BRIDGING THE GAP: MULTIPLE GENERATIONS IN THE WORKPLACE

Presented by
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INTRODUCTIONS . . .
HELLO, KC!
THE GAME PLAN

• Identify the generations and Generational Age

• Understand the basic similarities and differences among the generations

• Discuss how Generational Age affects our work as parks & recreational professionals
BUT WHY DOES IT MATTER?

• For the first time, there are FIVE generations working together in the workplace

• We have FIVE generations participating in our programs and visiting our facilities

• Generational gaps are more significant now than ever before in history

• Understanding the “why” behind certain behaviors can keep the “what” from escalating
BUT ALSO REMEMBER.

• All of us should be held to the same standard

• All employees should comply with the standards and policies of your agency

• No adaptations should be made that compromise the integrity of the job or diminishes the ability of your department to carry out its objectives
THE GENERATIONAL BIRTH ORDER

OTHER NAMES THE GENERATIONS ARE KNOWN BY:

TRADITIONALISTS—Builders, Great Generation
BABY BOOMERS—No alternate name
GEN XERS—Busters, Lost Generation
MILLENNIALS—Generation Y, Echo Boomers
CUSPERS—People who have characteristics of two generations and were born in between those generations.
WHAT DO THEY SHARE?

• Everyone shares life stages
  • School
  • Marriage
  • Work
  • Children
  • Retirement

• We all approach th
GHOST STORIES

• Shared experiences guide how generations approach life stages

• Shared experiences include the people, places, news events and social issues that influenced the generation
WHAT DO YOU THINK?

• What are your generational stereotypes?
  • Traditionalists
  • Boomers
  • Generation X
  • Millennials
  • Post Millennials
THE TRADITIONALISTS
(1900 – 1945)

Traditionalists (Born before 1945)

- New Generation: 122,000,000 (3.9%)
- Traditionalists: 38,600,000 (12.7%)
- Millennials: 63,600,000 (20.5%)
- Baby Boomers: 79,800,000 (26.2%)
- Gen Xers: 60,100,000 (19.8%)

FIVE STAR RECREATION
THE TRADITIONALISTS
(1900 – 1945)

• Really two generations, but they were bound by many common threads

• US takes international role for the first time

• Things were scarce

• Defining events included Great Depression, WW II, moving from the farm to the city, mass marketing & relying on experts
THE TRADITIONALISTS
(1900 – 1945)

• Traditionalists are LOYAL
  • Learned to put aside the needs of the individual for the good of many
  • Working together and with large institutions accomplished great things
• Country lacked social safety nets
• Over 50% of males are veterans – whole generation values top-down approach
The Traditionalists
(1900 – 1945)

• Value work – stayed with one company or career their entire lives
• Enjoys the satisfaction of a job done well
• Wants support as the balance of work & life shifts
• Views retirement as a reward for that job done well
BABY BOOMERS
(1946 – 1964)
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- 80 MILLION PEOPLE!
- As a group, they changed the entire culture with a baby boom
- Influenced by MLK, Nixon, JFK, Beaver Cleaver, the Beatles
- Affected by affluence & the exploding availability of consumer goods
- Greatest invention of the time?
- A great generation gap
BABY BOOMERS
(1946 – 1964)

- Boomers are OPTIMISTIC
  - Booming postwar economy & availability of education
  - Pushed for social change

- But they’re also COMPETITIVE
  - Had to compete for everything at every age
  - Very work-related
Baby Boomers (1946 – 1964)

• Hope to build a stellar career & want to stand out from the crowd
• Strive for a title & recognition – the corner office
• Wants to balance and find meaning in their personal life
• Will often move into a new career well into retirement
GENERATION X
(1965 - 1980)

Generation X (Born 1965–80)

- New Generation: 42,200,000 (13.9%)
- Traditionalists: 38,600,000 (12.7%)
- Millennials: 83,600,000 (27.5%)
- Baby Boomers: 79,800,000 (26.2%)
- Gen Xers: 60,100,000 (19.8%)

FIVE STAR RECREATION
GENERATION X
(1965 - 1980)

• Only 46 million strong – squished!!

• But. . . is it really?

• Influenced by Bill Clinton, OJ Simpson & Michael Jordan

• Media extends to cable, VCRs, video games, faxes & the PERSONAL COMPUTER!
GENERATION X
(1965 - 1980)

• Gen Xers are SKEPTICAL
  • Historical events
  • Explosion of 24-hour media wiped away mystique of America and parodies ensue
  • Divorce rate TRIPLES during birth years of Gen X
  • More moms head to work
  • Downward mobility is a reality for the first time in more than a generation

• Also resourceful & independent
GENERATION X
(1965 - 1980)
Generation X
(1965 - 1980)

• Hoping to build a portable career that can go with them anywhere

• View freedom as the ultimate reward...but they are also rebuilding their net wealth

• Xers want balance NOW!

• View retirement as a time to renew...but don’t want to wait until retirement to get renewal
MILLENNIALS (1981 - 2001)

- Millennials (83,600,000/27.5%)
- New Generation (42,200,000/13.9%)
- Traditionalists (38,600,000/12.7%)
- Baby Boomers (79,800,000/26.2%)
- Gen Xers (60,100,000/19.8%)

US Census Bureau: Current population survey, 2016
MILLENNIALS
(1981 - 2001)

... OR IT MIGHT JUST BE GAS.

