

Generation Gaps

Diverse and inclusive work environments are increasingly becoming part of the norm and come with great benefits but having various cultures in one work environment working harmoniously can often be challenging. Managing people successfully is difficult to get right at the best of times but add to that a workforce made up of different generations and the work environment becomes a more complex mix of experiences, viewpoints and abilities. All of which need to be recognised, valued and positively exploited.

Generation Gap Definition (Mary Whitman, author for Deputy website):

"The generation gap is the difference of outlook, opinions, beliefs, skills, attitudes, and behaviours among the older generations and the younger generations. In short, the generation gap is the age gap between each generation. While the generation gap has been prevalent throughout all periods of history, it has only grown more prevalent in recent years."

Find out what the biggest challenges when working across generations are according to Mary Whitman in her article for the *Deputy website titled, [How to Bridge the Gap in the Workplace](#).

*Deputy are a company who provide bespoke versions of their software Employee Management System to organisations globally.

You can find out more online at:

- [MindTools - How to thrive in a multi-generational workplace avoiding conflict and creating opportunity](#)
- [Harvard Business Review - Managing People from 5 Generations by Rebecca Knight](#)
- [BSCAI contractorconnections - Mind the Gap: Managing the Five Generations in the Workplace](#)

"As a new generation begins to enter the workforce, it's expected that companies could have up to five generations working side-by-side by 2020. This seems like a daunting cultural challenge if not approached with the right mindset. However, according to a leadership guide from the Wall Street Journal, "The key is to be able to effectively address and take advantage of the differences in values and expectations of each generation."

- [Training Journal - Learning and development across the generations by Steve Macaulay and Sarah Cook](#)

Sarah Cook is Managing Director of the leadership and change management specialists, [The Stairway Consultancy](#). Steve Macaulay is an Associate at [Cranfield School of Management's Centre for Customised Executive Development](#).

Or for an alternative perspective why not read the American Management Associations article - [The Myth of Generational Differences in the Workplace](#)

Additional Reading Material:

- [Bridging the Generation Gap: How to Get Radio Babies, Boomers, Gen Xers, and Gen Yers to Work Together and Achieve More](#) by Robin Throckmorton, MA, SPHR and Linda Gravett, PhD, SPHR.

- [Beyond Generation X: A Practical Guide for Managers](#) by Claire Raines

"Claire Raines is one of the nation's leading experts on generations and the author of *Twentysomething* and *Beyond Generation X*. In addition, she is a dynamic speaker and organisational consultant whose clients include McDonalds, Sprint, Mastercard, and Toyota. She lives in Denver."

- [When Generations Collide: Who They Are. Why They Clash. How to Solve the Generational Puzzle at Work](#) by Lynne C. Lancaster

Question:

Can you name 5 different generations commonly found in the workplace?

Answer:

Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y (Millennials) and Generation Z.

Sharing Knowledge:

Lack of knowledge in certain fields could breed fear between generations or lead to misinterpretations. By sharing our knowledge, we can break down barriers and create a more understanding and collaborative environment. Here are 4 easy ways to share knowledge at work:

1. **Blog** - you can set up a blog where a topic is introduced and then the team can submit their comments. Implemented correctly blogs provide a safe and open structure to hold discussions so be sure to set clear rules of how and what to share in a neutral manner (avoid any sensitive topics that could undermine sharing process)
2. **Focus Groups** - these could be a great way to resolve an issue or generate new ideas. Focus groups containing various generations would enable you to get different perspectives from your diverse work group
3. **Newsletter** - you can share knowledge by creating a newsletter where employees get to share their thoughts in an interview
4. **Suggestions** - invite suggestions so employees can submit ideas for review. These can be submitted electronically or on paper (or via both)

Here are some online guides that could be useful for you:

- [Social Media Marketing including Facebook and Twitter](#)
- [How to create a Twitter account](#)

Or if you prefer more visual guides:

- [wiki How to Make a Twitter Account](#)
- [How to build a LinkedIn profile in 2019](#)



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