

Why can't we all just get along...

Understanding the multi-generational workforce to increase retention and productivity

Goals

- Identify who makes up our current workforce?
- What influenced the development of each generation's core values?
- What are the attributes that each generation brings to the workforce?
- What are potential intergenerational conflict issues?

Goals (continued)

- How can you reduce conflict while tapping into the strengths of collaboration?
- How can you help foster an environment that appeals to all generations?
- Conclusions – Hope for the future!

What is a Generation?

- A society wide peer wide peer group, born over approximately 20 years, who collectively possess a common persona.
- Generations are shaped by history and events, technological advances, social changes, economic conditions, popular culture, etc.

Who's in the Workplace Right Now?

<u>Generation</u>	<u>Percentage Working</u>
• GI -Traditionalists	10%
• Boomers	44%
• Gen Xers	34%
• Millennials	12%

Generational Differences: Seminal events shape values, expectations, perceptions, opportunities, obstacles, etc., during the formative years...



G.I. Generation

born 1900-1924



World War I

Model T Ford



Wright Brothers Flight

Traditionalists (Mature, Silents)

born 1925-1942



Atomic Bomb: Hiroshima/Nagasaki



Pearl Harbor

Baby Boomers

born 1943-1960



Moon landing

MLK March on Washing

bat troops in Vietnam

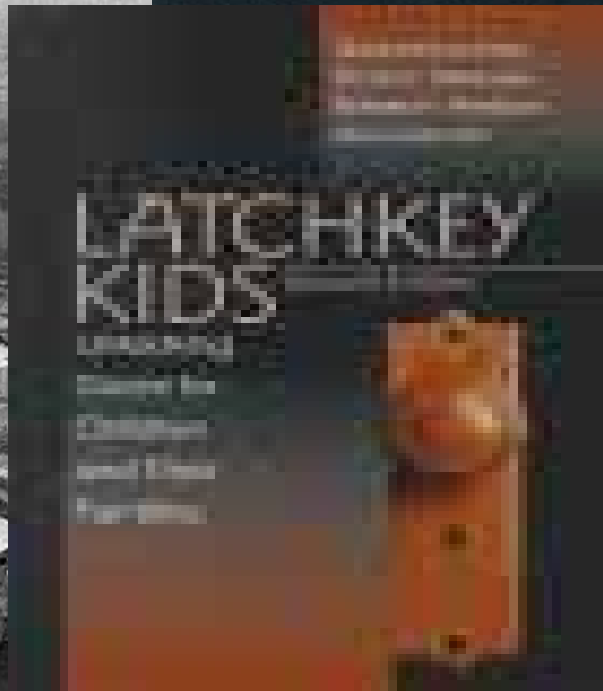


Generation X (Gen Xers)

