

Navigating in a Multigenerational Workforce

How to better understand, serve, and collaborate with people from each generation

Western Senior Alumni Presentation. November 29, 2019

Andrew Bartley, PCC, MDiv, MBA



What generations are in your workplace?



Lost Generation	1883-1900	On the job in 2020
Greatest Generation (G.I.)	1901-1924	
Traditionalists (Silent)	1925-1945	75-95
Baby Boomers	1946-1964	56-74
Generation X	1965-1980	40-55
Millennials (Gen Y)	1981-1996	24-39
Generation Z (Post Millennials, iGen)	1997-2012	8*-23

*These generational names are from the PEW Research Centre. Other demographers and authors use a wide variety of alternate names and dates for Gen X, Y, and Z. * PEW has not established a chronological endpoint for Generation Z.*

Comparison Age Pyramid

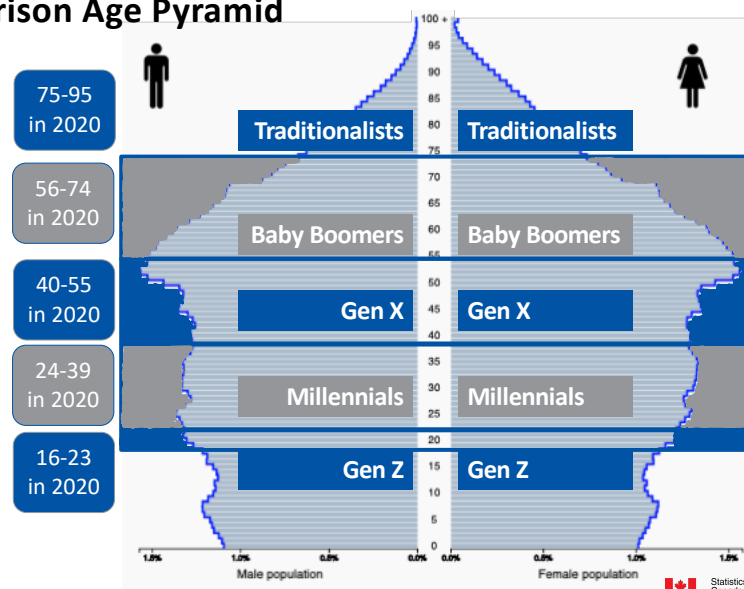
Statistics Canada

Data from 2016 and 2011 censuses.
Modified February 20, 2019.
Accessed March 12, 2019

<http://www2.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/92-621-x/2019001/article/00001-eng.htm>

With PEW Research Center generational names and dates

<http://www2.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/92-621-x/2019001/article/00001-eng.htm>



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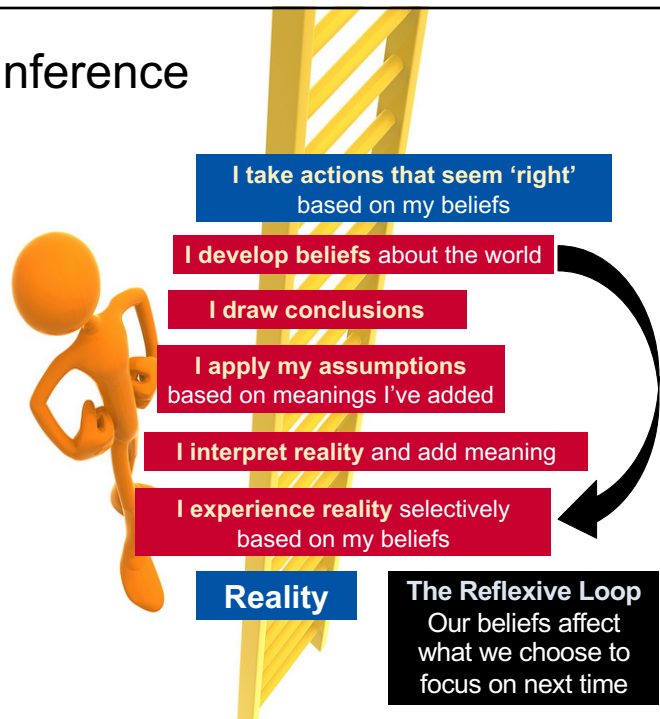
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Ladder of Inference

Chris Argyris. cf. Peter Senge



Get your ladder of inference working for you!



