



Bridging Generation Gaps in the Workplace

Mary Ellen Lynch, M.Ed.
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Session Goals

- Understand major characteristics and work styles of the generations of today's workplace
 - Explore strategies that foster effective cross-generational communication
 - Apply a strengths-based approach to build on the unique work styles and skill sets of each generation
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Agenda

- Welcome
- Community Builder
- Dynamics of a Multigenerational Workforce
- Communication Across Generations
- A Strengths-based Approach to Managing a Multi-generational Workplace
- Small Group Activity: “Choose Your Own Journey”
- Wrap-Up

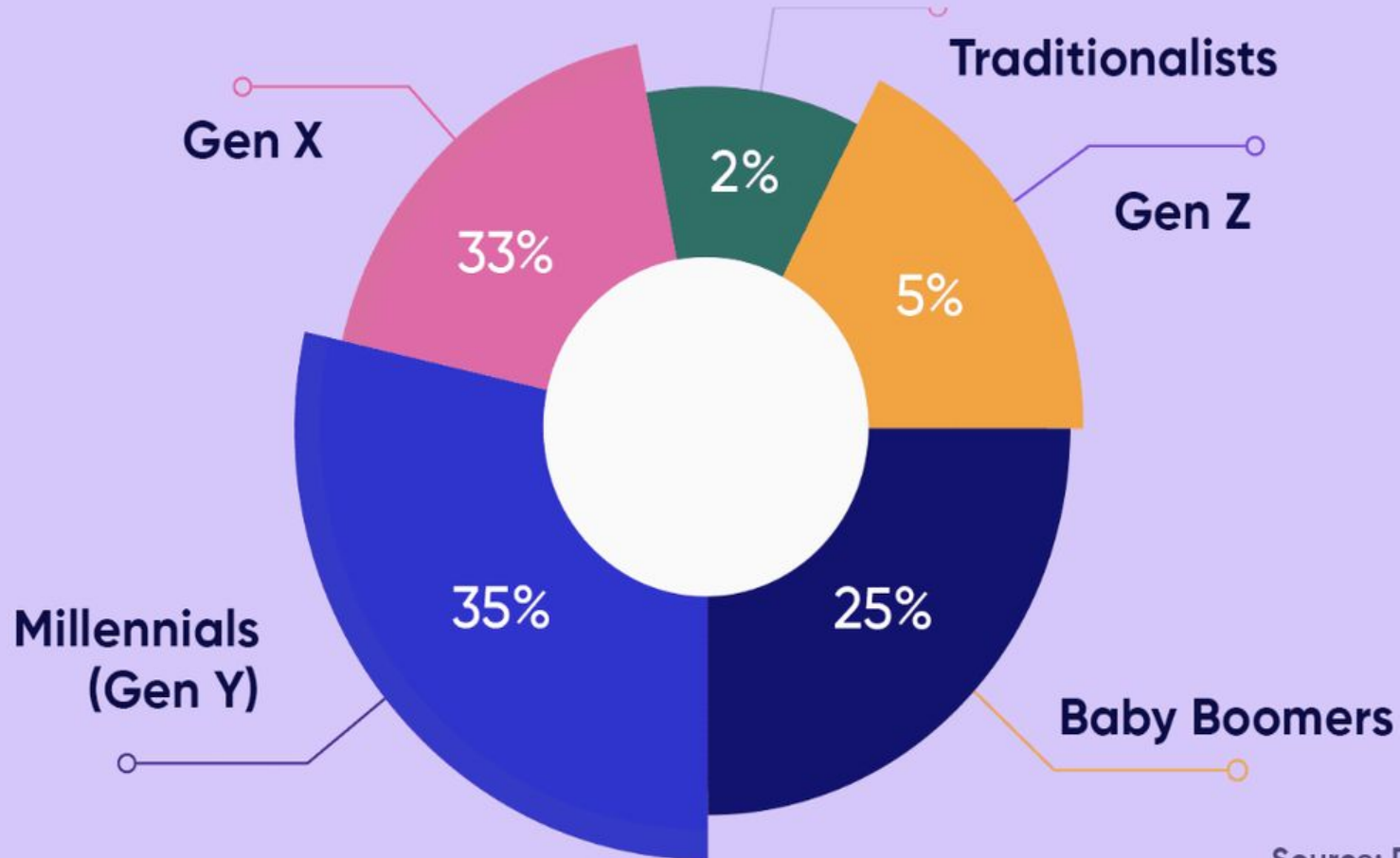
Community Builder: Connecting Across Generations

Step 1: Walk around the room while the music plays. Bring your “Questions to engage with a person of another generation” handout.

