

“It’s a Generational Thing”

UNDERSTANDING GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES IN THE WORKPLACE

“BRIDGING THE GENERATIONAL GAP”

Presentation to:

Ernest A. “Buddy” Mass Human Relations Conference

IAFF

January 29, 2010

Buena Vista Palace Hotel and Spa

Orlando FL

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Changes in the Workplace

“ The World is Flat” – so is the hierarchy in organizations and with it comes difficulties

Expectations of what employees bring to the workplace are also different

Changing notion of what employees expect from work

Difference in values, approaches and norms can lead to conflict – in some cases generational conflict

What Makes a Generation “Tick”

Events that had an influence (when) in their lives

**Demographics – “who and where as much as when”
has an impact on a generation**

Music

Heroes

Previous generations

Conflict in Organizations

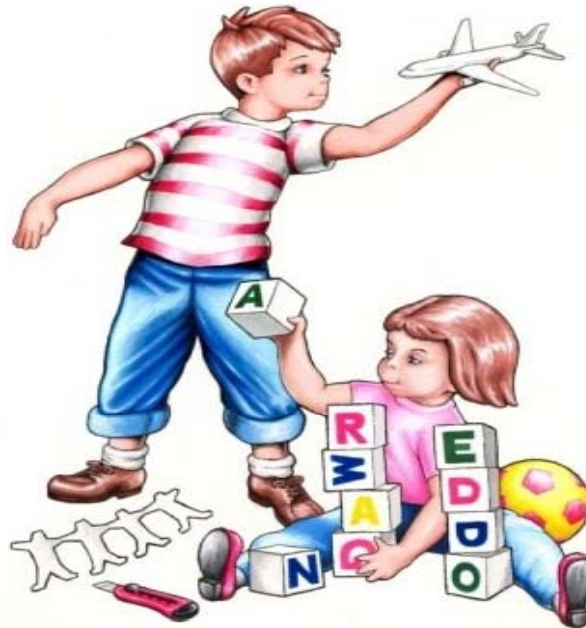
- **Many organizations are experiencing generational conflict**
- **Senior leaders have a hard time understanding, and therefore trusting, younger workers who are anxious to find their role in the organizational leadership**
- **The latter often can't understand why senior leaders believe and do what they do, and their questioning may lead to conflict**

Contrasting Values – Choices we Make

- Most of this tension results from generational differences that exist because of **contrasting values**
- We make **choices** and **decisions** based on our value system, and differing values often lead to misunderstandings and misinterpretation
- This, in turn, hampers our relationships and lessens the effectiveness of our work together

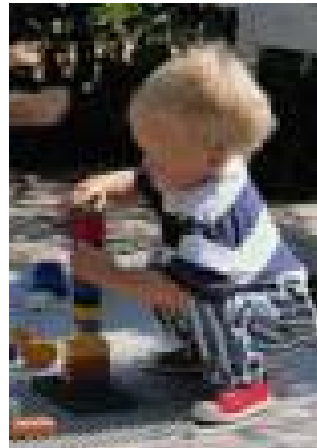
How Values Develop

According to sociologists, there are three stages of value development



The First Stage

- From Birth to about 7 years of age
- Imprinting takes place as the child absorbs all he or she is experiencing without evaluation, considering it normal



The second stage

- From ages 7 to 13
- Modeling takes place as the child looks at the around him choosing heroes, and deciding what values to embrace
- At about age 10, the most crucial value development takes place



The 3rd Stage

- From ages 14 to 20
- A time of questioning, challenging, and experimenting with new or different values, deciding which are valid and worth keeping, and which will be traded for others



Generational Trivia



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Who am I?



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Who am I?



Who are we?



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Who are We?



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Who are we?



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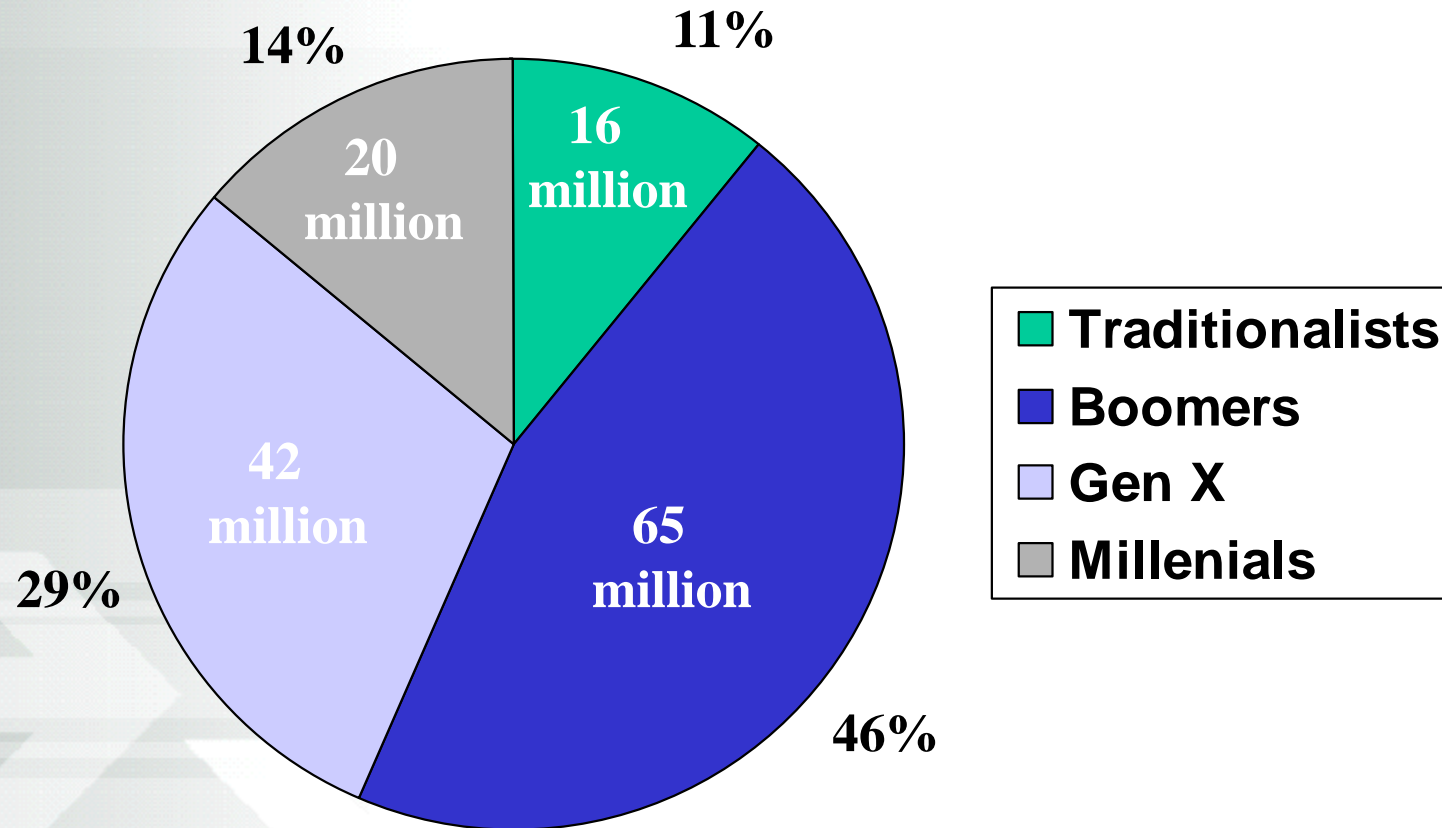
Who am I?



