

Introduction:

According to several sources, documented later in this paper, the population of the United States has been divided into six categories by age group. These are the GI generation born between 1901 and 1926 average age 103, the mature / silent generation born between 1927 and 1945 (my generation) average age 81, baby boomers born between 1946 and 1964 average age 61, generation X born between 1965 and 1980 average age 44.5, generation Y / millenniums born between 1981 and 2000 average age 26.5 (your generation), and generation Z / boomlets born after 2000 average age 8.5 (Novak 2009). In this paper, we will deal with four of these (mature / silent, baby boomers, Gen X, and Gen Y) as they are the ones who are most prevalent in the workforce today. Visual representations of the so-called “generational differences in the area of work ethics and values” and communications, feedback, and rewards (Rodriguez 2015) are:

	Silent	Baby Boomers	Gen X	Millennial
Work Ethic and Values	Hard work, respect authority, sacrifice, duty before fun, adhere to rules	Workaholics, work efficiently, crusading causes, personal fulfillment, desire quality, questions authority	Eliminate the task, self-reliance, want structures and direction, skeptical	What's next, multi-tasking, tenacity, entrepreneurial, tolerant, goal oriented
Work is...	An obligation	An exciting adventure	A difficult challenge, a contract	A means to an end, fulfillment
Leadership Style...	Directive, Command-and-control	Consensual Collegial	Everyone is the same, challenge others, ask why	tbd
Interactive Style...	Individual	Team Player, Loves to have meetings	Entrepreneur	Participative

	Silent	Baby Boomers	Gen X	Millennfal
Communications	Formal Memo	In Person	Direct Immediate	E-mail, voicemail
Feedback and Rewards	No news is good news, satisfaction = job well done	Don't appreciate it, money and title recognition	"How am I doing", freedom is the best reward	Whenever I want it, at the push of a button, meaningful work

(Rodriguez 2015)

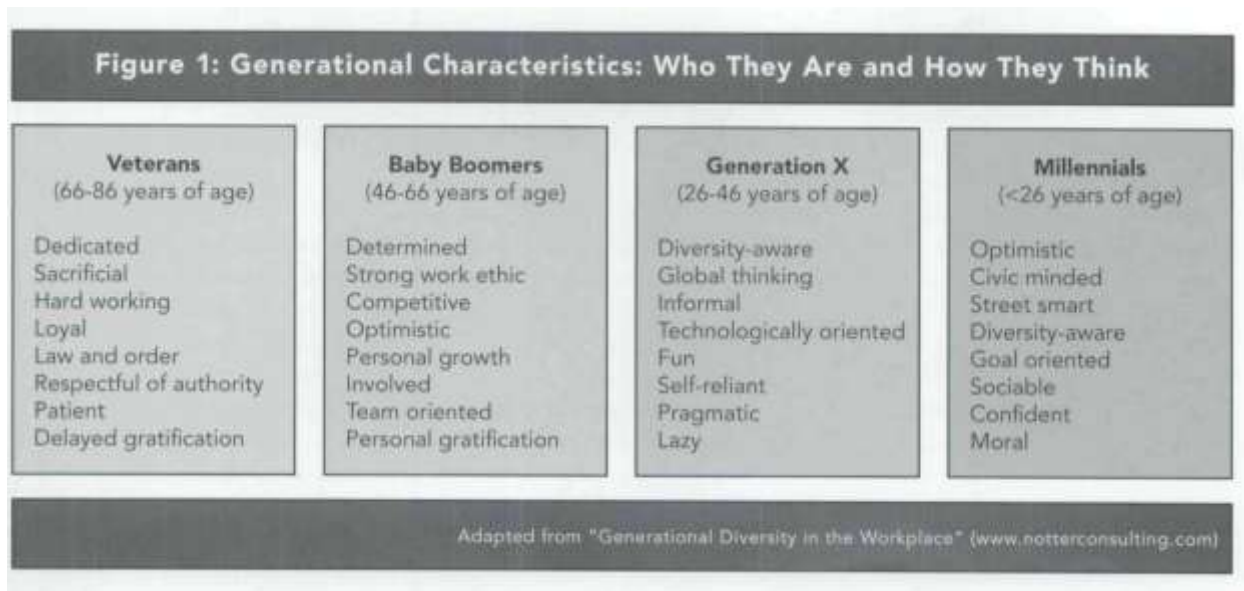
Problems seen by Human Resource organizations and social scientists are that the different age group categories find it difficult to work together. They feel that the backgrounds social structures, education, financial status, environmental outlook, technical knowledge, and worldview among other things cause friction. Examples of these perceived problems will be presented as well as ideas on how to alleviate these problems.

