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Enhancing Communication Within Multi-Generational organizations

Andrew J. Sage
LLP

Moss Adams
LLP

Anthony C. Andenoro
Gonzaga University

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ENHANCING COMMUNICATION WITHIN MULTI-GENERATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Andrew J. Sage, Moss Adams, LLP
Anthony C. Andenoro, Gonzaga University

In order to capture the essence of employee dynamics within the ever-changing landscape of modern organizations, a naturalistic inquiry using a holistic approach was employed. This technique emphasized the millennial generation's communication strengths as compared to those of previous generation workers. The perceptions of millennial students, millennial workers, multi-generational managers, university professors, and IT professionals were analyzed through a constant, comparative analysis and grouped so that grounded theory was allowed to emerge. The products of this inquiry include practical solutions aimed at reducing the uncertainty for multi-generational managers, specifically regarding the supervision of younger generation workers. In addition, the results of this study suggest that traditional business communication practices, when coupled with an increased use of information and communication technologies that are specifically designed to bolster collaboration and interpersonal communication, have the potential to maximize internal and external communication effectiveness. The data collected within this study provided an overview of the underlying values and perceptions behind millennial behavior. This synopsis, captured through millennial focus groups and face-to-face interviews, acquiesces to the literature surrounding the millennial generation. As outwardly portrayed, the individuals within this study are technically advanced, goal-oriented people who want the freedom and balance to work efficiently and effectively. In addition, the millennials used herein respect the traditional organizational structure, but only to the limit that its hierarchical nature does not stunt innovation achieved through adaptability and collaboration.

INTRODUCTION

The current multi-generational workforce is comprised of individuals who have their own desired methods of receiving and conveying information. Modern day leaders are tasked with recognizing these differences and employing the most effective communication methods in order to engage and empower their workforce. The millennial generation represents the leading challenge for multi-generational leaders within this context, especially considering that accommodating millennial strengths may result in restructuring previous organizational norms.

For example, recent trends indicate that younger generation workers prefer the ease and comfortability behind the modern communication methods of e-mail and instant messaging. Conversely, traditional face-to-face and telephone communication have a long-standing record of being the chief methods for maintaining business relationships. Managers must address the dilemma of maintaining customer service through personal communication, while satiating millennial desires for technology that enhances interpersonal, non-structured communication. Successful 21st Century managers will synergize these two contexts, creating an environment where all employees utilize the most effective tools for internal and external communication.

Utilizing the latest technology bolsters collaboration, especially amongst younger generation workers (Howe & Strauss, 2000). Increased collaboration amplifies innovation, improves sustainability, and reduces turnover (Rogers, 2003). Furthermore, using out-dated communication methods will produce unfavorable results, especially amongst millennials (Havenstein, 2007).

Currently, managers have a unique opportunity to capitalize on millennial strengths of adaptability, innovation, and technical aptitude, while mentoring them, specifically regarding organizational structure and processes associated with traditional business communication.

The timing of this study is paramount, considering that by 2012 approximately ten million, well-qualified, eager millennials will join the workforce within the United States (Cunningham, 2007). Further, this study fills a critical void within the current literature regarding millennials, specifically surrounding the current perception of their behavior, which is subjective and based on past organizational norms.

In addition, discrepancies within the findings of basic millennial culture, including such cursory information as the physical parameters that define the generation, point to a lack of understanding of the individuals that comprise this age group. This study explains the values and perceptions surrounding millennial behavior, while providing practical suggestions to empower this group and strengthen organizational communication.

CONCEPTUAL & THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Values and Perceptions of the Millennial Generation

Millennial behavior can be misleading without careful consideration. According to extensive studies recorded by Havenstein, the millennials are the smartest generation to date in all quantifiable ways (2007). Further, Howe and Strauss report that millennials are a more affluent, better educated, and more diverse group than previous generations (2000). Adding, millennials are optimistic, cooperative,

trusting, and follow rules, while displaying the old-fashioned social habits of teamwork, achievement, modesty, and good conduct (2000).

