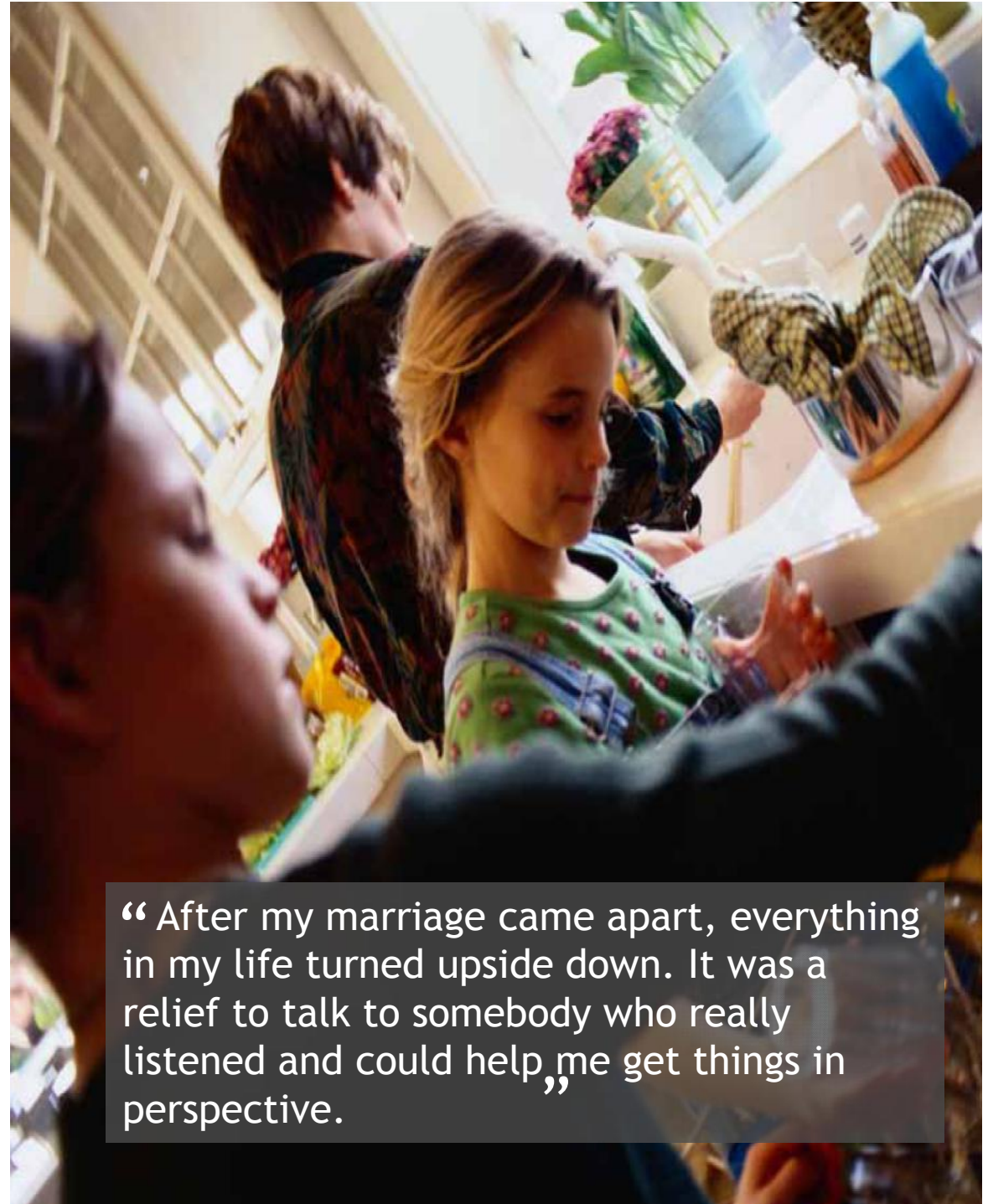# fseap

Now we're
talking.

4 Generations in the Workplace: Working Together

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The real thing.

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> " After my marriage came apart, everything in my life turned upside down. It was a relief to talk to somebody who really listened and could help me get things in perspective."

What is a Generation?

- A group of individuals born and living at about the same time

- A group of people most of whom are the same approximate age, having common cultural, social characteristics and attitudes

- An age group with shared experiences, values

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Which Generation do you belong to?

Traditionalists	**Born prior to 1947**
Baby Boomers	**1947-1965**
Generation X	**1966-1977**
Generation Y / Millennials	**1978-1997**

Group Discussion

- **Identify which generation you are a part of**
- **Think of your childhood & adolescent years**
  - **Name a childhood toy, movie, actor, song, hero that symbolizes your generation**

Why are we talking about this?

- **Only a decade age we had a few generations in the workplace with not much variation in workplace behaviors/styles**

- **People are retiring much later now increasing the numbers of those in the workforce**

- **Now we see a larger age range among employees and a greater variation in workplace behaviors/styles**

Why are we talking about this?

