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# Generational Formative Influences on Workplace Attitudes and Values

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Submitted to the Program of Organizational Dynamics, College of Liberal and Professional Studies, in the School of Arts and Sciences in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science in Organizational Dynamics at the University of Pennsylvania.

Advisor: Walter Licht

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# Generational Formative Influences on Workplace Attitudes and Values

## **Abstract**

The purpose of this capstone project is to investigate the following question: How do members of the Baby Boom, Generation X and Millennial generations believe influences and experiences of their formative years impact their workplace attitudes and values? In the U.S. labor force, there are three predominant generations comprising a significant share of the workforce, each unique with their own set of core values that have been collectively shaped and defined by their formative political, cultural, and social experiences. For every generation, there are events and circumstances that mold preferences, expectations, and values that ultimately shape their workplace perspective and expectations.

This paper was undertaken to provide a lens into the formative influences of each generation and the subsequent attitudes and values that emerge as a result of these experiences. By understanding the unique influences and motivations of each generation, we can qualitatively assess the research on generational influences on work-related attitudes. This capstone investigates the growing body of research and aligns it to survey data captured by members of each generation in a higher education institution in the Philadelphia area. This exploratory research is valuable for employees, management professionals, and practitioners who want to better understand generational values so they can evaluate their practices in order to communicate, engage, and lead their organizations effectively.

## **Comments**

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Advisor: Walter Licht

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AND VALUES

by

Christina Marie DeLucia

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College of Liberal and Professional Studies  
in the School of Arts and Sciences  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Science in Organizational Dynamics at the  
University of Pennsylvania

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

2015

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AND VALUES

Approved by:

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Walter Licht, Ph.D., Advisor

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Anne M. Greenhalgh, Ph.D., Reader

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this capstone project is to investigate the following question: How do members of the Baby Boom, Generation X and Millennial generations believe influences and experiences of their formative years impact their workplace attitudes and values? In the U.S. labor force, there are three predominant generations comprising a significant share of the workforce, each unique with their own set of core values that have been collectively shaped and defined by their formative political, cultural, and social experiences. For every generation, there are events and circumstances that mold preferences, expectations, and values that ultimately shape their workplace perspective and expectations.

This paper was undertaken to provide a lens into the formative influences of each generation and the subsequent attitudes and values that emerge as a result of these experiences. By understanding the unique influences and motivations of each generation, we can qualitatively assess the research on generational influences on work-related attitudes. This capstone investigates the growing body of research and aligns it to survey data captured by members of each generation in a higher education institution in the Philadelphia area. This exploratory research is valuable for employees, management professionals, and practitioners who want to better understand generational values so they can evaluate their practices in order to communicate, engage, and lead their organizations effectively.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

It is believed that people from the same generational cohort develop shared generational characteristics which affect their worldview, relationships, work ethic and behavior, inclination towards teamwork, communication preferences, perception of hierarchy, and how they manage change (Kupperschmidt, 2000). As each new generation enters the workforce, conflicts are assumed, as each generation sets its tone and establishes boundaries, ground rules, and expectations (O'Bannon, 2001). Despite vast interest in the topic from scholars and practitioners alike, and the need for organizations to employ adequate HR policies and adapt to the changing demographic environment, much of our knowledge of generational cohorts is limited to theory-based perceptions. Some empirical evidence has been conducted; however, it is still rare and often times non-conclusive (Deal, 2007). While the indication of generational gaps in the workplace may not be a new concept, what's unique in today's environment is that most scholars agree multigenerational lenses should be used both in theory and practice to gain a better understanding of workforce diversity in general (Hernaus & Vokic, 2014). While understanding that each generation is unique in their thoughts, attitudes, values and beliefs, my capstone will examine how the formative<sup>1</sup> influences and experiences of the Baby Boom, Generation X and Millennial generations formulate their workplace attitudes, values and expectations.

An analysis of the three predominant generations in the United States labor force will be discussed from their formative political, cultural, and social influences; then, I

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<sup>1</sup> The term "formative" serves to explain the period of an individual's growth and development.

will determine which values may emerge that could potentially impact an individual's workplace attitudes and preferences. The information analyzed in various books and scholarly articles will be compared against the data obtained through the use of exploratory survey analysis with members of each generational cohort across a higher education institution in the United States, in order to determine the extent to which the respective formative years of the Baby Boom, Generation X and Millennial groups impact their workplace attitudes.

## **1. Background and Context**

The workplace landscape continues to evolve as a new generation enters the workforce, middle generations transition to position of power and leadership, while older generations approach and surpass retirement. It is likely that each generation contributes their own unique set of values and expectations and alters the existing status quo set forth by the previous generations. In order to avoid stereotypes and misconceptions, the research presented in Chapter 2 discusses the “how” and “why” formative influences could impact a generation's approach to work.

## **2. Literature**

In order to identify studies examining generational differences in the workplace, the PsychINFO, Business Source Complete and Sage Premier databases, offered by the University of Pennsylvania library, were searched using a combination of key terminology for generation such as: generation, generational differences, birth cohort, formative, formative influences, Baby Boomer, Generation X, Generation Y, and

Millennial. Additionally, a search for work-related outcomes was conducted using the following: work attitudes and expectations, work attributes, core values, commitment, employee retention, attrition, communication, rewards, satisfaction and motivation. My references include a list of scholarly articles, journals and books, and majority of the literature reflects a publishing date within the past seven years. To further supplement the literature review, exploratory surveys were conducted with members of each generational cohort in the higher education industry to determine the extent to which the political, cultural and social experiences of their youth have impacted their workplace attitudes and values.

### **3. Methodology**

In this capstone paper, I conduct exploratory research to examine my research question: how do members of the Baby Boom, Generation X and Millennial generations believe influences and experiences of their formative years impact their workplace attitudes and values? Chapter 2 describes the current literature about the Baby Boom, Generation X and Millennial cohort; and later chapters attempt to understand how real life examples match with the academic research. The research question is divided into three main themes: formative influences, core values that emerge based upon these formative experiences, and subsequent generational work attitudes and expectations.

Since the research is fairly broad in defining a specific set of core values, and limited in terms of studies across various industries, I adopted the methodology of survey research with members of each generational cohort to gather qualitative information. Fourteen questions were developed as a result.

#### **4. My Role**

Current themes arising in my place of employment has served in my choice of topics to pursue capstone research, which is also relevant in today's dynamic corporate environment. As a younger Generation X member, I often find my own expectations of the workplace differ from many of my Baby Boom and Millennial colleagues; in that, while I respect the uniqueness of each, I often feel caught between two generations that dominate in size. They also seem to have distinctive approaches to work and subsequent expectations.

Raised by "Baby Boom" parents who worked full-time and achieved success through the traditional structure of climbing hierarchical ladders, I learned to be quite independent from an early age. While I began working before my high school years, the values instilled in me during my formative years were to work hard and always give full attention and effort to pursued endeavors. Given the various recessions and economic booms of my parent's careers, as well as high divorce rates that affected me and many of my peers, I've grown to be somewhat distrustful of the traditional institutions and establishments. Howe and Strauss explain that Generation X members were raised as "under-protected youth" in an era where the collective welfare of children sank to the bottom of the nation's priorities (2009).

Alternatively, a new "Millennial" generation has emerged in the workplace that contributes their own set of attitudes and preferences. Overall, the Millennial generation is technologically savvy and competent multitaskers, who always seem to be connected to the virtual world. Millennials were born during a time where "abortion and divorce

rates ebbed and popular culture began recasting babies as special and stigmatizing hands-off parental styles” (Strauss & Howe, 2009).

Born before the boom of online technology, I grew up with the gaming platform of Atari and computer access in school, but neither of those allowed for any real way to connect with others, as the internet was not yet developed and accessible to all. Although I’ve learned to assimilate to the technological advances of today, I still prefer to disconnect at frequent intervals to refocus my efforts. Throughout this capstone, I wish to further explore the formative influences of my generation, along with the Baby Boomers and Millennials, and uncover how these experiences help to shape workplace attitudes, preferences and expectations.

## **5. Layout and Focus**

In order to present the research in a concise and consistent manner, and provide a thorough analysis of the data presented, this capstone paper has been organized as follows: Chapter 2 defines a generation and explores how formative political, cultural and social influences could help to shape core values and workplace expectations. Chapter 3 identifies members of each generational cohort for which the exploratory surveys are conducted and outlines the qualitative questions. Chapter 4 reports and organizes the findings of the survey results. Chapter 5 provides a detailed analysis of the information gathered and compares it to the literature.

In summary, this paper aims to make the case for a better understanding of the driving force behind the influences of the Baby Boom, Generation X and Millennial generations, who are predominant in the workforce today. It also aligns the experiences

unique to each individual to the political, cultural and social influences of their generation; and, discusses the attitudes and values that emerge which can be leveraged and viewed as beneficial for employers, peers, scholars and colleagues across all levels of the organization. Ultimately, Chapter 6 will raise some open questions regarding the implications of current findings in the application to work-related factors to the advancement of future research in the field. It will also explore the benefits for companies' to acknowledge and align their strategic initiatives by utilizing the skill set and characteristics of each generation; as well as, whether HR professionals and Executive Leaders should consider making extensive changes to their corporate cultures and operating styles to accommodate the varying expectations of Baby Boom, Generation X and Millennial employees.



## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will examine each generation's formative experiences, core values, and attitudes that emerge towards work as a result of these influences. First, I will define a generation and identify the various perspectives on how a generation is formed, both from a social force, and a cohort perspective. Second, I will identify the birth years which comprise the Baby Boom, Generation X and Millennial generations. Third, I will explore the contemporary professional environment in terms of the civilian labor force in the United States. Fourth, I will discuss other considerations which may impact experiences and subsequent attitudes of some members of each generation. Fifth, I will introduce the profile of each generation in terms of formative political, cultural and social influences. Sixth, I will examine how these experiences may shape the ideals and values that influence and drive expectations of their career and workplace environment. Lastly, I will conclude the chapter by identifying the research gaps and provide insight on future research opportunities.

#### **1. Generations**

Prior to examining each generation's unique personae, we must first examine what defines a generation and how a generation is formed. Research suggests two distinct perspectives in defining a generation (Costanza, Badger, Fraser, Severt & Gade, 2012).

The first is a "group of individuals born and living contemporaneously who have common knowledge and experience that affect their thoughts, attitudes, values and

beliefs about behaviors” (Johnson, 2010, pg. 6). The idea is that common experiences are shared by individuals of a particular age, otherwise referred to as a “*social forces perspective*” (Lyons & Kuron, 2014). To further this analysis, Generational Cohort Theory, developed by Inglehart (1977) and popularized by Strauss & Howe (1991), suggest:

a generation is a social construction in which individuals born during a similar time period experience, and are influenced by, historic and social contexts in which a way that these experiences differentiate one generational cohort from another (Lester, Standifer, Schultz, and Windsor, 2012).

A generation can also be explained in terms of being:

shaped by events or circumstances according to which phase of life its members occupy at the time. As each generation ages, from youth, to young adult-hood, to mid-life to elder-hood, its attitudes and behaviors mature producing new currents in the public mood” (Strauss & Howe, 2007).

This idea refers to age variation associated with aging caused by life stage, and/or other developmental factors, otherwise referred to as a “*cohort perspective*” (Lyons & Kuron, 2014). Even though all people living in contemporary society experience the same historical events, they respond to these events differently on the basis of their life-cycle at the time (Ryder, 1965). It’s important to note that individuals do not belong to specific to age brackets. For example, a forty year old today cannot be defined as having the same beliefs, values and goals as did a forty year old living in 1970, nor a forty year old coming of age in the year 2040. To anticipate what a forty year old will be like in twenty years, you must examine today’s twenty year olds and how their formative experiences have shaped their attitudes, values and beliefs (Underwood, 2007). Both perspectives are often used interchangeably in the generational literature; however, empirical research on

age differences uses the “conceptualization of generations as cohorts of individuals created by shared experiences” (Costanza et al 2012).

Both theories contribute to the study of generational traits and attitudes, but differ in the assumption that generations are either formed through historical events and social changes, or consist primarily as function of age and maturity. For the purposes of this capstone, I will pursue the generational cohort theory as it explores the complexity and variances across generations as a function of social events and experiences.<sup>2</sup>

Theorists have argued that a generation’s identity emerge when “its members enter into adulthood (between the ages of 17-25) and collective memories of the formative events of their early life become crystallized as attitudes and behaviors” (Joshi, Dencker, & Franz, 2011). Each generation’s formative experiences will vary in how they were raised as children in the social and historical context, and what social mission they became involved in as they came of age (Underwood, 2007). Generational cohorts share a similar peer personality, as collective behavioral traits and attitudes expresses itself throughout a generational lifecycle trajectory (Strauss & Howe, 1991).

While generational stereotypes are widely held, evidence backing up these misconceptions is mixed, and research often challenges the conceptual, definitional, methodological and statistical issues (Costanza et al. 2012). Given that most publications on generational differences in attitudes and values appear in the popular press, “the peer reviewed literature is limited, and there are questions as to whether the claimed differences actually do exist” (Costanza et al. 2012). In other words, the existing data does not resolve the differences among and within each generation. However, what is

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<sup>2</sup> “Generations” will be defined as members who share similar cultural, political and social experiences during their formative years; rather than solely for the purposes of sharing a designated set of birth years.

clear is that today's workplace is more diverse in terms of age, gender, race, educational level, occupational, etc., and organizations should focus their efforts on identifying adequate policies and work design as workforce differentiation is gaining momentum (Hernaus & Vokic, 2014). The generational characteristics of a given cohort could affect their "worldview, relationships, work ethic, behavior, inclination towards teamwork, preferred modes of communication, perception of organizational hierarchy, adapt to change, etc." (Kupperschmidt, 2000). The variation should prompt organizations to explore the dynamics among employees and create an environment which can leverage the strengths and complexities of each cohort of individuals.

## **2. Birth Year Range: Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millennial**

*Baby Boomers:* Scholars and writers tend to vary in the agreed upon dates of birth that comprise this generation. For example, the U.S. Census Bureau (2006) and Lancaster and Stillman (2002) used 1946-1964; Strauss and Howe (1991) and Zemke et al. (2000) used 1943-1960. Deal (2007) divided the generation into Early Boomers (1946-1954) and Late Boomers (1955-1963). For the purposes of this capstone, the dates 1946-1964 have been chosen to coincide with the preferred dates of the Census Bureau.

*Generation X:* Born after the post-World War II baby boom, majority of the scholars agree upon the range of years that comprise this generation as: 1965 – 1981 (Strauss & Howe, 2007). This generation is otherwise known as: the Thirteenth Generation, and Gen X. In this paper, this cohort will be referred to as Generation X or Gen X.

*Millennials*: Millennials, otherwise referred to as Generation Y or Nexters, is the demographic cohort following Generation X. The exact dates which comprise this generation is varied; however, they are defined as having been born in the 1980s and 1990s, with a birth year traditionally beginning in/around 1982 (Oxford Dictionaries, 2015). Throughout this paper, this generation will be referred to as Millennials.

### **3. Civilian Labor Force in the United States**

Given the birth years listed above, the contemporary workforce consists of three dominant generational cohorts: Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millennials. While some members of the Silent Generation, otherwise referred to as Traditionalists, born before 1946, are still actively employed, most are retired and not pursuing active full-time careers. Additionally, the generation following the Millennials, born roughly after 2000, have yet to enter the labor force (Hernaus & Vokic, 2014). Therefore, the Silent generation and the generation born after the turn of the century, represent a small percentage of today's workforce, and will not be reviewed in this capstone.

In focusing on the Baby Boom, Gen X and Millennial generations, the Bureau of Labor Statistics states (2013b, p. 2),

over the 2012–22 decade, workers over the age of 55 will comprise over one quarter of the civilian labor force. Comparatively, the sharp increase of the Millennial participation in the workforce will continue on an upward trend in the coming decades.

Table 1.1 Civilian labor force by age (numbers in the thousands)

| Group                       | Level    |          |          |          | Percent Change |           |           | Percent Distribution |       |       |       |
|-----------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------------|-----------|-----------|----------------------|-------|-------|-------|
|                             | 1992     | 2002     | 2012     | 2022     | 1992-2002      | 2002-2012 | 2012-2022 | 1992                 | 2002  | 2012  | 2022  |
| Total, 16 years and older   | 128,105  | 144,863  | 154,975  | 163,450  | 13.1           | 7.0       | 5.5       | 100.0                | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Age, years:                 |          |          |          |          |                |           |           |                      |       |       |       |
| 16 to 24                    | 21,617   | 22,366   | 21,285   | 18,462   | 3.5            | -4.8      | -13.3     | 16.9                 | 15.4  | 13.7  | 11.3  |
| 25 to 54                    | 91,429   | 101,720  | 101,253  | 103,195  | 11.3           | -0.5      | 1.9       | 71.4                 | 70.2  | 65.3  | 63.1  |
| 55 and over                 | 15,060   | 20,777   | 32,437   | 41,793   | 38.0           | 56.1      | 28.8      | 11.8                 | 14.3  | 20.9  | 25.6  |
| Age of Millennials (oldest) |          | 20       | 30       | 40       |                |           |           |                      |       |       |       |
| Age of Generation X         | 11 to 27 | 22 to 37 | 31 to 47 | 41 to 57 |                |           |           |                      |       |       |       |
| Age of Baby Boomers         | 28 to 46 | 38 to 56 | 48 to 66 | 58 to 76 |                |           |           |                      |       |       |       |

The data demonstrates the shifting labor force in the United States, as each generation enters into the workplace with differences in attitudes and expectations, which will continue to evolve over time (Strauss & Howe, 2007). As indicated in Table 1.1, the distribution of civilians over the age of 55 will increase from 11.8 percent in 1992 to 25.6 percent in 2022. In the year 2022, the shift in civilian labor force will change dramatically as the Baby Boom generation reaches retirement age, and the percentage of Generation X and Millennials between the ages of 25-54 will comprise over 63 percent of the workforce. The table also demonstrates the decrease in the percentage of labor force participants between the ages of 16-24, which is primarily comprised of the generation following the Millennials. The size of each generation factors in to the labor force distribution as the number of Baby Boomers and Millennials far exceeds the baby bust Generation X group, as indicated later in this chapter. Currently, studies lack in the examination of implicating generational differences in the design of jobs. However, multigenerational lenses should be acknowledged in theory and practice to gain a better understanding of diversity in the workforce today (Hernaus & Vokic, 2014).

#### 4. Other Considerations

Before beginning the literature on the profile of each generation, it's important to note that while generational cohorts vary by age and social experiences, there are factors such as: race, gender, geographic region of the United States, experiences that vary depending upon your country of origin, and economic status, which also impact the experiences and subsequent attitudes of some members that develop as a result (Costanza, et al. 2012). That is, not all individuals born within the generational age range share the same experiences. For the purposes of this paper, the literature will reflect data retrieved from studies in the United States. Given the vast number of research studies conducted on gender and racial differences in the workplace, "there is no such comprehensive quantitative review of the research on generational differences in work-related outcomes" (Costanza, et al. 2012). However, the issue has been acknowledged and researchers prefer to frame generations as "multi-dimensional rather than monolithic" as generational differences in work-related variables has primarily focused on the dynamic interaction of old and new ideas (Lyons & Kuron, 2014).

However, it is worth noting that in recent decades, a significant demographic shift has impacted the workforce, as older generations grew up in a time when the male was the primary breadwinner for the family and the workplace was more heavily weighted toward a single Caucasian race. For example, Mencl and Lester (2014) indicate that in 1970, women and minorities between the ages of 25 to 54 years comprised 50% of the workplace; as compared to 75% in 2005. Also, in 2005, 77% of African American women, 70% of Asian women, and 65% of Hispanic women were in the workforce in the United States (pg. 259). As such, a diverse representation of workplace demographics

now include: age, number of employees in a firm within a given generation, gender, and race. Although empirical research does not currently exist to differentiate between workplace characteristics associated with the various factors listed above, research findings have shown Millennials are more comfortable with collaborating in a more diverse environment (Mencl & Lester, 2014).

Additionally, Zemke et al. (2000) stressed the importance of not using generational information to stereotype individuals. They understood the benefits of analyzing the information to “explain the baffling and confusing differences behind our unspoken assumptions underneath our attitudes” (p. 14). In their view, understanding generational differences

can be a source of creative strength and . . . opportunity, or a source of stifling stress and unrelenting conflict. Further advancements in this field are critical to making the differences work for the organization and not against it. (p. 17)

## **5. Profile of a Generation: Formative Influences and Events**

This capstone contends that formative influences are related to the ways in which generations view the employer relationship. To begin, the term “formative” refers to the period of physical and psychological development during the time when an individual emerges from the onset of puberty to adulthood (Oxford Dictionaries, 2015). According to Scott (2000), the ideas or beliefs of a generation are structured “in part, according to the experiences people had in the formative years of their own childhood” (pg. 356). Scott further claims that generational membership can lead to certain ways of thinking, feeling and behaving that come together to form a “natural view” of the world. The natural view will remain with the individual throughout the trajectory of their life, and will serve as the foundation for which later experiences are interpreted (pg. 356-57).



In accordance with Scott, et al., further analysis has been suggested that generational identities in the workplace emerge based on collective memories of shared events that take place within each generation's late formative years (2008). Employees from different generations may have varying experiences of what they value from the workplace; therefore, may approach work differently (Lester et al., 2012). There has been much debate on whether generational cohorts actually,

desire different things in a work context, or if it's a matter of perceived differences that may have been perpetuated through commonly held biases (Lester et al., 2012).

In this capstone, formative work experiences will be defined as a subset of experiences which influences an individual's work perspective, and the behaviors of their organization and leadership. The remainder of this chapter will focus on each generational cohort's early years, their social, political and cultural experiences; as well as, how these influences impact their workplace attitudes and values.

## **5.1 The Baby Boom Generation**

The Baby Boom generation is the only generation for which researchers agree on the name, with only slight variations. Otherwise referred to as "Boomers" and "Baby Boomers", this generation was born during a time the nation was reeling from sixteen prior years of depression and war (Strauss & Howe, 2007). As men returned home in the years following World War II, the birth rate surged and there was an estimated 79.9 million babies born in the United States, thus, creating a 'baby boom' that would also serve as the classification for those born during this time (Strauss & Howe, 2007). With one baby being born every 17 minutes in the 19 years after the end of World War II

(Zemke et al., 2000), it is difficult to find any label more appropriate than the Baby Boom generation.

*The early years:* According to Strauss & Howe, the baby boom generation grew up as indulged products of post war optimism, and came of age denouncing the traditionalist attitudes and values of their parents (1991). Their formative years began in the 1950's, and continued through to the early 1980's (Strauss & Howe, 1991). When the first wave of babies arrived, Benjamin Spock published a parenting manual in a book titled "The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care" (1946). This book instructs parents to trust their instincts and show affection to children. As a result, parents will raise idealistic children that are not afraid to "confront issues and problems in our country and around the world (Spock, 1946)." According to Underwood (2007), these children came of age embracing the idealism that parents and educators were teaching. They grew up with a clear sense of right and wrong. The idealistic carefree childhood of the 1950's gave way to one of the most tumultuous periods in our nation's history: the so-called consciousness movement from 1961 to 1975 (pg. 97).

