



Help your employees find balance

7 Simple Tips: How to balance and blend a multigenerational workplace

Four generations of employees working side-by-side is the new normal in most offices. Bridging the divide can pose a unique challenge. By recognizing the skills and contributions of each generation – and understanding their motivation – you can help close the age gap and promote a healthy, balanced workplace.

Who are they?

- > **Traditionalists, born pre-1946:** continue to work for the social benefits or to supplement their retirement.
- > **Baby Boomers, born 1946 to 1964:** highly competitive and continue to push off retirement.
- > **Gen X, born 1965 to 1980:** independent generation caught between Boomers and Gen Y.
- > **Gen Y, born 1980 to 2000:** highly collaborative and approach work with innovative ideas.

Keeping everyone happy can greatly improve an organization's culture, efficiency and bottom line. The goal is to ensure that new talent adapts and respects seniority and experience, while established talent adjusts and remains flexible. Here's how to challenge your employees to rise above generational differences, think outside their comfort zone and tackle problems together.

1. Bridge the gap

Encourage each group to talk about generational differences and clarify what's unknown or misunderstood. You can create awareness and understanding by offering a training course for employees, bringing in a guest speaker or attending a team building event, so people can learn how to better work together.

2. Change your approach

The intricacies of what we say, how we say it and what our choices say about us can be complex. Adjusting your communication style to accommodate preferences can improve efficiency and keep employees focused. Younger employees predominately use text to communicate and may regard a phone call as disruptive. Older generations, who typically write with more formality, may feel email is more arduous than a phone call.



3. Provide the right incentive

Maintaining balance and parity can build a culture of high performance. Gen X, with more family obligations, may benefit from flexible hours. Boomers might want to telecommute, so they can spend more time at home. Working offsite is an opportunity Gen Y might seize. Getting the best results is more important than how they're achieved.

4. Keep them motivated

Employee engagement may be different among generational cohorts, but finding out what employees are interested in and supporting their goals helps create a stronger organizational culture. Find out the learning styles of your employees and keep them engaged with training and educational opportunities. Boomers may favour more traditional training methods like PowerPoint presentations and handbooks, while Gen X and Gen Y will gravitate towards more interactive, technology-based programs.

5. Get creative

There's no wrong way to deliver what works best for your team while ensuring everyone has an equal voice. Gen X and Y dislike the formality of regular meetings, if there isn't anything new to discuss. Consider ditching the standing meeting and get together only when necessary. An open floor plan can also be a catalyst for collaboration and information sharing.

6. Collaborate and mentor

Inter-generational relationships created by mixing teams for projects can produce encouraging and unexpected results. All generations can learn from each other; these mutually beneficial relationships can go a long way towards keeping employees focused on the same strategic goals and creating an age-neutral workplace.

7. Invest in your employees

Understanding the unique motivations and skills of a multi-generational work force will benefit you in ensuring that you're leveraging your employees' combined potential. By paying close attention to the differences of each generation, you can help them work together more effectively and achieve a healthy, balanced workplace. Happy employees are productive employees.

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