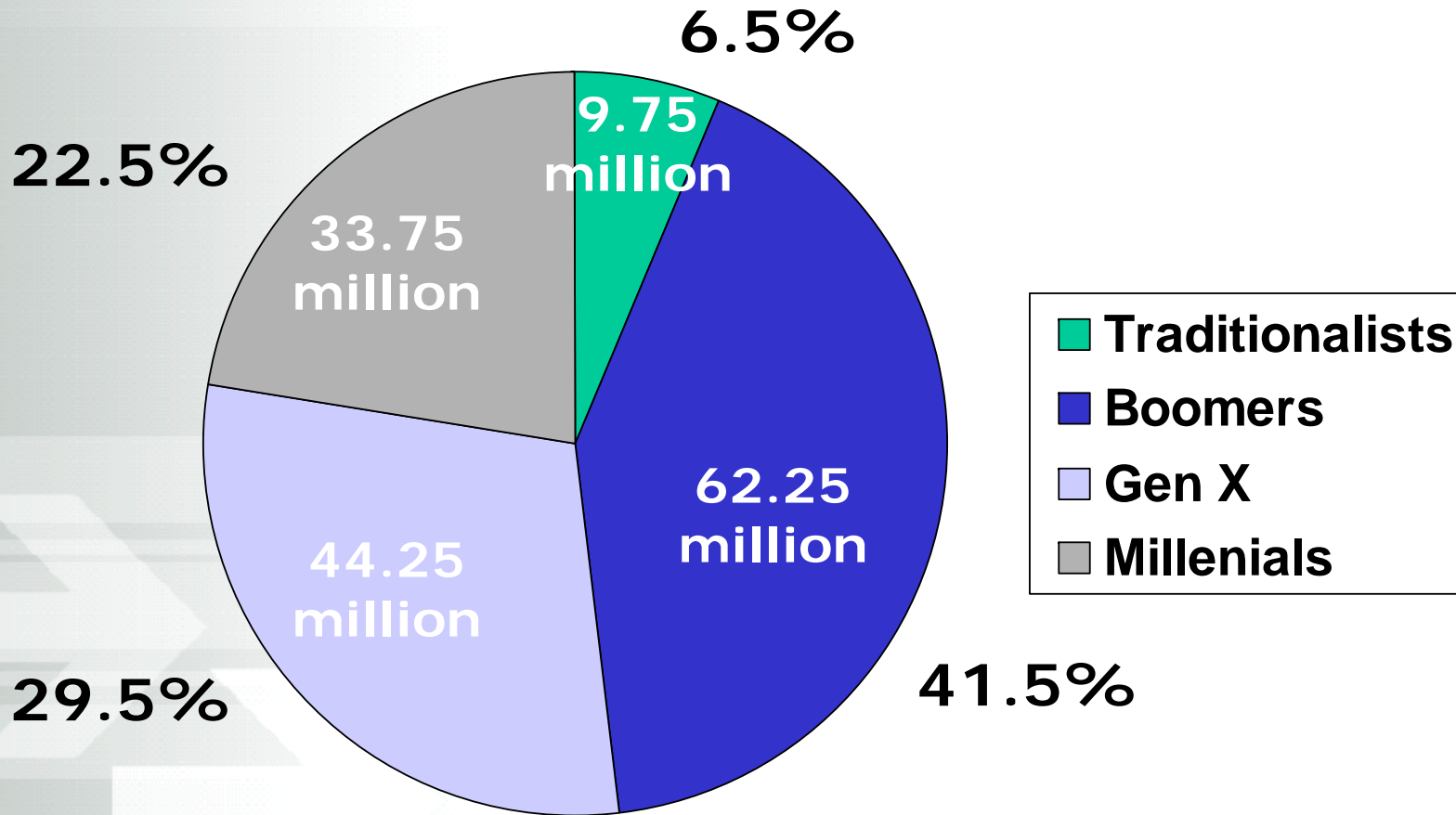
Generational Groups

- **Traditionalists (1922-1945): 75 million**
- **Baby Boomers (1946-1963): 80 million**
- **Generation X (1964-1980): 46million**
- **Millennials (1981-1995): 76 million**

US Workforce Demographics



US Workforce Demographics



You *could* be a “Cusper”

- **Born on the cusp between two generations.**
- **Identify strongly with one or the other generation.**
- **May find you share characteristics with both.**

Values & the Four Generations

	Traditionalists Born before 1946	Baby Boomers Born 1946 to 1964	Generation Xers Born 1965 to 1980	Millennials Born 1981 to 2000
<i>Outlook:</i>	Practical	Optimistic	Skeptical	Hopeful
<i>Work Ethic:</i>	Dedicated	Driven	Balanced	Ambitious
<i>View of Authority:</i>	Respectful	Love/Hate	Unimpressed	Relaxed, polite
<i>Leadership By:</i>	Hierarchy	Consensus	Competence	Collaboration
<i>Relationships:</i>	Personal sacrifice	Personal gratification	Reluctant to commit	Loyal
<i>Perspective:</i>	Civic	Team	Self	Civic
<i>Compelling Messages of Their Formative Era:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Make do or do without •Stay in line; adhere to rules •Sacrifice •Be heroic •Consider the common good 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Be anything you want to be •Change the world •Work well with others •Live up to expectations •Be competitive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Can't count on it •No real heroes •Get real •Survive - stayin' alive •Ask "Why?" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Be smart - you are special •Leave no one behind •Connect 24/7 •Achieve now •Serve your community

Changing Generational Values

HIGH SCHOOL SWEETHEARTS IN "THE BIG STEP"

LET'S GET MARRIED FIRST



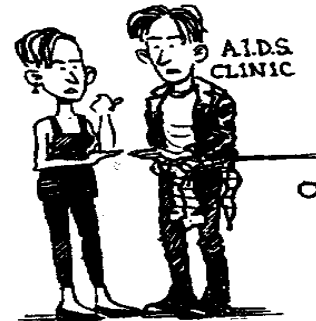
1950

LET'S GET STONED FIRST



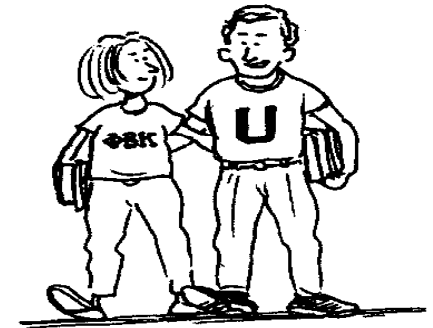
1970

LET'S GET TESTED FIRST



1990

LET'S DO NATIONAL SERVICE FIRST



2010

Traditionalists (1922 – 1945)

