

5 Strategies for Managing a Multigenerational Workforce

Guide

Intro

Today's workforce is in a unique position. Baby Boomers and Generation X comprise slightly over half of the workforce, while Millennials make up almost 40%. Gen Z has now reached working age, too, with an approach to work that can vary drastically from prior generations.

For employers, navigating this diverse landscape can be difficult since each generation has different attitudes about work and expectations from employers — but the benefits of a multigenerational workplace are well worth the challenge.

Bridging the generational divide at work is essential for success and will only become more important as the rest of Gen Z starts working. The successful coordination of different age groups will require a multi-pronged approach, from new leadership strategies to workforce management software.



#01 THE CURRENT WORKFORCE

The current multigenerational workplace landscape includes an array of clashing ideologies, styles, and opportunities. Some of the most prevalent differences leading to a generational divide revolve around attitudes and values:

- **Baby Boomers:** The older generation, born between 1946 and 1964, tends to be competitive, dedicated, and hard-working. They value company loyalty and hierarchies of authority. In the workplace, they often aim to inspire teams and teach younger generations. As Baby Boomers approach retirement age, they might look for flexible or reduced scheduling options.
- **Generation X:** Gen X was born between 1965 and 1980, with workers who often exemplify independence, efficiency, and innovation. They're more flexible than Baby Boomers, looking for more relaxed workplaces that value productivity and autonomy over hours worked. They may take more innovative risks and challenge current procedures. Gen X usually seeks a healthy work-life balance and monetary awards, like bonuses and stock options.
- **Millennials:** Millennials grew up in a technological explosion. Born between 1981 and 1996, these individuals tend to look for meaning in their jobs. They want to be creative and innovative, using technology to make an impact and work more efficiently. Many Millennials want relaxed work environments and are willing to challenge the status quo or authority to get them.
- **Generation Z:** Gen Z is the youngest of the bunch, born between 1997 and 2015. Although they're new to the workforce, they bring innovative thinking and adaptability. They often value honesty, authenticity, and connection, and they want employers to offer transparency, flexible environments, clear directions, and job security.

NEW INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY

#02

Since technology underpins most modern workplaces, leveraging it correctly can help bridge the generational divide. Digital tools that work for everyone are essential for including employees from all generations. Intuitive platforms can help meet the generations' learning and working styles.

Here are a few features to consider adding to your workplace to create a supportive, collaborative environment:

- **Flexible scheduling options:** In a 2021 study that asked employees to choose the most important benefits, flexible and remote working options took the second spot, just behind generous paid time off. While that might sound hard to offer in some fields — like hectic front-line businesses — good scheduling software can make it possible. Focus on offering tools that build flexibility, like shift swapping and requesting time off. More intelligent scheduling practices can also help you plan around time-off requests and approve them more often.
- **Novel benefits and incentives:** While health care, time off, and retirement plans are must-haves, some companies appeal to employees across generations with benefits like pet insurance, professional development funding, child care, financial resource planning, and fitness perks, such as a gym membership.
- **Equal opportunities for growth and development:** In one study from the Pew Research Center, 63% of workers cited advancement opportunities as a reason for quitting. Help your workers grow by addressing skill and competency management. Indeavor can also help you find upskilling and reskilling opportunities and ways to leverage your multigenerational employees' skills.

#03 SCHEDULING SOLUTIONS

Your scheduling solution can play a significant role in accommodating the individual needs of a diverse workforce and managing a multigenerational workplace. Some ways your workforce scheduling can address the generational divide include:

- **Meeting shift demands:** Intelligent scheduling can help you match employees to the best shifts according to factors like preferences, qualifications, and skills.
- **Offering self-service tools:** You'll want to offer modern tools for viewing schedules, requesting changes, and contacting supervisors. Mobile access may be particularly helpful for younger workers, and an intuitive interface is essential for some tech-averse older employees.
- **Removing bias:** A smart scheduler helps ensure fair and equitable scheduling — administrators can't apply biases for certain workers, such as giving a senior employee more desirable shifts.
- **Preventing burnout and violations:** Employees from all generations are susceptible to burnout. Regulatory compliance and internal rules can help prevent it, which a good scheduler can accommodate, ensuring your team gets the time off they need to do their best work.

MANAGEMENT STYLES #04

Managers must understand the benefits of a multigenerational workforce and their role in drawing those benefits out. Older managers can't dismiss younger employees, and young managers must be comfortable managing older people.

While management styles for different generations can vary, all of them should include the following traits:

- **Respect and appreciation:** Managers must see what each person can contribute and be open to hearing what all employees have to offer.
- **Psychological safety:** Psychological safety is all about feeling safe enough to take interpersonal risks, disagree openly, speak up, and raise concerns without fearing negative repercussions or needing to sugarcoat things. It's essential in fostering innovation, collaboration, and community, and many generations value the opportunity to make a difference. McKinsey offers some [leadership tips for creating psychological safety](#) in workplaces.
- **Empathy:** Empathetic management should underpin all efforts to bridge generational divides at work. Animosity between these groups often occurs from negative emotions like frustration and fear. Managers must approach problems with empathy to ensure a safe, supportive environment.

Include discussions of these traits during training, and connect them with the importance of bridging the generational divide to create a diverse, multigenerational workforce.

#05 ACTIONABLE STEPS

You'll need to provide concrete steps to help managers bridge the workplace generation gap. Give your managers some multigenerational workplace tips for supporting employees of all ages, such as:

- Creating mentorship programs that include the knowledge of younger employees.
- Pairing employees from different generations on collaborative projects.
- Creating feedback loops, such as pulse surveys and open-door policies, to provide an avenue for making positive change.
- Set clear expectations about mutual respect and understanding, supported by a company culture of open-mindedness.
- Deploying initiatives that appeal to different generations, such as bonuses for Baby Boomers or extra time off for Millennials and Gen Z.
- Finding common goals and values among team members.
- Reskilling senior employees with learning opportunities, prolonging their careers and supporting retention efforts.

Conclusion

- #01 — **The current workforce** spans generations, each with unique values, expectations, and preferences
- #02 — **New innovative technology** bridges generational gaps through intuitive tools, flexibility, and collaboration
- #03 — **Scheduling solutions** support diverse needs with fairness, flexibility, mobile tools, and compliance safeguards
- #04 — **Management styles** must balance empathy, respect, and safety to unite generational strengths
- #05 — **Actionable steps** empower managers to connect generations through mentorship, feedback, and inclusion

Managing a multigenerational workplace is no easy task, but it's crucial and will only become more impactful as the workforce evolves. The generational divide in expectations, work styles, and communication preferences can make this even more challenging. Effective workforce management is essential for facilitating a positive environment for everyone.

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