

# Generational Differences.... What's the big deal?

## HANDOUTS

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# Who are we talking about?

- **Traditionalists / Greatest Generation / GI Generation / Silent Generation**
  - born 1901-1945
  - 50 Million
- **Baby Boomers**
  - Born 1946-1962
  - 80 million+
- **Generation X**
  - Born 1963-1980
  - 40 million
- **Generation Y / Millennials**
  - Born 1981-2002
  - 80 million

# Generations and Work Characteristics

	Traditionalists	Boomers	GenX	Millennials
% of workforce	5%	45%	40%	10%
Focus at work	Task	Relationships & process	Results	Networking
Work Achievement	Seniority	Experience	Merit	Contribution
Work Time	Punch the clock, 9-5 get the tasks done	Whatever hours it takes to do the work, visibility is key	Get job done, focus on result not time in the office	Gone at 5pm on the dot, work is another thing in the “daily schedule”
Work Authority	Based on seniority and tenure	Originally skeptical, but now based on seniority/experience	Skeptical of authority, expect rule changes, will test authority	Tests authority but will often seek out authority figures when wanting guidance
Preferred work environment	Conservative, hierarchical, clear chain of command	Flat hierarchy, humane, democratic, warm & friendly	Functional, fun, fast paced, adaptable, access to information & leadership	Collaborative, creative, positive, diverse, fun, want feedback
Entered workforce with	Little to no experience	Academic or real world experience	Volunteer experience, advanced degrees, student loan debt	Volunteer experience, advanced degrees, student loan debt

# Key Points

1. Changing demographics & defining characteristics of generations are shifting how and who we successfully manage in our organizations
2. Generations are dynamic, not static
3. Generalizations about values, working styles, defining events etc. are only that, generalizations
4. There is almost as much variance within a generation, as there is between generations
5. Understanding the driving factors of, planning for and supporting the impending leadership transition has never been more important
6. It is not only the people who work in the NPO sector who are changing, the entire nonprofit industry is changing
7. Adapting and accommodating several generations at once, will increase the relevance and efficacy of your organization
8. Generational differences are often seen & felt most in organizations in three major areas:
  - General operations,
  - Meeting management
  - Transitions of executive leadership

# Resources

*Nonprofit Executive Leadership and Transitions Survey 2004*, Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2005

*Generations, The Challenge of a Lifetime for Your Nonprofit*, Peter Brinckerhoff, 2007

*Working Across Generations; Defining the Future of Nonprofit Leadership*, Frances Kunreuther, Helen Kim, Robby Rodriguez, 2009

*What's Next GenX? Keeping up, Moving Ahead and Getting the Career you WANT*, Tamara Erickson, 2010

*X Saves the World, How Generation X Got the Shaft but Can Still Keep Everything from Sucking*, Jeff Gordinier, 2008

*Millennials Rising*, Neil Howe, 2000

*13<sup>th</sup> Generation: Abort, Retry, Ignore*, Neil Howe, 1993

*Boomer Nation*, Steve Gillon, 2004

*Generation X: Tales for an Accelerated Culture*, Douglas Coupland, 1991

Thank you for your time and attention!



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