Turn and talk at your table:

If you could choose your generation, which one would you select and why?

- Gen Z

- Millennial

- Gen X

- Baby Boomer

- Silent

BREAKNG BARRIERS, BUILDING BONDS:

Multi-Generational Communication and Collaboration in the Workplace

Jackie Kohlhepp, SHRM-CP, LISW-AP, MSW
CEO, JTK Consulting, LLC
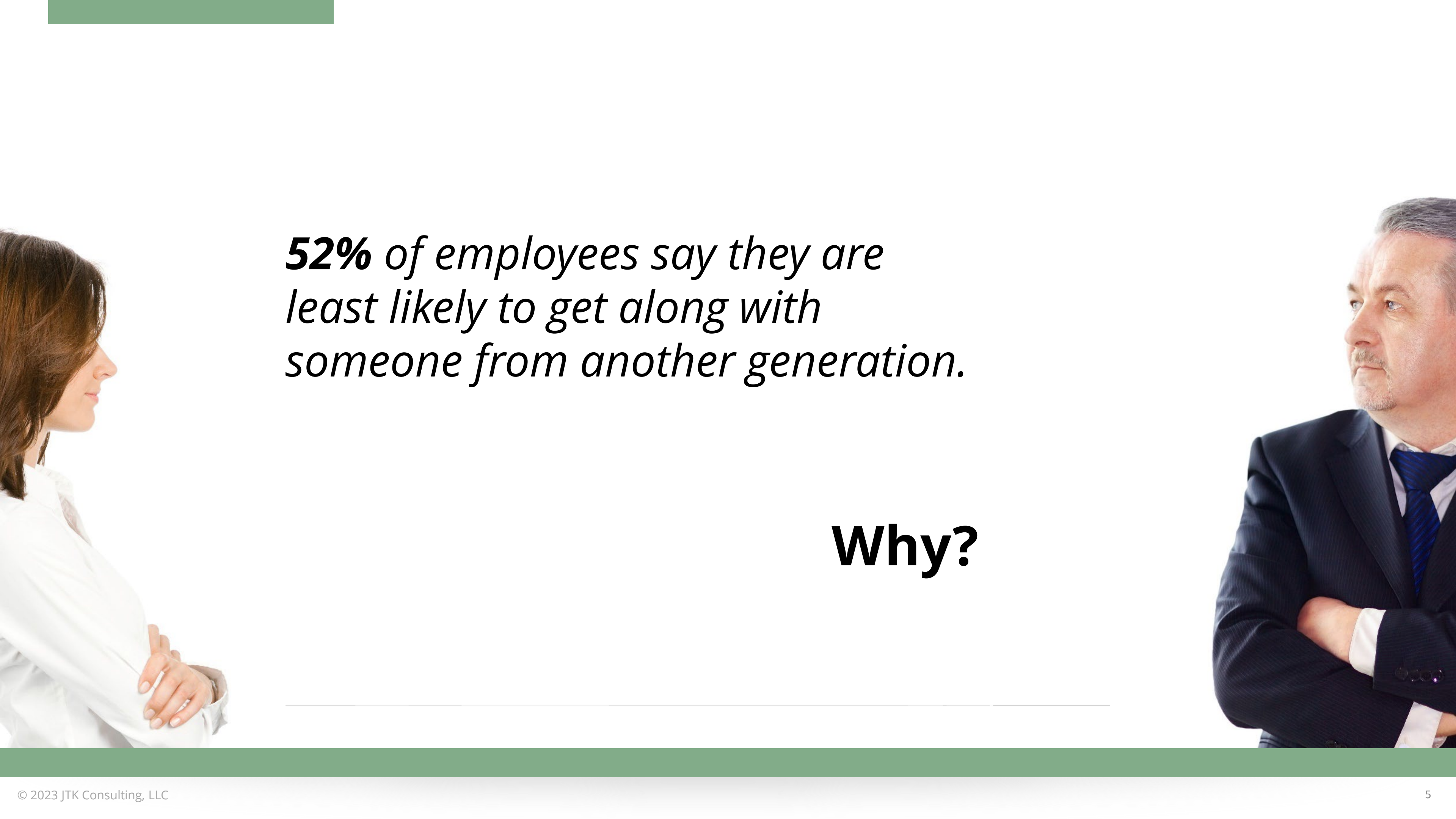Certified Facilitator for The Learning Café