→ Influences:

- **Great Depression**
- **The New Deal**
- **World War II**
- **The GI Bill**
- **The Cold War**
- **Korean War**

→ Traits:

- **Patriotic**
- **Duty/Sacrifice**
- **Faith in Institutions**
- **Thriftiness**
- **Loyal**

Boomers 1946-1963

**“God knows many of them are fools
and most of them will be sellouts,
but they’re a better generation than
we are”**

Lillian Hellman

American Playwright

Boomers (1946 – 1963)

→ Influences:

- Assassinations
- Vietnam
- Watergate
- Civil Rights Movement
- Woodstock
- Women's Issues
- Space Race
- Earth Day

→ Traits:

- Competitive
- Question authority
- Long hours
- Crusading causes
- Energy and enthusiasm
- Individuality
- Optimistic

Gen-Xers 1964-1980

“It’s no wonder Xers are angst-ridden and rudderless. They feel America’s greatness has passed. They got to the cocktail party twenty minutes too late, and all that is left are those little wieners and a half-empty bottle of Zima”

**From: Dennis Miller,
*Rants***

Gen Xers (1964 – 1980)

→ Influences:

- MTV
- High Divorce Rate
- Single Parent Home
- Personal Computer
- AIDS
- Hostages
- Latch Key Kids
- Wall Street Frenzy

→ Traits:

- Resourceful
- Highly Adaptive
- Distrustful of Institutions
- Self-Reliant
- Personal Focus
- Skeptical/Cynical

“Pants on The Ground”

GÉNÉRATION



Pants on the Ground Video

→ [YouTube - Pants On The Ground American Idol](#)

Millennials (1981 – 1995)

→ Influences:

- Fall of Communism
- Internet
- Desert Storm/Fox
- Video Games
- Domestic Terrorism
- Columbine
- Credit Card Debt
- September 11th

→ Traits:

- Globally Concerned
- Technologically supreme
- Environmentally Conscious
- Multi-Task
- Realistic

Millennials 1981 - 1995

“Tech stuff is natural for me, it takes me a minute to set up a computer. It takes my parents an hour”

**Ten year old
From
Don Tapscott:
*Growing Up
Digital***

Millennials 1981-1995

“Students are encouraged to think openly and think for themselves, only after memorizing everything they are told by a teacher or made to read in a textbook. By this time, if you think for yourself, question things that don’t seem right or question things that don’t seem relevant, you go away empty handed, ridiculed for ‘not paying attention to the teacher’”

**Matthew, Age 18
From Don Tapscott
*Growing Up Digital***

Generational Differences – Words of Caution

- ❑ **Stereotyping – tends to be negative; “us vs. them” mentality; opinion or belief**
- ❑ **Valid Generalizations – Draw conclusion from many particulars; descriptors rather than value judgements; based on empirical data.**

Millennials in our Midst

Garrison Wynn on Millennials

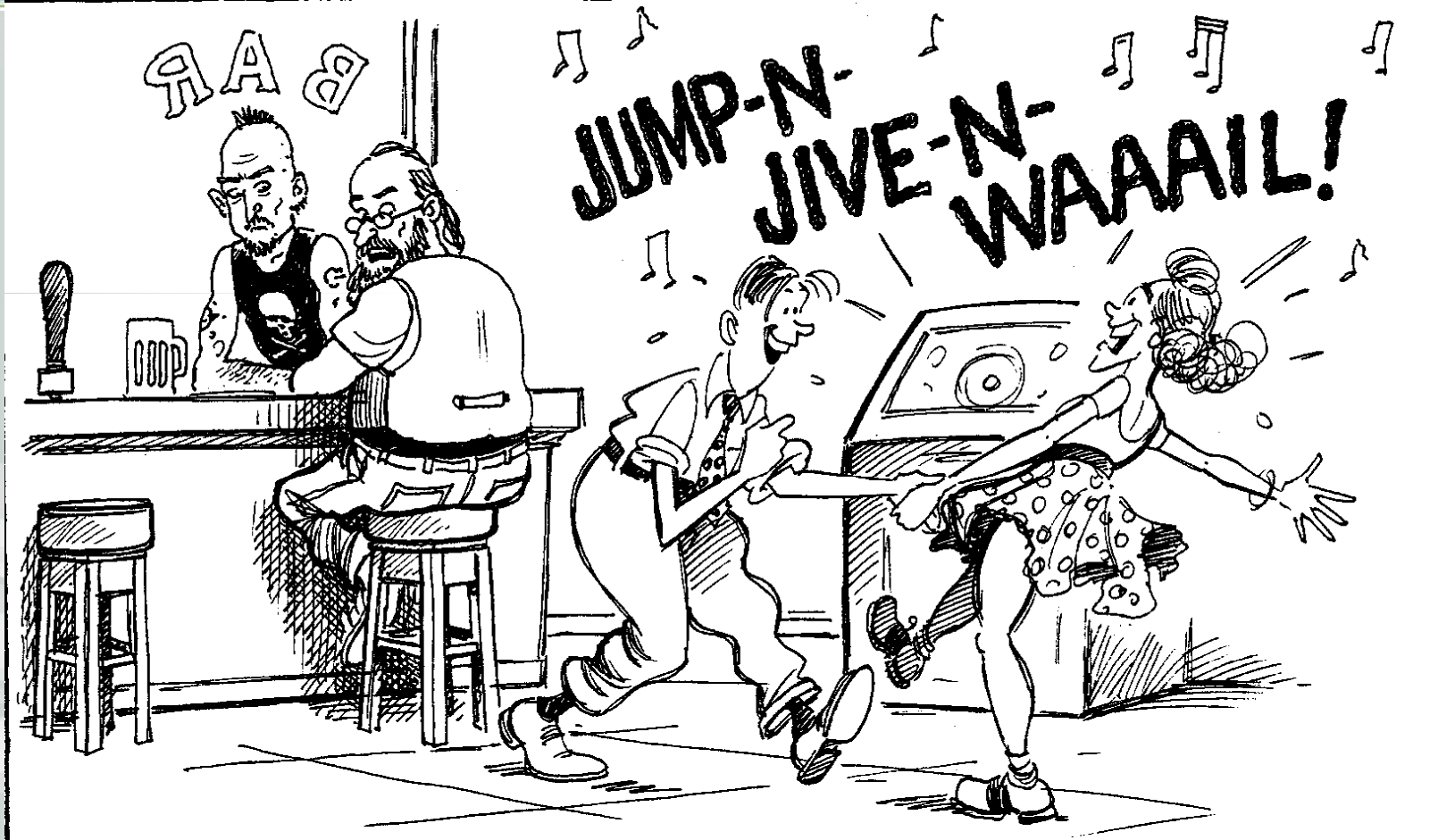
Thongs vs. Flip-Flops

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rTLzf3tU00A>

An Example of Successful Inter-Generational Communications

[YouTube - Ameritrade Commercial: Stewart](#)

The importance of defining events



"I FEEL SORRY FOR KIDS TODAY. THEYVE GOT NOTHING TO REBEL AGAINST!"

