

# EXPLORING COMMUNICATION ACROSS GENERATIONS

*A STRATEGIC PLAN TO PROMOTE AN UNDERSTANDING OF  
INTERGENERATIONAL COMMUNICATION DIFFERENCES WITHIN  
TODAY'S WORKPLACE*

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### *Executive Summary*

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, there are nearly 80 million Millennials inhabiting today's workforce. By the year 2020, nearly half (46%) of all U.S. workers will be Millennials working alongside other generations (Lynch, 2008). This generational shift within the workplace is important to understand and pay attention to, as it plays a major part in the success of all businesses. This research will focus on generational differences and exploring the communication gaps within the workforce. Communication gaps in the workplace can interfere with achievement of organizational objectives and increase conflict. When objectives are not met, organizations can experience turmoil which can contribute to conflict. According to Bergin (2001), "The organization is a battlefield where individuals and cliques emerge and fight each other for status and power... fighting erupts in every nook and cranny" (as cited in Woletsadik, 2015). Jones (2012) further notes that "Poor communication can sometimes be downright dangerous and lead to tragic and unnecessary loss of human life" (146). This is evidenced by the instances of workplace violence that we so often see published in the media. From this we can surmise that communication gaps in the workplace should be carefully managed to maintain a civil workplace. The purpose of study to identify communication gaps between generations within the workplace and provide ways to improve the effectiveness of communication across all generations. Research will include discussion of dispelling myths and tales of each generation and giving greater insight of how each generation operate oppose to the other. Research is planned for proposed assessment and evaluation of proposed program.

*Keywords:* Communication, Diversity, Intergenerational, Millennials, Baby-Boomer, Organizational, and Workplace,

I, Anthony Biddix, acknowledge I completed this assignment in the spirit of the Trinity Washington University policy regarding academic honesty and plagiarism.

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## Introduction

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According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, there are nearly 80 million young adults born between the years of 1976-2001 who have already joined or are preparing to join the workforce. In 2014, 36 percent of the U.S. workforce population was comprised of this generation and by the year 2020 (2 years from today), nearly half of the U.S. workers will be Millennials (Lynch 2008). By all accounts, Millennials are unlike their preceding generations, specifically the baby-boomers who are reaching retirement age. Millennials view the world differently and have redefined the meaning of success, personally and professionally.

Generational differences have become more prevalent in the workplace and will continue to threaten productivity for the foreseeable future as management faces a single generational fact: multiple generations currently existing in the workplace today (Karp and Sirias, 2001). Due to this increase of generational differences, the relevance of communication that keeps advancing as the world becomes a Global village. Organizations today communicate information using a variety of methods. Communication within organizations have changed since the influx of the new age entering the workforce. The purpose of the program is to explore communication across generations while providing tools to improve workplace communication.

## Population

The Baby-Boomer generation are those who were born in the years of 1946-1964. Influencers in this generation could be seen by the Civil Rights Era and where “The American Dream” was promised to them as children and they pursued it. Some but not all baby-boomers received college degrees, but the job market was so plentiful it wasn’t needed to get a decent education (Lynch, 2008). Even obtaining a job was easier for the Baby-Boomer generation, once one graduated high school they were able to get a government job instantly. In general, Baby-Boomers are believed to be in command-and-control management approach, value working individually, views managers as experts and look to their employers for career planning. They like clear boundaries and have a generally inward-looking perspective as compared to Millennials (Lynch, 2008). Life for this generation is more linear. It took time to progress from point A to point B (Brack, 2012).

The Millennials on the other hand, are those who were born in the years of 1981-2000. The Millennials are heavily influence by digital media and are tech savvy. They came out of an age in a period of economic expansion. With a focus on higher education, more than half of the cohort have some sort of college degree, leaving it harder for those within the same cohort to obtain a decent job and others to find one that fits well for them. Millennials see life in a more circular, optimistic terms.

For them, life is more like London's Eye – the city's giant Ferris wheel – there are multiple opportunities to stop along the way, with great views they can instantly snap with their camera phones, post to social media and ass a statue update, all before the next stop (Brack 2012).

One major thing all millennials want out of life, in all facets of life is the chance and opportunity to grow. Life offers endless possibilities to the young millennials in the workforce and it is difficult for some employers to retain them. The average tenure for millennial employees is two years (Fromm, 2015). In a span of a professional career, two years seems to hardly make a dent in getting anywhere. One reason why millennials are more likely to change jobs is because they are not willing to stick around if they do not believe they are receiving any personal benefit or growth (Fromm 2015). In order to keep up with a fast-moving generation, don't slow them down. Once managers/employers notice that millennial employees looking for more advance opportunities, they should give them more challenging work and encouraging them to keep moving. If a millennial feels their bosses are invested in their personal growth they will be more likely to develop a stronger relationship not just with the company but others who are working in it (Fromm 2015).

