

# Learning Curve

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Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services  
Professional Development and Training Division



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## Executive Director's Corner

At the Sudbrook office of the Professional Development and Training Division there are employees ranging in age from 23 to 60, and all ages in between. This issue of the *Learning Curve* looks at the various challenges presented by a multi-generational workforce. As you read the articles, you will learn about the differences in values, motivation, and ethics that the various generations bring to the workplace. So, you might think that Sudbrook would be a hotbed of conflict. But I am proud to report that this is simply not the case.

Interpersonal conflict arises among groups of diverse people, whether related to differences in age, race or ethnicity, nationality, religion, or gender, because of perceptual biases. Let's examine some of the types of biases that may occur.

According to Greenberg & Baron, there are five common perceptual biases, or ways in which people misperceive others.

First, there is the bias of "Fundamental Attribution Error." That's a big phrase for what is better known as stereotyping. In this bias, we tend to explain the

behavior of other people based on their age, gender, race, etc. instead of the actual situation that may have caused the behavior.

A second type of bias is "First Impression Error." This is our tendency to base judgments on our first impressions of a person, ignoring later information that contradicts them.

Third is the "Halo Effect," that leads us to make assumptions about someone based on an overall positive or negative impression. For example, if we like someone, we often assume they are competent and dependable.

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**Nancy C. Hoffman, Ph.D.**

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**Executive Director's Corner ~ continued**

A fourth bias is the “Similar-To-Me Effect.” People tend to view people who are similar to them in a positive light. And finally, there is the bias of “Selective Perception.” This is the tendency to focus on and remember only information that confirms our beliefs and ignore information that contradicts them.

With so many possible ways to misjudge others, it is easy to imagine how conflict may occur in very diverse groups. The secret to avoiding this conflict lies in everyone’s being keenly aware of the potential biases, checking themselves regularly, and making a solid effort to embrace and respect the differences. This requires a high level of maturity and tolerance on the part of all of us and is directly related to the topic

of one of our future *Learning Curve* editions – Emotional Intelligence. You’ll be hearing more about that topic soon.

My best to all of you of all ages,

Nancy

Reference: Greenberg, J., & Baron, R. (1997). *Behavior in Organizations*. Upper Saddle River, NJ

**Multi-Generational Workforce Comparison Chart**

	Veterans	Baby Boomers	Gen Xer	Millenials
Significant Events and Experiences	Great Depression World War II Korean War Cure for polio found	Civil Rights Sexual Revolution “Duck and Cover” drills in schools, Space travel	Fall of Berlin Wall Watergate & Nixon Women’s Liberation Energy Crisis	School shootings Oklahoma City bombing Booming Technology Desert Storm Child-focused world
Values	Hard work dedication & sacrifice Respect for rules and authority Duty before pleasure	Optimism Team orientation Personal gratification Involvement Personal growth	Diversity Fun and informality Self-reliance Practical	Optimistic Confident Achievement oriented Respect for diversity Technology savvy
Family	Traditional nuclear	Disintegrating	“Latch-key” kids	Merged families
Education	A dream	A birthright	A way to get there	An incredible expense
Means of Communication & Technology	Rotary phones Face to face Manual Typewriters	Touchtone phones Snail mail Electric typewriters	Fax Machines Cell phones	Internet Picture phones E-mail
Work is...	An obligation	An exciting adventure	A difficult challenge, a contract	A means to an end, fulfillment

## Multi-Generational Workforce - Organizational Impacts

By Steven Berry

When taking into consideration workplace diversity, one tends to first think of ethnicities, genders, race, and religious and cultural backgrounds. All of these represent significant diversities in the workplace; however, one of the most prominent features that sets today's workforce apart is the disparity in age. When researching multi-generational workforce, future force, or cultural diversity one thing is very clear. Academics, researchers, and practitioners all agree on one point. For the first time in history, the workforce includes four different and distinct work groups. Each of these groups, or generations, is discernibly different and separate in their strengths, ethics, loyalties, motivations, goals, and values. In addition, all have a great deal to offer organizations as they strive to achieve excellence and meet their missions. So what are the four generations? They are:

- Veterans - Born before 1946
- Baby Boomers - Born between 1946 and 1964
- Generation X'ers - Born between 1965 and 1980
- Millennials - Born after 1980 and sometimes referred to as Generation Y

Within each of these generations differences show up daily. For example, a member of the Veterans generation may not be as comfortable or trusting of emerging technology, while Millennials embrace it. Generation X values a work-life balance and creativity, while other generations value structure and a clear



Steve Berry  
Deputy Director

hierarchy. Differing styles also stand out. For example, the Baby Boomer generation has a high focus on processes and inclusion, and Gen X'ers sometimes prefer concrete goals and autonomy on goal attainment.

