

Regions 3 & 4 Parent Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) Conference



Navigating A Multi-Generational Workforce

Presented by:
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Instructor Information

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Shirley Burks holds a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration and a Master's Degree in Organizational Management. Her educational background includes numerous professional development programs such as; Project Management, Essentials of Management Development Certificate, Faculty College (UWM), Microsoft Office User Specialist (MOUS) certifications, Train the Trainer Certificate and various continuing education topics on capacity building related issues.

Burks currently serves as the Coordinator of Partnerships and New Initiatives within the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee's School of Continuing Education. Her primary role includes exploring new growth opportunities for the various departments and centers of the School of Continuing Education to meet community professional development and workforce needs through the development of special projects and collaborations with partners both internal and external to the School. She researches current labor/market trends for new programming areas to develop growth strategies and generate revenue. Burks serves as liaison for negotiating new contracts between the School and new vendors. She organizes and facilitates meetings and presentations with staff and partners in an effort to share information and provide needs assessments. She represents the School on University wide committees to foster collaborative relationships.

Burks has extensive knowledge and over 20 years of experience working in the nonprofit sector. She has worked in various capacities as a Director, Employment Recruiter, Workshop Facilitator, Admissions & Training Specialist and Instructor. Her background includes program and curriculum development, as well as overall project implementation and evaluation.

Burks creates curriculum and teaches topics for new and existing online and face to face topics including Organizational Development, Change Management, Stress & Time Management and Critical Thinking Skills Development. Burks has presented trainings for numerous organizations locally and internationally including the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Solutions Inc. (Cairo, Egypt), The Neighborhood House of Milwaukee, Girl Scouts of Milwaukee Area, Goodwill Industries of Southeastern Wisconsin, Employee Solutions Inc., YMCA Community Learning Centers and Milwaukee Public School System.

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Workshop Description

Effectively Communicating Within A Multi-Generational Workplace

Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Gen Xers, Millennial and Gen 2020 oh my! Put them all in one workplace and what do you do? How do you effectively communicate across the board to each group and promote a culture for collaboration? We are currently in a very unique position in time where we could very well have as many as five generations actively working in the same workplace at the same time.

This session will assist you in identifying the unique factors of each generation to help build and motivate successful teams. We will explore ways to utilize strengths in each group to achieve common goals.

Learning Objectives

- Identify what motivates each generational group currently in the work environment

- Explore best approaches to communicate with each generational group

- Discuss how each generation best gives and receives information

Four in One!

“For the first time in history of the traditional workplace we have four generations attempting to work together to function as one organization.”

*Rene’ Johnston-Gingrich
“Four Generations, One Workplace”*

When Generations Collide at Work Quiz

Modified from:

Different Generations at Work by [Lynne C. Lancaster and David Stillman](#)

Which of the following is important for a Baby Boomer (Born 1946-1964)?

- A. Build parallel careers.
- B. Build a stellar career.
- C. Build a legacy.
- D. Build a portable career.
- E. Build an entrepreneurial career

Your response? _____

Which of the following is important to Generation Xers (Born 1965-1980)?

- A. Give me balance now, not when I'm sixty-five.
- B. Support me in shifting the balance.
- C. Help me balance everyone else and find meaning myself.
- D. Work isn't everything; flexibility to balance my activities is.
- E. Give me information, I can teach myself what I need to know.

Your response? _____

Which of the following feedback do Millennials (Born 1981-1994) prefer?

- A. Sorry to interrupt, but how am I doing?
- B. Once a year, with lots of documentation.
- C. No news is good news.
- D. Feedback whenever I want it, at the push of a button.
- E. Short and sweet, no need to harp on it. On to the next thing.

Your response? _____

What makes a workplace multi-generational?

What are the Benefits of the Multi-Generational Work Team?

- The team can attract and retain talented people of all ages.
- The team is more flexible.
- The team can gain and maintain greater market share because its members reflect a multi-generation market.
- Decisions are stronger because they're broad-based with multiple perspectives.
- The team is more innovative and creative.
- The team can meet the needs of a diverse public and can relate more effectively.
- _____
- _____

How Do We Define the Generations?

