# *THE MULTI-GENERATIONAL WORKPLACE*

## INSTRUCTOR GUIDE

## 1/2-DAY COURSE

HRDQ®

*THE MULTI-GENERATIONAL WORKPLACE*

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# Instructional design and learning philosophy

We are committed to providing the best core-skills content possible for Instructor-Led Training (ILT). The following principles are applied in the development of programs:

## Sound Instructional Design

All course content is developed using a variety of research techniques. These include:

- Brainstorming sessions with target audience
- Library research
- Online research
- Customer research (focus groups, surveys, etc.)
- Subject Matter Experts (SMEs)
- Interviews with trainers

Expert instructional designers create imaginative and innovative solutions for your training needs through the development of powerful instructional elements. These include:

- Learning objectives provide effective tools for managing, monitoring, and evaluating training
- Meaningful connections between the topic and students' past, present, and future
- Appropriate organization of essential ideas helps students to focus on what they need to know in order to learn
- Modeling techniques demonstrate useful behaviors and problem-solving skills
- Active application, the cornerstone to learning, helps students immediately apply what they have learned to a real-life situation
- Consistent instructions and design help students learn and retain new information
- Accelerated learning techniques create interactive, hands-on involvement to accommodate different learning styles

## Application of Adult Learning Styles

Adults learn best by incorporating their personal experiences with training and by applying what they learn to real-life situations. Our experienced instructional designers incorporate a variety of accelerated learning techniques, role-plays, simulations, discussions, and lectures within each course to appeal to all learning styles and ensure that the ideas and information will be retained.



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# Course Timing

## Module 1: All of the Generations in the Workplace

| Type of Activity | Segment | Time |
|---|---|---|
| | Objectives and Meet and Greet | 10 |
| | How Did We Get Here? | 5 |
| | Fundamentals for the Workplace | 5 |
| | Who's Who in the Different Generations? | 10 |
| | Focus on Similarities | 10 |

## Module 2: The Specifics of Each Generation

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | The Specifics of Each Generation | 10 |
| | Tips for Approaching Each Generation | 30 |
| | What are the Stereotypes? | 10 |
| | Overcoming Stereotypes | 15 |
| | Change in Perception | 5 |

Reading

Written Exercise

Facilitation

Group Activity

# Course Timing (cont.)

## Module 3: Effects of the Generations in the Workplace

| Type of Activity | Segment | Time |
|---|---|---|
| | Potential Challenges | 20 |
| | The Challenges for Each Generation | 20 |
| | Communicating with Respect | 5 |
| | Mastering Sticky Situations | 20 |
| | Trio Practice Activity | 25 |

## Module 4: Making Improvements in your Organization

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Techniques for Improvement | 5 |
| | Action Plan | 10 |

Reading

Written Exercise

Facilitation

Group Activity



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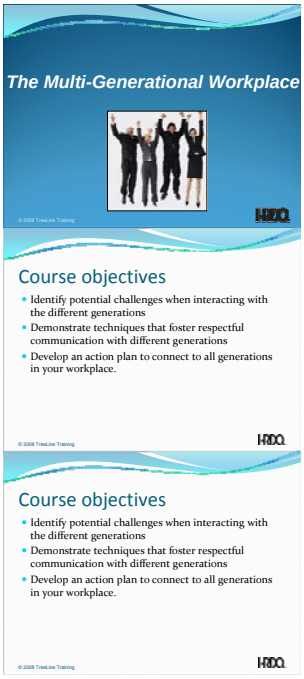
# Module One

## *ALL OF THE GENERATIONS IN THE WORKPLACE*

Opening / Warm up: 10 minutes

Welcome participants and provide a quick overview of the course and objectives.




Immediately sweep participants into action by introducing the warm-up activity on the next page.

# Course objectives

Successful completion of this course will increase your knowledge of and ability to:

- Describe the changing workplace
- Identify the four generations in the workplace
- Describe the characteristics of the four generations in the workplace
- Examine the stereotypes associated with each generation
- Identify potential challenges when interacting with the different generations
- Demonstrate techniques that foster respectful communication with different generations
- Develop an action plan to connect to all generations in your workplace



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# Meet and Greet

*The following worksheet will guide your team in identifying areas of similarity with your team members. This investment of time will provide a foundation for looking at diversity in a new way.*

Instructions: As a team, identify 3 points of similarity. For example, you all have brothers, all drive sports cars, etc.

