



DIVERSITY TOOLKIT



Bridging the Generation Gap

Danette Scudder,
Executive Vice President, Member Services and Strategic Relations
Tennessee Valley Public Power Association (TVPPA)



**“If the different generations
are to thrive – not just
survive – we need
translators and interpreters
rather than declarations of
war.”**

Mary Pipher

Why Should I Care?

Generational Differences can be a cause of conflict in the workplace:

- Reduced profitability
- Loss of valuable employees
- High payroll costs
- Poor customer service
- Derailed careers
- Wasted human capital

Defining Ourselves

What Defines a Generation?

- Groups of people marked by the year of their birth
- And, their subsequent value system influences

It's Not MY Fault...

What Shapes a Generation?

A common set of social and historic events that impact attitudes, ambitions and world views

- People
- Places
- Things
- Events



Ask Yourself...

- What/who most influenced your perspective growing up?
- What events or “personalities” do you remember from your childhood?

Type your answer



**“What factors shaped your perspective most when you were growing up?”
(critical factors across all age groups):**

- A. Influence of parents and family**
- B. Influence of friends and peers**
- C. Religion and church experiences**
- D. Influence of teachers**
- E. Managers and supervisors**

(From E-HResources.com survey (August 2004))

Roll Call

There are 5 (and a 1/2) Generations in the Workplace Today:

- Traditional (1928-1945) – 2% of workforce
- Baby Boomers (1946-1964) – 29% of workforce
- Generation X (1965-1980) – 34% of workforce
- *Xennials (1977-1983) – 10% of workforce**
- Millennials (1981-1999) – 34% of workforce
- Generation Z (2000-present)- 1% of workforce

(2015 demographic data)



DIVERSITY TOOLKIT

Audience Poll:

What Generation Do You Identify With?

- A. Traditional (1928-1945)
- B. Baby Boomers (1946-1964)
- C. Generation X (1965-1980)
- D. *Xennials* (1977-1983)
- E. Millennials (1981-1999)
- F. Generation Z (2000-present)

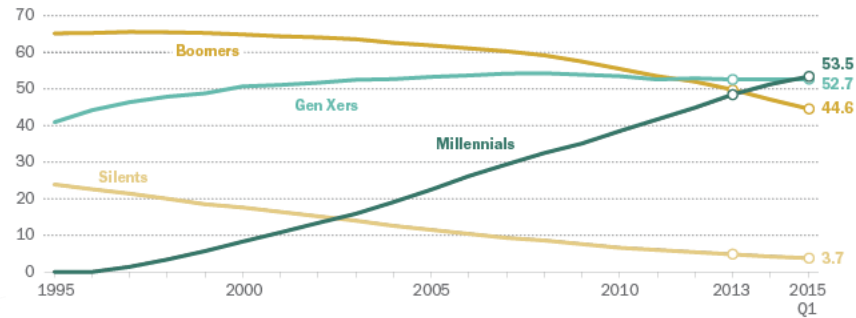
(2015 demographic data from Pew Research Center/*Huffington Post article and U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis)



