

## LULAC Conference

# Understanding & Working with Generational Differences

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## About this Presentation

Workshop developed through five years of academic, sociological research – books, periodicals, professional journals.

Since 2005, delivered workshop to over 4,500 participants\* in numerous federal agencies and professional organizations.

Writing a book on generational differences in government, working with academic partners, national speaker/consultant.

\*Secretary of Energy & DOE Senior Leaders, USDA Foreign Agricultural Service, Peace Corps, Department of Commerce, Partnership for Public Service, Federal Managers Association, Excellence in Government Conference, International Trade Administration Leadership Conference, etc.

## Today you will ...

Learn the characteristics of the four generations currently in the workplace.

Identify each generations preferred likes and dislikes.

Identify ways to increase generational competence and improve intergenerational communication.

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## Common Perceptions...

- VIDEO

## Does this sound familiar...

- VIDEO

## Signature Message: Federal Employees

“... The first responsibility of a leader is to define reality. The last is to say thank you. In between, the leader is a servant. ...”

~Max de Pree

# “The Truth about Work and Generational Differences”

## Setting the Stage

*“...Our youngest leaders matured in the glow of computer screens; our oldest in the shadow of the Depression and World War II...”*

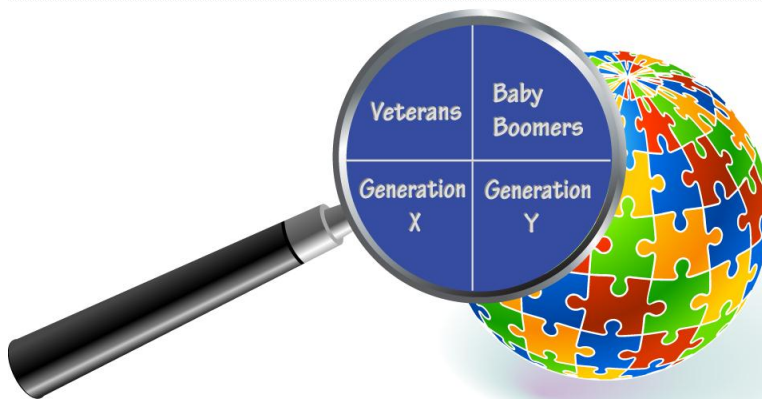
*Bennis & Thomas 2002*

## Who said this...?

*"...The children now love luxury. They have bad manners, contempt for authority, they show disrespect for adults and love to talk rather than work or exercise. They no longer rise when adults enter the room. They contradict their parents, chatter in front of company, gobble down their food at the table and intimidate their teachers..."*

**Socrates 5th Century B.C.**

## WHO ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?



## Generations in the Workplace

<u>Generation</u>	<u>Born</u>	<u>Number in Cohort</u>
Traditionalist	1922 – 1944	75 million
Baby Boomers	1945 – 1964	80 million
X	1965 – 1979	46 million
Y	1980 – 2000	76 million

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### THE VETERANS/TRADITIONALISTS- 1922 TO 1945





- Like consistency and uniformity
- Conformers to traditional roles and hierarchies
- Disciplined and value a self-denial work ethic
- Past oriented and history absorbed
- Have faith in organizations and leaders
- Conservative spending style

#### CORE VALUES

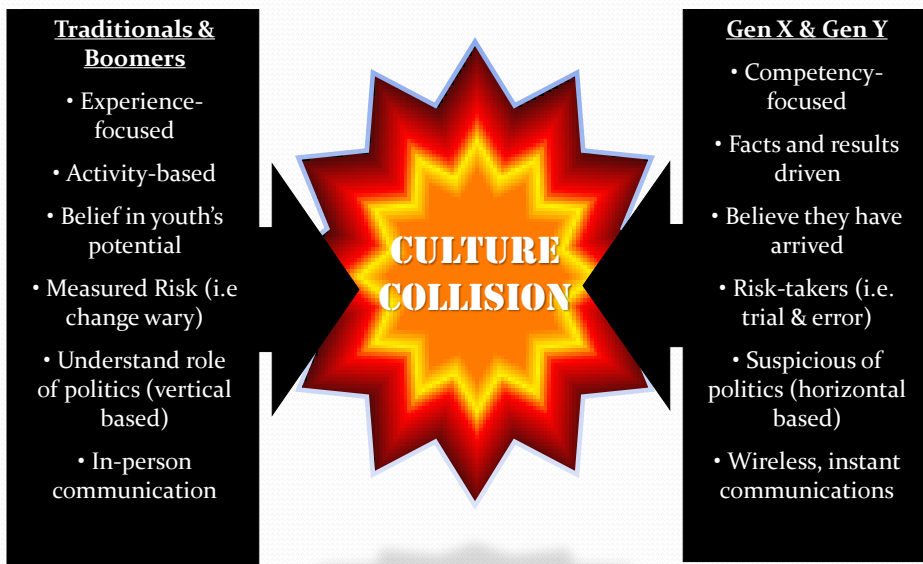
- |                         |                        |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| - DEDICATION/SACRIFICE  | - HARD WORK            |
| - CONFORMITY            | - LAW AND ORDER        |
| - RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY | - DUTY BEFORE PLEASURE |
| - PATIENCE              | - HONOR                |