Group Discussion

How Would You Answer the following Questions?

- **What are some of the events or conditions that occurred while you were growing up?**
- **Pick one symbol from your formative years. It could be a TV program, song, image, slogan, toy, symbol, etc?**
- **What do you like least about other generations?**
- **What do you like most/admire about the other generations?**

* Questions based on Reader's Guide in Lancaster & Stillman, *When Generations Collide*, p. 353.

Generational Views of the Workplace

- Incentives other than salary
- Different concepts of career and success
- Globalized economy
- Virtual workplace
- Technological revolution
- Return of the retired worker

Views on Careers

- ❑ **Traditionalists' Career Goals – “Build a legacy”**
- ❑ **Boomers' Career Goals – “Build a stellar career”**
- ❑ **GenXers' Career Goals – “Build a portable career”**
- ❑ **Millenials' Career Goals – “Build parallel careers”**

GENERATIONS WORKING TOGETHER – TRAITS IN THE WORKPLACE

Recruitment, Retention, Retirement

Dress Codes

Working Format and Hours

Rewards – Seniority

Training

Pensions – Defined Benefit vs Defined Contribution

Communications & Feedback

Promotions – Seniority

Work Life Balance

Health Insurance

Learning Styles –Just in case vs. Just in time

Values and the Workplace

Baby Boomers:

- Teamwork
- Long hours
- Hard work
- Recognition
- ***Respect***

Traditionalists:

- Structure/Consistency
- Strong Work Ethic
- Loyalty
- Patience
- Mission
- ***Respect***

Millennials:

- Achievement
- Structure
- Collaboration
- Mission
- ***Respect***

Generation X:

- Autonomy
- Informality
- Competence
- Ongoing learning
- Feedback
- Balance
- ***Respect***

Tips for Working with Traditionalists

Listen to their war stories (have patience with them)

Appreciate and respect their experience

Use them as a mentor or coach (Mentoring is rewarding)

Structure technology training carefully (recognize limitations)

Provide flexible work options to retain them

Provide structured opportunities to learn and develop

“Tokens” that indicate their experience (status) and/or affiliation

Tips for Working with Boomers

Recognition/Rewards/Credit

Respect their hard work

Opportunity to work in teams

Work to build consensus; gather their input

Opportunities for personal & professional development

Capture their experience

“Soft” benefits

Tips on Working with Gen X

Allow autonomy

FAST feedback (frequent, accurate, specific, timely)

Opportunities for continued learning & development

Open communication, information

Soft benefits - flexibility

Access to info and decision-makers

Challenge, fun & excitement

Watch for results not process

Tips on Working with Millennials

Provide structure and guidance

Ask for their input (they give it away anyway)

Team orientation - “Reverse” Mentoring

Maintain technology

Manage projects, not time

Challenge & increasing responsibility

Stress mission and values

Clashpoints

CLASHPOINT	Traditionalists	Baby Boomers	Generation X	Millennials
Institutions	Are loyal to institutions	Want to put their own stamp on institutions	Are skeptical of institutions	Will judge institutions on their own merits
Rewards	Satisfaction of a job well done	Money, title, recognition, the corner office	Freedom is the ultimate reward	Work that has meaning for "me"
Feedback	No news is good news	Formal yearly feedback with clear rewards	Frequent, honest, immediate feedback	Feedback whenever I want it at the push of a button
Work/Life Balance	Support me in shifting the balance	Help me balance everyone else and find meaning myself	Give me balance now, not when I'm 65	Work isn't everything; I need flexibility to balance all my activities
Training	I learned it the hard way; you can too	Train them too much and they might leave	The more they learn, the more they stay	Continuous learning is a way of life
Job Changing	Job changing carries a stigma	Job changing puts you behind	Job changing is necessary	Job changing is part of my daily routine

Something to Consider



Just like YOU have no intention of becoming your parents, the next generation has no intentions of becoming YOU.

Other Tools to Consider:

→ Interest Based Problem Solving Training

→ Communications Skills Training

Managing the Differences

- **Reflect** – Know your values
- **Understand** – The values of others
- **Respect** – The values for what they are
- **Accept** – The differences as positives

Working across generational differences



BUT DAAAD, I DON'T WANT TO GROW UP TO BE SMUG LIKE YOU"

→ Bridging Generational Conflict at Work

Please describe a problem at work that you had with someone from another generation?

- a) What were the issues, personalities, interested involved?
- b) Was it resolved?
- c) If so, what did you contribute towards the solution?
- d) What did your (younger/older) colleague contribute?
- e) What lessons were learned?

Bridging Generational Conflict at Work

Please briefly describe a positive work experience that you had with someone from another generation.

- a) What were the issues, personalities, interests involved?**
- b) What did you contribute towards the solution?**
- c) What did your (younger/older) colleague contribute?**
- d) What lessons were learned?**

Generations in Conflict

“They have no work ethic. They’re just a bunch of slackers.”

“So, I told my boss, ‘If you’re looking for loyalty, buy a dog.’”

