

“Each generation imagines itself to be more intelligent than the one that went before it , and wiser than the one that comes after it.”

~ George Orwell

“The world is passing through troubled times. The young people of today think of nothing but themselves.

They have no reverence for parents or old age; they are impatient of all restraint; they talk as if they alone know everything, and what passes for wisdom with us is foolishness with them.

As for the girls, they are foolish and immodest and unwomanly in speech, behaviour and dress.”

~ Peter the Hermit, 1274

"Our youth today now love luxury; they have bad manners, contempt for authority, disrespect for older people.

Children now days are tyrants, they no longer rise when elders enter the room, they contradict their parents, they chatter before company, gobble their food and tyrannize their teachers.

They have execrable manners, flout authority, have no respect for their elders. What kind of awful creatures will they be when they grow up."

~Socrates, 500BC

***“When I look at the younger generation,
I despair for the future of civilization.”***

~Aristotle, 300BC

Talkin' 'Bout My Generation

*Understanding Generational
Differences*

Goals for the Session

1. Understand the core values of each generation of volunteers
2. Discover ways to apply this knowledge to more effectively engage people of different generations in your programming & volunteer opportunities

INTRODUCTIONS

- Name
- Organization
- Your Role
- What generation do you most closely identify with?
- Name a defining experience of your generation?

Let's Get Started

Our take on the Generations

Silent Generation 1925-1945 (ages 65-85)

- Respects authority and wants to be respected in return
- Insightful, knowledgeable and wise
- Dedicated
- “Do the right thing” generation
- Survived the trauma of the Depression and a major war.
- Characterized by a reverence for authority, a quest for stability and financial security, and a strong civic-mindedness.

“Borrowed from a number of really smart people!”

Silent Generation (ages 65-85)

Defining Moments

- World War II
- The Depression

Life Stage

- Retirement
- Staying Active & Social
- Grandparenting
- Health issues

Fast Facts*:

- In 2009, 9.1 million older adults (age 65 and older) dedicated 1.6 billion hours of service to communities across the country.
- 20.4 % of that time was volunteered in professional and management activities.

**2010 Corporation for National & Community Service "Volunteering in America" Report*

Boomers, born 1945-1965 (ages 45-65)

(includes Generation Jones, born 1954-65)

- Social changers-they experienced the chaos of the civil rights movement, assassinations of popular leaders, and the Vietnam War.
- Have had only one career, working for one or two employers.
- View retirement not as an end to a career, but as an opportunity to begin a new one.
- Refuse to believe that age will limit them in any way.
- End up focusing more on achieving ideals through support of teams, harmony, self-fulfillment, and a strong commitment to *the work* (in contrast to the silents' commitment to the *company*).

"Borrowed from a number of really smart people!"

Boomers (ages 45-65)

Defining Moments

- JFK, MLK Assassination
- Woodstock
- Civil Rights Movement
- Vietnam War
- Sexual Revolution
- Rock & Roll

Life Stage

- Long-Runways (career)
- Retirement / planning
- Child rearing later years
- Empty nesting
- Grandparenting
- Divorce and remarriage

Gen X, born 1966-1979 (ages 31-44)

- Resourceful, self sufficient (latchkey kids).
- Get to the point - be clear
- Likes technology
- Trained to make fast decision; thinks fast/acts/then evaluates
- Independent, entrepreneurial, crave autonomy and choice
- Value a healthy balance between work and personal
- Rejects authority and rules
- Will have at least three distinct careers, more than 12 employers

**Borrowed from a number of really smart people, but confirmed by my experiences*

Gen X (ages 31-44)

Defining Moments

- Challenger Explosion
- Fall of Berlin Wall
- Royal Wedding
- AIDS Crisis
- Tiananmen Square
- Gulf War
- Lollapalooza

Life Stage

- Mid-stage Career
- Home ownership
- Child rearing
- Divorce & remarriage
- Busiest time of their life
- Not necessarily about them right now – very busy!

Millenials, born 1980-94 (age 16-30)

aka Generation Y, Nexters, Next Generation

- Want to do things that matter—work, community engagement
- Collaborative and team players
- Want quick feedback
- Socially conscious
- Most racially diverse generation ever
- High performance, high maintenance, questions everything....asks for everything
- Will have more than 5 distinct careers, more than 20 employers, and be self employed by choice more than twice.