Gemma "WHERE'S MY TROPHY?" Correll 2015
Old People: All you lazy millennials need to get outside! Get some exercise and fresh air!

Pokemon Go: *Happens*

Old People: No, not like that
MILLENNIALS
(1981 - 2001)

- Another 76 MILLION people with helicopter parents
- Living in an age of consumerism
- A techno-savvy group influenced by Cartman, Tiger Woods, Prince William & Tinky Winky
- Always had access to personal computers, the internet and cell phones
- Directly affected by Columbine, 9/11 and gang violence
MILLENNIALS  
(1981 - 2001)

• Tend to be a mix of previous generations

• They know that they are special
  
  • 96% of survey respondents answered that they agreed or somewhat agreed with the statement, “I can do something great”

• They expect diversity in the workplace
MILLENNIALS
(1981 - 1999)

- Will build parallel careers throughout their working life
- Seeking work that has meaning to them
- Wants flexibility to balance all their other activities
- What’s retirement???
post-MILLENNIALS
(2000 - Today)
post-MILLennials
(2000 - Today)

• The race is on to define them!
• The “non look” is in. . .You do you
• Snapchat & Vine instead of Facebook & YouTube
• First gadget?
• Teens & tweens with huge spending power
post-MILLENNIALS
(2000 - Today)
BUT DON’T FORGET . . .

• That we’re each individuals
• Our life experiences may make us lean towards a different generational outlook
• Or . . . Maybe you’re a CUSPER!
CUSPERS

• People born on the cusps of two generations
  • Boomers/Gen Xers: 1963 – 1968
  • Gen Xers/Millennials: 1979 – 1984
• Understand both generations & tend to be natural mediators, translators & mentors
• Experience different stressors than their generational peers
WHEN WE CLASH...

• When generational views don’t mesh, we often clash in the workplace

• Usually, we deal with the clash by
  • Ignoring the new generation
  • Trying to fix them
  • Cutting a deal with them
  • Leading them
POTENTIAL STICKING POINTS

- Communication
- Decision Making
- Dress Code
- Feedback
- Fun at Work
- Knowledge Transfer
- Loyalty
- Meetings
- Policies
- Respect
- Training
- Work Ethic
NOW THAT YOU KNOW... 

Focusing on the WHAT causes friction, but focusing on the WHY can help the team stick together.

- Understanding the generations allows us to address communication in the workplace.
- Generational psyche must be acknowledged by the generation itself & the other generations.
- This doesn’t negate the need to DO RIGHT in the workplace!
LEADING THROUGH IT

• Acknowledge generational differences
• Appreciate the difference (focus on “why” not “what”)
• Flex – agree on how to accommodate different approaches
• Leverage – maximize the strengths of each generation
• Resolve – determine which option will yield the best results if flexing isn’t an option
TRADITIONALISTS AS OUR CO-WORKERS

• Remember that they value hard work & the chain of command
• Score points by using formal titles rather than first names
• Be patient & take the time to explain new ideas or policies
• Schedule meetings rather than dropping in
• Don’t need (or give) feedback
• PICK UP THE PHONE!!!
TRADITIONALISTS AS OUR CUSTOMERS

• Use last names until given permission to use first names
• Give clear explanations of guideline changes
• Be sure to offer face-to-face registration offers
• Put REAL PEOPLE on the phone
• Use simple, traditional marketing pieces that offer expert endorsement
BOOMERS AS OUR CO-WORKERS

- Remember: Boomers value recognition – the annual evaluation is important!
- Boomers worked hard to get where they are and are competitive
- When giving goals, give clear guidelines with some autonomy
- Show respect for their skills, knowledge & potential
- Take a personal interest
BOOMERS AS OUR CUSTOMERS

• Get to know them personally & recognize their accomplishments

• Boomers are not old!!!

• Nostalgia is a great hook
  • Remember: they grew up with entertainers compelling them NOT telling what to buy!
GEN XERS AS OUR CO-WORKERS

- Show that you trust & have confidence in the work they can do – the “slacker” stereotype shouldn’t stick

- The annual evaluation is less important than immediate feedback so that they can adjust as needed

- Respect their time and be straightforward

- A mix of digital natives & digital immigrants – email is appropriate
GEN XERS AS OUR CUSTOMERS

- Provide information quickly – they are used to getting instant results
- Allow the opportunity to give feedback via the internet
- Promote program or product value
- Advertising should be edgy, nostalgic or fun
MILLENNIALS AS OUR CO-WORKERS

• Develop a relationship with these workers to aid in retention (91% self report that they will stay with the same job no more than 3 years!)

• Value collaboration – we NEED THEM to help Traditionalists & Boomers with technology

• Give lots of feedback...LOTS of feedback

• Be clear in task requirements & patiently answer questions

• Present expectations in a positive way
MILLENNIALS AS OUR CUSTOMERS

• They are multi-taskers – don’t be offended!
• Tend to be “top line” readers & skimmers
• Value star power and entertainment value in advertising
• Aren’t interested in traditional advertising avenues
7 TIPS FOR WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION

• Personal contact is important
• Develop a network
• Be courteous
• Be clear & consistent
• Compromise decreases the tension associated with conflict
• You cannot hold a person’s interest if you do not have something interesting to say
• Listen to what others are saying and show interest in what they are saying
QUESTIONS & COMMENTS

Thank you again!

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