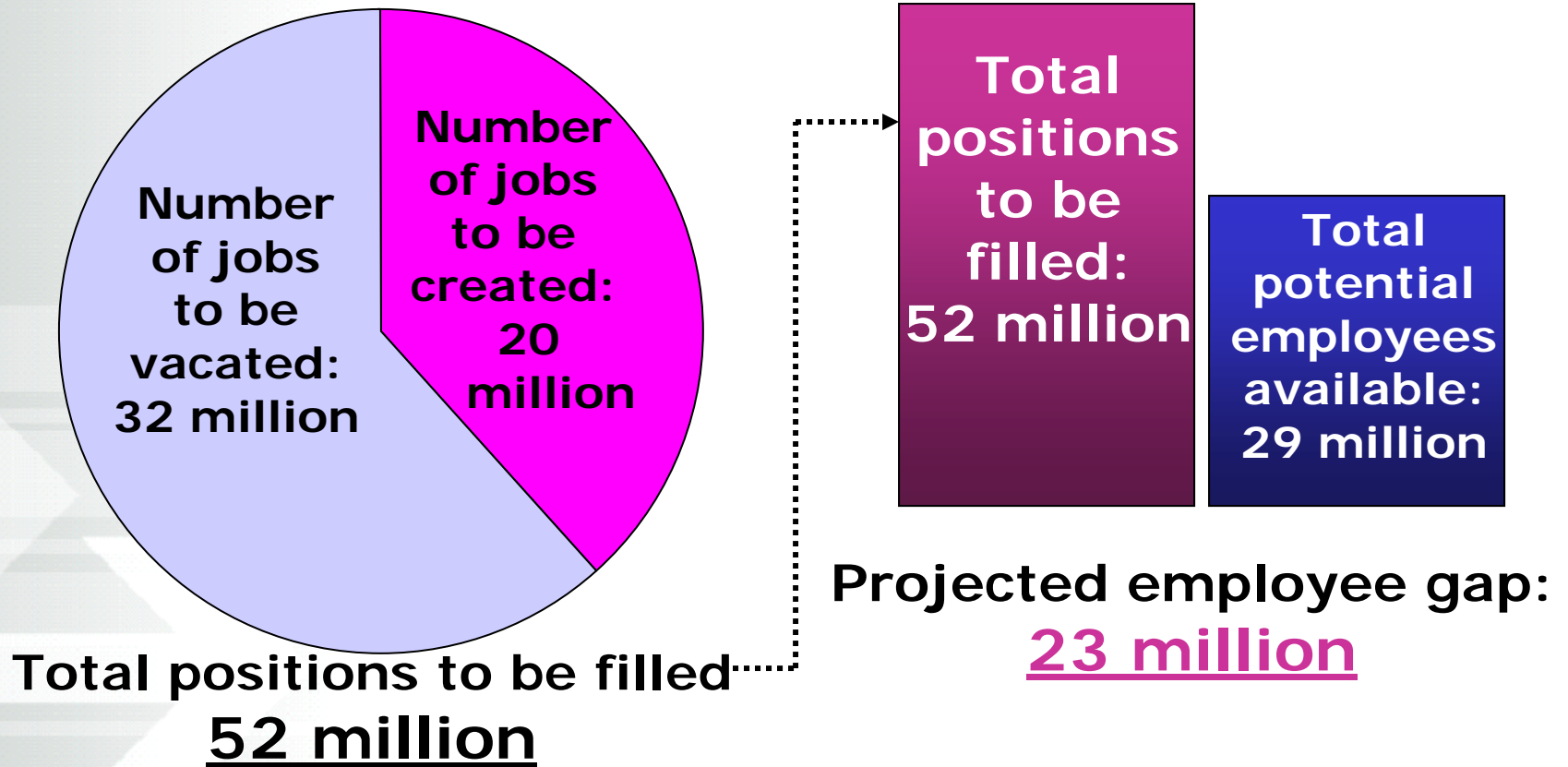
“He’s been out of training and in the field for 6 months and he wants a promotion – a promotion!”

“She wants a ‘career map.’ Hell! I don’t even know if there will be a customer relations department this time next year.”

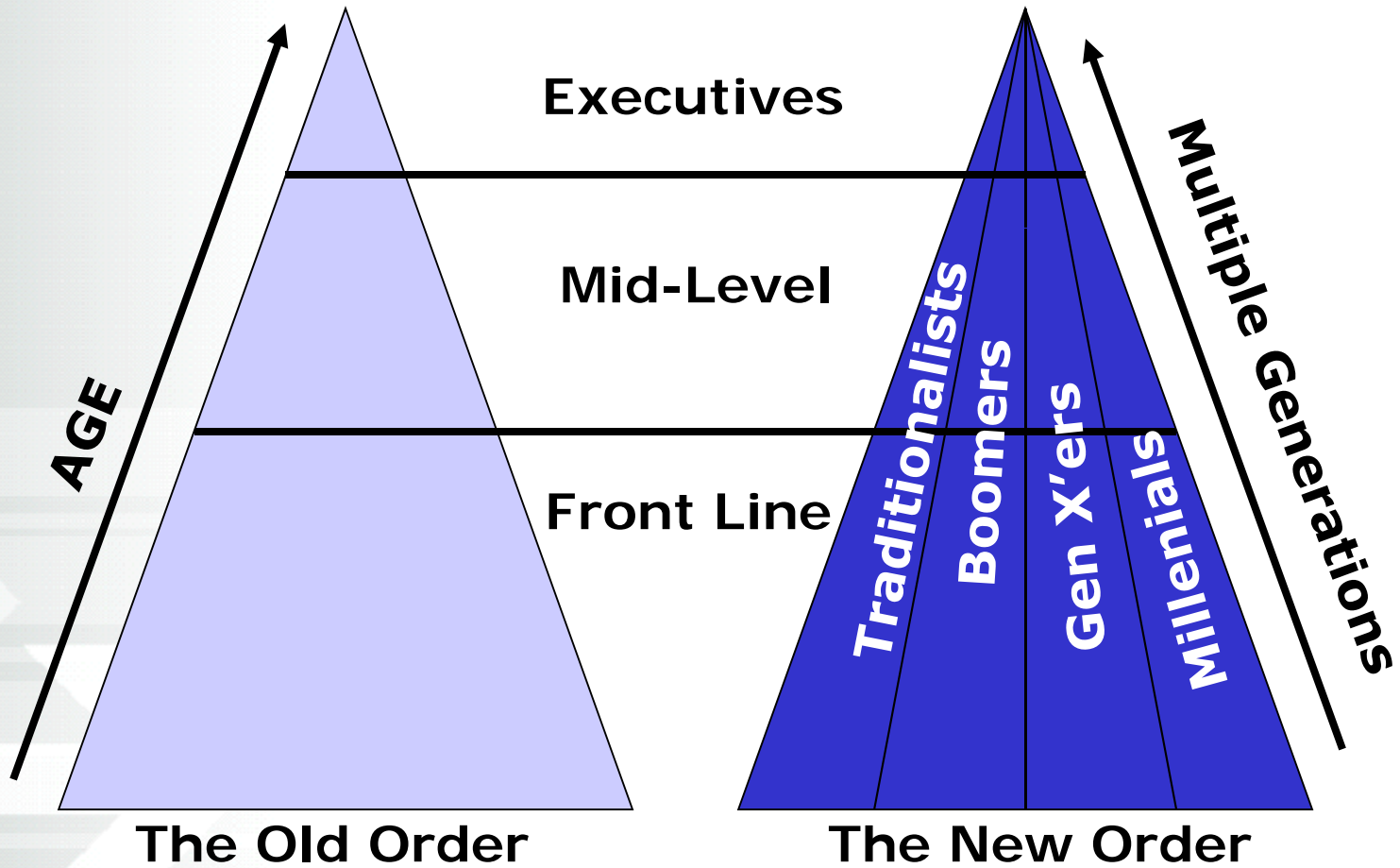
“If I hear ‘We tried that in ‘87’ one more time, I’ll hurl in his wrinkly old face.”

The Next Ten Years...

...will tend toward a talent shortage in spite of increased job creation



The New Order



Generational Peace

→ M.E.E.T. Model

**It It's Up To Us ... to take advantage of our generational differences to help make us more productive – more successful. To do that we've got to make an effort to recognize and respond to generational conflict situations to resolve them in a way that makes work a better place to be. Here is a way to do that:
It's Up To Us ... to take advantage of our generational differences to help make us more productive – more successful. To do that we've got to make an effort to recognize and respond to generational conflict situations to resolve them in a way that makes work a better place to be. Here is a way to do that:**

- Make time to discuss
- Explore differences
- Encourage respect
- Take responsibility

Creating an Inclusive & Respectful Workplace

- Listening to understand
- Seeking multiple points of view
- Giving and receiving feedback
- Enhancing inclusion
- Addressing inappropriate workplace behavior

How To Address Generational Conflict

- Respect differences
- Benefit from differences
- Question decisions solely based on “agism”
- If you are offended, don’t automatically assume the person has bad intentions
 - Ask before reacting, with genuine curiosity, to make sure you’re not equally guilty of agism
 - If you feel discriminated against, express how you feel, in a non-accusatory manner, using “I” statements
 - If the problem continues, inform your steward

What ALL Workers Want...