LEADERSHIP IN ACTION
2023 AIM Conference
HOUSTON, TX
DECEMBER 5-7

What We'll Cover

- Meet the **5G Workforce**
  - Characteristics, Trends, Preferences, Attitudes, & Influences
- Recognize and foster employee engagement
- *Gen*-erate impact and employee retention
  - Communication
  - Climate
  - Career

85%
of professionals interact with at least
3
other generations at work

52% *of employees say they are least likely to get along with someone from another generation.*

Why?

Generation Matters

- Our organization's greatest asset is our people
- Age diversity & shifting demographics
- Ability to pivot
- Innovation & creativity
- Employee growth & development
- Acceleration of technology & digitalization

Generational Diversity

- Representation of different generations in the workplace
- Slightly different from age diversity
- Fosters knowledge sharing
- Increased feeling of belonging
- Most effective when organization leaders make it part of their talent attraction & retention planning

*Cooney, M. (2021, May 25). Understanding Generational Diversity: Why It's Important To The Future Workplace. LinkedIn. Retrieved December 3, 2022, from *Mary Cooney, P. D. (2021, May 25). Understanding generational diversity: Why it's important to the future workplace. LinkedIn. Retrieved March 9, 2023, from https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/understanding-generational-diversity-why-its-future-mary-cooney-phd/

Gen-erate Curiosity...

to strengthen your teams

Ask team members questions to challenge assumptions, build on similarities, and view differences as strengths.

What is a generation?

A cohort of individuals who share:

- A chronological location in history
- Formative, shared experiences during that time in history

*Often determined based on the rise and fall of the birth rate

Examples:

Baby Boomers- Post WWII boom in population

Millennials v. Gen Z- Millennial, if you remember 9/11

A Few Notes About the Generations

- Study of the generations is a **social science**
- **2-to-3-year** cusp between each generation
- **Stage of life** matters

Birthdate *determines your* *generational cohort* *, not your personality*

Five Generations Working "5G Workforce"

| Silent / Traditional	Boomer	Gen X	Millennial	Gen Z
Born 1933 – 1945	Born 1946 – 1964	Born 1965 – 1979	Born 1980 – 1996	Born 1997 – 2012
Ages 78 – 90	Ages 59 – 77	Ages 44 – 58	Ages 27 – 43	Ages 11 – 26
~2%	~25%	~33%	~35%	~5%