*Political, Cultural and Social Influences:* During the period following the end of WWII, the United States and the Soviet Union emerged as the world's strongest nations, as superpowers. However, they had ideological differences about economics and government. Since the Soviet Union was a communist country, the government controlled production and resources and decided where people were going to live and work. Alternatively, as a capitalist country, citizens and businesses in the United States controlled the production of goods, and people decided where they were going to live and work. These differences led to a tense relationship between the two countries. For the

United States and their allies, fears of communism and nuclear attack began to emerge and events such as the Korean War, McCarthyism, the space race that began in the 1950s, and the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 contributed to the mounting tensions between the superpowers. Throughout the country, Baby Boom children and young adults followed instructions by practicing drills in school to take cover in the event of a nuclear attack (Strauss & Howe, 1991).

In the 1960's and 1970's, six major cultural revolutions took place in the United States that began a period of profound societal change for which a significant number of politically minded individuals, many of whom young and educated, sought to influence the status quo (Strauss & Howe, 1991).

1. Civil Rights: The civil rights movement, led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Malcolm X, and Cesar Chavez, sought to end racial discrimination and segregation against the minority population in the United States.
2. Feminism: Gloria Steinem, and other feminist leaders of the 1960's and 70's, led the women's liberation movement which fought for reforms on issues such as reproductive rights, maternity leave, equal pay, domestic violence, women's suffrage, sexual harassment, and sexual violence.
3. Ecology: The United States Environmental Protection Agency, otherwise known as the EPA, is an agency of the U.S. federal government established in 1970 that was created for the purposes of protecting human health and the environment by writing and enforcing regulations based on laws passed by Congress. Six of the 1<sup>st</sup> 7 EPA chiefs were Silent Generation leaders.

4. War Protest: In the 1960's and 1970's, a movement to oppose the Vietnam war took place on campuses and in various cities across the United States in the form of protests and marches, while also having a cultural impact on music, art, photography, television and other forms of media.
5. Sexual: Despite the conservative, traditionalist views of older generations, changes in sexual norms, attitudes and practices began to occur as feminists, gay rights campaigners, hippies and other political movements contributed to an era of sexual expression and freedom. After contraception was introduced in the early twentieth century, the domestic role of women shifted as many were delaying marriage and children, entering the workforce, and challenging the role of women in society. For the first time in history, women began to take control of their role in society.
6. Drug: This period of expression and experimentation also extended to the counterculture of psychedelic drugs such as LSD and mushrooms, and made the use of marijuana more accessible to a broader market. Timothy Leary, American psychologist and writer, advocated for the use of drugs to support his philosophy of self-awareness and questioning the G.I. and Silent generation authoritative figures in power.

Throughout the decade, attitudes and values shifted as the activism of the 1960's led the quest for autonomy and the urge to "find oneself." Many of the revolutionary leaders of the 1960s were members of the Silent generation, such as Martin Luther King Jr. and Gloria Steinem, who typically held strong traditional values; however, each revolution had a significant impact on the values shaped by the coming of age Baby

Boom generation (Underwood, 2007). Each of the six revolutions influenced the counterculture of the 1960's which was an anti-establishment cultural phenomenon, that was first developed the United States and United Kingdom, and subsequently spread throughout much of the Western world between the early 1960s and into the mid-1970s (Strauss & Howe, 1991) . Whether growing up as a youthful child or coming of age in your late teenage years and early twenties, during this time of remarkable change, Baby Boomers across the United States were impacted by an increasingly complex cultural, political and social environment (Strauss & Howe, 1991). According to Strauss & Howe, “coming of age Boomers loudly proclaimed their scorn for the secular blueprints of their parents—institutions, civic participation, and team playing—while seeking inner life, self-perfection, and deeper meaning (HBR, 2007).”

While most Second-Wave Boomers recall the cultural phenomenon of the 1960's, they were not fighting for the cause as were the socially active first wave boomers. Like First-Wave Boomers, most “Second-Wavers grow up with their nuclear families intact, as the divorce rate was relatively low at this time (Underwood, 2007).” However, American values and political relations the 1970's began to unravel as Watergate, inflation, higher cost of living, limited career opportunities, and job layoffs began occur, as did the beginning of a shift in the entertainment industry. According to Jefferson Cowie (2010), “for working people, the social upheavals associated with the sixties actually took root in most communities in the seventies, which was not simply a different decade, but a distinctly less generous economic climate” (pg. 6). The wholesome, *Leave it to Beaver* days of the 1950's were replaced by television shows that highlighted diversity, stronger female characters, and bolder plot lines. The top shows in the mid-seventies included: *All*

*in the Family* (white working class), *The Waltons* (return of the Great Depression), *Good Times / Sanford and Son* (life and poverty in the inner city), *The Jeffersons* (black upward mobility), *One Day at a Time* (working single mothers take on the world), and other shows that emphasized class infused social problems (Cowie, 2010).

Despite the changes, the American economy is relatively bountiful “during most of their formative years, so Second-Wave Boomers also believe America is going to offer them unlimited career and income possibilities (Underwood, 2007).” First and Second-Wave Boomers alike, share the belief that during this time, anything was possible in America (Deal, 2007). Although cultural shifts began to alter the perception of youthful boomer children, there was still a large portion of the United States population that remained conservative in their values and principles. The political climate of the late sixties primarily focused on race (Cowie), but Robert Kennedy attempted to shift the focus to “class, not color” which became a trademark for RFK’s coalition (2010, pg. 76).

Additionally, Strauss and Howe (1991) note another clash in values that reflect “an important bipolarity between the generations first and second waves” (pg. 304). On one hand, early Boomers were born primarily to parents of the G.I. generation who were coming of age during the Depression era and fighting in World War II; and, late Boomers who were born primarily to parents of the Silent generation who’s youth began as a cashless product of the Depression, but also had the “smoothest and fastest rising path of any generation” (Strauss & Howe, 1991).

Underwood (2007) states as Boomers entered adulthood, they struggled to keep their family and home life together as for the first time, women and minorities entered the workforce in large numbers and the need for two-parent incomes became imperative (pg.

107-109). In the 1970s, the U.S. Census Bureau reported the divorce rate in the United States as 165 percent higher than it had been only ten years earlier (2006). At the time, the American family unit was undergoing seismic transformation from what Boomers had known in their own childhood. While the divorce rate may have ascended, Boomers strived for near perfection in balancing their careers with parenting and home life (Strauss & Howe, 1991).

*Core Values:* According to Strauss & Howe, Boomers perceive the conservative values of their parents as not having any spiritual basis rooted in the deeper meaning of life and self. As a result, the first wave boomers, born in the years immediately following the war, developed three lifelong core values that began to emerge as a result of the war in Vietnam and the cultural revolution of the 1960s (1991). The first is *empowerment*, as many youthful Boomers demonstrated against the Vietnam War and began to speak out against any form of discrimination and inequality. For this generation, empowerment meant they believed a mass number of individuals could rally together to influence the government. The second core value is *engagement*, as Boomers believed that engaging in a notable cause could lead to gaining considerable influence that was required to sway the outcome. The last core value was the acknowledgement that while you can and should criticize the government, you should never fail your troops. The veterans of Vietnam returned home to a country in cultural disarray, as many veterans were criticized and denounced for their participation in a war that lacked fundamental justification, and were not supported in many ways upon their return home from a physical and emotional capacity. These core values helped to shape and define the Boomers viewpoint on social,

political and cultural issues and also the expectations for their workplace environment (Strauss & Howe, 1991).

Later in this chapter, we will review the primary core values that emerge among each of the three generations, and interpret this information in order to gain insight on the impact of these values on workplace attitudes and expectations.

## **5.2 Generation X, Thirteenth Generation**

Following the post - World War II baby boom, a new generation emerged as the thirteenth generation of the United States since the Declaration of Independence. Between the years of 1965 – 1981, there were approximately 58.5 million babies born, a sharp decline from their Baby Boom predecessors (Underwood, 2007). This new generation, otherwise known as “Generation X, Gen X, Thirteenth Generation, or Baby Bust Generation”, has struggled to find their identity amidst a more volatile economy, changing demographics, political movements and technology (Coupland, 1991).

*The early years:* This generation has matured in quite a different era than their predecessors. Their formative years began in the 1970s and continued through the 1990s (Underwood, 2007). Unlike Benjamin Spock’s book for parenting Boomer children, parental guides for Gen Xers shifted the focus to what is considered good for the parent, rather than establishing values that would benefit the children. Authors such as Thomas Gordon advised “parents to teach children to understand behavioral consequences at a young age... suggesting a child’s lifetime personality may be sealed by the time they entered school” (Strauss & Howe, 1991, pg. 328). During this time, Underwood noted parents of Gen Xers were undergoing four unprecedented experiments which ultimately



impacted the early experiences of the youth (pg. 162-166). These experiments are as follows:

The breakdown of the traditional family unit – More than 40 percent of this generation has come of age in divorced or single-parent households (Zill & Robinson, 1997). During the so-called Boomer era, the “introduction of the birth control pill, legalization of abortion, and liberalization of divorce laws ushered in smaller families, nontraditional family constellations of single parents, stepparents, and dual-career families, and the phenomenon coined the term latchkey kids” (Kupperschmidt, 2000).

Women in the workplace: Furthering the advancements of the cultural revolution of the 1960s, women began to enter the workforce which significantly impacted the upbringing of the coming of age Gen Xers. As career opportunities emerged for women, dual-career parents created the first generation of “latchkey”<sup>3</sup> children (Underwood, 2007).

Parenting by permissiveness: Underwood describes this new era of parenting as the desire to be a child’s friend rather than disciplinarian. During the Boomer-era, neighborhoods were relatively safe, media outlets weren’t vulgar, and education reinforced family values. In contrast, while Generation X was coming of age; crime became more prevalent; commercial radio and television became more vulgar, often exploiting children; and educators and parents alike began to relax their discipline (2007).

Mobile Society: Beginning with the birth of the oldest Gen Xers, the United States became a mobile society as businesses began to evolve from “locally owned enterprises to national conglomerates (Underwood, 2007).” As such, this generation

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<sup>3</sup> Latchkey children can be defined as “a child who is at home without adult supervision for some part of the day, especially after school until a parent returns from work (Oxford Dictionaries, 2015).

would accompany their parents to other cities, states, or nations, which has not occurred in such significant numbers as the preceding generations. During this time, television began to incorporate a more diverse demographic which led children to want to leave their roots and sample life in other areas (Underwood, 2007).

These experiences have resulted in children growing up more independently; in an era of: high divorce rates, career oriented parenting, a media geared towards adding shock value rather than the delivery of informative content, and ultimately, less of a focus on family and traditional values. As such, Gen X children have a less consistent message of right and wrong, and loss of hometown roots, which has led to poorer classroom performance than their Baby Boom predecessors (Underwood, pg. 166).

*Political, Social and Cultural Influences:* During the Generation X formative years, there were a vast number of political, social and cultural events that shaped this generation. When considering issues such as: the various economic recessions that left parents without work and lacking funds; the increase in murder and suicide rates among the youth; the rising AIDS epidemic; foreign competition; and the increased federal fiscal burden that shifted to the youth, it's no wonder fear, isolation and disillusionment plagued this generation (Strauss & Howe, 1991, pg. 325-327). Without solely focusing on the negative aspects, I will highlight a few key events that could be considered significant to shaping the workplace attitudes and expectations of Generation Xers. These events are as follows:

1. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 sought to end sex-based discrimination in education. This amendment impacted school age children at the time, and future generations in

terms of: increasing female participation in athletics, creating laws against sexual harassment, and ending discriminatory practices in all educational institutions such as colleges, universities, elementary and secondary schools (Retrieved March 14, 2015 from <http://www.justice.gov/crt/about/cor/coord/titleix.php>).

This legislative decision empowered and encouraged women to participate in school sporting events, which meant a reallocation of budgetary funds, often impacting male athletic opportunities (Underwood, 2007, pg. 184). Subsequently, Gen X formative year experiences shifted the gender dynamic as it started to become more female centric. For example, in my youth, I can recall Secret Deodorant advertisements as they began to market their products to women, which sent the message that women are now able to accomplish anything, from sports to careers; which in the past, was only conceivable for men.

2. In 1973, the Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade decision prompted an 80 percent increase in aborted fetuses during the first six years of legislation (Strauss & Howe, 1991, pg. 324). This legislative decision led to a decreased number of births and afforded a woman's right to choose whether or not she would focus on her career, raising a family; or, whether she would learn how to balance an increasingly complex personal and professional life.
3. Economic Decline and Lower Standard of Living – Strauss and Howe (1991) acknowledge this as a generation that sees no welcome mat on their economic future. Since the 1970s, the "cost of setting out in life (college tuitions and housing) have raced ahead of inflation, and the rewards (salaries and fringe benefits) have steadily fallen behind (pg. 320). In the aftermath of the Vietnam

War and Watergate, Americans were losing faith in the American Dream, their society, their government and their future.

4. **Uncertainty in the Workforce** - According to Cowie (2010), domestic working life in the United States was under attack in the 1970s and 1980s as the “worker had to be lost in the turbulence of the nation’s identity” (pg. 360). He explains: “corporations decentralized... moved abroad, replaced workers with technology or diversified into non-manufacturing sectors where the return on investment was higher” (2010, pg. 361).
5. **Global Economy** – As the United States economic future was uncertain, Cowie explains: “global competition steadily increased as advanced industrial countries recovered from the industrial devastation of World War II, and third world nations turned toward manufacturing as a development strategy” (pg. 361).
6. **Shift in Media Focus** – In the 1970s and 1980s, the increase in the number of FM radio stations, as well as, the introduction of cable television, meant programming and advertisements could be geared towards a broader audience. As multigenerational viewing decreased, Gen Xers grew up increasingly isolated from their elders (Underwood, 2007, pg. 169). For the first time, this generation of children came of age among an onslaught of media violence, vulgarity, sexual innuendos, and celebrity/ brand focus. As competition in the marketplace increased, shock messaging increased ratings and rewarded the non-conventional values of the media. As Underwood states, “scandal pays!” (2007, pg. 172). As a Gen X member, this shift in media focus meant children were exposed to information at a much earlier age than their predecessors. From my own

experience, I grew up with the ability to view and gain access to information which was previously only accessible to adults.

7. The Introduction of the Computer and Video Game – Generation X is the first generation to grow up with computers and video games. In 1982, Time magazine declared them as the “computer generation” (Retrieved March 14, 2015 from <http://content.time.com/time/covers/0,16641,19830103,00.html>). However, without the internet, the coming of age Gen X members grew up with isolated technology as these devices were not yet connected to other human beings. In speaking from my own experience, I feel fortunate to have grown up in an environment where children were still involved in outdoor activities, despite having cable television, Atari and Nintendo video games at home.

To describe the climate in the 1970s-1980s, Cowie (2010) states: “U.S. research and development sagged, complacency trumped innovation, growth rates shriveled, profits sagged, foreign competition took market share, plant technology proved grossly antiquated, and federal policy remained incoherent – even at odds with itself (pg. 361). Cowie further defines the new working class as being comprised of: “women, immigrants, minorities, and white guys” (2010, pg. 362).

In the 1980s, President Reagan attempted to change the course of the U.S. economic policy. Reagan’s 1981 Program for Economic Recovery had four major policy objectives: 1. Reduce growth of government spending, 2. Reduce the marginal tax rates on income from both labor and capital, 3. Reduce regulation, and 4. Reduce inflation by controlling the growth of the money supply (Retrieved May 31, 2015 from <http://www.econlib.org/library/Enc1/Reaganomics.html>). According to Niskanen, most

of the effects of these policies were favorable; as the major achievements of Reaganomics was the reduction of marginal tax rates and inflation. However, the U.S. economy experienced “substantial turbulence during the Reagan years despite favorable general economic conditions (1993).

The impact on the labor force and younger generation was significant as many members of Generation X can recall turbulent times in their youth in experiencing the economic booms and busts of their parent’s careers. Furthermore, they developed an understandable distrust in authoritative figures in the government and corporation; as well as, traditional values and institutions. This will be explained further in the latter part of this Chapter.

*Core values:* Most scholars would agree the Gen X members have vastly different values from their predecessors. Strauss and Howe explain Gen Xers:

come with myriads of regional subgroups and ethnic mini-cultures, each thinking its own thoughts, listening to its own music, laying its own plans, and paying little head to each other. Yet, the first signs of bonding begin to appear – a common alienation visible in art ad writing, and in their growing awareness of their own economic vulnerability” (1991, pg. 330).

Underwood provides further analysis into formative influences, by stating four primary core values, as Gen Xers are: “unimpressed with authority, cynical towards older generations, distrustful of major institutions, and disempowered & disengaged” (2007, pg. 195). Despite the negative connotations, there are also many positive beliefs and attitudes that begin to emerge. Underwood (2007) states,

Generation X is not a generation of sweeping ideology or idealism. Therefore, this generation is much more pragmatic. Secondly, Generation X is more eager to make their marriages work and be more involved in their children’s lives, which may a result of rectifying their own formative year parental experiences. (pg. 207)

As such, the Strauss and Howe article (2007) explains Generation Xers more likely to “date cautiously and marry late” (Retrieved March 14, 2015 from <https://hbr.org/2007/07/the-next-20-years-how-customer-and-workforce-attitudes-will-evolve/ar/1>). With regard to community interaction and outreach, Generation X is less likely to join community events, unless it involves their children, and prefers to donate money or volunteer their time on an individualist basis (Strauss & Howe, 1991). In terms of work, Underwood claims Generation X strives for achievement, seeking money and success; however, their approach may be somewhat different than their predecessors (2007). We will explore this further as we discuss the workplace attitudes and expectations below.

Finally, we examine the formative experiences of the youngest generation of workers in the marketplace today.

### **5.3 Millennials, Generation Y, Nexters**

The Millennial generation, otherwise known as Generation Y or Nexters, is defined as “comprising primarily the children of the Baby Boomers and typically perceived as increasingly familiar with digital and electronic technology” (Oxford Dictionaries, 2015). Since it’s unclear as to when the Millennial generation ends, most scholars would agree the formative years extend from the 1980s through the turn of the twenty first century (Underwood, 2007). According to workforce expert Tamara Erickson, Generation Y represents “more than 20 percent—between 70 - 90 million strong—depending upon where the boundaries are drawn ” (2008, pg. 7). The fertility rate rebounded, as compared to the baby bust of Generation X, and more proportionate in size

to the Baby Boom generation. A significant number of Millennials' have already joined the workforce; and they are expected to dominate it over the coming decade. The Millennials' power lies in their numbers, which will allow them to change many aspects of our lives. Erickson (2008) points out that "they are the largest consumer and employee group in history—representing more than one-third of the global population...or roughly a quarter of the total U.S. population" (pg. 7).

*The early years:* Strauss & Howe (1991) note the "first wave Millennials are riding a powerful crest of protective concern – over the American childhood environment (pg. 337). This was in stark contrast to the previous generation who were often depicted in television and books as "demons or throwaway survivalists" (HBR, Strauss & Howe, 2007). This 1980s – 1990s perspective of children began to shift more positively. Films such as, *Three Men and a Baby* and *You've Got Mail*, began to portray children as helping adults and were often looked upon to guide them through life and to cope with it more responsibly. In their HBR article, Strauss & Howe state "as abortion and divorce rates ebbed, popular culture began recasting babies as special and stigmatizing hands-off parental styles (2007).

*Political, Cultural and Social Influences:* In the United States, two major historical events occurred in the formative years of the Millennial generation that would give them a shared purpose which would ultimately help to define their core values; they are the terrorist attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup> and the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina. These tragic events led to school fundraisers, blood donations, and endless discussions with parents and teachers who were all trying to help each other comprehend and cope through these disasters. USA Today (2006) ran a story chronicling the



coalitions of high school and college students who decided to trade in their spring break for an opportunity to help those whose homes were lost or damaged in the hurricane (Retrieved March 15, 2015 from [http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/education/2006-03-15-spring-break\\_x.htm](http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/education/2006-03-15-spring-break_x.htm)).

From a cultural perspective, demographics are shifting quite considerably in the classroom as racial and ethnic diversity contribute to a growing percentage of young people of color. According to the According to the 2000 U.S. census,

39.1 percent of people under eighteen are people of color (Asian; black; Hispanic, who may be of any race; or Native American), as compared to 28.02 percent of people eighteen and over (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001a, 2002). Millennial students also are far more likely to be biracial or multiracial than are previous generations. This group made up 3.95 percent of the under-eighteen population in the 2000 U.S. census, while they made up just 0.95 percent of the eighteen-and-over population” (Retrieved March 15, 2015 from <http://www.census.gov/population/www/cen2000/briefs/phc-t1/index.html>).

As such, the Millennial generation is more accepting of diversity simply due to the exposure they had to it either at home, in the classroom, or through media outlets which played an integral role in bringing a more global perspective into living rooms across the country.

The next significant formative experience of the Millennials is the considerable advancements in technology. Unlike the Gen Xers, who experienced technology as innovative, yet isolating, Millennials have grown up with technology as essential to their daily routine. Erickson (2008) explains “more than 90 percent of those between 18 and 30 years old use the Internet regularly” (pg. 35). This provides unprecedented access to information, perhaps often to the point of overstimulation. While it is too early for research to track the effects of this access, further quantitative and qualitative analysis could explain the pros and cons in changing communication styles. It’s important to note

the ease and comfort of technology and access to information as crucial to subsequent values that begin to emerge.

Erickson states “technological advancements, perceptions of home ownership, and financial ability shape Millennials’ approach to life and work” (2008). For example, the infamous 2013 *Time* article entitled “The Me Me Me Generation: Why Millennials’ Will Save Us” mentioned projections that “Millennials’ and Generation X workers will have seven to ten jobs and a variety of different professions during their careers.” This is attributed to both technological and political changes:

Online tools and capabilities . . . make it easier than ever to find a new job and the U.S. Affordable Care Act will make it even less important to stick around for healthcare benefits. If the performance management process creates animosity or a lack of accountability, good people will often leave. (Stein, 2013)

The social changes that began in the Generation X formative years (deferred marriage, dual-income households, blended families) became “uncontroversial facts of American life”; as noted by Strauss & Howe (1991), and “abortion rates, voluntary sterilization, and divorce either plateaued or reversed” (pg. 337).

*Core Values:* Unlike previous generations, the Millennials grew up in a fast-paced, technology-dominated environment, where everyone was awarded a medal, despite a win or lose outcome. There are several values that begin to emerge which, in many ways, drive their outwardly focused world view. Growing up with over-protective parents, family relationships strengthened as Millennials grew up in an environment with parents who nurtured and structured their lives. As a result, this generation was drawn to their families for safety and security (Underwood, 2007).

Millennials came of age during the rapid growth of the internet, in a diverse global environment, and during a time of increased global terrorism. As a result, they are much more globally oriented than their Baby Boomer parents, and are resilient in navigating change as their appreciation for diversity and inclusion deepens (Strauss & Howe, 1991).

Throughout their youth, they experienced a time of global terrorism, highly publicized school shootings and natural disasters, which has driven a more civic-minded, compassionate mindset. They're more outwardly focused than the previous two generations. Growing up, they were taught to think in terms of the greater good and embrace the value of community service. Applications for the Teach for America program and the Peace Corps significantly increased as Millennials began moving into adulthood. Subsequently, they expect companies to contribute to their communities and to operate in ways that create a sustainable environment (Underwood, 2007).

Advancements in technology have allowed people to connect using various online and virtual platforms, and Millennials have grown up using technology as a way to develop, communicate and maintain interactions with others. There are many pros and cons of this type of interaction, but it has led to a different sense of belonging and kinship. As a result, Millennials are peer-focused team players who are said to strongly value fast-paced, technological interactions and prefer constant and instantaneous feedback in the personal and professional environment (Strauss & Howe, 2007).

