Microsoft

How 5 generations add up to 1 productive workplace

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Different generations, different needs

Today's workplace is more age-diverse than ever. With several generations working side-by-side, it's important to consider how their typical workstyles and needs might differ. Each generation has distinct experiences and preferences, especially when it comes to technology. Let's look at each of the generations working today and consider some research-based insights that can help you support them. With these insights, you can give individuals the right tools to maximize productivity, and get teams collaborating more effectively.

01

Traditionalists Born before 1945

Key trends
In Q2 of 2017, almost one in five 70- to 74-year-olds were still employed, up from one in ten in 1994.[1]
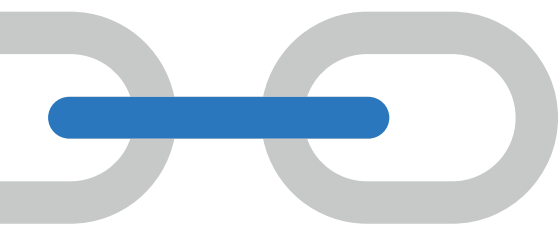
Workplace needs
Civic-minded and loyal, they're team players and tend to stick with one employer for as long as possible. Traditionalists like to work as part of a structured team, with a focus on longer-term projects.

Tech tips
Although not afraid of technology, Traditionalists tend to rely more on desktop computers, landline phones, and fax machines. They need robust voice capabilities and traditional desktop applications.

02

Baby Boomers
# Born 1946 to 1964

Key Trends

Boomers tend to stay in the same field for longer than Millennials, but switch employers more than Traditionalists. In 2015, they comprised 29% of the workforce, but are rapidly retiring.[2]

Workplace needs

Boomers focus on individual performance and are driven, with their identity defined by their profession. They care deeply about climbing the organizational ladder.

Tech tips

They're less likely than Gen X or Millennials to use social media at work[3], or to use smartphones[4]. They rely heavily on email: Checking email is the number one mobile phone activity for those over 50.[5]
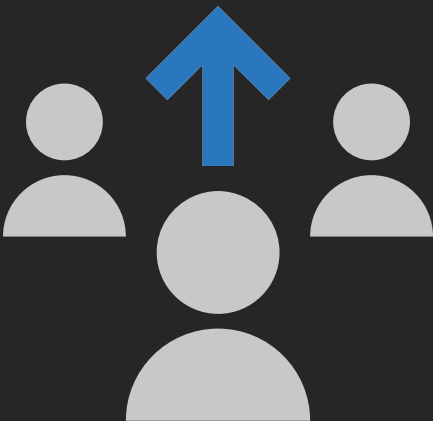
03

Generation X
Born 1965 to 1980

Key trends
Gen X has begun to replace Boomers in managerial positions in recent years, with 65% saying they manage the work of others. [6]

Workplace needs
Gen X workers are more independent than their predecessors, value authority less, and are more likely to walk away from an inflexible workplace.

Tech tips
Gen X fully embraces technology in the workplace, including smartphones, email, laptops, and tablets. They value flexibility, so video conferencing and team-based digital workspaces are a must.

04

Millennials
Born 1980 to 1997

Key trends
Millennials are a driving force in today's workplace: They'll comprise 75% of the global workforce by 2025. [7]

Workplace needs
They crave interaction, feedback, and collaboration, and are even more informal than Gen X. They're strongly driven by a sense of purpose, and crave continuous workplace learning and growth.

Tech tips
Millennials grew up fully immersed in digital technology. Email seems old-school to them. Text, IM, and social are primary modes of communication. 59% say state-of-the art technology is important to them when considering a job, and 41% say they prefer to communicate electronically.[8]

05

Generation Z
Born After 1997

Key trends

This generation is just beginning to enter the workforce, but is the largest cohort of the U.S. population, and the most ethnically diverse. [9]

Workplace needs

Gen Z is used to a fast pace: 62% think a feedback session of more than five minutes is too long.[10] They tend to be independent and competitive, as opposed to the more collaborative approach of Millennials.

Tech tips

91% say a company's tech savvy impacts their decision to work there, yet 85% say they prefer face-to-face communication at work[11]. They might appreciate technology that provides a personal experience, such as coauthoring and video meetings.

Choose flexible technology to make the most of a multi-generational workforce

It's important to choose collaboration and productivity tools that meet a wide range of needs, yet bring teams together regardless of how individuals choose to connect.

Those who crave independence can benefit from seamless cross-device, cross-location experiences, while those who want more personalized interactions may lean more heavily on voice and video.

All generations place a high and growing value on workplace technology, so making the right choice is more important than ever.

Today, it's possible to get communication, collaboration, and productivity for every generation in one easy-to-use solution with Microsoft 365.

Learn more about Microsoft solutions for the multigenerational workplace

Footnotes

[1] [Working Past 70: Americans Can't Seem to Retire, Bloomberg](#)

[2] [Millennials surpass Gen Xers as the largest generation in U.S. labor force, Richard Fry](#)

[3] [Social Media and the Workplace, Keith Olmstead, et al.](#)

[4] [Mobile Fact Sheet, Pew Research](#)

[5] [50+ Facts and Fiction: Mature Consumers Online](#)

[6-7] [Global generations: A global study on work-life challenges across generations, EY](#)

[8] [Millennials at work Reshaping the workplace, PwC](#)

[9] [New Kids on The Block: A First Look at Gen Z, The Hartman Group, Forbes](#)

[10-11] [David Stillman](#)

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