<h1>Generations</h1>					
Born Between	1922-1945	1946-1964	1965-1980	1981-1994	1995-2015
Known as:	Veterans Silent Traditionalists Matures	Baby Boomers Vietnam Gen. Me Generation	Generation X Gen X Xers Baby Busters	Generation Y Gen Y Millennial Echo Boomers	Generation Z Gen 9/11 Homelanders Gen 2020
General age in 2017	~ 72 years and older	~ 53 – 71 years old	~ 37 – 52 years old	~ 17– 36 years old	~ 2 – 22 years old

Notes

What is Unique About Each Generation?

Generational Characteristics					
	Veterans	Boomers	Gen X	Millennials	Gen Z
Core Values	Respect for authority Conformers Dutiful Custom	Optimism Involvement Tolerance Workaholism Stimulation	Skepticism Fun Informality Self-reliance Stimulation	Realism Confidence Extreme fun Social Self-direction Goal-focused Purpose	Uniqueness Authenticity Creativity Shareability Humanity
Work Ethic	Discipline Hard work Loyalty	Questions authority Self-centered Crusading causes	Task-oriented Self-reliant Work-life balance	Multitasking “What’s next?” Eagerness	Flexibility Self-reliant Personal freedom
Family	Traditional Nuclear	Disintegrating	Latch-key kids	Merged families	Diversity Blended
Education	A dream	A birthright	A way to get there	An incredible expense	Digital learning Hands-on
Communication Media	Rotary phones One-on-one Write a memo	Touch-tone phones Call me anytime	Cell phones Call me only at work	Internet Picture phones Emails	Born with tech in hand Everything social
Dealing with Money	Put it away Pay cash	Buy now, pay later	Cautious Conservative Save, save, save	Earn to spend	Conscientious Mindful of debt Savers
Stereotypes	Old-fashioned Practical Rule followers	Ambitious Optimistic Wealthy	Selfish Risk takers Cynical	Job hoppers Tech-dependent Work to live	Constantly connected Distracted Uninterested

Notes

How Does Each Generation Operate Within the Workplace?

In The Workplace					
	Veterans	Boomers	Gen X	Millennials	Gen Z
Ethic & Values	Hard work Respect authority	Workaholics Work efficiently	Self-reliance Skeptical	Multitasking Goal oriented	Egalitarian – human rights issues are important
Work is ...	An obligation	An exciting adventure	A difficult challenge	A means to an end	Financial means to success
Leadership Style	Directive	Consensual	Everyone is the same	Collaborative	TBD
Interactive Style	Individual	Team player	Entrepreneur	Participative	Social
Communication	Written Formal	In person One-on-one Telephone	Direct Email Text messaging	Text messaging Social Medial	Digital natives Hand-held devices
Feedback	No news is good news	Not keen on feedback	Direct – “How am I doing?”	Requires lots Instantaneous	Bite-sized Immediate Real-time
Rewards	Satisfaction in a job well done	Money Title recognition	Freedom is the best reward	Meaningful work	Money
What Motivates?	When experience is respected	Feeling valued Feeling needed	Do it your way Forgetting the rules	Knowing You will work with other talented people	Financial success
Work & Family Life	Clear separation of the two	No balance Work to live	Balance	Balance	High salary over balance

Notes

	Assets	Liabilities
Veterans	Experience, enhanced knowledge, dedication, focus, stability, loyalty, emotional maturity, and perseverance	Reluctant to buck the system, uncomfortable with conflict, retrained when they disagree
Boomers	Service orientation, dedication, team perspective, experience, and knowledge	Not necessarily “budget minded,” uncomfortable with conflict, reluctant to go against peers, may put process ahead of result
Gen X	Adaptability, techno-literacy, independence, creativity, willingness to buck the system	Skeptical, distrustful of authority
Gen Y	Collective action, optimism, ability to multi-task, and technological savvy	Need for supervision and structure; inexperience—particularly with handling difficult people issues
Gen Z	Nature ability with technology, drive for success, value on human rights issues	Unrealistic view on career timeline and rewards

Notes

Discussion

Let's take a closer look at each generation and their attributes.

Veterans:

- Came of age in 30s – 50s
- Company loyalty
- Believe in sacrifice
- Duty before fun
- Adherence to rules
- Leader has command & control
- Communicate via memo
- _____



Messages from their formative years...

- Make do or do without.
- Stay in line.
- Sacrifice.
- Be heroic.
- Consider the common good.
- _____

What drives Veterans?

