

# Communicating Across the Generations



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# Section One

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## **INTRODUCTION**

# Objectives

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- Learn more about yourself
- Learn more about others
- Be able to adapt for greater appreciation, communication and understanding



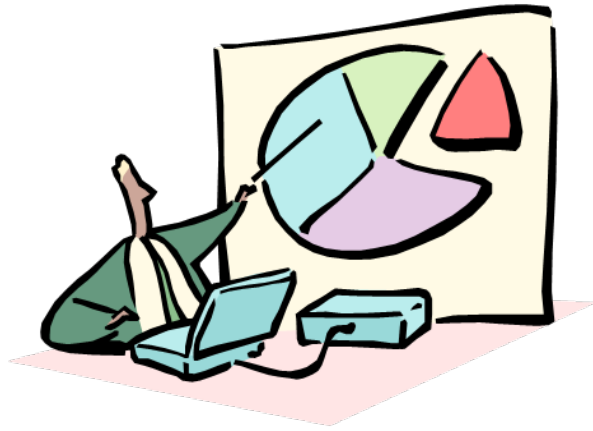
# Words of Wisdom from Ron Zemke

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- **Generational diversity, like gender, racial and ability diversity, is a factor to consider in managing and positioning your organization but is not the whole show.**
- **Humans share a lot of similarities and are, if anything, adaptable.**
- **You certainly can ignore those differences and follow your tried-and-true formulas and succeed.**
- **We believe, however, that acknowledging and accommodating subtle individual differences — whatever their origin — will make your association work better for you and your members.**

# A Few Words of Introduction

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- We are looking at dimensions of normal behavior
  - There are no right or wrong answers
  - One generation is not better than another

# Frequently Asked Questions

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- **Is this stereotyping?**
  - Not the intent
  - Helps to give some better insights
  - A starting place
  - Still need to view people as individuals

# Frequently Asked Questions

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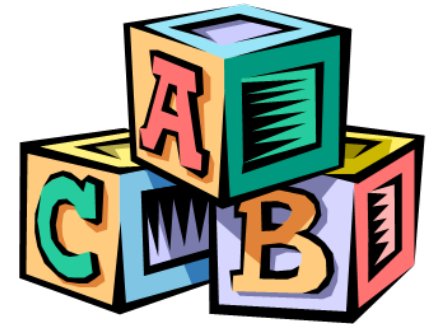
- Aren't there a lot of people who don't fit the profile?
  - Of course
  - Middle of the bell curve



# Frequently Asked Questions

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- **Do generations overlap?**
  - Yes— by as much as 5 – 7 years
  - Many people identify with two generations
  - People born in the late 50's and early 60's may relate better to Gen Xers



# Frequently Asked Questions

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- Don't the generations have a lot in common?
  - Yes, but subtle differences often lead to conflict at work



# Examples of Generational Differences

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- Work style
- Preferred ways of learning
- Preferred ways of being led
- Workplace communication
- Approaches to problem-solving
- Interactions with managers and senior leaders
- Career development
- Building (or not building) working relationships
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

# Language Barriers

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- Each generation "uses a different language," says Paul Storfer, president of HR Technologies, a firm that develops workforce management software.
- The term "communication skills," for example, might mean formal writing and speaking abilities to an older worker. But it might mean e-mail and instant-messenger savvy to a twenty something.

# Why All the Buzz?

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- “There are more pronounced differences between the generations today than there ever has been before. That's simply because our world has changed so much in the last 50 to 80 years.”
  - Claire Raines, co-author of *Generations at Work*