However, additional research uncovers that while millennials are intrinsically motivated, team players, evidence shows that they will pursue other options if they come up against traditional organizational obstacles (Havenstein, 2007). In addition, according to Cavanaugh, millennials are demanding, questioning, aggressive, and high-maintenance (2008).

It is important to understand that these findings are not conflicting. They are supplementary. The literature highlighted shows the complexity of the millennial generation and demonstrates the need for unique management solutions.

According to Bennett, one organizational mission should surround complimenting the millennials' need for a sense of freedom, purpose, and work-life balance (2008). Auby suggests addressing these motivational needs by reducing the standard workweek and basing contribution on productivity rather than time spent at one's desk (2008). The author also adds that another way to combat millennial impatience, especially during this slumping economy, is by stressing the importance of resume building (2008). Understanding the underlying values and motivation behind millennial behavior will reduce the uncertainty of managing this diverse group.

Cunningham suggests that the combination of millennials' parents valuing their opinion, while providing them with the freedom to make their own decisions, resulted in individuals who possess a distinct sense of self-importance (2007). As a result, millennials maintain high expectations of themselves and their employers. According to Frandsen, misunderstanding behaviors within a multi-generational workplace can result in poor leadership outcomes (2009). Managers will succeed by exploring individual personality traits, evaluating the positive and negative strengths of each, while applying these against organizational goals.

Managing & Motivating Millennials

Cavanaugh highlights millennial eagerness by describing the group as impatient job-hoppers (2008). Other, leading scholars assert, however, that managers experiencing these types of organizational symptoms have not adequately adjusted hiring and workplace processes to effectively recruit and retain this new group (Havenstein, 2007). Management can improve outcomes by encouraging informal relationships with younger generation workers (2007). One way to open and maintain the lines of communication is to provide frequent, task specific feedback (Barreta, 2008).

In a recent study, millennials recorded that providing detailed guidance in daily work was either moderately or extremely important (Hite, 2008). Further, an overwhelming majority of millennial employees said that their peers would benefit from frequent and candid performance feedback (2008). Rather than viewing these requests as demanding or representing a need to be coddled, managers should explore the opportunity to view millennials desire for feedback as a tool to maximize efficiency, while meeting organizational and personal expectations.

According to Healy, organizations can keep young employees interested and motivated by showing the big picture, making work social, and by opening up the lines of communication for two-way feedback (2008). The future of leadership also includes providing more information and preparing employees, so that working teams know the details better than management (Barreta, 2007). In addition, creating an atmosphere that supports rapid-fire communication and allows for creative workplace personalization will empower younger generation workers (Garretson, 2007). This new, collaborative structure results in an innovative role for leaders as coach, support system and monitors these working teams (2007).

Another key distinction between millennials and their predecessors surrounds their motivational needs. Figure 1 illustrates the five phases of basic human motivational needs (Maslow, 1943). Individuals, such as the millennials, who have had all of their basic motivational needs met, up to and including the development of a strong sense of character and self-esteem, have the additional ability and desire to focus their attention on much more grandiose ideas of how their personal contribution should affect the overall community.

Information and Communication Technology

Millennials are more comfortable with technology than any previous generation. According to Garretson, millennials enjoy using personal connectivity devices, such as MP3 players, PDAs, and cell phones (2007). In addition, millennials easily transition into using real-time communication technologies, such as instant messaging and text messaging (2007), which are perfect tools for enhancing interpersonal communication within the workplace. Auby suggests that organizations willing to learn from millennials will stay on the cutting edge (2008).

Further, some technology scholars have found a relationship between technology and interpersonal communication in the workplace and alternatives that foster collaboration (Ogata, 2008; Ball, 2007). For example, leading organizations have increased their practical technology use by implementing applications that transform informal learning into career development for new and existing workers (Weekes, 2009). These applications provide a framework for users to assess, select and track learning in ways that the individual can control (2009). This satiates an organizational goal of developing workers, while empowering workers through technology and personal accountability.