- *In 2020, employees from five generations, with formative experiences ranging from World War II to World of Warcraft, will be sharing the workplace. Companies must prepare to manage their different needs, expectations, and attitudes. Mostly, though, employers need to master social technologies and offer the personalized experiences prized by younger generations*
- ***The 2020 Workplace – Meister, Willyerd***
- ***www.forbes.com/sites***

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Why are we talking about this?

- **Each generation has different work values, and perceptions of authority & leadership, loyalty, work ethic, work life balance, and rewards and incentives**

- **If our workplace is not prepared to manage differences it can create conflict, poor performance and low morale in the workplace**

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Why are we talking about this?

- **Different workplace attitudes & styles can clash**
- **Communicating with people your own age can be challenging even on a good day, add in stereotypes, judgments, and different viewpoints due to different ages it can lead to bigger challenges – toxic workplace, morale issues**
- **E.g. the age difference between some employees can be roughly that of the age difference between a parent and their adult child**

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Why are we talking about this?

- **Younger employees are often the targets of the most judgment from the other generations**
  - **Survey**

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Why are we talking about this?

- **Responsibility of managers, supervisors, and HR's to recognize and bridge the gaps that exist between employees of different age groups**

- **And to also to engage all employees in the workplace recognizing that each employee needs something different**

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Objectives

- **Create a context for why different workplace behaviors and styles clash**

- **To develop an appreciation of diversity within the workplace**

- **To recognize the similarities among the generations**

- **Identify what each generation may be needing from their workplace**

Objectives

- **This understanding provides the opportunity to tap into people's strengths, helps in recruiting & retention, and can improves sense of morale**

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Where do Values & Beliefs come from?

- **Our life experience**

- **Our families**

- **Our cultures**

- **World & local events**

- Pop culture

Traditionalists – Born prior to 1947 Values

- **Defining events in history**
- **Their values were influenced by their parents' & grandparents' hardships (immigration, WW2, Great Depression)**

- **Duty**
- **Discipline**
- **Do what you are asked**
- **Personal Sacrifice**
- **Follow the rules**
- **Self-control**
- **Hierarchy**
- **Thrift**

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Traditionalists at Work

- Dependable
- Structured
- Traditional
- Trustworthy
- Experienced – know their job well
- Age = Seniority

- Loyal to the Organization
- May be resistant to technology and/or change
- May see upgrading skill set as not necessary

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Traditionalists at Work

- **May see younger generations as lacking work ethic**
- **May be seen as "old School" by younger generations or out of touch**
- **Doing a good job is the most important thing**

- **Respect for Authority, Hierarchy**
- **Authority is not challanged**
- **Hard Work with little expectation of extra reward- it's the right thing to do – some may expect this of others as well**

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Baby Boomers 1947-1965 Values

- Defining events in history
- Influenced by growth of materialism
- Things were easier for them vs. in their parents' childhood
- Sandwich Generation

- Emergence of non-traditional values
- "Me" generation
- Individuality
- Creativity
- Personal & professional fulfillment

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Baby Boomers at Work

- **Thrive on change**
- **Hard work = success/promotion**
- **Emergence of the term "workaholic" & "multi-tasking"**
- **Questions authority – challenges the system, brought democracy to the workplace**

- **Value competition**
- **Loyal to employer *with* expectations**
- **Flexible**
- **Work long hours for career advancement**

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Baby Boomers at Work

- **Interested in salary, promotion, titles, security, recognition**

- **Embrace teamwork**

- **Leadership is "earned" through experience**

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Generation X 1966-1977 Values

- **Defining events in history**
- **Socialized during time of inflation – saw parents' struggle**
- **First day-care generation – women in the workforce**

- **Pragmatic**
- **Self-reliant**
- **Skeptical**
- **Influenced by television**
- **Saw increase divorce rates**
- **Latch key kids**

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Generation X at Work

- **Value independence – prefer to mange own time**
- **Love information, seek it**
- **Prefer communication via e-mail vs. long meetings**

- **Entrepreneurship, willing to invest in own development vs. the company because experience has shown them that relationships are not reliable**

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Generation X at Work

- **Seeks feedback**
- **Comfortable with change**
- ***Expects* to have work life balance**
- **Does not put work before family**
- **Collaboration vs. Hierarchy**

- **They work to live, not live to work – can be labeled as "slackers"**
- **Not promotion oriented**
- **Skilled with technology**

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Generation X at Work

- **Informal (significant difference vs. Traditionalist & Boomers**
- **GenX see Millennials as coddled, underdeveloped and arrogant**
- **Respect is earned**

- **Not loyal to the organization**
- **Openly question authority**
- **Reward Oriented**
- **Can be conflicts with those preferring workplace loyalty, dedication, formality**

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Millennials 1978-1997 Values

- **Defining events in history**
- **Delayed Adolescence – staying at home longer without assuming complete adult responsibilities**

- **Instant Gratification**
- **Influenced by Videogames**
- **Focus on education**
- **Technology is mainstream**
- **Bubble-wrapped children**

Millennials at Work

- **Not focused on work performance**
- **Loyal to themselves**
- **Questions authority and wants explanation**
- **Good at multi-tasking**
- **Expects change**