- Show them respect
- Clear direction from leadership
- Person one on one contact
- No news is good news – not a lot of need for feedback
- _____

Motivating Messages...

- “Your experience is respected here.”
- “It’s valuable to the rest of us to hear what has and hasn’t worked in the past.”
- “Your perseverance is valued and will be rewarded.”
- _____

What was the technology that shaped the era for the Veterans?

Discussion

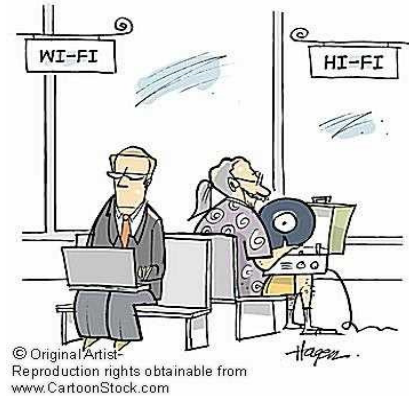
Let's take a closer look at each generation and their attributes.

Baby Boomers:

- Came of age in the 60s-70s
- Boomers grew up at a time of dramatic social change
- Experimental, individualism, free spirited, social cause oriented
- Value personal fulfillment
- Question authority
- Loves to have meetings
- _____

Messages from their formative years...

- Be anything you want to be.
- Change the world.
- Work well with others.
- Live up to expectation.
- Duck and cover.
- _____



What drive Boomers?

- Show them that you care.
- Fairness is important.
- Know their names.
- Give them a chance to talk-they want to show you what they know.
- Dialogue and participation is key.
- _____

Motivating Messages...

- "Your opinion is valued."
- "You can work as long as you want to."
- "Your contribution will be recognized."
- "We need you."
- _____

What was the technology that shaped the era for the Boomers?

Discussion

Let's take a closer look at each generation and their attributes.

Gen Xers:

- Came of age in the 80s-90s
- Believe in eliminating the task
- Value structure and direction
- Leaders should challenge others
- Ask why
- Communication should be direct and immediate
- _____



Messages from their formative years...

- Don't count on it.
- Heroes don't exist.
- Get real.
- Take care of yourself.
- Always ask "why?"
- _____

What drive Xers?

- Humor is important
- Give it to them straight; want information, not hype
- Talk with them, not at them, develop a dialogue
- Never confuse having a career with having a life
- Be visual and dynamic
- Be on top of your game; know your stuff and demonstrate it clearly
- _____

Motivating Messages...

- "Do it your way."
- "We've got the newest hardware and software."
- "There aren't a lot of rules around here."
- _____

What was the technology that shaped the era for the Xers?

Discussion

Let's take a closer look at each generation and their attributes.

Gen Yers:

- Came of age in 2000-2010
- "Trophy Generation", or "Trophy Kids,"
 - Everyone gets something for participating
- Value what's next
- Entrepreneurial spirit
- Want feedback/rewards whenever they want it at the push of a button
- _____

Messages from their formative years...

- You are special.
- Leave no one behind.
- Connect 24/7.
- Achieve now!
- Serve your community.
- _____



What drive Yers?

- Technology is expected
- Expect leaders to know more than they do
- They want more attention from authority figures
- Active and interactive: let them move
- Visually similar to Xers
- Provide supervision and structure
- Yers ARE readers so provide more back up information
- _____

Motivating Messages...

- "You will be working with other bright, creative people."
- "You and your co-workers can help turn this company around."
- "You can be a hero here."
- _____

What was the technology that shaped the era for the Yers?

Millennials Expect...

- Frequent and instantaneous feedback
- Skills and information that will help make their working lives less stressful and increase their marketability
- Training in people skills
- To make money

Three elements drive the ambitions of Generation Y in the workplace

1. **Impact**--Making a difference is a strong motivational force behind Gen Y's efforts.
2. **Communication**--The instant communication framework Gen Y developed through extensive computer usage has led to a need for more professional feedback than that of past generations
3. **Flexibility**--The divide between work and life is continually growing narrower as more people shift from the bricks-and-mortar to a remote workplace.

Gen Yers, the newest generation to enter the workforce were indulged and scheduled by their Baby Boomer parents, have taken the workplace by storm. They bring benefits and challenges to your workplace. Employers are dealing with helping up to four generations of workers happily co-exist to serve customers as a team. The economic downturn has made the four generation situation even more challenging with Boomers who planned retirement, but are unable to retire - and not happy about it. Gen Yers and Xers are supervising Boomers and Boomers are mentoring those who wish to learn from the leaving generation.

