



APPLICATION GUIDE – APRIL 2019

Generational Diversity in the Workplace, Part 1

BOTTOM LINE:

It can be tough to navigate working closely with people from other generations. In order to work better together, we have to understand one another.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- **The Generations**

Builders (Born 1929–1945)	“Be grateful you have a job.”
Baby Boomers (Born 1946–1964)	“I deserve better.”
Baby Busters/Gen X (Born 1965–1982)	“Keep it real.”
Millennials/Gen Y (Born 1983–2000)	“Life is a cafeteria.”
Homelanders/Gen Z (Born 2001–2018)	“I’m coping and hoping.”

- **Each generation brings its own set of experiences and expectations.**

- Satisfying people is about managing expectations.
- The narrative from generation to generation swings from caution to confidence.
- Conflict arises when there is distance between expectations and reality.
- “We gotta read ‘em before we lead ‘em.” – Tim Elmore

- **Each generation brings value.**

- Look to Baby Boomers for wisdom. They are well-suited to be great life coaches and can speak from experience.
- Seek authenticity and realism from Gen Xers. They are resourceful and great at seeing the pros and cons of a situation.
- Leverage the confidence and energy of Millennials. They are very optimistic, tech savvy, and aware of influence.

- **Five truths about our world today and potential generational diversity pitfalls:**

- **Speed:** Today’s world places a high value on doing things fast. This could lead many to think moving slowly is bad.
- **Convenience:** Today’s world is full of conveniences, which could cause many to think anything that is hard is bad or not worth it.
- **Entertainment:** In a world that has immediate access to any entertainment, many could think boring is bad.
- **Nurture:** Today’s world has become safety obsessed, which could lead many to conclude that risk is bad.
- **Entitlement:** People in today’s world have come to believe they’re entitled to perks and benefits, which could lead many to think they shouldn’t have to work for something they want.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION OR TEAM DISCUSSION:

1. Take a look around your office or organization. How many generations are you currently working with? Do you notice tension when working with people of different generations?
2. How can you leverage the benefits of each generation working in your organization?