Head Count

U.S. Labor Force by Generation, 1995-2015

In millions

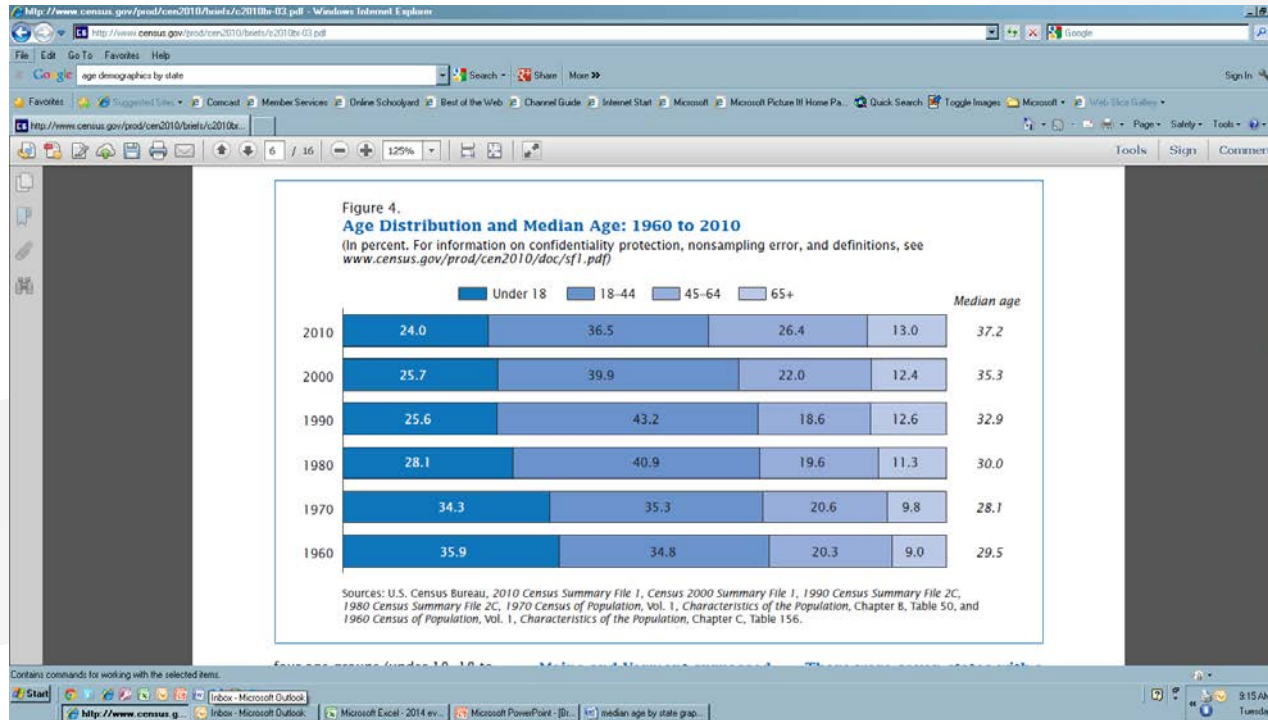


Note: Annual averages plotted 1995-2014. For 2015 the first quarter average of 2015 is shown. Due to data limitations, Silent generation is overestimated from 2008-2015.
 Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of monthly 1995-2015 Current Population Surveys, Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS)