The Silents

Born 1933 - 1945

Meet the Silents

- Well past traditional retirement age
- Known for hard work & self-discipline
- Historical anchors in the workplace
- Influential in public health
- Their Mantra: "*Work is a privilege*"
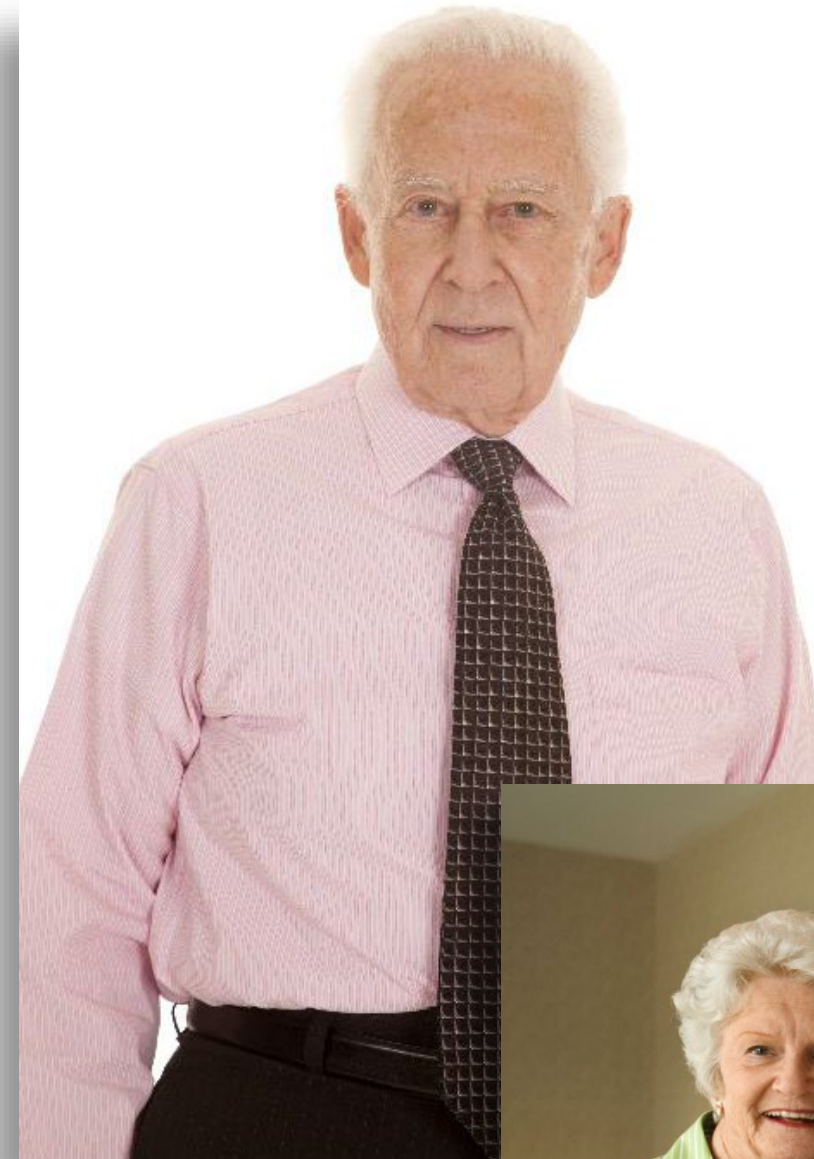
Silents
Influences

- Aftermath of The Great Depression & WWII
- Golden Age of Radio
- Birth of Rock 'n' Roll
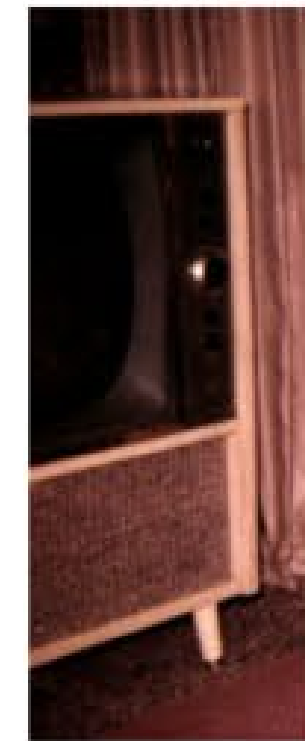
Silents
Characteristics

common sacrifice
civic responsibility
duty
dedication
self-discipline
defer gratification
conformist
courteous

The Boomers

Born 1946 - 1964

Meet the Boomers

- Over 30 million Boomers left the workforce when the Pandemic hit
- Their decision: keep working, retire, or return to the workplace
- Organizational knowledge & expertise
- More representation in Congress
- Their Mantra: "*Live to work*"