Lastly, since they are a large generation, competition is fierce, much like the experience of the Baby Boom generation. As a result, Millennials are education focused,

obsessed with gaining admission to colleges of their choice, in order to gain the best possible position in the workforce (Underwood, 2007, pg. 247).

Based on the available literature, we can acknowledge like all generations, the Millennial cohort, has been partially shaped by advancements in technology which has broken down geographical barriers and created a new way of communicating and interacting with others. Additionally, key events such as the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attacks, the Great Recession that stymied economic growth and halted job creation, and mounting student-loan debt has contributed to the complexities involved with navigating through increasingly destabilized world, (Erickson, 2008).

In summary, more research is needed to examine the extent of the political, cultural and social influences on any generation, and how it affects their approach to the workplace. Whether it's the empowerment/ engagement values of the Baby Boomers; the independent/pragmatic nature of the Gen Xer's; or, the civic-minded/ technologically advanced Millennials, we can assume core values emerge as a result of these influences. In the following pages, I will provide further analysis on the specific characteristics that emerge in the workplace for each of the three generations, based on existing research and scholarly articles.

## **6. Workplace Attitudes and Expectations**

Dencker et al. claims generational workplace identities emerge based on collective memories of shared events that take place within each generation's late formative years (2008). They further suggest this shared identity results in common workplace expectations (2008). Lyons and Kuron identify generational differences in

work values as generalized beliefs about the desirability of various aspects of work (pay, autonomy, work conditions) and related outcomes (prestige, accomplishment and fulfillment.) Since work values are conceptualized in different ways, the majority of studies involve having participants rate a list of work characteristics and outcomes that typically fall into four categories: intrinsic, extrinsic social and prestige (2014).

To date, research has failed to establish the precise mechanism through which formative experiences translate into specific work values (Lyons & Kuron, 2014). Empirical research is limited to determining: what the existing differences are, how big the gaps are among generations, and/or to what effect do these differences have on various outcomes? Most researchers agree the main challenge in studying generational differences in workplace expectations seems to be separating the differences attributable to generational membership from those due to other factors such as age and/or time period (Costanza, et al., 2012).

In the article, “Actual Versus Perceived Generational Differences at Work”, Lester et al. provides empirical evidence supporting the implications of generational perceptions and assumptions through the analysis of quantifiable data separating actual versus perceived differences. Subjects from a large mid-West organization were asked to answer questions about what they desire in the workplace, as well as, what they perceive other generation’s desire in the same context (2012). Data was gathered from a total employee pool of 466 and 263 employees provided feedback. The positions and status of participants represented a wide range within the organization. The findings of the study indicate the perceived differences may considerably outweigh the actual differences. The study sets out to acknowledge and embrace the differences between generations in order

to leverage strengths rather than view the gaps as challenges to overcome. The results enable the researchers to compare cross-generational perceptions to the actual preferences as reported by the individual respondents. Through this analysis, this study contributes to the discussion of generational diversity and its impact on the workplace.

In further advancements in the study of generational workplace values, Mencl and Lester (2014) conducted a study comprised of subjects from a Midwestern community's local Chamber of Commerce to extend the previous research findings to show similarities and workplace characteristics between Baby Boomers, Generation X and Millennials. The study was designed to examine similarities and differences between generations using characteristics associated with "best places to work" lists as found in Fortune's top 100 companies, HR Magazine's 50 Best Small and Medium Companies (pg. 257-258). These specific characteristics were chosen for a data collection project and include the following: teamwork and collaboration, a challenging job, a financially rewarding job, climate of diversity, continuous learning, career advancement, involvement in decision making, flexible work arrangements, work-life balance, and immediate feedback and recognition (Mencl & Lester, 2014). The findings suggest the most significant generational difference lies with career advancement opportunities that are more strongly valued by Millennials, than Gen Xers and Baby Boomers. Also, immediate feedback and recognition was most valued by Millennials, which could be contributed to their desire for instant gratification and a culture of rewarding everyone, despite a win-loss outcome (Mencl & Lester, 2014). Otherwise, Mencl and Lester (2014) indicate the findings support the notion that generational similarities may outnumber differences, as evident in

this study, as well as more narrowly define characteristics associated with best places to work (pg. 268).

In the following pages, we will review a few examples of studies and research that further explain to the ways in which formative influences may contribute to shaping attitudes towards work and workplace expectations.

### **6.1 Formative influences in shaping attitudes towards work**

As identified above, each generation has a unique set of core values that emerge as a result of their formative influences. When considering the formative experiences of the Baby boomers, this generation began to challenge the glass ceiling for women in the workplace in the 1970s; experienced fierce competition in the workplace among themselves, women and minorities; and pursued the hierarchical corporate ladder in the hopes of achieving recognition and status (Hernaus & Vokic, 2014). This generation has been characterized as individuals who believe hard work and sacrifice are the price to pay for success (Zemke et al., 2000). As home life values began to shift, so did workplace expectations. As the wave of Baby Boomers entered the workforce, there was an expectation of ease of the Silent Generation, where jobs were plentiful in the year's following the end of World War II. However, with the boom generation's significant numbers, there was an imbalance of worker supply and demand. Beginning in the 1970's, employees were ambushed by corporate downsizing, reengineering, consolidation, outsourcing, off-shoring, age discrimination, and executive corruption and greed. Additionally, there was fierce competition among them, and now women and minorities, who were also seeking to achieve success in title and salary. The formative influences of

the Baby Boomers have prompted them to enter adulthood as “career-driven workaholics”, who often define themselves by their work (Underwood, 2007, pg. 111).

Alternatively, the formative experiences of Generation X translated into a much different approach to work; in that, they are more adaptable to change, value autonomy and independence more so than their predecessors, express their interest in flexible work arrangements and seek a balance between work and life (Hernaus & Vokic, 2014). With both parents in the workforce, the family unit was smaller than experienced by previous generations. Their formative years have evoked a self-protective attitude, and a unique sense of individuality for which has enabled an entrepreneurial mindset. Historical events, such as, Watergate, the economic crisis brought on by the fall of savings and loan banks, economic booms and busts, and the Iranian hostage situation, resulted in a generation with an understandable skepticism about formal authority and traditional institutions (Lester et al., 2012). Gen Xers have also emerged as more accepting and tolerant of different ethnicities and lifestyles (Underwood, 2007, pg. 217).

For the highly educated and technologically savvy Millennials, this generation has a need for supervision and mentoring, which could largely be due to over-involved and over-protective parents, as well as, a desire for meaningful, diverse, and interesting work (Hernaus & Vokic, 2014). According to Crumpacker & Crumpacker (2007), the socialization of Millennials “reflects parental nurturing, protection and praise above and beyond each of the previous generations.” Furthermore, this generation “possesses high levels of confidence and optimism, coupled with expectations for immediate feedback and almost continuous recognition” (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007). They came of age protected, competitive, team oriented, idealistic and pursuant to technology which



has granted instant access to information and people (Underwood, 2007, pg. 276). Generally, Millennials share many of the same characteristics of Xers. They are claimed to value team work and collective action, embrace diversity, and are optimistic and adaptable to change (Zemke et al., 2000). Furthermore, they seek flexibility, are independent, desire a more balanced life, are multitaskers, and are the most highly educated generation. They also value training ([www.valueoptions.com](http://www.valueoptions.com)). They have been characterized as demanding (Martin, 2005), and as the most confident generation (Glass, 2007). Like Xers, they are also purported to be entrepreneurial, and as being less process focused (Crampton & Hodge, 2006).

## **6.2 Generational work values and expectations**

*Baby Boomers:* Various studies<sup>4</sup> have shown individuals from this generation seem to place a high value on workplace priorities, which often supersedes all other personal priorities, and employs a live to work mentality. Competitive in nature, Baby Boomers are both process and results oriented, and will often go the extra mile to get the job done. According to a 2012 study, research suggests Boomers place high value on professionalism, recognition, collaboration and consensus, and face to face communication (Lester et al., 2012). Hernaus & Vokic contribute to generational workplace study by explaining throughout the career trajectory of the Baby Boomers, this generation has sought after opportunities for advancement. They further explain the Boomers prefer praise and title recognition; they value process over results; and, have often found their own identity in their work (2014). According to Zemke et al., Baby Boomers prefer teamwork, collaboration and group decision-making, are competitive,

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<sup>4</sup> In my research, multiple sources are in agreement that Baby Boomers place a high priority on work, and the term “live to work” has appeared in several journals, books and scholarly articles.

and believe in loyalty toward their employers (2000). This generation, although not as traditionally formal in their views of leadership as the previous generation, believed that “work was a priority and that through loyalty and paying one’s dues came reward and seniority” (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007). Work, in other words, was work, and “life” (e.g., fun, enjoyment) was separate (Lester et al. 2012). As a result, researchers agree this generation will continue to work into their retirement years. Research by Gallup (2013) suggests:

The oldest members of this generation were approaching retirement age as the economic crisis began, and many may be delaying retirement to build up depleted savings, repay additional debt incurred during the downturn, or wait for their portfolios to recover lost value. In the meantime, other Baby Boomers may delay retirement because they prefer to keep working.

These contributing factors may keep Baby Boomers in the workforce for many years to come” (Retrieved March 21, 2015 from <http://www.gallup.com/businessjournal/163466/generation-gap-workplace.aspx>).

*Generation X*: Lester et al explains: “leadership, as defined by Generation Xers, equates to competency... seniority is not as valued as proving one’s ability to lead.” This generation has also resisted the workaholic mindset of their predecessors, preferring for less formality and a greater balance between work and life (2012). Empirical research by Hernaus & Vokic (2014) indicate Generation Xers are adaptable to change, entrepreneurial, outcome (not task) oriented, value autonomy and independence, question authority, seek work-life balance, and pursue tasks that keep them interested and engaged. However, they are also averse to supervision and hierarchy, reluctant to commit, tend to be poor team players, and are disloyal with no job security expectations. In terms of *actual* differences among the three generations, Gen Xers rated lowest on professionalism

in the workplace, and Baby Boomers and Millennials demonstrate a stronger desire to operate in collaborative settings, whereas Gen Xers prefer independence (Lester, et al., 2012). Underwood (2007) claims Gen Xers are keen to problem solving and solutions oriented, which could largely be due to their independent, self-reliant nature (pg. 239). In terms of how they'll spend their retirement years, it remains to be seen. For the oldest members of Gen X, they will reach retirement in the year 2030. However, it is anticipated they will retire early or pursue a different experience altogether (possibly scale down and change careers), as they have been more diligent about saving for retirement.

*Millennials:* When considering the Millennials have grown up in an era where instant gratification is possible through technology; this generation “prefers a work environment with clear, well-defined expectations, instant access to information, and consistently high levels of feedback” (Lester et al., 2012). Millennials regard jobs as primarily a means to build a career resume and lack long-term attachment or commitment to the organization (Strauss & Howe, 2000). This challenges managers to motivate workers beyond the bare minimum task requirements, leading to the possibility of using workplace fun as a motivation for this generation.

In terms of the results of the study conducted by Lester et al (2012), Millennials reportedly scored a high preference on the following work values: email communication, social media, fun at work, and continuous learning opportunities. However, Baby Boomers and Generation Xers *perceived* the Millennials would not value the following items as much as the Millennials felt they valued them: teamwork, security, recognition, professionalism, flexibility, involvement. The study further explains Millennial's placed value on continuous learning more so than their predecessors, which could be due to the

strong emphasis placed on pursuing higher education during their formative years, and the desire to build and retain marketable skills (Lester et al, 2012). Empirical research by Hernaus & Vokic (2014) indicate Millennials seek meaningful, diverse, interesting and challenging work, employ a positive attitude, achievement/results oriented, embrace change, require clear goals and expectations, and are collaborative decision makers. However, they may be inexperienced or have trouble handling difficult people or issues, which could be due to communication challenges. Similar to their Generation X predecessors, the Millennials view towards retirement is unknown; although, researchers anticipate their perspective will more aligned with Gen Xers rather than Baby Boomers.

Deal (2007) analyzed data from a large cross-sectional U.S. study which asked respondents to select preferred leader qualities from forty attributes. The results indicate a strong preference by older generations for the following attributes: delegate, persuade, and high degree of resourcefulness. The younger generations consistently indicated a strong preference for the following: dedicated, dependable, focused, supportive and optimistic. To further elaborate, Deal's study concluded there is modest evidence that younger generations appear to "seek leaders who provide a working environment conducive to individual fulfillment rather than focused on task and organizational success" (2007). Evidence from time-lag and cross-sectional studies suggest that "despite a number of similarities, the generations in today's workplace differ in aspects of their personalities, work values and attitudes, leadership and behaviors, and career experiences (Deal, 2007). The importance of material rewards and leisure appear to be increasing, as work ethic and the centrality of work in people's lives are decreasing (Lyons & Kuron,

2014). Researchers acknowledge the findings must be interpreted cautiously as to not over-state a seemingly stronger preference for any individual in a given age cohort.

## 7. Conclusion

In summary, the literature indicates the values that emerge based on formative experiences and the ways in which these values can be translated to workplace attitudes, preferences and expectations.

Table 2.1 Summary Generational Formative Experiences, Values, and Work Aspects & Values

|                       | Baby Boomers   | Generation X  | Millennials  |
|-----------------------|--|---|--|
| Formative Experiences | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indulged post war optimism</li> <li>Idealistic children</li> <li>Societal change/ cultural revolutions</li> <li>Nuclear families intact</li> <li>1970s high cost of living/ inflation</li> <li>Values family/ community</li> <li>America as a superpower</li> <li>Children were seen as special</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Breakdown of traditional family unit</li> <li>Parented by permissiveness</li> <li>Mobile society</li> <li>Latchkey kids</li> <li>More volatile economy</li> <li>Changing demographics</li> <li>Global competition</li> <li>Dual income families</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indulged by parents</li> <li>Merged families</li> <li>Coddled children/ everyone gets a trophy</li> <li>Societal view towards children more positive</li> <li>September 11th and Hurricane Katrina</li> <li>Racial and ethnic diversity</li> <li>Destabilized world</li> <li>Advancements in technology</li> </ul>  |
| Core Values           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anti-War/ Government</li> <li>Anything is Possible</li> <li>Equal rights/ opportunities</li> <li>Empowered/ Engaged</li> <li>Involvement</li> <li>Optimism</li> <li>Personal Gratification</li> <li>Team Oriented</li> <li>Transformational</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diversity</li> <li>Entrepreneurial</li> <li>Highly educated</li> <li>Independent</li> <li>Informality</li> <li>Pragmatic</li> <li>Skepticism/ Cynical of Traditional values/ institutions</li> <li>Think Globally</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Achievement</li> <li>Civic Duty</li> <li>Confidence</li> <li>Diversity</li> <li>Like personal attention</li> <li>Now! Immediate results</li> <li>Socialability</li> <li>Members of a global community</li> <li>Technological savvy</li> </ul>   |
| Work Aspects & Values | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Live to work</li> <li>Face to face communication</li> <li>Consensus Leadership</li> <li>Strong work ethic</li> <li>Willing to take on responsibility</li> <li>Competitive</li> <li>Challenge authority</li> <li>Dislike conformity and rules</li> <li>Like praise/ recognition</li> <li>Process oriented</li> <li>Value ambition/ equality/ teamwork</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adaptable</li> <li>Entrepreneurial</li> <li>Value independence/autonomy</li> <li>Interested/ engaged</li> <li>Unimpressed with authority/leadership</li> <li>Work/Life Balance</li> <li>Casual work environment</li> <li>No attachment to job/ employer</li> <li>Prefer diversity/ technology, informality</li> <li>Outcome oriented</li> <li>Value balance more than advancement</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuous learning opportunities</li> <li>Email Communication</li> <li>Fun at Work</li> <li>Require clear goals and expectations</li> <li>Collaborative decision makers</li> <li>Open to new ideas</li> <li>Work flexibility (outside of traditional hours)</li> <li>Expect to influence terms of job</li> <li>High expectations of bosses and managers</li> <li>Achievement/ Goal oriented</li> <li>Meaningful work and innovation</li> </ul> |

Table 2.1 provides a summary of the formative experiences, core values, and preferred work aspects and values. For the Baby Boom generation, the years following

the end of World War II engendered a feeling of post-war optimism, and subsequently, a shift in political, societal and cultural changes ensued. Growing up in a relatively positive environment, the Baby Boomers developed a sense of purpose and were driven to achieve their goals, question the cause or what they were taught to believe, and transcend traditional norms. Raised by G.I. and Silent generation parents, they developed a strong work-ethic as pride in their achievements and competition among them propelled their desire to succeed. As they challenged that status quo, shifted the family dynamic, and sought professional advancements, they developed a sense of purpose and were willing to advance the cause and change the world.

For Generation X, the world they were born into was significantly different from their predecessors. As parenting styles changed and family values shifted, this generation was forced in to a world of independence, global competition, and a more volatile economy. Subsequently, they've developed an entrepreneurial mindset, and were the most highly educated generation, up until that point. As a result, their workplace attitudes and values provided a consideration for a work/life balance, the development of a global mindset, and skepticism for traditional values and institutions. Generation X continues to remain independent and autonomous in their approach to work. As the Baby Boom generation retires, and Generation X moves in to a position of power and leadership, it will be interesting to see how the current state of affairs begins to shift politically, culturally, socially, professionally and personally.

With regard to the Millennials, their formative years were wrought with rapid technological advancements and changes to the way people communicate, uncertainty derived from a constant fear of domestic and international threat of terrorism, and

continued racial and ethnic diversity. Parenting styles continued to shift from that of Generation X, and Millennials were raised in an environment of involvement, over-parenting and often times, blended families. As a result, Millennials require a significant amount of feedback, immediate results, and sociability. In the work environment, they are collaborative team-players, open to new ideas, seek out meaningful and purpose-driven work, and prefer to influence the terms and conditions of their employment. Similar to the Baby Boomers, Millennials were empowered and encouraged to achieve their goals. In terms of their Generation X predecessors, they also value a work/life balance and seek a more flexible work environment than older generations.

Definitive research studies have yet to be conducted to encompass a large sample of members within a given generation due to the complexities and dynamics involved with individuals confined by social status, gender and race differences, and region of the country, each of which have the potential to alter the findings substantially. However, in further advancing this area of study, researchers could interview several large companies of a given industry, or employ comparative studies between two distinct industry groupings to see how the perceived differences across generations has been actualized or if these differences continue to remain a common misconception and/or stereotype. The literature captured the perception of Baby Boomers, Gen Xers and Millennials in the workplace. Given today's diverse workforce, it is necessary for individuals of various age groups to work collaboratively and interact effectively together.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

Conducting an online survey with individuals from the Baby Boom, Generation X and Millennial generations across a higher education institution was the primary methodology used to gather data for this capstone. The lack of conclusive information in the literature about how formative influences have impacted workplace attitudes and expectations encouraged me to reach out to members of each generational cohort to capture their experiences and insight about the matter.

#### **1. Survey Invitations and Selection Criteria**

First, I considered a large organization in the Philadelphia area that consists of a diversified employment pool for which I could obtain data from multiple sources within a given generation. Through the use of online sources, I reviewed the top employers in the Philadelphia area and scanned the information for organizations that are highly regarded in their industry. After careful consideration, I chose a well-respected local university, which happens to be the largest private employer in the city of Philadelphia and the second largest in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

It was imperative for me to select a diversified organization comprised demographically of employees varied in age, gender, and position within the organization. As a primary element for selection criteria, employees whose formative years were spent in the United States was preferred, as the literature review indicates individual experiences may vary based upon the political, cultural and social climate of their



formative years.

## **2. Logistics**

For the purposes of exploratory research, I distributed a Qualtrics questionnaire to individuals across varying age groups and positions within the University by employing the convenience sampling methodology. The survey was emailed to a total of 45 employees of the University of Pennsylvania, to include 15 members of each generation, comprised of Baby Boomers, Generation Xers and Millennials.

As an employee of this university, ease of access to a pool of diversified individuals was considered and the survey was provided to my current and former colleagues, classmates in the Organizational Dynamics program who are currently employed at the University, and members of university faculty. Biases were carefully minimized, as I did not discuss specifics of my capstone topic, or elaborate on my question selection, until after I was informed by the participant of survey completion. I was interested in obtaining information which emerged in a more organic manner as indicated in the survey responses, without the respondent having too much of a background or frame of reference for the topic of generational expectations of the workplace.

## **3. Survey Questions**

The same set of questions was provided to all individuals so I could compare their responses for consistency – the survey questions are provided later in this section. The questions were organized to ask the subjects about how their formative influences have helped to shape their workplace attitudes, expectations and values. The first two

questions were created to capture the respondents birth year, which automatically links to a generational cohort. The third question identifies the individual's location of birth, as the data captured in the literature review is based upon sources obtained from the United States. The fourth question was selected to obtain information about the length of time at the respondent's place of employment, as a more mobile society and advancements in technology have led to a higher number of career changes within members of younger generations, as indicated in the literature review. The fifth question was selected to gauge the extent for which the respondents believe loyalty toward their employer is important and impactful in their work environment. According to the literature review, older generations are more likely to value a sense of loyalty toward their employer.

Questions six and seven were designed to gather specific information about how an individual's formative years were impacted by events and developments that occurred during their youth, as well as, the extent for which they believe these events and developments ultimately shape their expectations of work. Question eight provides specific examples of each person's formative political, cultural and social experiences in support of/ against the data obtained in the literature review. The ninth question provides insight into attitudes and values, specific to each respondent that may have helped to shape their expectations of work. The tenth and eleventh questions have served the purpose of gathering information about specific attitudes or aspects of work they feel are important to them which may be directly linked to their formative influences, and gathered as a result of the information from the literature review. Question twelve allows the individual to think more broadly about their generation in order to determine whether or not a collective mindset towards work is appropriate for a given generation. Question

thirteen narrows down specific adjectives to describe the respondent's interpretation of their generation's attitude towards work. Lastly, question fourteen requires the respondent to provide adjectives for which they believe best describe attitudes towards work from other generations.

It is important to highlight the survey questions were intentionally written to gather the individual's experience, in order to determine if a consistent mindset exists among each generational cohort. They respondents were not directly asked which generation they identify with, as to not bias or lead the respondent by making reference to a specific generation. The subjects may respond in a manner that is unique to their experience; or, the results could indicate a consistent pattern of data across members of the same generation. Rather, questions were written more broadly to get a feel for their specific experiences and how they translate into their expectations of the work place.