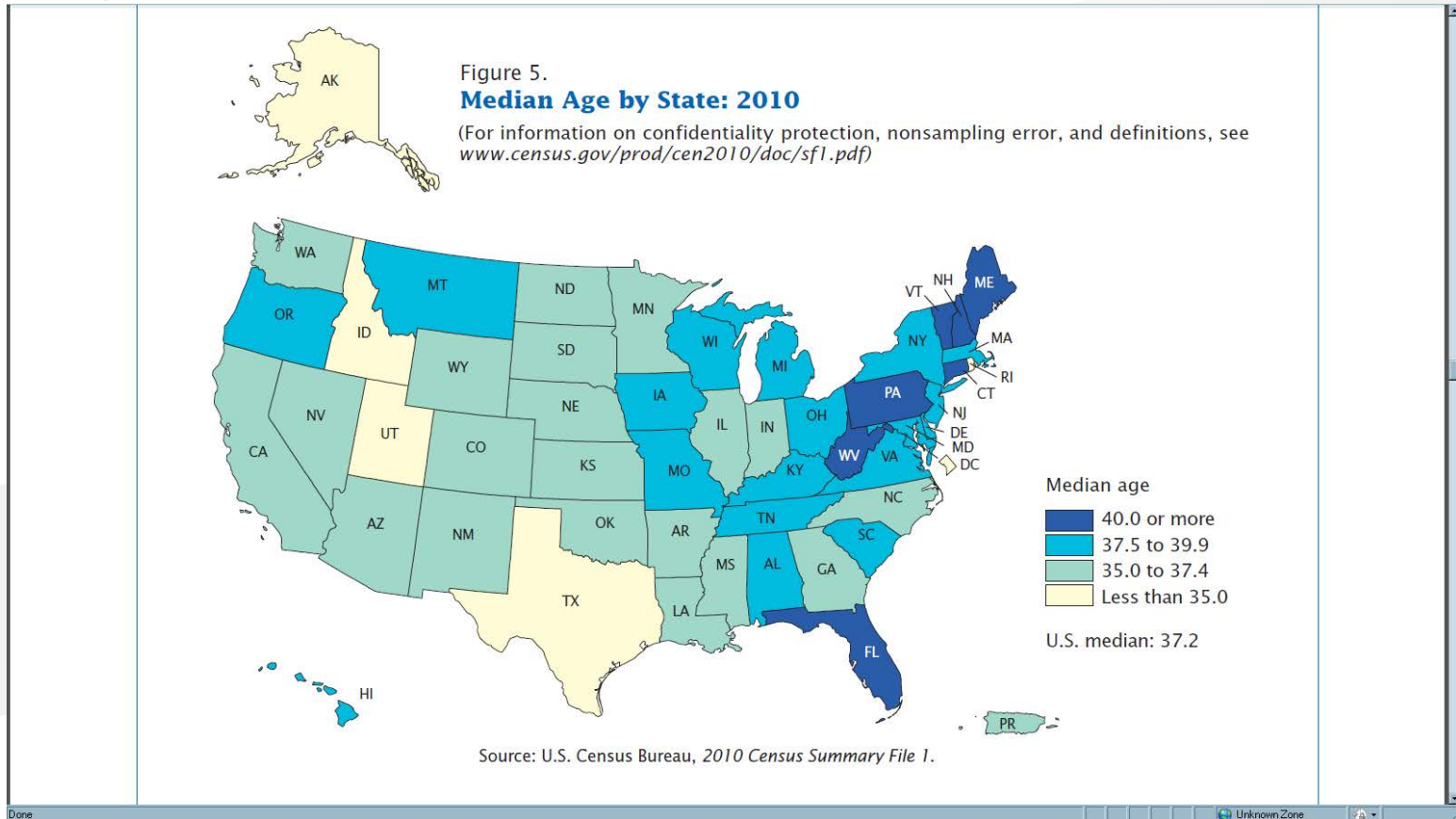
PEW RESEARCH CENTER



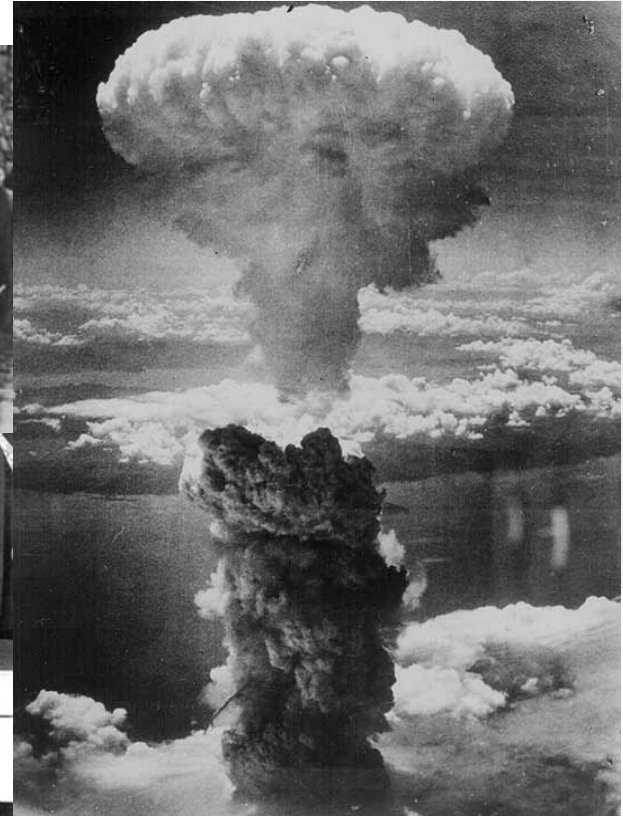
Who Are We Dealing With?



Mid-Life Crisis?



Traditional Generation (1928-1945): Historical Influences



Traditional Generation (1928-1945)

Characteristics & Values:

- Dedication, sacrifice, hard work, conformity
- Law & order, respect for authority, patience, delayed reward, duty before pleasure
- Honor, loyalty, tenure

Traditionals

Assets

- Stable
- Detail oriented
- Thorough
- Loyal
- Hard working

Challenges

- Unresponsive to ambiguity and change
- Reluctant to rock the boat
- Uncomfortable with conflict
- Unexpressive with disagreement

Baby Boomers (1946-1964): Historical Influences



Baby Boomers (1946-1964)

Characteristics & Values:

- Optimism, team orientation, personal gratification
- Health & wellness, personal growth, work involvement, individuality
- Exploring creative retirement, forever young

Boomers

Assets

- Service oriented
- Driven
- Good with relationships
- Aim to please
- Team players

Challenges

- Not naturally budget-minded
- Reluctant to disagree with peers
- Process ahead of results
- Overly sensitive to feedback
- Self-centered/judgmental

A photograph of a rooster crowing at sunrise. The rooster is in the foreground, silhouetted against the bright, colorful sky. The background shows a landscape with trees and hills under a sky with soft, colorful clouds.

