

Generations at Work

(Caution - These are broad generalizations!)

	Traditionalists Born 1900 - 1945	Baby boomers 1946-1964	Generation X 1965-1980	Generation Y 1981-1990
Experience of adversity	WW II and Great Depression	Post WW II prosperity and economic growth	High parental divorce rates, governmental scandals, parental layoffs	More likely to have friends that have died young, or have been in jail, natural disasters and global issues, corporate scandals
General philosophical outlook	Loyal, faithful to institutions,	Work hard and you will be rewarded,	Self-reliant and skeptical of institutions	High expectations for getting their needs met, consumerism
How they view work	Work hard and you will be rewarded	Work hard and what has meaning for you, has changed major jobs 2-3 times	Should be meaningful and a balance of hard work and paid time off, will change major jobs 5-10 times	A means to an end
How they view change at work	Workplace didn't change rapidly	Workplace improvements over time for efficiency but don't change too much too soon	No big deal, adapt and move on	What do you mean I can't have "Instant Messenger" at work?
Talents and skills	Management generalists, traditional skills/trades	A blend of generalist and technology, depends on the person, emphasis on professional education	Well-educated, generally 4-year college or trade school, good with all types of technology	Highly educated, but not necessarily 4-year college, technologically savvy, pagers, cell phones, MP3, comfort with virtual learning
How they view family/recreation time	What comes after work - Male and female roles defined	Generally focused on work-aholism, family time is after work, until the divorce!	Can be individual, generally will work hard in spells and then want long time off	More important to spend time doing what you want, with people that you like
How they view activism	Pick a social cause and donate money	Socially conscious but short of time, gives to a few causes	Less cause-focused, more global issues, vary who they donate to, yearly	Not quite old enough to have disposable income but may have done service work in high school
What is on their mind today	Rising costs in retirement	How to finance college education for kids and retirement for them	How to stay gainfully employed, how to pay for school loans, how to move out of parent's house	How to pay for consumption, keeping rapidly changing skills, Music, cars, time off, fun
Best way to manage performance	Slow and steady promotions and increases	Financial incentives and promotions	Flexibility, tie economics rewards to their individual performance, training opportunities	Quick gratification tied to their goals, they want feedback on their work, and training opportunities that relate to more money

Sources

Chaddock, Gail Russell, *US Notches World's Highest Incarceration Rate*, 2007 The Christian Science Monitor, August 18, 2003.
at: <http://www.csmonitor.com/2003/0818/p02s01-usju.html>

Dougherty, Kirk, Harder, Hill & Miller, *The Echo Boom: What Generation Y has in Store for the HR community*, accessed April 2007
at: <http://www.uncw.edu/STUAFF/career/documents/EchoBoom.pps>

Fieldstone Alliance, Tools You Can Use, *Six Generational Trends that will Affect Your Nonprofit*, accessed April 2007 at:
www.fieldstonealliance.org/client/client_pages/tools_you_can_use/02-21-07_generational_trends.cfm.

Kinner & Chapman, *Service-Learning and Community service in K-12 Public Schools*, Education Statistics Quarterly - Elementary and Secondary Education, Vol. 1, Issue 4, accessed April 2007 at: http://nces.ed.gov/programs/quarterly/vol_1/1_4/3-esq14-h.asp

Lloyd, Joan, *Gen X work ethic isn't all that different from others*, accessed April 2007 at:
<http://www.joanlloyd.com/articles/open.asp?art=697.htm>

Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research (MFMER), *Workplace generation gap: Understand differences among colleagues*, 2001 Planetree, Inc. accessed April 2007 at: <http://www.cnn.com/HEALTH/library/WL/00045.html>

Panepento, Peter, *Connecting with generation X*, The Chronicle of Philanthropy, March 31, 2005, accessed April 2007 at:
<http://www.philanthropy.com/free/articles/v17/i12/12003301.htm>

Senior Journal.Com, *Many Baby Boomers May have to Rethink Retiring Before Becoming Senior Citizens*
<http://www.seniorjournal.com/NEWS/Boomers/6-04-19-BabyBoomersWorry.htm>

The Baby Boomer Generation, *Paying it Forward and Backwards*, April 17, 2006, accessed April 2007 at:
<http://www.aginghipsters.com/blog/archives/000491.php>

The Baby Boomer Generation, *What Generation are You?* April 29, 2006 accessed April 2007 at:
<http://www.aginghipsters.com/blog/archives/000493.php>

Yelowitz, Aaron, *Young Adults Leaving the Nest: The Role of Cost-of-Living*, The Network on Transitions to Adulthood, May 2006,
accessed April 2007 at: <http://www.transad.pop.upenn.edu/downloads/Yelowitz-May2006.pdf>