Step 2: When the music stops, introduce yourself to one of the people closest to you. Take turns asking each other a question from the handout.

Dynamics of a Multigenerational Workplace

Generations in the Workforce



Source: Pew Research

Traditionalists

76 - 99 years old

Baby Boomers

57 - 75 years old

Generation X

41 - 56 years old

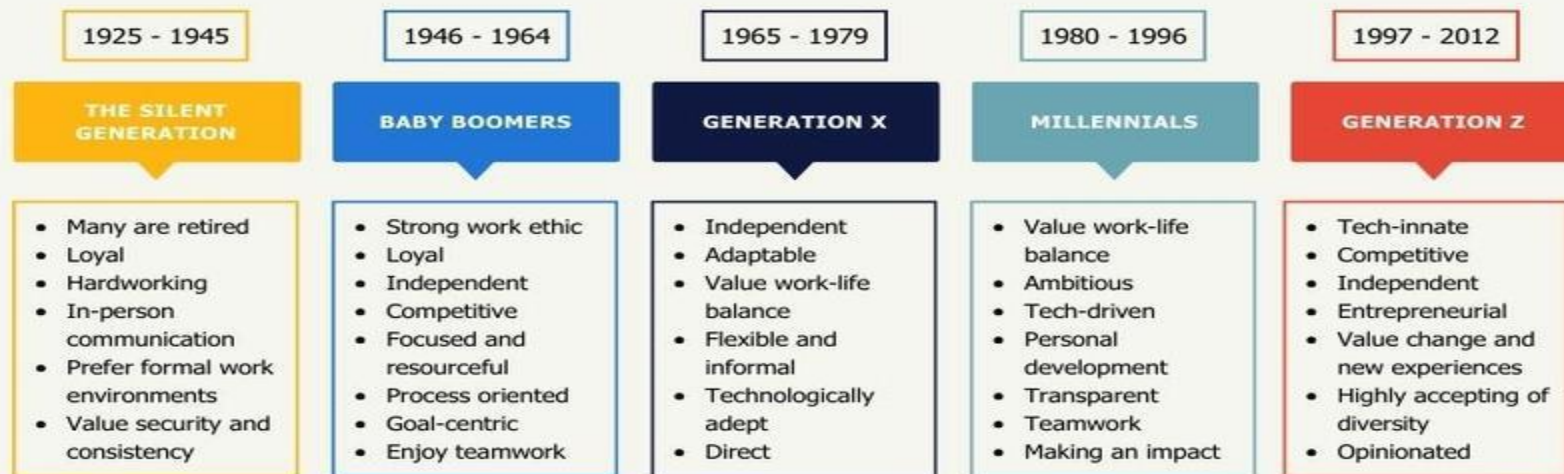
Millennials

26 - 40 years old

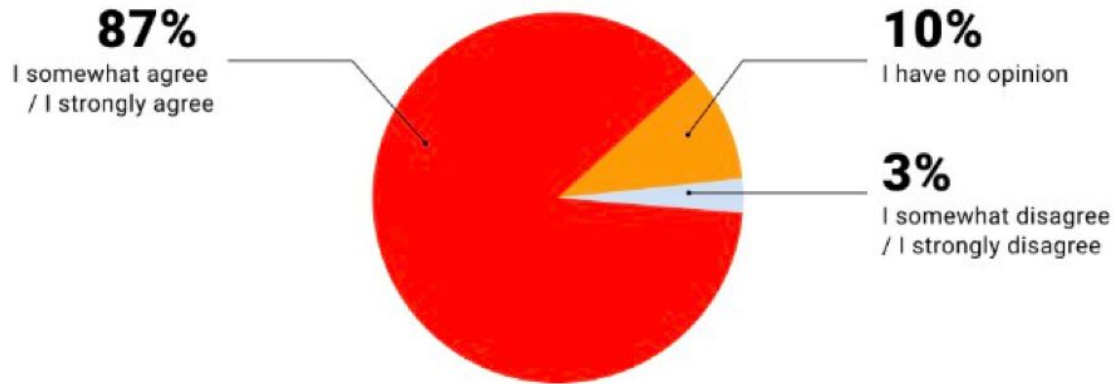
GENERATION Z

25 years old and
younger

The Five Generations of Today's Workforce



**Different generations can learn from each other
while working together.**



Shared Values Across Generations

- Feeling Respected
- Being listened to
- Receiving effective communication
- Receiving positive feedback
- Having opportunities for mentoring
- Experiencing an exchange of ideas

Strategies to Address Generational Challenges

- Identify shared values
- Understand differences in work and communication styles
- Build upon strengths of employees
- Support employee wellness
- Knowledge sharing
- Prioritize generational diversity in ongoing initiatives

Communication Across Generations

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Punctuation Challenges:

- To millennials, the ellipsis signals something negative such as hesitation
- For older adults, the ellipsis is often used to be casual