While the existence of these four distinct generations brings with it many challenges, one of the most prevalent ones is this – Baby Boomers make up the largest generation of the four work groups. According to the United States 2000 census, there were 82,826,479 Baby Boomers in the workforce. This year the oldest of the Baby Boomers turn 61. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 20% of the current workforce will be eligible to retire in 2014, stemming a huge organizational impact, in both the public and private sectors, with more impact on the former. Some of these impacts are lack of qualified personnel to move into these positions, a higher turnover, valuable loss of institutional knowledge, retaining talent, and ultimately a possible decrease in work production, not to mention possible fiscal impacts.

Many organizations have implemented various programs and/or incentives in an attempt to prepare for this exodus, some of which include; retirement incentives and enticements (built around keeping boomers from retiring), phased retirements, attracting and retaining older workers, redesigning job opportunities to include job

sharing and telecommuting options as well as part-time and/or temporary assignments. One of the most widely used and successfully implemented programs is succession planning and various mentoring programs. These programs afford numerous opportunities for those nearing retirement to pass on their knowledge, skills, and work experiences to younger employees. This can reenergize employees in the last few years of their career and potentially provide reduced employee training costs for employers, while at the same time, building the bench for the future.

The uniqueness of the four generations in today's workplace does present challenges, but with proper skills, preparation, and education, supervisors, managers, and leaders can utilize each of their individual qualities to build a cohesive and motivated team. Here are a few tips on managing your multi-generational workforce:

- Remember the commonalities of each group – everyone wants to succeed and feel valued
- All employees need to be motivated, however, each vary in their style and expectations
- Employees' reactions to change and challenges are just different, not necessarily bad
- Utilizing various skills of the generations can bring out the best in an employee (computer/technology, committee work, networking, special projects)
- Mentoring programs and succession/career planning are a great way to for senior leaders to leave their legacy and build our bench for the future ■

## Multi-Generational Workforce: Veterans

By Gene Farmer

Veteran employees are the ones who have been around for the longest time and have all the knowledge and history of the workplace. They were born before 1946 and make up only 5% of the workforce nationwide. This group grew up between the World Wars and during the Depression. Technology then was the rotary phone, black and white television, and manual typewriter. Education for most Veterans was limited to high school.



self. Saving money is key to the Veterans; save, save, save, and pay for everything in cash. The big goal was to buy their first home. Authority, law and order, and a structured environment appeal to the Veterans.



A study by the National Institute of Correction reported that in 2000, there were 35,000 employees in corrections from all states that are Veterans. That number has definitely decreased by now.

Think about this generation and how they regard money, authority, work ethic, and their

They tend to stay in one job for life and demonstrate pride and dedication. Veterans are family oriented, prepared for the unknown, and very conservative about almost everything.



Veterans in the workplace will take charge, delegate, and want results. They are very wary of technology and new machines. The Veterans are hard working and look to others to be as dedicated.

The Veterans put loyalty to their job above themselves. They like the chain of command with clear lines between bosses and subordinates. Veterans rarely make waves, are uncomfortable

with conflict, reluctant to resist the system, and for the most part are very private. Recognize their experience with plaques or other tangible rewards. They prefer personal notes instead of emails.

The first step in working in a multi-generational workforce is self-awareness. Understand yourself and how your generational experiences impact the workforce.

Ask:

- What are my most important attributes?
- What is my view about loyalty on the job?
- What balance do I maintain

between work and personal life?

- What judgments do I make about other people?
- Am I flexible in dealing with others?

Once you identify your own views, you will have a better understanding when working with Veteran employees. ■

***“Ours is not to  
reason why,  
ours is but to  
do and die”***

***~ Alfred Lord  
Tennyson***

Research for this article came from: National Institute of Correction, “*Managing a Multigenerational Workforce*,” 2004 Cook Ross, Inc.; “*Ideas for Managing a Multigenerational Workforce*” by Rachel Azaroff

## Multi-Generational Workforce: Baby Boomers

By Phyllis Mills-Greene

How do you keep the Baby Boomers happy and content in the workplace? The answer is simple, get out of their way and let them work.