Note: The similar points cannot be work related.

Take 5 minutes to find 3 points of similarity and 3 points of difference, and record them on this worksheet.

*Our team consists of:*
*List names:*

*3 points of similarity:*

*1.*

*2*

*3.*

*3 points of difference:*

Tell participants to stand up and meet, shake hands and greet as many of their fellow participants as possible in 2 minutes.

After 2 minutes, tell them to take their seats and to break into groups of 3.

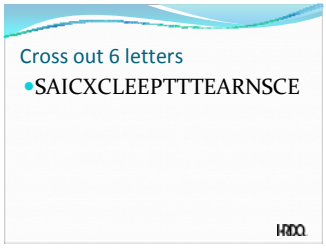
Allow them 5 minutes to find 3 points of similarity and 3 points of differences in their trios. For example, all 3 people drive an economy car, have a brother, like chocolate, etc.

Debrief around how easy or hard it can be to find similarities and differences. Discuss the importance of focusing on similarities and commonalities. Ask, "What was your mindset when you met everyone earlier in this activity?" "Do you often meet new and different people with the mindset of having commonalities or differences?"

Lead a quick round of introductions and establish ground rules for the session.

Suggestions:
- one conversation at a time, do not interrupt
- everyone should participate
- confidentiality: nothing we say leaves the room
- no personal attacks

Discussion: 5 minutes




Ask participants to look at the slide and to cross out 6 letters to form a common English word.

Most will try to cross out a quantity of 6 letters, but they need to cross off
S I X  L E T T E R S.

Lead a debriefing discussion around acceptance; focus on being tolerant, open and accepting of differences and looking for creative approaches to handle diversity in generational challenges, and on beginning to look at things differently.

Align acceptance with *diversity*, which is:

- valuing each individual for his or her uniqueness and similarities.
- the appreciation of different styles, values and attitudes as assets to an organization.
- continuing to evolve as we move toward a global marketplace.
- providing an environment where all individuals feel valued.

*acceptance* (āk-sĕp'təns) ***noun***

1. *the act or process of accepting*
2. *the state of being accepted or acceptable*
3. *favorable reception; approval*

*diversity* ( də-'vər-sə-tē) ***noun*** *1. Unlikeness; difference. 2. Variety; multiplicity.*



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# How did we get here?

Our current American workplace is unique. The years have shown us rises and falls in the economy. Especially during the challenging economic times we currently face, there is a lot of competition for jobs. It is not surprising that there are challenges, fear and resentment in the workplace.

This is the first time in history that we have four different generations in the workplace. Each generation is shaped by its unique experiences growing up and its members' diverse ideas about what they want in their work lives and personal lives. These differences affect how they interact with each other and judge each other's behavior and performance.

Advances in medical technology have increased life span; people are living longer and healthier lives and staying in the workforce for longer than any other time in the past.

Older workers are beginning to think about retiring, but many will work longer than once expected.

The number of individuals between the ages of 35 and 45 is decreasing due to the decline in birth rates from 1965-1978.

The demand for talented 35-45-year olds will continue to rise (projected at 25%) while the number of workers available in that age range is decreasing.

Each generation brings its own unique strengths to the workplace. When we can consider and embrace the differences of each group, and identify the strengths of each, it will enable us to work more effectively together.

"We are like all others; we are like some others;
and we are like no others."

Henry Murray, renowned Harvard psychologist, 1893 - 1988

Review the changes that have taken place in our workplace that make it the unique four-generational environment that it is today.

Transition – We have four unique generations working side by side. Each has different values and preferences based on their upbringing and experiences. This can't help but lead to friction in the workplace.

(Instructor Note: The statistics came from the US Census Bureau.)

Pair Activity – 5 minutes

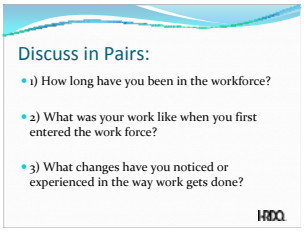
Provide a quick overview of the table, noting the shifts in what employees and employers got in the past and present.

Ask participants to pair up and discuss the following questions.

1) How long have you been in the workforce?

2) What was your work like when you first entered the workforce?

3) What changes have you noticed or experienced in the way work gets done?