Overview:

In a study to evaluate perceptions, two four-person teams were formed to create an advertising campaign. One team consisted of two people aged 27 (Gen Y) and two were aged 42 and 45 (Gen X). The other team consisted of four people aged 27 or 28 (Gen Y). The team performance and final product were evaluated by several hundred respondents. The evaluation showed no difference in the perception of the final product. When team performance was evaluated respondents aged 35 or above gave higher scores for team performance to the Gen Y team than those aged 20 to 34 (Chan, Hui, Cheng, Ng 2013).

Other ways of labeling the different generations are presented in a paper for managers and trainers uses terms such as; veterans or the GI generation are dedicated, conservative, and disciplined, baby boomer are competitive and view other generations as inferior, Gen X are uneasy, insecure, inferior, and economically unstable, Millennials have a great deal of misplaced

self confidence and are cocky. Another visual depicting perceived generational characteristics is shown below:



(Bartley, Ladd, Morris 2007).

Suggestions for dealing with the differences are and “Aggressive communication and Difference deployment”. Aggressive communication is making intense over communication the norm focusing on the underlay biases between generations”. Difference deployment is the “deliberate structuring of teams to take advantage of diverse experiences, skills, knowledge background and viewpoints” in order to form strong project teams, customer contact functions, and departments” (Bartley, Ladd, Morris 2007).

A paper dealing the technology age gap again presents the groups as being very different but offers no advice on how to deal with the differences. The silents are “methodical, with diligent work habits, and are often in service of a vision of persistent, progressive social evolution” Baby Boomers “marched through life with a sense of certainty and entitlement with a distrust for institutions and a penchant for radical transformation that apparently gave rise to management by buzzword”. Millennials are “characterized as optimistic, moral, socially aware,

globally conscious, and bright”. However “50 % of Millennials come from single family homes, they see their place in any specific company or position as transitory with estimates that the average Millennials will change jobs 10 times during their working career”. Gen X “were raised to work harder for less and prefer the most brutally simple path from point A to point B they feel that they are on their own. The major management issue with this group is that they generally assume that their values are shared by everyone around them. Their approach is well suited to a global free market that picks winners and losers on the sole basis of performance” (Lindsay, Perkins, Karanjikar 2009).

A report concerning nurses offers many of the same generational observations but also offers some ideas for managing the situations. Veterans (<1945), “this population of older nurses is diminishing in number as they retire, yet can still be found working in health care settings. These are solid and reliable nurses who value consistency and are no-nonsense performers for which change does not occur easily”. Baby Boomers (1946–1964), “are also loyal employees with a strong sense of duty. They are caught up with the reality they are now managing or being managed by people young enough to be their children, they are team oriented and look to be empowered, and are natural change agents in a dynamic work environment”. Generation X (1965–1976) this is an independent, self-directed techno-savvy group that grew up in the age of latchkey kids. This is a self-sufficient generational cohort who learned to become adaptable to change. The Millennials, Generation Y (1977–1997) “technology and instant communication has always been a part of this generational cohort’s lives. Cell phones for social networking are found in their pockets. This is a global generation accepting multiculturalism as a way of life”. The idea for managing the generational differences has the initials ACORN. “Accommodate

employee differences, Create workplace choices, Operate from a sophisticated management style, Respect competence, and Nourish retention” (Hahn 2011).

There are several papers published by Reliance Staffing & Recruiting, written by Catherine Cantieri that document each of the four generations in great detail. They contain far too much information for this paper but could be useful in a dissertation (Cantieri 2011).

Current State:

There has been much work and research done on identifying and documenting the differences between the generations, but very little work done on trying to find the similarities. Most of the effort has produced superficial ways of dealing with the differences.

Proposed Solution:

The following are ideas that are based on the idea that if the generational divisions are real the differences in attitudes both real and imagined can be overcome. The solution is dealing with each individual’s character strengths and personality types while trying to work on finding how people and generations are similar.

One tool that is available is the Myers Briggs (MBTI) instrument to help determine a person’s personality type always keeping in mind that “every type has value” and helping individuals “recognize his or her true preference (Lawrence, Martin 2004). Examples of preferences are:

Extraversion	Introversion
Sensing	Intuition
Thinking	Feeling
Judging	Perceiving

(The Myers & Briggs Foundation)

See attachment I for details.