There are three basic goals that the vast majority of employees want from their work regardless of their ages, cultures, or geographies.....

Achievement - Pride in one's work

Camaraderie - Positive, inclusive and productive relationships

Equity - Being treated fairly in matters such as pay, benefits, developmental opportunities etc.

Can you analyze these problems through a generational and non-generational lens?

- A manager frustrated with her employee, who just wants to be given “a result and a deadline” and to be left alone
- Senior employees that resent the fact that the company has not adequately trained them on new technology and that they are bypassed on many assignments in favor of newer employees with more recent training
- A manager faced with a seemingly discouraged/moody employee who, it turns out, wants continuous feedback and affirmation that she is doing a good job

Can you analyze these problems through a generational and non-generational lens?

- Senior employees frustrated with the “newbies” that come and go as they please, don’t carry their share of the load, and expect all the opportunities and benefits of people that have been here for years
- Newer employees discouraged because their ideas are always shot down with phrases such as “What do *you* know, I’ve been doing this for 20 years?” and “Here we go again, we tried it before; it didn’t work then and it won’t work now.”
- A new employee that is frustrated that the older colleagues have staked out their “territory”, and that he will have to wait until there is turnover until he can establish himself professionally

Can you analyze these problems through a generational and non-generational lens?

- A younger female employee who sees it as demeaning when her more senior male colleague calls her “dear” and assumes that she is not up to the physical challenges of the job (“Let me carry that for you.”)

Discussion Points

- What happens when a person of a younger generation becomes a supervisor of people of an older generation?
- How much attention has been given to making sure the “unofficial” history of your organization gets passed along to younger firefighters?
- How well have older workers done with mastering new technology on the job (new techniques etc)?

“Food for thought”

- Do a “skills and interest” inventory of all department members (you might be surprised at the diversity of interests and abilities that cut across generations). When asked, people will respond.
- Develop ways to pass along organizational knowledge to newer firefighters. Understand that storytelling is not necessarily a waste of time.
- “Reverse mentoring” – choose or assign mentors, not necessarily on similarities but rather on differences; younger firefighters providing guidance in some areas to those who are older.

Philosophical Musings & Other Observations

→ Marcus Aurelius (121 – 180)

- Roman Emperor from 161-180 (“Philosopher King”)
- Considered one of the five “great Emperors”
- “Twelve Books of Meditations” – Philosophical view of Life & Leadership
- To this day, he is still revered in many circles as a literary monument to a government of service & duty

Philosophical Musings..... & Other Observations cont.

Benjamin Disraeli (1804-1881)

- **British Prime Minister**
- **Literary & Social Figure of His Time**
- **“There are three types of lies: lies, damn lies & statistics”!**
- **“The only thing we have learned from history, is that we do not learn from history”!**

Philosophical Musings and Observations cont.

Don Miguel Ruiz

- **Nagual (Shaman) teaching the Toltec Knowledge**
- **Raised by a “curandera” (healer) mother and a “nagual” grandfather**
- **Author of the book – “The Four Agreements”**

Premise – The Four Agreements

Everything we do is based on Agreements we make:

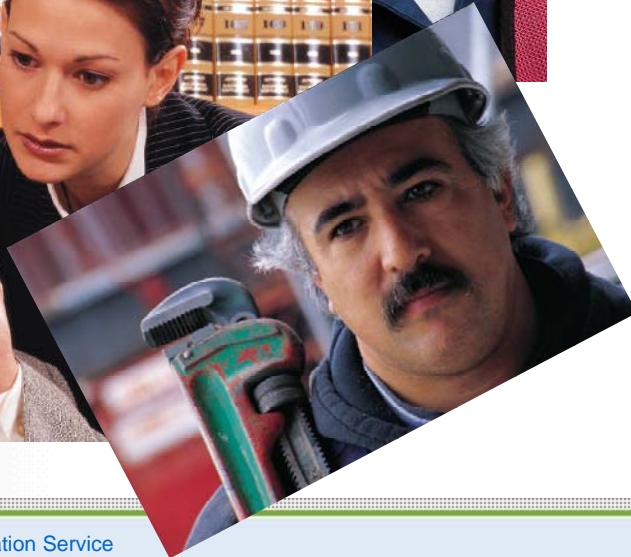
- 1. Agreements with ourselves***
- 2. Agreements with other people**
- 3. Agreements with our spiritual being**
- 4. Agreements with life**

***In these agreements we tell ourselves who we are; how to behave, what is possible; what is impossible**

The Four Agreements

- 1. Be Impeccable With Your Word**
- 2. Don't Take Anything Personally**
- 3. Don't Make Assumptions**
- 4. Always Do Your Best**

What Needs to Happen?

