

Generational Differences

SURVEY REPORT

A Study by the Society for Human Resource Management



HR: Leading People,
Leading Organizations



Generational Differences Survey Report

Mary Elizabeth Burke

Survey Analyst

SHRM Research

August 2004

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For more information, please contact:

SHRM Research Department
1800 Duke Street, Alexandria, VA 22314, USA
Phone: (703) 548-3440 Fax: (703) 535-6432
Web: www.shrm.org/research

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About This Report

In early 2004, the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) conducted a survey on generational differences in the workplace. The survey explored advantages and disadvantages that HR professionals observe due to an intergenerational workforce; the types, frequency and severity of intergenerational conflict in the workplace; and solutions HR professionals use to address and prevent intergenerational conflict. An e-mail with the survey's Web address was sent to 2,000 randomly selected SHRM members. Of these, 1,511 messages were successfully delivered to respondents, and 258 HR professionals responded, yielding a response rate of 18%.

The following report provides an analysis of the survey results. A copy of the survey instrument is included at the end of the report.

Throughout this report, analyses by HR professionals' organization staff size are presented and discussed, when applicable. Organizations are grouped into three categories based on the number of employees at the HR professional's business location: small (1-99 employees), medium (100-499 employees) and large (500 and more employees). Although respondents also identified their primary industry, it was felt that there were not enough respondents from each individual industry to yield conclusive results and analysis by industry.

Conventional statistical methods were used to determine if observed differences were statistically significant (i.e., there is a small likelihood that the dif-

ferences occurred by chance). Therefore, in most cases, only results that were significant are included, unless otherwise noted. A glossary of Key Research Terms is provided for readers to refer to in understanding the statistical methods used for analyses throughout this report.

About SHRM

The Society for Human Resource Management is the world's largest association devoted to human resource management. Representing more than 185,000 individual members, the Society's mission is to serve the needs of HR professionals by providing the most essential and comprehensive resources available. As an influential voice, the Society's mission is also to advance the human resource profession to ensure that HR is recognized as an essential partner in developing and executing organizational strategy. Founded in 1948, SHRM currently has more than 500 affiliated chapters and members in more than 100 countries. Visit SHRM Online at www.shrm.org.

About the Author

Mary Elizabeth Burke is a survey analyst for SHRM. Her responsibilities include designing, conducting and analyzing surveys on HR-related topics and assisting in larger research projects. She has a bachelor's degree in mathematics from Duke University and three years of survey and market research experience.

Introduction

There are currently up to four different generations working side by side at organizations across America. This mixing of generations adds valuable diversity to the workforce, but also lends itself to potential conflicts and complications as workers from different generations try to work together.

The generations were grouped into four categories based on experiences and values common to each generation. The Veterans, born before 1945, are the World War II generation. They came of age during the Great Depression and the war, and these experiences had a lasting impact on their development. The Baby Boomers (born 1945-1964) grew up in a time of much more prosperity, and their formative events included the Vietnam War and Watergate. Generation X (born 1965-1980) was raised on technology, with everything from televisions and microwaves to video-cassette recorders and personal computers becoming more commonplace early in their lifetime. Finally, the Nexters (born 1980-2000) are just now starting their working lives and beginning to emerge with yet another unique generational personality.

Human resource professionals indicate that, on average, their workforce consists of approximately 10% Veterans, 44% Baby Boomers, 34% GenXers and 12% Nexters.

In addition to age differences, each of these generations is at a different stage in their life cycles. This observation may seem straightforward, but it is important to note that in addition to differences stemming from formative experiences, different generations value training and development, retirement benefits, and childcare assistance very differently simply based on their current needs.

This survey report explores the issues—positive and negative—inherent in managing an intergenerational workforce. HR professionals have shared their experiences with intergenerational conflict and cooperation and the most effective methods of engaging workers from across generations. The survey report is not meant to reinforce stereotypes but to foster better understanding of the differences and relationships HR professionals observe in the workplace across different generations.

Methodology

The SHRM Survey Program developed the survey instrument. An internal committee of SHRM staff with HR expertise also provided valuable insight and recommendations for the instrument.

A sample of HR professionals was randomly selected from SHRM's membership database, which consisted of more than 175,000 members at the time. Only members who had not participated in an SHRM survey or poll in the last six months were included in

the sampling frame. Members who are students, consultants, academics, located internationally or have no e-mail address on file were also excluded from the sampling frame. Each member of the sample was sent an e-mail invitation containing a link that directed the participant to the online survey. The survey was fielded for a period of three weeks, and three e-mail reminders were sent to sample members in an effort to increase the response rate.

Key Findings

For the most part, human resource professionals reported that positive outcomes of an intergenerational workforce occur more frequently than negative ones. The most frequently observed outcome is workers from different generations working effectively together, and a consistent theme throughout the survey responses was that the advantages of an intergenerational workforce outweigh any disadvantages. The most commonly occurring negative effect of an intergenerational workforce involved conflicts between workers of different generations regarding acceptable work hours.

Most human resource professionals were not aware of intergenerational conflict among employees at their organization. The most commonly cited areas of conflict among those who have witnessed it involved work ethics, organizational hierarchy, dealing with change and technology issues.

By far the most successful method of addressing generational differences is communicating important information in multiple ways. Communicating in a variety of ways increases the likelihood that workers

within and among generations receive the information in a way which they are comfortable with. Collaborative decision-making and training managers on dealing with generational differences were also rated highly.

Respondents were also presented with a list of worker traits and asked how applicable they thought each trait was to the four generations in the workplace today. These ratings created a very general profile of the strengths of workers in each generation.

Veteran workers are seen as loyal and steadfast employees that an organization can count on to get specific tasks done. Baby Boomers are seen as hard, eager workers, well-suited to be brought back as consultants or for individual projects after their retirement. Generation X workers can be counted on in situations where conditions are fluid or not well defined. Finally, Nexters are just beginning to enter the workplace and establish their identity. They seem to share some similarities with Generation X, but the identity of Nexters will continue to evolve over the next few years.

Key Research Terms

Correlation—The degree of connectedness or association between two variables. Is there a relationship between x and y ? Correlation does not necessarily indicate causality.

Average (sometimes called “mean”)—The mathematical average of all of the data points or observations in a set, calculated by adding the data and dividing the resulting sum by the number of data points. An average may be affected by extreme data values.

Random sample—A representative sample of a population where each member of the population has an equal chance to be chosen for the research. A random sample can be generated in a variety of ways. If the population is very small, names could be drawn from a hat. Typically, however, random samples are generated by statistical software.

Sample (represented by n)—A subset of a population that represents the population to be studied. For example, consider that a researcher wants to study the U.S. population. It would be impractical to study every U.S. resident, so the researcher

chooses a part of it (a sample) representing the entire population. The sample must have the same characteristics as the entire population. Similarly, it is not prudent to study all SHRM members in a single study; therefore, usually a smaller, representative sample is drawn.

Standard deviation (SD)—The dispersion of values around the mean. A small standard deviation indicates low variability among responses. A large standard deviation indicates high variability and a relative lack of consensus among responses.

Statistical significance—A condition occurring when the researcher can show (through specific tests for significance) that the likelihood is small that the results occurred by chance. For example, if a researcher claims that the results are statistically significant at $p < .05$, the likelihood (probability) of these results occurring by chance only is less than 5%.