Millennials were raised with a constant coaching and feedback and expect to continue in the workplace (Brack 2012). Coaching is a way to keep millennials engaged in their work and allows them to feel as if they are cared for. They also expect greater accessibility to the leadership in their offices and are looking for mentorship than just direction. Research shows that the number one reason why millennials are likely to leave their current job is because of their boss (Fromm 2012). Coaching can be simple as a quick email response, a text or two-minute conversation (Spiegel, 2011). It's not as time consuming as managers would deem it to be.

According to a recent survey conducted by TriNet, 69% of millennials see their company's review process as flawed. A major reason for this is because of the lack of feedback throughout the year. The survey also found that three out of four millennials feel in the dark about their performance and nearly 90% would feel more confident if they had ongoing check-ins with their bosses (Fromm, 2012). The more frequent and constant feedback from managers and supervisors will solicit better attitudes towards the workplace from the millennial. A few other things millennials want from employers can be: collaboration, measurers, and motivation. Millennials want to work in an environment that is more suitable to their needs and inspires them to contribute without being criticized (Spiegel, 2011).

### **Needs Assessment**

Workplaces in today's society are forced to face a fact that multi-generations are working together in offices across the country and can heavily influence how communication styles can impact office

culture. There are at least four generations employed in workplaces across the world. For decades, the Baby-Boomer generations have represented the majority of the workforce, meanwhile, the new age of Millennials are now taking over. With different generations co-existing in the workforce, each bringing their characteristics, values, and attitudes toward the workplace and existing communication techniques. There are various factors of which influences the difficulties in cross generational conflict and the issues that arises from this context. Among the many generational conflict issues that can arise within the workplace, this study will cease to only focus on the following: (1) work related values and (2) attitudes towards work.

Arsenault (2004) suggested that differing expectations in work-related values could lead to generational conflict in the workplace. Smola and Sutton (2002) defined *work-related value* as the evaluative standard relating to the “work environment by which individuals discern what is right or wrong and the outcomes they feel they should attain through work” (p. 366). These differences in the perception of what’s right or wrong in the workplace can cause generational conflict. Sirias, Karp and Brotherton (2007) found that “Baby Boomers as smug workaholics who play corporate politics and who are out of touch with current economic realities” (p. 752).

The perceived decline in work ethic is perhaps another major contributor of generational conflict existing in the contemporary workplace today. Millennials on one hand, has been characterized as the ‘slacker’ generation and employers complain that younger workers are uncommitted to their jobs and work only the required hours or less (Jenkins, 2007). Conversely, the Baby-Boomer generation may be workaholics and reportedly started the trend (The National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Office of Diversity, 2006).

Faced with this challenge and the dichotomy between generations, organizations and business leaders are tasked with facilitating effective communication within the workplace. Sacks (2006) suggests that if business do not address this generational conflict, they are subjecting themselves to lower productivity, higher turnover, and frustrated employees, which will ultimately lead to reduced profits. Sack (2006) describes the issue as follows:

Managers will be challenged to minimize the friction and maximize the assets of distinct sets of work values and styles simultaneously. The latest generation to join in the mix is disruptive not only because of its size but because of its attitudes (72).

It is it important for business leaders to know how to approach this problem and offer solutions.

## Statement of the Problem

Generational differences can lead to misunderstanding among the employees co-existing in today's workforce. Baby-boomers on one hand, may feel millennials need more in training and development, better communication skills and view them as slackers. While on the other hand, millennials may have their own perception characterizing baby-boomers in a similar negative view within the workforce. No matter the way it is put, generational differences in-turn can affect how teams collaborate and that's not good for business. Increasingly, however, leaders and managers should realize this generation's unique competencies and perspectives, and employers must search for ways to harness their strengths (Brack, 2012).

It is crucial for organizations and business leaders to pay close attention to the differences of the co-existing needs of their employees, which can cause detriment to the company's overall success. Effective communication informs and educates employees at all levels and motivates them to support the strategy (Barret, 2002). Recent studies about communication show that communication has positive correlation with many organizational outputs like organizational commitment, performance, organizational citizenship behaviors, and job satisfaction. In contrast communication failure may cause functionless results like stress, job dissatisfaction, low trust, decrease in organizational commitment, severance intention, and absence and this can affect organization's efficiency negatively (Zhang and Agarwal, 2009). The end result of this program is to facilitate employers in understanding the needs caused by generational differences in the today's workforce and how to improve intergenerational communication. If communication across generations were improved within organizations in today's workforce, then this would increase the awareness of intergenerational differences, thus providing tools for decreasing workplace conflict and improving workplace communication.

## Program Design

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The goal of this program will be to improve all facets of communication between generations. The program is designed for Human Resources leaders and business managers to undergo trainings and developmental workshops to learn effectively manage and mitigate intergenerational conflict within organizations. This will be done where leaders will learn the personal lifestyles and characteristics of each generation inhabiting within the workforce today. What better way to manage employees without getting to know who they are. Secondly, business leaders will be provided will strategies and tools to reduce cross-generational conflict. Lastly, a survey of will be conducted within organizations to identify additional potential cross-generational conflicts if any. This program will serve as an assessment tool-



intervention method that will occur and co-exist with current human resources policies or techniques businesses can use in effort to enhance communication effectiveness in organizations and to diminish, or mitigate the disparities in intergenerational differences within the workplace.

