

BRIDGING THE GENERATIONAL GAP

Today's workforce and golf clientele are increasingly diverse and for the first time in history, span across five generations including Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Gen X, Millennials and the rising Centennials. Also, the unemployment rate across all industries is at an all-time low; thus, organizations are finding it increasingly difficult to hire and retain employees who are motivated, produce quality work, and are loyal to the company.

Understanding each of these generations and the differences in communication styles, expectations, motivators, work habits, and priorities is imperative for creating an innovative, cohesive, and collaborative work environment, and ultimately a profitable organization.

This past week, the South Florida Section provided an insightful and thought-provoking educational workshop on what influences these generations and how each of us need to think and act differently when interacting, working, and servicing these vastly different cohorts. Also, we had an interactive panel discussion that produced **Best Practices** for consideration.

Below are highlights of the seminar. If you would like additional information, please contact Kathy Grayson, PGA Career Consultant at kgrayson@pgahq.com or Marty Hall, South Florida Section, Educational Chair at mhall@fgcu.edu

Influencers/Work Place Expectations

Greatest/Silent Generation, 1901 – 1945: Great Depression, Global War, Post War, Space Race – this generation is very patriotic, loyal, expects respect and job security. ***These are most likely your members and boards of directors!***

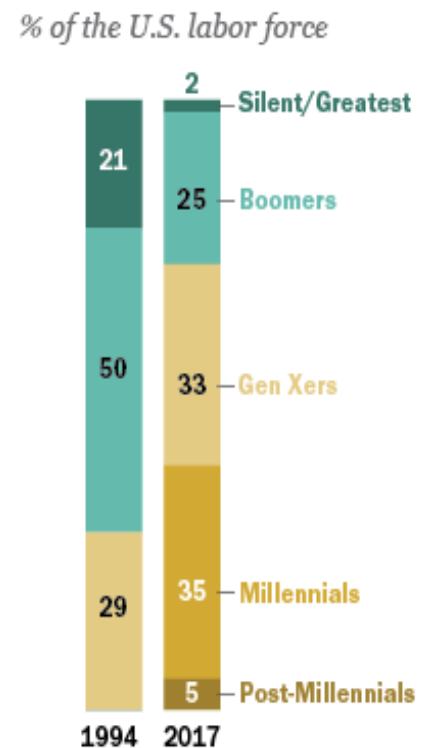
Baby Boomers, 1946 – 1964: Watergate, Cold War, Rock & Roll, Woodstock
Boomers are very rebellious, workaholics, and ambitious to climb the corporate ladder and achieve leadership roles. They are reluctant to share best practices and feel future generations need to “pay their dues” - ***(this generation must let this go!)*** They do not recognize the word “retirement” as many are not financial able to do so due to the dot.com recession, 911 and the belief that they had to give everything to their kids before saving for themselves.

Gen X, 1965 – 1980 – Fall of Berlin Wall, End of Cold War, AIDS, MTV, Computers
Often referred to as the “forgotten” generation. This group is our “latch-key” kids whose divorced or working parents left them alone to fend for themselves. This cohort is very self-sufficient, takes initiative and makes decisions quickly. They do not like to be micro-managed or tied up in unproductive meetings.

Gen Y (Millennials), 1981-1997 – Obama election, Great Recession, Global Internet
This generation is used to instant gratification. They are very well educated and tech savvy, but need specific direction, flexibility, and mentorship. They also require constant feedback, or they will move onto an employer who will do so. Many in this generation were over-scheduled and are inherently “anxious” and can be easily overwhelmed. However, they can get things done quicker than any other age group if adequately managed. Keep in mind, this generation will represent 60% of the workforce in the next five years.

Gen Z (Centennials), 1998 – 2010 – Global terrorism, Trump, Brexit, YouTube, Digital Revolution

Gen Z is very tolerant, diverse, and perceives themselves as genderless. They are the most non-judgmental generation and accept everyone regardless of their race, color, religion, sexual preference.



Preferred Communication Style

Traditionalists – face to face, phone, and printed material.

Baby Boomers – face to face, phone, email, with some texting capability.

Gen X – brief and to the point meetings, direct communication via phone, email, text, facetime.

Millennials – text, Instagram, mobile applications, and social media.