Adapted from “Understanding Survey Research Concepts and Terms” at www.shrm.org/research/terms.asp.

Survey Results

This survey report examines generational differences in the workplace. Throughout the report, the four generations currently in the workforce are referenced. These generations (or cohorts) are *approximately* defined as follows:

- Veterans (aka Traditionalists, WWII Generation)—born before 1945 (age 60 and older)
- Baby Boomers—born 1945-1964 (age 40-59)
- Generation X (GenXers)—born 1965-1980 (age 25-39)
- Nexters (aka Millennials, Generation Y)—born after 1980 (age 24 and younger)

These definitions were provided to respondents at the beginning of the questionnaire. While they are not strict boundaries, these definitions offered respondents a general idea of what age range falls into each generation.

Obviously, everyone is unique, and there are substantial differences within, as well as across, generations. This survey sought not to reinforce stereotypes, but to better understand the differences and relationships HR professionals observe in the workplace across different generations.

Effects of an Intergenerational Workforce

Human resource professionals rated how often certain events where generational differences play a role occur in their workplaces. Respondents were specifically asked to consider only instances in which they

believe a generational difference was a main/primary factor in the occurrence. Table 1 shows their responses.

Positive Outcomes of an Intergenerational Workforce

For the most part, human resource professionals witness positive outcomes of an intergenerational workforce occurring more frequently and negative outcomes less frequently. The most common outcome is workers from different generations working effectively together, which a majority of respondents (51%) observe frequently. Thirty-one percent said that they frequently see workers from different generations learning from one another, and 27% indicated that they frequently see a better quality of work due to a variety of generational perspectives.

Additionally, there were no respondents who indicated that they never observe workers from different generations working effectively together or learning from one another, and only 3% said they never see a better quality of work due to a variety of generational perspectives.

Negative Outcomes of an Intergenerational Workforce

The most common negative impact of an intergenerational workforce is a conflict regarding acceptable work hours between workers of different generations, with almost one-quarter (24%) of human resource

Table 1 Occurrence of Events Where Generational Differences Play a Role

	Number of Respondents	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
Workers from different generations working effectively together	253	51%	46%	3%	0%
Workers from different generations learning from one another	252	31%	55%	15%	0%
Better quality of work due to variety of generational perspectives	253	27%	55%	15%	3%
Conflicts regarding acceptable work hours between workers of different generations	255	24%	42%	29%	5%
Employees feeling coworkers from other generations do not respect them	254	20%	45%	30%	6%
Communication breakdowns between workers of different generations	253	19%	57%	22%	2%
Intergenerational mentoring (formal or informal)	252	16%	41%	35%	8%
Perspectives of workers from two or more different generations balancing one another	254	14%	54%	29%	3%
Employees stating that coworkers from other generations are over- or underreliant on technology	254	14%	45%	33%	8%
Employees taking coworkers from other generations less seriously	254	13%	47%	33%	8%
Resentment between workers of different generations	254	8%	29%	45%	18%

Note: Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding. The table is rank-ordered by the percentage of respondents who indicated that the event occurs frequently.

Source: Generational Differences Survey Report

professionals witnessing this conflict frequently. One out of five human resource professionals (20%) indicated that they frequently hear reports of employees believing that coworkers from other generations do not respect them.

Intergenerational Mentoring

Other outcomes of an intergenerational workforce were reported to occur frequently by fewer than 20% of human resource professionals. For example, only 16% report that they frequently witness intergenerational mentoring. Mentoring is a relatively untapped tool in many organizations. While little research has

been conducted regarding the specific impact of age diversity on the nature and results of mentorship, a recent article offers some insight on mentoring between employees of different ages.¹ The authors discuss the advantages and disadvantages of being mentored by someone younger. Advantages include increased respect, greater networking opportunities, expanded knowledge sharing and a more positive work atmosphere. Disadvantages include concerns of the older employees about knowledge and experience of younger workers, as well as jealousy regarding career advantages the younger mentors may have.

¹ Finkelstein, L. M., Allen, T. D., & Rhoton, L. A. (2003, June). An examination of the role of age in mentoring relationships. *Group and Organizational Management, 28*, 2, 249-281.

Table 2 Occurrence of Events Where Generational Differences Play a Role (by Organization Staff Size)

	Overall (n = 258)	Small (1-99 Employees) (n = 70)	Medium(100-499 Employees) (n = 103)	Large (500 or More Employees) (n = 71)	Differences Based on Staff Size
Better quality of work due to variety of generational perspectives	3.06	2.89	3.06	3.24	Large > Small
Conflicts regarding acceptable work hours between workers of different generations	2.86	2.60	3.02	2.90	Medium > Small
Employees feeling coworkers from other generations do not respect them	2.79	2.56	2.74	3.08	Large > Small, Medium
Employees taking coworkers from other generations less seriously	2.63	2.44	2.56	2.92	Large > Small, Medium
Resentment between workers of different generations	2.27	2.09	2.19	2.55	Large > Small, Medium

Note: Average ratings are based on a scale where 1 = Never and 4 = Frequently. Sample sizes are based on the number of respondents answering the size question; however, the percentages shown are based on the actual number of respondents by size that answered this question using the response options provided.

Source: Generational Differences Survey Report

Differences by Organization Staff Size

There were some differences in responses by organization staff size. Table 2 shows the average response, both overall and by staff size, for each event where a significant difference by organization staff size was observed.²

As illustrated in Table 2, where a difference by staff size was observed, the event usually occurred more frequently at larger organizations than at smaller ones, whether the event itself was positive or negative. This makes logical sense, as a larger absolute number of employees would understandably lead to a larger absolute number of instances to be observed.

Other Intergenerational Workforce Issues

Human resource professionals were also asked to report other issues, positive and negative, that their organizations have faced as a result of having an intergenerational workforce. A common response was that a variety of generational perspectives resulted in

better quality of work. In addition, a recurring theme was that the advantages of an intergenerational workforce far outweigh any disadvantages. Another common issue raised by human resource professionals was the need to design benefits packages that meet the needs of multiple generations of workers.

Finally, a growing issue in dealing with a multigenerational workforce is the transfer of institutional knowledge. As Veterans and Baby Boomers retire, they take with them volumes of experience and information. Good working relationships between older and younger generations now are critical in ensuring that this institutional knowledge is not lost as older workers retire. The greater the mix of generations in an organization's workforce, the more important knowledge transfer becomes as older workers retire and/or cut back hours. Human resource professionals can assist their organizations by implementing formal and informal knowledge management programs that encourage team-based

² The higher the average, the more frequently respondents reported observing that outcome. The last column indicates which differences are statistically significant (e.g., the likelihood is small that the difference occurred by chance).

projects that require knowledge sharing. HR professionals can also encourage managers to implement formal knowledge transfer processes in their departments.

Intergenerational Conflict

Due to the nature of their positions within the organizations, human resource professionals are likely to be aware of whether intergenerational conflicts exist in the workplace. Most human resource professionals (60%) said they were not aware of intergenerational conflict among employees at their organization, while 40% said they were aware of conflict (see Figure 1). As shown in Figure 2, workers from large organizations were much more likely to report intergenerational conflict than those from small or medium organizations (58% compared with 31% and 34%, respectively).