The intensity and depth of the answers to each question varied based on each individual's unique experiences. I asked the same questions of all respondents. The questions are as follows:

1. What year were you born: 1946 – 1964, 1965 – 1981, and 1982 – 2000+?
2. If other, please indicate your birth year \_\_\_\_\_
3. Please indicate your location of birth (state and/or country) \_\_\_\_\_
4. How long have you been employed with your present employer? Less than 2 years, 2-4 years, 5-10 years, 11-25 years, over 25 years
5. On a scale of one to five, what are your views on loyalty toward your employer/ organization? 1 (not important) – 5 (very important)

6. During the time period between your childhood until you finished your formal education, please list three to five important events and/or developments that impacted your life. (this may be defined as personal, national, or world events/developments)
7. Have these events/ developments shaped your expectations and experiences at work? If they have, please describe. If they have not, please explain.
8. How would you describe your generation's formative political, cultural and social experiences? (for the purposes of this paper, the term "formative" refers to the period of an individual's growth and development from adolescence to early adulthood)
9. In your youth, what attitudes/ values were instilled in you that may have shaped your expectations of work/ your career?
10. Rate the following statements or aspects of work on the indicated scale of 1 (not at all important) – 5 (very important)
  1. Live to work
  2. Face to face communication
  3. Consensus Leadership
  4. Willing to take on responsibility
  5. Competitive
  6. Recognition
  7. Challenge authority
  8. Dislike conformity and rules
  9. Like praise/ recognition
  10. Process oriented
  11. Value equality/ teamwork
  12. Unimpressed with authority/leadership
  13. Value independence/autonomy
  14. Work/Life Balance
  15. Adaptable
  16. Entrepreneurial
  17. Interested/ Engaged
  18. Casual work environment

19. No attachment to job/ employer
20. Outcome oriented
21. Prefer diversity/ technology, informality
22. Value balance more than advancement
23. Continuous learning opportunities
24. Achievement/ results oriented
25. Require clear goals and expectations
26. Fun at work
27. Email communication
28. Open to new ideas
29. Work flexibility (outside of traditional hours)
30. Expect to influence terms of job
31. High expectations of bosses and managers
32. Collaborative decision makers
33. Meaningful work and innovation

11. When considering the work preferences and values listed above, what are your top three preferences?
12. In thinking broadly about members of your generation, do you think they share similar core values in how they view their work/work place? Why or Why not?
13. What adjectives might you possibly apply to describe your generation's attitudes toward work? Please list 3-4 terms.
14. In thinking about members of other generations, what adjectives might you apply to describe their attitude towards work? Please indicate the generation you refer to with each adjective.

#### **4. Field Notes and Remarks**

A list of fifteen members of each generational cohort was compiled in preparation of the request for completion for a total of forty-five potential respondents. The contents of the email are listed in the appendix, and include the purpose of survey, a request for a specific due date of completion, and notification that the responses will remain

anonymous. The initial email was sent on May 7, 2015, and a follow-up email was sent to all potential respondents on May 18, 2015. A due date of May 21, 2015 was provided to align with my personal goal for tabulation and analysis.

The invitees who responded to my request to complete the survey expressed an interest in discussing the results after completion of the data analysis portion of my paper. While I received a substantial number of responses within the first week, I only received a few additional notifications in the days leading up to the due date. In total, thirty-one surveys were completed out of a total of forty-five, which is slightly above sixty-eight percent. Of those forty-five, twelve Baby Boomers, eleven members of Generation X, and eight Millennials had completed the survey. It is worth noting that the participants were forthcoming and contributed to my research by sharing information about their own experiences in the context of their formative influences. Even though quantitative data is crucial in strengthening the qualitative information gathered, the data is sensitive and unique to each individual; therefore, qualitative analysis is subjective and considered to be confidential because it provides a lens into the specific background of the individual, their inclination towards work, and the ways in which they believe their youthful influences may/ may not have impacted their workplace attitudes and values.

## CHAPTER 4

### SURVEY FINDINGS

In this chapter, each of the fourteen survey questions is presented, followed by a summary of respondent's answers.

#### 1. Respondents

For each question, a table has been provided in order to put the answers in context for the reader; and, Questions #6 – 14 include a separate table for each generation. The respondents answers varied in length and depth based on their own unique insight and perspective.

#### 2. Questions and responses

##### Question 1: What year were you born?

Table 4.1 Answers to Question 1

| # | Answer      | Response | %    |
|---|-------------|----------|------|
| 1 | 1946 - 1964 | 12       | 39%  |
| 2 | 1965 - 1981 | 11       | 35%  |
| 3 | 1982 - 2000 | 8        | 26%  |
| 4 | Other       | 0        | 0%   |
|   | Total       | 31       | 100% |

For the purposes of this paper, all survey respondents were considered to be of the Baby Boom, Generation X or Millennial generations. Of thirty-one replies, thirty-nine percent are placed in the Baby Boom generation, thirty-five percent are considered to the members of Generation X, and twenty-six percent are categorized as Millennials.

**Question 2: If other, please indicate your birth year:**

As a result of Question #1, there were not any respondents born before 1946 or after the year 2000. Therefore, this question was left blank and disregarded from the analysis.

**Question 3: Please indicate your birth location (state or country)**

Table 4.2 Answer to Question 3: Baby Boomers

| <b>Loction of Birth</b> | <b>Total Response</b> |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Philadelphia, PA        | 1                     |
| Pennsylvania            | 3                     |
| Indiana                 | 1                     |
| Michigan                | 1                     |
| Ohio                    | 1                     |
| North Carolina          | 2                     |
| Florida                 | 1                     |
| USA                     | 2                     |

Each of the twelve Baby Boom respondents was born in the United States; effectively four were born in Pennsylvania.

Table 4.3 Answer to Question 3: Generation X

| <b>Loction of Birth</b> | <b>Total Response</b> |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Philadelphia, PA        | 1                     |
| Pennsylvania            | 5                     |
| Michigan                | 1                     |
| Tennessee               | 1                     |
| Alabama                 | 1                     |
| Egypt                   | 1                     |
| France                  | 1                     |



Of eleven Generation X respondents, nine members have been born in the United States; and, six were born in Pennsylvania. Two respondents were born internationally, in Egypt and France respectively.

Table 4.4 Answer to Question 3: Millennials

| <b>Loction of Birth</b> | <b>Total Response</b> |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Delaware County, PA     | 1                     |
| Pennsylvania            | 3                     |
| New Jersey              | 1                     |
| Washington, DC          | 1                     |
| USA                     | 1                     |
| Poland                  | 1                     |

Of eight respondents of the Millennial generation, seven members have been born in the United States; and four were born in Pennsylvania. One respondent was born in Poland.

As the combined table below indicates, the Generation X and Millennial respondents include people of foreign birth. This was not the case for the Baby Boomers, an indication of greater immigration in the United States after 1965. In addition, the results of Question #3 indicate twenty-eight of the thirty-one total respondents, approximately ninety-one percent were born in the United States.

Table 4.5 Summary of Question 3 Responses

| <b>Location</b> | <b>Baby Boomer</b> | <b>Generation X</b> | <b>Millennial</b> |
|-----------------|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Pennsylvania    | 4                  | 6                   | 4                 |
| Other USA       | 8                  | 3                   | 3                 |
| Foreign         | 0                  | 2                   | 1                 |

**Question 4: How long have you been employed with your present employer?**

Table 4.6 Answer to Question 4: Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millennials

| Length of Time (years) | Baby Boomer |    | Generation X |    | Millennial |    |
|------------------------|-------------|----|--------------|----|------------|----|
|                        | #           | %  | #            | %  | #          | %  |
| Less than 2 years      | 0           | 0  | 2            | 18 | 1          | 13 |
| 2 - 4 years            | 1           | 8  | 2            | 18 | 4          | 50 |
| 5 - 10 years           | 3           | 25 | 6            | 55 | 3          | 38 |
| 11 - 25 years          | 8           | 67 | 1            | 9  | 0          | 0  |
| over 25 years          | 0           | 0  | 0            | 0  | 0          | 0  |

For Question #4, the table above indicates the length of time each respondent has identified they've been employed with their present employer. The data is separated by generation, and each generation includes the number of responses in each category; as well as the total percentage of each response per generation. For the Baby Boom generation, eight of twelve respondents indicate they've been employed with their present employer for over eleven years, which is approximately sixty-seven percent of the respondents. For Generation X, six of eleven respondents indicate they've been employed with their present employer between five to ten years, which is about fifty-five percent of the Gen Xers surveyed. Lastly, in terms of Millennials, fifty percent of the Millennial respondents have only been employed with their present employer between two to four years.

**Question 5: On a scale of 1 - 5, to what extent do you value loyalty toward your employer?**

Table 4.7 Answer to Question 5: Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millennials

|                                   | Baby Boomer |    | Generation X |    | Millennial |      |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|----|--------------|----|------------|------|
|                                   | #           | %  | #            | %  | #          | %    |
| Not all Important                 | 0           | 0  | 1            | 9  | 0          | 0    |
| Somewhat Unimportant              | 0           | 0  | 0            | 0  | 3          | 37.5 |
| Neither Important nor Unimportant | 1           | 8  | 1            | 9  | 1          | 12.5 |
| Somewhat Important                | 3           | 25 | 8            | 73 | 3          | 37.5 |
| Very Important                    | 8           | 67 | 1            | 9  | 1          | 12.5 |

For Question #5, the table above represents the responses of each generation, in terms of the extent for which they value loyalty toward their employer. In analyzing the data, sixty-seven percent of the Baby Boomers surveyed consider loyalty toward their employer *very important*, while twenty-five percent indicate it's *somewhat important*, and 8% do not feel it is *neither important nor unimportant*. Seventy-three percent of the Generation X members surveyed consider loyalty toward their employer as *somewhat important*, while nine percent indicate it's either *very important*, *neither important nor unimportant*, or *not at all important*. Thirty-eight percent of the Millennial surveyed indicate loyalty towards their important is either *somewhat important* or *somewhat unimportant*. Thirteen percent specify it is *very important*, while the remaining thirteen percent indicate it is *neither important nor unimportant*.

To summarize, ninety-two percent of the Baby Boomer respondents consider loyalty towards their employer as important; and the percentage begins to decrease with successive generations. The results indicate eighty-two percent of Generation Xers consider loyalty as important, with majority only indicating it's somewhat important. Interestingly, fifty percent of Millennials consider employer loyalty as a preferred value;

while, fifty percent has either not expressed a preference, or they feel loyalty toward their employer is somewhat unimportant.

**Question 6: During the time period between your childhood until you finished your formal education, please list 3 - 5 important events/ developments that impacted your life (this may be defined as personal, national, or world events/ developments).**

Table 4.8 Answer to Question 6: Baby Boomers

| Text Response  |
|--|
| Vietnam war; JFK assassination; MLK assassination; having many part-time jobs in high school and college; having a parent with health issues   |
| Getting Married, Having/Raising Children, Getting a Full Time Job, Buying a House  |
| Reaganomics and coming out of an economic recession and beginning work as the economic world began to improve, man walking on the moon, being encouraged by parents to do and be anything I could!             |
| Moved from Michigan to NJ to Chicago to St. Louis to NJ. New groups of friends in each location. Death of my favorite pet.   |
| JFK assassinated, father died at age 54, Nixon impeached, Woodstock, Economic recession in the 1980's  |
| My parents divorce; going away to school; working overseas   |
| Viet Nam War, women's liberation movement and an early marriage  |
| The unexpected death of my grandfather, the encouragement I received to pursue a masters degree at the end of my undergraduate studies, the devastation of not having been accepted to my first choice college |
| 1. Attending Catholic schools; 2. Early acceptance to college; 3. Joining the military   |
| decision to take a pay cut for a position at the University, birth of my children, divorce, major illness with a 5 year old nephew (brain tumor)   |
| Vietnam War/Love/Peace, Women's Lib, New Wave, Volunteerism  |
| Parent's divorce, met my wife, flunked out of college, had our first child   |

Of twelve respondents, five have indicated political, social and cultural events as having an impact on their life during the time of their formative years. Of these twelve Baby Boomer respondents, seven have indicated events/ developments that are of a personal nature only, such as: marriage/ family, divorce, educational pursuits, and other life events. It is important to note: three have indicated the Vietnam War, two have indicated the assassination of JFK, two consider the significations of the women's

liberation movement of the 1960s, and two have indicated the economic recession in the 1980s, while one indicates the impeachment of President Nixon and Woodstock.

Table 4.9 Answer to Question 6: Generation X

| Text Response   |
|---|
| birth of sibling (9yrs apart), back surgery, moving to NY   |
| My father starting his own business, the 2000 Presidential Election, 9/11   |
| Marriage, Arab Spring, leaving home country   |
| High School Graduation; College Graduation; Child Birth; Marriage   |
| September 11th; Economic Recessio; the Internet (global takeover); having a baby  |
| 1. Family moving multiple times 2. Major Family Illness 3. Challenger explosion 4. 9/11   |
| My first job, My parents divorce, Getting Married at age 20   |
| International guests; international travels; Olympic Games; European Union Création   |
| 1. Moving away to go to college 2. 1st serious romantic relationship and subsequent break up 3. My parent's divorce                                       |
| moved to Switzerland at 4 yo, moved back to States at 6 yo, parents got divorced, father remarried someone I didn't like                                  |
| Technological revolution, Greater opportunities for women in the workplace, Rise of excessive consumerism, Environmental degradation, increased terrorism |

Of eleven Generation X respondents, five individuals include events/developments that are of a personal nature only, while, two list national and world events only, and four include both personal, national, and world events/developments as having a significant impact on their lives. Twenty-eight percent of the respondents mention the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> as being impactful, twenty-eight indicate their parents' divorce, and thirty-seven percent indicate moving as being impactful during their formative years. Additionally, approximately nineteen percent include the technological revolution/ the internet as impactful during their formative years. Other important responses include: the 2000 Presidential election, the economic recession, the Challenger explosion of 1986, the increase in global terrorism, the increased opportunities for women in the workplace, the rise of excessive consumerism, and environmental degradation. It is important to note

that two of the eleven respondents are of international descent. However, both have indicated personal and political events as having a direct impact on their lives.

Table 4.10 Answer to Question 6: Millennials

| Text Response  |
|--|
| college, graduate school, socioeconomic status (low-middle income)   |
| working with the men's bball team at college, traveling abroad, one time when I was a child my grandfather scolded me for buying unneeded Sesame Street band aids with the change he gave me to buy milk. Seeing that he had a nice house and nice cars, I knew he could afford it, but I learned the lesson of not being frivolous. |
| death of friend, 911, death of parent  |
| 9/11, high school sports, moving away to college, personal relationships, the internet   |
| 1. Started my own lawn mowing business 2. Captain of Varsity Basketball Team 3. Learned to play guitar / started a band 4. 9/11 5. Moved out of my parents house   |
| 1. September 11, 2001 2. Changes in Civil Rights issues (sensitivity towards minority groups, women, race, disabilities, gender and homosexuality issues. 3. Various School shootings in the US and increased focus on mental health issues. 4. Later, the Great Recession   |
| attending an all girl's high school, taking leadership roles on campus during college years, raising my gpa in undergrad from a troubling first semester   |
| Moving to the States, Study Abroad, Internship Abroad  |

Of eight Millennial respondents, fifty percent indicate the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> as being impactful to their life during their youth. Twenty-five percent of the respondents consider the ability to travel/ study abroad as being impactful. One individual considers the economic status of their youth as significant in their development. Of eight respondents, seventy-five percent consider education as having significance; while, fifty percent discuss involvement in school activities as being impactful. Other important responses include: the internet, the continuing evolvement of civil rights issues, various school shootings across the United States, and the Great Recession of the twenty-first century. It is important to note that one of the eight respondents is of international descent.

Table 4.11 Summary of Question 6: Baby Boomers, Generation X, &amp; Millennials

|              | Baby Boomer |    | Generation X |    | Millennial |      |
|--------------|-------------|----|--------------|----|------------|------|
|              | #           | %  | #            | %  | #          | %    |
| Personal     | 7           | 58 | 5            | 46 | 4          | 50   |
| Non-Personal | 1           | 8  | 2            | 18 | 1          | 12.5 |
| Both         | 4           | 34 | 4            | 36 | 3          | 37.5 |

To summarize Question #6, Table 4.11 categorizes the events and developments listed in the responses by those of a personal and non-personal nature; as well as the responses that include a combination of personal and non-personal feedback. In considering childhood events or developments impactful to their life, the results vary for each generation. However, a larger percentage of respondents only considered events of a personal nature as being impactful; while, the lowest percentage for each generation only included non-personal responses, such as national or world events/ developments.

**Question 7: Have these events/ developments shaped your expectations and experiences at work? If they have, please describe. If they have not, please explain.**

Table 4.12 Answer to Question 7: Baby Boomers

| Text Response   |
|---|
| yes - my financially necessary part-time jobs made me flexible in many work situations later and provided me with experience and good references  |
| Once you get married and have children, it changes your expectations and experience at work, you want less adventure and travel, and more time at home with family. You career choices not only impact you, but also impact your family, and you feel a much greater sense of responsibility. |
| Started work thinking I could do it all. Making money and safety was important though as parents lived through Great Depression, as well as the recession of the late 70s and early 80s   |
| Yes, the frequent moves made me very independent and self-reliant, and gave me a rich appreciation of variety and diversity of ways of doing things.  |
| Nursing was seen as a safe bet in terms of future employment; did not want to join a corporation since they were not seen as trustworthy  |
| I tended to be a bit of loner...doing things for myself. I tried hard to excel. And I did not form many close relationships.  |
| They heightened my realization that one must think independently and be prepared to face the consequences of one's own beliefs.   |
| My educational choices have absolutely shaped my expectations and really guided my career choice and informed the way I would encourage my children and others around educational and career attainment.  |
| The values, growth, attitudes, and beliefs learned at catholic schools and in the military have definitely shaped my experiences and expectations at work.  |
| My work ethic is part of me, the events have not impacted my expectations at work but I believe they have helped with having empathy for others and understanding that we all face challenges in life.  |
| Womens Lib did - when I saw my mother go back to school and earn her degree and then work vs. stay at home mom, I wanted to do the same. The movie "Working Girl" also inspired me to think that I could do anything as a young woman.  |
| Most of these actually drove me to work hard, set goals, be responsible.  |

Of the twelve Baby Boomers questioned, eighty-three percent believe these events/ developments have shaped their expectations and experiences at work. One person claims it has not directly had an impact aside from “having empathy for others and understanding that we all face challenges in life.” Whether the experiences of their youth have taught them flexibility, safety, self-reliance, an internal drive for success, or the importance of shaping your career to align with values, majority of the Baby Boom respondents have indicated these events/ developments have either had a direct impact on their work expectations, or they’ve come to the realization that while others may have different experiences, we should all have empathy for the plight of others. Alternatively, one respondent does not believe these events have shaped their expectations of work claiming: “I tended to be a bit of a loner... tried hard to excel... did not form many close



relationships.” Interestingly, this respondent has only indicated personal childhood influences for Question #6, stating events such as:” parent’s divorce, school, and working overseas.”

Table 4.13 Answer to Question 7: Generation X

| Text Response   |
|---|
| yes, saw importance of work/life balance, realization that one can't always be truly independent, importance of team  |
| The two political events, not so much. My farther starting his own business has changed my expectations of work because he detested his employer, and when he started his own business he suddenly liked his job. It made me think of wage labor as essentially unpleasant, bosses usually idiotic, and with a constant fear of being laid off or fired.  |
| Yes, it gave me the opportunity to have an career that spanned 3 continents   |
| Not just at work but within my life in general. My point of view has changed from these.  |
| Yes. September 11th allowed employers to require more "security" measures that actually reduce personal civil liberties. The economic recession has meant that employeers can call all of the shots and justify low pay/wage freezes/increased work for no pay. The internet has changed the way that we work, so that we work from home and there are no longer boundaries between work and home. Having a child has completely changed my priorities and made me less focused on the importance/unreasonable demands of work. |
| They have definitely shaped my expectations/experiences at work. They give a perspective that that life is short and precious so work should be enjoyable, have meaning/purpose. Also the day-to-day should provide a life balance to be able to focus on and take care of the things that are truly important.   |
| Yes, they have taught me to respect authority, responsibility for my actions & future, and how to work with others  |
| Enjoying international exposure - sensitivity to international culture.   |
| No  |
| After the divorce, I felt like I had to be perfect to be loved/loveable; it made me a perfectionist in life. This helps me do well at work (most of the time), but can also make me be hard on myself and others. My expectations sometimes are too high.   |
| Yes - when I was in middle school, personal computers were just beginning to be more widely used - between then and now, the way that work gets done has changed radically; I had more opportunities than my mother's generation to acheive more professionally because of women's rights advances  |

For question #7, ninety-one percent of Generation X members have indicated the personal, national or world events/ developments have shaped their expectations and experiences at work. One person indicated the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> have “reduced personal civil liberties”, and the ensuing recession affords more liberties to the employer. This person also indicated the internet has broken the “boundaries between work and

home” and has altered the workplace environment. Similarly, another respondent discusses the evolution of technology throughout their educational years and how that has “radically” changed the way work is done. This person also views the women’s rights advancements as affording more opportunities for their generation. Another individual doesn’t see the connection of the political events; however, they do indicate their father’s entrepreneurial endeavors have meant more happiness and less un-pleasantry in working for others. Nineteen percent of the respondents have mentioned the importance of work-life balance. Other pertinent responses include: international exposure and sensitivity to international culture, “life is short... so work should be enjoyable, having meaning and purpose,” and high expectations of self and others. One Gen X respondent does not see the connection of these events to their work experiences.

Table 4.14 Answer to Question 7: Millennials

| Text Response  |
|--|
| No - have sought work to match my personality and preferences. Got ideas of what to do/not to do from formal education. Formal education enabled career choices, but did not necessarily inform them directly.   |
| As a female working for a men's basketball coach, the coach's gave me a great deal of respect, responsibility, and authority. It lead me to believe that the glass ceiling did not exist. Growing up, the successful people I knew were men who owned their own businesses. As a result, I tried to develop myself as someone who was comfortable and confident speaking professionally to men. In addition, having worked previously in a male dominated industry, I am concious to remain professional as a female and stay away from toeing the line. |
| these events haven't exactly impacted my work life except perhaps I don't take things too seriously because no matter what happens at work things could always be worse  |
| Yes, particularly with playing sports - it taught me discipline, motivation, and the value of teamwork.  |
| These events have indeed shaped my expectations and experiences at work. The combination of taking responsibility for acheiving what you want in life and at the same time, understanding that there are elements that are out of your control, are lessons that were solidified through these developments. In relation to work, this means I take responsibility and control the elements that I have control over and let go of things outside of my control.   |
| Yes, I believe they have made things less certain in both a positive and negative way. Positively, they have opened the door for more diversity in the work place that allows for different perspectives on issues. In a negative way, things seem less safe. there are more safety precautions everywhere due to 9/11 and shootings, etc. The Recession made job stability less certain.  |
| They remind me that there is so much that I can acheive  |
| Yes they have helped me become more independent and resilient in a state of uncertainty  |

Seventy-five percent of the Millennials questioned believe these events have shaped their expectations and experiences at work. However, all have indicated it has provided them with perspective into their professional endeavors. The responses include: breaking down the barriers of a traditionally male-dominated industry, value of teamwork, learning to be adaptable as events can sometimes be out of your control, taking responsibility for achieving your goals, opening the door for more workplace diversity, and remaining resilient in a state of uncertainty. Fifty-percent of the respondents indicate these events have highlighted the uncertainty of: life, the economic state of the country, and social issues that may arise as a result. One person does not believe these events have shaped their expectations/ experiences at work claiming: “sought to match personality and preferences... got ideas of what to do/ not do from formal education... formal education has enabled career choices, but did not inform them directly.” For Question #6, this person considered their educational pursuits and socioeconomic status.

Table 4.15 Summary of Question 7: Baby Boomers, Generation X, & Millennials

| <b>Response</b> | <b>Baby Boomers</b> | <b>Generation X</b> | <b>Millennial</b> |
|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Yes             | 10                  | 9                   | 6                 |
| No              | 1                   | 1                   | 1                 |
| Yes & No        | 1                   | 1                   | 1                 |

As indicated in Table 4.15, a large majority of the respondents believe the events and developments they’ve listed in Question #6 have shaped their expectations of and experiences at work.