### **Goal 1**

Diversity in isolation is no longer a sufficient goal in organizations, inclusion will be part of the overall program. The first goal for this program is to increase generational awareness within the workforce while reinforcing how age diversity benefits all organizations.

#### ***Objective 1***

To increase and improve intergenerational connectedness by 60%, the program will host a series of educational seminar, learning the background and origins of all generations inhabiting today's workforce, their characteristics and how in generational differences.

#### ***Objective 2***

Implement cross-generational networking opportunities to foster intergenerational harmony through mentoring and knowledge transfer.

### **Goal 2**

The second goal of the program is to promote strategies for improving effective intergenerational communication and provide techniques for managing cross-generational conflict that may arise within the workforce.

#### ***Objective 1***

Administer an online communication skills training workshop - developing interpersonal and presentation skills, perfecting professional writing techniques, and public speaking.

#### ***Objective 2***

Implement regular workshops and an online community-based practice for managers to learn and discuss strategies to minimize cross-generational conflict as they arise.

### **Perspective for Change**

Despite recent controversies surrounding millennials entering the workforce at a high rate now more than ever, researchers who have used theoretical frameworks to explain the groundwork to the existence of generational differences have had difficulty distinguishing noticeable differences and

explaining how behaviors and attitudes vary from one generation to another (Saba, 2013). There are several theories researchers could select from to help assist how generational differences can be explained. For the purposes of this program, it's best to note the origins of those theories, where they came from, and how it is used in research today to help explain cross-generational differences between baby boomers and millennials existing within the workplace today.

### **Sociological Foundations**

Generational difference can be traced back to the 1950's, and has its early origins in sociology, most notably in publication of the work of Karl Mannheim (1893-1947), in his seminal paper, "Problems of Generations". Mannheim (1952) emphasized the importance of generations as a guide to understanding the structure of social and intellectual movements. He defined a generation as being similar to the class position of an individual in society in that a generation is not a 'concrete group' (i.e.: it's members do not have mental and/or physical proximity or any knowledge of each other) but is a 'social location'. Mannheim suggested that the existence of generation is made possible by five characteristics of our society: (1) new participants in the cultural process are emerging; (2) former participants are continually disappearing; (3) members of a generation can participate in only a temporally limited section of the historical process; so (4) cultural heritage needs to be transmitted; and finally (5) the transition from generation is continuous (Parry and Urwin 2011, 81).

While most people in the world may believe that members of the same generation share the same year of birth so have a common location in the historical dimension of the social process. This limits them to specific range of potential experiences, predisposing them to a certain characteristic mode of thought and experience. However, Mannheim dictates that individuals cannot be members of the same generation simple because they share a year of birth. They must definitely be in a position to participate in certain common experiences so that a concrete bond is created between members of a generation and so that they share 'an identity of responses, a certain affinity in the way in which all move with and are formed by their common experiences (Parry and Urwin 2011, 81).

The most widely accepted recent sources of distinguishing millennials from baby-boomers would come from the works of Neil Howe and William Strauss (2000), out of their series of books titled – *Generations: The History of America's Future, 1584 to 2069*. Driven by the logic of their generational scheme and by observations of youth culture in the late 1990's, Howe and Strauss (2000) argued that post-Generation X children are an "heroic generation" similar to their celebrated "GI Generation" forebears. Viewing the American history as a complex repetition of four generational types – Idealist, Reactive, Civic, and Adaptive – Howe and Strauss tend to accentuate differences specifically around the millennial generation (Wilson and Gerber 2008, 30). According to Howe and Strauss, millennials

are a “direct reversal from the trends associated with Boomers” and “represent a sharp break from the traits that are associated with Generation X” (44-45). In their own right, millennials are a generation shaped by their predecessor’s reaction to the world around them.

Both theories attempt to study generations and tend to address generational traits and behavior, however, they have different approaches in discussing generations. Mannheim’s argument, for instance, is primarily based on criticism of the two major 19th century viewpoints and emphasizes on social classes to explain different traits and attitudes. His studies have been the bases for other social studies on generations. Neil Howe and William Strauss were also greatly influenced by Mannheim’s theory and his theory was one of the bases of their argument. Conversely, the notion of generation in Mannheim’s theory that also served as the bedrock of other sociological studies would not help studying Generation Y and their traits and characteristics alone. Mannheim’s theory provides a very broad view on generation studies. Strauss-Howe theory, nevertheless, is more focused on the contemporary issues of generations and can be more practical in helping understand different generations’ behavior. Therefore, in order to understand the work values of generations and to examine their similarities and differences, it is necessary to have an in-depth grasp the Strauss-Howe generational theory (Sajjadi, 2012).

In spite of its recognition in the research circles on generational studies, Howe and Strauss data collection methodology that led to the development of their theory has been under some criticisms also. Twenge (2010) criticizes that some of the theoretical assumptions of Strauss-Howe are not reliably verified. For instance, Lancaster and Stillman (2002) and Tulgan (2009) who have conducted major studies on generations and their traits and values are criticized by Twenge (2010) to have relied more on qualitative than quantitative data.