It is possible that in some instances intergenerational conflicts do not escalate to the point where the human resource function is involved, instead being handled at the supervisor level. Also, since intergenerational differences frequently arise from differences in values and norms, conflicts rooted in intergenerational value differences may not be recognized as such.

Human resource professionals who indicated they were aware of instances of intergenerational conflict provided further details on this conflict. The most common areas of conflict were work ethic, organizational hierarchy and managing change, particularly with regard to technology issues.

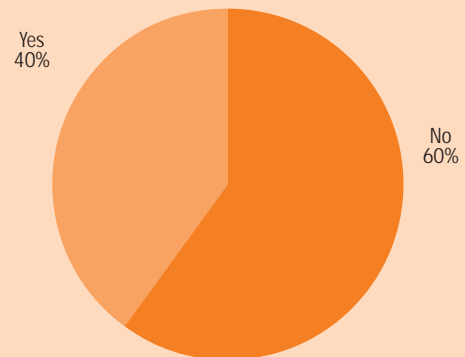
Work Ethic

While many mentions of intergenerational conflict fell under the general category of differing work ethics, the specific nature of the conflicts cited varied considerably. Some human resource professionals reported that Veterans do not think the GenXers and Nexters understand what a real day of work is and that workers from older generations are more willing

Figure 1 Intergenerational Conflict in the Workplace

Are you aware of any instances of intergenerational conflict among employees at your organization?

(Number of Respondents = 258)



Source: Generational Differences Survey Report

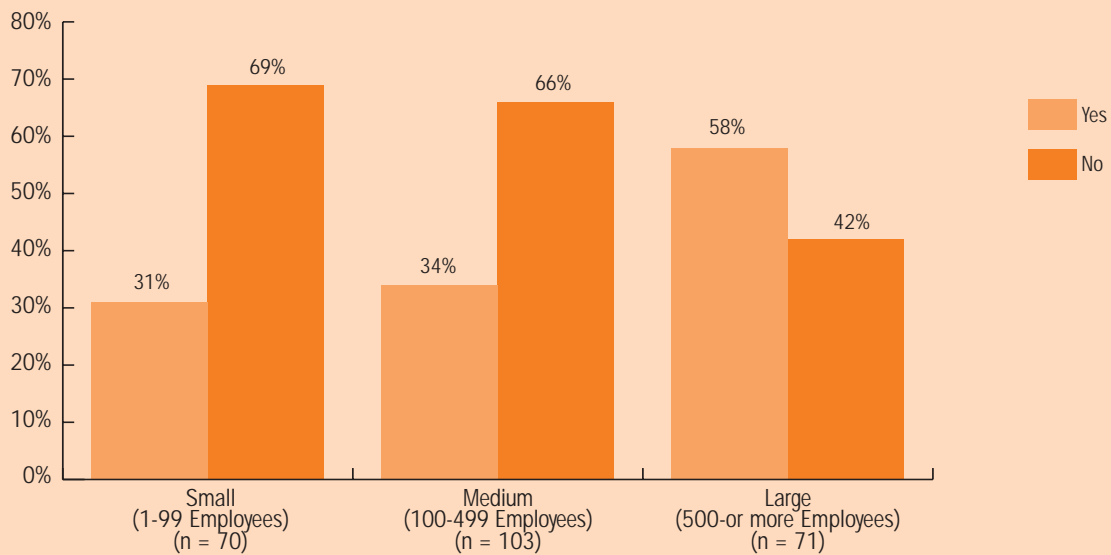
to put in the extra time and effort to get a job done right. However, other respondents indicated that employees with seniority feel the company owes them something so they tend to slack off more. Some HR professionals recognized that part of this disconnect may stem from the fact that the generations have different perceptions of what makes an employee dedicated. Older generations may view willingness to work long hours, professionalism and punctuality as defining employee dedication, while younger generations seem more likely to view dedication in relation to the quality and quantity of work completed.

Organizational Hierarchy

About one out of five human resource professionals (18%) viewed organizational hierarchy as a source of generational conflict. Again, some issues stemmed from younger generations resisting authority and structure and bypassing the chain of command, while others involved employees who feel having seniority gets them specific jobs, regardless of employee's qualifications.

Figure 2 Intergenerational Conflict in the Workplace (By Organization Size)

Are you aware of any instances of intergenerational conflict among employees at your organization?



Source: Generational Differences Survey Report

Managing Change

Most issues around managing change stemmed from workers from older generations being perceived as reluctant to change the way they are used to doing their jobs, while workers from younger generations seem eager to constantly try new ideas. One human resource professional summarized the conflict as such: “Veterans who feel they shouldn’t be questioned or challenged because they have ‘paid the price’ and earned their status [are] working next to Generation X or Nexters who quickly challenge [everything] as a standard way of approaching a situation.”

Generational conflicts over technological issues are often a specific manifestation of these fundamentally different approaches to change. The ever-increasing volume and speed of organizational change feed this potential source of conflict. Human resource professionals can offer change management programs as a way of assisting all generations in better dealing with change.

Other Areas of Conflict

Some human resource professionals also mentioned friction that arises as younger generations become impatient for Veterans and Baby Boomers to retire and vacate upper-level positions within the organization. This conflict is addressed in more detail in the next section, Specific Situations.

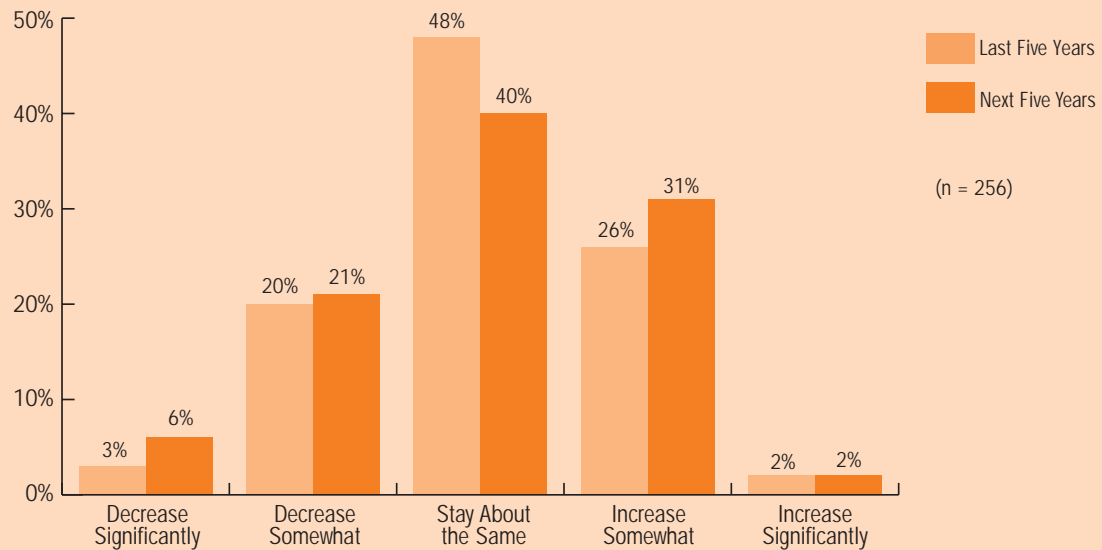
Changes in Frequency of Conflict

Additionally, human resource professionals were asked to comment on how the frequency of workplace conflicts between workers of different generations has changed over the last five years and how it is expected to change over the next five years. These results are shown in Figure 3.