**Question 8: How would you describe your generation’s formative political, cultural and social experiences? (For the purposes of this paper, the term "formative" refers to the period of an individual's growth and development from adolescence to early adulthood)**

Table 4.16 Answer to Question 8: Baby Boomers

| Text Response  |
|--|
| The Vietnam war changed the direction of many of my friends who were drafted, or who might be drafted. The government and authority were looked at by a younger generation in a different and more scrutinizing way. Young people began to feel that they could actually greatly influence social, cultural and governmental policy.                             |
| We came home to Watergate discussions and developed a distrust for high government officials, we respected others doing their own thing, and being their own person, but we were also competitive, and yet we still had fun together.  |
| Not sure what you are after in this question,,,,,sorry   |
| I was in high school during the Viet Nam war and was active in the peace movement. I went to a Quaker high school, so it made me very aware of the horrors and injustice of war, and this led to the generation of hippies who valued love, peace and cooperation..  |
| Social unrest, rise of women's rights, racial inequality, distrust of older generation, more emphasis on doing good than making money  |
| Distrust of government (I did not want work overseas with Peace Corps, so found my own job); information overload  |
| I would not comment on my "generation's formative experiences."  |
| It was fairly quiet (70s and 80s), post civil rights but still the USA was not an equality opportunity experience. I believe as an African AMERICAN, we were still establishing ourselves and our identity and trying to work hard for stability. HIV/AIDS was entering the scene, brutally. Most people of color were likely to be first generation to college. |
| My generation experiences good economic times, endured the draft and the Vietnam War, and created the civil rights movement.   |
| Personally, my experience taught me about hard work, patience, and persistence. Family and friends are important and you must give your best at work and be a team player.   |
| During my formative years, I think political affiliation was evenly split between Republicans and Democrats.. Socially, you had your group of friends...you go to the mall together, as we got older, out to bars, go to the shore, etc.   |
| Cold War, MLK assassination, RFK assassination, Woodstock, Oil Crisis, Watergate   |

A majority of the Baby Boomers surveyed describe their generation’s formative experiences with a focus on Vietnam and the draft, the government and authority, the creation of the civil rights movement, the peace movement, Woodstock, social unrest, Watergate, and political affiliations. Thirty-seven percent directly indicate a distrust of government and older generations, and a comment includes “the government and

authority were looked at by a younger generation in a different and more scrutinizing way.” One individual identified the Cold War, the Oil Crisis and assassinations of the 1960s as being impactful. Another individual, who identifies as an African American, discusses the post-civil rights experience as being “not an equal opportunity” as they were still establishing their identity. This person also highlights the horrors of HIV/AIDS.

Table 4.17 Answer to Question 8: Generation X

| Text Response  |
|--|
| simpler than today given that we did not have the influx of social media - more doing than watching  |
| In the 90's, it was assumed that everything would be fine forever. There was a smug contentment with life in America. In the 00's, we learned through the Bush presidency that not only was this not true, but that our political elites were determined to sell off everything in the country they could, and that politicians would never do anything productive or beneficial for the people. The growth of the Internet made it so that we could have all the free music, tv, and movies we wanted, but that we would have to accept less money for our labor, never be able to support ourselves on artistic/creative work. "Selling out", which was seen as a horrible betrayal for people older than us, became something that was not even a possibility for our generation. |
| Liberal and recolonary   |
| Liberal  |
| We were brought up in the shadow of Watergate and Communism. We experienced the advantages of the 80s economic boom and technological advancements (including visual media in education, microwaves for ease of living). After the Berlin Wall came down, the world opened up and travel became "unlimited". We have never really known war, so instead the media gave us "angst". We have always been surrounded by media and have seen the downfall of the media in all ways.  |
| I would describe it as one of transition. We transitioned politically from a long period of Republican politics/presidencies to Bill Clinton and the Democratic years. We transitioned from the Cold War to the a more global community. We transitioned from a culture of security to one of fear/distrust in post 9/11. We transitioned for personal, tactile communications to one of social media and texting (more impersonal).   |
| These years have helped us develop a larger sense of socially acceptable values  |
| Openness to the world.   |
| constant change  |
| I was born one year after the Baby Boom cut--off year of 1964. I feel like I straddle both generations, but I relate more to the Baby Boomers ethos: "With hard work you can make things happen; Have respect for elders, teachers, the police, etc.; Be courteous (have manners); Take pride in your country, appearance, neighborhood and yard/sidewalk; CARE about something - march, protest, volunteer."  |
| Self-reliance, desire for self actualization, some disillusionment with the political system, interest in work/life balance  |

The Generation X respondents describe their formative experiences as follows: simple and without social media, liberal, a period of transition, constant change, and openness to the world. Thirty-four percent highlight the advancements in technology, and

the comments include: “the internet made it so that we could have free music, TV, and movies... but that we would have to accept less money for our labor”; “technological advancements (including visual media in education, microwaves for ease of living”; and “social media and texting (more impersonal.)” One individual discusses the economic advantages of the 1980s, and the world opening up, “travel became unlimited”, due to the fall of the Berlin Wall. This person also indicates the impact of the media and the “angst” created as a result of “always being surrounded by it.” Another person discusses the ease and “smug contentment” of the 1990s, which was shattered in the 2000s by the political elites and the Bush presidency. They state “the politicians would never do anything productive or beneficial for the people.” They further explain “we would have to accept less money for our labor” and not having the ability to support themselves on artistic/creative work. Another individual indicates their formative years have transitioned personally, politically and globally from a technological standpoint as well as from a culture of security to one of fear/ distrust post September 11<sup>th</sup>. They exclaim “we transitioned from “Republican politics to the Democratic years... from a culture of security to one of fear/ distrust, and to more impersonal communications.” Additionally, another person responds that their formative years can be described as having the “desire for self-actualization”, disillusionment with the political system”, and an interest in a balance between work and life.

Table 4.18 Answer to Question 8: Millennials

| Text Response   |
|---|
| tumultuous but privileged   |
| we haven't experienced a draft like our grandparent's or parent's and the great depression like our grandparents. Perhaps that enables us to work without fear of one day not having food. There's more to life than financial success. I think my generation is more liberal than previous. I think my generation is more accepting to diversity in race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identification than previous.   |
| I think my generation is involved, focused and hard working   |
| I have a tough time recalling the political and social climate prior to the internet and 9/11 - I am accustomed to a lack of privacy  |
| My generation is the last to experience life with and without the internet / digital age. We were young when computers became common household items and unlike some in the older generations, are not intimidated by technology because we grew up learning and working on computers. We were also the last to have to use card catalogues in the library when doing school research. That is to say, we're comfortable in both analog and digital environments whereas those in younger generations function primarily in the digital realm. In regards to economic and political experiences, a good deal of our generation's time was spent in the 90's, where there was relative peace and economic prosperity. We then had the dot-com bust followed by 9/11, which was our first real glimpse at war and uncertainty. We had friends and family go off to a war for the first time. We also experienced a real estate boom and bust, followed by the greatest recession since the great depression. I could go on in great detail as to what impact such events has on a generations psyche but suffice it to say, our generation can be described through our experience with social and cultural dichotomy: analog vs. digital, boom vs. bust, peace vs. war; Wall St. vs. Main Street, etc. |
| I think we are much more liberal and open minded than our parent's generation. I think the diversity that we have experienced made us acknowledge that it is a positive attribute to work.  |
| Politically- only interested when something happens on large scale (clinton's troubles, 9/11), culturally/socially- more open to other cultures and appreciative of diverse social settings   |
| Those eperiences are sometimes more critical than experiences formal educational institutions offer. Exposure to those situations/experiences in addition to formal education shape an individual's learning and development.   |

The Millennials have described their generation's formative experiences as being: tumultuous but privileged, liberal, focused, comfortable in digital environments, open-minded, diversified, culturally and socially more accepting of others, and less private than older generations due to technological advancements. One Millennial indicates "there's more to life than financial success", while also describing the acceptance of diversity in race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identification. Another Millennial describes the ease of using technology and the ability to function in a "digital" environment. They further exclaim their generation was the "last to experience life with and without the internet/ digital age.... And the last to use card catalogues in the library." As a result, they are "comfortable in both analog and digital environments." Lastly, one

person describes their generation’s formative experiences, along with their educational experiences, as having “exposure to those situations/ experiences in addition to formal education shape and individual’s learning and development.”

**Question 9: In your youth, what attitudes/ values were instilled in you that may have shaped your expectations of work/ your career?**

Table 4.19 Answer to Question 9: Baby Boomers

| Text Response   |
|---|
| Basically, find a job in a good company and stay there for a long, long time and you'll live a happy life. Be loyal to your employer. Work hard.  |
| intellectual curiosity, variety, fulfillment, satisfaction  |
| If you worked hard, you could get ahead. Hard work was valued whether it was in school, in relationships, or work. It was also more about society and family rather than so self-centered.  |
| Strong work ethic, importance of cooperation and service, importance of doing my best in whatever I do.   |
| rebellious, questioning, fearless about taking career risks, highly individualistic, altruistic, wanting to change the world  |
| Work hard; I am capable; I can accomplish what I set my mind to   |
| My parents were both hard working, value-driven individuals. That had the greatest impact on my development and work.   |
| To work hard, be reliable, be loyal   |
| A respect for authority, hard work, achievement, materialism, and consumerism.  |
| My father demonstrated that we must work hard, be committed and strive to do our best -- go above and beyond. I expect that of myself and my colleagues. I am a trusting person and I assume the best in everyone until they prove me wrong. That said, I also learned to forgive and forget. |
| study and work hard, play a musical instrument, choose a sport(s) - the hard work ethic carried me through in my career..."work to live"...As I'm now older and wiser, it's shifted to "live to work "  |
| Love what you do, and if you don't, change what you do. Achieve, work hard, you control your destiny  |

Eighty-three percent of the Baby Boomers surveyed believe hard work was a value instilled during their youth, which has shaped their expectations of work/ career. Of those who mention hard-work, eighteen percent believe in loyalty toward their employer. Other values instilled during their youth include: intellectual curiosity, fulfillment, satisfaction, variety, importance of cooperation and service, doing your best and going above and beyond, rebellious, fearless risk takers, altruistic, change the world mentality,



reliability, achievement, materialism, consumerism, the impact of the value-driven influences of their parents, and the ability to control your own destiny.

Table 4.20 Answer to Question 9: Generation X

| Text Response   |
|---|
| hard work ethic, high expectations of self/team/client  |
| That employers would only want to extract labor from you by any means (unpaid overtime, making you afraid of being fired), and that as an employee, it was up to you to resist this however you could (slacking off on the job, stealing office supplies) |
| Hard work pays off and it doesn't have to be with just one employer. Actually, i learned that changing jobs every 2 or 3 years is very enriching. You get exposed to different corporate cultures, industries, way of doing things...etc.                 |
| Values that were instilled were work ethic - always do the right thing and follow thru - your word is your bond.  |
| To work hard and always do your best at work because it reflects on your personal work ethic/values, which is part of who you are as an individual. To "never burn a bridge" at work regardless of the work situation.                                    |
| Respect, an honest, hard-working work ethic, joy/meaning/purpose in your work, satisfaction of a job well-done (my mom would always ask if something I did was something I would be willing to sign my name onto)   |
| Hard work will get you ahead, Clear communication is crtical  |
| Study hard to get the best education as possible; this will help you change career if need be.  |
| strong work ethic, dedication, adapting to change   |
| From my parents: be honest, work hard, keep confidences (be trustworthy). You are responsible for your own life, no one owes you anything. You can make things happen. You are powerful.  |
| My parent s were very fiscally conservative, and instilled in me the value of money, as well as the importace of hard work and being disciplined and conscientious  |

Generation X also indicates hard work as a value instilled during their youth. Other values include: high expectations of self and others, the enrichment achieved by changing jobs, seeking joy/meaning and purpose in their work, clear communication, gaining value from your education, honesty, and the value of money. One individual discusses the employer's extraction of labor by any means necessary could result in resistances and sometimes unethical behavior. As indicated above, several members of Generation X seek internal motivations such as high expectations of self, a reflection of work ethic/ values as crucial to being an individual, personal satisfaction on a job well-done, and ultimately being responsible for your own path in life.

Table 4.21 Answer to Question 9: Millennials

| Text Response   |
|---|
| individualism, creativity   |
| Work hard, work harder than others. The ideal scenario is to have your own company in order to not work for someone else and have the opportunity for great wealth.   |
| Work hard, nothing is just handed to you.   |
| Along with sports, my parents played a pivotal role in shaping my expectations of work. A strong work ethic was instilled in me at a young age.   |
| Taking responsibility for your actions is a key value that was instilled early on, along with empathy and benevolence. I also learned critical collaboration, teamwork, and leadership skills through my experiences in competitive sports. |
| Work hard! Do things to make you stand out from the crowd. Persistence and dedication will get you far.   |
| I was constantly reminded from my parents and other authoritative figures, that as a woman you can achieve more than the previous generation and things will only get better with time.   |
| working hard pays off, never burn any bridges as you don't know when and who you will come across in your life later, people will try to knock you down - keep your nose above the ground and don't let them                                |

Hard work was also a consideration for Millennials, as twenty-five percent specify working hard will differentiate you from others. Other values listed in Question #9 include: individualism, creativity, an entrepreneurial mindset, persistence & dedication, gender equality, and the importance of not burning any bridges. One Millennial discusses “critical collaboration, teamwork, and leadership skills have been instilled as a result of their involvement in sports during their youth.

To summarize Question #9, eighty-three percent of Baby Boomers, eighty-two percent of Gen Xers, and sixty-three percent of Millennials have indicated *hard work* or *work ethic* as a value instilled during their youth, which may have shaped their expectations of work/ their career.

**Question 10: Rate the following statements or aspects of work on the indicated scale of 1 (not at all important) – 5 (very important)**

Table 4.22 Answer to Question 10: Baby Boomers

| #  | Question  | 1 - Not at all Important | 2 - Somewhat Unimportant | 3 - Neither Important nor Unimportant | 4 - Somewhat Important | 5 - Very Important | Total Responses | Mean |
|----|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|------|
| 1  | Live to work                                    | 0                        | 2                        | 4                                     | 5                      | 1                  | 12              | 3.42 |
| 2  | Preferred method of communication: Face-to-face | 0                        | 0                        | 2                                     | 5                      | 5                  | 12              | 4.25 |
| 3  | Consensus Leadership                            | 0                        | 1                        | 2                                     | 6                      | 3                  | 12              | 3.92 |
| 4  | Willing to take on additional responsibilities  | 0                        | 0                        | 1                                     | 4                      | 7                  | 12              | 4.50 |
| 5  | Competitive                                     | 0                        | 1                        | 3                                     | 6                      | 2                  | 12              | 3.75 |
| 6  | Strong Work Ethic                               | 0                        | 0                        | 1                                     | 3                      | 8                  | 12              | 4.58 |
| 7  | Challenge Authority                             | 0                        | 3                        | 3                                     | 5                      | 1                  | 12              | 3.33 |
| 8  | Dislike conformity and rules                    | 1                        | 2                        | 4                                     | 3                      | 2                  | 12              | 3.25 |
| 9  | Like praise and recognition                     | 0                        | 2                        | 3                                     | 5                      | 2                  | 12              | 3.58 |
| 10 | Process-oriented                                | 0                        | 2                        | 4                                     | 5                      | 1                  | 12              | 3.42 |
| 11 | Value equality and teamwork                     | 0                        | 0                        | 3                                     | 5                      | 4                  | 12              | 4.08 |
| 12 | Unimpressed with Authority/ Leadership          | 1                        | 0                        | 5                                     | 6                      | 0                  | 12              | 3.33 |
| 13 | Value Independence/ Autonomy                    | 0                        | 0                        | 0                                     | 3                      | 9                  | 12              | 4.75 |
| 14 | Work/Life Balance                               | 0                        | 1                        | 3                                     | 3                      | 5                  | 12              | 4.00 |
| 15 | Adaptable                                       | 0                        | 0                        | 1                                     | 4                      | 7                  | 12              | 4.50 |
| 16 | Entrepreneurial                                 | 0                        | 0                        | 3                                     | 5                      | 4                  | 12              | 4.08 |
| 17 | Interested/ Engaged                             | 0                        | 0                        | 1                                     | 5                      | 6                  | 12              | 4.42 |
| 18 | Casual work environment                         | 0                        | 2                        | 3                                     | 5                      | 2                  | 12              | 3.58 |
| 19 | Little or no attachment to job/ employer        | 4                        | 3                        | 5                                     | 0                      | 0                  | 12              | 2.08 |
| 20 | Outcome-oriented                                | 0                        | 1                        | 1                                     | 4                      | 6                  | 12              | 4.25 |
| 21 | Prefer diversity/ technology/ informality       | 0                        | 1                        | 5                                     | 6                      | 0                  | 12              | 3.42 |
| 22 | Value balance more than advancement             | 1                        | 1                        | 4                                     | 5                      | 1                  | 12              | 3.33 |
| 23 | Continuous Learning Opportunities               | 0                        | 0                        | 1                                     | 3                      | 8                  | 12              | 4.58 |
| 24 | Achievement/ Results Oriented                   | 0                        | 0                        | 1                                     | 6                      | 5                  | 12              | 4.33 |
| 25 | Require clear goals and expectations            | 0                        | 0                        | 3                                     | 8                      | 1                  | 12              | 3.83 |
| 26 | Fun at Work                                     | 0                        | 2                        | 6                                     | 3                      | 1                  | 12              | 3.25 |
| 27 | Preferred method of communication: Email        | 1                        | 4                        | 3                                     | 4                      | 0                  | 12              | 2.83 |
| 28 | Open to new ideas                               | 0                        | 0                        | 2                                     | 3                      | 7                  | 12              | 4.42 |
| 29 | Work flexibility (outside of traditional hours) | 0                        | 1                        | 0                                     | 4                      | 7                  | 12              | 4.42 |
| 30 | Expect to influence terms of jobs               | 0                        | 0                        | 7                                     | 4                      | 1                  | 12              | 3.50 |
| 31 | High expectations of bosses and managers        | 0                        | 1                        | 3                                     | 7                      | 1                  | 12              | 3.67 |
| 32 | Collaborative decision makers                   | 0                        | 2                        | 4                                     | 2                      | 4                  | 12              | 3.67 |
| 33 | Meaningful work/ innovation                     | 0                        | 1                        | 1                                     | 3                      | 7                  | 12              | 4.33 |

In considering the statements or aspects of work, all of the Baby Boomers surveyed have allocated the following as *very important* or *somewhat important*: value independence/ autonomy. According to the research, this is considered to be a value highly regarded by Gen Xers. Approximately ninety-two percent have rated 4 or higher as either *somewhat important* or *very important* for the following: willing to take on additional responsibilities, strong work ethic, adaptable, interested/engaged, continuous learning opportunities, achievement/results oriented, and work flexibility. The first two statements are considered to be valued highly by Baby Boomers; however, the remaining statements align more closely to the Gen X and Millennial generations.

Approximately eighty-four percent have rated 4 or higher as either *somewhat important* or *very important* as follows: outcome oriented, open to new ideas, and meaningful work/innovation. Again, these statements are traditionally considered values important to younger generations.

The findings also indicate that over fifty-eight percent of the Baby Boomers surveyed rate “little or no attachment to job/employer” as either *somewhat unimportant* or *not at all important*; while, over forty-one percent indicated “preferred method of communication: email” as either *somewhat unimportant* or *not at all important*.

Table 4.23 Answer to Question 10: Generation X

| #  | Question  | 1 - Not at all Important | 2 - Somewhat Unimportant | 3 - Neither Important nor Unimportant | 4 - Somewhat Important | 5 - Very Important | Total Responses | Mean |
|----|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|------|
| 1  | Live to work                                    | 3                        | 2                        | 3                                     | 3                      | 0                  | 11              | 2.55 |
| 2  | Preferred method of communication: Face-to-face | 0                        | 2                        | 2                                     | 2                      | 5                  | 11              | 3.91 |
| 3  | Consensus Leadership                            | 0                        | 1                        | 5                                     | 4                      | 1                  | 11              | 3.45 |
| 4  | Willing to take on additional responsibilities  | 0                        | 1                        | 0                                     | 5                      | 5                  | 11              | 4.27 |
| 5  | Competitive                                     | 1                        | 6                        | 2                                     | 2                      | 0                  | 11              | 2.45 |
| 6  | Strong Work Ethic                               | 0                        | 0                        | 1                                     | 2                      | 8                  | 11              | 4.64 |
| 7  | Challenge Authority                             | 0                        | 2                        | 4                                     | 4                      | 1                  | 11              | 3.36 |
| 8  | Dislike conformity and rules                    | 0                        | 3                        | 5                                     | 2                      | 1                  | 11              | 3.09 |
| 9  | Like praise and recognition                     | 0                        | 0                        | 0                                     | 9                      | 2                  | 11              | 4.18 |
| 10 | Process-oriented                                | 0                        | 1                        | 4                                     | 4                      | 2                  | 11              | 3.64 |
| 11 | Value equality and teamwork                     | 0                        | 0                        | 0                                     | 5                      | 6                  | 11              | 4.55 |
| 12 | Unimpressed with Authority/ Leadership          | 0                        | 4                        | 2                                     | 4                      | 1                  | 11              | 3.18 |
| 13 | Value Independence/ Autonomy                    | 0                        | 0                        | 0                                     | 2                      | 9                  | 11              | 4.82 |
| 14 | Work/Life Balance                               | 0                        | 0                        | 1                                     | 1                      | 9                  | 11              | 4.73 |
| 15 | Adaptable                                       | 0                        | 1                        | 0                                     | 1                      | 9                  | 11              | 4.64 |
| 16 | Entrepreneurial                                 | 1                        | 1                        | 1                                     | 3                      | 5                  | 11              | 3.91 |
| 17 | Interested/ Engaged                             | 0                        | 0                        | 0                                     | 2                      | 9                  | 11              | 4.82 |
| 18 | Casual work environment                         | 0                        | 1                        | 1                                     | 6                      | 3                  | 11              | 4.00 |
| 19 | Little or no attachment to job/ employer        | 0                        | 1                        | 5                                     | 3                      | 2                  | 11              | 3.55 |
| 20 | Outcome-oriented                                | 0                        | 1                        | 2                                     | 5                      | 3                  | 11              | 3.91 |
| 21 | Prefer diversity/ technology/ informality       | 0                        | 1                        | 2                                     | 5                      | 3                  | 11              | 3.91 |
| 22 | Value balance more than advancement             | 0                        | 1                        | 4                                     | 4                      | 2                  | 11              | 3.64 |
| 23 | Continuous Learning Opportunities               | 0                        | 0                        | 2                                     | 2                      | 7                  | 11              | 4.45 |
| 24 | Achievement/ Results Oriented                   | 0                        | 0                        | 3                                     | 6                      | 2                  | 11              | 3.91 |
| 25 | Require clear goals and expectations            | 0                        | 2                        | 2                                     | 5                      | 2                  | 11              | 3.64 |
| 26 | Fun at Work                                     | 0                        | 0                        | 1                                     | 8                      | 2                  | 11              | 4.09 |
| 27 | Preferred method of communication: Email        | 1                        | 2                        | 3                                     | 5                      | 0                  | 11              | 3.09 |
| 28 | Open to new ideas                               | 0                        | 0                        | 0                                     | 5                      | 6                  | 11              | 4.55 |
| 29 | Work flexibility (outside of traditional hours) | 0                        | 1                        | 0                                     | 2                      | 8                  | 11              | 4.55 |
| 30 | Expect to influence terms of jobs               | 0                        | 2                        | 4                                     | 3                      | 2                  | 11              | 3.45 |
| 31 | High expectations of bosses and managers        | 0                        | 1                        | 1                                     | 4                      | 5                  | 11              | 4.18 |
| 32 | Collaborative decision makers                   | 1                        | 0                        | 0                                     | 6                      | 4                  | 11              | 4.09 |
| 33 | Meaningful work/ innovation                     | 0                        | 0                        | 0                                     | 4                      | 7                  | 11              | 4.64 |

According to the Generation X respondents, eighty-two percent of those surveyed indicate the following statements or aspects of work are *very important*: value independence/ autonomy, work/life balance, adaptable, and interested/ engaged. These are all values considered to be more closely aligned with younger generations. Over seventy-two percent also consider a strong work ethic and work flexibility as an aspect of work that is *very important*. When considering statements or aspects of work that is either *somewhat important* or *very important*, all of the Generation X respondents agreed upon the following statements: like praise and recognition, value equality and teamwork, value independence/ autonomy, interested/ engaged, open to new ideas, and meaningful work/ innovation.

