



5.11 Generational Traits Handout and Discussion (Page 1 of 5)

Try This!

Directions:

Read through the generational traits handout and discuss the following.

1. What generation are you?
2. Referring to the chart, which of the traits accurately describes you? Which don't? What are some specific examples that relate to you?
3. Give examples of how you have experienced generation differences with your co-workers.
4. Do you agree with the heroes that are listed? Why? Why not? Who would you add?
5. Do you agree with these quotes? Why?

“People resemble their times more than they resemble their parents.”

“A company or a team needs to be constantly rejuvenated by the infusion of young blood. It needs young people with the imagination and the guts to turn everything upside down if they can. It also needs old fogies to keep them from turning upside down those things that ought to be right side up. Above all, it needs young rebels and old conservatives who can work together, challenge each other's values, yield or hold fast with equal grace, and continue after each hard fought battle to respect each other.”

6. How could knowing this information help you better understand and work with others?



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Generation	Core Values	Contributions / Challenges	Messages that Motivate	Learning Styles		
<p>Traditionalists 1930 to 1945 (44 MM)</p> <p>Defining Moments: Pearl Harbor</p> <p>Heroes: Eisenhower, Churchill, FDR, Babe Ruth, Joe DiMaggio</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedication, loyalty and sacrifice; patriotism • Patience • Honor, respect for authority • By nature, tend to be private • Rule-abiding and obedient 	<p>Contributions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thorough and detail-oriented • Loyal, hard-working and stable <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncomfortable with change and ambiguity • Aren't forthcoming. If they disagree, they are reluctant to speak up and don't want confrontation; won't share innermost thoughts right away. • Uncomfortable with conflict • Don't waste their time – <i>they have a job to do!</i> 	<p>Traditionalists want to receive communication using a more personal approach (face to face) but in more formal language. They want to be valued for what they know, not just for what they do.</p> <p>“We respect your experience.”</p> <p>“We want to hear what you have to say about what worked and what didn't work in the past.”</p> <p>“We value your loyalty to our organization.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move away from mindset of <i>remedial</i> training • Physical comfort, such as seating or lighting, is important • If tests are necessary, consider open book. • Want to know the <i>history</i> of a department or organization • Policies/procedures are important. 		
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<p>Baby Boomers 1946 to 1964 (80 MM)</p> <p>Defining Moment: Assassination of John F. Kennedy</p> <p>Heroes: Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., John and Jackie Kennedy, John Glenn</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team orientation • Personal gratification/growth • Work involvement • Name recognition 	<p>Contributions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willing to <i>go the extra mile</i> • Driven, like to <i>win</i> • Good team players • Eager to please • Seek harmony <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncomfortable with conflict • Overly sensitive to feedback • May be judgmental of those who see things differently 	<p>Boomers define themselves through their jobs: work ethic = worth</p> <p>“We need you.”</p> <p>“You are important to the success of our team.”</p> <p>“You deserve this promotion.”</p> <p>“You’ve paid your dues.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life-long learner • Enjoy classroom interaction, discussion • Tests are stressful. • No role-playing • Ask more questions when learning • Use body language to communicate 		
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<p>Generation X 1965 to 1980 (46 MM)</p> <p>Defining Moments: Mega corporate downsizings of '70s and '80s</p> <p>Heroes: None — this group is skeptical of authority and institutions in general.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balance • Diversity • Self-reliance • Global thinking 	<p>Contributions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptable • Independent • Authority doesn't intimidate • Technologically advanced <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impatient, cynical • <i>People</i> skills may suffer – not political animals • Will make frequent job changes 	<p>Their strong sense of self-reliance should be encouraged, and they WANT feedback and access to their managers.</p> <p>“You can do this your way — find me if you need help.”</p> <p>“We’ve got the most advanced technology.”</p> <p>“We want you to have a life outside of work.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will challenge information; ask more in-depth questions. • Usually get something the first time • Want <i>just the facts</i> • Not afraid to ask questions • Give them a list of <i>important people to know</i> • Self-study, fast-paced (CDs or videos) • Place a premium on learning opportunities 		
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Generation Y 1981 to 2000 (76 MM) Defining Moments: Columbine, Oklahoma City bombing Heroes: Mother Teresa, Bill Gates, Mark McGuire, Michael Jordan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confidence Achievement Civic duty Morality Challenge 	Contributions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-tasking capabilities, highly creative Optimism Heroic spirit Belief in collective action Challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need supervision and structure Inexperienced in handling issues with difficult people Desire a fun, relaxed atmosphere 	This generation values mentors, so it's important to match these employees with more experienced people. "You'll be working with other creative people." "In this job, you'll be able to learn a variety of new skills that will help you advance." "Your boss has been with us for several years." "We want your feedback on this project."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participative learners Most techno-savvy of all age groups Need more structure Believe in goal setting, want to be challenged Want on-the-spot feedback Learn best when matched with more experienced employees 		
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Cuspers bridge communication between the different generations. Born right between two generations, this group is sometimes called the *sandwich group*.

Three sets of *cuspers*: **1940 – 1945** **1960 – 1965** **1975 – 1980**