Debrief - Ask for examples of the changes participants have experienced. Discuss the challenges of the norms and standards of today's work world.

# Fundamentals for the workplace

These demographic shifts have resulted in changes to workforce rules. The unspoken agreements between employers and employees have changed.

## Employees

In the past, employees enjoyed job security and lifetime employment. They received regular and predictable raises. They could reasonably expect to be promoted, with their career paths progressing on a predictable upward path, and coworkers functioned as a sort of second family.

Today, employees see more challenges and opportunities to learn and help with personal issues, when needed. They leverage their skill sets to advance themselves, rather than expecting to advance automatically through seniority.

## Employers

In the past, employers enjoyed the benefits of hard-working, dedicated and loyal employees. The payroll was static and predictable, and this served the employee and employer well.

Now, employers face a workplace with minimal loyalty. Their workers have little or no expectation of job security. It's an unsure and unsteady environment, and there are fewer opportunities to give promotions. The only thing that is guaranteed is change.



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# Who's who in the different generations?

In our current workforce, people from four generations are working side by side. Each generation has something to offer the others, but the generational differences tend to collide, and the gap is often cited as problematic.

Individuals in each generation have fundamentally different life experiences than those in generations before or after them. Their experiences impact the group as a whole and bind them together as a generation. Life experiences (including the generation they are a part of) affect the way people learn and behave.

Each generation has rebelled against the previous generation.

## Veterans

Born prior to 1945 — Age in 2008: 63+ years old

## Baby Boomers

Born 1946 to 1964 — Age in 2008: 44 to 62 years old

## *Generation X*

Born1965 to 1978 — Age in 2008: 30 to 43 years old

## *Generation Y*

Born 1979 - — Age in 2008: 0 to 29 years old

When the generations fail to communicate effectively, there may be negative ramifications. Conflict and lack of communication may impact turnover rates, tangible costs (such as recruitment, hiring, training and retention), intangible costs ( such as morale), grievances and complaints. Additionally, there may be perceptions of unfairness and inequity.

Discussion: 10 minutes

Review the table presenting the four generations that represent today's population.

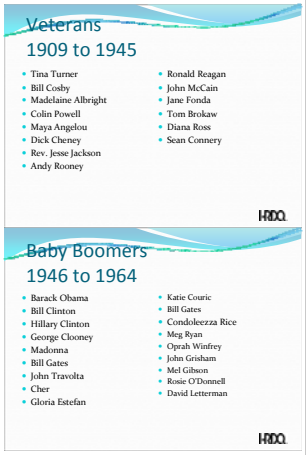
Note the large timeframe that each covers, lumping people within an age range of almost 20 years into the same generation.

Understanding the generations' different values will help us to better understand the diverse beliefs of each generation. While we may not always agree with our coworkers' values, we can strive to understand the different mindsets that produce them, and approach them from a positive standpoint.

Note that it is expected that the next generation will be nicknamed "Generation Z."

Review the highlights of each generation and note the famous people from each.

Encourage participants to be thinking of people they know and work with as we discuss each generation.




# The four generations

Veterans were brought up during a tough economic time. Great leaders stepped forth and led the nation, and accordingly, Veterans have a deep respect for authority. They tend to conform, and value safe working conditions and job security. Because of war rationing and difficulties in their formative years, they are known to be frugal, hardworking, and loyal employees. Their beliefs about the importance of work and of meeting obligations define them. They believe in saving and paying cash rather than using credit. They are very different from their children's generation, the Baby Boomers.

Baby Boomers grew up during times of economic and educational growth. They attended school in a traditional system and had rigorous programs. As they developed into young adults, they faced major social upheaval and change. They bucked the system of traditional gender roles, as scores of women entered the workforce. This generation worked hard and earned well. They differed from their parents' generation in that that their financial philosophy was to buy now and pay later. With the rise of consumerism and two-income families, the divorce rate grew. Most Baby Boomers either participated in or protested the Vietnam War, and were active in various political and social causes.



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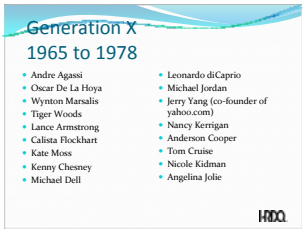
# The four generations (cont.)