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## Managing Across Generations

<b>Views</b>	<b><u>Veteran</u></b> 	<b><u>Boomer</u></b> 	<b><u>Gen X</u></b> 	<b><u>Gen Y</u></b> 
<b>Leadership</b>	Top leaders set the direction	The group decides where to go	It begins and ends with leading self	Give me the script and I'll do it better than anyone
<b>Loyalty</b>	Unquestioned	To the Organization	To the Occupation	To Self Interest
<b>Technology</b>	Hope to Outlive it	Pretend to Master it	Enjoy it, stay close to the cutting edge	Employ it in everything they do
<b>Jobs</b>	Grateful to work	Believe employers owe them	Opportunity must relate to what they like	Work is like a cafeteria, a little of this and that

## POTENTIAL GENERATIONAL CONFLICT



## What Everyone Forgets to Tell You...

- VIDEO

## EMPOWERING VETERANS AT WORK

- **Make time for personal interactions**
- **Demonstrate respect for history and tradition**
- **Embrace hallmarks of family values and good manners**
- **Be linear and logical emphasizing relevant facts**
- **Create opportunities to socialize, particularly between assignments**
- **Honor hard work with formal recognition**



## EMPOWERING BOOMERS AT WORK

**Ask for their input and expertise (“I need you for this task”).**

**Allow them avenues to build consensus**

**Give them public recognition and awards for their work**

**Provide them perks in line with their professional status**

**Place them in charge of projects that build name recognition and demonstrate their leadership savvy**



## EMPOWERING GEN X AT WORK

**Allow them to prioritize projects as they see fit**

**Offer regular feedback (constructive and critical)**

**Encourage the pursuit of interests outside of work**

**Create opportunities for fun at work**

**Utilize the latest computer technology**

**Provide perks as requested**





## Generation Y



## Awareness...

- VIDEO

## How NNSA thinks Gen-Y Communicates:



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## How Generation Y really Communicates...

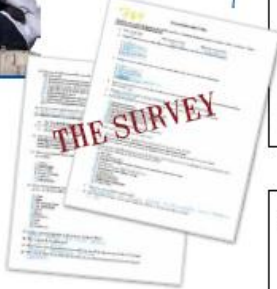




Our **Search** for the **Leaders of Tomorrow**  
— Asked Today

Sourcing primarily from attendees at the National Student Leadership Conference, as well as the Americans for Informed Democracy young leaders' courses, and DC internship programs, we surveyed 1,057 young American leaders.

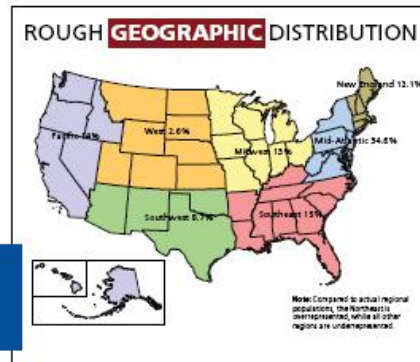
Our thinking was that this approach was a more representative gathering of future leader attitudes than general teen surveys, as: 1) they have been identified as such by their peers, and 2) they have shown enough interest in the field of policy and politics to spend their summer vacations in D.C. (i.e., they've got the 'bug' already). That is, we can't guarantee we have the future Bill Clinton or Barack Obama (who attended similar programs) in this pool, but we do know we have the views of a variety of their future advisors, diplomats, journalists, etc.



**1,057**  
young American leaders

Average age

**16.4**



*Their Changing Patterns of* **Communication**

The 20th century witnessed a fundamental change in how young leaders communicate—letters, telephone calls and gatherings at the mall now seem primitive compared to text messaging and internet chat rooms. More recent advances in and ease of access to cell phone and online technology has allowed the Millennials to digitally communicate with more frequency and speed than ever before. We asked the young leaders: "How many email messages, text messages, blog posts, tweets, etc. do you send a day on average?"


The results were astounding, and even more so when we broke the data down by when they took the survey. Among those who took the survey in 2008 and 2009, the mean number of texts per day was 39.4, with a median of 20. Of the young leaders, 50.5% were sending less than 25 a day, 23.4% were sending between 25 and 50 messages a day and 17.2% were sending over 50 messages a day. Of note, many asked in their responses questions like, "What are tweets?"

In 2010, the numbers had significantly grown as the technology and youth reliance on it proliferated. The mean had jumped to 78.9 messages a day (nearly 40 messages sent a day more on average) and the median was 35, an increase of 15 a day. Even more astounding, 29% of the young leaders were now sending over 100 messages a day. These numbers may even be greater in that the data does not reflect the many respondents who wrote non-numeric answers like "too many to count" or "infinity."





# How They See TERRORISM




**84%**  
**NO**

"Do you envision a point in your life that terrorism will no longer be a threat?"

The general agreement on terrorism was striking. The youth, therefore, were asked, "Do you envision a point in your life time at which terrorism will no longer be a threat?"

Newly 85% of Millennial respondents cannot envision a point in their lives when terrorism will no longer be a danger, proving just how ubiquitous the threat has become for young people after 9/11. This combination of priority and permanence is interesting and may have growing impact on America's future policies and political landscape. For example, the announcement of an Orange Alert was one of the many shaping factors in the run up to the 2004 election (the last election that none of these youth was eligible to vote in). But in their lives, almost every day has been an Orange Alert day. This sense of permanence and cross-partisan prioritization may indicate the power of terrorism as a wedge political issue is passing, as is the validity of promising to "win" any "war on terrorism."



# An UNTAPPED POTENTIAL of PUBLIC SERVICE



The next generation of leaders shows a fascinating array of opinions, values, and even wisdom, but what many have found is that they also show a great deal of promise. But how might this promise be tapped into the nation's service? This question is all the more important as those now serving in the public sector begin to age out. Leaders at organizations that range from USAID to the Pentagon's contract officer workforce have all recently lamented that a majority of their workforce is already eligible for retirement or will be within the next few years.

One option that has been floated to face this challenge is the creation of some type of public service university or scholarship program that would be used as a recruiting and training ground for future diplomats, aid officials, treasury homeland security experts, etc. So we asked the young leaders if they would be interested in such a program, but with the proviso that "Much like the military academies, it would be free, but, in turn, require the graduating student to commit to serve in the government for five years after their graduation, in the hopes that they would make it a long-term career."

A remarkable 71% of the Millennial leaders responded positively. Acknowledging that these kids already have "the bug" of interest in politics and policy, the interest in such a program that would require such a significant commitment to government work is still significant. It runs counter to the prior Generation X's focus on lucrative career goals as well as the ideas

once expressed by Ronald Reagan that "The best minds are not in government. If any were, business would hire them away." At least for this generation, the best young minds, at least as so far determined by their peers, are quite interested in desire the kind of public service work that molds and executes policy.

The critical question that this data (and indeed the other survey results) poses is whether the current generation of organizations and leaders will be able to positively respond? Will these young leaders and the changes they embody ultimately be viewed as part of a crucial turning point in America's history, or as a lost opportunity?

**28.9%** NO  
**71.1%** YES

*Interested in attending a public service university scholarship program, that then required five years of government service after graduation*

## EMPOWERING GEN Y AT WORK

Promote in-house education and training.

Encourage autonomy, diversity, communications, teamwork, openness to ideas, and respect.

Act like a coach.

Offer challenging assignments.

Provide state-of-the-art resources - Encourage utilization of technology.

Keep up with their pace -- Fast-paced communication is key to keep their interest.

Involve them in a partnership -- Solicit their ideas and contributions, and work with them as a team.



## Final Thought...

- VIDEO

## Generations in Summary

### Generational Culture Lenses Focus on Organizational Dynamics

<b>Generation Y</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Hurry and Achieve”</li> </ul>	<b>Generation X</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I Can Do That”</li> </ul>	<b>Baby Boomers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Work Ethic = Worth Ethic”</li> </ul>	<b>Veterans/ Traditionals</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Honest pay for honest work”</li> </ul>
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## CONTACT INFORMATION



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- **D.C.'s New Guard:**, What Does the Next Generation of American Leaders Think? Foreign Policy at BROOKINGS, February 2011 (PowerPoint)





# Resources

## Useful Links:

- [http://nkilkenny.files.wordpress.com/2006/08/generational\\_learning\\_slide.pdf](http://nkilkenny.files.wordpress.com/2006/08/generational_learning_slide.pdf)
- <http://www.authorstream.com/Presentation/Mahugani-9590-Learning-Styles-111706-Review-Update-learning-styles-ppt-powerpoint/>
- [http://www.uwsp.edu/education/facets/links\\_resources/4413.pdf](http://www.uwsp.edu/education/facets/links_resources/4413.pdf)
- <http://www.slideshare.net/jclarey/multi-generational-learning>
- <http://www.futureworkplace.com>
- <http://www.mcbassi.com/>