The older generation thought
nothing of getting up at five
every morning - and the
younger generation doesn't
think much of it either.

-John J. Welsh

Generation X (1965-1980): Historical Influences



Generation X (1965-1980)

Characteristics & Values:

- Diverse, global thinkers, balanced
- Technological, fun, informal, detached
- Self-reliant, pragmatic, skeptical, entrepreneurial

Xers

Assets

- Adaptable
- Techno-literate
- Independent
- Unintimidated by authority
- Creative

Challenges

- Impatient
- Different manners
- Inexperienced
- Skeptical
- Perceived slackers
- Quick to criticize

Xennials (1977-1983)

Characteristics & Values:

- Analog childhood, digital adulthood
- Tech savvy and maybe a little bit too confident
- Possess Generation X cynicism and Millennial optimism and drive

Millennials (1981-1999): Historical Influences



Millennials (1981-1999)

Characteristics & Values:

- Optimism, civic duty, confidence, achievement
- Sociability, morality, street smarts, diversity
- Automation in every aspect of life
- Nurtured, do not want to be lumped with Gen X

Millennials

Assets

- Meaningful work
- Realism
- Tenacity
- Heroic spirit
- Multitasking
- Technological savvy

Challenges

- Need for supervision and structure
- Inexperience
- Job hopping
- Multitasking
- Work isn't everything

Meet the Fockers Goes Millennial



So, What Are They Going to Want Next?

Generation Z/iGen (2000 – present)

- Diversity
- Technology
- Innovation
- Everything is a game
- Not accustomed to taking risks
- Grass roots organization
- No “American Dream”

Comparing Apples to Oranges

	Traditional	Baby Boomer	Generation X	Millennial
Resources	Radio and Newspaper	Newspaper and Television	Television and Internet	Internet and Social Media
Communication	Handwritten correspondence	Telephone	Email	Text/Instant Messaging
Speed	Days - Weeks	Hours	Minutes	Seconds



Signs of the Times



WWI & WWII



1973



1980-2001



2001-2006



ARMY STRONG.®

2006- Present



Clashpoints

- Career
- Management
- Job Change
- Retirement
- Social

The Matrix

	Traditional	Baby Boomer	Generation X	Millennial
Career	Build a legacy/Work First	Build a stellar career/Live to Work	Build a portable career/Work to Live	Build parallel careers/Live, then Work
Management	Chain of command	Change of command	Self command	Don't command – collaborate
Job Change	Carries a stigma	Puts you behind	Is necessary	Is part of my daily routine
Retirement	Reward	Retool	Renew	Recycle
Social	Betty Crocker/Betty Grable	Dr. Spock/Dr. Seuss	Nirvana/Ivana	Cell phones/cell clones

“When Generations Collide” Lancaster & Stillman



Is It All for the Paycheck?

- What do you value most from your workplace?
- Why do you do your job?
- What are your biggest frustrations with other generations?

Type your answers in the chat box!

“What entices you to join an organization?” (answers across age groups)

- A. Mission, Values, Ethics**
- B. Pay and Benefit Package**
- C. Challenge and Interesting Work**
- D. Opportunity for Career Development**

(From E-HResources.com survey (August 2004))



“What compels you to stay with an organization?” (answers across age groups)

- Challenge (the work itself: interest and variety)
- Being treated with respect by managers and coworkers
- Ethical organization
- Recognition and Making a contribution (specific to Traditionals and Boomers)
- Work-Life Balance and Pay/Benefit Structure (specific to Generation X and Millennials)

“What characteristics of other generations in the workplace bother you the most?” (Response from Traditional and Boomers)

- Poor work ethic (coming in on time, doing quality work)
- No sense of customer service – too self centered – “it’s all about me”
- Expect too much without earning it; sense of entitlement

“What characteristics of other generations in the workplace bother you the most?” (Response from Generation X and Millennial)

- Too rigid and unwilling to change old habits
- They reminisce too much about “the old days”
- Expect everyone to “pay their dues” in years, not expertise

“What do you want other generations to know and understand about your age group, in order to dispel common misperceptions?” (Traditionals and Boomers)