### **Theoretical Model**

Historical events of the past, shapes and influences the way millennials think and what they value most in today’s society. The program is shaped by blending the two major classifications or Baby-Boomers and Millennials, based on Lancaster and Stillman (2002) and Howe and Strauss (2000). The generational theory by Howe and Strauss helps explains seven distinguishing traits of the millennial generation in connection with the generations before them and how those traits may help explain generational differences altogether. The seven core traits typifying millennials described by Howe and Strauss includes: (1) Special, (2) Sheltered, (3) Confident, (4) Team-Oriented, (5) Achieving, (6) Pressured, and last but not least (7) Conventional (2003 4). Each trait in the model is outlined within the generational workshops to help gain insight and learning of generational differences, traits, and

historical contexts. This will increase generational awareness within the workforces and eradicate generational differences by 60%.

### **Baby-Boomers**

Baby Boomers as the generation that grew up in the post Great Depression and World War II era comprise the largest number of the labor force of the world of labor According to Lancaster and Stillman (2002) the rather big size of this Generation forced them into a cruel and severe competitiveness “for resources and opportunities”. Being brought up in a flourished environment they are said to be “very optimistic and responsible for many social movements” (Lancaster and Stillman, 2002). They value and treasure their careers very much and are not very keen on switching jobs or careers. Howe and Strauss 1991) stress that often Baby Boomers are seen as “workaholics”, they seek the meaning in life from work and place much importance on their careers. Their core traits being the following: idealistic, optimistic and highly competitive (Lancaster and Stillman, 2002).

### **The Seven Traits of Millennial Model**

#### ***Special***

Millennials are viewed as the special generation. Compared to the Gen-Xers and Baby-Boomers, a smaller group born during a period of relative social indifference to children, Millennials are a huge demographic, and one that are eagerly anticipated by their parents. They are “the largest, healthiest, and most care-for generation in American history” (Strauss & Howe 2000, 76). Reasons are due to family size changing from baby-boomers to millennial generation, income of parents, parenting styles, and child centric cultural shifts. Baby-boomers were born in a time period where they were left to fend for themselves at every moment. During the 70s the culture around children wasn’t as robust as it is during the millennial generation. While having children seemed problematic—or even irresponsible—for many couples in the 70s, a surprising culture change-of-mind occurred thereafter, resulting in “a newfound love for children” (p. 80). Today, there’s so much positive attention to having a baby vs before it was about education and marriage.

#### ***Sheltered***

Since current media expose to youth to pretty much everything, it is tempting to think of them as hardened veterans of the world (Wilson and Gerber 2008, 30). However, the millennial generation is the most protected generation in American history. For the millennial generation there were bike helmets, child proof pill bottles, toy safety recalls, regulated child abuse laws, car seats, Amber Alerts,

etc. Howe and Strauss (2000) detail regulations, noting that millennials have been, “buckled, watched, fussed over, and fenced in by wall-to-wall rules and chaperones” (119).

### *Confident*

Millennials are generally happy with life. According to Jocelyn Noveck and Trevor Tompson, a recent survey study found that “72 percent of millennials say that they are happy with life in general (2007, n.p.a.). Millennials are highly motivated goal-oriented, and confident not only in themselves but the future. They have high levels of optimism and feel their connected with their parents mostly due to how they were raised. They are assertive and believed to be right all the time. “In Canada”, write Howe and Strauss, “Millennials have been dubbed the ‘Sunshine Generation” (2000, 178).

### *Team-Oriented*

Millennials display strongly group-driven behavior and are very prone to participate in group activities. They have been exposed to various tasks in organized group play, wearing uniforms in school (showing unity amongst peers), collaborative learning experiences, and group dating. The group of generations grew up watching Barney who was always about group effort in every episode aired on television. They see this trend as an outcome of the widespread rejection in the name of bringing everyone into the mainstream (Wilson and Gerber 2008, 31).

### *Achieving*

Contemporary young adults such as the millennials have big plans, particularly about their careers. Boomers were also ambitious, but according to Strauss and Howe (2000), they embraced accomplishment in the arts and humanities in a way Millennials have not; further, Boomers, were more internally driven—operating with an “inner compass”. Howe and Strauss argued that Millennials respond best to external motivators and are highly rationalistic, making long-range plans and thinking carefully about “college financing, degrees, salaries, employment trends, and the like (2000, 182-183). While they are likely to put in the work, school for them is not something from which they expect enlightenment or personal transformation. “Work hard, play hard, is an important maxim for them (Wilson and Gerber 2008, 31).

### *Pressured*

Raised in the century where the media portray life as perfection, high expectations by workaholic parents in an economy designed for highly skilled labor, mixed with highly scheduled lives and zero tolerance, Millennials have internalized the message that they must build strong resumes and how to build it fast to be successful in the world (Wilson and Gerber 2008, 31). In the words of

Strauss and Howe, Millennials “feel stressed in ways that many of their parents never felt at the same age. Pressure is what keeps them constantly in motion—moving, busy, purposeful, without nearly enough hours in the day to get it all done” (2000, 184).