For both questions, a plurality of human resource professionals reports no change, and very few see significant changes in either direction. Forty-eight percent of respondents think intergenerational conflicts have stayed about the same over the last five years,

Figure 3

Change in Frequency of Workplace Conflict in the Last Five Years and Expected Change in the Next Five Years



Note: Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

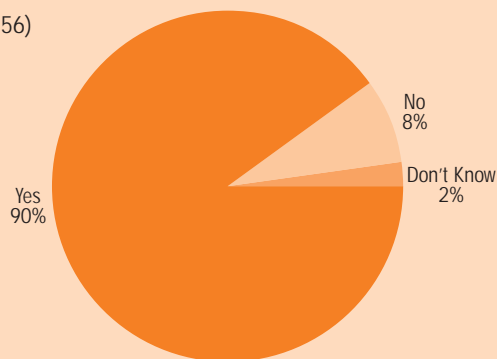
Source: Generational Differences Survey Report

Figure 4

Reporting to a Younger Manager

At your organization, does any employee report to a manager or supervisor who is a member of a younger generation than the employee?

(n = 256)



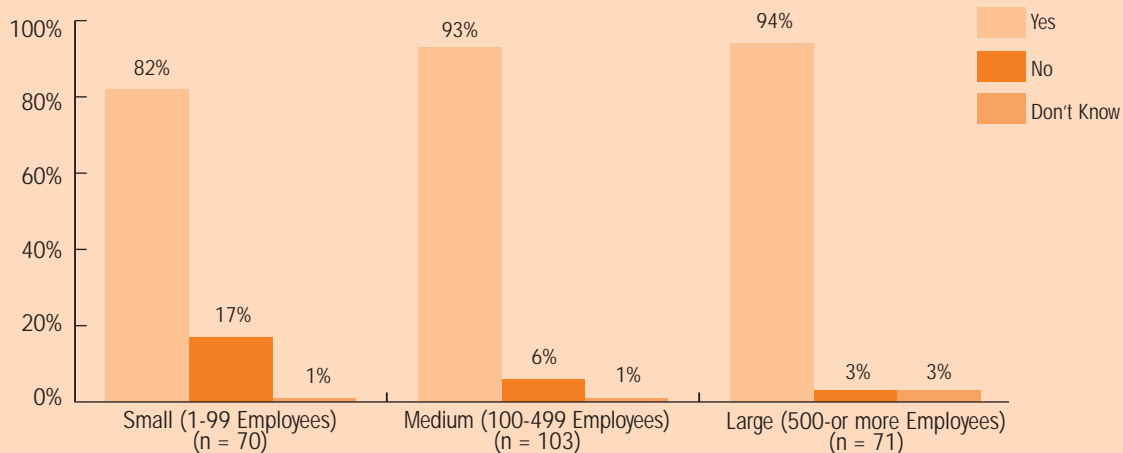
Source: Generational Differences Survey Report

and 40% expect the level to stay about the same over the next five years. Only 3% of respondents have seen a significant decrease in the last five years, and only 2% have seen a significant increase. Similarly, 6% expect a significant decrease in the next five years, and only 2% expect a significant increase.

More human resource professionals have seen or expect to see a more moderate change, but they differ regarding the direction of these changes, with slightly more having seen or expecting to see a moderate increase than a moderate decrease. Twenty percent of respondents indicate that conflicts between workers have decreased somewhat in the last five years, while 26% have seen the number increase somewhat. Twenty-one percent expect conflicts to decrease somewhat over the next five years, and 31% expect them to increase somewhat.

Figure 5 Reporting to a Younger Manager (By Organization Size)

At your organization, does any employee report to a manager or supervisor who is a member of a younger generation than the employee?



Source: Generational Differences Survey Report

Specific Situations

There are also several specific, potentially negative situations that may result from an intergenerational workforce. Human resource professionals reported how frequently each of the following situations arises in their organization, and how those dealing with each issue address it.

Reporting to a Younger Manager

It is relatively common for an employee to report to a manager or supervisor who is part of a younger generation. Ninety percent of human resource professionals indicate that some employees at their organizations report to a younger supervisor, though the arrangement is slightly less common at organizations with fewer than 100 employees at the reporting location (see Figures 4 and 5). However, the majority of respondents who have employees reporting to a younger manager or supervisor (70%) are not aware of any complaints stemming from it, and very few

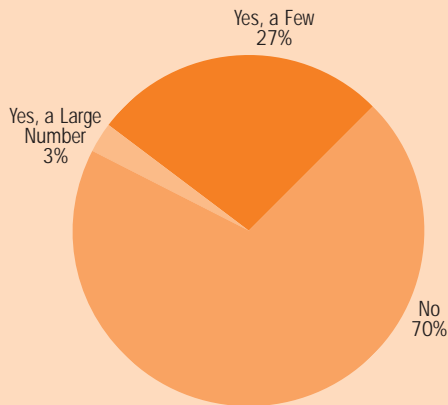
respondents (3%) report having a large number of complaints (see Figure 6).

Human resource professionals who have dealt with complaints were asked to explain the general nature of the complaints and how their organization was addressing them. The most common cause of conflict is the subordinate from an older generation feeling that the younger manager may have paper credentials, such as a degree, but lacks real-world knowledge and experience. Other causes of conflict are problems with the supervisor's management style, the subordinate not respecting a supervisor because of the supervisor's age, and the workers' inability to understand each other's problems and concerns.

The most common way of managing this conflict is by training managers, though a number of human resource professionals specifically reported that their organization is doing nothing to address the situation. Other ways of working with the situation included team building and mediation.

Figure 6 Complaints About Reporting to a Younger Manager

(n = 237)



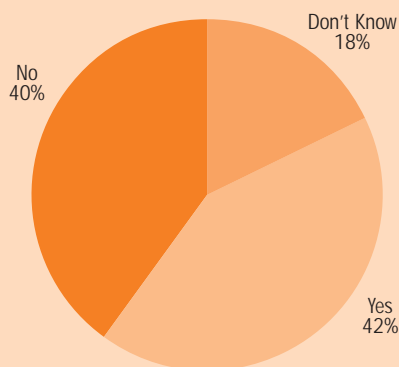
Note: Based only on respondents who have employees who report to a younger manager.

Source: Generational Differences Survey Report

Figure 7 Retention of GenXers and Nexters

Has your organization faced retention issues among Generation X or Nexter professionals who feel they are not able to advance in their careers because Veteran generation and Baby Boomer employees already hold the high-level positions in the company?

(n = 252)



Source: Generational Differences Survey Report

Retention

A less common occurrence is the issue of retention of Gen X and Nexter professionals who feel they are not able to advance in their careers because Veterans and Baby Boomers already hold the high-level positions in the company. As seen in Figure 7, just over two out of five human resource professionals (42%) are aware of this situation at their organization, and an additional 18% are not sure whether it exists. Forty percent of respondents say they have not faced retention issues related to intergenerational workforce at their organization.

