
engaging a changing workforce™

Study of Four Generations from The Learning Café





Welcome to the Changing Workforce 2011

Welcome to 2011 and the ever changing workforce. You're moving quickly, *but are you moving fast enough?*

If you're keeping up you know that there continue to be four generations of employees in the workforce: Silents, Baby Boomers, Gen X and Millennials. You know because you have recruited, engaged and hopefully retained the best employees you can find, from the admin who worked her way up to a management position over three decades, to the recent college grad who shows so much promise. How can you guarantee that your valued workforce stays, from tenured guru to enthusiastic new hire? How can you engage every single employee, when the community is so diverse? More importantly, how can your organization avoid demotivating actions?

Millennials	
'77 - '98	
Generation X	
1965 -	Silent Generation
1976	
Baby Boomers	
'46 - '64	1933 - 1945

Demotivation is at the heart of the workplace generations challenge. As an example, The Learning Café found that nearly **65% of Millennials** (compared to 60% in our previous study) said *boredom* and *feeling unchallenged* were their top demotivators and are factors that could shut down their productivity or even lead them to depart for greener, more challenging pastures.

Once again we want to offer insight into what motivates and demotivates each generation and recommend actions managers can take to increase employee engagement, productivity and knowledge sharing. This research report provides valuable, actionable insight into what motivates and demotivates each generation. The recommendations throughout the report not only will increase employee engagement and reduce turnover costs, but also will strengthen productivity and knowledge sharing.

The report begins with background information, followed by key findings and definitions of each generation - all laying the foundation for the balance of the report. A brief overview of our survey findings, is followed by an in-depth analysis of each generation's top four motivators and demotivators, and concludes by highlighting the major elements of the report.

The Learning Café specializes in solving issues related to the four-generation workforce. For ten years, they have learned from the age-diverse workforce by engaging in primary research, analyzing secondary research, capturing trends, teaching in organizations and observing workplace behavior - to build a strong knowledge base of the four generations' commonalities and differences. They have helped organizations in many industries create strategies to manage their four-generation workforces and bridge the generation gap at work. Their presentations, training materials and workshops have provoked thought, changed behavior and educated thousands of managers and employees on the importance of flexing to meet the needs of a changing workforce - and practical ways to do so.

Background

Today's managers and organizations have their work cut out for them. With four different generations sharing the workplace, it is harder than ever to understand what will motivate, engage and retain each employee. In addition, every generation has its own attitudes, perceptions and values that shape how its members regard work, and the influences that stimulate them to surpass expectations.

However, every generation contends with workplace factors that leave them dissatisfied and unproductive. In today's rapid and turbulent business climate, it is crucial to understand what motivates each generation, and what factors will have the opposite effect.

Key Findings

- 1** The **motivators** - those survey responses that satisfy, engage and cultivate productivity - are nearly consistent among all generations surveyed. This contradicts popular thinking and common wisdom, which attribute very different motivators to each generation.
- 2** **Demotivators** are notable and generation-specific. Demotivators are the factors that cause people to become unhappy, ineffective and disconnect. Unlike motivators, these demotivators vary somewhat among the generations.
- 3** The generations differ in the **actions** they will take when demotivated. For example, when a Silent or Baby Boomer complains, they are likely to remain with their employer. However, when a Gen Xer or Millennial grumbles, they are more inclined to investigate their options and leave.

Generations Defined

Before presenting the top motivators and demotivators that drive each generation, it is important we have a common understanding of what defines each group. The Learning Café's unique overview of the generations in today's workforce appears on the following pages.

Millennials
'77 - '98

Generation X

1965 -
1976

Silent
Generation
1933 - 1945

Baby Boomers

'46 - '64

Millennials '77 - '98

There are 75 million members of the youngest generation in today's workforce, all raised at the most child-centric time in our history. The Millennials display a great deal of self-confidence, even at times appearing cocky, perhaps because of the shower of attention and high expectations from their parents.

The Learning Café calls them "Generation Y-not?" because this generation packs power and potential. The challenge for leaders is living up to the high standards and expectations the Millennials bring to the workplace.

Sometimes coached by their parents, they do not see the value of paying their dues or earning their stripes. They perform best with some structure, especially younger Millennials who are newer to the workplace. They are learning *to* work as well as learning *the* work. Millennials also have a bit of a "whatever" view of title and position, showing less reverence for position that's simply based on experience, which they think Baby Boomers overemphasize. They respect knowledge and

and learning. They want a relationship with their boss. This does not always mesh with Generation X's love of independence and a hands-off style. Watch out! They will leave for greener pastures if challenge, learning and fun are absent from their work.

The Learning Café calls them
"Generation Y-not?"

