



# People, Not Generations

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According to some in the media, and other places, there is a storm brewing—a generational storm that is threatening to change office life as we know it. Predictions of trouble abound, as a new generation enters the workforce and mingles with the generations already there.

Of course, there are some differences between the generations. But, are these differences going to be a big deal, as some are predicting? Nope. People of different generations have been working together for... well, a really long time. And, today is no different. Don't dwell on the differences, find the similarities and use them to get your employees motivated. While there is something to these generational labels, people have shared some common experiences, which certainly helped shape them. But really, it's key to remember that the generations are made up of people; individuals with their own values, goals, and points of view. In the end, it comes down to differences in individual style. And, dealing with that in the office is nothing new.

Find ways to make everyone happier and more successful in their jobs. It will make you a happier, more successful business owner. Here are a few ideas to get you moving in the right direction.

Understand and motivate individuals, not generations. People are the key to the success of any organization, big or small. Help them realize their potential, and they'll help you realize yours.

## BE AUTHENTIC

Be real. Everyone, young and old, can smell the half-truth from the truth. People will be a lot happier if they're treated honestly.

## BE CREATIVE

Try something new! Everyone can be an innovator. Inspire them with originality, creativity, and imagination.

## BE APPRECIATIVE

Reward and recognize. And, it doesn't always have to be money or a gift, sometimes a simple "thank you" or "good job" will go a long way.

## BE CLEAR

Make your expectations for the job clear. Satisfaction at work comes from knowing what is expected. Communicate goals, roles, and responsibilities. Establish a channel for feedback.

## BE FAIR

People are happier at work when they perceive they are being treated equally and appropriately. Involve them in decisions that affect their jobs, and even the overall direction of the company.

## BE SUPPORTIVE

Empower people to achieve by giving them what they need. Provide the tools and materials necessary to do the job. Encourage professional development, and take an interest in their career.

## BE CONNECTED

Facebook hasn't replaced face-to-face—far from it. People desire connections; they want personal interaction; they want to participate. Help them connect.

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### Baby Boomer (1943-1961)

Think of the Boomers as masters of change. They have lived it and they have caused it. They excel at adapting to change and they know it. The workplace is no different: they have been dealing with constant technological changes their entire careers. Another change? They can handle it.

### Generation X (1962-1977)

Named after an unknown variable, Gen X has a hard-to-define quality. They were the first generation to grow up with video games and computers. They are comfortable with technology, and they have turned that skill into a tool for getting things done. Think of them as digital pioneers finding their way with technology.

### Millennials (1978-1997)

Beleaguered by the media, Millennials have been given a reputation for being high maintenance. But don't believe the hype. This is one generation ready to take on a challenge, make a difference, and prove themselves. Technology? Oh, you mean my music-playing, Internet-surfing, picture-taking, text-typing, video-watching cell phone? That's just a way of life.