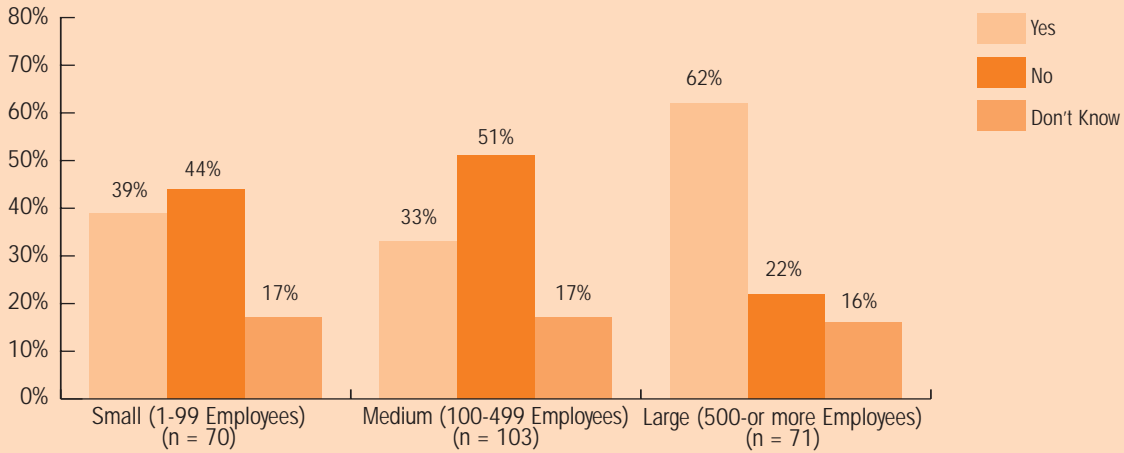
As illustrated in Figure 8, human resource professionals from large organizations were much more likely to report such retention challenges than those from organizations with fewer than 500 employees (62% of respondents from large organizations compared with only 39% from small and 33% from medium organizations).

A number of human resource professionals dealing with this issue are not taking any actions to address it. Some feel that there is nothing they can do; others see this as a natural form of attrition that does not need to be dealt with. Additionally, several respondents believe that some of this difficulty comes from the younger generations of workers being impatient and having no loyalty to the employer.

Other organizations are attempting to address the issue of younger workers who feel “stuck.” Some human resource professionals report that they are attempting to improve the situation by expanding the workers’ current job experiences, either through succession planning or establishing a career path, developing new skills and responsibilities, training, or other ways of challenging employees within the structure of their current positions. This solution has the benefit of not only keeping employees interested in their day-to-day work, but also providing the organization with a rich field of internal talent both for current opportunities and potentially for future internal promotions.

Figure 8 Retention of GenXers and Nexters (By Organization Size)

Has your organization faced retention issues among Generation X or Nexter professionals who feel they are not able to advance in their careers because Veteran generation and Baby Boomer employees already hold the high-level positions in the company?



Note: Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.
 Source: Generational Differences Survey Report

Finally, some human resource professionals report concentrating on providing good pay and benefits that address the needs of GenXers and Nexters in order to retain these workers when opportunities for promotion are not as available as the employees may like. This strategy includes offering stock options that vest after a set period of time.

Managing an Intergenerational Workforce

Human resource professionals rated the successfulness of a number of methods for managing an intergenerational workforce in their organizations (see Table 3).

The Importance of Communication

By far the most successful method of addressing generational differences is communicating important information in multiple ways. It is also one of the most commonly used solutions, with only 2% of

human resource professionals indicating that they have not tried it. Among those who have, 65% found it to be very successful—almost twice the number who found any other solution to be very successful.

Different generations prefer different methods of communication and have different levels of comfort with technology such as e-mail. Communicating important information in more than one way increases the number of people who are receiving the information in the format with which they are most comfortable. Additionally, it increases the probability that employees will be exposed to the information multiple times thereby ensuring that it is understood, since communicating information in different formats addresses various types of adult learning styles. Finally, even within generations, employees have different preferences regarding oral versus written and formal versus informal communication. Again, communicating in a variety of ways increases the likelihood that the audience receives the information in a way with which they are comfortable.

Table 3 Approaches to Managing an Intergenerational Workforce and Their Successfulness

	Very Successful	Moderately Successful	Slightly Successful	Not at All Successful	Not Applicable/ Have Not Tried
Communicating information in multiple ways (i.e., via e-mail and during meetings)	65%	29%	6%	*	2%
Collaborative discussion, decision-making or problem-solving	37%	49%	14%	1%	2%
Training managers on dealing with generational differences	37%	40%	20%	3%	17%
Team-building activities	31%	47%	20%	2%	6%
Offering different types of training	29%	47%	20%	4%	8%
Creating mentoring programs to encourage workers of different generations to work together and share experiences	27%	37%	29%	7%	13%
Training employees on working with people of diverse age groups	22%	47%	27%	4%	21%
Conducting a demographic audit of the workplace to increase awareness of generational issues	13%	30%	40%	16%	25%
Mediation	8%	26%	50%	16%	24%
Keeping workers of different generations from being assigned to work together where possible	2%	3%	17%	78%	36%

* Less than 1%

Note: The number given is the percentage of respondents who have tried a given approach and reported on its successfulness. Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

Source: Generational Differences Survey Report

Other Solutions

Collaborative decision-making was also both popular and successful. Only 2% of human resource professionals have not tried it, and among those who have, 37% found it to be very effective. Collaborative decision-making also provides organizations an opportunity to express respect and inclusion of all employees.

Training managers to handle generational differences was also rated as successful by 37% of those who have tried it, though it had a much lower rate of utilization, with 17% of human resource professionals indicating that they have not tried it.

Separating Employees Does Not Work

The least successful method of addressing generational differences is also the most extreme. Of human resource professionals who indicated that they have tried keeping workers of different generations from being assigned to work together where possible, 78% said that this strategy was not at all successful. This solution is also not very widely used, with 36% of respondents reporting they have not tried it. Both the unpopularity and the lack of success of this method may stem from its impracticality—deadlines and limited resources mean that separating workers of different generations would take considerable effort. Additionally, human resource professionals are unlikely to suggest sepa-

rating employees of different generations, as doing so goes against the practice of treating all employees fairly and equally.

Addressing Intergenerational Differences

One possible reason that human resource professionals are not doing a lot about intergenerational differences is that there are few best practices yet established in this area. Training requires time, money and resources that an organization may not have readily available. However, human resource professionals can advocate for training as a tool to proactively educate the workforce regarding intergenerational differences.

Generational Traits

Human resource professionals were also presented with a list of worker traits and were asked how applicable they thought each trait was to each of the four generations in the workplace today. These traits were:

- Willing to navigate office politics.
- Accepting of authority figures in the workplace.
- Ask for help when needed.
- Need supervision.
- Embrace diversity.
- Give maximum effort.
- Good at multitasking.
- Learn quickly.
- Like informality.
- Like structure.
- Plan to stay with the organization over the long term.
- Process-driven.
- Respectful of organizational hierarchy.
- Results-driven.
- Retain what they learn.
- Seek work/life balance.
- Technologically savvy.
- Prefer to work alone.
- Prefer to work in teams.