Managers need to develop the skill of managing Gen Ys. The Millennials have a quest for work-life balance.

Notes

11 Tips for Millennial Management

1. **Provide structure.**
 - Reports have monthly due dates. Jobs have fairly regular hours. Certain activities are scheduled every day. Meetings have agendas and minutes. Goals are clearly stated and progress is assessed. Define assignments and success factors.
2. **Provide leadership and guidance.**
 - Millennials want to look up to you, learn from you, and receive daily feedback from you. They want “in” on the whole picture and to know the scoop. Plan to spend a lot of time teaching and coaching and be aware of this commitment to millennials when you hire them. They deserve and want your very best investment of time in their success.
3. **Encourage the millennial's self-assuredness, "can-do" attitude, and positive personal self-image.**
 - Millennials are ready to take on the world. Their parents told them they can do it - they can. Encourage - don't squash them or contain them.
4. **Take advantage of the millennial's comfort level with teams. Encourage them to join.**
 - They are used to working in groups and teams. In contrast to the lone ranger attitude of earlier generations, millennials actually believe a team can accomplish more and better - they've experienced team success. Millennials gather in groups and play on teams; you can also mentor, coach, and train your millennials as a team.
5. **Listen to the millennial employee.**
 - Your millennial employees are used to loving parents who have scheduled their lives around the activities and events of their children. These young adults have ideas and opinions, and don't take kindly to having their thoughts ignored. After all, they had the best listening, most child-centric audience in history.
6. **Millennial employees are up for a challenge and change.**
 - Boring is bad. They seek ever-changing tasks within their work. What's happening next is their mantra. Don't bore them, ignore them, or trivialize their contribution.
7. **Millennial employees are multi-taskers on a scale you've never seen before.**
 - Multiple tasks don't phase them. Talk on the phone while doing email and answering multiple instant messages – yes! This is a way of life. In fact, without many different tasks and goals to pursue within the week, the millennials will likely experience boredom.
8. **Take advantage of your millennial employee's computer, cell phone, and electronic literacy**
 - Are you a Boomer or even an early Gen-Xer? The electronic capabilities of these employees are amazing.
9. **Capitalize on the millennial's affinity for networking.**
 - Not just comfortable with teams and group activities, your millennial employee likes to network around the world electronically.
10. **Provide a life-work balanced workplace.**
 - Your millennials are used to cramming their lives with multiple activities. They may play on sports teams, walk for multiple causes, spend time as fans at company sports leagues, and spend lots of time with family and friends. They work hard, but they are not into the sixty hour work weeks defined by the Baby Boomers. Home, family, spending time with the children and families, are priorities. Don't lose sight of this. Balance and multiple activities are important to these millennial employees. Ignore this to your peril.

Discussion

Let's take a closer look at each generation and their attributes.

Gen 2020:

- Are coming of age now
- Pragmatic realists
- The “seen-it-all” generation
- Confident about themselves, not the world
- Are “connected” in every way possible
- _____

Messages from their formative years...

- You have access to anything
- Diversity is a given
- The world is an uncertain place
- Expect and ask for more!
- You are personally responsible for changing the world, humanity.
- _____



What drive Gen 2020?

- Financial Success
- Humanity; racial, sexual and gender equality isn't an idea but a reality.
- Values and desires are still taking shape.
- Now is the time to see them through a clear lens
- _____

Motivating Messages...

- “You will make lots of money.”
- “You will help others.”
- “You are the necessary key to implement change.”
- _____

What was the technology that shaped the era for the Zers?

Gen 2020 Expect...

- Instantaneous feedback (the “like” and “share” buttons)
- Realism, they are post 9/11 and recession. They do not view the world with much optimism
- Diversity and equality
- To share information
- To make large amounts of money

Fact or Myth

Younger generations have no work ethic. _____

Older employees are not as productive. _____

Younger generations don't want to put in the hours to get ahead. _____

Younger generation employees have no respect for authority. _____

Group Work

Addressing Your Own Generational Assumptions

- What do I believe are the most important attributes of an employee?

- How loyal do I believe an employee should be to an organization?

- What balance do I maintain between my work and personal life?