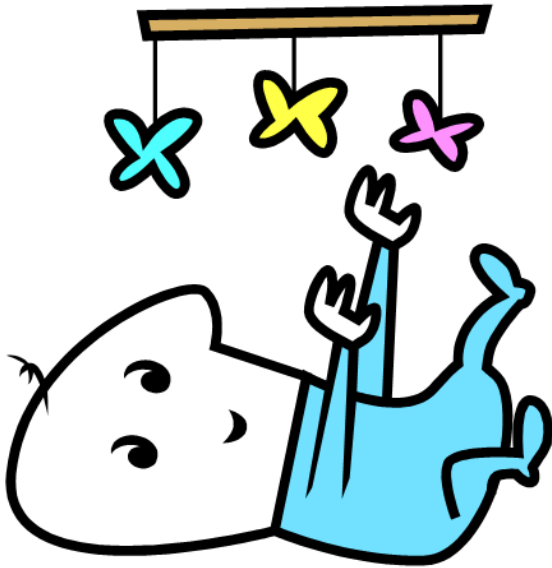
# Why All the Buzz?

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- “Until managers learn to communicate effectively with X/Ys and facilitate on-the-job learning, they will continue to be frustrated by their staff’s constant demand for information, endless questions and insistence on relating to information in their own way.”
  - Margaret Kirby, Managing Director of recruitment firm The i Group

# Definition of a Generation

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- A group of people who:
  - Share a common range of birthdates
    - ✦ Normally about 18 years
  - Share a common set of experiences

# Generations

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<b>Dates</b>	<b>Generation</b>	<b>Other Names</b>
1901 – 1924	Builders	The Greatest The War The Booster
1925 – 1946	Veterans	Silent Generation The Sandwich The Depression
1946 – 1964	Baby Boomer	The Love Generation The Me Generation
1965 – 1983	Generation X	The 13 <sup>th</sup> Generation The Slackers
1984 – 2002	Generation Y	Millenials New Silent
2003 -	Generation Z	MySpace Generation

# Generation Numbers

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<b>Generation</b>	<b>Number of People</b>
Builder	20,000,000
Veterans	50,000,000
Baby Boomers	76,000,000
Gen X	51,000,000
Gen Y	76,000,000

# Section Two

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## **UNDERSTANDING THE FORCES THAT SHAPED EACH GENERATION**

# Value Development

*Morris Massey, The People Puzzle*

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Imprint and  
Observation  
or Patterning



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Modeling by  
Heroes or  
Identification



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Socialization  
by Peers and  
Significant  
Others



21

Significant  
Emotional  
Event(s)



# Determining Influences

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- What games did you play when you were 8 - 12?
- Who was a hero/heroine of yours?
- What is your most vivid memory of a national or international event?
- What did your folks tell you about dating?
- What sort of equipment was standard when you got your first job?

# Determining Influences

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<b>Area</b>	<b>Silent</b>	<b>Boomers</b>	<b>Gen Xers</b>	<b>Millennial</b>
<b>Games</b>	Active, outdoor	Board games	Rubik's cube	Playstation
<b>Heroes and Heroines</b>	Roosevelt Churchill	Kennedy	Family	Super heroes
<b>National Event</b>	Depression WWII	Kennedy assassination	Challenger Death of Diana	September 11
<b>Dating</b>	Wait for sex	Boys call girls	Go in groups	Be safe
<b>Office</b>	Typewriters	Electric typewriters	PC's	Wireless

# The Veterans

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- **Timeframe**
  - 1925 – 1946
- **Historical Events**
  - Depression
  - World War II
- **“The difficult we do at once...the impossible takes a bit longer.”**
  - Seabees



# The Veterans

*Generations At Work, Ron Zemke*

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- “Veterans came of age before and during the Great Depression and World War II. They are the classic “keepers of the Grail” and an irreplaceable repository of lore and wisdom, practical wiliness, and more than a few critical extra-organizational contacts, and they are very prone to digressions about “The Good Old Days.”