Table 4

Workplace Traits Most Attributed to Generations

Veterans

- Plan to stay with the organization over the long term
- Respectful of organizational hierarchy
- Like structure
- Accepting of authority figures in the workplace
- Give maximum effort

Baby Boomers

- Give maximum effort
- Accepting of authority figures in the workplace
- Results driven
- Plan to stay with the organization over the long term
- Retain what they learn

GenXers

- Technologically savvy
- Like informality
- Learn quickly
- Seek work/life balance
- Embrace diversity

Nexters

- Technologically savvy
- Like informality
- Embrace diversity
- Learn quickly
- Need supervision

Note: For each trait, respondents were asked to rate whether the trait is "very applicable," "moderately applicable," "slightly applicable" or "not at all applicable" to each of the four generations. Results shown are top five traits for each generation listed in order from highest to lowest.

Source: Generational Differences Survey Report

The top five traits attributed to each generation, based on the average response, are listed in Table 4, and the three traits least attributed to each generation are given in Table 5.

The top-rated trait for Veterans is that they plan to stay at the organization over the long term. This is likely due to a generational propensity to value loyalty (as defined by tenure) as well as to the fact that most

Table 5 Workplace Traits Least Attributed to Generations

Veterans	
	Embrace diversity
	Technologically savvy
	Like informality
Baby Boomers	
	Like informality
	Respectful of organizational hierarchy
	Need supervision
GenXers	
	Respectful organizational hierarchy
	Like structure
	Plan to stay with the organization over the long term
Nexters	
	Respectful organizational hierarchy
	Like structure
	Plan to stay with the organization over the long term

Note: For each trait, respondents were asked to rate whether the trait is “very applicable,” “moderately applicable,” “slightly applicable” or “not at all applicable” to each of the four generations. Results shown are bottom three traits for each generation listed in order from lowest to highest.

Source: Generational Differences Survey Report

Veteran workers are well-established in their current positions and are looking to retirement, not another organization, as their next career step. Other more traditional values were also rated as highly applicable to Veterans, including respecting organizational hierarchy, a preference for structure and acceptance of authority figures in the workplace. Veterans were rated lowest on preference for informality. Taken together, these traits paint a picture of Veteran workers as loyal and steadfast—someone the organization can count on to get specific tasks done.

The trait most attributed to Baby Boomers is the willingness to give maximum effort. While Baby Boomers also share two other top five traits with Veterans—acceptance of authority figures in the

workplace and planning to stay with the organization over the long term—one of the lowest rated attributes for Baby Boomers was in the top five for Veterans—respect for organizational hierarchy. Baby Boomers are also rated as highly results-driven and likely to retain what they learn, and low on their need for supervision. Many Baby Boomers plan to work at least part time past the traditional retirement age. These characteristics show Baby Boomers to be hard, eager workers who may be well-suited to be brought back as consultants or for individual projects after their retirement.

Generation X represents a shift from Veterans and Baby Boomers in that none of the more traditional traits were among the top five most applicable traits to this generation. GenXers’ top trait is that they are technologically savvy. Members of this generation have grown up and are comfortable with ever-evolving technologies. They are also rated highly on their ability to learn quickly and embrace diversity. GenXers could be expected to work well in situations where conditions are not well-defined or are constantly changing. Generation X workers rate high on their preference for informality and desire to seek work/life balance and low on their respect for organizational hierarchy and plans to stay with the organization over the long term, which may make them less suited for more traditional work environments.

Finally, human resource professionals seem to profile Nexters as very similar to Generation X, sharing four of the top five traits and all three of the bottom traits. This may be because of legitimate overlap, as seen between Veterans and Baby Boomers, or because Nexters are just beginning to enter the workplace and establish their own identity. The fifth trait attributed to them—need for supervision—supports the latter interpretation. That is, Nexter workers need supervision not necessarily as an inherent generational trait, but because they are just entering the workforce and therefore are still “learning the ropes.” This generation’s identity will continue to evolve over the next few years.

Conclusion

Despite the prevalence of intergenerational workforce in every workplace, generational conflict is not widespread. Instead, organizations are reaping the benefits of the diversity provided by workers of different generations. Workers from different generations work effectively together and learn from one another. The most frequently reported problems are relatively minor and tend to stem from issues such as differing expectations regarding work hours and acceptable dress. Effective management can avoid many of these issues by being certain to state clear policies on what is and is not acceptable and expected in the workplace. Another common issue is employees feeling that coworkers from other generations do not respect them. Again, good management can reduce friction with effective communication, team building and recognizing the efforts of all workers. Therefore, the HR function at an organization has a clear role in ensuring that generations work effectively together by training managers and helping them establish these policies. As Veterans and Baby Boomers approach retirement, good intergenerational relationships become even more critical to ensure the efficient passage of institutional knowledge to Generation X and Nexter professionals.

Even within each area of conflict, the specific nature of the cited conflicts varied considerably. Some of this variation seems to originate from different generations having differing perceptions of what makes a “good” employee. Older generations seem more likely to

value a willingness to work long hours, exercising a greater degree of professionalism and punctuality, while younger generations appear more apt to value the quality and quantity of work completed. Many of these differences can be traced to the value different generations put on “face time,” or the time an employee is physically present in the office. Veterans and Baby Boomers tend to value face time much more than GenXers and Nexters. Human resource practitioners are increasingly expanding and modifying policies and practices to include ways employees get their jobs done other than just face time. One result of this trend has been the increasing use of flexible scheduling options such as telecommuting.

Additionally, HR plays a critical role in the retention and job satisfaction of workers of all generations by ensuring that an organization’s benefits package meets the needs of all of its workers. HR can also work with managers to help expand the positions of Generation X and Nexter employees who may feel stunted in their growth at the organization. Developing these workers not only increases retention but also assures a rich internal talent pool for eventual openings.

Four generations working side by side could be a recipe for disaster. Instead, it reaps numerous benefits for both the organizations and the workers themselves. Managing these generations and their differences well can lead to even more advantages for any organization.

A Look Ahead: A Future View of Generational Differences

By Jennifer Schramm, Manager of Workplace Trends and Forecasting

Human resource professionals are positive about the intergenerational workforce and overall view it as a business advantage. This generally upbeat view indicates that intergenerational relations in the workplace over the coming decades could continue to be relatively positive. However, 28% of the HR professionals surveyed believe that conflict between workers of different generations had increased in the last five years and 33% expect it to increase in the next five years. Examining some of the areas where human resource professionals currently report problems may help shed light on issues that could become more significant areas of conflict in the future.

Human resource professionals most often reported conflict in what many described as differences in work ethic. This conflict frequently involved complaints they had heard from older generations about younger employees' willingness to work as hard. From the perspective of younger generations, a more appropriate description of such a situation

might be conflict over issues related to time or work/life balance. SHRM research on job satisfaction indicates that work/life balance is one of the most important factors promoting job satisfaction among younger employees. Interestingly, the younger the employee, the more similar the importance of this issue is to both men and women. Whereas for the Baby Boomers and Veterans, work/life balance is an issue of much greater relative importance to women, among GenXers and Nexters, work/life balance is almost equally important to both genders.

