



# solutions

## BRIDGING THE GAP



**Raise the engagement level, job satisfaction, and overall performance of your multi-generational workforce with expert support from your Employee Assistance Program (EAP).**

### Understanding Generational Differences

The American workforce has four diverse generations working side-by-side, each with their own viewpoints, values, and styles. Understanding the nuances across generations can result in a more effective team. The descriptions below provide some broad generalizations of the different generations.\*

#### **Traditionalists (born before 1945)**

- Respect authority and believe in hard work and discipline
- Change in the status quo can be discomfoting
- Just beginning to become familiar with the concept of work/life balance
- Measure their work by the hour
- Prefer formal face-to-face communication
- Can often find new technology challenging



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## Baby Boomers (born 1945 through 1964)

- “Live to work”—accustomed to working long hours to advance
- Typically not used to discussions of work/life balance
- Like learning independently or from experts, but can also work well in teams
- Prefer personal interaction, such as in-person meetings or phone calls
- Want to feel valued and needed at work
- Can be technologically challenged at times

## Generation X (born 1965 through 1980)

- Seek precise and straightforward instructions and deadlines
- Pragmatic and results-driven workers
- Can be somewhat skeptical of leadership and overbearing rules
- Value immediate and direct contact via email or voice message
- Support collaborative peer-to-peer learning
- Oftentimes tech-adept learners

## Millennials (born after 1980)

- Highly tech-savvy; connected 24/7
- Flexible hours are an important factor in job selection
- Seek a positive work environment full of guidance and praise
- Comfortable with virtual communication, such as instant messaging
- Learn best when they see value in what they’re learning
- Measure work by results, not hours

Be mindful of these characteristics and leverage the strengths of your multi-generational team members. Your EAP offers confidential consultations to help you choose management styles that take full advantage of your team’s intergenerational cultures and capabilities.

*\*Note: Some individuals on your team might not exhibit the stereotypical characteristics of their generation.*

## Tips for Managing Your Multi-Generational Workforce

Today’s federal managers face new challenges and opportunities amid a changing workforce and advances in technology. Take on your changing work environment with confidence and raise your team’s engagement level using the tips below:

### Communication

Technology today makes it possible to connect with anyone, anytime, anywhere. Because members of your team from different generations may have different communication preferences, it is important to **speak and communicate in a language that motivates** each generation and drives innovation and creativity.

## Work/Life Balance

Offering lifestyle benefits can help your organization retain top employees. Start to rethink what “work” is and where it can be done. **Consider offering flexible options** for telecommuting, working in virtual teams, or compressed work schedules. Implementing clearly defined goals and performance outcomes will maintain high accountability and productivity levels, regardless of when or where the job is performed.

## Growth and Development

Forming teams that combine members from multiple generations can **stimulate learning and mentoring**. This can help team members benefit from the strengths each employee brings to the table. For example, Millennials can learn professional workplace etiquette from older teammates, while sharing skills in cutting-edge technology with their less tech-savvy colleagues.

## Recognition and Rewards

From promotions to handwritten thank-you notes, **rewards and recognition can pay major dividends** in terms of employee engagement and retention. Ask your employees what they value and what award or recognition would appeal to them. Then, adjust your recognition system accordingly.

## Engagement

Being sensitive to generational differences also provides an opportunity for boosting engagement among “partially engaged” employees. Respecting the beliefs and experience of Traditionalists or valuing Baby Boomers and their strong work ethic, for instance, can help these team members feel more connected with you and your team’s goals.

Organizations and managers that embrace generational differences and integrate the unique strengths of their employees often thrive. **Consult with your EAP for more support and guidance** on getting your multi-generational workforce to perform at its best.

Help is available at any time. Your EAP offers 24/7 management consultation services over the phone and in person to help you handle sensitive workplace issues. Call your EAP for expert assistance.

**EAP**  
**24 HOURS A DAY**  
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