About a decade ago, the number of workers 55 and older began to rise and the numbers have accelerated since 2000. Baby Boomers are choosing to stay in the workplace for various reasons. Here are some motivating factors to help Baby Boomers thrive, not just survive.

Baby Boomers, born between 1946 and 1964, developed their work ethic and motivation from their parents' experience and advice. Their parents said work hard and be loyal and you will be rewarded with a pension after many years of dedicated service. So following their advice, many Baby Boomers developed a workaholic attitude. Work is the means to an end, the way to a promotion, and status in the workplace.



Along with status comes the recognition that most Baby Boomers desire. Recognition is a true motivating factor because it is saying "thank you" for a job well done. Thank you goes a long way towards gaining respect and loyalty from employees.

Most employees between the ages of 40 and 60 are loyal and dedicated to their employer. However, the Baby Boomer expects to be appreciated in the workplace. Faithful to the end, the Baby Boomer will support their workplace and team when they know their work is valued.

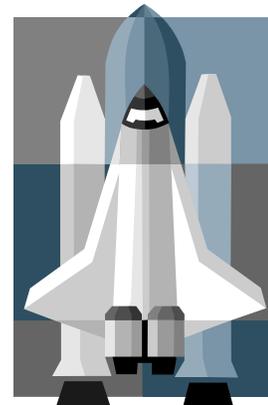
Baby Boomers work well in the team setting. Team members have clearly defined roles and responsibilities so that each person can be held accountable for their share of the work.

Accountability is another important characteristic for Baby Boomers on



the job. They expect management will applaud good work and hold accountable the employees who are not doing their share. Baby Boomers' competitive nature also fuels the need for personal satisfaction on the job.

Pride in a job well done is a hallmark of the Baby Boomer. Completing the project timely and accurately is imperative. The phrase, "Autograph your work with excellence," could be the motto of this generation. ■



**Veterans—born 1922-1945**  
**Baby Boomers—born 1946-1964**  
**Gen Xers—born 1965-1980**  
**Millennials, Gen Y, or Nexters—born after 1980**

## Multi-Generational Workforce: Generation X'ers

By Dawn Pearson



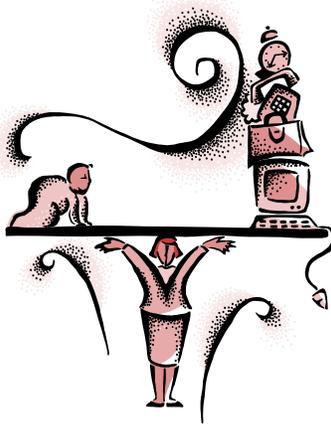
Generation X can be defined as the generation following the Baby Boomers. Persons born between 1965 and 1980 are referred to as Generation Xers, Gen-Xers, and Xers. Some describe Xers as underemployed, over-educated, unpredictable, and private. They are sometimes labeled as strong-willed, rebellious, and bold. Generation X can be viewed as a generation that is often misunderstood.

To enhance understanding of Gen Xers, first realize that they were parented by Baby Boomers who were holding down two jobs and often absent from the home. Many were latchkey kids who had to develop independence at an early age. Gen-Xers value work ethics, loyalty, and commitment, but also insist on having the balance in their lives that they did not see their parents maintaining. Consequently, what they prefer are career flexibility, work-life balance, and feedback.

### Career Flexibility

Xers are intent in looking for career security rather than job security and are less likely to define themselves by their jobs. New challenges and the opportunity to build new skills

are imperative for those born in this generation. They believe it is critical to build a set of skills and experiences they can take with them, if necessary. If their needs are not met, Generation Xers are more likely than Baby Boomers to leave a job to move on to another agency or start their own business.



### Work – Life Balance

Gen Xers see work as secondary to their family and life outside of the workplace. Xers want the time and flexibility to care for their young children better than, what they believe, their parents did. For individuals born in this generation, work is only a single element of a set life experiences that also include family, friends, and fun. It is important to balance them all.