**Conventional**

“Family” is a keyword for the Millennials, as “alienation” was for the 1960s Boomers. Born in a divorce culture and aware of the fragility of the American family, Millennials tend to embrace measures that promise to strengthen or support it (Wilson and Gerber 2008, 32). As noted, recent surveys consistently show teens to be strongly attached to parents and siblings, especially their mothers. “Millennials are willing to accept their parents’ values as stated—but they are starting to think they can apply them, and someday run the show, a whole lot better,” wrote Howe and Straus (2000, 185-186).

**Program Chart**

Howe and Strauss’s theory, nevertheless, is more focused on the contemporary issues of generations and can be more practical in helping understand different generations’ behavior. Therefore, in order to understand the work values of generations and to examine their similarities and differences, it is necessary to have an in-depth grasp the Strauss-Howe generational theory (Sajjadi, 2012). The program model is designed in phases, whereby organizations can maximize full engagement of all generations to play a part of the overall goal in increasing intergenerational awareness.

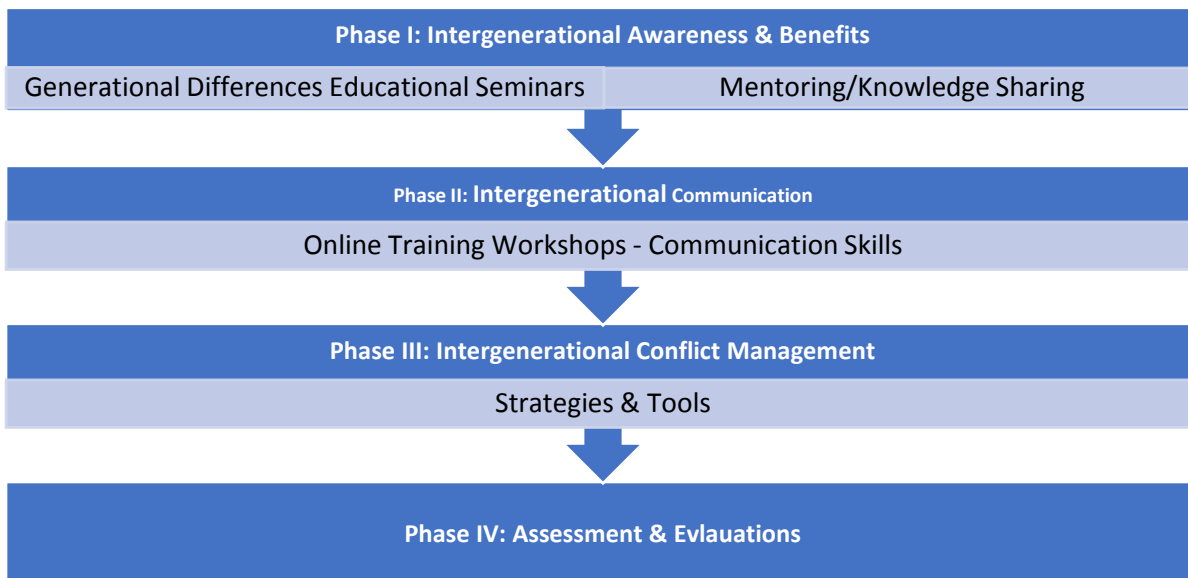


Figure 1. Workplace Communication Program Chart

The model is made of phases (4) phases, mirroring the goals and objectives of the overall program. Phase 1 of the model will be geared towards the learning the classifications of generations outlined by Howe and Strauss through educational seminars while facilitating mentoring and knowledge sharing opportunities. Phase two of the model will begin by focusing on eradicating intergenerational communication through a host of online training workshops learning communications skills. Phase three will consist of providing business leaders and HR managers the tools needed to manage generational conflict as they arise. Lastly, phase four will evaluate the effectiveness of the overall program and assess the need of program continuation.

### **Activities**

Housed within current existing HR policies, the program involves of all employees inhabiting the workforce, from Millennials to Baby-Boomers. Whereby, an HR Director and/or Department Executive will be the main point of contact of the program delivery. In addition to being the program coordinator, the HR Director and/or Department Executive are given the tools to carry out the activities necessary to achieving the goals and objectives. The program is designed to last four (4) weeks. Throughout each week of the program, there's a host of workshops and seminars set up in stages aimed to diminish intergenerational conflict within the workforce while improving intergenerational connectedness based on the similar goals listed in the program model.

#### **Stage One: Program Start Up**

- Survey all employees on intergenerational awareness within the workforce.
- Submit program plans and schedule to organizational leaders for approval
- Implement program workshop schedules and gather workshop materials.

#### **Stage Two: Cross-generational Mentoring, Knowledge Sharing, & Communication Workshops**

- Host intergenerational awareness educational seminar using Howe and Strauss theory.
- Develop and implement a cross-generational mentoring program.
- Develop and implement a knowledge sharing program.