- Do I feel most comfortable with people of a certain age group at work?

Six Strategies for Multi-Generational Harmony

1. Establish Respect

It doesn't matter how old or how experienced we are; we all crave respect. And, just as newcomers need to respect older generations' seniority and experience, so long-servers need to adjust to and respect the talent and potential of younger generations. Only when each group respects the other can both thrive.

The key to respecting other generations is to understand and **accept that they are different** from yours. Consider what motivates people from different generations, what experiences they might have had, and what their working styles are likely to be.

2. Be Flexible and Accommodating

When you understand what makes other generations "tick," being able to accommodate their needs and preferences, where practical, can help to prevent division and conflict.

Each generation has its wants and needs, and values different ways of working. Older generations often have fewer responsibilities and costs at home and they appreciate the opportunity to work part-time or reduced hours, so that they can enjoy the benefits and rewards of a lifetime's work. But an increasing number of Generation Xers are part of the "**sandwich generation**," responsible for caring for both elders and children alongside their work. And for members of Generation Y, a sociable life outside of work is often just as important as their career.

3. Avoid Stereotyping

It's easy to stereotype different groups. For example, if you're a Baby Boomer, you may think of Millennials as tech-obsessed and lacking in people skills. To Generation Z, Boomers may seem to be stubborn and inflexible.

Everyone is unique so, instead of assuming the worst, fight your **unconscious bias** and accept individuals based on their merits, rather than as "typical" members of particular generations. Remember, chances are, somebody may be stereotyping you! You can change their perceptions and attitude by demonstrating a willingness to listen to new ideas or suggestions, and by sharing your knowledge and expertise.

4. Learn From One Another

The different generations have a wealth of knowledge and experience that they can share.

The Boomers in your team, for example, can pass on the knowledge, information, useful contacts, and perspectives that they have developed during their years at work. In return, a Generation Y colleague can help them to get to grips with recent innovations, such as the latest developments in social media and viral marketing.

Successful multi-generational teams identify, value and build on one another's skills and experiences. This focus on individual strengths, rather than on generational differences, is a key part of thriving in the modern workplace.

5. Tailor Your Communication Style

The generations often have their preferred methods of communication. Silents and Boomers tend to use one-on-one, telephone or written communication, whereas Generations X and Y tend to like emails and texts. Generation Z generally prefers the collaborative interaction of social media.

Generations differ in the degree of formality they use, too. Older team members tend to be more formal, whereas their younger colleagues will more likely use colloquialisms, abbreviations and "emojis" – small digital images and icons that are used in messages to represent ideas or emotions. This is more suited to personal or less important messages or communications. Serious or important messages are probably not the best times to use smiley face emojis!

Sticking rigidly to your own favored means and **style of communication** can alienate others, so, although it might not feel natural, try to tailor your communication to suit the recipient whenever it's appropriate.

6. Don't Overlook the Similarities

Focus on the things that unite you with colleagues of all generations, rather than dwelling on the differences.

You might struggle at first to find similarities between yourself and older or younger team members. But, however stark the differences might appear to be, **research** suggests that there are more similarities than differences across the generations. After all, most people like to feel engaged with their work, to receive fair pay, to achieve, to build a better quality of life, to be happy and respected, and so on. Likewise, many of us share the same grumbles, such as feeling overworked and underpaid!

Why is it important to acknowledge generational differences?

Case Exercises

Define the issue(s):

- ---

What are the challenges:

- ---

Propose solutions:

- ---

Similarities Across Generations

- All groups view work as a means to personal fulfillment – they expect compensation that is equivalent to the marketplace
- Workplace culture matters
- Employees value an environment where they are heard and valued
- Flexibility helps people balance work-family obligations

How Do We Bridge the Gap?

- **Create cross-generational teams** and encourage workers to share their ideas and expectations
- **Focus on outcomes** not superficial details.
- **Embrace differences** while looking for common ground.
- **Work together** and use multigenerational viewpoints as a strength for the workplace.
- **Be flexible**, relationships are more fluid for both employer and employee – younger employees may be more mobile and appear less loyal, but the same is true of most organizations.
- **Respect each other.** While there is a collectivity of “generations,” it’s important not to make assumptions of individuals based on age. Avoid sweeping generalizations. Not every Boomer is technophobic and not every Generation Yer is carefree.