Stop! It's time to consider my reasoning.
Identify where on the ladder I am.



From my current 'rung', **analyze my reasoning by working my way back down the ladder.** At each stage, I ask myself what I am thinking and why.



1. Why have I chosen this course of action?
2. What belief led to that action? Was it well-founded?
3. Why did I draw that conclusion? Is it sound?
4. What am I assuming? Are my assumptions valid?
5. What data have I chosen to use and why?
6. What other facts should I consider?

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Applying the Ladder of Inference

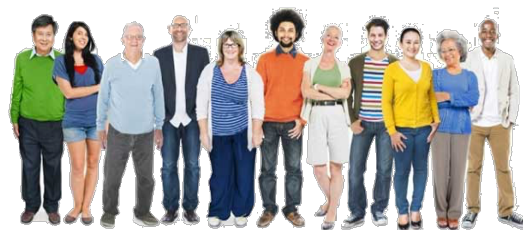
- A) Walk down your ladder of inference about one assumption you might make of someone based on their generation. Pick a specific person or generation.
- B) Walk down your ladder of inference about assumptions/prejudgments you make about your own generation.



*We do not see people
and things as they are.
We see them as we are.*
Stephen Covey

Tips to Communicate Across Generations

- ✓ Acknowledge
 - ✓ Appreciate
 - ✓ Flex
 - ✓ Leverage
 - ✓ Resolve
- Determine the language preferences of other generations and accommodate them
 - Ask generations to help shape content and medium of messaging



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Traditionalists and Communication

- Present in a formal, logical manner
- Address me with Mr., Mrs., Sir, Ma'am. It shows respect and acknowledges my experience
- Do not use profanity
- Use formal language
- I'll listen to a speech
- Use memos, hand-written notes, personal interaction, write letters, call a meeting

75-95
in 2020



Traditionalists and Communication

Why?

- I grew up in the 'print and radio' era
- Phones were common after WWII
- I was taught proper penmanship
- I learned formal writing skills
- Communication was primarily face-to-face

75-95
in 2020



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Baby Boomers and Communication

- Use a direct communication style
- Present me with options and alternatives
- Use electronic communication as well as face-to-face
- Focus on vision and mission, and how they fit strategy
- Seek consensus and inclusion
- Personalize communication
- Develop friendly rapport
- Write memos, use phone, set up a meeting

56-74
in 2020



Baby Boomers and Communication

Why?

- I started career in the era of typed, formal memos
- I was heavily trained in formal writing skills
- I grew up in the broadcast era, and watched the world on TV
- I hold higher standards for presentations
- I emphasize the visual
- I've always had a phone

56-74
in 2020



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Gen X and Communication

- Be blunt, direct, and factual
- Adopt an informal communication style
- Connect messages to impact; what are the results?
- Use e-mail or text
- Hold online, virtual meetings



Gen X and Communication

Why?

- I grew up in global world
- I embraced new technologies email and cell phones as they were introduced
- I remember the early days of the internet



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Millennials and Communication

- Be polite and respectful
- Be motivational and humorous
- I enjoy electronic communication and technology (cell phone, email, texting)
- Communicate in person if the message is very important
- Use action verbs and portray images with your language
- I'm highly connected to virtual, social, and tangible networks
- I maintain significant online presence



24-39
in 2020

Millennials and Communication

Why?

- I grew up with smartphones, wireless video games, text messaging
- I'm a tech native
- I've always had the world at my fingertips



24-39
in 2020

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Gen Z and Communication

16-23
in 2020

- Hold in-person meetings
- Demonstrate candour
- Be forthright and transparent
- Treat me as an equal
- Give me autonomy
- Judge me on the merits of my ideas, not on my seniority
- Check in with me often
- Take me seriously
- I'm savvy with social media, and comfortable expressing myself in 140 characters, emoticons, and #hashtags



Gen Z and Communication

16-23
in 2020

Why?

