

LESSON 7-4: Multi-Generational Leadership Meetings, Policies, Dress Code and Fun at Work

"What you wear is how you present yourself to the world, especially today, when human contacts are so quick. Fashion is instant language." – Miuccia Prada

"In terms of work, I've always had a Bad Attitude in that I won't work anywhere which requires me to work strict hours or follow a dress code. I think it's just being reasonable." – Bram Cohen, computer programmer

WELCOME & PRAYER

PREVIOUS LESSON FOLLOW UP

- What did you learn from your discussion with a member of another generation?

KICK OFF QUESTION

- With which of the quotes above do you identify most closely? Why?

PRIMARY SCRIPTURES

"For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago." Ephesians 2:10 (NLT)

Discussion Question:

- If we are God's masterpiece, so are our co-workers. Do you treat your multi-generational co-workers as His masterpiece? Would your co-workers agree?

BIG PICTURE

Leaders have all types of issues that land on their desk. Many of these issues might seem trivial, but some are important and can cause friction if not addressed. As long as there are multiple generations in the workforce and multiple generations as customers, these problems cannot be ignored. We are going to tackle 12 issues over the next three lessons. Learning how to lead a multi-generational workforce will aid in understanding multi-generational customers.

In this lesson, we will specifically focus on how these differences play out in four specific areas: meetings, policies, dress code, and having fun at work.

CONCEPTS TO UNDERSTAND

As we examine how different generations view an issue, we will focus on what they believe and why they believe it.

Meetings

Traditionalists:

- What: Meetings are infrequent, and the boss does most of the talking.
- Why: Most decisions were made behind closed doors, so meetings were used to announce decisions that had already been made.

Boomers:

- What: Meetings are how information is shared and represent opportunities for the participants to be involved.
- Why: Meetings help get things done, so it is important to be present and engaged.

Gen Xers:

- What: If a meeting gets bogged down or is not relevant to a Gen Xer, multitasking during the meeting is acceptable.
- Why: Meetings are another form of collaboration, as are emailing and texting. Doing them all at the same time is productive.

Millennials:

- What: Meetings are unproductive if they are not interactive.
- Why: Millennials are used to having a voice on social media. They expect the same in meetings.

Policies

Traditionalists:

- What: Everybody needs to be told what to do, and do what they're told.
- Why: They rely on experts for guidance, including policies in the workplace.

Boomers:

- What: Policies and procedures were meant to make life and the workplace fair for everyone.
- Why: This generation experienced social upheaval that resulted in equal opportunities for all.

Gen Xers:

- What: Policies? Rules are made to be broken.
- Why: Gen X saw that rules didn't solve all issues, and one size doesn't fit everyone.

Millennials:

- What: If a policy doesn't make sense, they assume it's just a guideline.
- Why: They were allowed to question and negotiate rules set by their parents.

Dress Code

Traditionalists:

- What: Formal attire, such as a business suit, shows and commands respect.
- Why: How they dressed reflected pride in themselves and respect for authority.

Boomers:

- What: Will wear the required attire at work but are casual at home.

- Why: Hired by Traditionalists, Boomers were expected to meet a dress code at work.

Gen Xers:

- What: Clear preference for casual at work.
- Why: Belief that work is more about the work that gets done, not the attire.

Millennials:

- What: Why is a dress code such a big deal?
- Why: Millennials grew up seeing people from around the world being productive regardless of the clothes they wore.

Fun at Work

Traditionalists:

- What: Work is the priority. Anything resembling fun will have to wait.
- Why: On the farm and in war, if the required work wasn't completed there were immediate negative consequences.

Boomers:

- What: Work itself is fun.
- Why: Life is full of endless possibilities and opportunities, and work is no different.

Gen Xers:

- What: Work is work – don't make it something it's not.
- Why: Work is a place to earn a living, fun at work is a bonus.

Millennials:

- What: This generation will get more work done if they have fun.
- Why: *Sesame Street*, interactive education, and video games all blurred the lines between serious matters and fun.

EXERCISE

In the table at the end of this lesson, identify one practical issue in your workplace that could be improved from the list of topics covered in this lesson. Write down the initials of individuals (including yourself) along with their generation, and answer the following questions:

- What do they believe?
- Why do they believe it?
- How can I/we be flexible?
- How might we leverage this issue for the benefit of the organization?

Discussion Questions

1. Which of the four issues do you believe creates the most significant challenge for you and your workplace? Why?
2. Regardless of your position, how might you help lead a diverse group of generations to develop flexible solutions for one of the topics above that will bring value to the organization?

TAKE ACTION

- Go to multiple generations in your workplace and ask them the first two questions from the exercise: What do they believe about the issue? Why do they believe it? Report back next week.

CLOSING PRAYER

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- *Sticking Points* by Haydn Shaw
- *Generational Differences Chart* by Midland Family Center
(<http://www.wmfc.org/uploads/GenerationalDifferencesChart.pdf>)
- *Navigating the Multigenerational Workplace* by Leah Georges at TEDxCreightonU
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kzfA0c4L6vQ>)

Issue: _____

Initials/ Generation	What do they believe?	Why do they believe it?"	How can we be flexible?	How might we leverage this issue for the benefit of the organization?