# The Veterans

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- **Male Names:**

- James
- Robert
- John

- **Female Names:**

- Mary
- Barbara
- Patricia

- **Popular Movies**

- *Singin' in the Rain*
- *From Here to Eternity*
- *Rebel Without a Cause*
- *Shane*



# The Veterans

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- **Major Influences**
  - Shortages and rationing
  - Economic hard times
  - Global conflict and sacrifice
  - High expectations for children



# The Veterans

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- **Core Values**

- Dedication and sacrifice
- Hard work
- Conformity
- Law and order
- Respect for authority
- Patience
- Delayed reward
- Duty before pleasure
- Adherence to rules
- Honor



# Baby Boomers

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- **Timeframe**
  - 1946-1964
- **Historical Events**
  - Cold War
  - Kennedy assassination
  - Vietnam
- **“I don’t want to speak disparagingly of my generation. Actually I do; we had a chance to change the world and opted for the Home Shopping Network instead.”**
  - Stephen King



# Baby Boomers

*Generations At Work, Ron Zemke*

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- “The Baby Boomers, the post-war babies, are graying, and they’d really rather not be seen as the “problem” in the workplace - though they frequently are. After all, they’ve been defining everyone else as “the problem” since “Don’t trust anyone over 30.” They invented “Thank God, it’s Monday!” and the 60-hour work week.
- Boomers are passionately concerned about participation and spirit in the workplace, about bringing heart and humanity to the office, and about creating a fair and level playing field for all. And they hold way too many pointless meetings for the average GenXer’s taste. GenXers at the chapter level see them as too wedded to ceremony and ritual, and too controlling.”

# Baby Boomers

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- **Male Names:**

- John
- David
- Michael

- **Female Names:**

- Linda
- Mary
- Susan

- **Popular Movies**

- *Psycho*
- *The Sound of Music*
- *The Graduate*
- *Doctor Zhivago*
- *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*
- *Rocky*



# Baby Boomers

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- Major Influences
  - Television
  - Free .....
  - Affluence
  - Civil rights movement
  - Vietnam



# Baby Boomers

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- **Core Values**

- Optimism
- Team orientation
- Personal gratification
- Health and wellness
- Personal growth
- Youth
- Work
- Involvement



# Generation X

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- **Timeframe**
  - 1965 - 1983
- **Historical Events**
  - Challenger
- **“It’s no wonder the Xers are angst ridden and rudderless. They feel America’s greatness has passed. They got to the cocktail party 20 minutes too late and all that’s left are those little wieners and a half-empty bottle of Zima.”**
  - Dennis Miller

# Generation X

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- **Origin of the Term**

- It comes from a Canadian writer by the name of Douglas Coupland who wrote a novel called Generation X. He'd heard his generation called "Twentysomethings," "Thirteeners" (because they're the thirteenth generation since the Declaration of Independence), "Post-Boomers," and "Baby-Busters." He didn't like any of those titles. They were all inventions of Baby Boomers, and he, like many others, felt the Boomers had been especially judgmental of his generation. He was looking for a generic title, sort of a non-label, and that's how he came up with "Generation X."

# Generation X

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- **Male Names:**
  - David
  - Michael
  - Jason
- **Female Names:**
  - Mary
  - Jennifer
  - Lisa
- **Popular Movies**
  - Star Wars
  - ET
  - Raiders of the Lost Ark
  - The Silence of the Lambs
  - Close Encounters of the Third Kind

# Generation X

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- **Major Influences**

- Both parents working away from the home
- Divorce
- A lot of television
- Computers
- Gender neutral
- Negativism

# Generation X

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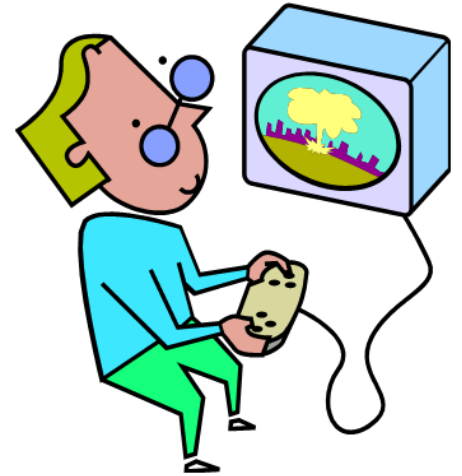
- **Core Values**