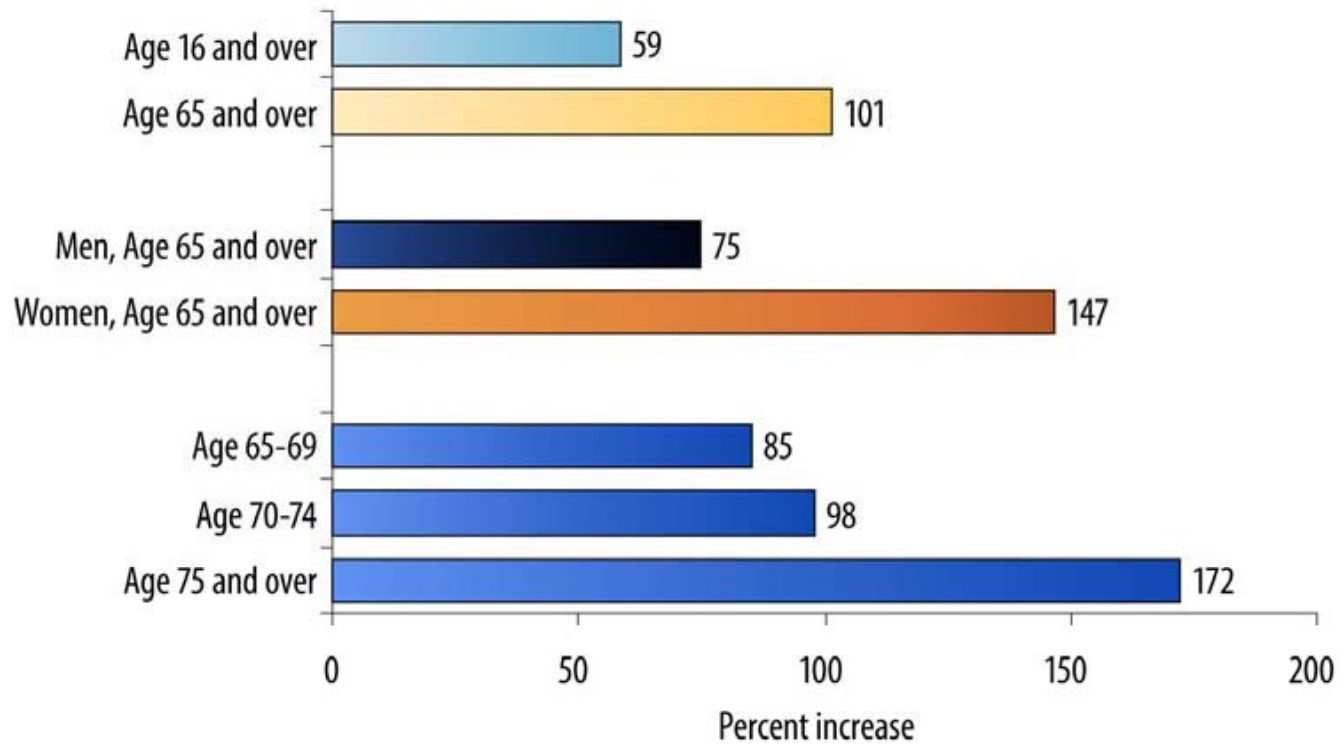


Forward-thinking leaders believe that successfully managing the generation mix is a business imperative **that contains wide-ranging implications for the world of labor relations.**

By the numbers, there aren't enough Gen X and Millennial employees to take the place of the Traditionalists and Boomers who will retire in the next five to 15 years.

Trends: The Greying of America

Percent increase in employment by age and sex, 1977-2007

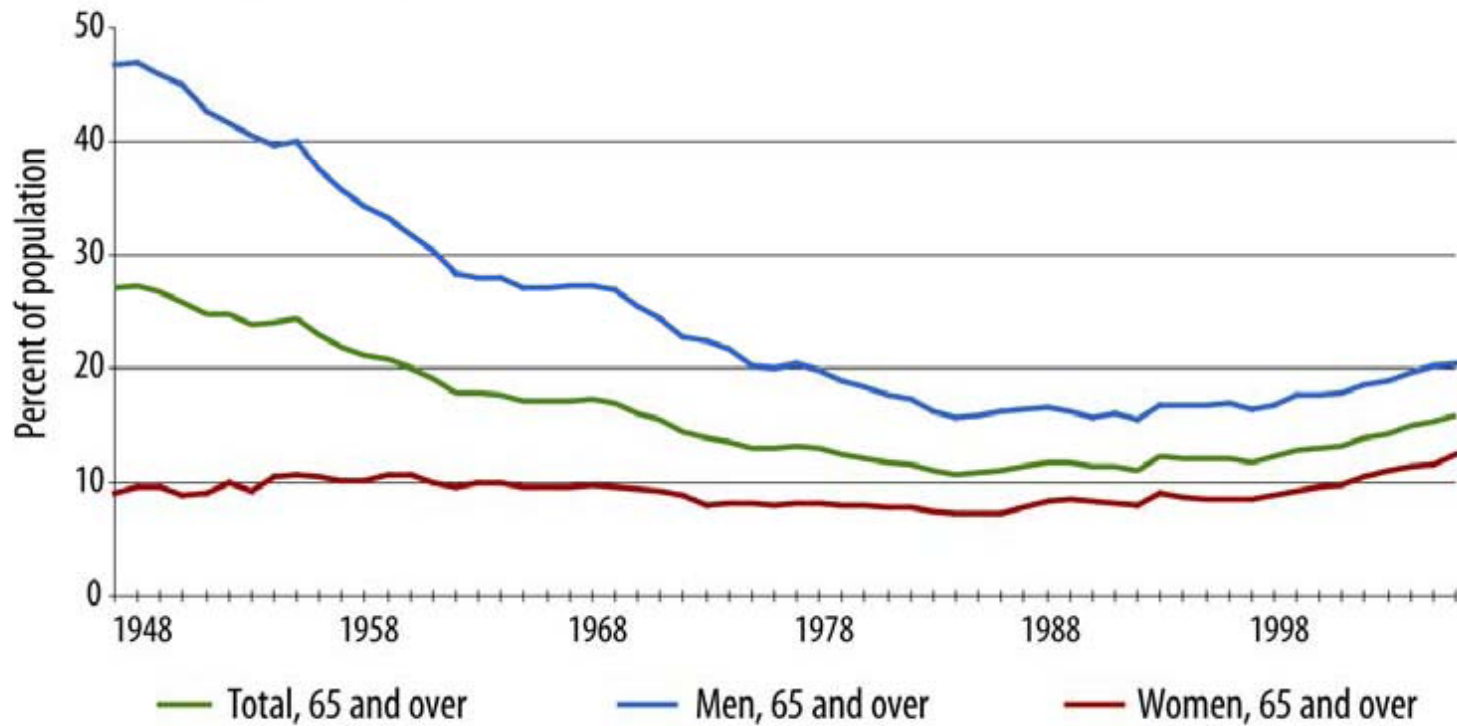


Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

www.bls.gov

Trends Cont.