Millennials are typically team-oriented and work well in groups, preferring group work to individual endeavors. In addition, they are used to tackling multiple tasks with equal energy, so they expect to work hard. They are effective multi-taskers, having juggled school, sports and social interests as children.

As you might expect, this group is technically literate like no one else. Technology has always been part of their lives, whether it is computers, the Internet, cell phones, text messaging, MySpace or YouTube.

"What does it take to keep them? We recruited them from good schools, gave them a decent starting salary and all the training they need. And then they leave. It's the money, right?"
– Aerospace

Generation X

1965 - 1976 - This is the most documented, discussed and stereotyped generation in recent history. Its 41 million members live with the corporate footprint of previous generations; they are reshaping organizations to meet their generation's priorities.

Generation X grew up in a very different world than previous generations. Divorce and working moms created latchkey kids out of slightly over half of this generation. This led to traits of independence, resilience and adaptability. Generation X feels strongly that "I don't need someone looking over my shoulder."

Generation X saw their parents laid off or face job insecurity, and many of them entered the workplace in the '80s, when the economy was in a downturn. Because of these factors, they have redefined loyalty. Instead of remaining loyal to their company,

their loyalty is most often to their work, their team and their immediate boss.

"I don't need someone looking over my shoulder."

Today, Generation X is solidly at career mid-point. They are managers, tenured employees, business owners - and they are busy raising families and contributing to their communities. They expect time flexibility that allows a separation of work from family.

This generation takes employability seriously; for them, building a career portfolio supersedes climbing the career ladder. They continue to grow their portfolios, building a skill set that supports their need for independence even as they attain increasing levels of responsibility. They can move laterally, stop and start. Their careers are more fluid with on ramps and off ramps.

"We instituted a hiring freeze in the 1990s. As a result we now have a gap. We have a large group of Baby Boomers and we have begun to hire Millennials, but we have almost no Gen Xers! It's a huge challenge when we look at where we will get new leaders."

- Federal Government

Baby Boomers '46 – '64

As the most populous generation in the U.S., 76 million Baby Boomers typically grew up amid economic prosperity, suburban affluence and strong nuclear families with stay-at-home moms. Some researchers divide the Baby Boomers into two groups: those born between 1946 and 1954 (the “Woodstock” group, known for their idealistic endeavors and social conscience) and those born between 1955 and 1964 (the “Zoomer” group, known for their preoccupation with *self*).

They work hard -
maybe too hard!

Boomers came into the workforce en masse, and made the rules by which many companies play. The Boomers’ paradox is that many are reaching a stage in their lives marked by ambivalence about the very rules they created. Nevertheless, this generation tends to be optimistic, competitive and focus

on personal accomplishment. They have been on the world stage since infancy and were Time’s Person of the Year in 1966 (Time Magazine “Twenty-Five and Under”). Boomers have redefined everything from social values, politics, economics, corporations, environment to the media.

They work hard - maybe too hard. This generation amazingly increased our historical 40-hour workweek by one full month per year! As younger generations enter the workplace, Boomers are waiting for them to pick up this traditional approach to work.

This generation is comfortable in the culture they have created, and they view change as sometimes painful, yet inevitable. Many companies experience their biggest generational conflict when Boomer managers are confronted with younger employees who do not fit the mold that they, the Boomers, created.

“The CFO is joining the Peace Corps! I don’t think our Boomers are going to retire but I think they will be making some pretty significant changes in their lives.”

- Manufacturing

Silent Generation 1933 - 1945

There are 52 million members of the Silent Generation and they defy generalization more than any other generation - so watch those stereotypes! While some of its members have already left the workforce, many others remain, and they are reinventing the concept of career maturity and retirement.

Silents are eager to continue working and trying new things.

The oldest members of the generation grew up in the aftermath of the Depression. However, their financial cycle moved from a cashless childhood to an affluent elderhood, due in part to economic growth, plentiful jobs, retirement benefits and because of their propensity to live well within their means as a generation. They built their success on hard work, self-discipline and postponing material rewards.

As a generation, they put the group before the individual. Often referred to as the “facilitative generation,” many members have taken leading national roles as diplomats, civil rights leaders and distinguished civil servants and politicians. Typically, employees from this generation are disciplined, loyal team players who work within the system. They have a huge knowledge legacy to share and embody a traditional work ethic.

Today’s economic climate, our longer life expectancy and an enjoyment of work, are all keeping Silents in the workplace longer. Whether they are postponing retirement or have retired and returned to work, many Silents are eager to continue working and trying new things. They see themselves as vigorous, contributing members of the workforce.

“Our Silent generation employees are worried about job security. They say they feel undervalued and many tell us they are struggling to balance work and their personal lives. I wonder - are their challenges real? Are we contributing to their concerns?”