Figure 1: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943)
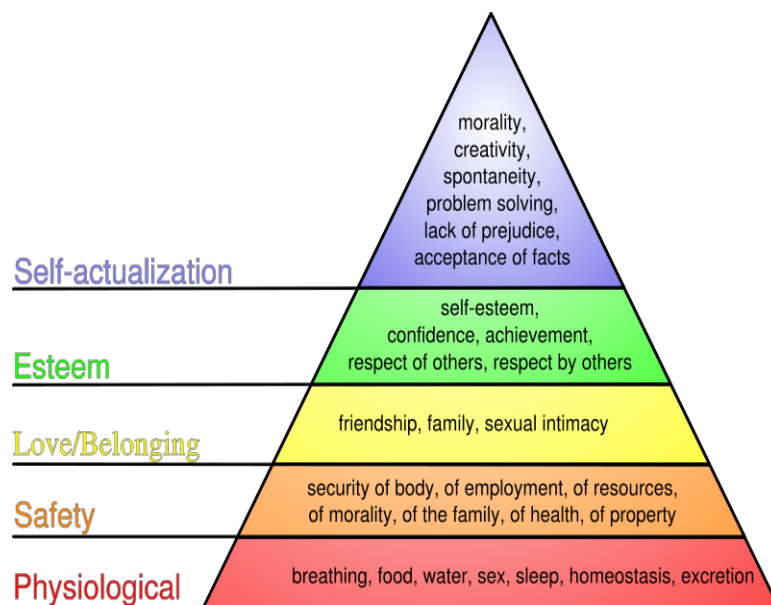
According to Ball, preparing for technology trends requires only a simple shift in your way of viewing your organization (2007). For instance, the author suggests thinking of your organization's website as an adaptable portal that is central to both marketing and innovation (2007). IT solutions, such as video conferencing, make virtual meetings feel like face-to-face interaction, while enabling people to share and collaborate more effectively (2009). These solutions cut travel expenses and help organizations keep their network of associates up-to-date on new products, while allowing consumers to buy directly from the company (2009). Phil Sorgen, President of Microsoft Canada adds, companies that continue to pursue innovation, position themselves to better weather difficult economic times (2009).

Small Group Communication

Small group communication is inevitable within modern organizations. As such, communication techniques within these dynamics must be addressed when developing a framework for practice. Small group communication is critical to organizational success. Effective and efficient small group communication provides members with the opportunity to grow, build a collaborative network, develop understanding, and successfully operate with a socially constructed mores. Further, cooperative learning produces higher achievement, a greater number of positive relationships, and increased psychological health as opposed to competitive to individualistic learning environments (Johnson & Johnson, 1989). In addition, cooperative learning and collaborative environments allow for the possibility of positive social interdependence. When the individuals share common goals and allow outcomes to be affected by the actions of others, organizations have the tremendous potential for enhanced viability (Deutsch, 1962). Further, this dynamic creates an environment where interaction is promoted, participants substitute for each other, participants' effective actions are affirmed, and high inducibility is possible (Johnson & Johnson, 1997).

Leading contenders, like Barreta, have also found a direct relationship between creating a participative environment, like the ones created within small groups, and positive impacts on increasing employee buy-in and ownership in the company (2007). Organizations have a unique opportunity to capitalize on millennials' need for freedom and balance by using collaboration technologies within teaming arrangements, especially when location results in mostly virtual interactions (Havenstein, 2007).

One of the most important factors in creating a strong dynamic within small groups is establishing cohesiveness through the accomplishment of common goals (Forsyth, 2006). Within this dynamic, the team leader's main objective is to observe the group and addresses any aspect of the team's interaction that is impeding progress or shows promise of strengthening team function (Hackman, 2002). In addition, the role of a team leader is to provide group understanding surrounding goal expectations and their rewards (Hackman, 2002). Finally, the manager must empower the groups' members so that they have the ability to affect the outcome of the targeted team goals (2002).

Rivera reports that millennial adaptability within groups is far greater than previous generations due to their increased exposure to diversity (2008). Managers should entrust

40

employees with decision-making authority, supplying the group with applicable information to make those decisions (Barreta, 2008). Further, managers must recognize that peer-to-peer interaction is stifled by conventional corporate hierarchy and work processes (Havenstein, 2007).