Boomers
Influences

- Vietnam War
- Civil Rights
- Women's Liberation Movement
- Woodstock
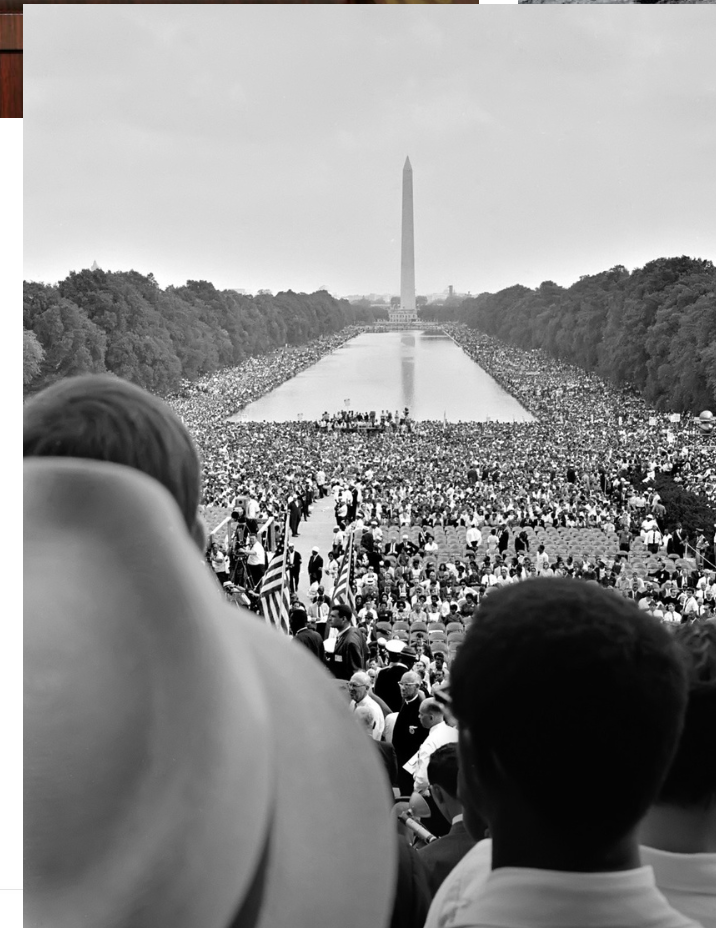
Boomers
Characteristics

forever young
pioneer
competitive
ambitious
optimistic
visible
team player
success
hard-working

Gen X

Born 1965 - 1979

Meet Gen X

- Today's emerging executives & organization leaders
- 55% of US start-up founders
- "Latchkey kids"
- Parents of Gen Z
- Their Mantra: "*Work to live*"

Gen X
Influences

- Gulf War
- Fall of the Berlin Wall
- MTV
- Challenger Disaster

Gen X
Characteristics

work-to-live
pragmatic
adaptable
latchkey
independent
resilient
resourceful
skeptical
self-starter

Millennials

Born 1980 – 1996

Meet Millennials

- Global; Influential
- Career Jungle Gym
- Age $\neq$ Expertise
- Looking for mentors, not managers
- Their Mantra: "*Meaningful life and work*"

Millennial
Influences

- September 11th Attack
- Great Recession
- "Helicopter Moms"
- The Tech Revolution

Millennial
Characteristics

high expectations
hard-working
peer-oriented
collaborative
chauffered
informal
diverse
tech savvy
issue-oriented
confident
inclusive
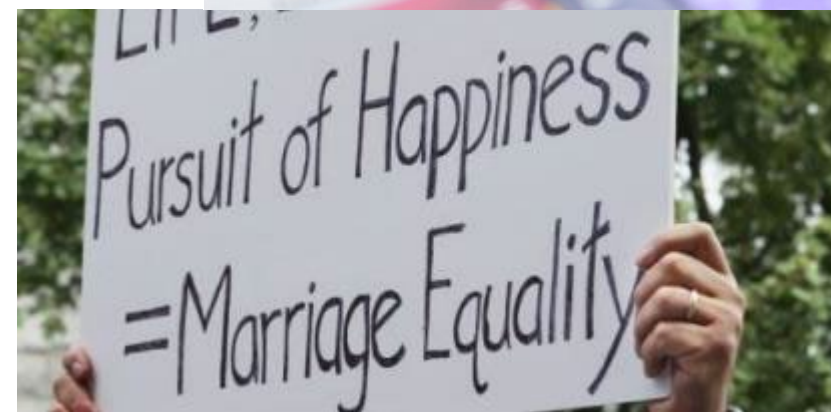
Gen Z