### Feedback

Xers can never get enough feedback concerning their performance. These individuals need instant, immediate, and

honest feedback. To other generations, this may appear to be inappropriate.

Generation X employees are very visible in our workforce today. The better you understand them, the more likely you will have insight into what motivates them. This will lead to positive actions and results that will be valuable to both the individual and the workplace.

To determine how you communicate and lead Generation Xers, please feel free to take the "How in Step Are You With Generation X?" quiz by Terri Nagle at <http://www.coachingandmentoring.com/Quiz/xquiz.html> ■

### Tips for Managing Employees

- BE FAIR AND FLEXIBLE
- DEVELOP GENUINE LEADERSHIP WITHIN YOUR ORGANIZATION
- MAINTAIN OPEN LINES OF COMMUNICATION
- PROVIDE HONEST FEEDBACK TO EMPLOYEES, REGULARLY
- PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONTINUOUS LEARNING
- SUPPORT AND LISTEN TO EMPLOYEES

## Multi-Generational Workforce: Millennials's

By Sue McGee

HT WU?\* If you can decipher these letters into a meaningful communication, you were born after 1980 or live with someone born during that time. Those of you celebrating birthdays between 1980 and 1999 grew up with Microsoft, IBM PCs, in-line skates, NutraSweet, fax machines, film on disks, and unregulated quantities of commercial interruptions on television. You have always been able to get the news from USA Today and CNN. You have never needed a prescription to buy ibuprofen; the moonwalk is a



Michael Jackson dance step, not a Neil Armstrong giant step; ketchup

has always been a vegetable; have never seen a black and white TV or one with only 13 channels; there has always been a woman on the Supreme Court; have no idea how big a breadbox is; and the expression "you sound like a broken record" means nothing to you.

Millennials are about 10% of our current workforce. What are their views on work and family? What do they value? What are their major motivators? While there are always individuals within a group that don't share all of the group characteristics, these are some of the general traits of the Millennials. Some people will fit this description; some will fit part of this description and some will not

fit at all. Millennials are multi-taskers, achievement oriented, and open-minded.

Millennials have developed work characteristics and tendencies from



doting parents, structured lives, and contact with diverse people. They have had high exposure to technology and gadgets. Their ability to use the phone, computer, internet, instant messaging, music, and television in conjunction with each other results in boredom when they are doing a task that requires just one medium.

The younger they are the more likely Millennials are to see a job as a paycheck and something to do between weekends. Don't let that mislead. This group is dedicated to completing a task well and moving onto the next task with equal enthusiasm. This generation will work diligently if they can have a say in how the work is done and if opportunities exist for innovation and creativity. Tell an employee that you understand this may not be their lifelong career and in order to keep this job and paycheck these are the expectations. Promises of promotions and titles are not motivating. Show a Millennial knowledge and expertise, and they will show you respect.

Millennials are used to balancing many activities such as teams, friends, school, and church and want flexibility with a life away from work. Every ounce of loyalty and respect has to be

earned. Millennials tend to be confident and hopeful. They value knowledge and accountability and are the least promiscuous of the four generations.

To manage Millennials, recognize that they are used to working in teams and want to make friends with people at work. Millennials work well with diverse coworkers. They have a can-do attitude and look for feedback about how they are doing frequently. Don't bore them, ignore them, or trivialize their contribution. Help long time employees make room for the Millennials.



As instructors, PDTD needs to recognize that today's learners operate in a world that is networked and filled with technology. Providing opportunities for group work and problem solving allows students to learn from others who share their values and are people they respect. The instructor's role with Millennials is to facilitate group activities, provide feedback and one on one support. A variety of teaching methods should be used that are engaging, challenging and team focused. B4N TTYL\* ■

\* HT- hi there

WU?- what's up?

B4N – bye for now

TTYL- talk to you later

## The World of Technology through All the Generations

By Michael Helm

The current workforce includes generations ranging from 1922 to 2002



spanning 80 years of social, economic, and technological evolutions. This workforce is as follows: The Veterans, Baby Boomers, Gen-Xers, and Millennials. As technology was created and implemented, it influenced the entire multigenerational workforce.