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The following is a representative synopsis of a naturalistic study set within the context of communication and leadership theory. This analysis provides a snapshot of the current perceptions of millennials and multi-generational leaders, specifically regarding effective communication methods within multi-generational organizations. Further, this examination offers practical suggestions meant to increase collaboration and improve interpersonal communication. Finally, this study shows that increasing interpersonal communication effectiveness is the key to reducing the uncertainty surrounding the management of younger workers, especially regarding the ever-emerging millennial generation.

The examination of the perceptions of millennial students, millennial workers, and multi-generational leaders provides pertinent feedback concerning the efficiency and effectiveness of utilizing information and communication technology (ICTs) to enhance collaboration and improve interpersonal communication. In addition, this study focuses on context-specific data surrounding the following: The values and beliefs of the millennial generation, managing millennials, employee motivation, information and communication technology, interpersonal communication and small group communication. The overall purpose is to assist managers by providing them practical solutions to empower their younger generation workers.

This study examines the following research objectives:

- Assess millennial perceptions and capabilities surrounding personal connectivity devices and ICTs in the workplace
- Assess millennials' values, view of authority, work and communication style, and expectation of leadership and work environment, compared to the current outlook and practice of multi-generational leaders
- Conduct a cursory review of ICTs that bolster organizational collaboration, while assessing IT Professional's perceptions surrounding the capabilities, limitations, and exposure issues
- Assess millennial & multigenerational manager's perception of collaboration and utilizing ICTs within small working groups
- Assess millennial perception of managerial roles within small working groups
- Make recommendations for the revision of corporate communication practices

METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a naturalistic research method that provided a snapshot of the multi-generational landscape within modern organizations. Data was collected in two ways. First, millennial student focus groups were conducted to gain respondent perspectives in an effort to understand the social plight and organizational issues facing millennials. Respondents were asked open-ended questions regarding their ideal work environment, specifically surrounding their preferences concerning communication and leadership styles. Respondents were also asked to discuss their perception about the practicality of utilizing ICTs to bolster collaboration and interpersonal communication within the workplace.

Second, face-to-face interviews were conducted with millennial workers, IT professionals, academics, and multi-generational leaders within organizations. Personal face-to-face interviews with academics and IT professionals added to the clarity of the study. These respondents were interviewed as subject matter experts for the field of communication theory and information and communication technology, respectively. This allowed for solid triangulation to occur, as they were able to provide practical and contextual knowledge about millennials, their communication patterns, and their impact on organizational climates. Personal face-to-face interviews were also conducted with millennial workers and managers who currently lead within multi-generational work environments. These respondents were interviewed to provide perspectives about working with millennials, specifically regarding communication strategies employed to reach this new audience.

Respondents were determined using a purposive sample to maximize the amount of context-specific information collected (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993). The purposive sample allowed for the richness within each context to surface (Patton, 1990). Three millennial focus groups consisting of 8-10 respondents (n=27) were conducted. In addition, twelve face-to-face interviews were conducted, including 3 millennial workers, 3 IT professionals, 3 academics, and 3 multi-generational leaders (n=12).

Respondent perceptions were analyzed via a constant comparative analysis (Glasser & Strauss, 1967). By compiling statements and noting signs of reoccurring behavior, themes emerged naturalistically allowing grounded theory (Janesick, 1994). This process ultimately allows for transferability to other contexts. Further, triangulation throughout the data collection process allowed for a variety of data to be collected, which maximized the researchers' ability to gain a holistic perspective of the context (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993).

41

Establishing Trustworthiness

Credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are essential components within a naturalistic study (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993). In order to satisfy the aforementioned requirements and ultimately have an impact on the overall body of knowledge dedicated to managing millennials, this study guarantees the credibility surrounding the data collected (1993). Further, the respondent data is compiled into a working application for its intended audience (1993). In addition, a document trail exists to provide the opportunity for its audience to substantiate the findings (1993). Credibility, then, will ultimately be the measure of the useful data provided by this study for its intended audience, multi-generational managers.

