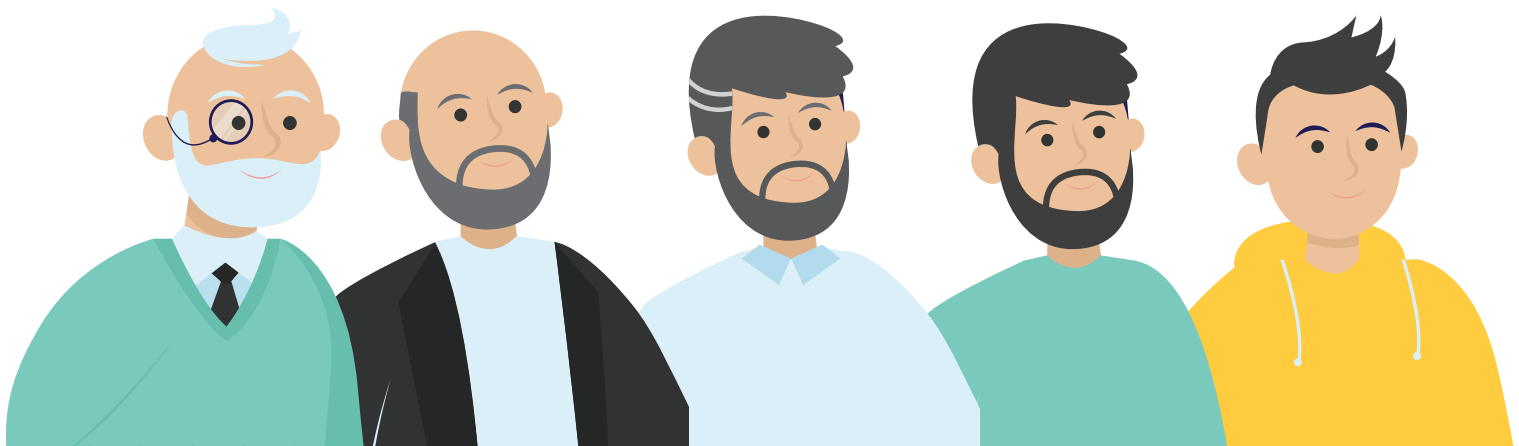zen**HR**

Everything you need to know about

MANAGING A MULTIGENERATIONAL WORKFORCE

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT MANAGING A MULTIGENERATIONAL WORKFORCE

One of the biggest challenges that companies are facing today involves managing a multigenerational workforce in which five different generations are working alongside each other, each at different life and career stages, with different preferences, expectations, work styles, and needs.

For the first time in history, the workforce now is comprised of 5 generations working side by side:

1. Traditionalists (Silents)
2. Baby Boomers
3. Generation X
4. Generation Y (Millennials)
5. Generation Z

Managing this multigenerational workforce is challenging for companies and requires paying close attention to the differences between these generations and the best practices to deal with each one of them. However, leveraging skills of each generation can add great value to the organization's bottom line.

UNDERSTANDING THE 5 GENERATIONS OF TODAY'S WORKFORCE

TRADITIONALISTS (SILENTS)

1925 – 1945

- Loyal
- Dedicated
- Straightforward

Top priority at work

"Live to work" mentality

BABY BOOMERS

1946 – 1964

- Workaholics
- Goal-oriented
- Self-disciplined

Top priority at work

Financial stability & retirement plans

GENERATION X

1965 - 1980

- Independent
- Adaptive to change
- Collaborative

Top priority at work

Work-life balance

MILLENNIALS

1981 – 1994

- Competitive
- Achievement-oriented
- Ambitious

Top priority at work

Career Growth

GENERATION Z

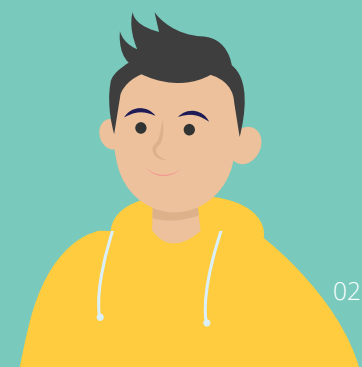**1995 - 2020**

- Entrepreneurial
- Tech-Savvy
- Progressive

Top priority at work

Learning with purpose

GENERATION Z

Generation Z was born between 1995 and 2020 and is the youngest generation to enter the workforce, they have grown up in a diverse environment that is full of political turbulence and violence. The internet was there when they were born, so they have never known a world without it.

Gen Z Characteristics

· Entrepreneurial
· Tech-savvy
· Progressive

How to attract and retain Gen Z employees?

Companies that are good at showing their positive impact on society and the world will have a major selling point for Gen Z when it comes to choosing a company to work for. Highlighting things such as CSR and volunteer initiatives and a commitment to diversity, transparency, and equal pay can make your company an employer of choice for Gen Z.

What Gen Z value the most in their jobs?

After watching their parents deal with the effects of the 2007–2008 financial crisis, job security is a priority for Generation Z. Another top priority for this generation is workplace flexibility. They value diversity, face-to-face communications, and they prefer to be independent and self-directed.

Statistics About Generation Z at the Workplace

93%
of Generation Z
said that a company's impact on society affects their decision to work there.

77%
of Generation Z
said that a company's level of diversity affects their decision to work there.

84%
of Generation Z
prefer communicating face-to-face with their boss.

91%
of Generation Z
said technological sophistication would impact their interest in working at a company.

MILLENNIALS

Millennials were born between 1981 and 1994 and represents the largest percentage of today's workforce. The digital revolution happened when Millennials were still in high school and college, and not in their formative years as it was the case with Generation Z.

Millennials Characteristics

· Competitive
· Achievement-oriented
· Ambitious

How to attract and retain millennial employees?

