



**\*COLLAPSE THE GAPS\***  
*Savvy Solutions to Workplace  
Generational Challenges*

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Presented for ***Cornell Bay Area Alumni***

by

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# ***GENERATIONAL CHRONOLOGY***

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Dates of birth (flexibly defined)

■ **Traditionalists** (1925-1942)

*Approx. 63 million*

■ **Baby Boomers** (1943-1961 )

*Approx. 77 million*

■ **Generation X** (1962-1978)

*Approx. 44 million*

■ **GenY/Millennials** (1979-1998)

*Approx. 70 million*

# ***PARADOXES & CHALLENGES***



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- “Sandwich generation”
- Vastly different world views
- Baby Boomers are Gen Y’s parents
- Generational contradictions
- No time for needed introspection
- Poor economy increases tension

# Some Attributes

## **TRADITIONALISTS**

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- Practical outlook
- Dedicated, loyal, follow rules
- Respectful of authority
- Hierarchical leadership style
- Self-sacrificing
- Risk-averse, slow to change
- “Don’t get” work/life balance concept

# Some Attributes

## **BABY BOOMERS**

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- Optimistic outlook
- Driven - work defines self-worth
- Challenges authority
- "Pay your dues" road to leadership
- Seeks personal gratification
- Is responsible for balancing everyone else
- Competitive environment
- Redefined roles
- Will revolutionize retirement; 80% plan to work past 65

# Some Attributes

## **GENERATION X/BABY BUSTERS**

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- Skeptical
- “Free Agent” ethic, resourceful
- Dedicated to projects, people, ideas
- Unimpressed by authority
- Leadership based on competence
- Reluctance to commit
- Want balance now
- Accept change
- Mentoring as a right
- Comfortable with diversity

# Some Attributes

## **GENERATION Y/MILLENIALS**

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- Respectful of authority and elders
- Leadership based on merit
- "Work smarter"
- Multi-tasking; short attention span
- Cautious; crave praise; fear of failure
- Used to instant communication; feedback
- Inclusive relationships; collective action
- Expect flexibility and options, diversity
- Close to parents; "helicopter parents"
- Volunteerism; spirituality
- Digital natives; e-learners

# ***DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GEN X AND GEN Y***



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## **Gen X**

- Project dedication
- Autonomous
- Don't expect security
- Free agent mentality
- Skeptical
- Little respect for authority/seniority
- Gen Y = spoiled

## **Gen Y**

- Relationship = key
- Team players
- Seek security, stability
- Cautious, crave praise
- Idealistic, practical
- Respect for elders, authority
- Gen X = dark



# ***PREVALENT CHALLENGES***

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- Appropriateness and Professionalism
- Communications styles and media
- Work ethic perceptions and Facetime
- Need for differing management styles
- Work/life Flexibility
- Differing team attitudes
- Older reporting to younger
- Openness to “new” and change
- Time perceptions and management

# ***GEN Y RAPPORT WITH BOOMERS***



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- Show initiative
- Convey confidence, not arrogance
- Ask how you can best serve
- Recognize their achievements
- Show interest in learning from them
- Suggest reverse, mutual mentoring
- Share interests

# ***GEN Y RAPPORT WITH GEN Xers***



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- Develop ability to think independently
- Don't expect spoon-feeding
- Establish common ground on similarities
- Be specific about goals; lay out a plan
- Use active listening
- Learn to ask for and give effective feedback

# ***BOOMER RAPPORT WITH UNDER AGE 35***



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- Treat them as individuals, not a “class”
- Paint the big picture
- Keep them in the loop and conversation
- Show interest in learning from them
- Establish reverse and mutual mentoring
- Give frequent recognition
- Make intros to your networks
- Become a “digital citizen;” social networks
- Expect desire for flexibility



# ***SOLUTIONS***

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- Facilitate cross-generational dialogues
- Mutual mentoring and mentoring circles
- \*\*\* Recognize people for mentoring
- Assessments: ED Workplace, Work Expectations
- “Why?” sessions
- Re-orient and expand orientation
- Flexibility – for everyone!
- Earn and show respect

# ***THANK YOU!***

# ***QUESTIONS?***

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