

## Working With Generation X

Every generation has its own distinct way of viewing the world of work. These are generalizations, of course; however, studies and research have determined characteristics common to many in each particular generation. By being aware of the way each approaches work, colleagues, authority, etc., you can be more successful in hiring and retaining people who will produce the results you need and mesh with the rest of your team.



Let's look at Generation X (1965–1980). These individuals:

- ◆ are independent and self-reliant, without the need or desire for a lot of supervision.
- ◆ want balance and value their personal time. (They are not slackers, as older generations may think. They work hard and expend a lot of effort in getting the job done. They just want that balanced with time for personal pursuits, family and friends.)
- ◆ are team oriented and individualistic, which may seem contradictory. This means they like to do their own work for the benefit of the team.
- ◆ are not impressed with authority. You have to earn their respect through competence and skill; you can't just expect it because you are "the boss."
- ◆ view colleagues as friends and promote open dialogue to resolve issues and collaborate.
- ◆ often challenge or change the rules, if they even acknowledge rules exist.
- ◆ have a flexible work style and want that reflected in their schedules, work space, and assignments.

Is some or all of this different from your own perspective and approach? Then use this knowledge to adjust your interactions with this group. It will help you succeed in recruiting, managing, and working with Generation X.

---

## Success or a Dead Gopher?



I opened my back door one morning and...ewwww...on the step is a dead gopher! Gross! But from my cat's viewpoint, he just gave me the highest honour, the best thing he could give to his "person." The same item, different perspectives, *completely* opposite opinions.

Can this happen to you when dealing with clients, employees or the boss? Of course. We have in mind what we feel would be best—the best marketing campaign, the best employee reward, the best report—but if it's not what the other person wants, needs, or expects, all our hard work and effort will just be a dead gopher on the mat!

Dr. Kurt Einstein, a behavioural psychologist, made the observation, "To the degree that people know what is expected, to the same degree they can succeed." So success comes from knowledge and knowing what others expect. Take the time to learn what is expected from the other person's perspective. Ask questions, send out a survey, pay attention to what people talk about and how they do their work, what they appreciate and what ticks them off. In this way, you will be gaining valuable insight into their needs/wants and into your own success.

What you produce will be the best thing from the perspective of the one who receives it. Your work...will it be a success or a dead gopher? (Well, it could be both if you're a cat!)

### —Communications Tips—

## "Constructive" Criticism

Nobody likes criticism. Sometimes it's necessary, though, to help someone grow and improve. How can we give it so it will be heard and accepted?

- ◆ Choose a time and place when you will have privacy and when neither of you are tired or too stressed or angry.
- ◆ Don't attack the person; talk about the action or behaviour.
- ◆ Make a suggestion on what he/she could do differently, give two reasons why you think it is a good idea (a benefit and what it will prevent), and finish off with an encouraging comment about the person's abilities.
- ◆ Come to an agreement on what the change needs to be.
- ◆ If you can use a bit of humour, do so. "A spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down."

---

## Quote

"Face your deficiencies and acknowledge them; but do not let them master you. Let them teach you patience, sweetness, insight."—*Helen Keller*

"Nothing lowers the level of conversation more than raising the voice."—*Stanley Horowitz*

---

To **subscribe**, just send an email to [subscribe@dimension11.com](mailto:subscribe@dimension11.com).

We love to hear from you. Send **feedback** to [annette@dimension11.com](mailto:annette@dimension11.com).