Alternatively, when considering statements or aspects of work that have been rated 4 or higher as either *somewhat important* or *very important*, ninety-one percent of the respondents agree as follows: willing to take on additional responsibilities, strong work ethic, work/life balance, adaptable, fun at work, work flexibility and collaborative decision makers.

Lastly, sixty-four percent of Generation X respondents have rated “competitive” as either *somewhat unimportant* or *not at all important*; while, forty-six percent have rated “live to work” as *somewhat unimportant* or *not at all important*. This feedback aligns with the research; in that, these values are considered to be of high regard by the Baby Boom generation.

Table 4.24 Answer to Question 10: Millennials

| #  | Question  | 1 - Not at all Important | 2 - Somewhat Unimportant | 3 - Neither Important nor Unimportant | 4 - Somewhat Important | 5 - Very Important | Total Responses | Mean |
|----|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|------|
| 1  | Live to work                                    | 0                        | 3                        | 3                                     | 2                      | 0                  | 8               | 2.88 |
| 2  | Preferred method of communication: Face-to-face | 0                        | 0                        | 3                                     | 4                      | 1                  | 8               | 3.75 |
| 3  | Consensus Leadership                            | 0                        | 0                        | 5                                     | 3                      | 0                  | 8               | 3.38 |
| 4  | Willing to take on additional responsibilities  | 0                        | 0                        | 1                                     | 5                      | 2                  | 8               | 4.13 |
| 5  | Competitive                                     | 0                        | 0                        | 4                                     | 4                      | 0                  | 8               | 3.50 |
| 6  | Strong Work Ethic                               | 0                        | 0                        | 1                                     | 4                      | 3                  | 8               | 4.25 |
| 7  | Challenge Authority                             | 0                        | 3                        | 2                                     | 3                      | 0                  | 8               | 3.00 |
| 8  | Dislike conformity and rules                    | 0                        | 3                        | 4                                     | 1                      | 0                  | 8               | 2.75 |
| 9  | Like praise and recognition                     | 0                        | 0                        | 2                                     | 4                      | 2                  | 8               | 4.00 |
| 10 | Process-oriented                                | 0                        | 1                        | 2                                     | 5                      | 0                  | 8               | 3.50 |
| 11 | Value equality and teamwork                     | 0                        | 0                        | 1                                     | 5                      | 2                  | 8               | 4.13 |
| 12 | Unimpressed with Authority/ Leadership          | 0                        | 0                        | 5                                     | 3                      | 0                  | 8               | 3.38 |
| 13 | Value Independence/ Autonomy                    | 0                        | 0                        | 1                                     | 4                      | 3                  | 8               | 4.25 |
| 14 | Work/Life Balance                               | 0                        | 0                        | 2                                     | 0                      | 6                  | 8               | 4.50 |
| 15 | Adaptable                                       | 0                        | 0                        | 1                                     | 3                      | 4                  | 8               | 4.38 |
| 16 | Entrepreneurial                                 | 1                        | 0                        | 3                                     | 3                      | 1                  | 8               | 3.38 |
| 17 | Interested/ Engaged                             | 0                        | 0                        | 2                                     | 1                      | 5                  | 8               | 4.38 |
| 18 | Casual work environment                         | 0                        | 2                        | 2                                     | 3                      | 1                  | 8               | 3.38 |
| 19 | Little or no attachment to job/ employer        | 0                        | 2                        | 5                                     | 0                      | 1                  | 8               | 3.00 |
| 20 | Outcome-oriented                                | 0                        | 0                        | 2                                     | 5                      | 1                  | 8               | 3.88 |
| 21 | Prefer diversity/ technology/ informality       | 0                        | 0                        | 3                                     | 4                      | 1                  | 8               | 3.75 |
| 22 | Value balance more than advancement             | 0                        | 1                        | 4                                     | 3                      | 0                  | 8               | 3.25 |
| 23 | Continuous Learning Opportunities               | 0                        | 0                        | 1                                     | 3                      | 4                  | 8               | 4.38 |
| 24 | Achievement/ Results Oriented                   | 0                        | 0                        | 1                                     | 6                      | 1                  | 8               | 4.00 |
| 25 | Require clear goals and expectations            | 0                        | 0                        | 1                                     | 1                      | 6                  | 8               | 4.63 |
| 26 | Fun at Work                                     | 0                        | 1                        | 2                                     | 2                      | 3                  | 8               | 3.88 |
| 27 | Preferred method of communication: Email        | 0                        | 1                        | 3                                     | 2                      | 2                  | 8               | 3.63 |
| 28 | Open to new ideas                               | 0                        | 1                        | 1                                     | 2                      | 4                  | 8               | 4.13 |
| 29 | Work flexibility (outside of traditional hours) | 0                        | 0                        | 4                                     | 2                      | 2                  | 8               | 3.75 |
| 30 | Expect to influence terms of jobs               | 0                        | 1                        | 3                                     | 4                      | 0                  | 8               | 3.38 |
| 31 | High expectations of bosses and managers        | 0                        | 0                        | 3                                     | 4                      | 1                  | 8               | 3.75 |
| 32 | Collaborative decision makers                   | 0                        | 0                        | 1                                     | 4                      | 3                  | 8               | 4.25 |
| 33 | Meaningful work/ innovation                     | 0                        | 1                        | 1                                     | 2                      | 4                  | 8               | 4.13 |

According to the Millennial respondents, seventy-five percent of those surveyed indicate the following statements or aspects of work are *very important*: work/life balance and require clear goals & expectations. When considering statements or aspects of work that is either *somewhat important* or *very important*, approximately eighty-eight percent of Millennials agree on the following statements: willing to take on additional responsibilities, strong work ethic, value equality & teamwork, adaptable, value independence/ autonomy, continuous learning opportunities, achievement/ results oriented, and collaborative decision makers. The last three statements align with the research for the Millennial generation.

Other statements or aspects of work important to a large percentage of Millennials rated as either *somewhat important* or *very important* are listed as follows: like praise and recognition, interested/ engaged, outcome oriented, open to new ideas, and meaningful work/ innovation. Aside from praise and recognition, these aspects of work are closely aligned to the literature for the Millennial generation.

Alternatively, about thirty-eight percent of Millennial respondents have rated “live to work, challenge authority, and dislike conformity & rules” as either *somewhat unimportant* or *not at all important*. This also aligns with the literature, as these statements are considered of high value for Baby Boomers.

In summary, value independence/ autonomy was rated by one hundred percent of Baby Boomers and Generation Xers as *important*. The literature states this is of particularly high value to the Gen X generation. Alternatively, eighty-eight percent of Millennials rated achievement/ results oriented, require clear goals and expectations, and



collaborative decision makers as *important*. This is consistent with the literature. For Baby Boomers, approximately ninety-two percent have rated the following as *important* values: willing to take on additional responsibilities, strong work ethic, adaptable, interested/ engaged, continuous learning opportunities, achievement/results oriented, and work flexibility. The first two statements align with the literature, and the remaining aligns more closely with younger generations.

Ninety-one percent of Generation Xers have rated the following as *important* statements or aspects of work: willing to take on additional responsibilities, strong work ethic, like praise and recognition, value equality and teamwork, work/life balance, adaptable, interested/ engaged, fun at work, open to new ideas, work flexibility, collaborative decision makers, and meaningful work/innovation. The literature supports this data in terms of values such as: work/life balance and adaptable.

Finally, eighty-eight percent of Millennials have rated the following statements/ aspects of work as *important*: willing to take on responsibilities, strong work ethic, value equality and teamwork, value independence/ autonomy, adaptable, continuous learning opportunities, achievement/results oriented, require clear goals and expectations, and collaborative decision makers. The literature supports the survey findings for the last four statements.

There are a few statements/ aspects of work that are consistent among majority of the respondents in the three generations, such as: willing to take on additional responsibilities, strong work ethic, value independence/ autonomy, and adaptable. These values have been rated highly consistently by all three generations in this study.

In terms of statements that are *unimportant*, fifty-eight percent of Baby Boomers have rated little or no attachment to job/ employer. Sixty-four percent of Generations Xers have indicated competitive as being *unimportant*, and thirty-eight percent of Millennials have listed challenge authority, and dislike conformity and rules as *unimportant*. In considering the literature and popular press, these values are consistent with the findings presented. Forty-six percent of Generation X and about thirty-eight percent of Millennial respondents have indicated “live to work” as *unimportant*. These findings are also consistent with the research.

**Question 11: When considering the work preferences and values listed above, what are your top three preferences?**

Table 4.25 Answer to Question 11: Baby Boomers

| Text Response   |
|---|
| Work-Life Balance, collaboration and information sharing, less of a top-down organization style |
| Meaningful Work/Innovation, Continuous Learning Opportunities, Interested/Engaged               |
| Results oriented, strong work ethic, value autonomy   |
| (1) Meaningful work/Innovation; (2) Interested and engaged; (3) Work flexibility                |
| Independence/autonomy, flexibility, learning new ideas  |
| Continuous learning; outcome oriented; competitive  |
| Independence, Team work & Equality and Fun at Work.   |
| Strong work ethic, Independence and autonomy, meaningful work                                   |
| 1. Consensus leadership; 2. Collaborative decision makes; 3. Worl/Life balance.                 |
| Strong work ethic, continuous learning opportunities, meaningful work and innovation            |
| Independence/Autonomy, Achievement/Results-Oriented, Meaningful Work/Innovation                 |
| Autonomy, High expectations of bosses/leaders, entrepreneurial                                  |

Of the Baby Boomers surveyed, half have indicated independence and autonomy as a top work preference. Forty-six percent indicate their top work preference also includes: meaningful work & innovation. Thirty-six percent indicate continuous learning, while twenty-seven percent consider a strong work ethic as a top preference. Eighteen percent list collaboration, work flexibility, and results orientation as a top preference. Other preferences listed include: consensus leadership, competition, team work and equality, outcome orientation, high expectations of bosses/ leaders, fun at work and entrepreneurial.

Table 4.26 Answer to Question 11: Generation X

| Text Response  |
|--|
| Value autonomy, work life balance, entrepreneurial   |
| Face to face communication is essential, always being able to learn new things, and a skepticism toward the supposed skills and talents of management. |
| Engagement, innovation and challenging conventional wisdom   |
| Work ethic, Teamwork, Balance  |
| Independence, work-life balance, and strong work ethic   |
| 1. work/life balance 2. work flexibility 3. meaningful work/innovation   |
| Hard working, Work Life Balance, Meaningful Work   |
| Outcome oriented; adaptable; entrepreneurial   |
| 1. strong work ethic 2. work/life balance 3. meaningful work/innovation  |
| Work/Life Balance, Like praise and recognition, High expectations of bosses and managers   |
| Meaningful work, work/life balance, Continuous learning opportunities  |

Sixty-four percent of the Gen Xers surveyed list a work/life balance as a top preference. Thirty-seven percent consider the value of a strong work ethic. Thirty-seven percent also indicate meaningful work as a top preference. Nineteen percent indicate a preference for being entrepreneurial, while another nineteen percent indicate a preference for independence & autonomy. Nineteen percent also consider continuous learning opportunities as a top preference. Other Generation X preferences include: skepticism toward management, engagement, face-to-face communication, innovation, teamwork, balance, work flexibility, outcome orientation, adaptable, like praise and recognition, and high expectations of bosses and managers.

Table 4.27 Answer to Question 11: Millennials

| Text Response   |
|---|
| important to me or important to the employer? This is why I assessed all as threes. Mine are flexibility, meaningful work, and autonomy |
| Entrepreneurial, Continuous Learning Opportunities, High expectations of bosses and managers  |
| work/life balance, strong work ethic and learning opportunities   |
| Work/life balance, value independence/autonomy, continuous learning opportunities   |
| Value Independence / Autonomy, Meaningful work / innovation, work flexibility   |
| 1. work/life balance. 2. Achievement/ Results Oriented 3. Fun at work   |
| 1. Work Life Balance 2. Interested/Engaged 3. Meaningful Work   |
| Interest/Engagement, meaningful work/innovation, work/life balance  |

Sixty three percent of Millennials indicate a preference for work/life balance. Fifty percent state meaningful work and continuous learning as a top preference. Approximately thirty-eight percent consider independence & autonomy as a top preference. Twenty five percent list work flexibility and interest/engagement. Other Millennial preferences include: fun at work, high expectations of bosses, entrepreneurial, strong work ethic and achievement orientation.

To summarize Question #11, *independence/ autonomy* is a value strongly held by half of the Baby Boomers respondents. While over sixty percent of Gen Xers and Millennials indicate *work/ life balance* as a top preference.

Other highly rated preferences for Baby Boomer include: meaningful work, continuous learning, and strong work ethic. Generation Xers have rated meaningful work, entrepreneurial, independence/ autonomy, and continuous learning as a top preference. While Millennials have also rated meaningful work, continuous learning, and independence/ autonomy as a top preference; they also consider work flexibility and interested/engaged as a top preference.

**Question 12: In thinking broadly about members of your generation, do you think they share similar core values in how they view their work/work place? Why or Why not?**

Table 4.28 Answer to Question 12: Baby Boomers

| Text Response  |
|--|
| I'm not sure   |
| Yes, because we lived through many of the same world events and No, because we're all such different people.   |
| yes. Our parents provided a more cohesive view of the importance of work and loyalty   |
| Not really. I've always been fairly different than my peers, probably because I moved around so much growing up and had to adapt to multiple peer groups.  |
| I would expect that there ideas changed over time, as they took on more responsibility at home, their attitudes at work changed  |
| Yes and no--I think "we" are outcomes oriented and hard-working...but not necessarily as competitive as I am   |
| I have no idea   |
| Yes, I feel strongly that the way we were raised and the values instilled from our parents were more comparable to most others than perhaps parental vs. children values are today.  |
| Yes, broadly-speaking, my generation share share similar values; like, being identified by one's work, material goods, optimism, openness to new ideas, and teamwork.  |
| I do think they share the approach to work as it was not unusual to stay committed to your employer for many years. We didn't experience the instant nature of society as we currently live. We didn't have information at our fingertips and we understood that we had to prove our capabilities. |
| Yes and No...Yes - Achievement/Results-oriented and in-person comm. No - I enjoy a flexible, casual entrepreneurial environment  |
| Maybe not, much of this internally-driven. I sought workplaces that value what I value   |

Approximately forty-two percent of the Baby Boomers surveyed believe members of their generation share similar workplace core values. Those in agreement of a shared value system include comments such as: “lived through the same world events”, “being identified by one’s work, material goods, optimism, teamwork”, “achievement/results-oriented”, and “it was not unusual to stay committed to your employer.” Of those who responded favorably, four percent indicate this could be due to the values instilled by their parents during their youth stating: “our parents provided a more cohesive view of the importance of work and loyalty”, and “the way we were raised and the values instilled from our parents were more comparable to most others.” Over sixteen percent respond

both for and against a shared value system. Twenty-five percent of the survey respondents were uncertain and did not elaborate further. Finally, less than seventeen percent indicate they don't feel their generation shares similar core values as they feel "different from their peers because I moved around so much growing up and had to adapt to multiple peer groups", and "much of this is internally driven.... I sought workplaces that value what I value."

Table 4.29 Answer to Question 12: Generation X

| Text Response  |
|--|
| not necessarily - may vary more on individual  |
| Yes, you can tell from the media we grew up on (Dilbert, Office Space,   |
| Yes, we are a unique generation mainly due to our interconnectedness. We look at things differently and there are many technological, social and economic circumstances that helped shape who we are.  |
| Yes and No...it depends on how you were raised and education. How hard individuals had to work to get what they wanted/needed.   |
| I think that there is a divide in my generation. Some members of my generation seem to be okay with being "corporate" (earning a good paycheck, 401K, etc); however, others (and I think the majority) seem to share a sense of continuing to question the status quo of our jobs. We have loyalty to individuals and not the corporate entity, so we work hard for specific managers, bosses, etc. We value innovation by questioning the status quo, and we want the world to be a better place. Though we have been silenced, we still believe that we can make a difference through our actions, beliefs, etc. |
| Yes. I think that many of my peers are in a place of their careers where they have an appreciation for family and life outside of work. They want to find a way to have the balance/flexibility to work hard and still be able to enjoy family time/personal interests. They are also beginning to think about their legacy and what meaningful work can be done to give purpose to their lives.   |
| yes, I think a large group of my generation saw our parents work hard and have come to value the same ethic but I also think our goals are different than theirs were.   |
| Yes - except that part is still very competitive and financial results-driven.   |
| Yes, especially when talking about work/life balance. I think this is a very important value in my generation.   |
| I think a lot of the Baby Boomers do, but the work environment has changed a lot and adapting may not be easy for everyone.  |
| Yes - think that all three of the values I listed above are very common to Generation Xers   |

Sixty-four percent of the Generation X members surveyed think members of their generation share similar core values in their view of work/workplace. The favorable comments received include: "you can tell from the media we grew up on", "we are a

unique generation mainly due to our interconnectedness... technological, social and economic circumstances that helped shape who we are.” They further elaborate by stating “we have loyalty to individuals, not the corporate entity, and we value innovation... and want the world to be a better place. Another individual indicates they seek “balance/ flexibility to work hard and enjoy family time/ personal interests.” Another individual observation claims a work/life balance “is a very important value in my generation.”

Approximately eighteen percent respond both for and against a shared value system claiming: “it depends on how you were raised and education,” and “there is a divide.... But majority seem to share a sense of continuing to question the status quo of our jobs.” Less than ten percent indicate a shared value system may vary more on an individual basis, rather than by generation.

One person indicated they believe generational similarities in a core value system “may vary more on the individual.”

Table 4.30 Answer to Question 12: Millennials

| Text Response  |
|--|
| yes - due to informal conversations. Some prefer more routined schedules, and some prefer less routined. work values are themed around these preferences, in my observation.   |
| I think it's mixed along with the educational background   |
| Yes. I feel my generation has a strong work ethic  |
| No, I feel as though millennials require much more hand holding than other generations. I am a bit on the 'bubble' of Gen X and Millennial, so I feel as though I share values from both generations.  |
| I think they do share similar core values. Our generation in general is well educated and would like to use their skills to make the world better. This means they value and prefer work that is meaningful over work that is merely for a paycheck. In general, they value experiences over things so a balance between work and life experiences is important. |
| No, I feel that since I am early in the generation, I have a combination of old and new values.  |
| Yes I do. I feel that my generation is more interested in how a job satisfies them moreso than how that can satisfy their employer   |
| Yes...times are changing and we live in a different world with different expectations than people for whom we work. With all of the technological advancents and innovation, the world that was here 20 years ago does not exist anymore. We have to adjust strategy and the way we manage to fit the current working population.                                |



Approximately sixty-three percent of the Millennials surveyed believe members of their generation share similar core work/workplace values. Just over twelve percent of those who completed the survey “think it’s mixed along with the educational background.” However, twenty-five percent do not feel their generation shares similar values as they are on the cusp of the Gen X and Millennial generations. Of those, one individual commented “I feel as though Millennials require much more hand holding than other generations.”

Of the Millennials surveyed, the agreeable comments include: “strong work ethic”, “our generation is well educated and would like to use their skills to make the world better... therefore, they prefer meaningful work”, “my generation is more interested in how a job satisfies them, more so than how that can satisfy their employer”, and finally “with technological advancements and innovation, the world that was here 20 years ago does not exist.... We have to adjust strategy.”

Table 4.31 Summary of Question 12: Baby Boomers, Generation X, & Millennials

|            | Baby Boomer |      | Generation X |    | Millennial |    |
|------------|-------------|------|--------------|----|------------|----|
|            | #           | %    | #            | %  | #          | %  |
| Yes        | 5           | 42   | 7            | 64 | 5          | 63 |
| No         | 2           | 16.5 | 1            | 9  | 2          | 25 |
| Yes and No | 2           | 16.5 | 2            | 18 | 1          | 12 |
| Don't Know | 3           | 25   | 1            | 9  | 0          | 0  |

For Question #12, the table above indicates the number of respondents, who responded with “yes”, “no”, “yes & no”, or “don’t know” if members of their generation share similar core values. As indicated above, a significantly larger number of Generation Xers and Millennials believe their generation shares similar core values.

**Question 13: What adjectives might you possibly apply to describe your generation's attitudes toward work? Please list 3-4 terms.**

Table 4.32 Answer to Question 13: Baby Boomers

| Text Response  |
|--|
| Collaborative, cooperative, conscientious, diligent  |
| workaholic, over achievers, competitive, it's all about the money, prestige and power                            |
| loyal to employer, understand that work isn't perfect, but we need to make it work, willing to go the extra mile |
| Important, service, duty, means of caring for family   |
| Live to work, loyal although that less than in previous years, anxious about benefits and future employability   |
| Important, Roots Oneself, Sacrifice  |
| I believe that there is great variability in any generation's attitudes toward work.                             |
| serious, committed, dependable, satisfied  |
| Non-conformity, adaptability, flexibility.   |
| challenging, enjoyable, exciting, engaging   |
| strong work ethic, face to face communicating, relationship building, set goals, deliver results                 |
| Authority, loyal, lifetime employment, carrot and stick, ambition, competitive, gold watch                       |

To describe their attitude towards work, approximately twenty-five percent of Baby Boomers indicate loyalty, with a live to work attitude and view work as being important. Twenty five percent would describe their generation as being competitive and roots oneself, seeking lifetime employment. Other Baby Boom comments include: collaborative, cooperative, conscientious, diligent, over-achievers with a focus on money, prestige and power, anxious about benefits and future employability, sacrifice, serious, committed, dependable, satisfied, non-conformists, adaptable, flexible, challenging, enjoyable, exciting, engaging, authoritative, ambitious, and carrot and stick.

Table 4.33 Answer to Question 13: Generation X

| Text Response  |
|--|
| younger generation - work life balance, more entitlement                           |
| precarious, anxious, round-the-clock   |
| A bit disloyal compared to our parents. Value work life balance and very impatient |
| Routine, Stress, Responsibility  |
| Hard working, cynical, and frustrated  |
| impactful, meaningful, purposeful, entrepreneurial, flexible                       |
| planners, goal oriented, entrepreneurs   |
| Global; purpose-driven; success-driven; change agents.                             |
| dedicated, motivated, creative   |
| Loyal, work ethic/hard-working, inflexible   |
| Casual, Meaningful, Collaborative  |

Generation X has responded to this question quite interestingly as they have included both positive and negative adjectives in describing their generation's attitude towards work. For the positive comments, twenty-eight percent include adjectives such as: purposeful and meaningful; while, nineteen percent include: hard-working, entrepreneurial, and work/life balance. Other positive comments include: impactful, meaningful, flexible, planners, goal-oriented, round-the-clock, responsibility, success-driven, change agents, dedicated, motivated, creative, loyal, casual, and collaborative.

The findings also indicate a few adjectives that can be interpreted in a more undesirable manner. Those adjectives include: very impatient, cynical, frustrated, inflexible, stress, disloyal, anxious and precarious.