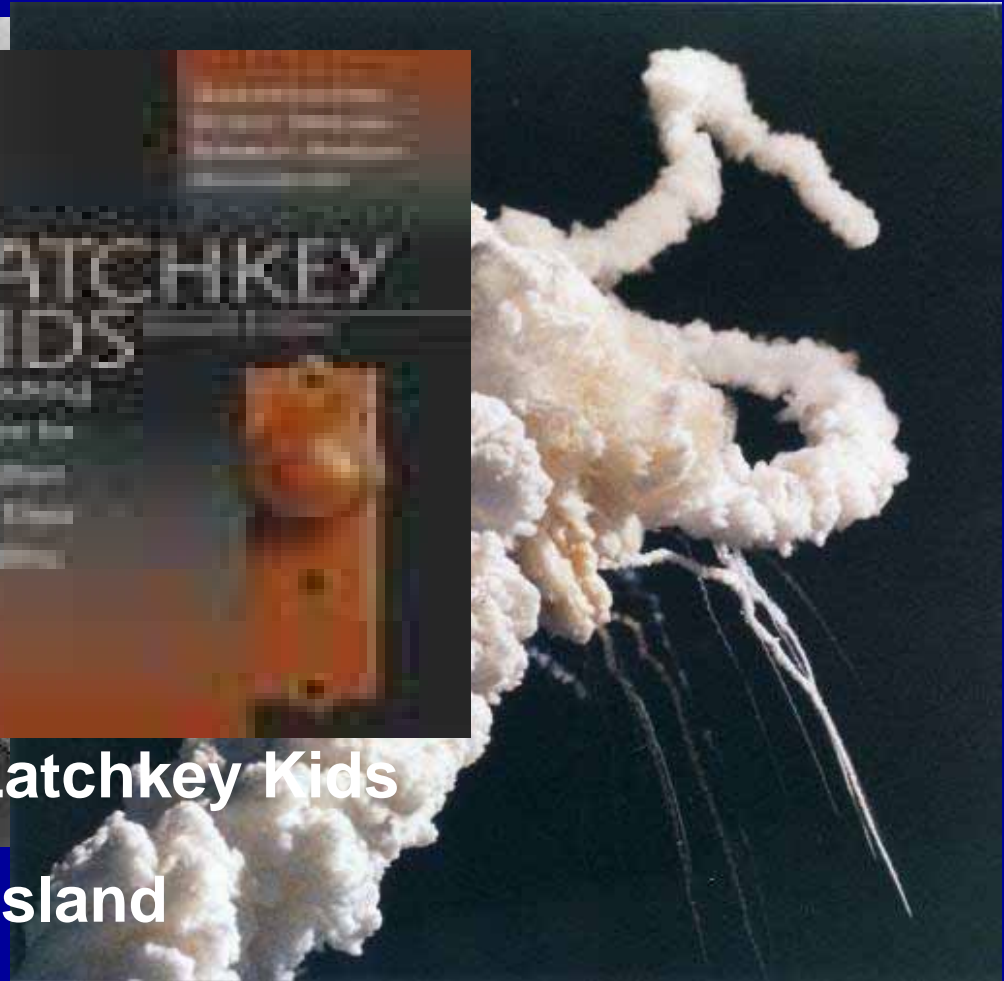
born 1961-1981



Three-Mile Island



Latchkey Kids



Challenger Disaster

Millennials (Gen Y, Nexters)