Born 1997 - 2012

Meet Gen Z

- Fastest growing generation in the workforce
- FOMO ("Fear of Missing Out")
- Most ethnically & racially diverse
- Eager to work- impact
- Most emotionally distressed generation
- Their Mantra: *"Unbounded Work. Balanced Life."*

Gen Z
Influences

- COVID-19
- Recession of '08 & '09
- Technology- "mobile only"
- Obama Presidency
- Climate Change
- Young Entrepreneur Millennials

Gen Z
Characteristics

entrepreneurial
social media
curious
competitive
diverse
activists
digital natives
life hacking
hyperconnected
resourceful

#hashtag the generations

Generations:

Silents

Baby Boomers

Gen X

Millennials

Gen Z

Reflect and Discuss With Your Table:

Select a generation you are most curious about.

Discuss what you know about your chosen generation.

Create a descriptive #hashtag for the generation.

The #hashtag should communicate the generation's valuable and unique contributions to the workplace.

Time: 6 minutes

"I'll have someone from my generation get in touch with someone from your generation."

What is the biggest predictor of employee retention?

Employee Engagement!

- *Engaged employees **want to work with other engaged employees**.*

- *Engaged employees **want to come to work**.*

How do you know when your employees are engaged?

- They are bought into the mission
- They talk openly about the impact of the organization
- They seek new opportunities to contribute

What does disengagement look like?

- Tardiness & Absenteeism
- **Reduced participation & communication**
- Focus more on problems; less on solutions
- **Less interest in work**

Employee Engagement

32%

Engaged

50%

Neither engaged nor disengaged

18%

Actively disengaged

How do we keep our teams engaged and retained?

By learning what matters most to our employees:
- **Communication**
- **Climate**
- **Career**

Communication

WHERE'S THE "LIKE" BUTTON?

Each generation believes their preferred method of communication to be the most efficient.

How often do you communicate with media and methods that don't appeal to you?

Communication

Feedback is how employees of all generations learn, grow, and succeed.

Consider your ability to give and receive feedback. Is your approach to feedback helping you become a more effective leader?

The Boomers
Communication

Communication

- In-person
- Like to build rapport
- Presence is important
- Value politeness in communication

Not as responsive to...

- Verbal or non-verbal language that appears "disrespectful"
- Overlooking experience
- Not showing up

The Boomers
Feedback

Receive feedback

- Prefer feedback that is invitational, inclusive, and offers options.

Give feedback

- Emphasize personal connection, knowledge, and experience-based insights when giving feedback.

Gen X
Communication

Communication
- Be concise
- Be honest
- Prefer Email

Not as responsive to...
- Anything resembling micromanagement
- Not giving them options
- Conversations that don't get to the point

Gen X

Feedback

Receive feedback

- Prefers timely & candid feedback

Give feedback

- Emphasizes the results, not always the "how"

Millennials
Communication

Communication

- Frequent feedback
- Informal
- "Text me"

Not as responsive to...

- Communication that feels too "formal"
- Topics that are "dated/irrelevant"
- Feeling like they are being "talked down to"

Millennials

Feedback

Receive feedback

- Prefer frequent feedback
- Want to be coached

Give feedback

- Achievement-focused, and growth- and development-orientated

Gen Z

Communication

Communication

- Technology as a "team member"
- Images- Reels, TikTok, gifs
- Prefer face-to-face feedback
- Keep it quick
- Constant feedback

Not as responsive to...

- Initiating the conversation
- Too much formality
- Unclear expectations

Gen Z
Feedback

Receive feedback

- Prefers instant, growth-oriented feedback; personalized and respectful to the individual
- Face-to-face

Give feedback

- Informal and real; often intertwines personal and professional priorities

Outstanding Communicator Awards

Imagine and Discuss With a Peer: It has just been announced that your organization is being honored at the **"Outstanding Communicator Awards,"** the awards show that honors great communication skills in the workplace. Your favorite celebrity is hosting.

When it comes time to hand out the awards:

• For which communication skill(s) will the Boomers and Gen Xers at your agency be recognized?

• For which communication skill(s) will the Millennials and Gen Zs at your agency be recognized?

