Leveraging Intergenerational Communication with Our Student Population

Winter Advising Forum
March 2010
Cecile Morris
“With the aging of America, every workplace will soon be coming to grips with the challenge of managing age diversity.”

Ken Dychtwald, PhD
Author of the *Age Wave* and *Age Power*
Why Are We Here?

To better understand, appreciate and communicate with people of all generations, especially the millennials, our student population.
What Am I Going to Take Away?

- Strategies for communicating effectively with colleagues and students of all generations
- Increased awareness of the four generations currently in the workforce and in the student population
Agenda

- Generations: Building the Context
- Student Panel
- Strategies for Dealing with a Multigenerational Workforce and Student Body (Activity)
Generation Defined:

A group of people who experienced the same events & similar influences within the same time frame.
Careful! Don’t Stereotype …
Four Generations in the Workplace and Student Body

- Veterans: 1922-1943
- Baby Boomers: 1943-1960
- Generation X: 1960-1980
- Cuspers: Those born at the end of one generation or at the beginning of another
Veterans: 1922-1943

Defining Events:

- The Roaring 20s
- Rise of the Automobile
- Stock Market Crash of 1929, the Great Depression, Massive Unemployment
- Rosie the Riveter - Women in the Workplace
- The New Deal
- Attack on Pearl Harbor -- December 7, 1941 -- World War II
Veterans: 1922-1943

Work Style & Values

- Loyal
- Respect for rules, hierarchy & authority
- Dedication; hard work
- Definite separation between work/home
- Sacrifice
- Duty before fun
- Traditional
- Motivated by financial rewards and security
Baby Boomers: 1943-1960

Defining Events:

- The beginning of the Atomic Age and the Cold War
- The Korean War
- The McCarthy hearings
- Post-war prosperity
- Television and Rock ‘n’ Roll
- Brown vs. Board of Education - School Desegregation & the Civil Rights Movement
Baby Boomers: 1943-1960

Work Style & Values

- Work a priority
- Optimistic
- Personal Fulfillment
- Competitive
- Strong Professional Networks
- Value Meaning
Generation X: 1960-1980

Defining Events:

- 5 Assassinations: JFK, RFK, MLK, Malcolm X, George Lincoln Rockwell
- The Viet Nam War
- Hippies - Woodstock -- 1967 Summer of Love
- Moon Landing - 1969 Watergate & Resignation of Nixon
- The Emergence of Silicon Valley and Personal Computers
Generation X: 1960-1980

Work Style & Values

- Self-reliant
- Desire flexibility
- Skeptics
- Technology-driven
- Informal
- Latch-key kids
- Value work/life balance
Generation Next/Millennials:
1980-2000

Defining Events:
- The Challenger Disaster
- Glasnost and Fall of the Iron Curtain
- Operation Desert Storm
- Columbine Massacre
- Proliferation of the Internet
- Recycling: Environmental Awareness

Work Style & Values

- Fast-paced/Multi-taskers
- Global perspective
- Tech savvy
- Blurred lines between work & play
- Entrepreneurial
- Group-oriented
- Close to family
Generation ___: 2000 and Beyond

Defining Events

- 9/11: Destruction of the Twin Towers
- 2nd Persian Gulf War
- Economic Downturn
- Election of Barack Obama
- Expanded Technology & Social Networking: YouTube, MySpace, FaceBook, Twitter

The story is still being written …
Human Needs Common to Employees of All Generations

- To be treated with respect and compassion
- To be heard
- To be taken seriously
- To be understood
- To be valued for our contributions
- To be treated as individuals
- To be challenged and trained
Tips for Working Effectively with …

- Veterans
- Baby Boomers
- Generation X
- Nexters or Millennials
Student Panel
Activity
In Closing …

“In truth, generation gaps are neither new nor forever insurmountable.”

Source: Zemke, Raines, Filipczak in Generations at Work
References:

