

Blending the Generations at Work

From **Generations at Work:**

Managing the Clash of Veterans, Boomers, Xers and Nexters in Your Workplace

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Successful cross-generationally friendly companies have five common approaches to making their environments generationally comfortable and focusing their people's energies on the business of the business.

1. They accommodate employee differences.

- They are learning all they can about employees.
- They are working to meet employees' specific needs.
- They are serving employees according to their unique preferences.

2. They create workplace choices.

- They allow the workplace to shape itself around the work being done, the customers being served, and the people who work there.
- Dress policies tend to be casual.
- The height and width of the chain of command tend to be foreshortened, and decreased bureaucracy is taken on as a clear goal.
- They understand that leadership in an industry or a product area doesn't come with an insurance policy, nor does the accompanying organizational prosperity.
- There's an element of humor and playfulness about most of their endeavors.

3. They operate from a sophisticated management style.

- They tend to be more direct.
- They give those who report to them the big picture, specific goals, and measures. Then they turn their people loose – giving them feedback, reward, and recognition as appropriate.

- Seven attributes characterize their flexibility:
 - Their supervisory style is not fixed.
 - Their leadership style is situationally varied.
 - They depend less on positional than personal power.
 - They know when and how to make personal policy exceptions without causing a team riot.
 - They are thoughtful when matching individuals to a team or a team or an individual to an assignment.
 - They balance concern for tasks and concern for people.
 - They understand the elements of trust and work to gain it from their employees. They are perceived as fair, inclusive, good communicators, and competent in their own right.

4. They respect competence and initiative.

- They assume the best of their people.
- They treat everyone, from the newest recruit to the most seasoned employee, as if they have great things to offer and are motivated to do their best.

5. They nourish retention.

- They know that keeping their people is every bit as important in today's economy as finding and retaining customers.
- They offer lots of training from one-on-one coaching opportunities to interactive computer-based training, to an extensive and varied menu of classroom courses.
- They encourage regular lateral movement within their organizations, but they have broadened assignments.