Labor force participation rate of workers 65 and over, 1948-2007

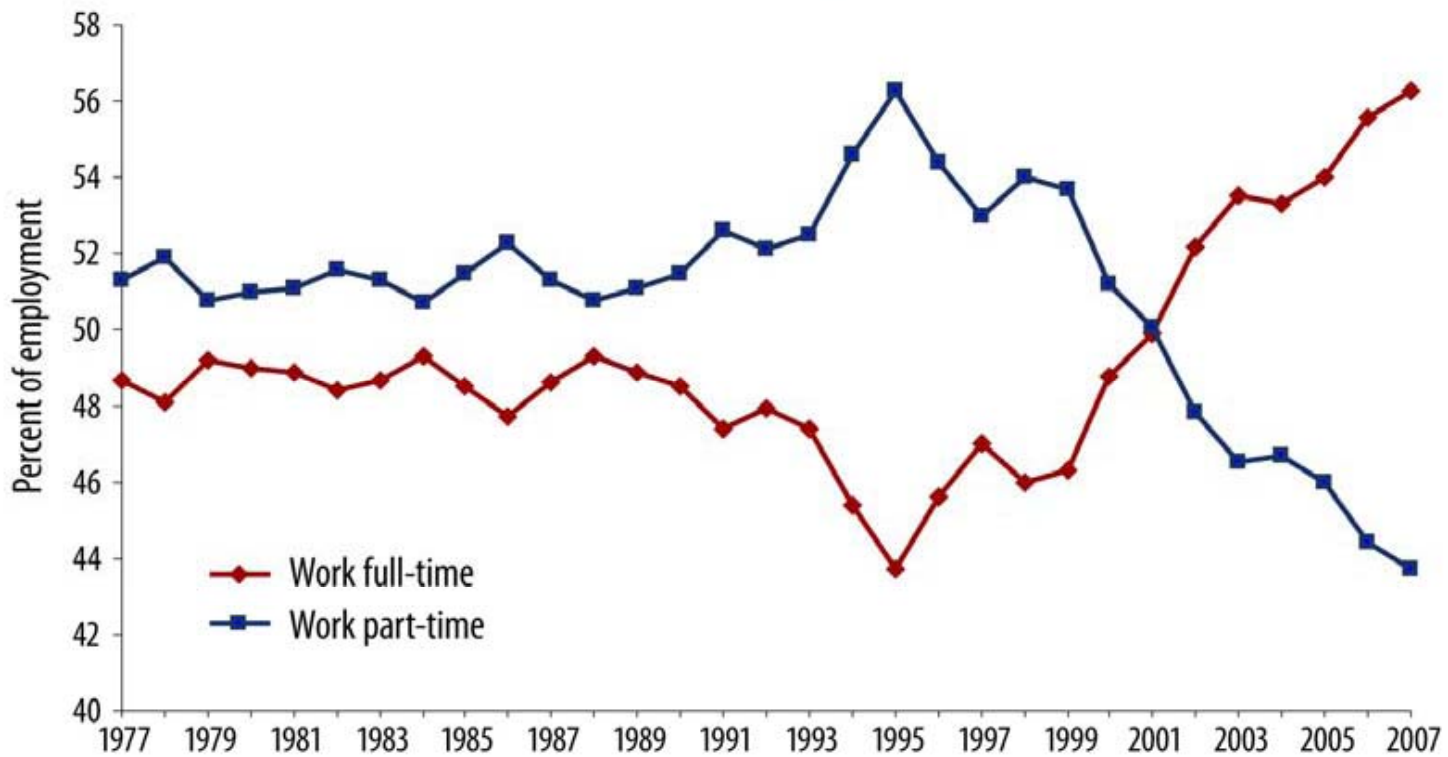


Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

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Trends Cont.

Workers 65 and over by work schedule, 1977-2007

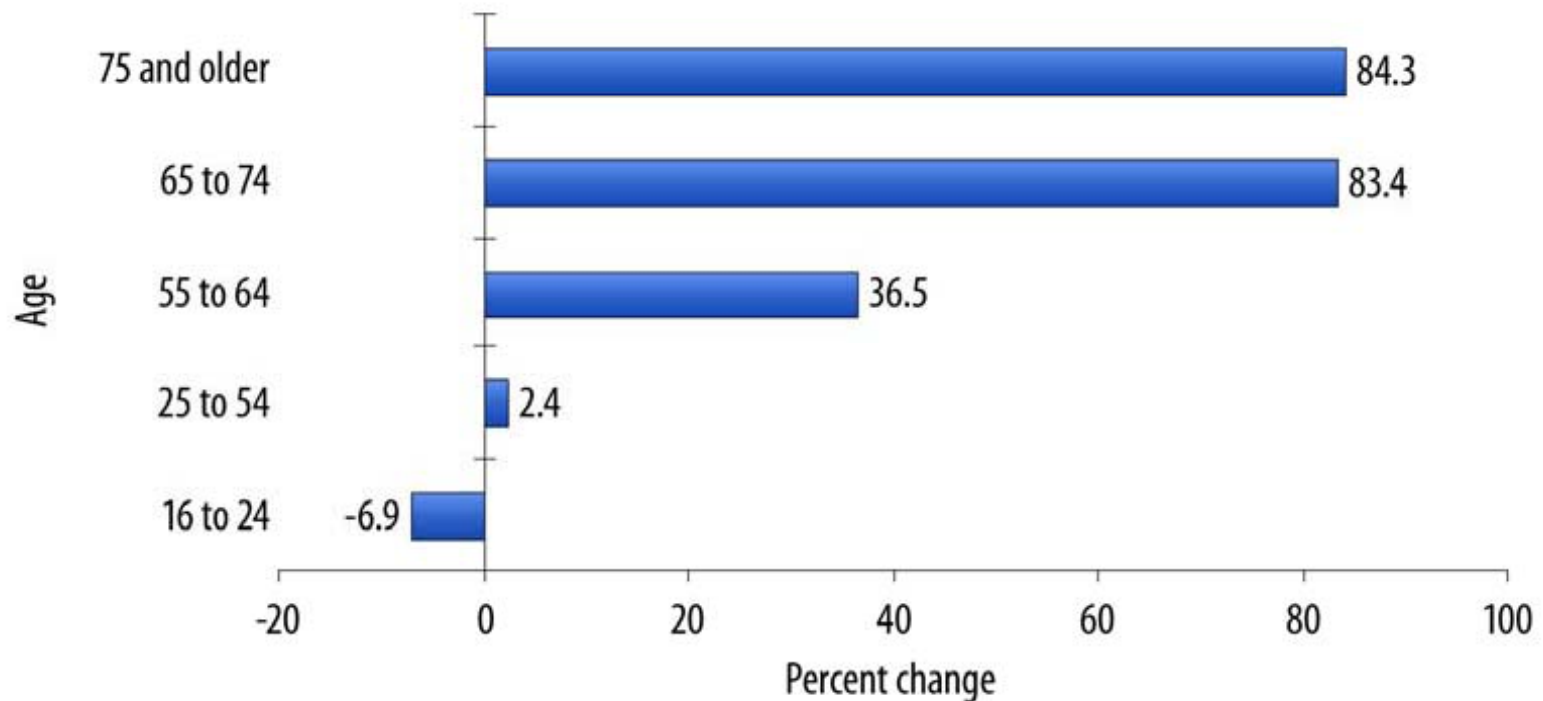


Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

www.bls.gov

What does the future hold?

Projected percentage change in labor force by age, 2006-2016



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

www.bls.gov

QUIZ TIME

For This exercise, try and work with at least two others from a different generation!

Generational Voices

Traditionalist 1922-1945

Boomers 1946-1963

X'ers 1964-1980

Millenials 1981-2005

“Some people estimated that there were nearly five hundred thousand of us at Woodstock. But if you survey the country today, you’d have to think the number was more like several million”

Generational Voices cont.

Traditionalist 1922-1945

Boomers 1946-1963

X'ers 1964-1980

Millenials 1981-2005

**“You might hear the word “ludicrous” and think:
ridiculous. I hear it and I want to turn up my radio (i-
pod; i-phone etc).”**

Generational Voices cont.

Traditionalist 1922-1945

Boomers 1946-1963

X'ers 1964-1980

Millenials 1981-2005

“You pay your dues. You make the sacrifices necessary to make things work. People today ask too many questions. They expect too much too soon. Just do what you you’re told. Get the job done. You’ll get what you deserve in time. Your company puts a roof over your head and food on your table. You have an obligation”.

Generational Voices cont.

Traditionalist 1922-1945

Boomers 1946-1963

X'ers 1964-1980

Millenials 1981-2005

“I was just old enough to learn how to drive when I learned about the Chernobyl accident in the Soviet Union. Comforting.... I don't think I quite understood the magnitude of that at that time. I do now”.

Generational voices cont.

Traditionalist 1922-1945

Boomers 1946-1963

X'ers 1964-1980

Millenials 1981-2005

“Three Mile Island. You don’t hear that phrase much anymore. That was pretty close to the ““Big Bang”” revisited. I was just out of college and starting a career. I’m lucky it wasn’t a short one”.

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