Leadership Across The Generations

Chip Espinoza, Ph.D. | CalCom
The Generations at a Glance

• The Builders/Silents/Traditionals (1926-1945)
• The Baby Boomers (1946-1964)
• Generation X (1965-1982)
• The Millennials (1983-2001)
• Gen Z (2002-2020)

Generational Theory (Karl Mannheim, 1923)

• Age
• Social and economic conditions
• Experiences during formative years (adolescence)
  • Technology
  • Pop culture
  • Socio-political events
  • Parenting
  • Education System
Demographic Metabolism
Millennials surpassed GenXers as the largest generation in U.S. labor force in the first quarter of 2015.

53.5 million-strong

By 2020, Millennials Will Comprise Half The Global Workforce
The County of Orange did a workforce audit and 60% of its employees are eligible for retirement within one year.

The Transition of Family Owned Businesses

- The mean age of family control in the family's company is 60.2 years.

- The environment for innovation in family businesses improves when more generations of the owning family are actively involved in the business.

- This year it is estimated that 40.3 percent of family business owners expect to retire, creating a significant transition of ownership in the US.

- Less than half of those expecting to retire in three years have selected a successor.

Source: Family Business Alliance & Family Business Survey 2017
Age Cohort Effect

- Each cohort, responsive to social change, exerts a collective force for further change as they move through the age-stratified society they press for adjustments in:
  - Social roles
  - Social values
  - Influencing other age cohorts

Millennial Fatigue

Definition

Millennials tiring of hearing about their generation—particularly themes like entitled, disloyal, and coddled.
### Biggest Challenges Millennials Face

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>What Millennials Want</th>
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<tbody>
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Source: Chip Espinosa, PhD, "The Biggest Challenges Millennials Face in the Workplace and What They Can Do About Them"
### Millennials & B2B

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### Working With Young Professionals

- The people with the most responsibility have to be the first to adapt.
- The most critical aspect of integrating young professionals is the quality of relationship they have with you.
- One of the greatest threats to organizations today is the inability to transfer knowledge—tacit knowledge is only transferred through relationship.
Perceptual Position

• First Position: See, hear and feel a situation as yourself.

• Second Position: See, hear and feel a situation as the other person.

• Third Position: See, hear and evaluate the situation as a detached observer.
con·ven·tion
/kanˈven(t)ʃ(ə)n/
noun
plural noun: conventions

1. a way in which something is usually done, especially within a particular area or activity
   "the woman who overturned so many conventions of children's literature"

2. an agreement between countries covering particular matters, especially one less formal than a treaty.
   synonyms: agreement, accord, protocol, compact, pact, treaty, concordat, entente

Translations, word origin, and more definitions

Today's Young Professional

• Primarily offspring of the Baby Boomers generation

• Current ages range from 18 to 36

• Teamwork has been emphasized throughout their lives

• They have greater access to education
Today's Young Professional

- 1 in 4 comes from a single-parent home
- 3 in 5 have working mothers
- Most ethnically diverse generation
- Closer to parents than previous generations

Understanding Baby Boomers

- They value position and title
- They are optimistic
- They expect others to respect their authority (experience or position)
- Feedback is something they give
  - Self-perception: Gives maximum effort, open to change, willing to learn new things (Conference Board of Canada)
Understanding GenX

- They value independence but will work on teams
- They are pessimistic
- They expect authority figures to leave them alone
- Feedback is just feedback

- **Self-perception:** See themselves as giving a greater effort than other Gens and being results driven (Conference Board of Canada)

Understanding Millennials

- Career Development is their love language
- Ambiguity is their kryptonite
- They will make decisions by indecision
- They expect authority figures to be “for” them

- **Self-perception:** Listens carefully, gives maximum effort, asks for help when needed (Conference Board of Canada)
The Builders (1925 - 1945)

- The Great Depression
- Roosevelt's "New Deal"
- WWII & Korean War
- GI Bill
- Golden age of radio & silver screen
- Rise of labor unions
- Polio (Poliomyelitis)

The Baby Boomers (1946 - 1964)

- Vietnam & Cold War
- LPs & 8-Tracks
- Civil rights movement
- Credit cards
- Women's lib
- TV & Rock-n-Roll
- Kennedy & King assassinations
Generation X (1965 - 1982)

- Persian Gulf War
- Space Shuttle Challenger Explosion
- AIDS
- Corporate Down-sizing
- Tripling of Divorce Rate
- Both parents working (latchkey kids)
- Video Games, MTV, & Computers

The Millennials (1983 - 2001)

- 9/11 & Terrorism
- Columbine
- Cell Phone
- Snapchat
- E-mail & IM
- Going Green
- Emphasis on Safety
Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Key difference #1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenged Managers</th>
<th>Successful Managers</th>
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<td>Talked about how others needed to change to make it in the “real world”</td>
<td>Talked about their own need to change to manage in “today’s world”</td>
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<tr>
<th>Challenged Managers</th>
<th>Successful Managers</th>
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<tr>
<td>Believed there was very little they could do about their situation</td>
<td>Believed there was something they could do about their situation</td>
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### Key difference #3

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<tr>
<th>Challenged Managers</th>
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<tr>
<td>Punished their subordinates for challenging them</td>
<td>Allowed their subordinates to challenge them with new ideas, processes, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Challenged Managers</th>
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<tr>
<td>Felt that their position was the only power they had</td>
<td>Used the power of relationship vs. the power of position</td>
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### Key difference #5

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<th>Challenged Managers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Felt that working with twenty-somethings made them feel older</td>
<td>Felt that working with twenty-somethings made them feel younger</td>
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Key difference #6

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenged Managers</th>
<th>Successful Managers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saw Millennials as a roadblock to their own success</td>
<td>Saw themselves as the key to their Millennial employees' success</td>
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**Overcoming The Bias of Experience**

- The way "I" or "we" did it is the blueprint for everyone else
- Excuses leaders from the adaptive work they need to do
- Leaders who cannot suspend the bias of their experience fail to ask themselves questions like:
  - Why am I bothered by their behavior?
  - What threats do Millennial values represent?
  - How will I need to change?
Organizational Bias

- Career advancement
- Organizational structure
- The bias about "voice"

- "It drives me nuts how they come in and immediately start criticizing what we have been doing."

- "Isn't there an unspoken rule that you have to be here a couple of years before you can talk in a meeting?"