#### **Stage Three: Intergenerational Conflict Management and Evaluation**

- Facilitate online workshops for all managers with access to links of conflict management techniques and skills
- Assess the need for continuing intergenerational communication on a monthly basis

- Evaluate the effectiveness of the mentoring and knowledge sharing programs
- Conduct final survey of intergenerational awareness to determine staff knowledge

### Outcomes

Improving communication across generations will provide Human Resources managers and business leaders the tools they will need to improve intergenerational communication. The program is created to be easily implemented into current HR policies. Throughout the duration of the program, the courses are designed to facilitate effective communication skills and learning of generational differences. Organizations will learn how to tailor communication style to a more effective-targeted approach, gaining insight on how major world events influence the thinking and behaviors of different generations, understand that workplace diversity do exist, while creating a more inclusive workforce with multi-generations.

### Program Plan and Implementation

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#### Tasks

The following list below explains in detail all task to be completed for each phase of the program. As you will notice in Table 1 – the program timeline is set up in four (4) phases, modeling the program chart.

Phase one of the program is the initiation phase, whereby the objectives, scope, purpose, and deliverables are produced with the organization. In this phase, a program coordinator is appointed to disseminate all program materials. Employees will be surveyed on their knowledge of intergenerational awareness within the workplace. Surveys will be forwarded to all employees via email, with time allocations given. The program coordinator will then submit program plan and schedule to the organization executives for review and approval. Lastly, the program coordinator will also gather all workshop materials before implementing workshop series and schedule.

Phase two of the program is related to the development of workshops and seminars. The program coordinator will work closely with the workshop facilitator to develop all activities involved within the workshops and seminars. The workshops and seminars that are being developed in this phase includes:

- **Generational Differences Educational Seminar** (With the use of Strauss-Howe's generational theory, program participants will discuss and learn the history of generational types existing within the workplace)



- **Mentoring/Knowledge Sharing Network** (Program participants will engage in mentoring and knowledge sharing opportunities. Millennials will be paired with Baby-Boomers and/or an employee with several years of experience in a particular profession. Both parties will learn from one another, creating an intergenerational connectedness. Ex: Baby-Boomer will transfer knowledge and expertise to Millennials where Millennials will show Baby-Boomers how to operate savvy technological systems, etc.)
- **Communication Skills Workshop** (This workshop is developed to bridge the communication gap between generations where participants will learn effective interpersonal communication skills between generations. Discover and identify communication skillsets that contributes to effective teams.)

Phase three includes the initiation of program workshops and seminars. The program workshops and seminars are set-up in several series, lasting a week each. Employee's participating within the program will learn the topics related to the workshop/seminar objectives. Light lunch will be provided throughout the workshops to program participants. Towards the end of this phase, managers will be able to access online management workshops to assist in intergenerational management within the workplace.

Lastly, phase four will include program assessment and evaluations. Program participants are given a final survey to determine overall knowledge of intergenerational awareness within the workplace. Data from the survey's is used to help evaluate and measure the effectiveness of overall program. In the end, the program will be assessed to determine the use and need of program for the next fiscal year.

## Program Timeline & Gantt Chart

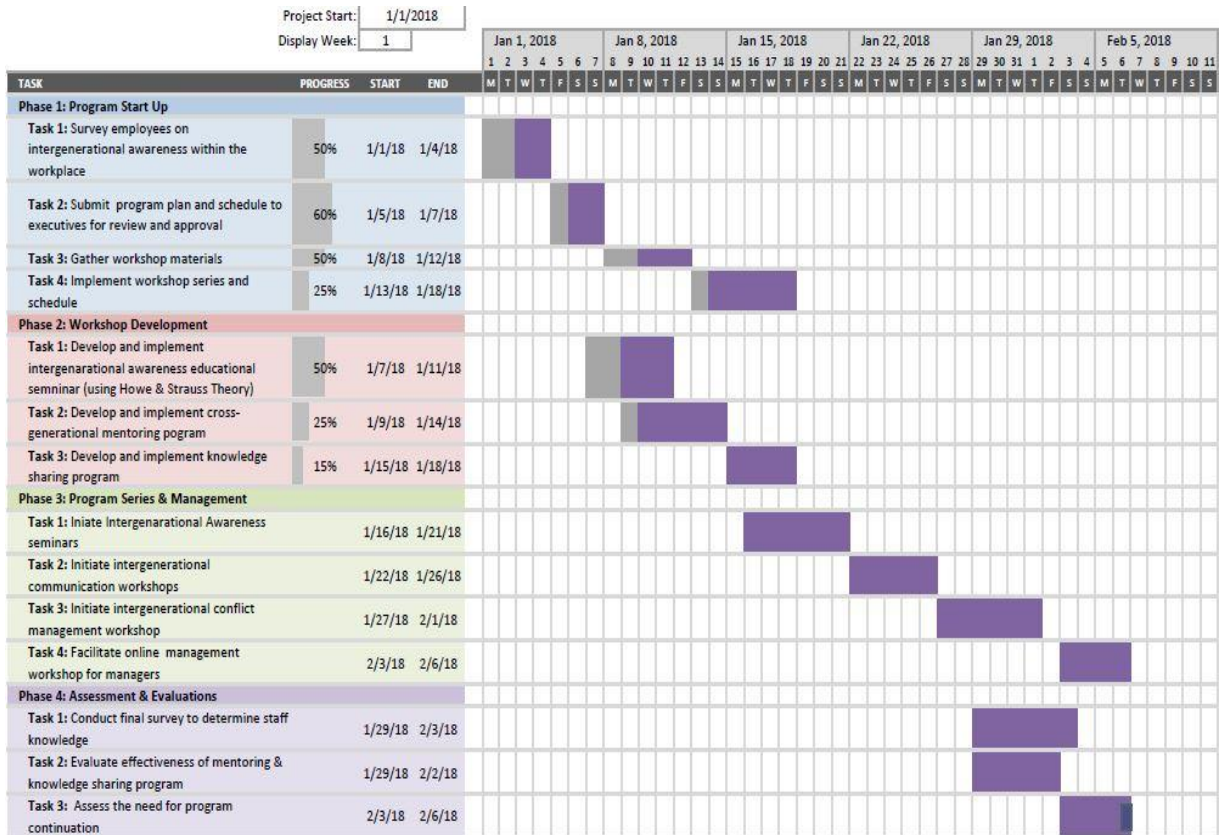


Figure 2. Workplace Communication Timeline of Events.

### Communication Outreach

The program coordinator (PC) will coordinate all communication outreach efforts to promote and advertise the program in and around the organization. The PC will post information regarding the intergenerational educational seminars, training workshops, and all other information related to the program (location of workshops, dates, and duration of program). The communication methods may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Program Flyers
- Newsletter
- Email
- Bulletin Board
- Executive/Department Meetings

### Organizational Resources

Intergenerational workplace communication program will utilize various organizational resources that are currently housed within the organization. This will allow the organization to save on costs without

the need to bring in third party vendors to facilitate and manage the program. The organizational resources plan will include the role and responsibilities for each facilitator of the program. The facilitators roles and responsibilities includes, but are not limited to the following:

- **Program Coordinator (PC):** responsible for overall implementation and maintenance of the program. PC is the first point of contact for all program related inquiries, coordinates program schedules and agendas, gather materials, and data management.
- **Workshop Facilitator:** responsible for being subject matter experts on generational differences. Prepares and distribute workshop materials to participants, present and provide information/expertise on generational differences, monitor and assess participants throughout the program.
- **HR/Department Executive:** responsible for evaluating the success of the entire program.

In additional to the facilitator roles, the program seminars and workshops are held within the organizations conference room (or designed area that allows for a big meeting space to house all employees). Within the conference room (or designed meeting area) – there are 10 round tables with 10 chairs, blending a mixture of generations at various tables throughout the seminars/workshops. The room is designed whereby the workshop facilitator can initiate program series, engaging employees to participant in all activities, with the use of slideshows and program materials.

**Knowledge and Information Sharing**

The information and data gathered throughout the duration of the program will be stored in a document management solution center (DMS) that can reduce the need for filing cabinets, boxes, and storage bins. Through the DMS department managers and workshop facilitators will be able to share information through a secured network. The DMS will allow all shareholders to retrieve and share various information in relation to the program (presentation and workshop materials, quick reference guides on program goals and objective, conflict management tips, and any other helpful tools).

**Budget**

Table 1. Budget: Proposed.

| Intergenerational Workplace Communication |                                         |          |       |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|----------|-------|
| Proposed Program Budget                   |                                         |          |       |
| January 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2018            | Program Duration: 01/01/2018 – 02/28/18 |          |       |
| Category and Description                  | Unit Cost                               | Quantity | Total |
|                                           |                                         |          |       |

**INTERGENERATIONAL WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION**

|           |                                                  |            |                               |                     |
|-----------|--------------------------------------------------|------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>1.</b> | <b><u>Personnel &amp; Org. Resources</u></b>     |            |                               |                     |
|           | Workshop Facilitator Adjusted Salary             | \$30/hr    | 8hrs/6 days                   | \$1,440.00          |
|           | Program Coordinator Adjusted Salary              | \$25/hr    | 8hrs/6days                    | \$1,200.00          |
|           | <b>Personnel &amp; Org. Resources Sub Total:</b> |            |                               | <b>\$2,640.00</b>   |
| <b>2.</b> | <b><u>Equipment &amp; Supplies</u></b>           |            |                               |                     |
|           | Folders (10ct)                                   | \$10.00    | 5                             | \$50.00             |
|           | Pens (25ct)                                      | \$5.00     | 2                             | \$10.00             |
|           | Paper (50 sheets)                                | \$8.00     | 10                            | \$80.00             |
|           | Tables (company owned)                           | \$0.00     | 10                            | \$0.00              |
|           | Chairs (company owned)                           | \$0.00     | 50                            | \$0.00              |
|           | Intergenerational Educational Materials          | \$40.00    | 50                            | \$2,000.00          |
|           | <b>Equip. &amp; Supplies Sub-Total:</b>          |            |                               | <b>\$2,140.00</b>   |
| <b>3.</b> | <b><u>Promotional Materials</u></b>              |            |                               |                     |
|           | Posters/flyers/signs                             | \$20.00    | 20                            | \$400.00            |
|           | Printing and copying                             | \$ -       | 0                             | \$0.00              |
|           | <b>Promotional Materials Sub-Total:</b>          |            |                               | <b>\$400</b>        |
| <b>4.</b> | <b><u>Miscellaneous</u></b>                      |            |                               |                     |
|           | Staff Lunch                                      | \$ 15.00   | 50/6days                      | \$4,500.00          |
|           | In-kind expenses                                 | \$ 500.00  |                               | \$500.00            |
|           | Survey Poll Daddy Premium                        | \$200/Year | 1                             | \$200.00            |
|           | <b>Misc. Sub-Total:</b>                          |            |                               | <b>\$5,200.00</b>   |
|           |                                                  |            |                               |                     |
|           |                                                  |            | <b><u>PROGRAM TOTALS:</u></b> | <b>\$ 10,380.00</b> |

**Budget Justification**

The outlined budget accounts for all expenses brought on by the program to the organization. All funds are requested to facilitate and execute program goals and objectives. The workshop facilitator will provide oversight of program, including program management, implementation and evaluation. The program coordinator is responsible for program activities, including materials, presentation, data collection, and dissemination. Both will receive salary adjustments throughout the duration of the program to compensate for program maintenance.

The supplies are administered to the program participants to assist with note taking throughout the program workshops and seminars. To help cut down on organizational cost, the program will utilize their own equipment (tables and chairs) to set-up all workshops and seminars layout. Intergenerational educational materials will be distributed throughout the workshop and seminar sessions. Participants can take the educational materials home to further develop their knowledge of generational differences within the workplace. The promotional materials will be posted in various areas within the organization to bring awareness of program to all employees. Staff will be provided lunch throughout the entire duration of the program. In-kind expenses are calculated for the use of light refreshments to program participants. Lastly, Poll Daddy will be used to uncover organization's awareness of intergenerational differences and data will be used to assess program overall success.

### **Assessment and Evaluation**

The assessment and evaluation process will hold numerous advantages in measuring the success and failures of the overall program. There were two goals with two objectives per goal within the program. Goal one focused on increasing intergenerational awareness within the workforce and age diversity. Goal two focused on promoting communication and conflict strategies to improve intergenerational communication and differences. Educational seminars and training workshops will be assessed with the use of questionnaires before and after implementing the program. The questionnaires are designed to seek intergenerational awareness levels of the participants attending the seminars and workshops. Participants of the program will be asked what they liked or didn't like about the various topics discussed throughout the workshops/seminars. The data collected from the completed assessments of the participant's knowledge and attitudes of intergenerational differences will determine how effective the overall program has been in meeting the goals and objectives.

Another way the program will be evaluated is through observation. The purposed of observation is to gather accurate information about how well the program is operating and to assess program processes. With the help of the workshop facilitator, the program coordinator will assess operations of the program as they are actually occurring. Paying close attention to participants attitudes and feelings throughout the program will help facilitators know what is working and what is not. There will also be a series of interviews with program participants. The interviews will help get further feedback of the overall success of the program. The PC will then share and review program findings with executives and department managers to determine the use of program in reducing intergenerational differences or increasing intergenerational harmony. If data proves the program to

be effective, the program will be facilitated in other organizations and agencies providing necessary tools and equipment needed to reduce intergenerational differences in and around the workplace.

### **Sustainability**

Awareness. Awareness. Awareness. The program will sustain by continuing to bring awareness on intergenerational differences and providing management the necessary tools to managing intergenerational conflict as they arise. The main goal of the program is to create intergenerational harmony within the workplace. To assure that intergenerational harmony continues to exist after initiation phase, the program will offer mentoring and knowledge sharing networking opportunities on a yearly basis.

There will also be sources of financial sustainability to ensure the success of the program in future years with the use of online fundraising and grants from local government agencies. Online fundraising will allow us to reach a wide audience and individuals who will fund the project according to their interests. A grant manager will be assigned to apply for all grants to help increase the overall effectiveness and program improvement.

As stated in the assessment and evaluations, the program will seek to get involvement of local federal and governmental agencies to ensure improved access to governmental initiatives. This will be done by publishing the success of overall program, keeping the media informed of events involving the program to improve publicity. Most governmental agencies are permanent and enduring, this will help the program in sustaining the project activities beyond the project duration.

### **Summary**

As a result of multiple generations existing within the workplace today, you can imagine how difficult it can be to manage or retain all employees. Continuity in management and supervisory practices are important for success in supporting multiple generations (Yang & Guy, 2006). The purpose of this program was to help organizations build that gap between the various groups and help find a common ground in creating intergenerational harmony. Millennials enter the workforce, bringing with them different perspectives and expectations. While on the other hand, baby-boomers and more seasoned employees, oftentimes find it difficult to understand the Millennial generation which brings rise to generational conflict. Implementing a way where all employees are aware of the generational differences and offering opportunities to learn from one another will help negate intergenerational differences within the workplace.

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