Ohio National Guard

When called, we respond with ready units.

Generations in the Workplace

MODULE 4
NATIONAL GUARD TECHNICIAN PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT COURSE
Generations in the Workplace

What we will discuss today

• The different generations in the workplace today.

• Identify strategies and practical tools to break down barriers and work more effectively with members of other generations.
Generations in the Workplace

As a leader, you must ensure mission success and:

• Recognize and embrace the generations in your workplace

• Understand the strengths, weaknesses and job-related needs of each generation

• Examine how the culture of your organization affects the ability of the generations to work together
Why Should I Care?

• Different people / generations have different needs

• Working with people requires an understanding of others’ values and traits

• By understanding these differences, individuals have a better chance of understanding each other

• The more you understand someone, the better you can work with and manage people = mission success.
The Generations

Veterans: Born Before 1943

Baby Boomers: 1943-1964

Generation X: 1965-1980

Veterans . . .

...On Money
• Save, save, save
• Buy a first home
• Pay in cash
• Join the Christmas Club
• Use lay-away

...On Authority
• Embraces it
• Likes law and order
• Functions best in structure

...Their Work Ethic
• Work and sacrifice
• Pride and dedication
• Job for life

...About Self
• Family-oriented
• Conservative
• Prepare for unknown
Veterans

• Defining Moments
  – Television
  – Korean War
  – I Like Ike!
  – End of the Depression
  – WWII
  – Home ownership
  – Truman fires MacArthur

• Popular Culture
  – Hoola Hoops
  – Ozzie and Harriet
  – Your Show of Shows
  – Poodle skirts
  – Personal cars
  – Drive In Movies
Baby Boomers...

...On Money
- Reacted to frugal parents
- Spend now, pay later
- Have plastic and don’t leave home without it

...Their Work Ethic
- Live to work
- You are what you do
- Worth ethic = work ethic

...On Authority
- Question it

...About Self
- Generation of soul searchers
- Self-gratification important
- Self-help to get things done
Baby Boomers

• Defining Moments
  – Assassinations of JFK, MLK
  – Vietnam
  – Rosa Parks
  – 1968 Democratic National Convention
  – Kent State
  – Forced integration at the University of Alabama

• Popular Culture
  – The Beatles
  – Motown
  – Laugh In
  – Catch 22
  – Olympics
Generation X...

...On Independence
- Were latchkey kids, the children of workaholic Baby Boomers
- Had to become self-reliant, independent

...About Work
- Work to live better
- Balance family and work
- Don’t believe you CAN have it all

...On Family
- Parents believed in “quality time” but questioned their concept
- Many came from homes of divorced parents or two working parents

...About Authority
- Unimpressed by it
- Not against it, just indifferent
- Saw too many “role models” fall off the pedestals
Generation X

• Defining Moments
  – The Challenger Explosion
  – Berlin Wall falling
  – Gulf War
  – War on Drugs
  – President Reagan shot
  – Anwar Sadat assassinated
  – U.S. boycott of Olympics in Russia
  – Hostages held in Iran

• Popular Culture
  – Cable TV
  – Video Games
  – Sesame Street
  – Muppets
  – Michael Jackson
  – Star Wars Trilogy
  – E.T.
Millennials...

...On Family
- Had over-involved parents
- Were the “babies on board”

...On Life
- Confident and hopeful
- A new demographic: Baby Gap, Pottery Barn-Kids
- Busy kids, highly scheduled (soccer, T-ball, karate)

...Their Values
- Closest to those of Veterans
- Accountability
- Embrace diversity and community service

...With Technology
- The digital generation
- Plugged in, logged on, wirelessly connected
- Cyber pals all over the world
Millennials

• Defining Moments
  – Oklahoma City Bombing
  – Shootings at Columbine
  – The Clinton/Lewinsky Scandal
  – 9-11

• Popular Culture
  – Disney afternoon shows
  – X games
  – Rap
  – Brittany Spears
  – Reality TV
# Character Traits

## Veterans
- In it for the long haul
- Company comes first
- Direct—take charge—look for results
- Works hard and expects others too
- Wary and untrusting of technology
- 10% college degrees

## Baby Boomers
- Loyalty to company is critical and often comes before self and family
- Keep proving themselves
- Live to work, expects others to
- Consensus and harmony
- 18% college degrees

## Generation X
- Balance work and personal life
- Self-preservation and self-loyalty
- Informal at work, humor, bored if not challenged
- Asks “why” and needs answers
- Seen by others as whiners, and think their entitled
- 22% college degrees

## Millennials
- Multitask, bored with repetition
- Value diversity and inclusion
- Open minded—not set in their ways
- Constantly improving their skill set to advance career
- See themselves as short-term workers providing a service
- 10% college degrees... *so far...*
Chain of Command / Work Ethic

**Veterans**
- Comfortable and prefer rank structure
- Respect authority
- Clear lines of who’s in-charge and subordinates
- Dedicated and dependable
- Won’t rock the boat and will get the job done without questions
- Inclusion: Diversity is new to them = grew up with segregation

**Generation X**
- Hierarchy and rank structure is meaningless to them
- Task oriented
- Need balance of duties
- Need to leave at scheduled time
- Inclusion: Tolerant

**Baby Boomers**
- Love-hate relationship with rank
- Pay your dues but question authority
- Driven, workaholics
- Go above and beyond to make it and will work over on their time
- Inclusion: Equality and Fairness

**Millennials**
- Determined, while unimpressed by rank, age, tenure, accomplishments
- Don’t respect those who are know-it-alls
- Show them knowledge and expertise and ask them how to apply theirs – and they will give you respect
- Work best if they have a say in how things are done and can use their creativity
- Inclusion: I’m OK - You’re OK
Strategies and Tools to Break Down Barriers

Veterans
- Acknowledge their experience.
- Use proper grammar.
- Link your message to organization history.
- Remember – they are dependable.

Baby Boomers
- Acknowledge their work ethic.
- Take time to build rapport.
- Link your message to organization vision and values.
- Remember – they are driven.

Generation X
- Acknowledge their time is valuable.
- Lighten up and get to the point.
- Link your message to the organization and what's in it for them.
- Remember – they want fun and flexibility.

Millennials
- Acknowledge their fresh perspective is valuable.
- Want respect? Then show it to them first.
- Link your message to the positives of the them first, and then the organization.
- Remember – they want a say in how things can get done and doing things better.
Strategies and Tools to Break Down Barriers

**Bridging the Gap**

- **Focus on goals**
  People can easily lose sight of objectives. Leaders must help resolve problems without dampening enthusiasm or criticizing opinions.

- **Create an environment where everyone feels included**
  Keep an open mind. Encourage generations to mentor the other.

- **Break the bonds of tradition**
  Expect resistance when changing the status quo. Older employees may proceed with caution, while younger ones will move ahead without worrying about the risks.

(Adapted from www.generations.com/bp/media_kit/clashpoints.pdf)
Strategies and Tools to Break Down Barriers

**Bridging the Gap**

- **Invest in the future**
  Force Development for everyone—not just the top 10%. Keep up with technology. Share with everyone where things are going, and how they fit in, and how everyone needs to prepare.

- **People notice the little things**
  Good people leave bad bosses.

- **Build it, and they will come, and want to stay**
  Employees of each generation place a high value on balancing their work with their personal life. Be engaged with your people.

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QUESTIONS ??? COMMENTS ???