- Electric Utility

With an appreciation for what defines each generation, we offer a snapshot of our 2010 survey findings; the top four motivators and demotivators for each generation.

Survey Findings

The two tables below provide a clear picture of each generation's top four responses within both our **Motivators** and **Demotivators** categories.

Motivators What keeps you motivated, satisfied, or productive?

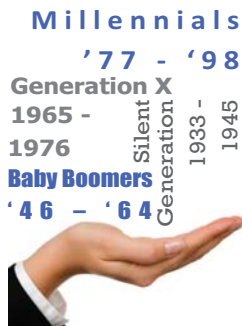
	Millennials	Generation X	Baby Boomers	Silent Generation
1	Challenging, stimulating, varied work	Challenging, stimulating, varied work	Challenging, stimulating, varied work	Challenging, stimulating, varied work
2	Career growth, learning and development	Career growth, learning and development	Making a difference, a contribution	Pay
3	Enjoyable work environment	Healthy work-life balance/flexibility	Appreciation/ (non-monetary) recognition	Enjoyable work environment
4	Pay	Making a difference/ contribution and Enjoyable work environment*	Enjoyable work environment	Appreciation/ (non-monetary) recognition

Demotivators What causes you to disconnect, be unhappy or ineffective?

	Millennials	Generation X	Baby Boomers	Silent Generation
1	Boredom, no challenge	Bad boss	Lack of appreciation, respect or recognition	Bad boss
2	Lack of appreciation, respect or recognition	Micromanagement	Bad Boss	Boredom, no challenge
3	Bad boss	Lack of appreciation, respect or recognition and No work-life balance*	Micromanagement	Lack of appreciation, respect or recognition
4	Inability to learn, grow and develop	Inability to learn, grow and develop	Boredom, no challenge	Inability to learn, grow and develop and Micromanagement*

* Two factors tied

Conclusion



From the casual self-confidence and high expectations of the **Millennials** to **Silents** still hungry for new challenges, each generation in today's workplace has its own deeply rooted values and perceptions that are powerful and defining. These differences hold the key to keeping each employee happily productive, engaged and committed. Managers genuinely willing to (1) *learn the generational nuances* and (2) *adapt their management styles*, can “crack the code” of the generations and apply techniques that motivate and increase productivity.

This report's key findings, definitions, motivators, demotivators and recommendations offer basic insights into generational differences – a starting point from which to build. Managers should use these recommendations and suggestions as initial guidelines for understanding employees and colleagues, but also understand this information does not recommend a cookie-cutter approach. Differences within any generation, and in every individual, will require unique approaches when it comes to motivation, engagement and retention.

The Research

The data in this report was collected from over 2,000 workshop participants and conference attendees from 2006 through 2010. Individuals were given a survey (see sample on page 18) and asked to rank their top motivators and demotivators, selecting from a list of 26 choices created through the coding and categorization of freeform input gathered during previous surveys. Two percent (2%) of respondents are in the Silent Generation; 48% are Baby Boomers; 26% are Gen Xers; and 24% are Millennials. Sixty-one percent of the respondents indicated they are employed in the private sector; 36% work for the federal government.

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www.thelearningcafe.net



The Learning Café Programs & Products

Engaging a Changing Workforce™ Workshops

Engaging a Changing Workforce looks at today's workforce through a generational lens. This workshop focuses on the practical advice, skills and tools that managers and employees need to win in the new game.

The Art & Science of Engagement: Winning the War for Talent

Employees don't disengage or leave because they are pulled away by better offers. Employees disengage because they are pushed out by factors under management's control – initial stimuli that open the door to the pull of outside opportunities. This session energizes and focuses managers on the realities of employee engagement.

Building Your Brand

Personal branding is a leadership strategy for managing reputation within an organization and marketplace. A personal brand is how you define and differentiate yourself. The Building Your Brand experience includes Make It: Identify who you are and why you're unique; Market It: know your audiences, make connections and sell yourself; and Manage It: how to change, compensate and leverage your brand.

Instant Expert Manager Series

Front line managers never know what new challenges each day will bring. Their days are busy and unpredictable. In their high-speed work environments, they only have time for training that is fast and targeted. The Instant Expert Manager Series includes six modules. Each 90-minute session delivers how to's, powerful actions, and a key skill to coach and engage employees from recruitment to retirement.

Mentoring for Success

An easy-to-use program that ensures mentoring initiatives get quick, sustainable results. The user-friendly tool kit prepares participants for a comfortable, productive relationship. The tools supplement a Mentor and Mentee's natural abilities with guidelines, how-to's and structure for maximum effectiveness and joint satisfaction.