- Diversity
- Thinking globally
- Balance
- Techno literacy
- Fun
- Informality
- Self-reliance
- Pragmatism

# Generation Y

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- **Timeframe**
  - 1984 - 2002
- **Historical Events**
  - Death of Princess Diana
  - 9/11/01



# Generation Y

## *Generations At Work, Ron Zemke*

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- “They may be the smartest, cleverest, most-wanted small humans to have walked the face of the planet. Their moms and dads see themselves as devoted parents sacrificing to bring this new generation to adulthood. Think soccer moms and Little League dads. They’re an optimistic bunch who express doubt about the wisdom of traditional racial and sexual categorizing, and they have Internet pen pals in Asia whom they can, and do, contact at any hour of the day or night.
- The ones now in the workforce - think fast-food, movie theaters, grocery store carryout, yard work, babysitting, Web-page building, and internships - seem destined to become what historians Bill Strauss and Neil Howe, authors of *Millennials Rising* (Vintage Books, 2000), call "good scouts." They will be a very welcome addition to any association currently struggling with Boomer/Xers conflicts. But we are aware that they are coming with their own agenda. “

# Generation Y Fun Facts

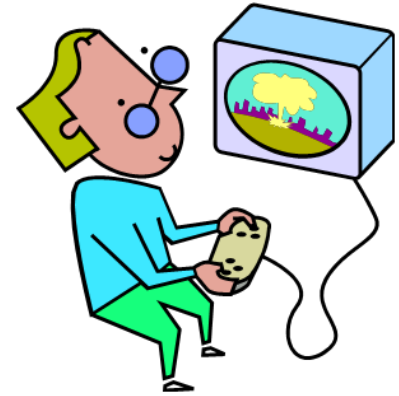
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- In their book, ***Connecting to the Net.Generation: What Higher Education Professionals Need to Know About Today's College Students***, Reynol Junco and Jeanna Mastrodicasa (2007) found that in a survey of 7,705 college students in the US:
  - 97% own a computer
  - 94% own a cell phone
  - 76% use Instant Messaging.
  - 15% of IM users are logged on 24 hours a day/7 days a week
  - 34% use websites as their primary source of news
  - 28% own a blog and 44% read blogs
  - 49% download music using peer-to-peer file sharing
  - 75% of students have a Facebook account
  - 60% own some type of expensive portable music and/or video device such as an iPod.

# Generation Y

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- **Male Names:**
  - Michael
  - Jason
  - Christopher
- **Female Names:**
  - Jennifer
  - Jessica
  - Ashley
- **Popular Movies**
  - Braveheart
  - Titanic
  - Shrek

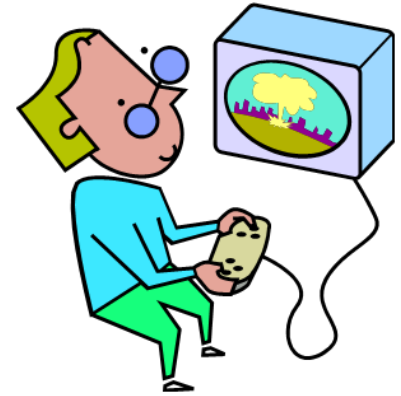


# Generation Y

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- **Major Influences**

- Re-focus on family and children
- Scheduled lives
- Multiculturalism
- Terrorism
- Patriotism
- Globalism

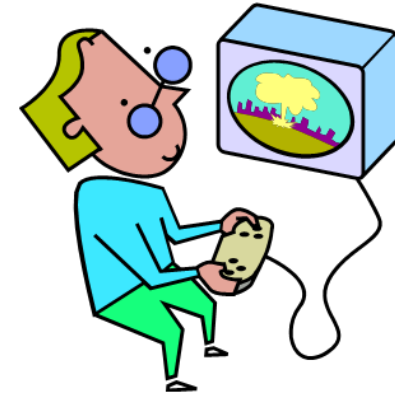


# Generation Y

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- **Core Values**

- Optimism
- Civic duty
- Confidence
- Achievement
- Sociability
- Morality
- Street smarts
- Diversity



