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MOSAIC

Messages of Openness,
Shared Awareness,
Inclusion & Connection

Different Generations and Perspectives, One Workforce

All Perspectives are Valuable and Understanding is Critical to Effective Leadership

In September, HRLA presented **Generation Next: Leading Across Generations**, led by moderator Linda Ferraro, Principal of Valency Consulting. In it, we brought panelists together from several generations to discuss perspectives, expectations, needs, and experiences from those representing each of the generations in our workforce today. Our goal was to open up a dialogue to create understanding, overcome misconceptions, and give leaders an opportunity to learn from and understand generational perspectives, and how best to communicate, motivate, teach, and empower those who are the future of our businesses along side those who have built our foundations. We are excited to share with you in this issue, some insights, and key takeaways each panelist shared.

Standing Powerfully at Middle Ground

Amanda Spada, Associate Director, Business Connections Learning Community at UCONN shares:

Millennials bring a unique middle-ground perspective, having experienced the workplace both before and after the rapid evolution of technology. We are comfortable leveraging technology while still valuing in-person relationships, allowing us to bridge communication gaps and adapt to different working styles. Entering the workforce during a period of economic uncertainty also shaped our appreciation for stability, commitment, and teamwork, while recognition and opportunities for growth help reinforce loyalty.

We value transparency, clear expectations, defined career pathways, and regular feedback - all in an effort to build trust and support professional development. Additionally, work-life balance, psychological safety, and supportive workplace cultures are essential to fostering engagement, well-being, and long-term success.

All Perspectives Matter

Avery Raber, Manager of Recruitment and Retention at UCFS Healthcare points out:

As new graduates and a new generation are entering the workforce across entry-level all the way up to leadership-level roles, it is important to recognize that all perspectives matter. A factor that can be easily lost within a multigenerational workforce, is that someone fresh in the field and someone with a wealth of experience both possess great concepts, knowledge, and ideas that should be encouraged and are worth listening to. Just as there is a blend of various types of people within the workforce, it is vital to allow for and listen to a blend of those same individuals' outlooks in the work that that they accomplish as a team today.

Learning Styles Vary. Leave Room for What Works

Anne Peabody Brostek, Human Resources Manager at RRD offers some advice:

In an organization with many generations, I recommend that good communication involves accepting how each employee approaches learning. Some people are more visual (show me), others want to know the 'why' behind each step, and others might suggest, "Why can't I perform it another way?"

Managers and supervisors need to explain that when a senior employee shares knowledge, they shouldn't assume their opinion is the only method that works. The senior employee might share why they feel they have been successful in their job versus telling a newer employee what they should do. In organizations where there are standard operating procedures (usually for quality or customer requirement reasons), these standards should be explained fully.



Diverse Teams Lead to the Best Outcomes

Arnetia Green, Director of Human Resources and Risk Management, Town of Groton recommends:

Being a Xennial allows me to draw the best from "both worlds". Diverse teams lead to the best outcomes – and generational diversity is no different. Understanding the many approaches to recognition, tech, communication, and problem solving can help us recognize how to best connect within and across teams.

Working in local government, we must be especially aware of staying current, competitive, engaging our team members, and attracting new ones. We work against the stereotype of public government and show care to our teammates, recognizing that purpose, respect, and providing growth opportunites are just as important as loyalty, hard work, and following the rules. My positioning between generations enables me to have conversations with more senior leaders and those newer to the workforce, bridging the gap in connection and embracing what is "different". Demonstrating understanding, flexibility, openness, and embracing various types of communication styles is a great place to start. It can show that you and your team are flexible and accept that what is valued can shift over time, and that is ok. (Look up healthy college wellness "darties" if you don't believe me!)

Consider your workplace – what is similar, and different, across members of the team when it comes to communication preferences, desired methods of recognition, perspectives on work and flexibility, technology, career mobility and loyalty, values, cultures, and purpose? Does your organization actively respect and manage any differences? How is the team affected? We touched on some of these topics at the event, recognizing the need to sit, talk, and truly listen to each other is the first step in creating mutual respect and understanding. Let's model that and bring it into the workplace!

We ALL Play an Important Role

As we look at the roles that each of us play in our workplaces, it's easy to put people from different generations into stereotypical "roles". The "newbies" who have so much to learn (and so who are they to tell US anything?), the seasoned employees who are "stuck in their ways", and not willing to listen to new ideas, or those in the "generational middle" who often see criticism from all sides. But the message here is clear: there's no place for boxes in organizations. Get rid of them!

We have an incredible opportunity right in front of us to embrace the knowledge that comes from life experiences, new realms of education and technology, and everything in between. Get excited for the energy, enthusiasm and wide-eyed excitement of those who are just starting out, side-by-side with the eyes-wide-open approach of those who have been through and seen it all. We ALL have an important part to play.

And let's not forget - we have all either been a newbie, or a mid, or will become seasoned. Remember what it felt like, what we needed and how our roles have changed, and will continue to as we grow in our careers and lives. We can lean on each other, learn from each other, grow with each other and support each other as we work toward our one common goal: the future of our businesses, our world, and our lives.

We have what it takes - and working together, we can accomplish incredible things!

Looking For Resources?

We respect that one person does not represent an entire generation, however these articles from the Center for Creative Leadership and SHRM are a great starting place for actionable strategies and approaches that apply to everyone.

Leading Across Generations

Guide to Leading a Multigenerational Workforce

Want More?

If you are interested in a Part II for a deeper dive into the topic of Generational Leadership, click here to let us know!



Look for more from the HRLA Diversity Team in **2027!**