**Borrowed from a number of really smart people*

Millennials (ages 16-30)

Defining Moments

- 9/11
- Iraq War
- Columbine

Life Stage

- Early Stage Career
- Recent Grad
- University (Grad Student)
- Marriage (28/29)
- First child
- First home purchasing

Generation Z, born 1995-2001 (age 9-15)

aka Internet, Net or Dot Com Generation

- Relatively little is firmly established about its composition, character, and even name.
- “Digital Natives” - highly connected, many having had lifelong use of communications and media technologies such as the World Wide Web, instant messaging, text messaging, MP3 players, mobile phones and YouTube

**Borrowed from a number of really smart people*

Generation Z (age 9-15)

Defining Moments

- i-Phone, i-Pad, i-Pod touch
- 3G Service
- Hurricane Katrina
- Iraq-Afghanistan War
- Election of first African American President

Life Stage

- Still dependents in parents household
- In school

Millennials & Teens

Fast Facts*

- The volunteer rates for both Millennial & teenaged volunteers increased in 2009.
- In 2009, 10.8 million Millennials dedicated 1.1 billion hours of service to communities across the country.
- 21.6 percent of Millennials volunteered in 2009.
- In 2009, 4.4 million teenagers (ages 16 to 19) dedicated 389.5 million hours of service to communities across the country. 26 percent of teenagers volunteered in 2009.

**2010 Corporation for National & Community Service "Volunteering in America" Report*

Technology

Technology through the Generations

Silent Generation	Baby Boomers	Generation X	Generation Y
Slide-rule	Calculator	Desktop computer	i-Phone
Mimeographing	Photocopying	Scanning	Bluetooth
IBM	Apple	DOS to Windows	USB / i-Pad
Switchboard	Touch-tone Phones	Cell Phones	Chat / Texting
Party Lines	Conference Calls	Video Conferencing	Skype
Traditional Mail	Telex	Fax	Email
Tape reel to reel	Cassettes	CD	mp3

Adapted from (Smith & Clurman 1997, p.123)

Work Styles

Work Styles of the Different Generations				
Generation	Year of Birth	Entered Workforce	Work Values	Work is...
Silent Generation	1925-1945	1940's-1950's	Hard working, conservative, company loyalty	An inevitable obligation
Baby Boomers	1945-1965	1960's-1970's	Quality of life, ambitious, conforming, commitment to the work	An exciting adventure
Generation X	1966-1979	1980's-1990's	Flexibility, job satisfaction, loyal to self, balance work/life	A difficult challenge
Generation Y	1980-1994	2000's-2010's	Value diversity, sociability, global mindset, technology savvy	A means to an end – work to live!

Adapted from (Meredith et al. 2002; Smith & Clurman 1997; Zemke et al. 2000)

Applying the Knowledge

- Understanding diversity is imperative, applying it is tricky. The primary danger is stereotyping.
- Don't guess what volunteers from different generations within your organization want – ask them!
- Build a culture that enhances change as each new generation is embraced.

Be Aware of Hurdles

- **Be Prepared to Show them the Value**

Many Gen X and Millennials question why they should bother joining a group at all - much less volunteer.

- **Resistance to Change**

- from staff, current volunteers and organizational structure

Aversion from current members as to the value of including students or young professionals? What do they have to offer or will they just get in the way? They question everything we do! They're lazy, uninterested, etc.

Gen X as Volunteers

- May not connect with their grandparents' concept of volunteerism as civic duty.
- May not buy into their parents' optimism about changing the world.
- Feel capable of helping one person.
- May prefer to focus on local, not global issues, on tangible results, not idealism.

Attracting Gen X-ers

- Promote the value of changing the life of one individual.
- Make it local, not global.
- Talk about results - be specific about the difference they can make.
- Encourage flexibility, creativity and the freedom they need to reach the desired results.
- Identify what they will learn, gain from the volunteer experience.

Retaining Gen X-ers

- Give them meaningful assignments
- Listen for their preferences and concerns, respect their skills and opinions.
- Remember that they are very good at multitasking.
- Build in socializing, fun, celebrations (food!).
- Run tight, brief, efficient meetings (including orientation).
- Have copies of all materials available (self education).
- Make it easy for people to participate.
- Recognize individual contributions.

Millenials as Volunteers

- Looking for variety, stimulation and "push button" action.
- Are searching for their causes.
- Exhibit a strong interest in volunteering.

Attracting Millennials

- Promote the cause/mission or issue to attract this civic minded generation.
- Focus on issues that represent the interests of the community rather than individuals.
- Promote collaboration, team spirit and diversity.
- Talk about multiple options, parallel opportunities instead of asking them to commit to one thing.
- Offer a variety of exciting and challenging experiences.

Retaining Millennials

- Provide opportunities to be innovative and creative.
- Engage them quickly, keep them busy and give ongoing, immediate feedback.
- Clearly define tasks and expectations.
- Use technology.
- Provide an atmosphere of collaboration and teamwork.
- Treat the Millennial volunteer as a respected equal.
- Allow them to ask questions and challenge assumptions.

Questions?

Want More?

www.bloomington.in.gov/volunteer

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