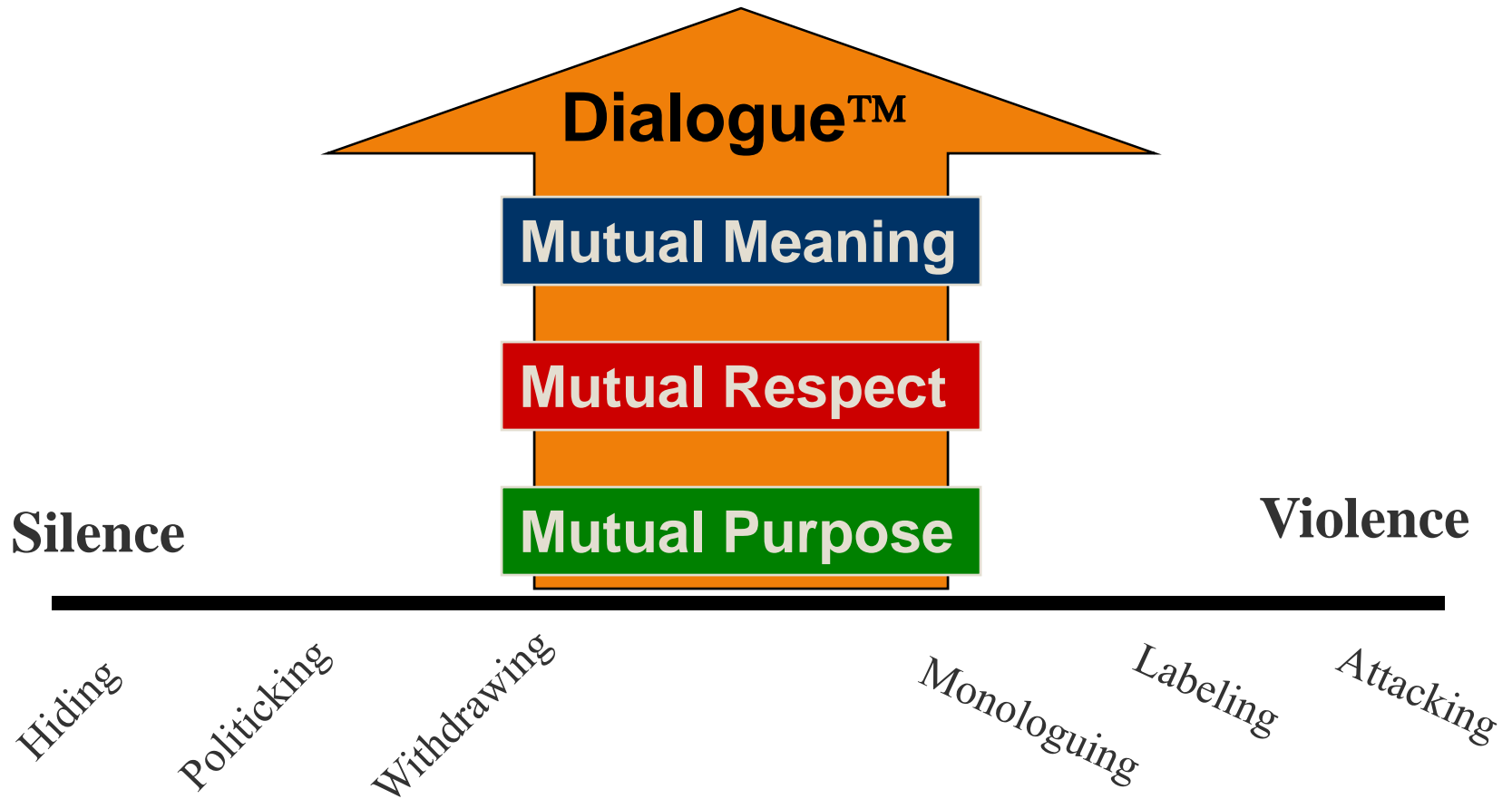
# Section Three

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## **COMMUNICATION FUNDAMENTALS THAT WORK**