- The ellipsis can cause intergenerational confusion because it's not clear which emotion is being used





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Meghan Brakebill · 2021-2-24

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I'm not emotionally stable for this. I will stare at an email for 10 minutes trying to interpret the tone of this ellipsis #fyp #boomer #corporate



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OK, thanks....

**boomer managers
that end every email
with an ellipsis**

Corporate Jargon

- Terminology used to maintain professional appearance
- Young workers, particularly Gen Z feels it's an unnecessary formality of professional life




A Strengths-based Approach to Managing a Multigenerational Workplace

Meeting People Where They Are: A strengths-based approach



Understanding a person's strengths helps to describe:

- What motivates a person
- What influences a person's actions
- How a person makes decisions
- How a person approaches relationships & responds to situations



**Provide
actionable
insights to
work more
effectively
together**

**Leverage
talents to
acheive goals**

**Understand
what
motivates
people**

**Build
relationships
and mitigate
conflict**

12.5%

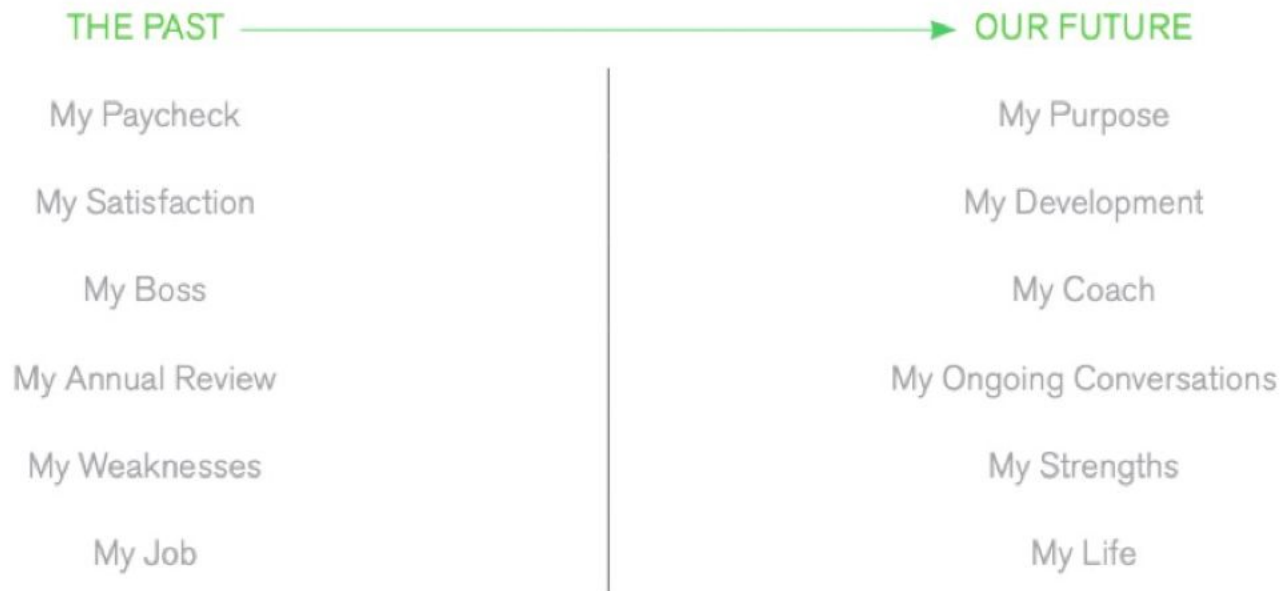
Teams that focus on strengths everyday have **12.5%** greater productivity.

