Intergenerational Issues:
Effective Communication with the New Generation of Lawyers

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Intergenerational Issues

Why?
Biggest problem in the work setting: **Communication!**

Lack of communication or understanding leads to:
- Misunderstandings of common interactions
- Poor work morale
- Decreased efficiency
- Work and customer experience suffers
Workforce Demographics

US Population by Age Group

- Traditionalists: 13%
- Boomers: 26%
- Gen X: 21%
- Gen Y: 20%
- Global: 20%
Who?

- Traditionalists
  - 1900 - 1945

- Boomers
  - 1946 - 1964

- Gen X’s
  - 1965 - 1980

- Gen Y’s
  - 1981 - 1999
Traditionalists
Born 1900-1945

Influences

- Great Depression
- World War II and Korean War
- New Deal
- Rise of corporations
- Work for same employer
- Substantial social contact
- Eventual period of prosperity
Boomers
Boomers
Born 1946-1964

Influences

- Civil Rights Movement
- Space Race
- Vietnam War
- Woodstock
- Cold War
- Love and the intro of “the pill”
- Women’s Movement
- Assassinations of JFK and MLK
Generation X
Generation X
Born 1965-1980

Influences

* MTV
* Skyrocketing Divorce
* Watergate
* Computers in the workplace
* Two recessions
* Gulf war
* End of Cold War
* AIDS Epidemic
* “Greed is good”
Generation Y
Generation Y / Millennials
Born 1981-1999

Influences

- 9/11/01
- General economic prosperity
- Internet boom and bust
- Globalization
- Smart phones
- Birth of reality TV
- Child-focused families
- “Everyone’s a winner” mentality
What?
Sign of the times

Home Ownership Data 1900-2010

- 1900: 46.50%
- 1910: 45.90%
- 1920: 45.60%
- 1930: 47.80%
- 1940: 43.60%
- 1950: 55.00%
- 1960: 61.90%
- 1970: 62.90%
- 1980: 64.40%
- 1990: 64.20%
- 2000: 66.20%
- 2010: 66.90%
Traditionalists
Born 1925-1945

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influences</th>
<th>Attributes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* Great Depression</td>
<td>* Fiscally conservative</td>
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<tr>
<td>* World War II and Korean War</td>
<td>* Disciplined; self-sacrificing</td>
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<tr>
<td>* New Deal</td>
<td>* Respect authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Rise of corporations</td>
<td>* Follow rules</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Work for same employer</td>
<td>* Loyal</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Substantial social contact</td>
<td>* Patriotic</td>
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<td>* Eventual period of prosperity</td>
<td>* Risk averse</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* Hard-Working</td>
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<td>* Trust the system</td>
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Boomers
Born 1946-1964

Influences

* Civil Rights Movement
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* Vietnam War
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* Cold War
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Attributes

* Ambitious
* Not into rules or boundaries
* Competitive
* Health and wellbeing
* Personal growth
* Time stressed
* Live to work
* Forever young
Generation X
Born 1965-1980

Influences
* MTV
* Skyrocketing Divorce
* Watergate
* Computers in the workplace
* Two recessions
* Gulf war
* End of Cold War
* AIDS Epidemic
* “Greed is good”

Attributes
* Independent and self-reliant
* Skeptical
* Technologically adept
* Entrepreneurial
* Distrust of authority
* Informal
* Follows merit-based leadership
* Seek work/life balance
Generation Y / Millennials
Born 1981-1999

Influences
* 9/11/01
* General economic prosperity
* Internet boom and bust
* Globalization
* Smart phones
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* Child-focused families
* “Everyone’s a winner” mentality

Attributes
* Optimistic
* Technology is essential to lives
* Generally well educated
* Expects diversity
* Crave personal attention
* Require immediate feedback
* Team player & social networker
* Expects change
* Very close to parents
* Demands work/life balance
How?
How?

- Respect
- Flexibility
- Mentoring
- Communication
- Open Door
- Compensation
Keys to working with

Traditionalists

* Rules and well defined procedures
* Prefer a personal touch
* Uncomfortable with relaxed workplace

Boomers

* Their work is important to them
* Work well in teams
* Motivated by their responsibility to others
* Don’t take criticism well
* Require flexibility, attention & freedom
* Prefer in-person contact
Keys to working with...

**Gen X**

- Wants independence and informality
- Give deadlines, but allow them to decide how to get there
- Time to pursue other interests
- Provide them with technology
- Allow them to have fun at work

**Gen Y**

- Like a team oriented workplace
- Enjoy bright and creative people
- Expect to feel valued
- Accustomed to “edutainment”
- Require technology
- Opportunities to collaborate
- ongoing feedback, but not accustomed to negative feedback
- Communication & transparency
Methods for dealing...
In Practice...

- Consider a robust orientation
  - Gen Y needs more of an introduction, but may end up being your most enthusiastic, and technologically savvy attorneys
- More frequent feedback devices
- Consider online portal
- Start a local social collaboration platform
- Play to their sense of social justice
- Create a well organized mentoring program
- Create a series of awards
Questions???
Additional Resources

* Phyllis Weiss Haserot, Practice Development Counsel available at http://www.pdcounsel.com
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