In an effort to ensure trustworthiness, the interview questions were piloted within focus groups, comprised of millennial college students. This initial test showed that the questions and context were credible by inducing positive, purposive dialogue. Further, the use of the purposive sample to collect respondent data increases the amount of transferability of this study (1993). In addition, the level of transferability is demonstrated by the amount of thick, context-rich description within the analysis, itself (1993).

Moreover, since this study is an analysis of respondent perceptions during a specific time, dependability is measured by an outside source's ability to perform an outside check, or audit on the process by which the study was conducted (1993). Further, throughout the study, dependability is established by searching for consistencies within respondent data (Janesick, 1994). By grouping that data and allowing a theory to emerge, it is ensured that a similar study would produce similar results (1994).

Confirmability is also judged by the amount to which a study represents the product of the respondent data, rather than researcher bias (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Confirmability is met by tracking respondent data accurately, while coding the respondent answers. Coding the answers also ensures that the respondents maintain their confidentiality, while creating an audit trail that can confirm the findings. Within the focus group, for example, the respondent data was coded by assigning an alphabetical designation to each member of the group, according to their seating arrangement during the session. Lastly, in an effort to provide maximum confirmability, each of the respondents was given a completed copy of this study and asked to confirm or make suggestions surrounding any of the conclusions drawn based on their responses.

Respect for Respondent Data Collection

"Respect for people within a sample population includes informed consent from willing participants." (Hoyle et al., 2002, p. 48) Each respondent that participated in the focus groups or interview sessions conducted within this inquiry, signed a consent form that explains the purpose and scope of his or her involvement. Each participant acknowledged the voluntary nature of his or her contribution to this thesis and was given the opportunity to refuse to answer any particular question or to end his or her individual session at any time. Further, all respondents that participated in a focus group session gave verbal consent to record their responses. Digital recordings were kept of the personal interviews and focus group to satisfy the naturalistic requirement of referential adequacy materials (Lincoln &Guba, 1985). These were imperative in order to capture the complete context within the focus group, thereby refining the subsequent interview questions. The primary researcher conducted member checks by e-mailing each respondent a copy of the results section, so that he or she could provide feedback, surrounding conclusions and detail if they felt their perceptions had been captured incorrectly.

FINDINGS

The findings of this inquiry are reported in case study form. According to Lincoln and Guba, this is best means of reporting a naturalistic research study method as it enhances the reader's understanding of the focus of the inquiry (1985). Further, Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen have identified five additional strengths surrounding the use of case study reporting for the naturalistic inquirer (1993). In this instance, the naturalistic study addressed the perception of millennials and multi-generational managers, surrounding efficient and effective communication within the workplace and the technology that empowers those interactions.

Additionally, the case study is better suited for the reconstruction of respondent data, whereas traditional reporting is better suited for extrinsic concepts and categories that have meaning for scientific observers. Further, Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen have identified five additional strengths surrounding the use of case study reporting for the naturalistic inquirer (1993). They are as follows:

- The case study is better suited for the reconstruction of respondent data, whereas traditional reporting is better suited extrinsic concepts and categories that have meaning for scientific observers
- The case study builds on the readers knowledge by presenting holistic and lifelike descriptions that allow the person to experience the context vicariously
- The case study allows for a better display of the interaction between the inquirer and the respondents
- The case study allows the reader the opportunity to verify internal consistency
- The case study provides the thick description, which is a judgment of transferability

42

The following section provides the findings in tandem with the corresponding research objective:

Research Objective #1: Assess millennial perceptions and capabilities surrounding personal connectivity devices and ICTs in the workplace

According to research published by Garretson, millennials enjoy using personal connectivity devices, such as MP3 players, PDAs, and cell phones (2007). Respondent MW2 admitted, "I try not to use my I-pod at work due to the judgment that it might project", but added, "I would really prefer to use it if given the chance". Respondent FG4 acknowledged, "We stream, even during class or while at work". Further, all seven of the millennial students in the focus group reported having additional devices used for social networking, information gathering or entertainment. According to respondent FG4, a significant by-product of millennials' privileged upbringing and subsequent exposure to technology surrounds their "exceptional capacity to process large amounts of information and to process information, despite distraction".