# Key to Working Together - Dialogue™

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# Enter Dialogue Through *Mutual Purpose*

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- **Commit to seek Mutual Purpose**
  - Foundation of trust
  - I care about what you care about—and vice versa



# Build *Mutual Respect*

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- **Respect begins with Inquiry**
  - The skill of respectfully asking for information in ways that make it safe to share.

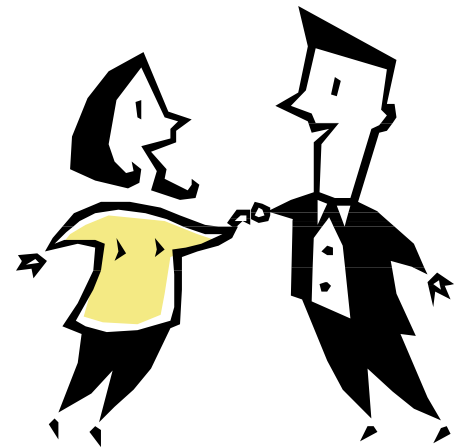


# Build *Mutual Respect*

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- **Advocacy**

- The skill of respectfully sharing our honest feelings and information without causing others to become defensive or to be annoyed.



# Build *Mutual Respect*

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- **Responding to others**
  - First words out of your mouth
  - Non-verbals
  - Negative positives



# The ACORN Approach

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- **A**ccommodate employee differences.
- **C**reate workplace choices.
- **O**perate from a flexible management style.
- **R**espect competence and initiative.
- **N**ourish retention.



# Techniques for Communicating More Effectively

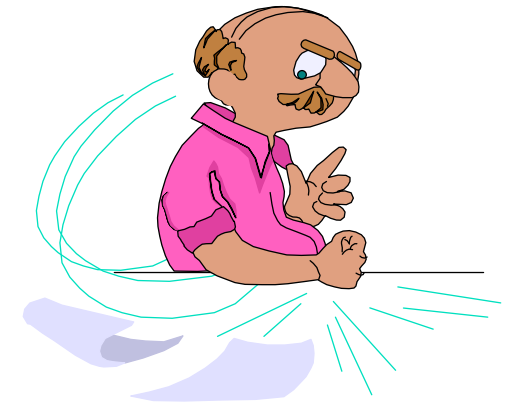
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# Step One: Reduce the Attribution Error

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- **Problem:**
  - Telling a story that makes the other person bad or wrong.
  - Then expanding it to an entire group of people.
- **Solution:**
  - Attribute a good motive, then check it out.



# Step Two: Establish Common Principles

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- Don't assume that everyone knows the mores and values of the organization.
  - Discuss and agree
  - Insist as necessary
  - Make them clear

# Step Two: Establish Common Principles

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- **Example of conflicting principles**
  - Gen X Staffer--Alex
  - Builder Supervisor--Fran
    - ✦ Alex has been working very long weeks. He decides he needs a day off. Goes to the Supervisor and says, “Hey Fran, I won’t be here on Friday—I need a mental health day.”
    - ✦ Fran’s response—“Will that be a sick day or vacation?”