- **Viewed as not professional or dedicated**
- **Optimistic viewpoint**
- **Value diversity more than any other generation**

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Millennials at Work

- **Training is essential – student loans**
- **$ is used to having and spending money**
- **Expect pay equity, bonuses, flex time**

- **Want independence**
- **Desires flexible hours**
- **Technology smart**
- **May clash with Boomers**

Group Discussion

- **Form groups being sure to have a mix of generations?**

- **What do you want other generations to "get" or "know" about your generation?**

- **What challenges do you experience as a result of generational differences at work?**

- **What works / doesn't work?**

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Bridging the Gap

- **Wishing people were more like you is not a strategy - What works & motivates each group?**

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What "works" for each Generation?

Traditionalists

- **Encouraged to accept more participatory management and horizontal structures**
- **Be open to new ideas, just as younger workers can respect experience and preference for more formality Preference for structure**
- **Recognition for effort, knowledge and experience should be shared**

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What "works" for each Generation?

Traditionalists

- **Value experience, offer flexible ways for staying involved**
- **Strive to keep older employees engaged**
- **Help train in the area of technology**

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What "works" for each Generation?

Boomers

- **May need assistance in recognizing some come to work to work, not develop relationships**

- **They appreciate knowing how their work matters, how it fits into the big picture, and who it impacts**

- **Appreciate clearly stated goals & tasks**

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What "works" for each Generation?

Boomers

- **May need assistance if work-style clashes with Millenials**

- **May conflict with traditionalists who put others' first and are completely loyal to the organization**

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What "works" for each Generation?

Gen X

- **Want home/work balance - Help Xers recognize their work as significant & rewarding to increase loyalty and retention**
- **Value technology skills**
- **Help Xers understand the intrinsic and non-monetary rewards of work**
- **Mentoring**

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What "works" for each Generation?

Gen X

- **Be aware of the impact of applying more traditional work structures on this group (i.e. dress, hours)**

- **Help Xers to balance independence & interdependence**

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What "works" for each Generation?

Millenials

- **Supervision – orientate to appropriate workplace skills & realistic expectations of their career path, work world, and workplace**

- **Assistance in identifying appropriate/inappropriate uses of technology at work**

- **Mentoring, especially by younger employees who have transitioned themselves**

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What "works" for each Generation?

Millenials

- **Feedback & praise oriented**

- **Need help moving from being rated on attendance & intrinsic good to being rated on performance & outcomes**

- **Mentoring in the area of communication skills with the public, conflict management**

Bridging the Gap

- **Appreciating that fundamental differences in values exist between generations provides a context for how conflict, stereotypes, and misunderstanding arise**

- **When we understand the *Shared* values we can better understand each other**

- **Understanding needs to go both ways**

- **By acknowledging similarities and likenesses, we create a starting point for understanding and appreciating diversity in the workplace**

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Bridging the Gap

Team Building

- **The glass is half full:**

- **Start with similarities, not differences, this is how you build relationships**

- **Diverse work relationships add richness with a mixture of experience, new ideas all which are critical for success**

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Bridging the Gap

Team Building

- **If you start by recognizing the ways in which you are similar to your coworkers, you'll build a base of understanding and acceptance that will withstand the sometimes stormy times when differences come to the forefront**
  - **How could you implement more team building in your workplace?**

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"How to" share common ground?

- We are all human with emotions, needs, interests, outlooks, opinions, goals
  - Share something about yourself to create an environment in which your coworker wants to share information with you
  - Listen don't pry
  - Polite continued interest in your coworker contributes to workplace harmony

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"How to" share common ground?

- **We are all human with emotions, needs, interests, outlooks, opinions, goals**
  - **You have family and other interests outside of work and similar needs from work**
    - **Acknowledge this and note the commonalities**

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Bridging the Gap

- **Help people use their talents and skills to contribute to the overall accomplishment of organization objectives**

- **Respect and value people and recognize and act on their contributions**

- **Create an environment in which people have interesting work and enjoy their coworkers**

Bridging the Gap

- **Honour everyone's contribution**

- **Emphasize commonality**

- **Create opportunity for different age groups to interact**

- **Recognize that change occurs**

- **Develop curiosity for things unknown**

- **Avoid characterizations based on age**

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Bridging the Gap

- **Set up mentoring**
- **Have fun**
- **Balance new ideas with "tried & true" experience**
- **Talk about different needs**

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Bridging the Gap

- **Practice good communication sills**
  - **Check for clarity – paraphrase before answering**
  - **As questions rather than make statements**
  - **If the other person was right after all, say so**
  - **Listen**

Thoughts?

Thank-you

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Resources

- *The 2020 Workplace – Meister, Willyerd*

- *www.forbes.com/sites*

- *10+ ways to Minimize Generational Differences in the Workplace – Calvin Sun*

- *Working with the Generations: Generational Issues in the American Workplace – Mark Taylor*

- *Managing the Generation Mix in the Workplace – Tips to Manage the Gap – Dale Mask*