Generational Diversity
In the Workplace and Community

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Leadership & Volunteer Development Specialist
Program Objective

- To inform organizations that use volunteers on how to motivate all generations to take an active part in volunteering toward their community’s welfare.
## Age-related Cohorts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Range</th>
<th>Generation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1909-1928</td>
<td>Builders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929-1945</td>
<td>Silents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946-1964</td>
<td>Boomers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965-1980</td>
<td>X’ers</td>
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<tr>
<td>1981-2000</td>
<td>Millennials</td>
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<tr>
<td>2001-present</td>
<td>Post-millennials (Gen Z)</td>
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<tr>
<td>??</td>
<td>Gen Alpha</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*PEW, 2015
U.S. Census Bureau, 2015
Population Reference Bulletin, 2009*
My Generation’s Profile

- Divide into generations. As a group, find a flip chart sheet for your generation on the wall.

- On the flipchart pages, record your generation's:

1. Characteristics and values
2. Preferred forms of communication
3. Requirements for a good volunteer experience
4. Myths/Stereotypes
Silents

Characteristics:
- Successful
- Considerate
- Inclusive
- Mentors – quiet but industrious
- Cautious
- Sandwiched – underestimated/overlooked

Values:
- Self-reliance
- Thriftiness
- Hard work/discipline
- Dedication/loyalty
- Family/community

Born 1923-1944

29 million adults (9%)

(Pew Research Center, 2015)
Boomers

Characteristics:
- Educated
- Independent
- Desire quality
- Cause-oriented
- Fitness conscious
- Question authority
- Resourceful

Values:
- Work
- Personal gratification
- Focus on self (WIIFM)
- Heath/youthfulness
- Competitive

75.4 million adults (23.6%)

(U.S. Census Bureau, 2015)
Gen X

Characteristics:
- Self-reliant
- Survivors
- Serious about life
- Stressed out
- Loyal to relationships
- Skeptical
- Highly spiritual

Values:
- Diversity
- Thinking globally
- Balance
- Techno-literacy
- Fun
- Informality

Born 1964-1980

66 Million (20.7%)

(Pew Research Center, 2015)
Millennials

Born 1981-2000

83.1 Million (26.1%)

(U.S. Census Bureau, 2015)

Characteristics :

- Ambitious yet seek guidance
- Individualistic yet group-oriented
- Short attention span
- Overscheduled (busy)
- Optimistic/idealistic
- Multitaskers

Values:

- Civic engagement
- Education
- Confidence
- Achievement
- Diversity
- Technology
The purpose of the mixed method study was to determine motivational factors of generational cohort volunteers who participated in the ND Horizons Leadership Development program.
# A Guide to Engaging Volunteers Across Generations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation to volunteer</th>
<th>Millennials</th>
<th>Generation X</th>
<th>Baby Boomers</th>
<th>Silents/Builders (Traditionalists)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Egoistic motivation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Altruistic motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Working with friends and relatives</td>
<td></td>
<td>• To be involved with community</td>
<td>• Altruistic motivation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Giving back</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Being involved with their children</td>
<td>• Address a community need</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Focus on a meaningful cause</td>
<td>• Sense of accomplishment</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Sense of accomplishment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Following the example set by parents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Sense of being needed</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hindrance to volunteering</th>
<th>Millennials</th>
<th>Generation X</th>
<th>Baby Boomers</th>
<th>Silents/Builders (Traditionalists)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Time conflicts/lack of flexibility</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Time conflicts due to family and work</td>
<td>• Time conflicts/lack of flexibility</td>
<td>• Time conflicts/lack of flexibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Personal conflict with other volunteers</td>
<td></td>
<td>• People with negative attitudes toward others</td>
<td>• Lack of organizational structure and vision</td>
<td>• Unclear objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Poor treatment of volunteers</td>
<td>• Health</td>
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<tr>
<th>Motivation to continue with volunteer efforts</th>
<th>Millennials</th>
<th>Generation X</th>
<th>Baby Boomers</th>
<th>Silents/Builders (Traditionalists)</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Enjoyment of the work</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Continue to help the community</td>
<td>• Sense of accomplishment</td>
<td>• Help the community to survive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Enjoy the people they work with and those they help</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Being involved in their children’s activities</td>
<td>• Feel needed and appreciated</td>
<td>• Socialization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Enjoy the people with whom they work</td>
<td>• Their talents and skills are beneficial to the community</td>
<td>• Feel needed – an asset to the community</td>
</tr>
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<th>Actions volunteer professionals can change or improve to ensure continued volunteerism</th>
<th>Millennials</th>
<th>Generation X</th>
<th>Baby Boomers</th>
<th>Silents/Builders (Traditionalists)</th>
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<td>• Flexibility</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Communicate frequently with volunteers</td>
<td>• Appreciation for volunteer efforts</td>
<td>• Expand the volunteer base</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Be respectful and caring</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Expand the volunteer base</td>
<td>• Expand the volunteer base</td>
<td>• Clear communication</td>
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<tr>
<th>Most important factors in retaining volunteers</th>
<th>Millennials</th>
<th>Generation X</th>
<th>Baby Boomers</th>
<th>Silents/Builders (Traditionalists)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Appreciation for their efforts</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Appreciation for the efforts of the group</td>
<td>• Appreciation for their efforts</td>
<td>• Worthwhile projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Worthwhile purpose</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Sense of accomplishment</td>
<td>• Sense of accomplishment</td>
<td>• Sense of accomplishment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Comfortable environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Flexibility with time demands</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Adult learning opportunities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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[1] Theories emphasizing egoistic motivation assert that motives for volunteering are self-seeking.

[2] Altruistic motives, the desire to help others and serve the community, are found in people becoming volunteers.

Developed by: Mark Schmidt using data from *Generational Differences of Volunteers in North Dakota Communities* survey results. Research conducted by Mark Schmidt, Ph. D., Rachelle Vetter, Ph. D., Tom Hall, Ed.D.
When asked why they continue to work at current volunteer site…

“I enjoy helping people and feel like I have made a difference in others’ lives and feel I can continue to do so.”

Millennial Volunteer
When asked what current volunteer sites could do to improve and ensure continued volunteerism…

“Flexibility.”

Millennial Volunteer
When asked why they continue to work at current volunteer site...

“I enjoy working with kids and adults. I get to meet new people. I would like to see changes in our community.”

Gen X Volunteer
When asked what current volunteer sites could do to improve and ensure continued volunteerism…

“Be nicer to the new people.”

Gen X Volunteer
When asked what encouraged them to volunteer...

“I wanted to be part of something that makes a difference.”

Boomer Volunteer
When asked what current volunteer site could do to improve and ensure continued volunteerism…

“Always say thank you, and let volunteers know ‘the plan’.”

Boomer Volunteer
When asked, “What are the most important factors in retaining you as a volunteer”…

“I will continue no matter what.”

Silent Volunteer
When asked, “Why do you continue to volunteer at your current volunteer site(s)”…

“Feel very needed. Feel I am an asset to the community.”

Silent Volunteer
Implementation Ideas
Partnerships Through Volunteerism: A Generational Approach

- Millennials
  - Use different language
    - Replace the words kids with young adults and adults
  - Give them responsibility
  - Provide leadership roles
  - Team them with others
Partnerships Through Volunteerism: A Generational Approach

• **Generation X**
  - Provide comfortable, flexible roles, schedules and environment
  - Offer technology-centered tasks
  - Use positive language
Partnerships Through Volunteerism: A Generational Approach

- **Boomers**
  - Focus on the work to be done
  - Treat them like paid staff
  - Consider their skills and interests
  - State how they are making a unique difference
  - Pair volunteering with education and part-time work
Partnerships Through Volunteerism: A Generational Approach

- **Silents**
  - Use “post-career” vs. “older”/“senior”
  - Focus on skills, experience and legacy
  - Create opportunities for mentorship and leadership
  - Provide a chance to network
Advisory Council Member Role Description

Assist organization staff by:

- Identifying/obtaining resources
- Determining priorities
- Being sounding board for new ideas and programs
- Promoting programs
- Evaluating programs
- Speaking to support groups for organization
- Giving suggestions for educational publications, newsletter content etc.
Role Description Exercise

- Break into groups of 4
- Use example role description form
- Write 1 role description for 1 volunteer you would like to recruit (ex: non-profit board member, fund-raising chair, community event volunteer)
- Include the generation or generations you will target
- Choose one person to report to large group
Outreach Ideas – How Do You Find Them?

- **Millennials**
  - Young professional groups, civic engagement clubs
  - Fitness/wellness centers
  - Media: Internet sites, social networks, radio, and text requests
  - College campuses
  - Peer-to-peer recruitment
Outreach Ideas – How Do You Find Them?

- **Generation X**
  - Internet (social networking sites, bulletin boards, web sites, e-mail)
  - Fliers: cafes, book stores, coffee shops, children’s school events
  - Employer volunteer organizations
  - Graduate schools
  - Ads at child-care centers where they pick up their children
  - Ads at pediatricians’ offices
  - Wellness centers and events
Outreach Ideas – How Do You Find Them?

- **Boomers**
  - High-profile media/technology
  - Corporations and business associations
  - Outplacement agencies
  - Civic organizations
  - Fitness/wellness centers
  - Health care facilities
Outreach Ideas – How Do You Find Them?

• Silents
  - Civic and social clubs
  - Shopping centers/supermarkets
    - Daytime hours
  - AARP and post-career centers
  - Health-care facilities
  - Faith communities
# Preferred Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generational Group</th>
<th>Preferred Communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Silents</td>
<td>Simple and straightforward; letters, phone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boomers</td>
<td>Personal style to build rapport; phone, face-to-face networking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X’ers</td>
<td>Direct approach; email, voice-mail, social media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millennials</td>
<td>Social networking websites, expect instant feedback; texts/tweets</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Image of a series of stick figures with speech bubbles indicating communication preferences: Write me, Call me, Email me, Text me]
Where the Rubber Meets the Road

- When you get back to the office…
- Create a targeted recruitment plan for the role description you created (using worksheet)
- Include generation specific recruitment ideas
Recommendations from Generational Volunteering Research

1. Make volunteering a social affair. Provide networking opportunities.
2. Demonstrate a need for volunteers. Be vocal. Position descriptions are key.
3. Manage your volunteer events and your office professionally.
4. Treat volunteers with respect, make them feel welcome, avoid gossip and negativity at all costs.
Volunteer Managers Should

1. Recruit at faith communities, youth groups (4-H, Scouts, etc.,) and local employers.
2. Offer numerous times or ways to volunteer to alleviate issues: work and family conflicts.
3. Let current volunteers know they are needed and have made a difference. Recognition is important!!!
4. Make the volunteer experience fun!!!
SUMMARY

- Different generations bring different strengths, beliefs and attitudes.
- Utilizing your volunteers’ generational assets can have a positive impact on the climate, collegiality and overall success of your organization.
Like so many other things in life, success as a recruiter of volunteers is highly dependent on attitude. If you can’t imagine that anyone will volunteer for you, they probably won’t. On the other hand, if you approach recruiting with a positive set of expectations, you will find that people will indeed join up.

Susan Ellis
Volunteer Development Theorist, Author, Educator
Program Objective

To inform organizations that use volunteers on how to motivate all generations to take an active part in volunteering toward their community’s welfare.
Contact Information:

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References


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