Unfortunately, you can't win 'em all!

Offer one recommendation to increase successful communication and feedback across the generations.

Time: 6 minutes

Communicate Across Generations

Reflect: Does your communication style draw others in or push them away?

Apply:

- Build self-awareness.
- If you don't know, Ask.
- Think inclusion. *How can I strengthen my communication to benefit everyone?*

Climate

Impact of the work environment or how it "feels" at work.

- **51%** of workers are highly satisfied with their jobs*

- *A person is **77%** more likely to stay with their employer when they are satisfied with their organizational culture.***

*(2023, March 30). How Americans View Their Jobs. Pew Research Center. https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2023/03/30/how-americans-view-their
**Bower, T., PhD (n.d.). Job Satisfaction Is Rising: What's Behind The Surprising Tend. Forbes. https://www.forbes.com/sites/tracybrower/2023/06/04/job-satisfaction-is-rising-whats-behind-the-surprising-tend/?sh=4fcfcb36453b

Climate

"*70%* of the variance in team engagement is determined solely by the manager."

– Gallup

*Sullentrop, A., & Bauman, E. B. (n.d.). *How Influential Is a Good Manager?* Gallup. https://www.gallup.com/cliftonstrengths/en/350423/influential-good-manager.aspx

Identify the "Rescue Period"

"**52%** percent of voluntarily exiting employees say their manager or organization could have done something to prevent them from leaving their job." - Gallup

*McFeely, S., & Wigert, B. (2019, March 13). This Fixable Problem Costs U.S. Businesses $1 Trillion. Galup. Retrieved March 14, 2023, from https://www.gallup.com/workplace/247391/fixable-problem-costs-businesses-trillion.aspx

Climate

Wellbeing = the new requirement of the modern workplace.

- **_52%_** of workers across generations want spaces to process mental health (e.g., mediation room)*

- **_53%_** of workers want insurance for mental health services.*

*Wong, B., JD (n.d.). *Workplace Benefit Trends By Generation In 2023*. Forbes Advisor. https://www.forbes.com/advisor/business/workplace-benefit-trends-by-generation/

Climate

Cultivate an environment where folks *want* to show up.
Not where they *have* to.

What are you doing to contribute to a climate where people want to engage and participate?

Boomers
Climate

- Acknowledge and appreciate work ethic & contribution
- Invite thought leadership
- Leverage their knowledge
- Help them find flexibility
- Opportunity to make a final mark

Inspire with: "It's the right thing to do."

Gen X
Climate

- Focus on task
- Time is their currency
- Build mastery & versatility
- Challenge, stimulation, variety
- Respect preference for work-life balance; monitor burnout
- Get it done!

Inspire with: "This works, it gets results."

Millennials

Climate

- Flexibility
- In-the-moment feedback and coaching
- Role model leaders
- Opportunities for mentorship
- Leadership development
- Collaborate

Inspire with: "Let's do this together."

Gen Z

Climate

- Answer the question "why"
- Nurture personal relationships
- Encourage fresh perspective
- Inclusive organizational culture
- Growth and development opportunities
- Offer stress relievers

Inspire with: "We can fix this."

Climate

- Gen Xers hold **>50%** of leadership roles*

- **62%** of Millennials have direct reports, including Gen X & Boomers**

*Buffett, J. (n.d.). *Generation X in the Workplace: 2022 Study*. Zety. https://zety.com/blog/generation-x-in-the-workplace
**Perna, M. (n.d.). *Under New Management: Millennials As Successful Managers*. Forbes. https://www.forbes.com/sites/markcperna/2020/08/11/under-new-management-millennials-as-successful-managers/?sh=5b544d122248

Climate

Managing Older

Reflect: Individuals who manage employees older than them often struggle with confidence in their leadership.

Apply:

- Make connections first; set goals second
- Make space for two-way dialogue
- Don't be afraid to be vulnerable

Climate

Managing Younger

Reflect: Many managers assume what works for them will work for their employees. How do you contribute to a positive and energizing work environment that is inclusive of emerging generations?