- I know my writing might be weak
- I thrive in face-to-face chats
- I want to get a more accurate read on your honesty and integrity
- I'm used to immediacy
- I might not be here for long, and I'm upfront about that
- I want to make a difference today, so treat me as an equal



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Tips for Change in an Intergenerational Workplace

Us v. Them, Jeff Havens



- ◆ The (oversimplified, generalized) challenge:
 - ◆ Older people resist change, preferring to stick with systems and strategies that have achieved success; natural expectation for things to stay the same
 - ◆ Young people value existing systems that have achieved success and expect continued change
- ◆ Importance of intentionality and deliberate practice

Tips for Change in an Intergenerational Workplace

Us v. Them, Jeff Havens



- ◆ Recognize qualities, attributes and options generations have in common
- ◆ Understand why younger/older colleagues think/behave the way they do
- ◆ Explain to colleagues why you do things the way you do
- ◆ Illustrate how all of us sometimes benefit from doing things traditionally
- ◆ Remind change-averse people they are changing personally and professionally
- ◆ Use a previous failure to illustrate occasional value of 'business as usual' and lack of innovation
- ◆ Impress upon all that change is happening more quickly than before
- ◆ Work toward creating culture that actively seeks innovation and works against complacency

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Traditionalists

75-95
in 2020



Work Ethic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hard working
Top Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Family, Integrity, Love
Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self-sacrificing• Loyal (lifetime employment with one company)• Dislike Change
Happiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feeling valued, recognition and appreciation• Supportive environment, reliable leadership
Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Very hierarchical, conforming, top-down management
Respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deferential, special treatment• More weight given to their options• Seek and expect respect
Work motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Financial security (a generation of savers)

Baby Boomers

56-74
in 2020



Work Ethic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workaholic
Top Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Family, integrity, love
Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Involvement, quality, loyal to organization• Team oriented, willing to work to get ahead
Happiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feeling valued, recognition and appreciation• Supportive environment, reliable leadership
Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hierarchical; some discomfort with authority
Respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deferential, special treatment• More weight given to their options• Seek and expect respect (but less so than Traditionalists)
Work motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seek self-fulfillment and meaning from their work

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Gen-X

40-55
in 2020



Work Ethic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Only work as hard as needed
Top Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Family, love, integrity
Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Informality, autonomyLoyal to leader; seek work-life balance
Happiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Feeling valued, recognition and appreciationSupportive environment; capable workforcereliable leadership
Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Comfortable with authorityNot impressed by titles or authority for authority's sake
Respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Want to be esteemed and listened toDo not expect deferential treatment
Work motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">BalanceBalance financial needs with personal time

Millennials

24-39
in 2020



Work Ethic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Work hard if fulfilling
Top Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Family, love, spirituality
Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Teamwork; multitasking; networkingEfficiency through technology; informality, constant stimulationStrong social values; sense of purpose
Happiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Feeling valued, recognition and appreciationSupportive environment, being part of a capable team
Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Non-hierarchical; casualNot impressed by titles or authority for authority's sake
Respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Want to be esteemed and listened toDo not expect deferential treatment
Work motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Fun and meaningful work

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Gen Z

16-23
in 2020



Work Ethic	• Work hard for salary; career focused
Top Values	• Diversity, flexibility, collaboration
Values	• Price conscious, financially conservative, environmentalism • Empowering work culture, in-person communication • Global
Happiness	• Optimistic and self-assured • Freedom, creativity, individuality
Authority	• Meritocracy,
Respect	• Want ideas to count • Hold little loyalty for brands, organizations, programs, rewards
Work motivation	• Making an immediate difference • Working for organization that aligns with their values



Tips for moving forward together

- **Expect times of tension** among the generations: sticking points are inevitable
- **Turn tension into opportunities** for relationship-building
- **Acknowledge when you're stuck**
- **Consider things from the other person's point of voice**
What needs are they trying to meet? Why do they hold that perspective? What interests lie beneath their opinion? Be flexible in your thinking.

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Tips for moving forward together

- **Appreciate differences** among the generations
- **Speak the other person's generational language**
- **Leverage generational strengths** - think creatively and find ways to build on the assets of the different generations
- **Create opportunities** for cross-generational mentoring
- **Celebrate forward momentum and progress**

Application

- **What 'golden nuggets'** am I taking away from today's workshop?
- **What next steps will I take** to navigate the multigenerational workforce with greater agility?
- **How will I be different** because of taking these steps?
- **What will it cost me** if I don't take these steps?
- **How will I know I've made progress** toward this goal?

