

# *Hey Dude!*

*Managing Age Diversity  
In Today's Workplace*

**Robert W. Wendover**



The  
Center  
for  
Generational  
Studies

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## **Generations in the United States**

- **Matures**
  - (born prior to 1946)
- **Baby Boomers**
  - (born 1946-1964)
- **Generation X**
  - (born 1965-1980)
- **Millennials**
  - (born 1981-1999)

## A Generation...

can be defined as a society-wide peer group, born over a period roughly that same length as the passage from youth to adulthood who collectively possess a common persona.

## Influences

### Matures

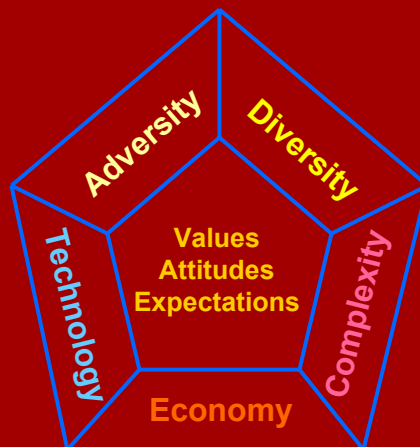
Family Stories  
Schools  
Radio  
Newspapers  
Magazines  
Movies  
Neighbors

# Influences

## Millennials

Family Stories	Cell Phones
Schools	Global Positioning Technology
Places of worship	Menu-Driven Software
Radio	Presentation Software
Billboards	Text Messaging
Newspapers	World Wide Web
Magazines	Meta-Search Engines
Movies	Electronic Shopping Carts
Neighbors	Video Phones
Television	Swipe Technology
Calculators	Downloadable Entertainment
Cordless Phones	Portable Entertainment
Personal Computers	In-text Advertising
Pagers	Mobisodes
	Blinks

## A Generation's Outlook on Life



## Generational Themes

### Matures (born prior to 1946)

- Hard work
- Duty to country
- Community
- Sacrifice for the common good
- The good guys and the bad guys
- Thriftiness
- Respect for authority
- Right is right. Wrong is wrong

## Generational Themes

### Baby Boomers (born 1946-64)

- It's about the experience
- What we deserve
- Rules are not for us
- Buy now, pay later
- Balance inside a stress-filled schedule
- Retread - not retire
- We love our history
- Having it all and being noticed for it

## Generational Themes

### Generation X (born 1965-80)

- Pragmatism
- Skepticism
- Resourcefulness
- A focus on quality
- Balance of life
- Contractually oriented
- Peer focused
- Impatience with “Boomer” mentality

82% of men  
between ages  
20 and 39 say  
a “family friendly”  
schedule is their  
most important  
job criteria.

Radcliffe Public Policy Center  
Harvard University

“Exposed to consumerism and public relations strategies since we could open our eyes, we GenXers see thru the clunky attempts to manipulate our opinions and assets, however shrinking. When we watch commercials, we ignore the product and instead deconstruct the marketing techniques. This is what we love about TV. We have learned that ‘content’ means lies, and in that context lies brilliance.”

Douglas Rushkoff  
The GenX Reader

## Generational Themes

### Millennials (born 1981-99)

- Pre-affluence
- Convenience
- Speed/Impatience
- Non-stop fun
- Shopping as entertainment and expression
- Responsible spending patterns
- Skepticism of marketing in general
- Menu driven mentality
- A technology answer for everything\*
- Expectancy of choice
- Conflicting sense of ethics

97% of college seniors said their studies had prepared them to act ethically in the future. However 73% said professors had taught them that right and wrong are not susceptible to uniform standards, but depend upon individual values and cultural norms.

Zogby International

## **Pervading Work Beliefs of Older Generations**

- A job is what you are.
- I remember when...
- Good things come...
- If your hands aren't moving...
- We have to have a system.
- All this technology will never overcome the value of hard work.

## **Pervading Work Beliefs of Younger Generations**

- A job is a contract, not a calling.
- Focus on the outcome.
- Balance is more important.
- Training/knowledge = versatility
- Management should be partners with employees.
- Life is too short to pay dues.

## **Retention Themes -- Matures**

- Consistency in overall management
- A sense of security in their position
- An atmosphere of respect and dignity
- An environment where loyalty is recognized and rewarded
- A place where experience is valued
- Stability in corporate vision
- An environment where they are in the company of peers their age
- A place where the work ethic is familiar to them
- A methodical approach to the business
- Predictable outcomes

## Retention Themes -- Boomers

- Consistency in overall management
- Public recognition for work
- An atmosphere where their ideas are valued
- A place where the work ethic is familiar to them
- A cordial, non-confrontive atmosphere
- An environment where they are making a difference
- Flexibility in work environment and schedule
- A place when teams are practiced, not just preached
- An environment where personal relationships are valued
- A place where their long hours are rewarded

## Retention Themes – Generation X

- An environment that encourages work/life balance
- A place where training and development is valued and available
- A management focus on outcome rather than task
- State-of-the-art equipment and technology
- An environment that allows for independence
- A workplace that accepts a casual relationship with authority
- A place where the word "policy" is treated with disdain

## Retention Themes -- Millennials

- State-of-the-art
- computers and equipment
- An egalitarian, inclusive community
- A place where fun is an integral element
- An organization that is making a difference
- Consistency and fairness in management
- A positive, optimistic workplace
- A place where an individual can make a difference
- Policies that make sense and are applied to everyone.

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