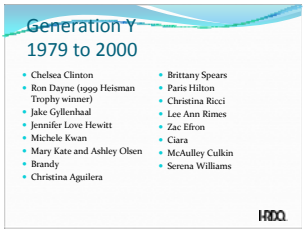
Generation X consists of the children of the Baby Boomers. They are said to have inherited the 'social debris' of the Boomers, with self-absorbed, often divorced parents, which resulted in single-parent, single-income families who had difficulties paying their expenses in the face of a growing national debt and failed corporations. Accordingly, they are more financially conservative, having learned from their parents' mistakes the importance of saving. Many saw their workaholic parents being laid off from the jobs to which they were so loyal. They have learned that there is no such thing as job security.

Generation Y is the most educated, technologically sophisticated generation ever. They grew up in a world of computers, the Internet and cell phones. Generation Y saw unprecedented events such as the Oklahoma City bombing, the Columbine High School massacre and September 11, 2001. Being exposed to such fear and lack of security has caused them to value job satisfaction, security and opportunity for advancement as priorities over financial compensation. They aren't as concerned about saving as the previous generation. Their motto could be "Earn it, Spend it." They are dubbed the "Why Me" generation.

Continue reviewing the highlights of each generation and note the famous people from each.

Encourage participants to be thinking of people they know and work with as we discuss each generation.



Review each category in the table and paint a picture of each generation.

Lead a discussion on the popular 'battle cries' and complaints of the different generations.

"He moseyed in about half an hour late."

"I got here at 10 minutes after, that's not even late."

"I've been through many managers in my career, but it's difficult when the boss is much younger and inexperienced!"

"I'm tired of hearing Boomers say, 'We've always done it this way.'"

"Let's get creative. I don't want my grandfather's incentive program."

"So what if I have a tattoo? That doesn't affect my IQ."

"I can be more effective writing the plan at home. Why should I suffer through rush-hour traffic to write it at my desk?"

# Four generations

| | Values | Work Preference | Family |
|---|---|---|---|
| Veterans: | Respectful of authority; job security | Jobs with security and longevity | Traditional |
| Baby Boomers: | Optimistic<br>Collaborative | High-paying and high-status jobs | Disintegrating/ divorces |
| Generation X: | Skeptical, informal | Flexibility, reward for productivity vs. longevity | Latch-key kids |
| Generation Y: | Confident, realistic | Contract approach, will sacrifice pay to learn and to have latest technologies | Blended families |

| | Education | Means of Communication | Feedback |
|---|---|---|---|
| Veterans: | A dream | Face to face | No news is good news. |
| Baby Boomers: | A right | OK to call after hours | Once a year, with lots of documentation |
| Generation X: | A means to an end | Do not call me after hours | Sorry to interrupt, but how am I doing? |
| Generation Y: | A huge expense | Internet, cell phone, texting | Feedback whenever I want it/ at the click of a button |

In summary, people from each generation have different values and behaviors, due to their experience and upbringing.



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# Focus on similarities

List people you work with in the chart below.

## Veterans

Someone I know in this generation: _____

Something I have in common with this person: _____

## Boomers

Someone I know in this generation: _____

Something I have in common with this person: _____

## Generation X

Someone I know in this generation: _____

Something I have in common with this person: _____

## Generation Y

Someone I know in this generation: _____

Something I have in common with this person: _____

Ask participants to take a minute to identify at least one person they know in each generation, ideally someone from their workplace.

Tell participants to identify at least one common characteristic that they have with that person (as they did in the earlier Meet and Greet exercise).

**Debrief** - Point out that each group will have similarities and differences between the generations.

Remind them that different is not wrong; it's just different.

Individual Activity: 10 minutes

Ask participants to identify their own generation.

Remind them that they may display characteristics of more than one generation. For instance, someone born in 1963 is formally a Baby Boomer, but he is on the young side and may be able to relate more to Gen Xers.

Ask participants to record the generational characteristics that they relate to and those that they do not identify with.

After 2 minutes, ask them to pair up with someone they haven't worked with yet and share the characteristics they recorded from the generation(s) that they do and do not identify with.

Ask the pairs who are from different generations to note the similarities and differences they have.

Debrief - Point out that people within each generation can have similarities and differences, just as there are similarities and differences amongst the different generations.

Transition by discussing the specifics for each generation.

# My generation

## Where do I fit?

## Characteristics I identify with

## Characteristics I do not identify with



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