The impact this trend will have on the workplace will be determined by a number of factors. First, it depends on whether this emphasis on work/life balance is a life-stage or generational issue for GenXers and Nexters. If, for example, it is largely related to the stage of life of GenXers who are currently rearing children, its importance could fade as they move into other life stages where their caregiving responsibilities decrease. But if it is a genera-

tional value—an intrinsic and unchanging part of the way these younger generations view the world and the role of work in their lives—then this issue is likely to remain very important for many decades to come. There is an argument that in either scenario work/life balance will remain of critical importance to GenXers and Nexters because, regardless of life stage, a large proportion of these younger generations is likely to have caregiving responsibilities for either children or elderly parents across most of their working lives.

A number of factors could intensify the significance of work/life balance. First, as noted above, it is of critical importance to a growing proportion of the workforce—both men and women of Gen X and Nexter generations. Women may also soon be in a position of greater influence over work culture. Women are outpacing men in degree attainment and in many professional qualifications. If employers within some of these professions or sectors begin to face a tighter labor market

where finding qualified employees becomes more difficult, they may need to rethink policies that might be causing highly qualified women to look elsewhere for employment. Increasingly, “elsewhere” for women means starting their own businesses, and the rapid growth of women-owned businesses is also likely to have some impact on work culture over the coming decades.

Nearly 60% of respondents from large employers report instances of generational conflict among employees at their organi-

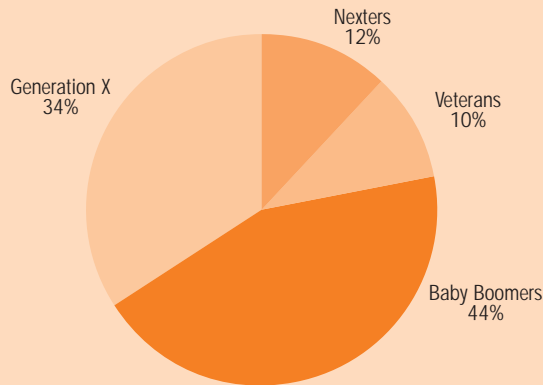
zation, a much higher percentage than those at small- and medium-sized companies. This may be because issues that seem to bring about generational conflict may be more prevalent in large organizations than in small ones. The issues of time and work/life balance—the greatest reported sources of conflict—could, for example, be more significant at larger organizations. Other areas of potential conflict, such as access to certain benefits or the ability of younger generations to advance, may also be intensified in larger companies.

There are several unknowns that could have an important impact on the areas of potential intergenerational conflict in the coming years. The first is to what extent the Baby Boomers will remain active in the labor market. The second is how the Nexter generation, a large generation that is currently being shaped by many significant world events and is still developing its own identity, will influence society and the world of work. SHRM will continue to monitor generational conflict in the workplace over the coming years. ■

Demographics

Generations in the Workforce

What percentage of the workforce at your current location are in each generation?



Source: Generational Differences Survey Report

Generation of Respondents

(Number of Respondents = 249)

Veterans (aka Traditionalists, WWII Generation)—born before 1945	5%
Baby Boomers—born 1945-1964	60%
Generation X—born 1965-1980	35%
Nexters (aka Millennials, Generation Y)—born after 1980	0%

Number of Employees

(Number of Respondents = 244)

On average, respondents indicated their organization employed 1,344 employees. Responses ranged from 3 to 45,000 employees.

On average, human resource professionals from large- staff-sized organizations (500 or more employees) reported a higher percentage of their workforce consisting of Veterans (15%) compared with human resource professionals from small (1-99 employees) and medium (100-499 employees) organizations (9% each). Human resource professionals from medium organizations reported a higher percentage of Generation X workers (37%) than did those from large organizations (31%).

Region

(Number of Respondents = 236)

New England (Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut)	2%
Middle Atlantic (New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania)	15%
East North Central (Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin)	20%
West North Central (Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas)	6%
South Atlantic (Delaware, Maryland, District of Columbia, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida)	20%
East South (Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi)	3%
West South (Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas)	12%
Mountain (Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Nevada)	9%
Pacific (Washington, Oregon, California, Alaska, Hawaii)	14%

Industry

(Number of Respondents = 245)

Manufacturing (durable goods)	13%
Health	13%
Services (profit)	9%
Manufacturing (nondurable goods)	8%
Government	7%
Finance	6%
Services (nonprofit)	6%
Educational services	6%
High-tech	5%
Wholesale/retail trade	5%
Construction and mining/oil and gas	2%
Insurance	2%
Transportation	2%
Telecommunications	1%
Utilities	1%
Other	16%

Unionization

(Number of Respondents = 242)

Eighteen percent of respondents indicated their organization employs unionized workers. Those 18% indicated that, on average, 72% of their workers are covered under a collective bargaining agreement.

Profit/Nonprofit

(Number of Respondents = 246)

For-profit	70%
Nonprofit	30%

Human resource professionals from nonprofit organizations reported a larger percentage of Veterans in their workforce (12%) than did those from for-profit organizations (9%), while respondents from for-profit organizations reported a larger percentage of GenXers in their workforce (36%) than did those from nonprofit organizations (31%).

Sector

(Number of Respondents = 246)

Public/government sector	21%
Private sector	79%

Human resource professionals who work in the public or government sector reported more Baby Boomers (47%) and fewer Nexters (9%) in their organizations compared with respondents from the private sector, who reported that their organizations, on average, employ 42% of Baby Boomers and 13% of Nexters.

Survey Instrument

SHRM® 2004 Generational Differences Survey

The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) is conducting a CONFIDENTIAL survey of HR professionals about generational differences in the workplace. Your insight and experiences as an HR professional are valuable to us in this effort.

Please participate in this survey by answering the following questions and clicking the “submit” button

at the end of the survey no later than Tuesday, February 3, 2004. If you have any questions, please contact the SHRM Survey Program by telephone at (703) 535-6301 or by e-mail at surveys@shrm.org. Thank you for sharing your time and experience.

Results of this survey will appear on the Survey Program page of SHRM's Web site free to members. Please visit the Web site at www.shrm.org/surveys.

This survey should take no more than 10 minutes to complete.

This survey is about generational differences in the workplace. Throughout the survey, we will be referring to the four generations currently in the workforce. These generations (or cohorts) are approximately defined as follows:

- Veterans (aka Traditionalists, WWII Generation)—born before 1945 (age 60 and older).
- Baby Boomers—born 1945-1964 (age 40-59).
- Generation X (GenXers)—born 1965-1980 (age 25-39).
- Nexters (aka Millennials, Generation Y) – born after 1980 (age 24 and younger).

These definitions are not precise; they are only meant to provide you with a general idea of what age range falls into each generation.

Obviously, everyone is unique, and there are substantial differences within, as well as across, generations. This survey seeks not to reinforce stereotypes, but to better understand the differences and relationships HR professionals observe in the workplace across different generations.

For each of the traits listed below, please indicate how applicable you believe that trait is to each generation. Try to generalize what you have observed to be the norm for each generation in the workplace. Please rate each generation on each trait (i.e., you should have a response on every line).

