Supporting a Positive Work Environment While Bridging the Generational Gap

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Everyone’s focused on Millenials.

Should we be worried about managing Millenials?

Or should we be worried about Millenials managing us?
Some key info:

We currently have four generations in our workforce:

• Traditionalist – born before 1946.
• Baby Boomer – born between 1946 and 1964.
• Gen X – born between 1965 and 1976.
2015 is a pivotal generational year:

- Millenials outnumber Baby Boomers in the workplace.
- The last full class of Millenials graduated from high school.
- The next class (2016) will include the next generation, Gen2020.

Key point: By 2020 we will have five generations in the workforce.
What does that mean for us?

1. We need to **adopt a post-generational approach** that bridges generations.

2. We need to **focus on people as individuals** rather than stereotype by age or generation.

3. At the same time, we need to **recognize the elements of an engaged, effective workforce** that are common across generations.
What are the stereotypes?

From *Forbes*:

- Millennials are lazy, entitled and get more done on Facebook than at work.
- Baby Boomers are old, set in their ways and wouldn’t know how to use all this new technology even if they wanted to.
Individual focus

Myers-Briggs personality inventory:
• Extrovert vs. Introvert
• Sensing vs. Intuition
• Thinking vs. Feeling
• Judging vs. Perceiving

**Individual personality will matter far more than generational influences.** Generational influences may drive fashion, music, devices and references, but individual personality will drive performance, interaction and reaction.
Common elements across generations

1. Everyone needs **trust**.
2. Everyone needs a **vision and mission** that they care about and believe in.
3. Everyone needs to **not be miserable**.
   a. Everyone needs to know what it means to be **successful** in their job.
   b. Everyone needs to know that what they do is **important**, even if it's just to you.
   c. Everyone needs to be **known at work as an individual**, and not just a job title.
Final points

- Organizations, public or private, are groups of people working on a common mission.
- If you want to build the organization you have to focus on the people.
- "Managing" by generational stereotypes glosses over the people and hurts the organization.
- If you know your people and make it your work to build them up and engage them, the organization will flourish, and generational differences will be minor detail.