- Teamwork is necessary to do a quality job; you can't always be a star
- Older workers are open to change and willing to be flexible
- We're willing to stay with a company through good AND bad times
- Experience and savvy come usually with years, not a college degree
- You can't always get what you want

“What do you want other generations to know and understand about your age group, in order to dispel common misperceptions?” (Response from Generation X and Millennial)

- It doesn't mean we aren't serious if we're not dressed in a suit or if we want to laugh sometimes
- It doesn't mean we don't have a work ethic just because we want time with our family
- It doesn't mean we can't contribute if we don't have years behind us
- We're not job hoppers just for the excitement of moving around (we'd stay in one place if companies offered jobs/benefits/pay we need)

Values Collide

	Traditional	Baby Boomer	Generation X	Millennial
Outlook	Practical	Optimistic	Skeptical	Hopeful
Work Ethic	Dedicated	Driven	Balanced	Ambitious
View of Authority	Respectful	Love/Hate	Unimpressed	Relaxed, polite
Leadership By...	Hierarchy	Consensus	Competence	Achievement, pulling together
Relationships	Self-sacrifice	Personal gratification	Reluctance to commit	Loyal, inclusive
Perspective	Civic-minded	Team-oriented	Self-reliant	Civic-minded
Turn-offs	Vulgarity	Political incorrectness	Cliches, hype	Cynicism, condescension

Clare Raines, 2006

Meeting and Exceeding Expectations

Traditional Generation: Values Based Communication

- Dedication, sacrifice, hard work, **conformity** = **consistent service**
- Law & order, **respect for authority (seniority)**, **patience**, delayed reward, **duty before pleasure** = **be courteous, call them sir or ma'am, give them time to make decisions**
- **Honor, loyalty, tenure** = **relationship-based, look them in the eye, thank them for their patronage with a personal touch – show genuine interest in them**

Meeting and Exceeding Expectations

Baby Boomers: Values Based Communication

- **Optimism**, team orientation, **personal gratification** = be solution oriented – time is valuable and they want a **relevant** solution now, be positive and find the bright side of every situation
- Health & wellness, **personal growth**, work involvement, **individuality** = treat them as individuals and emphasize personal relationships

Meeting and Exceeding Expectations

Generation X: Values Based Communication

- **Diverse**, global thinkers, balanced = treat them as equals regardless of differences
- **Technological**, fun, **informal**, detached = show respect in an informal manner – no sir or ma'am, be relaxed, use technology whenever possible – keep printed documents to a minimum
- **Self-reliant**, pragmatic, **skeptical**, entrepreneurial = give them time to ask questions and obtain information, at the same time be efficient and competent



Meeting and Exceeding Expectations

Millennials: Values Based Communication

- Optimism, civic duty, confidence, achievement = keep evidence of volunteer activities and philanthropic involvement visible, have flexible options, customizable plans
- Sociability, morality, street smarts, diversity = do not try to influence their decisions
- Automation in every aspect of life = appeal to their tech savvy and be aware of the convenience factor based on their accustomed pace of getting information, be friendly but don't expect same type of personal relationships



Meeting and Exceeding Expectations

Generation Z: Values Based Communication

- **Technology, innovation, everything is a game** = focus on different ways to engage, educate, communicate with them using online and mobile tools and resources
- **Grass roots organization** = provide opportunities for involvement, contributing to decision-making, avenues to share ideas
- **No “American Dream”** = benefits, work schedules, performance expectations will be very different from previous generations

Building on Shared Values

Everyone Wants:

- To be treated with respect
- To be acknowledged and appreciated
- To be challenged and engaged
- To have opportunities for growth
- To be compensated fairly

Acknowledging the Differences

Generational Disparity in Value-Related Expectations

- Need for conformity vs Desire for options
- Level of formality
- Forms of communication and resources
- Speed of information and decision making

What Does All This Mean?

- Understanding the values and perspective of each generation and how that affects their performance and expectations in the workplace will lead to less conflict.
- Building a team capitalizing on the skills of each generation can only strengthen your organization.
- Focus on the common goals and shared values across generations as much as possible to strengthen relationships.

Pieces of the Organizational Puzzle



Questions? Comments?





DIVERSITY TOOLKIT

**Danette Scudder
Executive Vice President
TVPPA**

**dscudder@tvppa.com
423.490.7922 (office)
423.240.7586 (cell)**