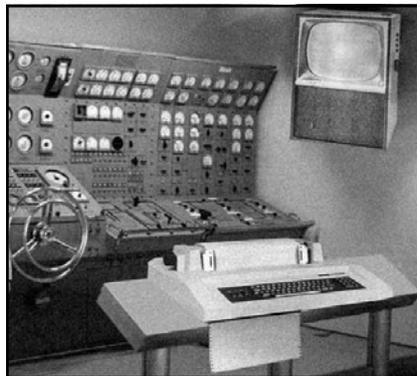
During the time of the Veterans, all communication was through printed documents and radio transmission. Most of the technologies and components were in their infancy. Therefore, analog devices or manual processes were utilized in business, government, education, and personal affairs.

Technology grew in a rapid manner especially during the Baby Boomer and Gen-X era. These advancements in new technology made it a challenge to find competent employees to implement and support the necessary competitive tools.

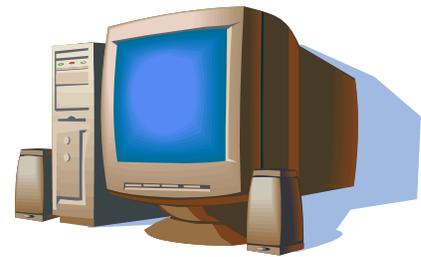
The Baby Boomer generation was in the cusp of the technological/ digital advances between 1942 and 1962. Technology was changing at a rapid rate and was mostly incorporated in larger

organizations, the military, and higher educational institutions. New technology skills were in high demand in these large organizations which drove the need for formal information technology education programs.

Constant changes in technology provided opportunities for the Baby Boomer and Veteran workforce. However, the Baby Boomers, who embrace social and economic changes, did not have quite the same perception of changes in technology. Most new implementation was confronted with the fear of individuals losing their jobs and other negative effects on the individual worker.



Gen-Xers experienced times where computer and technology flooded the commercial market and was actually affordable to the public. Gen-Xers were raised with the skills and knowledge of the modern information technology. In 1981, IBM entered the personal computer market, creating a de facto



standard. With the availability of the personal computer, Gen-Xers had technology in their own homes. This enhanced the technical expertise of the current and upcoming workforce.

Digital devices, used by Millennials, were entering the market. Digital portability with immediate access was essential to society. Technology improved by incorporating the same capability in smaller devices while including voice and entertainment media available at any location. And so, Millennials were accepting of instant access and real time information.

As you can see, over the last 80 years, technology has constantly been changing. Through all of the information technology changes, each generation had to continually adapt to these new tools and constantly train their workforce to maximize services provided. ■



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### Learning Curve

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#### *PDTD Mission*

Professional Development and Training Division provides a comprehensive, integrated learning and organizational development system for employees who protect the citizens of Maryland.

#### *PDTD Vision*

Committed to promoting collaboration, communication, and innovation throughout DPSCS, PDTD fosters a highly trained and professional workforce that ensures the seamless transition of defendants and offenders from pretrial through community supervision and ultimately to productive lifestyles, creating safe Maryland communities.

#### *PDTD Guiding Principles*

The Guiding Principles of the Professional Development and Training Division are to:

- *Assist DPSCS staff in aligning with the organizational mission*
- *Encourage life-long learning and growth for all DPSCS staff*
- *Develop leadership at all levels within DPSCS*
- *Stay focused on customers, both internal and external*
- *Teach evidence based content, utilizing adult learning principles*
- *Support all learning styles through creativity and innovation*
- *Collaborate with the various agencies of the Department*
- *Partner with external agencies to provide enhanced training and professional development opportunities for DPSCS staff*

## Editor's Commentary

By Cindy Reisberg

Whether it's over the river and through the woods to Grandma's house at Thanksgiving or to Uncle Ralph's for the annual Fourth of July picnic, each of us has traditions that were passed down through our family. It doesn't matter if you are a Baby Boomer, Millennial, or from one of the other workforce generations. Traditions, like the special gatherings during the holidays and family reunions or the principles and values we teach our children, bond one generation to another. At almost every family setting we hear telltale recollections of days gone by, how the price for everything has skyrocketed, or the humorous stories of wintertime sledding. We savor Mom's homemade pumpkin pie or Aunt Sally's delicious potato salad, both made from recipes handed down from ancestors. Honoring these traditions are a tribute to our families. Hold fast to your family's traditions; celebrate and share them with the new generations to come. ■