Millennials expect a tech-driven recruitment experience, which means a mobile-optimized application process. They tend to research the social media presence of a company to assess its culture. They also value clear career paths and opportunities for career growth and development.

What Millennials value the most in their jobs?

Millennials want to work in a company where they clearly understand how their work will help achieve the company's mission and bigger goals. They want to have a good work-life balance, and they want to be judged for the quality of their work, not for their working hours in the office.

Statistics About Millennials at the Workplace

75%
of the global workforce is to be made up of millennials by 2025.

44%
of Millennials
would be more likely to increase their work engagement if their managers met with them regularly.

GENERATION X

Generation X was born between 1965 and 1980. This generation is a hybrid of the more traditional Baby Boomers and the more technically proficient Millennials. They are known to be self-reliant and pragmatic.

Generation X Characteristics

- Independent
- Adaptive to change
- Collaborative

How to attract and retain Generation X employees?

Gen X is comfortable using technology and online recruitment and hiring tools, but they're more comfortable with face-to-face interactions.

What Gen X values the most in their jobs?

Gen X values freedom, responsibility, and autonomy. They prefer less supervision and greater autonomy at work. Members of this generation probably have families and kids, that's why they value things like health insurance, on-site childcare, and other perks that support a healthy work-life balance.

BABY BOOMERS

Baby Boomers were born after World War II, they have been known for their hardworking, strong work ethic, self-disciple, and optimism. They are workaholics and want to be appreciated for their skills. They prefer face-to-face interactions at work.

Baby Boomers Characteristics

· Workaholics
· Self-disciplined
· Goal-oriented

How to attract and retain Baby Boomers?

They are more comfortable with traditional recruitment processes that include creating formal resumes and face-to-face interviews, they also prefer the traditional methods of job search such as newspaper advertisements, word of mouth, and referrals. The best way to retain employees of this generation is by rewarding them for their achievements in public ceremonies.

What Baby Boomers value the most in their jobs?

Baby boomers want a stable job with a formal and structured work environment. Healthcare benefits and retirement plans are highly desirable for them.

TRADITIONALISTS / SLIENTS

Traditionalists were born between 1925 and 1945, and they are the oldest generation in today's workforce. They are hard workers with strong core values.

Traditionalists Characteristics

· Loyal
· Dedicated
· Straightforward

What Traditionalists value the most in their jobs?

Providing offline and non-tech options to complete tasks can help create a positive work environment for older employees. Similar to Baby-Boomers, they value personal interactions and can be effective when given the opportunity to meet face-to-face.

CHALLENGES OF MANAGING A MULTIGENERATIONAL WORKFORCE

While age diversity may bring many benefits to the workplace, but it also comes with several challenges. So what are the top challenges associated with a multigenerational workforce? And how can companies overcome these challenges?

1. Negative Stereotypes

"Old employees lack innovation and creativity, and they are hard to work with", or "Today's young employees of Gen Z are never committed to their jobs". Does this sound familiar? Unfortunately, yes. Generational stereotypes are common in the workplace, and they are caused by a lack of understanding of other generations. The optimal way to overcome those stereotypes is by encouraging collaboration between team members of different generations, so they get to understand each other and respect each other's knowledge and expertise.

2. Different Work Styles

Different generations prefer different work styles, for example, baby boomers might be happy with spending long working hours at the office, while Millennials and Gen Z prefer flexible working hours and remote work options. Giving employees a certain degree of autonomy to choose their preferred style of work can help companies overcome this challenge.

3. Communication

While traditional communication tools such as emails and phone calls might be preferable for traditionalists and baby boomers, online chat tools and instant messages might be better options for younger generations. To avoid any inconveniences here, it's best to communicate with employees using the medium they prefer. If your organization has different communication channels, you should be clear about how each channel should be used.

4. Cultural Expectations

Organizations today need to build a culture that keeps up with the emerging technologies and new trends, especially that this is an essential requirement for employees of the younger generations; however, this direction might be viewed as a threat for older employees who have more traditional working styles. A good way to approach this issue is to allow employees to work in the style that they are comfortable with, and appreciate the efforts of each team member regardless of their work styles.

THE BEST STRATEGIES TO MANAGE A MULTIGENERATIONAL WORKFORCE

UNDERSTAND YOUR WORKFORCE

Familiarize yourself with the key differences between the generations you manage and try to understand the individual preferences of your team members. This understanding can be a strong starting point for building a healthy multigenerational workplace.
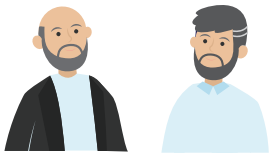
ENABLE CROSS-GENERATIONAL MENTORING

Create a mentoring program where employees from all generations can share their knowledge and experiences with their colleagues so that all generations can learn from each other.

AVOID STEREOTYPES

Remember that multigenerational teams that consist of professionals with fresh minds combined with those who possess great long experiences can bring great value to your organization, so make sure that you are aware of the common stereotypes linked with multigenerational teams.

ENCOURAGE COLLABORATIVE WORKING

Create a collaborative mindset at work, where different generations see each other as partners rather than subjects of a rigid hierarchical system, so they can all benefit from fresh and innovative ideas coupled with experience and wisdom.
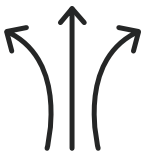
BE FLEXIBLE

You have to be flexible and able to accommodate the different needs and preferences of your different generations. Make sure to give all of your generations an equal voice to say what they need.

USE DIFFERENT COMMUNICATION APPROACHES

Utilize the many available communication tools, both tech-savvy and traditional, to meet the different needs of your different generations.

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sales@zenhr.com

Jordan +962 6 577 7500
KSA +966 54 259 6566
UAE +971 50 804 0218

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