Centennials – face to face, *private* authentic feedback, text, mobile applications.

Motivators

Traditionalists – job security, mentoring opportunities, verbal recognition, monetary reward.

Baby Boomers – leadership and managerial roles, upward mobility, materialism, monetary increases and bonuses, public recognition.

Gen X – autonomy, work life balance, additional time off, and private workspaces.

Millennials – flexible work schedules, continuing education, health and wellness, mentorship, rapid advancement, Rotation of job responsibilities, and teamwork.

Centennials – flexibility and opportunity for innovation, clear path for advancement, less traditional organizational hierarchy – like to work in teams, employers must show they are willing to invest in their future.

Best Practices

- **Create** an email blog with “like clubs” and share best practices monthly!

Recruitment

- **Marketing Job Openings** – think outside the box. Promote mentorship, teamwork, advancement, health and wellness, philanthropic opportunity, path for advancement, flexible schedule, student loan repayment, signing bonuses (could cover rent deposit, etc.), continuing education fund, good catch incentives (catch an employee doing a good deed and reward with a gift card).
- **Hire** personality, train the skills
- **Hire** and utilize behavior assessments to determine if the candidate is a fit with the organizational culture and team.
- **Onboarding Process** – Ben Bauer, Director of Golf at Ibis Club believes this is the most crucial first step to assimilating and employee into the club culture. Ben requires every new employee to spend a day with each department head to fully understand that department. After 18 months, they are “assessed” and “realigned” to further their education and experience. This practice is in addition to receiving continual feedback and evaluation.
- **Onboarding Process – interns** – same as above but provide them with a “checklist” of what they will be doing and learning during the time they are employed.

Retention

- **Groom or Broom** – Give employees the resources, training and timeline for success. If they cannot achieve, then cut them loose or prepare to suffer the breakdown of the team and the problems it causes.
- **Scheduling** – Move from the traditional “excel” sheet to an online scheduling platform with a mobile application like SLING, used by Director of Golf, Justin DeFont at Audubon CC. This allows employees instant access to their schedules and enables them to virtually request time off in advance of making the schedule.
- **Scheduling** – Allow assistants and outside operations to create the schedule so every employee has buy-in. The final schedule to be approved by the HP or DOG. This also gives the employee experience in training and scheduling.
- **Cross-training** – Kevin Swan, Director of Golf at Mediterra, requires each staff member participate in a training session with the on-site club fitter and instructors. This practice provides them knowledge and experience within these areas and promotes conversation about these services between the staff and members, resulting in increased revenue.
- **Cross training** – Karen Sherman-Lavin, Director of Golf at Addison Reserve, implements a “Teach the Teacher Day” where her employees spend the day with the Director of Instruction learning how to teach. They also have a “Rules Official” day where they have on-course training on the rules and how to approach and address a member or guest when faced with handling a rules infraction.
- **Team Empowerment** – Train and empower employees to hold each other accountable.
- **Team Empowerment** – Team participates in an Operational SWOT Analysis to identify strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities within their department or the entire facility.
- **Budgeting** – Justin DeFont, Director of Golf at Audubon CC, assigns his Assistants the responsibility of “closing” and reconciling a daily-activities excel sheet. This excel sheet as a tool that ties back to the budget which he reviews line by line with each of his Assistants to teach them how it affects the bottom line.
- **Evaluations** – Administer 360-degree review process – everyone evaluates each other including leadership.
- **Incentives** - “Bring back the Best” initiative – a promise of a monetary reward if they return next season.

Employee Recognition/Team Building Ideas

- Ibis “Bucks” – employees are rewarded with “coins” and their name is entered into a quarterly drawing
- Tickets – concerts, baseball games, hockey games.
- Employee outings – TopGolf, Par 3 Events, Drive Chip & Putt competitions, movie night, pizza delivery, employee BBQ’s, beach volleyball tournament, Paint Ball, Laser Tag, holiday parties, weekend retreats in off-season. Dining at a nice restaurant and observing and critiquing the service.
- Health and Wellness – partner with a local gym as a corporate partner, create team competitions. If possible provide them the opportunity to work out at the club during off-times. If that does not work, then provide a stipend for gym membership or portion of the fees.
- Social Media – recognize employees for a job well-done on the club website or social media platform.