Table 4.34 Answer to Question 13: Millennials

| Text Response   |
|---|
| transactional, step-ladder, need for intellectual challenge |
| some are entitled or have expectations                      |
| hard working, goal oriented and focused                     |
| Flexible, self-serving, independent                         |
| Entrepreneurial, Agile, Impactful                           |
| flexibility, technology, diversity                          |
| collaborative, adaptable, technology-driven                 |
| Innovative, collaborative, socially-responsible             |

For the Millennial generation, twenty-five percent of those surveyed use the following adjectives to describe their generation's attitude towards work: technology-driven, collaborative, flexible, entrepreneurial/independent, and self-serving/ entitled. Other adjectives listed include: transactional, step-ladder, hard-working, goal oriented and focused, agile, impactful, diversity, adaptable, need for intellectual challenge, socially responsible and innovative.

In summary, Question #13 has varied in responses from all three generations. Twenty-five percent of Baby Boomers would describe their generation's attitude towards work as loyal, competitive, and important. Generation Xers would describe their generation's attitude towards work as purposeful/meaningful, hard-working, entrepreneurial, and work/life balance. While, twenty-five percent of Millennials have included the following: technology-driven, collaborative, flexible, entrepreneurial/independent, and self-serving/ entitled.

**Question 14: In thinking about members of other generations, what adjectives might you apply to describe their attitude towards work? Please indicate the generation you refer to with each adjective.**

Table 4.35 Answer to Question 14: Baby Boomers

| Text Response  |
|--|
| Grateful - pre-1950, Loyalty - around 1950, fulfillment - current  |
| Millenials are much more work life balanced and think about the greater good. Generation X is much more self centered              |
| younger generations: less committed, don't see the big picture, me-centric   |
| My parent's generation: loyalty; tradition. My Kid's generation: chance to do interesting things, have fun, create things.         |
| More concerned about personal development and work life balance  |
| Me, me, me (younger); everything for family (older)  |
| I believe that there is great variability in any generation's attitudes toward work.   |
| this generation - impatient, non-focused, uncommitted, less-communicative, disrespectful (seemingly), creative, innovative, quick. |
| Unity, authority, quality.   |
| no answer for this one   |
| collaborative, unstructured, casual - Gens X & Y   |
| I can't judge.   |

When considering how the Baby Boomers would describe younger generation's attitude towards work, approximately thirty-seven percent indicate younger generations are less committed and/ or more focused on a work/life balance. Interestingly, approximately thirty-four percent of Baby Boomers believe younger generations are more "me-centric, concerned about their own personal development, self-centered, and me-me." Other comments on younger generation's attitudes towards work include: "think about the greater good; don't see the big picture; a chance to do interesting things, have fun, and create things; impatient; non-focused; less communicative; innovative; and quick." Less than seventeen percent of those surveyed did not provide an answer for this question.

Majority of the people surveyed did not indicate the name of a specific generation for which they reference, aside from characterizing them as: my parent's generation, younger/older generations, and my kid's generations. There was only one respondent who commented about a particular generation by stating: "Millennials are much more work/life balanced and thinks about the greater good.... As generation X is much more self-centered."

Table 4.36 Answer to Question 14: Generation X

| Text Response  |
|--|
| older generations more loyalty, younger generation less loyalty  |
| GI generation - tired, bored. Baby Boomers - engaged, optimistic.  |
| Baby boomers were/are very loyal. Dedicated. Not innovative or are not let go easily now with the workplace. They are holding tight to their jobs  |
| Gen Y: Flexibility, Innovative Gen X & Baby Boomers: Resilience  |
| Boomers - hard working, don't question the status quo, their identity comes from their work title, and they are afraid to leave their jobs because they are still financing their children and have high expectations of retirement. Millennials - needy (they need massive direction to complete tasks and they need massive acknowledgement for their successes); prefer teamwork; question the insignificant; feel entitled |
| baby boomers: traditional, office-oriented, 9-5 Gen y-ers: innovative, flexibility, aversion towards traditional office work   |
| Millennial generation - entitled, diverse, little respect for authority, creative  |
| Younger : uniformists.   |
| responsibility, duty, uninspired   |
| (Millennials) Lazy, self-centered, self-entitled, flexible, creative   |
| Greatest Generation - stoic, conscientious, frugal; Boomers - Excessive, materialistic; Generation Y - Ambitious, confident  |

According to the survey results, Gen Xers would describe the Baby Boom generation as: engaged, optimistic, dedicated, resilient, hard-working, don't question the status quo, identity comes from work, unable to leave jobs due to finances, high expectations of retirement, traditional, office-oriented, prefer a 9-5 schedule, excessive, and materialistic. Approximately 19% of the Generation Xers surveyed feel the Baby Boomers are a very loyal generation.

Alternatively, Generation Xers would describe the Millennial generation as: less loyal, innovative, needy (require massive direction and acknowledgement), team oriented, averse to traditional office work, diverse, little respect for authority, lazy, self-centered, ambitious, and confident. Twenty-eight percent of Gen Xers describe Millennials as: entitled and flexible; while, nineteen-percent would categorize them as creative and innovative.

Table 4.37 Answer to Question 14: Millennials

| Text Response   |
|---|
| routine, loyalty, company-oriented over individual  |
| I think previous generations worked for a paycheck. In comparison to my generation, which wants its work to be meaningful and will accept less money. |
| entitled, lazy and spoiled (referring to the generation after mine)   |
| Baby boomers: task-oriented & loyal; Gen X: work to live  |
| Baby Boomers: heirarchical, committed, rigid  |
| older generations are definitely more focused on hierarchies, loyalty, and a very traditional work place.   |
| motivated by results (money, promotions, public recognition)  |
| Baby boomers: secure, regulated, structured   |

In terms of asking Millennials to describe how members of another generation's attitude towards work, a significant majority focused solely on the Baby Boom generation. Approximately thirty-eight percent of Millennials include the term "loyal" in how they would describe the Baby Boom generation. Twenty five percent reference their hierarchical mindset. Other adjectives to describe the Baby Boomers include: company-oriented, work for a paycheck, task-oriented, hierarchical, committed, rigid, secure, regulated, structured and motivated by results such as money, promotions and public recognition. The only comment geared towards Generation X was their "work to live" mentality.

### 3. Conclusion

Based upon the information obtained in the data analysis, common themes that began to emerge for the Baby Boom generation include: the value they place on loyalty toward their employer; their hard-working approach to their career that was instilled during their formative years; the impact of their revolutionary formative influences such as the movements of civil rights and women's liberation; the Vietnam War and subsequent protests; the political assassinations of JFK, RFK, and MLK; Watergate, Reaganomics; as well as other personal influences such as marriages, divorces, educational experiences, etc. Overall, the Baby Boom respondents consider themselves to have a strong work ethic, and willing to work hard for success and achievement. Their work preferences include meaningful work and availability of continuous learning opportunities; and they also consider themselves to be loyal and competitive as they view work as being an important part of their existence.

With regard to Generation X, common themes that have emerged from the survey responses include: a lesser, but still significant importance placed on employer loyalty; their work ethic, adaptability, and ability to choose your own career path mentality, as instilled during their formative years; and, the impact of their formative influences such as the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>; revolution and evolution of technological advancements; and various economic recessions. Quite a few respondents have included their parent's divorce as an important event that has impacted their life, as well as relocation due to educational pursuits or their parent's careers. Overall, Gen Xers consider the global environment, technological advancements, and educational opportunities as influential during their formative years. Their work preferences include work/life balance, work



ethic, independence and autonomy, entrepreneurial, and seek meaningful/ innovative work. In consideration of their generation, Xers offer a unique lens to their attitudes towards work and describe a sense of anxiety, inflexibility, disloyalty, stress, and precariousness. They were the only generation to consider the positive and negative aspects of their own generation.

For the Millennial generation, common themes that have emerged from the survey responses include: a significantly less value placed on employer loyalty; more liberal, open-minded, and embracing of different ethnicities, genders, and other affiliations; and an inclination to “use their skills to make the world better.” They were raised to work hard, be collaborative, differentiate from the crowd, and dedicate themselves to the cause. Their formative influences have also included the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>, as well as sensitivity towards civil rights issues; various school shootings; an increased focus on mental health in the United States; and the recession. A few respondents have also discussed their personal experiences in detail, and their ability to travel abroad and take on more leadership responsibilities. In terms of career ambitions, they differ from their Baby Boom counterparts in they do not have a live to work approach to their jobs; rather, they prefer to seek fulfillment in both their personal and professional endeavors. Their work preferences include: willing to take on responsibilities, strong work ethic, value equality and teamwork, value independence/ autonomy, adaptable, continuous learning opportunities, achievement/results oriented, require clear goals and expectations, and collaborative decision makers. They’re also technologically-driven, collaborative, flexible, and entrepreneurial/independent.

As mentioned above, there are a few statements/ aspects of work that are consistent among majority of the respondents in all three generations, such as: willing to take on additional responsibilities, strong work ethic, value independence/ autonomy, and adaptable. In summary, each survey respondent was required to consider their own attitudes, expectations, and values towards work based on factors deriving from their formative influences, in the context of their current and former political, social and cultural environment; as well as personal and professional experiences. They were asked to consider their generation's attitude towards work, and also provide their perspective on describing the work/workplace attitudes of other generations. In the coming chapter, I will analyze these findings and compare them to information presented in the literature.

## CHAPTER 5

### DATA INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

This chapter will examine the data gathered through the survey results and compare it to the literature within the three generational cohorts of: Baby Boomers, Generation Xers, and Millennials. Questions 1 and 2 will be analyzed together under a theme of general demographics by survey respondents. Question 3 will provide a general analysis of the survey respondent's location of birth, for which experiences and developments may differ, depending upon their country of origin, for each of the three generations. Questions 4 and 5 will be analyzed together under the theme of organizational loyalty. Questions 6 and 7 will examine the respondent's perspective on how personal, national, and/or world events & developments may have shaped their expectations and experiences at work. Question 8 required the respondent to describe the formative experiences of their generation, from a political, cultural, and personal standpoint. In the analysis, we will consider consistent themes and statements that may arise within each generation, while also being mindful of individual experiences. Question 9 requires the individual to reflect on the values instilled in them during their formative years. Question 10 and 11 will be analyzed to build from the previous questions in terms of translating how formative influences may have impacted work attitudes and values, by identifying themes and patterns in value statements or aspects of work, significant for each of the three generations. Questions 12 and 13 will be analyzed together to determine how a generation views themselves in terms of core values and aspects of work. Lastly, Question 14 will examine how an individual views members of

other generation's attitudes towards work. The analysis in this chapter will refer to the literature review chapter to reflect what the survey results revealed, confirmed, or challenged.

## **1. General Demographics**

**Question 1 and 2: What year were you born: 1946 – 1964, 1965 – 1981, and 1982 – 2000+? If other, please indicate your birth year.**

Thirty one individuals completed the survey and based on their answer, they were identified as either a Baby Boomer (1946 – 1964), a member of Generation X (1965 – 1981), or a Millennial (1982 – 2000).

**Question 3: Please indicate your location of birth (state and/or country).**

Of thirty-one respondents, twenty-eight were born in the United States, which is just over 90% of the total respondents. Fifteen individuals have indicated their location of birth as Pennsylvania or New Jersey. Ten respondents have listed various cities/states across the U.S. Three individuals stated they were born in the U.S.A.; however, they did not provide information on the state. The remaining individuals surveyed have indicated they were born in either: France, Egypt, or Poland respectively.

As discussed in the literature review, there are factors that could potentially impact an individual's generational experience, such that those born outside of the United States will likely have different political, cultural, and social experiences (Costanza, et al. 2012). Therefore, the formative influences and subsequent attitudes that develop as a

result of these factors could affect their responses in this survey. The three internationally born survey respondents are considered as either a member of Gen X or a Millennial. As there are no foreign born respondents from the Baby Boom cohort, this could be a reflection of the re-opening of the doors to immigration after the year 1965. From personal acquaintance, it is known that of the three survey respondents born internationally, they have all lived in the United States for a considerable amount of time (over ten years), have traveled extensively, and thus, have a cultural awareness and sensitivity towards the working environment in the United States. Additionally, the nature of our business and our educational experience involves direct communication with clients and students across the United States, and internationally. This also provides an understanding of culturally accepted norms and values associated with the professional environment in the United States. Therefore, although there are only three survey respondents that fit into this category, their feedback is valuable and provides a unique perspective on the strongly held attitudes and values in their workplace.

## **2. Organizational Loyalty**

**Question 4: How long have you been employed with your present employer? Less than 2 years, 2-4 years, 5-10 years, 11-25 years, over 25 years .**

For the Baby Boomers, sixty-seven percent of those surveyed have remained with their current employer for over 11 years. Over half of the Generation X respondents has been with their employer for between 5-10 years; while fifty percent of the Millennials have indicated a 2-4 year employment status with their current organization.

A general question was asked to gauge the length of time an individual has been employed at their current organization. One possible explanation could be due to the employee's age. For example, a thirty year old employee has likely not been with their current employer for over 10 years. Another possible explanation could be due to factors such as: loyalty from/toward the employer; advancement opportunities within the organization, and other intrinsic and extrinsic factors that are valued highly by the individual. For the purposes of this paper, Question 5 will build upon this question in order to gather information on how the survey respondents value loyalty.

**Question 5: On a scale of one to five, what are your views on loyalty toward your employer/ organization? 1 (not important) – 5 (very important)**

According to the survey results, sixty-seven percent of the Baby Boomers rated loyalty toward their employer *very important*, seventy-three percent of the Generation Xers rated loyalty as *somewhat important*, and thirty-eight percent of Millennials rated either *somewhat important* or *somewhat unimportant*.

The Baby Boomers value loyalty more so than younger generations as indicated in the survey results. Loyalty was also progressively valued less with successive generations. As research suggests, loyalty to the employer has primarily remained a tightly held value by older generations. This value was instilled in the Baby Boom generation by their G.I. and Silent Generation predecessors. However, as the political, cultural, and social climate began to shift, loyalty wavered, as workers and organizations alike were shifting their focus as a more volatile economy and an increase in professional opportunities required the worker to drive their own career path rather than relying on the

organization to dictate their future. The statement provided by Crumpacker & Crumpacker capture the current thinking at the time the Baby Boomers were entering the workplace: “work was a priority and that through loyalty and paying one’s dues came reward and seniority” (2007). While this may have been the case for older generations, younger generations experience less loyalty from and towards their employer.

### **3. Impactful Formative Influences & Shaping Workplace Experiences and Expectations**

**Question 6: During the time period between your childhood until you finished your formal education, please list three to five important events and/or developments that impacted your life. (This may be defined as personal, national, or world events/developments).**

The respondents have all included events/ developments that are of a personal nature, and/or include non-personal national or world events that can be grouped into these categories.

The Baby Boomer research includes events such as: the Cold War; cultural revolutions; protests for/against the Vietnam War; the assassinations in the 1960s; the various economic booms/ busts; the political climate of Kennedy, Nixon, and Reagan; as well as, the shifting values and goals of the Baby Boom generation across the United States. The survey results can be further delineated into the following events/developments:

- *Personal:* jobs, relocation, relationships and marriages, illness & death of parent, childbirth, and education
- *National:* Vietnam War, the assassination of JFK, the significations of the women's liberation movement of the 1960s, the economic recession in the 1980s, the impeachment of President Nixon and Woodstock, the man on the moon, volunteerism, and new wave cultural movement.
- *World:* The survey results did not include specific world events; however, many of the national events had a significant impact to the global economy and shifted the cultural/economic and social landscape.

For Generation X, the research suggests a cultural shift from the traditional family unit, an economic shift towards a more global environment, and a social shift in the values and norms as portrayed in the media. As a result, the professional environment was impacted as women and minorities entered the workplace, and dual income families became the new normal. The research includes: a shift in traditional family structure and values, the inclusion of women in the workplace and the impact of a dual parent income on the latchkey kids, the increasing uncertainty in the economic climate of the 1970s, the U.S. decline of status in the global economy, September 11<sup>th</sup>, a more diversified and inclusive global environment, an increase in uncertainty and terrorism, and the subsequent disillusionment and distrust of authority and the government. The survey results can be delineated into the following events/ developments:

- *Personal:* parent starting their own business, jobs, relocation, relationships and marriages, international guests/ travel, childbirth, and education



- *National:* Challenger explosion, September 11<sup>th</sup>, greater opportunities for women in the workplace, terrorism, economic recession, presidential elections, the internet/ technology, rise of excessive consumerism, environment degradation
- *World:* Many national events have also had a global impact such as: September 11<sup>th</sup>, increased terrorism, technological revolution, rise of excessive consumerism

In terms of the Millennial generation, Strauss & Howe describe the impact of the formative events and developments on this generation by stating: “Millennials came of age during the rapid growth of the internet, in a racial and ethnic global environment, and during a time of increased global terrorism. As a result, they are much more global centric than their Baby Boomer parents, and are resilient in navigating change as their appreciation for diversity and inclusion deepens” (Strauss & Howe, 1991). Based upon the survey results of Question 6, many of the Millennial respondents describe the following:

- *Personal:* educational experiences, personal interests, values instilled by family members, socioeconomic status, death of close friends and relatives, personal relationships, relocation
- *National:* Half of the survey respondents have included the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>; other responses include changes in civil rights issues, U.S. school shootings and increased focus on mental health issues
- *World:* Similar to previous generations, many of the national events have also had an impact on the world, such as: September 11<sup>th</sup> and the impact of the U.S. recession on the global economy.

The responses of all three generations provide a snapshot into their formative events and developments that had a direct or indirect impact on their life. In this survey, the data supports the research as many of the respondents included events discussed throughout the literature in terms of the external environment which was impactful during their early years. By having the respondents consider how their formative influences may impact their life, it allows them to delve deeper into their own work values that may develop as a result. The next question will determine the extent for which these events may/may not shape expectations at work.

**Question 7: Have these events/ developments shaped your expectations and experiences at work? If they have, please describe. If they have not, please explain.**

The literature review suggests events and developments experienced in your formative years ultimately impact your approach to work. Dencker et al. claims generational workplace identities emerge based on collective memories of shared events (2008).

Based on the survey results, twenty-eight of thirty-one respondents have all agreed these events and developments have shaped their expectations and experiences at work, or at least to a certain degree. The themes that began to emerge for Baby Boomers were very much internally focused, or developed as a result of their external environment. This includes: the impact of a career and a shifting focus toward home and family life; the impact of relocating and subsequent sense of self-reliance and appreciation of variety and diversity that emerges as a result; the ability to focus your career choices to suit your

lifestyle; the drive to succeed at the expense of personal relationships; the ability to think independently and face the consequences of your beliefs; the impact of values instilled from loved ones, schooling, and military experiences; and finally, the importance of turning one's focus outwards and having "empathy" for others. One respondent included an external factor of the women's liberation movement, which "inspired me to think that I could do anything as a young woman."

Ninety percent of the Generation X respondents confirmed these events have shaped their expectations at work. The internal factors that emerge as a result of these experiences are: work/life balance; the impact of parent's career on one's own expectations of work; international exposure to other cultures and professional environments; the impact of divorce on children's lives; and seeking employment that provides meaning and purpose. The themes that emerge based on external factors include: the reduction of personal civil liberties due to increased security measures; the evolution of technological advancements and its impact on the workplace; and the increase in rights and opportunities in the advancement of women that began in previous generations.

For the Millennial respondents, seventy-five percent of the survey results confirm the events have shaped their expectations at work. Uncertainty is a theme that emerged multiple times in the survey responses with both positive and negative connotations: uncertainty in the changing workplace demographic; uncertainty in expectations of the work environment; uncertainty brought about by a richer, more dynamic, cultural environment; uncertainty that has arisen from increased domestic and international terrorism; and finally, the internal values derived from a constant state of uncertainty.

As mentioned above, approximately ninety percent of the respondents believe

these events have shaped their expectations and experiences at work. For those who do not believe this would impact their expectation of work, over half recognize the effect these events may have on others, by stating: “I believe they have helped with having empathy for others”, and “no matter what happens at work, things could always be worse.”

#### **4. Generational Experiences during Formative Years**

**Question 8: How would you describe your generation’s formative political, cultural and social experiences? (For the purposes of this paper, the term "formative" refers to the period of an individual's growth and development from adolescence to early adulthood)**

While this question allows the respondent to consider experiences that may/may not have had a direct impact on their lives, as their responses will capture events they believe are shared by members of their generation. As mentioned in the literature review, specific political, social, and cultural experiences are unique to each generation and may also drive their professional goals and ambitions. To summarize, as mentioned in Chapter 4, I’ll highlight some of the common themes among each generation as indicated below:

For Baby Boomers: a majority of the Baby Boomers surveyed describe their generation’s formative experiences with a focus on Vietnam and the draft, the government and authority, the creation of the civil rights movement, the peace movement, Woodstock, social unrest, Watergate, and political affiliations. Thirty-seven percent directly indicate a distrust of government and older generations.

The Generation X respondents describe their formative experiences as follows: without social media, liberal, a period of transition, constant change, and openness to the world. Thirty-four percent highlight the advancements in technology. The Millennials have described their generation's formative experiences as being: tumultuous but privileged, liberal, focused, comfortable in digital environments, open-minded, diversified, culturally and socially more accepting of others, and less private than older generations due to technological advancements.

As the survey responses indicate, the literature suggests:

a generational cohort includes an identifiable group of individuals who share distinctive social or historical life events during critical development stages... people who grew up in the same time period have a strong identification with their own time in history and may feel, think, and act in similar ways based on the influences of that time (Hernaus & Vokic, 2014).

There were sufficient consistencies in survey responses to support the theory that individuals growing up in the same time period, who share personal or historical events, identify as a unit distinctive from other generations. In analyzing the results, I found it interesting that the Baby Boom generation listed very specific events as impactful, such as the Vietnam War, civil rights movements, etc., and younger generations tended to indicate more generalized statements, such as a period of transition and change, openness to the world, technology, liberal-minded, diversified, and culturally accepting of others.

## **5. Values Instilled during Formative Years**

**Question 9: In your youth, what attitudes/ values were instilled in you that may have shaped your expectations of work/ your career?**

As a youth, the values instilled by members of older generations may have a profound impact on shaping your expectations of work. Whether it's the Baby Boomer, who was raised by G.I. and Silent generation parents who lived through the Depression and War; the Gen Xer who often found themselves with divorced, two-parent career seekers; or, the Millennial who had to differentiate themselves from their peers in order to seek employment in a competitive environment with a rapidly changing global environment.

The survey results indicate values unique to each generation. For the Baby Boomers, eighty-three percent believe hard work was a value instilled during their youth, which has shaped their expectations of work/ career. Of those who mention hard-work, eighteen percent believe in loyalty toward their employer. Generation X also mentioned hard work; but most respondents expanded upon that by including the importance of education and shaping your own career path. A majority of the Millennials mention hard work; but, also include standing out from the crowd, taking responsibility for your actions, and achieving more than previous generations.

## **6. Generational Workplace Values**

**Question 10: Rate the following statements or aspects of work on the indicated scale of 1 (not at all important) – 5 (very important)**

The statements or aspects of work included in this question were all derived from the literature review. According to the research, the preferences are included as follows:  
#1 – 11: Baby Boomers, #12 – 22: Generation X, and #23 – 33: Millennials.

In terms of aligning the literature with the survey results, while there may have been some consistent themes for each generation, there was not sufficient evidence to support that all statements or aspects of work coincide with the values explicitly stated in the literature.

