dislike conformity and rules. They are hard workers who strive to do their very best and are willing to take risks.

Perhaps more than any other generation, they want to make a contribution to their clients and their companies. The workplace is often a place to find personal fulfillment and purpose. Baby Boomers need personal satisfaction from their jobs. Provide praise and recognition. Allow for flexibility so that they can balance family and work responsibilities.

BOOMERS TIPS

Send the message that long hours at work aren't necessarily a badge of honor.

Redesign their jobs to provide flexibility.

Spotlight personal fulfillment, meaningful work, intangibles.

Generation X (born 1965-76)

GENERATION XERS entered the workforce during volatile economic times and amid turbulent world affairs. They watched their parents cope with massive corporate layoffs and job insecurity. When Generation Xers went to work, there wasn't a corporate welcome mat waiting for them, so they have reacted to the work world as they found it.

Gen Xers are seeking the same control over their corporate lives that they experienced as children and young adults. Many tend to be output-focused and outcome-oriented. They are seeking balance in their lives. They've observed workaholic Baby Boomers are choosing to live and work differently.

Generation Xers want to know that they can remain widely employable while pursuing a career with a single organization. Communicate frequently and truthfully about how the company is performing. Provide feedback on their job performance. Provide learning and development opportunities to increase their sense of employability. Allow for work/life balance and provide situations where they can try new things.

GEN XER TIPS

Resist micromanaging them.

Provide flexible work environments (i.e., telecommuting, flex-time).

Reward their initiative.

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The Millennial Generation (born 1977-98)

MILLENNIALS are being raised in the most child-centric time in U.S. history. Studies show that their Gen Xer parents are rejecting the benign neglect practiced by their own parents. And those Baby Boomers who waited until later in life to have their children are giving parenting their formidable all. So this offspring enters the workplace as the best educated, most technically literate and most doted upon of any generation at work.

The Millennial generation brings together the “can do” ethic of the Silents, the teamwork approach of the Boomers, and an even greater tech savvy than that of the Generation Xers. They may be the first generation in some time that readily accepts older leadership. They’re looking for careers and stability.

To attract and keep them, be clear about your goals and expectations, communicate frequently, provide supervision and structure, establish mentoring programs, honor their optimism and welcome and nurture them. They want to be happy at work and are seeking organizations that are friendly in nature. Millennials are at ease in teams. ✨

MILLENNIALS TIPS

Personalize their work — one size doesn’t fit all.

Make their work interactive, like their technology, and group oriented, like their social preference.

Communicate the civic side of your company.