13 November 2014

*Generations on the Move*

Amanda Holland, Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
Generations Basics

Cutoff years vary

General observations

While not an exact science, generational awareness provides tangible rewards.

Laborers take a break from unscrewing old deck boards during the Yukon River Bridge redecking project. Photo by Tom Laurencelle, Alaska DOT&PF
Generations at Work

Four generations in the workplace
Fifth generation is just entering workforce

Many supervisors are younger than direct reports

Age-related workplace conflict on the rise
U.S. Generations

1920 – 1945: Builders, Traditionalists, Veterans

1946 – 1964: Baby Boomers, Boomers, Me Generation

1965 – 1979: Gen X, Lost Generation, Xers


2010 – XXXX: No official name --- Alpha Generation?
The Hourglass Effect

**Baby Boomer Generation**
(78 million people born 1946–1964)

**Generation X**
(45 million people born 1965–1976)

**Echo Boomer Generation**
(72 million people born 1977–1994)

Echo Boomer, aka “Gen-Y” – 80 mil
# The Four Working Generations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Millennial (Gen Y)</th>
<th>Generation X (Gen X)</th>
<th>Baby Boomer (Boomers)</th>
<th>Traditionalist (Veterans)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Population</strong></td>
<td>~ 80 million</td>
<td>~ 45 million</td>
<td>~ 78 million</td>
<td>~ 52 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mindset Events</strong></td>
<td>School shootings • Oklahoma City • Technology • Child-focused world</td>
<td>Fall of Berlin Wall • Watergate • Desert Storm • Energy Crisis</td>
<td>Civil Rights • Cold War • Space travel • Assassinations</td>
<td>Great Depression • New Deal • World War II • Korean War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Core Values</strong></td>
<td>Trained in leadership since primary school, are skeptical of power. • Want to work for themselves, not necessarily because of money, but for freedom, lifestyle and to be in charge without conforming to someone else's vision. • Trophy Kids – everyone gets a medal.</td>
<td>Unimpressed by authority or expertise. • Rely on their own perceptions, experience, intuition and input of friends. • Want flexibility and will change careers readily. • Leaders should be team members, leading from within. • Make it fun.</td>
<td>Value freedom of choice/expression • Traditionalists’ authoritarian style isn't appealing. • Want knowledge, information and logic to rule leadership. • Like a flatter structure, but still want managers to be experts and lead by their own knowledge and skills.</td>
<td>Strong work ethic • Respect for authority • Conservatism • Commitment • Reliability • Management style: clear roles, defined leadership, 'command and control'.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Generation Group Comparison

DOT&PF Workforce – 2011 & 2014

Surprisingly, Baby Boomers are holding steady in the DOT&PF workforce.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Spring 2011</th>
<th>Spring 2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Millennials</td>
<td>295 9.1%</td>
<td>695 21.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation X</td>
<td>1227 37.8%</td>
<td>1069 32.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby Boomers</td>
<td>1480 45.7%</td>
<td>1490 45.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditionalist</td>
<td>240 7.4%</td>
<td>38 1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3242 100.0%</td>
<td>3292 100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Generation Group Comparison

DOT&PF Workforce to U.S. Labor Force

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>AK DOT&amp;PF</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>US Labor Force</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Millennials</td>
<td>695</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>64,306,000</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation X</td>
<td>1069</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>60,049,000</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby Boomers</td>
<td>1490</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>77,564,000</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditionalists</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>29,912,000</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3292</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>231,831,000</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The department’s workforce has a noticeably higher percentage of Baby Boomer employees.
Things to Consider about Boomers

Grew up where there were literally more kids than seats in the classroom

Believe they have to fight for it all; if they don’t fight for it, someone else will get it

Compete on one path
(once they decide where going, cannot be altered from that path)
Things to Consider about Xers

Grew up where institutions were failing (corporate layoffs, marriage, etc.)

First generation of latch-key kids

Think in terms of options; they believe in having contingency plans

Balance multiple paths (key is keeping options open just in case)
Things to Consider about Gen Y

Grew up where something terrible could happen tomorrow (e.g., 9/11)

First generation who is unconsciously competent with technology (grew up with it)

Live with a constant sense of randomness; live life to the max each day (I want today to matter because there may not be a tomorrow)
“Generations”
Cross-Generational Challenges

*Filling potholes in the snow!* Photo by Noah Hill, Alaska DOT&PF
Considerations

**Boomers** = achievement-oriented, dedicated and career-focused – subject matter experts (prefer to have staff in the office, face-to-face, every day)

**Gen X** = options thinkers – what we need in today’s changing environment (appear to disregard authority)

**Gen Y** = drive us to use new technology to fundamentally re-energize work (proficiency expectation for others is very high)

**Gen Z** = bring sense of pragmatism – how to create balance and compromise in times of change (constantly in motion)
Working DOT&PF

Integrity ∙ Excellence ∙ Respect
Work Environment

Texting, social media, smart devices (e.g., March Madness)

Office protocol (e.g., arriving on time, interrupting others, personal business)

“Because we’ve always done it this way” is no longer an adequate answer
Behaviors
(e.g., ear buds in office, personal space, feedback)

Framing
(e.g., repetitive words “like”, profanity, request v. command)

Life Filters
(e.g., outdated phrases, authority figures, public exposure, work ethic)
Kirby Maury is the most senior engineering assistant in Central Region construction. He has been a great teacher and a mentor for many young engineers. This project will be his last since he plans to retire. Photo by Chong Kim, Alaska DOT&PF

“With or without formal training, leaders have been emerging within your organization.”
-Michael DeMarco
75% of the workforce reports their immediate supervisor is the most stressful part of their job.

At least 20% lower risk of heart attack if you work for a good boss.

Best bosses are those aware of their own strengths, weaknesses, quirks.

1/3 of all employees spend at least 20 hours a month lamenting about their bosses’ behavior.
**Beloit College Mindset List**

**2018 LIST**

*Students heading into their first year of college this year were generally born in 1996.*

Among those who have never been alive in their lifetime are Tupac Shakur, JonBenet Ramsey, Carl Sagan, and Tiny Tim.

On Parents’ Weekend, they may want to watch out in case Madonna shows up to see daughter Lourdes Maria Ciccone Leon or Sylvester Stallone comes to see daughter Sophia.

For students entering college this fall in the Class of 2018...

1. During their initial weeks of kindergarten, they were upset by endlessly repeated images of planes blasting into the World Trade Center.

2. Since they binge-watch their favorite TV shows, they might like to binge-watch the video portions of their courses too.

3. Meds have always been an option.

4. When they see wire-rimmed glasses, they think Harry Potter, not John Lennon.

5. “Press pound” on the phone is now translated as “hit hashtag.”

6. Celebrity “selfies” are far cooler than autographs.

7. The Daily Show with Jon Stewart has always been the only news program that really “gets it right.”
Stepping into the Future

Assessing flood damage on Richardson Highway in Keystone Canyon. Photo by Mike Isaacs, Alaska DOT&PF