Another is Strength Finders which is a tool that determines which character strengths are strongest in an individual. Although there are many strengths, 34 are highlighted by the tool with your top five as being most important to you. It is important to keep in mind that each is a strength and none are weaknesses and that people will have different strengths that will complement others helping to form an effective team / alliance. Some examples of complementary strengths are: “Legendary investor Warren Buffett realized his enthusiasm was well-tempered by Charlie Munger's skepticism. Buffett dubbed his collaborator the "abominable no-man" and claimed that together, they made better investment decisions”. “Pierre Omidyar, founder of eBay, discovered the "analytic powerhouse" he needed for the business in Stanford MBA Jeff Skoll. "It was the perfect balance," Omidyar said of his work with Skoll. "I tended to think more intuitively, and he could say, 'Okay, let's see how we can actually get that done.'” (Gallup Inc 2009).

Tools that help in finding your personal strengths are “Strengths Finder 2.0” (Rath 2007), or the VIA survey (Character Strengths). Having used both tools I have found my strengths are:

Strengths Finder	VIA
Maximizer	Curiosity
Positivity	Humor
Adaptability	Leadership
Strategic	Zest
Includer	Bravery

See attachment II for details.

Making sure each individual is treated as a person and not stereotyped as a member of a group will go a long way in helping to create a functioning workforce across all age groups.

Attachment I

What Each Preference Can Offer

<p>Extraversion</p> <p>Outwardly directed energy needed to move into action</p> <p>Responsiveness to what is going on in the environment</p> <p>A natural inclination to converse and to network</p>	<p>Introversion</p> <p>Inwardly directed energy needed for focused reflection</p> <p>Stability from attending to enduring ideas</p> <p>A natural tendency to think and work alone</p>
<p>Sensing</p> <p>A mastery of the facts</p> <p>Knowledge of what materials and resources are available</p> <p>Appreciation of knowing and doing what works</p>	<p>Intuition</p> <p>Insight and attention to meanings</p> <p>A grasp of what is possible and what the trends are</p> <p>Appreciation of doing what hasn't been tried before</p>
<p>Thinking</p> <p>Analysis of the pros and cons of situations, even when they have a personal stake</p> <p>An ability to analyze and solve problems</p> <p>Want to discover the “truth” and naturally notice logical inconsistencies</p>	<p>Feeling</p> <p>Knowledge of what is important to people and adhere to that in the face of opposition</p> <p>The ability to build relationships and to be persuasive</p> <p>Desire to uncover the greatest good in a situation and notice when people may be harmed</p>
<p>Judging</p> <p>Organization, planning, and follow through on projects</p> <p>Push to get things settled and decided</p> <p>Appreciation of well-organized efficiency</p>	<p>Perceiving</p> <p>Quickly and flexibly responding to the needs of the moment</p> <p>Strive to keep things open so new information may be gathered</p> <p>Appreciation of the need for spontaneity and exploration</p>

(The Myers & Briggs Foundation)

Attachment II

Strengths / VIA

Strengths Finder	VIA
<p style="text-align: center;">1</p> <p>Maximizer</p> <p>Shared Theme Description</p> <p>People who are especially talented in the Maximizer theme focus on strengths as a way to stimulate personal and group excellence. They seek to transform something strong into something superb.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1</p> <p>Curiosity</p> <p>You are curious about everything. You are always asking questions, and you find all subjects and topics fascinating. You like exploration and discovery.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">2</p> <p>Positivity</p> <p>Shared Theme Description</p> <p>People who are especially talented in the Positivity theme have an enthusiasm that is contagious. They are upbeat and can get others excited about what they are going to do.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">2</p> <p>Humor</p> <p>You like to laugh and tease. Bringing smiles to other people is important to you. You try to see the light side of all situations.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">3</p> <p>Adaptability</p> <p>Shared Theme Description</p> <p>People who are especially talented in the Adaptability theme prefer to “go with the flow.” They tend to be “now” people who take things as they come and discover the future one day at a time</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3</p> <p>Leadership</p> <p>You excel at the tasks of leadership: encouraging a group to get things done and preserving harmony within the group by making everyone feel included. You do a good job organizing activities and seeing that they happen.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">4</p> <p>Strategic</p> <p>Shared Theme Description</p> <p>People who are especially talented in the Strategic theme create alternative ways to proceed. Faced with any given scenario, they can quickly spot the relevant patterns and issues.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">4</p> <p>Zest</p> <p>Regardless of what you do,</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">5</p> <p>Includer</p> <p>Shared Theme Description People who are especially talented in the Includer theme are accepting of others. They show awareness of those who feel left out, and make an effort to include them.</p>	<p>you approach it with excitement and energy. You never do anything halfway or halfheartedly. For you, life is an adventure.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">5</p> <p>Bravery You are a courageous person who does not shrink from threat, challenge, difficulty, or pain. You speak up for what is right even if there is opposition. You act on your convictions.</p>
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(Gallup 2009)

(Character Strengths)

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