# Step Two: Establish Common Principles

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Area	Builders	Boomers	Gen Xers	Millennial
<b>In addition to making a living, factors you find motivating in work</b>	Financial gain and security	Self-fulfillment and meaning	Balancing work and personal time	Having fun while doing meaningful work

# Step Three: Balance Home and Work

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	<b>Builders</b>	<b>Boomers</b>	<b>Gen Xers</b>	<b>Millennial</b>
<b>Career Goals</b>	Build a legacy	Build a stellar career	Build a portable career	Build parallel careers

# Step Three: Balance Home and Work

55

Area	Builders	Boomers	Gen Xers	Millennial
<b>Top priority in job</b>	Loyalty to company	Loyalty to my own needs	Loyalty to my family's needs and my personal beliefs	Loyalty to my need to do something I enjoy

# Step Four: Give Feedback Appropriately

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- Traditionalists – “No news is good news.”
- Boomers – “Feedback once a year and lots of documentation.”
- Xers – “Sorry to interrupt but how am I doing?”
- Generation Y – “Feedback whenever I want it at the push of a button.”

## Step Five: Deal with “Why?”

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- **Boomer Supervisor—Marie**
- **Gen X Professional—Justin**
  - Marie—“Danny, I want you to stop what you’re working on and go help Alice put together the mailing for the Open House.”
  - Justin—“Why?!”
  - Marie—“Because I’m your boss and I said so!”

# Step Six: Reward Appropriately

58

- **Boomer CEO—John**
- **Staff with 50% Gen Xers and Generation Y**
  - Company starts “Casual Fridays.” On the first Friday some of the younger staff women wear hip hugger pants and short shirts, showing their stomachs. John is aghast.
  - John institutes “Corporate Casual Friday.” The company buys polo shirts for everyone that they will wear with Dockers-like pants.
  - The younger staff members bristle at this uniformity.
  - John says fine—either wear the polo shirts or show up in normal business attire.

# Step Six: Reward Appropriately

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	<b>Builders</b>	<b>Boomers</b>	<b>Gen X</b>	<b>Millennial</b>
<b>Rewards</b>	Satisfaction of a job well done	Money, title, recognition	Freedom is the ultimate reward	Work that has meaning for me

# Step Seven: Allow Flexible Work Styles

60

- **Millennial Intern--Jason**
- **Boomer Supervisor—Sarah**
  - Sarah—”Jason this is all wrong. I told you to total up the columns and type them on a separate sheet so I could insert them into my budget.”
  - Jason—”All you told me was to add the columns up. So I put them into a spreadsheet so you could sort them all sorts of ways. You have to agree it’s better than the way you’ve been doing it.”

# Step Eight: Respect Supervisors of All Ages

61

- **Examples of Disrespect:**
  - “When you’ve been around here as long as I have ....”
  - “Betty, you’re just like my kids ....”
  - “Honey, dear, etc.”
  - “Kid”

# Additional Tips for Adapting to Communication Styles

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# Communication Tips

## *Builders*

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- Build trust through inclusive language (we, us)
- A leader's word is his/her bond, so focus more on words, not body language
- Face-to-face or written communication is received best
- Use more formal language
- Don't waste their time; they have a job to do
- Don't expect them to share their innermost thoughts immediately

# Communication Tips

## *Baby Boomers*

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- Boomers are the "show me" generation, so use body language to communicate
- Speak in an open, direct style
- Answer questions thoroughly, and expect to be pressed for details
- Avoid controlling, manipulative language
- Present options to show flexibility in your thinking
- Use face to face or electronic communication to reach out to them

# Communication Tips

## *Generation X*

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- Learn their language and speak it
- Use e-mail as your primary communication tool
- Talk in short sound bytes to keep their attention
- Present the facts, use straight talk
- Ask them for their feedback
- Share information with them immediately and often
- Use an informal communication style
- Listen! You just might learn something

# Communication Tips

## *Generation Y*

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- Let your language paint visual pictures
- Use action verbs to challenge them
- Don't talk down to them; they will resent it
- Show respect through your language, and they will respect you
- Use e-mail and voicemail as primary communication tools
- Use visual communication to motivate them and keep them focused
- Constantly seek their feedback
- Use humor. Reassure them that you don't take yourself too seriously
- Encourage them to break the rules and explore new paths or options