born 1982 to present



Tiger Woods

9/11

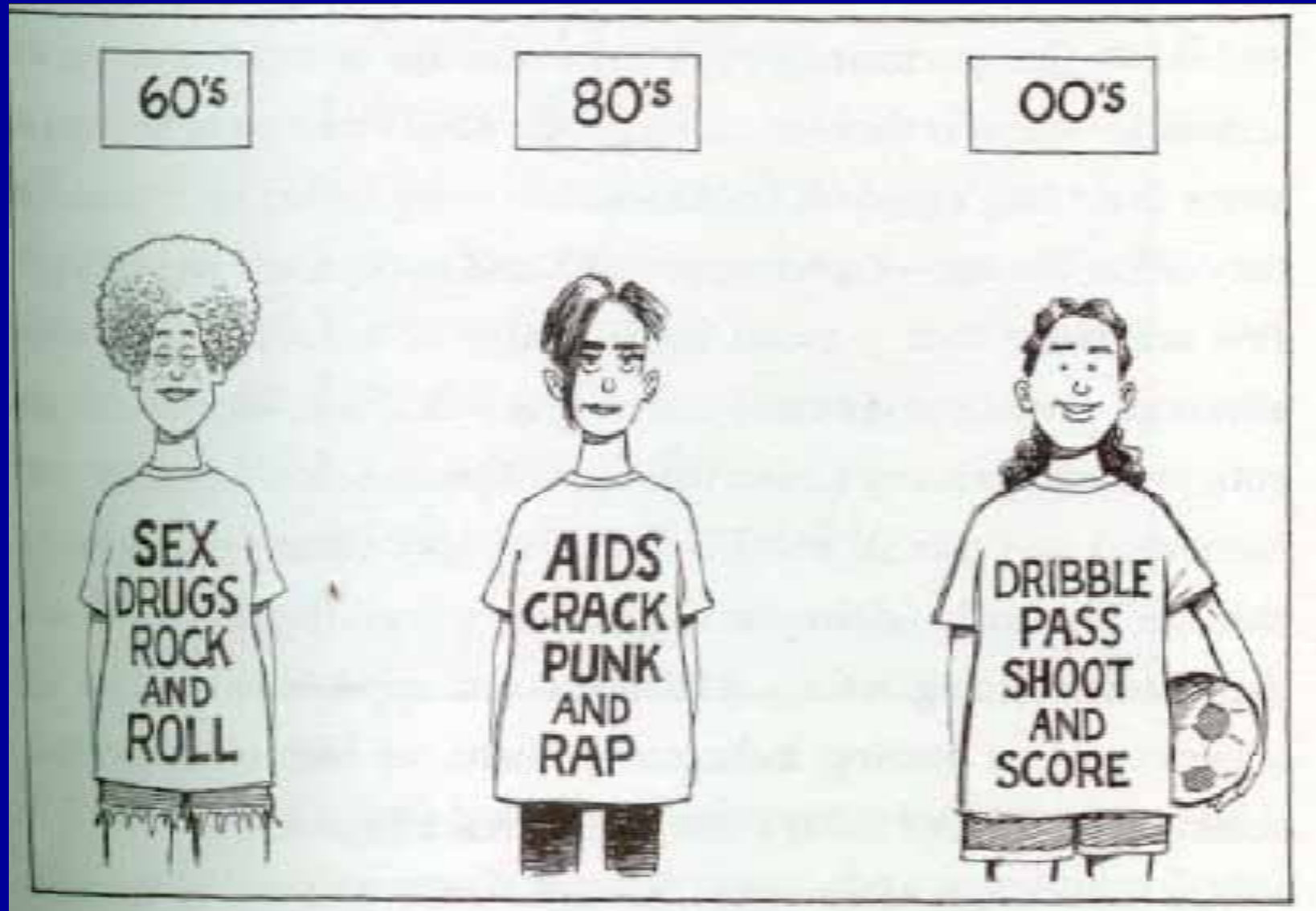
Clinton/Lewinsky scandal

Identifying With A Generation

What was the music you listened to, movies playing, TV shows you watched? Who were the "heroes" you and your friends looked up to?

Group Exercise

Why and how has it impacted your thinking around work & diversity?



Millennials Rising: R.J. Matson, Cartoonist

Workplace Traits Most Attributed to each Generation

Traditionalists

- Plan to stay with organization over the long-term - loyalty
- Respectful of organizational hierarchy
- Like structure
- Accepting of authority in the workplace
- Give maximum effort

Baby Boomers

- Give maximum effort
- Accepting of authority figures in the workplace
- Results driven
- Plan to stay with the organization over the long term
- Retain what they learn

Generation X

- Technologically savvy
- Like informality
- Learn quickly
- Seek work/life balance
- Embrace diversity

Millennials

- Technologically savvy
- Like informality
- Embrace diversity
- Learn quickly
- Need supervision (perhaps because they are new to the workplace)

C. Carney Strange from: "Constructions of Student Development Across the Generations"

Generation

- GI -Traditionalists
- Boomers
- Gen Xers
- Millennials

Characterization

- "We Are" Generation
 - loyal, conforming
- "I Am" or "Me" Generation
 - individual
- "We Differ" Generation
 - honoring sub-cultures, difference
- "We Connect" Generation
 - engaging others

Intergenerational Workforce Issues

Sources of Conflict Between Generations:

Workplace

- Career goals
- Rewards
- Retirement
- Job changing
- Feedback
- Training
- Balance
- Etiquette

Stage of Life Pressure

- Work/Life Flexibility
- Child care
- Housing costs
- Health insurance plans
- Caring for Aging Parents
- Retirement plans (pensions vs. mobile)

Common Areas of Generational Conflict: SHRM Survey

- Work Ethic
- Organizational Hierarchy
- Dealing with Change
- Managing Technology

Work Ethic

- Workplace Etiquette –attitudes, practices, and perceptions clearly differ among generations
 - Work hours: Number of hours of work put in vs. quality/quantity of work accomplished
 - Punctuality - What does it mean to be “on time”?
 - Salary expectations
 - Professional dress
 - “Paying dues” - expectations for pace of advancement vs. experience/seniority

Organizational Hierarchies

- Older employees tend to accept hierarchies
- Younger generations resist formal structures
- Younger generations also tend to have more informal relationships with supervisors and department heads than in previous generations
- Older employees can resist/resent supervision by younger employees

Dealing with Change

- Younger employees tend to adapt to change more easily than older employees
- Using rapidly changing technologies
- Accepting different ways of accomplishing work
- Adapting to organizational restructuring
- Changing career paths and moving among organizations

Technology Issues

- Variety of communication forms necessary for transmitting important information broadly
- Each generation has varying levels of comfort with different technologies as well as when and what are appropriate uses for them.
 - E-mail
 - Cell phones
 - Blackberries
 - Palm pilots
 - Web

Strategies for Managing Multiple Generations

Strategies

- Training for managers and staff
- Team building among staff in departments
- Mediation
- Knowledge-transfer programs
- Collaborative decision making
- Use of a variety of communication formats
- Recognizing the efforts of all employees
- Succession planning and professional development
- Flexible benefits packages and work situations

Managing Across Generations

Matures

- Responsibility
- Public Recognition
- Money
- Desire to Lead
- Organizational Loyalty

Boomers

- Promotion
- Public Recognition
- Desire for subordinates
- Loyalty to self

Generation "X"

- Workplace Flexibility
- Mentoring
- Boss's recognition
- Skills training
- Latest technology

Millennials

- Orient quickly
- Encourage mentoring
- "Hands-on"
- Workplace Flexibility
- Emphasis on teamwork

Recruiting

- Train the staff responsible for hiring and training about the uniqueness of each generation as part of diversity training
- During interviews highlight benefits that appeal to all generations

Reduce Turnover by Increasing Retention

- It's not just the money it's creating the right mix of financial personal and cultural factors that produce a sense of fit, loyalty and opportunity.
- How do the generations view job changes?
- A solid orientation to a new job is a key to increased retention.
 - Specifics for each Generation to keep in mind...

Traditionalists

- Interested in history, culture, and mission of organization
- Showcase past performance of organization
- Highlight value traditionalists that give to an organization
- Make sure visuals are not just the young set
- Highlight training opportunities available
- Invite other traditionalists to the orientation

Boomers

- Would also like history – but avoid lots of American flags and loyalty oaths
- Emphasize future direction – e.g. product evolution
- GM uses three tiered approach
 - Immediate, at 6 months, & again at 18 months

Generation Xers

- Don't avoid negatives – scandals, safety issues
- 20 minute modules
- Include interactions with other workers
- Career paths
- Training opportunities
- Focus on do's not dues

Millennials

- Make sure to include marketing strategy – the reason why
- Make it hands on and move at a rapid pace
- Show the big picture, allow them to see everything – not just their own unit/dept.
- Respectful of authority but not awed by it

Create an Environment that Appeals to All

- Accommodate employee differences
- Create work place choices
- Review employees competencies and provide feedback in ways that the employee will be receptive
- Encourage retention through flexibility and training options

Conclusions

- Tap into resources that exists
 - Iowa Workforce Development Center
 - Many Online Information IaCAG and DTG
 - Books
 - Listen & collaborate with others in the “field”
- There are NO ONE right answer!
 - Be ready, plan ahead
 - Strive to understand diversity in all it's forms
 - Be flexible and adapt as needed
 - Celebrate small successes



www.iacag.org

The Iowa Consortium for Applied Gerontology has been actively working with regional businesses and organizations to create further awareness on this and other related issues concerning the changing dynamics of the marketplace and the workforce.