Notes

Working Successfully in the 21st Century: Integrating a Multi-Generational Diverse Workforce and Understanding the Role of New Technologies

From Bahira Trask, Ph.D. Presentation 2013

Checklist for managers and team leaders:

- Identify your own generational assumptions
 - What do I believe are the most important attributes of an employee?
 - How loyal do I believe an employee should be to an organization?
 - What balance do I maintain between my work and personal life?
 - Do I feel most comfortable with people of a certain age group?
- Personalize your style
- Be creative
- Find out about other's preferences
- Build on strengths
- Recognize the unique talents that others bring to the table
- Offer options for getting tasks done
- Keep open communication going
- Initiate conversations about generational differences
- Ask about people's needs and preferences instead of assuming
- Be respectful of differences and incorporate them
- Acknowledge the different values that may be held by various generations
- Remain flexible and open to other perspectives
- Encourage generational partnerships and collaborations

Communication Channels

- Factual
 - Data, “wow” statistics,
 - Visuals – makes facts “memorable”
- Emotional
 - We “follow” and engage” because of how we “feel” – recognize, energize, provide optimism
- Symbolic
 - A leader without symbols is like summer without heat – make a connection, use storytelling



Levels of Communication

- Social
 - Impersonal, easy to decipher
- Significant
 - More important issues like plans, priorities, relationships, goals
- Intimate
 - Deepest level reserved for spouses, allies, and deities.

Questions

- Do we expect all members of our team or department to speak up?

- How do we reward them when they do?

- How do we shut them down?

The Power of Feedback

Why do we hesitate?

- Fear or dread
- Lack of observation time
- Lack of proximity
- Lack of skilled feedback or positive coaching themselves
- _____

Guidelines for Giving Productive Feedback

Feedback should be:

- Specific
- Well-timed
- Owned by the giver
- Based on observable behavior
- Checked to ensure clear communication
- _____



Reinforcing Feedback

- Tell them what was right
- Tell them “why” it was valuable

Redirecting Feedback

- Tell them what’s not effective
- Make a suggestion and/or a question that will help them find the right path

Notes

The 60-Second Opening

1. The issue is:
 - Be concise.
 - Is it a concern, challenge, opportunity, or recurring problem that is becoming more troublesome?

2. Select a specific example that illustrates the behavior or situation you want to change:
 - Keep it short – you only have 60 seconds.
 - What have I seen that I can describe? What’s the “visual”

3. Describe your emotions about this issue:
 - Sharing “how you feel” is disarming.

4. Clarify what’s at stake:
 - Why is this important?
 - What is at stake for the individual, for you, for the customers, the team, the organization?
 - Speak calmly and quietly – simply “clarify.”

5. Identify your contribution to this problem:
 - Recognize any role you played in creating the problem.
 - Acknowledge your accountability as appropriate.

6. Indicate your wish to resolve the issue:
 - Use the word **resolve**.
 - “Resolve” communicates good intent on your part.

7. Invite the other person to respond:
 - Ask them to offer their perspective. Sit. Stay. Listen.

Source: Fierce Conversations by Susan Scott, 2002

Activity

“Recognition Report Card”

	Grade
1) An award, preferably given in front of your peers.	_____
2) A plaque to hang on the wall.	_____
3) A thank you, in writing, from your supervisor.	_____
4) A note to my supervisor’s supervisor about my excellent performance.	_____
5) A chance to be on a really exciting, cutting-edge project.	_____
6) Opportunity to work with people from other parts of the company.	_____
7) Some flexibility in your schedule.	_____
8) A chance to lunch with senior management.	_____
9) A day off.	_____
10) A bonus of some sort.	_____
11) A promotion.	_____
12) A change in your title.	_____
13) * _____	_____
14) * _____	_____
15) * _____	_____

*Are there any that you would add?

OVERALL GPA _____



Final Checkpoint

1. Which generation is entering the workforce today? _____
2. How many generations are currently working in the workplace today?
3. Boomers enjoy having meetings. T F
4. What is the age of the “homelander” generation now? _____
5. It is best to establish small talk with a Gen Xer before you present information. T F
6. Creating individual work teams for each generation to address issues is the best way to bridge the multi-generational gap. T F
7. We hesitate to give feedback because of fear or dread. T F
8. When giving feedback, it is important to be very general. T F

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