



Pacific Tide

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Author of the month:



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Emma received her A.S. in Accounting and A.A. in Business from Cabrillo College. She is currently attending Colorado State University Global to obtain her B.S. In Business Management. Her educational plan is to obtain her Masters in Business Management in the next five years. She first stepped foot into Veterinary Medicine in April of 2006. She obtained her CVPM in September 2009. She currently manages both PVSES and PVSM. She is the secretary for the local veterinary medical association, the MBAVMA. Emma shares her life with her wonderful husband and three children, ages 19, 18 and 2 ½. She has many pets, but her heart belongs to an English Bulldog named Low Low.

Generational Leadership

No one ever said that managing employees was easy, but did any one ever think it was going to be so challenging? The year 2012 has brought many things from healthcare reform to rising gas prices, to record high unemployment and record low property values. We currently live in a different world then we did even five years ago. Whether you manage your team yourself or you have hired someone do it for you, it is important to understand that leadership styles need to evolve. A key element to this evolution is acknowledging the four different generations that we have in our workplace: they are the Traditionalists, the Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y.

A leader communicates using content and context; while neither of these is absolutely determined or confined by age or generation, recognizing the ways in which generational identification informs communication is the mark of a successful leader. Content is the actual words or symbols of the message that is known as *language* — the spoken and written words combined into phrases that make grammatical and semantic sense. While language can differ by age and generation the general principles and words have meanings that are the same. Context is the way the message is delivered and is known as *paralanguage* — it is the nonverbal elements in speech such as the tone of voice, the look in the sender's eyes, body language, hand gestures, and state of emotions. A good leader will not allow his or her age or generation to restrict how they lead, but they will be aware of generational expectations and modify their communication style to achieve the greatest impact.

Good leaders develop through a never ending process of self-study, education, training, and experience. A leader is not defined by their age or generation though the people they manage may be; an effective leader must learn how to manage them differently. Knowing the values and expectations of different generations in the workforce can help managers learn to better communicate with employees by recognizing subtle generational differences and tailoring communications accordingly. A leader may need to lead differently based on employee's age and generation, (see figures 1 and 2). A leader may need to lead differently based on employees' age and generation; however, there are common qualities that employees want their leaders to have.

Each generation ranked honesty, competence and loyalty among the top leadership qualities, with honesty being the most important. In a research study conducted by the Center for Creative Leadership, 3,000 organizational leaders were surveyed over a seven year period. A key finding of this research was that the top three values of all generations were family, love and integrity, although they demonstrated these values in various ways. Having a common value shared between generations allows for leaders to have a shared starting point. Understanding the traits of your employees is also important.

Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal. As time changes and technology advances, leaders have to learn how to adapt. There are some fundamental communication skills that all leaders must possess that are not dependent on the means in which things are communicated. Understanding your subject matter and your audience are examples of these common communication skills. A typed memo that is posted on a communication board in a room is no different than getting it in an email. Leaders that refuse to grow and adapt to the ever-changing world of technology will get left behind. They will lose ways to lead and relate to their staff. People of all generations and at all levels want their leaders to be credible, trustworthy, dependable, farsighted, encouraging and good listeners. Good leaders are continually working and studying to improve their leadership skills; they are not resting on their laurels. Being a skilled leader involves acclimatizing your skills to your workforce and to the changing world around you, because if there is one thing recent years have taught us, the world will be changing.

Figure 1:

Generation	Percentage of Workforce	Assets in Workplace	Leadership Style Preference
Traditionalists Born 1922–1945 Ages 67-90	8%	Hard working, stable, loyal, thorough, detail-oriented, focused, emotional maturity.	Fair, consistent, clear, direct, respectful.
Baby Boomers Born 1946–1964 Ages 48-66	44%	Team perspective, dedicated, experienced, knowledgeable, service-oriented.	Treat as equals, warm and caring, mission defined, democratic approach.
Generation X Born 1965–1980 Ages 32-47	34%	Independent, adaptable, creative, techno-literate, willing to challenge the status quo.	Direct, competent, genuine, informal, flexible, results-oriented, supportive of learning opportunities.
Generation Y Born 1981–2000 Ages 12-31	14% and increasing rapidly	Optimistic, able to multitask, tenacious, technologically savvy, driven to learn and grow, team-oriented, socially responsible.	Motivational, collaborative, positive, educational, organized, achievement oriented, able to coach.

Figure 2

Workplace Traits Most Attributed to Generations
<p>Veterans (a.k.a. Traditionalists, WWII Generation, born before 1945)</p> <p>Plan to stay with the organization over the long term. Respectful of organizational hierarchy. Like structure. Accepting of authority figures in the workplace. Give maximum effort.</p>
<p>Baby Boomers (born 1945-1964)</p> <p>Give maximum effort. Accepting of authority figures in the workplace. Results driven. Plan to stay with the organization over the long term. Retain what they learn.</p>
<p>Generation X (born 1965-1980)</p> <p>Technologically savvy. Like informality. Learn quickly. Seek work/life balance. Embrace diversity.</p>
<p>Nexters (a.k.a. Generation Y, born after 1980)</p> <p>Technologically savvy. Like informality. Embrace diversity. Learn quickly. Need supervision.</p>
<p>Note: For each trait, respondents were asked to rate whether the trait is “very applicable,” “moderately applicable,” “slightly applicable” or “not at all applicable” to each of the four generations. Results shown are top five traits for each generation listed in order from highest to lowest.</p>
<p>Source : <i>Generational Differences Survey Report, 2004.</i></p>

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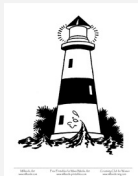
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About Our Organization

PVSES was founded to provide high quality, specialized medical care to companion animal patients. Our practice is dedicated to serving the veterinary community as a partner in total patient care.

We offer comprehensive specialized services including endoscopy, Doppler ultrasound, surgery, 24-hour ICU care, and emergency and critical care.

Our staff is committed to providing compassionate and thorough medical care that meets the needs of the patient, client, and referring veterinarian.

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