Millennials reported, "Technology is the key to efficiency and effectiveness within the workplace" (MW1, MW2, & MW3). In addition, millennial workers believe collaboration and interpersonal communication are enhanced through innovative solutions, such as instant messaging, virtual meetings and web-based application within small groups. MW1 also referred to personal experience with previous generation managers stating, "They do not see the benefit of using new technological solutions until they experience the efficiencies through a quick demonstration". Auby agrees that organizations that are willing to learn from millennials will stay on the cutting edge (2008).

Research Objective #2: Assess millennials' values, view of authority, work and communication style, and expectation of leadership and work environment, compared to the current outlook and practice of multi-generational leaders

Millennials are a diverse, complex group of individuals. Howe and Strauss' contend millennials display the old-fashioned social habits of teamwork, achievement, modesty, and good conduct (2000). Conversely, Cavanaugh asserts that millennials are demanding, questioning, aggressive, and high-maintenance (2008). Again, it is important to understand millennial values behind these behaviors. For example, respondents MW1 and MW2 stated, "IM is a better collaborative tool because it forces users to address questions in real time". Adding, "This tactic is more efficient and has little to do with the perceived notion that we need instant gratification".

Another important aspect regarding the millennials generation is their need for a sense of freedom, purpose, and work-life balance (Bennett, 2008). Respondent FG3 reported, "Millennials might even consider a flexible

schedule over a pay increase". In addition, several focus group participants agreed with FG3's assertion, "People prefer to work for charismatic leaders rather than the traditional, transactional leaders". FG1 Added, "Open-mindedness and adaptability are the most important qualities of managers".

According to research recorded by Havenstein, using standard organization communication methods within a multi-generational work environment will be challenging and likely result in high turnover (2007). For instance, respondent MW1 reported, "I do not even like using the telephone as a method of communication; even with people I know". Further, she believes, "E-mail is even outdated and that instant messaging should take its place".

Two female millennial workers agreed that open, two-way communication flattens the hierarchical structure of the organization and enhances collaboration and innovation within their work environment. Adding, "Managers could effectively create a better work atmosphere by simply allowing a less structured, friendship-style communication." MW2 responded, "Rigid, hierarchical relationships result in less innovation and lower productivity". Havenstein's research strengthens the findings with her suggestions that management will improve outcomes by encouraging informal relationships with younger generation workers (2007).

The millennial workers reported wanting to work for effective, efficient managers who have the adaptability to use a variety of communication tactics. Respondent MW3 added, "Positive follow-ups after jobs are helpful and appreciated, when provided in conjunction with standard constructive criticism". Research performed by Hite acquiesces, stating millennials would be more efficient and productive upon receiving frequent and candid performance feedback (Hite, 2008). Respondent P1 states, "Current undergraduate students tend to utilize a more informal way of communicating than their predecessors and work well within this format". In addition, Respondent MGM1 noted, "many of our older mangers use an old-school, direct style of communication that may be off-putting to many younger workers". In addition, MGM1 contends, "Older managers are resistant to their newer processes, especially in terms of providing innovative solutions about how they could do their jobs more efficiently".

Research Objective #3: Conduct a cursory review of ICTs that bolster organizational collaboration, while assessing IT Professional's perceptions surrounding the capabilities, limitations, and exposure issues

The following is a list of solutions that enhance interpersonal communication and collaboration within the organizational setting, based on the respondent perceptions:

- Instant Messaging (IM)
- Web-Based Intranets

- Secure Information Portals
- Interactive Meetings/Video Conferencing
- Text Messaging
    - o Used for constructive feedback
    - o Follow-ups after job completions
- Group Newsletters

Respondent IT1 believes, "Instant messaging is a less formal, quicker, real-time application that is perfect for interpersonal communication within the workplace". However, he cited, "The lack of storage and printing capabilities within this medium limits its capacity to only informal, interoffice communication". He believes this type of application would work well within small groups, "especially if people need real-time solutions from remote locations".