For the Baby Boomers, the results align with the research for the following: face to face communication, consensus leadership, willingness to take on additional responsibilities, strong work ethic, and value equality and teamwork. However, they also highly rated the following Generation X statements: value independence/ autonomy, adaptable, interested/ engaged, and outcome oriented. And, they highly rated the following Millennial statements: continuous learning opportunities, achievement oriented, require clear goals and expectations, open to new ideas, work flexibility, and meaningful work/innovation.

For Gen Xers, the results align with the research for the following: value independence/ autonomy, work/life balance, adaptable, interested/ engaged, and casual work environment. However, they've also rated the following Baby Boom statements: willingness to take on additional responsibilities, strong work ethic, like praise and recognition, and value equality and teamwork. And, they rated the following Millennial statements: continuous learning opportunities, fun at work, open to new ideas, work flexibility, high expectations of bosses and managers, collaborative decision makers, and meaningful work/ innovation.

For Millennials, the results align with the research as follows: continuous learning opportunities, achievement/ results oriented, require clear goals and expectations, open to new ideas, collaborative decision makers, and meaningful work/innovation. However,

they highly rated the following Baby Boom statements: willing to take on additional responsibilities, strong work ethic, like praise and recognition, and value teamwork and equality. And, they highly rated the following Generation X statements: value independence/ autonomy, work/life balance, adaptable, interested/ engaged, and outcome oriented.

It is important to note the following qualification: the respondents are all employed at an educational institution where learning and development is readily available to employees at their department level or throughout the institution. Additionally, many of the respondents are taking advantage of the flexible work option, as the university supports employee efforts to balance the demands of work and their personal life. Research suggests that younger generations have grown up where job security waned and downsizing became an accepted management practice; therefore, “to maintain marketability, younger employees are more likely to participate in training programs to develop new skills (Mencl & Lester, 2014). However, one explanation could be that training is less important to older generations in the workplace as they have already achieved and maintained status within their respective organizations. Despite this, the survey supports the research with a few notable characteristics within each generation, but the survey results do not support a clear delineation among them.

**Question 11: When considering the work preferences and values listed above, what are your top three preferences?**

As the research suggests, collective work preferences and values may be formed based upon formative influences. For the Baby Boom generation, the years following the



end of World War II provided the nation with a feeling of post-war optimism and subsequently, a shift in political, societal and cultural changes ensued. Growing up in a relatively positive environment, the Baby Boomers developed a sense of purpose and were driven to achieve their goals, question what they were taught to believe, and transcend the traditional norms. Being raised by G.I. and Silent generation parents, they developed a strong work-ethic as pride in their achievements and competition among them propelled their desire to succeed. As they challenged that status quo, shifted the family dynamic, and sought professional advancements, they developed a sense of purpose and were willing to advance their beliefs and goals in an effort to change the world.

*Baby Boomers:* The research and survey data is consistent with the following work preferences and values: collaboration, strong work ethic, competitive, value equality and teamwork, collaborative decision makers, and consensus leadership. However, the survey data differs, in that, half of the respondents consider “value independence and autonomy” as a top work preference which is considered a top preference for Generation X. Additionally, “meaningful work” and “continuous learning opportunities” was chosen by at least 33% of the respondents, which is considered a top preference for Millennials.

For Generation X, the world they were born into was significantly different from their predecessors. As parenting styles changed and family values shifted, this generation was forced into a world of independence, global competition, and a more volatile economy. Subsequently, they developed an entrepreneurial mindset, and were the most highly educated generation, up until that point. As a result, their workplace attitudes and

values provided a consideration for a work/life balance, the development of a global mindset, and skepticism for traditional values and institutions. Generation X continues to remain independent and autonomous in their approach to work. As the Baby Boom generation retires, and Generation X moves in to a position of power and leadership, it will be interesting to see how the current state of affairs begins to shift politically, culturally, socially, professionally, and personally.

*Gen Xers:* In comparing the research to the survey data, the “work/life balance” preference was consistently a top priority for over 63% of the survey respondents, as research demonstrates this is a top priority for Gen Xers. Other Generation X preferences consistent in the research and the survey data include: value autonomy, entrepreneurial, skepticism toward the supposed skills and talents of management, challenge conventional wisdom, independence, outcome oriented, and high expectations of bosses and managers. However, approximately 37% of the survey respondent’s list “meaningful work” and “strong work ethic” as a top preference which is typically considered a value shared by Millennials and Baby Boomers respectively.

With regard to the Millennials, their formative years were formed with rapid technological advancements and changes to the way people communicate, uncertainty derived from a constant fear of domestic and international threat of terrorism, and continued racial and ethnic diversity. According to Crumpacker & Crumpacker (2007), the socialization of Millennials “reflects parental nurturing, protection and praise above and beyond each of the previous generations.” Furthermore, this generation “possesses

high levels of confidence and optimism, coupled with expectations for immediate feedback and almost continuous recognition” (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007).

*Millennials:* For Question #11, the Millennials have answered in a manner that was most consistent with the research. About 63% consider “work/life balance” as a top priority which research states is a top value for younger generations. Fifty percent consider “meaningful work” and “continuous learning opportunities” as a top preference, both of which are considered to be a top Millennial preference according to the research. Twenty five percent list: “interest/ engagement” and “work flexibility” as a top preference, which is also included in the research. Other top Millennial preferences, consistent in both survey data and research, include: achievement/ results oriented, fun at work, and high expectations of bosses and managers. Aside from “strong work ethic”, all other Millennial responses are consistent with strong held preferences of younger generations, such as: entrepreneurial and value independence/ autonomy. Of all twenty four preferences included in the survey data for Question #11, there were only three values that were not typical “Millennial” values: strong work ethic, entrepreneurial, and value independence/ autonomy.

## **7. A Lens into Your Own Generation’s Core Values & Attitudes towards Work**

**Question 12: In thinking broadly about members of your generation, do you think they share similar core values in how they view their work/work place? Why or Why not?**

The results of this survey question are mixed, which supports both sides to the research as to whether similar core values hold within a given generation. Approximately forty-two percent of Baby Boomers, sixty-four percent of Gen Xers, and sixty-three percent of Millennials have answered in support of a collective core value system.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, it's important to note that while generational cohorts vary by age and social experiences, there are factors, race, gender, geographic region of the United States, experiences that vary by country, and economic status, which also impact the experiences and subsequent attitudes of some members that develop as a result of these factors (Costanza, et al. 2012). This can also be applied to a shared value system which can also vary by community, older/ younger members of the same generation, and their current professional environment. However, a few survey responders believe core values can emerge based on values instilled by your parents.

**Question 13: What adjectives might you possibly apply to describe your generation's attitudes toward work? Please list 3-4 terms.**

The literature suggests a generation's attitudes towards work may be determined by formative events and experiences. Lester et al. describe preferences regarding work culture as "one's view of formal authority and its association with leadership as well as to one's view of the appropriate ways work should be conducted (2012)." They believe these differences are believed to arise from the historic events that defined different generations. In support of the literature, the survey data is consistent with descriptions of attitudes towards work.

*Baby Boomers:* collaborative, cooperative, conscientious, diligent, workaholic, competitive, over-achievers, loyal to employer, service, dutiful, live to work, important, sacrifice, serious, committed, dependable, challenging, exciting, engaging, relationship building, setting goals/ seeking results, ambitious, lifetime employment, carrot and stick, and authoritative.

*Generation X:* Interestingly, the Gen X responders have included both positive and negative attitudes towards work. For the positive attributes, the responses include: work/life balance, hardworking, entrepreneurial, purposeful, purpose-driven, meaningful, goal oriented, responsible, flexible, success-driven, change agents, creative, collaborative, casual, and impactful. Many of these responses are considered attitudes of younger generations, and not necessarily Generation X, per se. However, the negative attributes listed include: anxious, impatient, cynical, frustrated, inflexible, precarious, and disloyal.

*Millennials:* need for intellectual challenge, entitled, flexible, goal oriented, self-serving, independent, entrepreneurial, agile, impactful, technology driven, diverse, collaborative, innovative, and socially responsible.

Aside from “setting goals/ seeking results”, the Baby Boom responses are aligned with the literature. Generation X was the only generation to view themselves in a more unfavorable light. The literature and survey data shows the attitudes are consistent with Millennial, or younger generation, research which claims “collaboration and involvement is valued, with more interaction and less formality at work” (Lester et al. 2012).

## **8. Identifying Other Generation’s Workplace Attitudes**

**Question 14: In thinking about members of other generations, what adjectives might you apply to describe their attitude towards work? Please indicate the generation you refer to with each adjective.**

According to the study conducted by Lester et al., a high expectation of perceived differences may arise as a result of the following: individuals are always searching for explanations for other people's behavior; previous research claiming that discriminatory views arise from generational stereotyping; and, actual value differences influence perceived differences. In other words, how generations view power, status, technology, and communication with others will affect how members of each generation interpret others in a cross-generational interaction (2012). The findings of the study indicate the perceived differences may considerably outweigh the actual differences. For example, the study finds that Baby Boomers value technology higher than younger generations believe they do; and Gen Xers reported placing less value on technology, social media, and professionalism than Millennials or Baby Boomers believe them to hold. These findings also "paint a familiar picture: one in which "older" workers are rigid and inflexible, "younger" workers are irresponsible and entitled, and the workers in the "middle" are misunderstood by both younger and older generations (Lester et al., 2012).

In comparing the research to the survey data, the findings of the survey indicate:

Baby Boomers view younger generations as: more work/life balanced, more concerned with personal development, more "me-centric", impatient, non-focused, uncommitted, less communicative, collaborative, unstructured, and casual. Baby Boomers view older generations as: grateful, loyal, and traditional. Aside from one

response, the Baby Boomers surveyed did not indicate the specific generation they were referring to and mostly chose to label them as “older” or “younger” generations.

Generation X views Baby Boomers as: loyal, hard-working, optimistic, dedicated, traditional, excessive, materialistic, resilient, engaged, office-oriented, and not innovative. Gen Xers also believe Baby Boomers are holding tight to their jobs, their identity comes from their work title, and they are not retiring because they are still financing their children. Gen Xers view the Millennial generation as being: entitled, flexible, creative, less loyal, needy and requiring massive direction, innovative, diverse, lazy, self-centered, ambitious, and confident.

Millennials view Baby Boomers as: loyal, company oriented, task oriented, hierarchical, committed, rigid, traditional, secure, regulated, and structured. They view Gen Xers as having a “work to live” attitude towards work.

The survey responses are consistent with the findings of the study conducted by Lester et al; in that, the perception outweighs the actual differences. They suggest researchers and managers could benefit from “lessons already provided in the literature; namely, the need for a work climate that fosters non-judgmental attitudes, tolerance, and an open exchange of information (Lester et al. 2012).

## **9. Conclusion**

In summary, there are areas where the survey responses have aligned with the literature; as is the case with Questions #4-9, and #13-14. Questions #10 and 11 serve as a starting point for identifying workplace preferences among attributes and qualities, but require more of a sample size to expand upon the current thinking. Since there is no

conclusive empirical or scientific evidence that exists in support of a direct connection to the impact of formative influences on generational work attitudes and values, it is worth asking if generations base their responses on their own personal experiences alone, or, based on assumptions and stereotypes perpetuated in the research, the media, and professional environment.



## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper has focused on one primary question: how do members of the Baby Boom, Generation X and Millennial generations believe influences and experiences of their formative years impact their workplace attitudes and values? Defining a generation, and providing a snapshot of the U.S. civilian labor force today, delineating the Baby Boom, Generation X, and Millennial generations, served as necessary background to help understand the factors that comprise a generation and workplace attitudes and values. This research is exploratory and has attempted to draw a clear picture of each generation's formative influences and how these experiences translate into the professional environment.

The limitations of my study lie in four key aspects. First, I solicited feedback from people in various schools and departments within a large, highly decentralized university. As a result, each department within the university is distinctive in its leadership and operational functions. While they are bound to operate within the guidelines set forth by the University, the responsibility for a variety of controls has been delegated to the various operating entities of the University. This can be particularly impactful to employees and students alike, in that, some departments may be more liberal or limiting in terms of leadership vs. management styles, feedback and rewards styles, and benefits that are determined at the discretion of the supervisor. In my department, we are able to adopt flexible work options; however, this may not be the case for all employees at the university. In linking this capability to my paper, many of the respondents have placed a

high value on work flexibility and work/life balance. Second, I only gathered responses from employees of one organization, and their feedback may not be representative of their generation as a whole. For instance, the degree for which the respondents measure their own formative experiences and translate these events and developments into the workplace, serves only as a basis for further study in the field. However, there were findings that aligned with the literature as presented in the analysis chapter that reinforced the respondent's perspective. Third, while I made an attempt to diversify the individuals selected to complete the survey, questions were intentionally not included to differentiate experiences based upon gender, race, ethnic background, or religious affiliation. Rather, the focus of the paper was to capture a more generalized view of each generation as a whole. Lastly, while I received a response rate of over seventy-three percent of the Baby Boom and Gen X generations, I only received a response rate of slightly over fifty percent for Millennials. Although these percentages are considered quite high for survey feedback, I would have preferred to have a slightly larger sample size for the Millennial generation to align more with the previous generations.

It is important for the reader to keep in mind that the survey responses reflect the individual's own personal experience, how they identify with other members of their generation, and how they distinguish their generation's attitudes towards work compared to other generations. The responses contain assumptions and biases and sometimes these perceptions are supported by the research literature and sometimes by the popular press. In these cases the perceptions of those surveyed receive some support for their opinions. Nevertheless, it is clear from the literature and the survey results that there is a lack of data and research about the ways in which formative influences impact workplace

attitudes and values, aside from providing some generalized background information and observed characteristics.

In highlighting a few strengths of this paper, I requested the feedback of individuals working at Philadelphia's largest private employer; therefore, the survey sample is contained to one industry, and one employer with a diversified employment pool which consists of members among each generational cohort. In other words, different industries contain a varying degree of: regulations, domestic vs. global expansion opportunities, and flat vs. hierarchical organizations. In addition, over ninety percent of those surveyed were born in the United States; and all of the survey responders have lived in the United States for over a decade. This work is therefore a beginning effort to understand each generation's perspective of work in more depth avoiding reliance on pundits or popular notions.

Moreover, the survey results revealed some interesting findings that were either unique to the individual or confirmed/ refuted the conclusions I drew from literature in Chapter 2. In this final chapter, I will discuss my major findings from the surveys and how they fit with the literature.

In terms of the survey data aligning with the literature, this is the case with regard to Organizational Loyalty, Impactful Formative Events and Shaping Workplace Experiences and Expectations, Values Instilled during Formative Years, and Generational Experiences during Formative Years. For Organizational Loyalty, the survey results reveal each successive generation places a lesser value on loyalty from and towards their employer. As indicated in Chapter 5, the results support the literature as loyalty has been a value instilled by members of the G.I. and Silent generations for their Baby Boom

children; however, this has decreased in value given more volatility in the economic climate and less value placed on loyalty from the employer towards the employee.

The Impactful Formative Events that have helped to shape workplace experiences and expectations have included major national and world events for all three generations. As literature suggests, the media plays a significant role in bringing the “news” to people of all ages in an almost instantaneous manner. All three of these generations have been impacted by television, radio, newspapers, the internet, and various other information streams, more so than the generations before them. As a result, children become aware of surroundings outside of their home environment and can determine the extent for which these events impact their own lives. The survey results show over 90% of the respondents agree these events and developments may help to shape their expectations of work to a large degree.

With regard to Values Instilled during Formative Years, the survey results indicate specific values unique to each generation. As youth, each generation was raised with a slightly different expectation of the workplace and achieving success in their careers. Baby Boomers were taught to value hard-work and loyalty. Gen X was empowered to pursue higher education and play a bigger role in being more selective in your own career path. Millennial responses include differentiating yourself from others, individualism, and creativity.

For Generational Experiences during Formative Years, sufficient evidence exists in both the literature and survey results that supports the theory that individuals growing up in the same time period, identify as a distinctive unit from other generations.

In comparing the information obtained from the survey findings to the literature, the results are varied for Generational Workplace Values, a Lens into Your Own Generation's Core Values, and Other Generation's Workplace Attitudes.

For Generational Workplace Values, the survey results align with the literature to a certain degree. However, a larger sample size would be required to come to a more definitive conclusion. For example, the Baby Boomer and Generation X survey results align with the research in roughly forty-six percent of the values/ statements of work presented. In Millennials, this percentage increases slightly to fifty-five percent. For all generations, the survey results include a combination of values across the three generations. Therefore, more information would need to be obtained to either support or refute the literature.

As respondents considered whether members of their generation shared similar core workplace values, the findings reveal the results are mixed as forty-two percent of Baby Boomers, sixty-four percent of Gen Xers, and sixty-three percent of Millennials have answered in support of a collective core value system. A larger sample size would be necessary in order to support or refute the literature.

In consideration of the Workplace Values important to members of other generation's, how we perceive other generations can often be skewed by assumptions, stereotypes, and misleading data obtained from the popular press. However, Gen Xers and Millennials agree that Baby Boomers are often much more loyal to their employers than their predecessors. Furthermore, the Baby Boomer respondents believe younger generations are more concerned with personal development and are often more "me" focused.

To summarize, in many instances this paper will show alignment between the survey findings and the literature. The degree for which events/ and developments shape expectations and experiences at work have been confirmed in over 90% of the responses. The focus of this paper was to provide specific examples of impactful formative influences and how they may help to formulate workplace attitudes and values. The findings of the survey provide the reader with a snapshot of the unique perspective held by the Baby Boom, Gen X, and Millennial generations.

### **Remaining Gaps: What We Still Don't Know**

As research suggests, cultural and historical conditions are unique to each country; therefore generational configurations may differ. Other factors such as socio-economic status, ethnicity, gender, and birth location, also contribute to varying generational membership across the United States. Notably, in my survey study, one Baby Boom respondent indicated she was an African-American in a post-civil rights era, which unlike the popular press claims, was still not “an equal opportunity experience.” Furthermore, there are organizational variables such as industry, and organizational size, culture, and structure, which must be examined in order to assess the conditions for which generational commonalities and identities exist.

Furthermore, based upon the data observed in my survey, a few respondents commented on the fact that they were born on the cusp on two generations; yet, they typically identify more closely with one generation. There are factors that may contribute to leaning towards one generation over the other, as this could depend upon your family

upbringing, your peers, the region of the country for which you were raised, and the values for which you feel more closely aligned.

While I had the benefit of analyzing data from members of one organization, a larger sample size would help to support or dispute the claims presented in the literature review. Despite having achieved a response rate of over 68 percent, the sample size would have to increase considerably, in order for clear delineations, patterns, similarities and differences to be substantiated.

All things considered, while it's ill-advised to make assumptions based upon birth year alone, researchers advocate for a more critical approach to the "interpretation and reporting findings" when considering all variables in generational studies, in order to not perpetuate unfounded stereotypes (Lyons & Kuron, 2013). Given the extensive coverage of generational workplace study in the media and popular press, I was somewhat surprised with the limited number of primary studies available linking formative influences to workplace attitudes and values, beyond more generalized statements. The questions presented in my survey have required the respondents to consider the "how" and "why" aspect of the ways in which these experiences have shaped their work attitudes and values, as noted in questions #7-9. The breadth and depth of their responses to these questions could be crucial to linking these influences to current work attitudes and should be considered for future studies.

### **Implications for Organizational Leaders**

An important implication of the current findings is that managers need to be educated about actual generational differences so they can inform their subordinates to

focus on the need to foster nonjudgmental attitudes, exercise tolerance, and an open exchange of communication and information. My research showed generational differences in formative influences, loyalty toward the employer, and attitudes/statements of work valued by each generation in terms of the following: competition, the notion to challenge authority, views on conformity and rules, and various preferred methods of communication. Notably, although I had expected a greater representation delineating consistent themes based upon preferred work preferences among the Baby Boom, Gen X, and Millennial respondents; I found the gaps among them were less prevalent than I had anticipated.

However, my research has demonstrated the manner for which a generational cohort is raised as children has a direct impact on their expectations of work. For example, Baby Boomers learned the value of a strong work ethic and loyalty toward their employer from their G.I. and Silent generation parents who lived through the Great Depression and World Wars. Generation X children were raised by parents who were working in an increasingly volatile economic environment and therefore their parents shifted their focus to their own professional endeavors; rather than placing their sole focus on raising children. They learned the value of independence and autonomy, and developed a more entrepreneurial mindset as a result. Alternatively, Millennial children were raised by overly-involved, overly-indulgent parents who taught them to work hard, achieve their educational dreams, and seek employment that is as fulfilling as it is balanced so they can achieve the most out of life. Understanding the environment in which a person develops their value system can help managers to adapt their approach to each generational cohort in order to accomplish their goals.



## **Recommendations**

In terms of recommendations, I would encourage organizational leaders and managers to use various tools, such as employee surveys, to collect and assess information from their employees on a regular and on-going basis. By doing so, they can tailor their practices to the existing demographics of their staff. Gaining this type of insight will allow organizations to provide resources to managers and other employees to support staff on the factors and preferences noted to be of importance to them. Furthermore, being proactive and educated on the academic findings of each generation can help to eliminate unfounded biases, assumptions, and stereotypes; and, can assist a multigenerational workforce in its efforts to collaborate and build synergies that can lead to a more effective, proficient work environment. This would not only benefit the individual and their teams, but would also add value to an organization's ability to sustain a long term business strategy and revenue growth. With that said, generational membership alone is not sufficient to treat members of different generations separately. To be more effective, managers can address differences based upon careful observation and analysis in order to identify and develop high performing teams.

Future research on generational differences should strive to assess a broader range of work-related criteria, collect data on all generations in the workplace, and focus on intra-generational differences among the oldest and youngest members of a given generation. To further this area of investigation, researchers and managers should determine the best way to apply this learning and implement various strategies given the data around in their study. There is also a need for improved methodological approaches for studying generational differences. Repeated cross-sectional studies can be

administered to a given team over the course of a set period of time to determine consistent themes and/or inconclusive data points. Additionally, I have found that by not providing a contextual framework on the topic to respondents before taking the survey, they were not persuaded to provide answers based upon assumptions and biases.

## **Conclusion**

Whether you are interested in learning more about the factors that impact a generation's view of the workplace, or for research and practice purposes, how generations are actualized in organizations and perceptions of generational identities can significantly impact the workplace. This topic can be further studied in order to develop a more balanced and critical approach to the interpretation and reporting of findings. The professional environment today is diverse and complex, and often the success of an organization is dependent upon effective interactions among colleagues, superiors, clients, and various other constituents. As individuals work together to achieve goals, develop innovative strategies, solve challenges, and a new generation of leadership emerges, it is important to embrace differences, recognize strengths, and develop an awareness for leveraging the positive aspects of each individual, team, and generational cohort.

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## APPENDIX

### INVITATION TO COMPLETE SURVEY

The invitation email was sent as follows:

As many of you may know, I'm pursuing my Master's Degree in Organizational Dynamics from the School of Arts & Sciences at the University of Pennsylvania.

Currently, I'm working on my Master's thesis, and would like to request your feedback by participating in an anonymous survey via Qualtrics.

[https://sasupenn.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV\\_3EPuoyEGj6AXRJP](https://sasupenn.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_3EPuoyEGj6AXRJP)

Your input would be invaluable. It is important for me to hear real life examples and see how they match with academic research. The survey will take approximately 15-20 minutes.

I know everyone is extremely busy at work (so thank you in advance!) If possible, I would like to request you **complete the survey by May 21<sup>st</sup>**. My goal is to begin analyzing the data by the end of May.

I very much appreciate your time and assistance.

Kind Regards,

Christina