Source: [gallup.com](https://www.gallup.com)

People who focus on using their strengths are **Six Times** more likely to be engaged in their jobs.

EMERGING WORKPLACE EXPECTATIONS ARE SHIFTING

WHAT FUTURE WORKPLACES WANT AND NEED



Leading with Strengths: Examples

"When team members understand the way their brains work, the way they relate to each other changes." - Jennifer Robinson

→ **Achiever**

Team members can't claim Sharon's extreme productivity is due to her baby boomer work ethic. It's because **Achiever** is among her top 5 CliftonStrengths.

→ **Command**

Intense **Command**, not the infamous "millennial entitlement" drives Taylor to take charge.

Balconies and Basements Framework

Balconies

- When we operate at our best
- Our strengths are in balance



Basements

- Operating in our blind spots
- Struggling to reach our potential



Strengths Assessments



CliftonStrengths[®]

The science of maximizing human potential by developing people to become great at what they're naturally good at.



gallup.com



Know Your Best Self

Discover what is unique about you, what motivates & drives you



Be Happier

Find purpose in what you do and be more satisfied with your life



Achieve Your Goals

Leverage your talents to realize your dreams faster



Increase Confidence

Embrace & leverage what makes your stand out from the rest



Build Stronger Relationships

Understand others and enhance your interactions with them



Progress Your Career

Make better decisions about your career and your future

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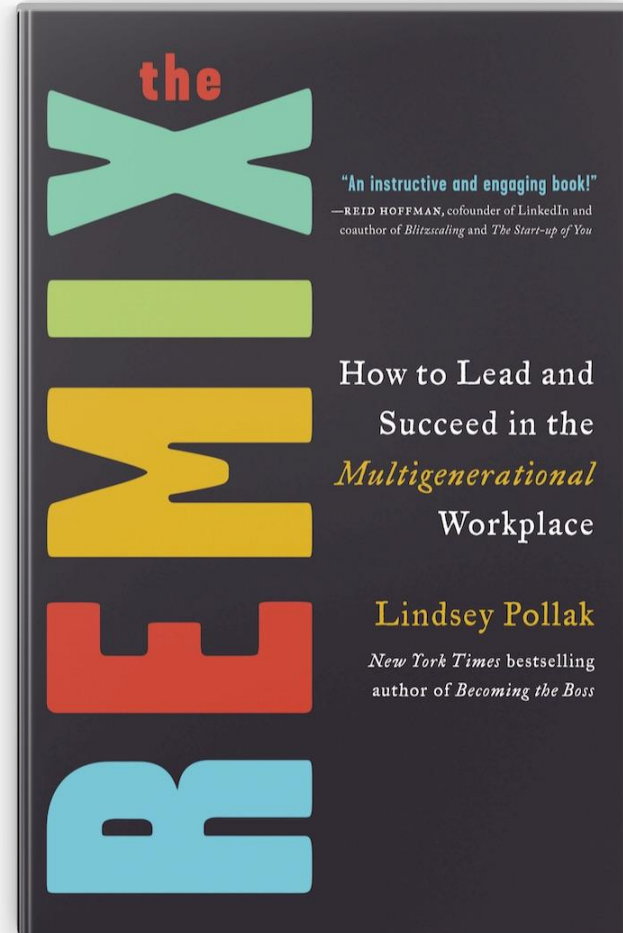


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Modern Mentoring

- **Reverse mentoring** - junior employees mentor senior leaders
- **Co-mentoring** - two or more people guide each other's professional development
- **Micro-mentoring** - short term relationship designed to address a specific need



Small Group Activity: “Choose Your Own Journey”

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Option 1: Balconies & Basements

Option 2: Cross-generational Challenges

“What matters most is the ability to understand different perspectives and leverage key talents.”

-Patrice Thompson

A millennial's proposal for a happy multigenerational workplace | TED Talk

Thank you!

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