Additionally, respondent IT2 states, "Applications, such as web-based intranets, are an excellent way to keep internal people informed, while providing services to certain users". Respondent IT1 added, "(Intranets) can easily be controlled through encryption or by distributing client certificates". He asserts, however, "They are more expensive than they are difficult to set up and maintain". One unique measure Respondent IT2 added, concerning intranets, surrounds an added method his company instituted, aimed at increasing communication, "Sending out weekly synopsis e-mails with links to the company intranet has increased its use; the same info, as a different stimuli, is viewed differently and has the potential to reach more people".

Regarding personal connectivity devices, Respondent IT2 stated, "With the increased use of personal, portable electronic devices comes an increased ability to escape company control". He added, "Once information leaves the network, it can be easily identified and it is difficult to audit the information flow". Adding, "Thumb drives, external hard drives, CD burners and regular e-mail can allow client information to flow through insecure measures". His suggestion, "Do not purchase computers with CD burning capabilities and establish secure information portals for the transmission of confidential client information."

Research Objective #4: Assess millennial & multigenerational manager's perception of collaboration and utilizing ICTs within small working groups

Some technology scholars have found a relationship between technology and interpersonal communication in the workplace (Ogata, 2008) and alternatives that foster collaboration (Ball, 2007). Respondents MW1 and MW2 agree that small group collaboration could be an effective way to accomplish certain types of work-related projects.

Respondent FG2 believes, "technology is the key to the success within working groups". She continued by saying, internet-based technology "allows people the freedom to work from different locations, while contributing to the overall successful completion of the project". Research by

Havenstein states, technology empowers younger generation workers by providing them with the freedom and balance to work within these virtual teaming arrangements (2007). Respondent MGM 2 believes, "IM allows for quick, real-time communication and is handy while working in small groups, especially when the groups are at different locations".

According to Rivera, millennial adaptability within groups is far greater than previous generations due to their increased exposure to diversity (Rivera, 2008). Respondent P2 stated, "I did not detect any prejudices from the millennials". She added, "This surprised me, especially considering our overall community perception towards minority groups". She noted, "Millennials exposure to diversity should translate into positive outcomes within small groups, both in the classroom and within organizational settings".

The millennial generation is comprised of individuals who are more affluent, better educated, and part of a more diverse group than previous generations (Howe & Strauss, 2000), but some millennials remain sheltered as a result of the private school system and other regional-based factors. The millennial students agreed, however, that they desired an opportunity to work within diverse cultures and believe their open-mindedness and team building skills would work well within a diverse organizational culture.

Research Objective #5: Assess millennial perception of managerial roles within small working groups

Literature published by Hackman states, the primary role of a team leader is to provide group understanding surrounding goal expectations and their rewards (2002). Respondent MW2 stated, "Managers should serve mainly as mentors, while making themselves available for questions". Further, Barreta believes that managers should feel free to entrust employees with decision-making authority and supply them will all the applicable information to make those decisions (2008). Respondent MW1 added, "Managers should not waste time by checking in on the status of prescribed work". MW3 reported, "I enjoy the freedom and responsibility of completing tasks with minimal supervision within small groups, but, so far, each scenario lacks from a clear sense of direction, feedback, and efficiencies created through effective supervision".

Millennials take pride in being well-educated, highly capable professionals who will succeed, given the right information and opportunity. Research complied by Hite, points to the millennial assertion that detailed guidance in daily work was either moderately or extremely important (Hite, 2008). These millennials have respect for management and the organizational process, but require that same reciprocation of trust and respect in order to maximize their efficiency, effectiveness, and overall buy-in.

TRIANGULATED RESULTS

The results of this analysis identify that multigenerational organizations can empower their workforce through reciprocal learning and teaching environments achieved through small working groups.

These collaborative environments are further strengthened and stimulate originality when utilizing the latest information and communication technology. The end result is a strong, collaborative workforce that communicates effectively internally and externally, while sustaining organizational growth through adaptability and innovation.