1. Willing to navigate office politics				
	Very Applicable	Moderately Applicable	Slightly Applicable	Not at All Applicable
Veterans	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Baby Boomers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Generation X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nexters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Accepting of authority figure in the workplace				
	Very Applicable	Moderately Applicable	Slightly Applicable	Not at All Applicable
Veterans	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Baby Boomers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Generation X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nexters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Ask for help when needed				
	Very Applicable	Moderately Applicable	Slightly Applicable	Not at All Applicable
Veterans	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Baby Boomers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Generation X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nexters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Need supervision				
	Very Applicable	Moderately Applicable	Slightly Applicable	Not at All Applicable
Veterans	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Baby Boomers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Generation X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nexters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Embrace diversity				
	Very Applicable	Moderately Applicable	Slightly Applicable	Not at All Applicable
Veterans	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Baby Boomers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Generation X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nexters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. Give maximum effort

	Very Applicable	Moderately Applicable	Slightly Applicable	Not at All Applicable
Veterans	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Baby Boomers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Generation X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nexters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. Good at multitasking

	Very Applicable	Moderately Applicable	Slightly Applicable	Not at All Applicable
Veterans	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Baby Boomers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Generation X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nexters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. Learn quickly

	Very Applicable	Moderately Applicable	Slightly Applicable	Not at All Applicable
Veterans	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Baby Boomers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Generation X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nexters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. Like informality

	Very Applicable	Moderately Applicable	Slightly Applicable	Not at All Applicable
Veterans	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Baby Boomers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Generation X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nexters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10. Like structure

	Very Applicable	Moderately Applicable	Slightly Applicable	Not at All Applicable
Veterans	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Baby Boomers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Generation X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nexters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11. Plan to stay with the organization over the long term

	Very Applicable	Moderately Applicable	Slightly Applicable	Not at All Applicable
Veterans	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Baby Boomers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Generation X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nexters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

12. Process-driven

	Very Applicable	Moderately Applicable	Slightly Applicable	Not at All Applicable
Veterans	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Baby Boomers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Generation X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nexters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

13. Respectful of organizational hierarchy

	Very Applicable	Moderately Applicable	Slightly Applicable	Not at All Applicable
Veterans	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Baby Boomers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Generation X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nexters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

14. Results-driven

	Very Applicable	Moderately Applicable	Slightly Applicable	Not at All Applicable
Veterans	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Baby Boomers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Generation X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nexters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

15. Retain what they learn

	Very Applicable	Moderately Applicable	Slightly Applicable	Not at All Applicable
Veterans	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Baby Boomers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Generation X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nexters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

16. Seek work/life balance

	Very Applicable	Moderately Applicable	Slightly Applicable	Not at All Applicable
Veterans	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Baby Boomers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Generation X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nexters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

17. Technologically savvy

	Very Applicable	Moderately Applicable	Slightly Applicable	Not at All Applicable
Veterans	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Baby Boomers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Generation X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nexters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

18. Prefer to work alone

	Very Applicable	Moderately Applicable	Slightly Applicable	Not at All Applicable
Veterans	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Baby Boomers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Generation X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nexters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

19. Prefer to work in teams

	Very Applicable	Moderately Applicable	Slightly Applicable	Not at All Applicable
Veterans	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Baby Boomers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Generation X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nexters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

20. Are you aware of any instances of intergenerational conflict among employees at your organization?

- Yes
- No (skip to question 22)

21. Please explain instances of intergenerational conflict you are aware of at your organization.

22. How frequently would you estimate each of the following occurs at your organization? Please consider only instances where you believe a generational difference was a main/primary factor in the occurrence.

	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
Better quality of work due to variety of generational perspectives.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communication breakdowns between workers of different generations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conflicts regarding acceptable work hours between workers of different generations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employees feeling coworkers from other generations do not respect them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employees stating that coworkers from other generations are over- or underreliant on technology.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employees taking coworkers from other generations less seriously.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Intergenerational mentoring (formal or informal).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perspectives of workers from two or more different generations balancing one another.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Resentment between workers of different generations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Workers from different generations learning from one another.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Workers from different generations working effectively together.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

23. What other issues, positive or negative, has your organization faced as a result of having an intergenerational workforce?

24. Would you say workplace conflicts between workers of different generations have decreased, stayed the same or increased in the last five years?

- Decreased significantly
- Decreased somewhat
- Stayed about the same
- Increased somewhat
- Increased significantly

25. Do you expect workplace conflicts between workers of different generations to decrease, stay the same or increase in the next five years?

- Decrease significantly
 Decrease somewhat
 Stay about the same
 Increase somewhat
 Increase significantly

26. How successful would you consider the following methods to be in managing an intergenerational workforce?

	Very Successful	Moderately Successful	Slightly Successful	Not at All Successful	Not Applicable/Have Not Tied
Collaborative discussion, decision-making or problem-solving	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communicating important information in multiple ways (i.e., via e-mail and during meetings)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conducting a demographic audit of the workplace to increase awareness of generational issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creating mentoring programs to encourage workers of different generations to work together and share experiences	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Encouraging an environment that highlights the benefits of an intergenerational workforce	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Keeping workers of different generations from being assigned to work together where possible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mediation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Offering different types of training (i.e., computer-based and seminars)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Team-building activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Training employees on working with people of diverse age groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Training managers on dealing with generational differences	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

27. What other strategies, if any, has your organization implemented to address intergenerational conflict at work?

28. At your organization, do any employees report to a manager or supervisor who is a member of a younger generation than the employee?

- Yes
- No (skip to question 32)
- Don't know (skip to question 32)

29. Are you aware of any complaints due to this reporting structure?

- Yes, a large number of complaints
- Yes, a few complaints
- No, I am not aware of any complaints (skip to question 32)

30. Please explain the general nature of these complaints.

31. What is your organization doing to address these complaints?

32. Has your organization faced retention issues among Generation X or Nexter professionals who feel they are not able to advance in their careers because Veteran generation and Baby Boomer employees already hold the high-level positions in the company?

- Yes
- No (skip to question 34)
- Don't know (skip to question 34)

33. What are you doing to address this issue?

34. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "HR is seen as a strategic business partner in my organization." (Check only one.)

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

35. What percentage of your workforce at your current location are: (Note: these should total 100%)

Veterans _____%

Baby Boomers _____%

Generation X _____%

Nexters _____%

36. What generation do you belong to?

- Veterans
- Baby Boomers
- Generation X
- Nexters

37. How many employees are employed at your location?

38. In which state is your location?

39. Are there unionized employees (under a collective bargaining agreement) at this location?

- Yes
- No (skip to question 41)

40. What is the percentage of unionized employees at this location (under a collective bargaining agreement)?

_____ %

41. Which industry best describes your location's main business? (Check only one.)

- Construction & mining/oil & gas
- Educational services
- Finance
- Government
- Health
- High-tech
- Insurance
- Newspaper publishing/broadcasting
- Manufacturing (durable goods)
- Manufacturing (nondurable goods)

- Services (nonprofit)
 - Services (profit)
 - Telecommunications
 - Transportation
 - Utilities
 - Wholesale/retail trade
 - Other (please specify)
- _____

42. Is your organization for profit or nonprofit?

- For profit
- Nonprofit

43. Is your organization in the public/government or private sector?

- Public/government sector
- Private sector

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ISBN 1-58644-060-8



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