

For more information:

Engage Me



251.479.1990
info@generationalinsight.com
www.generationalinsight.com
© 2008 Generational Insight

Matching generational preferences with tactics to help each employee reach his full potential.

Generational biases inform workplace preferences. Understanding how these preferences play out in management, communication, culture, training and recognition, allows leaders to thoughtfully prepare an environment that engages employees and helps them feel valued, and as a result, more committed to corporate goals.

While many of the actions recommended here can be applied successfully across all generations, each is listed where it is most valued. Other generational preferences may appear in direct contrast to one another. Your leadership challenge is to identify how your employees fit into these norms, finding both the common ground and the opportunities for individuality.

Engage Me

Matching generational preferences with tactics to help each employee reach his full potential.

To Engage Matures	To Engage Baby Boomers	To Engage Gen Xers	To Engage Millennials
<p>Managers Should...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take care not to "overdo" recognition, especially for simply doing what is expected. Be open to alternative schedules - Matures are now typically working because they want to, not because they have to. Retaining them may require flexibility. Understand and recognize the importance of teamwork - Matures believe the group is more powerful and more important than the individual. 	<p>Managers Should...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt a "get it done" and "whatever it takes" attitude. Be visible and active in the workplace - Boomers value "face time" and do not want to be managed from afar. Demonstrate how you have earned your leadership role. Have first-hand knowledge of subordinate's work, preferably having done the same job at some point. 	<p>Managers Should...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Honor commitments at all cost. Gen Xers place a high value on reliability. Recognize that work does not equal life - celebrate Xers' hobbies or passions in addition to their work skills. Allow for flexibility and negotiate schedules when needed. Regularly review individual goals and team goals and the individual's role on the team. Revisit deadlines as needed. 	<p>Managers Should...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have a sincere interest in the individual - spend time with them and get to know their goals and personalities. Offer and commit to develop new, valuable, and relevant skills in their employees. Recognize that work does not equal life - have fun. Offer scheduling flexibility with negotiations (Like Gen X). Articulate how working for you will help them achieve their personal goals while achieving the company goals at the same time.
<p>Communications Should...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be spoken and written, this is particularly important for messages that impact the company or their work. Use traditional formats - text-messaging terms are considered rude and indecipherable. Come from authority figures in the company - those that have tenure. Clearly communicate what is needed from them and their teammates. 	<p>Communications Should...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlight team goals, accomplishments, and celebrations. Focus on team goals, preferably posted in public places where everyone can be reminded of them. Avoid text-messaging abbreviations. Demonstrate understanding of stated team goals and be focused on helping the team towards those goals. Be delivered in person where possible. Email is secondary. 	<p>Communications Should...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get straight to the point - Gen Xers loathe fluff. Be consistent and supported with actions as well as words. The company must walk their talk every day. Be infrequent. "Official Corporate Communications" should be saved for the critical messages. Most communication should be individualized and delivered personally. Email is usually the preferred method of communication followed by interpersonal, face-to-face conversation. 	<p>Communications Should...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline the steps needed to achieve a goal. Establish "checkpoints" along the way to document progress towards goals and provide frequent feedback. Celebrate individual contributions to team goals where possible. Be positive. When giving criticism be prepared with a 3:1 positive to negative ratio - three compliments for every one reprimand.
<p>The Corporate Culture Should...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow Matures to feel confident and able regarding technology - don't expect mastery without proper training. Operate under clear rules and expectations, with any changes properly communicated to all. Provide opportunities to stay in touch with changing expectations, particularly technological skills. Value their Institutional Wisdom. Call upon Matures for guidance and opinion when appropriate - they are superb teachers. 	<p>The Corporate Culture Should...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer the tools Boomers need to do the job better, more quickly, more thoroughly, etc. Promote visibility of bosses and workplace peers - "face time" matters. Acknowledge both individuals and teams who have achieved their goals. Promote collaborative meetings where everyone can provide input as desired. Allow Boomers time to anticipate and prepare for change. 	<p>The Corporate Culture Should...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trust the employee's time management skills - check in regularly but not frequently. Allow them to get their work done without interference or unnecessary interruptions. Leave them alone when they're focused on their tasks. Seek their input frequently on what you can do to "to make things better, easier or quicker?" Respond to their requests with actions and results. 	<p>The Corporate Culture Should...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask "What have you learned today? Anything you think I need to know?" Avoid strict hierarchy/chains of command; egalitarian approach is preferred. Seek input from everyone, not just leaders, managers, supervisors, etc. Encourage optional social activities that are open to all employees and are held outside the office, after hours - adopt and develop an employee Social Calendar. Give credit to individuals for their ideas and involvement.
<p>Training Programs Should...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be immediately and clearly relevant. Use their time wisely. Invite discussion throughout the training, including how the training will help and its implications on their work. Provide insights into their workplace peers or clients / customers that they didn't have already. Be delivered by someone with "earned" authority, not someone who could be their grandchild (unless it is technology skills training). 	<p>Training Programs Should...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep Boomers up-to-date and competitive in a quickly changing and evolving workplace. Allow all levels of technology skills to learn without feeling inferior or intimidated - pre-evaluate skills, don't assume. Be participatory and interactive, allowing for deliberation and discussion versus one-way instruction. Ask them more questions than they ask you. Create realistic examples to utilize in the learning process. 	<p>Training Programs Should...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address the employee's career goals - ask "What skills do you need to get where you want to go?" Be flexible and numerous - Gen Xers want information and choices. Demonstrate commitment to the Gen Xer mantra to "work smarter not harder." Include leaders and peers - demonstrating management's commitment to the training as a valuable use of time. Promote new ideas on how to "get things done." 	<p>Training Programs Should...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involve the whole group, where practical. Clearly identify how they'll benefit from learning this information both at this job and beyond. Be interactive and fun. Allow everyone to take a role in some part of the teaching process.
<p>Rewards & Recognition Should...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celebrate the efforts of the whole team, not any single individual. Be genuine and sincere. Nothing beats a handshake and a personal "Thank you" from the boss. Recognize true achievements, not simply rewards for doing the job. 	<p>Rewards & Recognition Should...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celebrate the individual as well as the team. Be public and/or able to be displayed - trophies, plaques, lapel pins, etc. are valued by the Boomer. Encourage celebrations within the team as well as company-wide acknowledgements. 	<p>Rewards & Recognition Should...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer variety. Allow Gen Xers to choose from a list of reward options with roughly equal values. Express gratitude for the individual's contribution in private, Xers don't want a fuss for doing their jobs. Honor commitments to goals that are solid and achievable - don't keep upping the ante or you will lose trust. 	<p>Rewards & Recognition Should...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer options, similar to Gen X needs. Millennials cherish their individuality. Be celebrated publicly, in front of the team and/or visible to the customer where appropriate (lapel pin, etc). Offer special "top performer" learning opportunities to reward initiative and help propel employees toward their future goals. Happen during the work day - validate the reward by celebrating on company time.