**Figure 2: An Opportunity for Sustainable & Innovative Corporate Practice –
A Visual Depiction of the Triangulated Results**

Sustainable & Innovative Corporate Practice
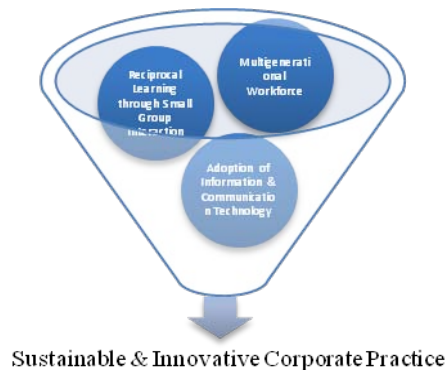
CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The final research objective, **make recommendations for the revision of corporate communication practices**, will be addressed in the form of conclusions and recommendations for enhancement of holistic organizational business practice.

The combination of older generation workers reaching retirement age and the massive influx of the millennial generation requires a major shift within organizational ideology, especially surrounding interpersonal communication, collaboration and worker contribution. The current, sluggish economy is only temporarily allowing outdated organizational mores to continue; organizations that wish to thrive within the next decade will begin shifting their mindset towards empowering younger workers within collaborative environments that utilize the latest technology. In summary, organizational success is dependent upon millennials and previous generation managers working together, synergizing the strengths of innovation and collaboration with longevity and structure.

The millennial generation must learn patience and the value of showing respect towards previous generations, while learning the fundamentals of organizational success, especially surrounding the proven methods of face-to-face, telephone and written communication with clients. Organizations should provide basic courses to new hires that teach the importance of basic business communication, including attire and respect of the organizational structure. Conversely, managers need to be patient with younger workers, while not discounting their younger employee's

strengths. Conversely, managers must relinquish their pride, stop hiding behind the ease and comfortability of hierarchical systems, and shift towards empowering employees, while strengthening their technical aptitude and collaborative skills.

In addition, managers need to allow millennial workers to be assertive. Begin by allowing new hires or established younger generation workers to teach previous generation workers and managers about the efficiencies created through technology. Further, millennials should be allowed to set the type of workplace environment that accentuates their strengths, especially surrounding their aptitude towards innovation, collaboration, freedom, and work-life balance. Finally, organizations that wish to succeed will synergize all skill sets within multi-generational organizations by shifting managerial roles towards mentoring, supplying employees with more information, power, and control over the successful completion of their goals, while providing the latest technology and training, in order to create the very best internal and external communicators throughout their organizations.

Andenoro noted in a lecture, "You can only make beautiful music, if you know how to play in an orchestra" (2009). This quote is fitting when we address the idea of organizational success within a multi-generational context. Currently, a tense dichotomy exists amongst previous generation managers and millennial workers. In my opinion, this problem is exacerbated when managers and millennials take their associated skill sets for granted. The synergistic effect of combining perseverance with technical aptitude and innovation will provide the impetus for organizational

45

growth, which could translate into opportunities surrounding innovation, collaboration, and enhanced cultural dynamics. These measures just might lead an organizational symphony of classical proportions.

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46

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Andrew J. Sage is currently a consultant, trainer, and cost segregation analyst for Moss Adams, LLP in Spokane, WA. He is a proven leader in the construction and development industry and is an active volunteer within his community. Andy has spearheaded numerous events within his organization, including Habitat for Humanity Projects and other events related to interdepartmental culture building. He volunteers as a head baseball coach for 5th and 6th grade boys at St, Aloysius School and periodically volunteers at Spokane's House of Charity. Andy earned a Bachelor of General Studies with an emphasis in Organizational Leadership in 2005 from Gonzaga University and an MA in Communication and Leadership from Gonzaga in 2009.

Dr. Anthony C. Andenoro currently serves as an Assistant Professor for the Department of Organizational Leadership at Gonzaga University. His research interests include the development of creativity and intelligence in leadership, the connection between critical thinking and emotional intelligence, the enhancement of critical thinking skill and disposition and written effectiveness through innovations in leadership education, and the globalization leadership curricula. He earned a BA in Communication from the University of Toledo, a MS in Educational Administration from Texas A&M University, and a PhD in Leadership Studies from Texas A&M University.