Apply:

- Let them know it's ok to fail
- Clarify the impact
- Lead with honesty & authenticity
- Emphasize belonging

How's Your Workplace Climate?

Connect with a Peer and Discuss:

You have been asked to speak to a multi-generational group of people who are eager to learn more about a career at your agency.

What key points would you communicate to your audience to demonstrate how the work environment (climate) meets the needs of each generation?

Time: 6 minutes

Career

Experienced and emerging generations want meaningful careers. How they define career looks different.

In what ways are you partnering with employees to design and further their careers?

Career

Whether you are managing older v. younger, recognize how each of your employees define career:

- Unlock individual ***motivations***. Discover how to make work meaningful and valuable to each person.
- Debunk stereotypes. Challenge assumptions and *gen*-erate greater **understanding** of how each person views career success.

Boomers

Develop & Accelerate

- Passion, drive, vision
- Mentorship
- Individual recognition
- Legacy plan
- End-of-career stretch project
- Inspire innovation with vision

Boomers
Debunk Stereotypes

"Workaholics"
- Get-it-done-at-all costs
- Corporate ladder
- Eager to make a contribution

"Resistant to change"
- Created many workplace systems
- Trendsetting
- Team players

"Selfish"
- Ambitious
- Success is visible
- Competitive

Gen X

Develop & Accelerate

- Balance of internal & external development/coaching
- Hands-off management
- Opportunities to lean into entrepreneurial traits
- Share the goal; not the how
- Results-oriented projects

Gen X
Debunk Stereotypes

"Impatient"

- Prefer direct communication
- Time is currency
- Results-oriented

"Skeptical"

- Prefer transparency
- Get to the point
- Don't want to be "sold to"

"Too hands-off"

- Enjoy independent work
- Resourceful
- Believe in sharing the goal and not the "how"

Millennials

Develop & Accelerate

- Differentiate between management & coaching
- Frequent feedback
- Career advancement
- Collaborative spirit; partner with them on setting and achieving career goals

Millennials
Debunk Stereotypes

"Entitled"
- Optimistic
- Age does determine the contribution
- "We want to do more"

"Not loyal"
- Loyalty must be earned
- Want to be challenged
- Want to be included in the visioning and planning

"Stuck on social"
- Enjoy sharing success online
- High-tech & high-touch
- Tool to advance careers

Gen Z

Develop & Accelerate

- Driven and ambitious; map out career trajectory
- Careers are limitless
- Provide safety and security
- On-the-job skills & professional skills training
- Highlight opportunities for achievement

Gen Z
Debunk Stereotypes

"Stuck on their phones"

- Prefer communicating with images (e.g. photos & video)
- Teach Mom & Dad to download apps, use social media
- Can pay attention to more stimulation at once

"Not collaborative"

- Independent and entrepreneurial
- Want to be coached
- Determined to succeed

"Want to be catered to"

- View themselves as pragmatic and are concerned about their future
- Desire financial security
- Workplace culture matters

Put Me in Coach

Reflect Independently:

Imagine a team member came to you and expressed frustration with their work, citing a lack of meaning in their everyday role.

What career coaching would you provide this team member to reconnect and engage themselves in their work?

Career

Reflect: Do you create opportunities for team members to develop and accelerate their careers?

Apply:
- Identify the critical knowledge & skills that each generation brings
- Discover what opportunities employees seek to advance their careers
- Make the time to coach employees, setting job-specific and career development goals

Gen-erate Long-term Impact

- Identify and value generational similarities and differences
- Recognize your communication strengths and areas of growth, developing the skills necessary to communicate effectively across generations
- Understand how the work climate meets the needs of each generation and discuss where opportunities exist
- Meet team members where they are, asking each person what they need to be effective on the job
- **Encourage mentorship and peer -to -peer learning opportunities to facilitate knowledge transfer**
- Discover how each person likes to be recognized and rewarded
- Debunk generational myths and misconceptions

Jackie Kohlhepp
JTK Consulting, LLC
(843) 571-8484
jackie@jtkconsultingllc.com
www.jtkconsultingllc.com