Generational Insights

on Bridging Differences

Prepared by: Pam McElvane, CEO &DMBA Research Team
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diversity **MBA**
BENCHMARKING

Understanding the influence of generational behaviors in the workplace has become the most prolific initiative that organizations are trying to leverage. Differences of outlook or opinion between people of different generations is a value of diversity and inclusion. It is important to understand the impact that generational differences have on organizations to create an environment of harmony, mutual respect, and creativity that leads to organizational success.

This executive summary is intended to highlight practices and provide insights on generational differences and companies approach to solutions. *The insights are from the DMBA Inclusive Leadership Index (ILI).*

Trends in Generational Perspectives

Illustration: Generational Perspectives: Percent of companies with Yes Responses
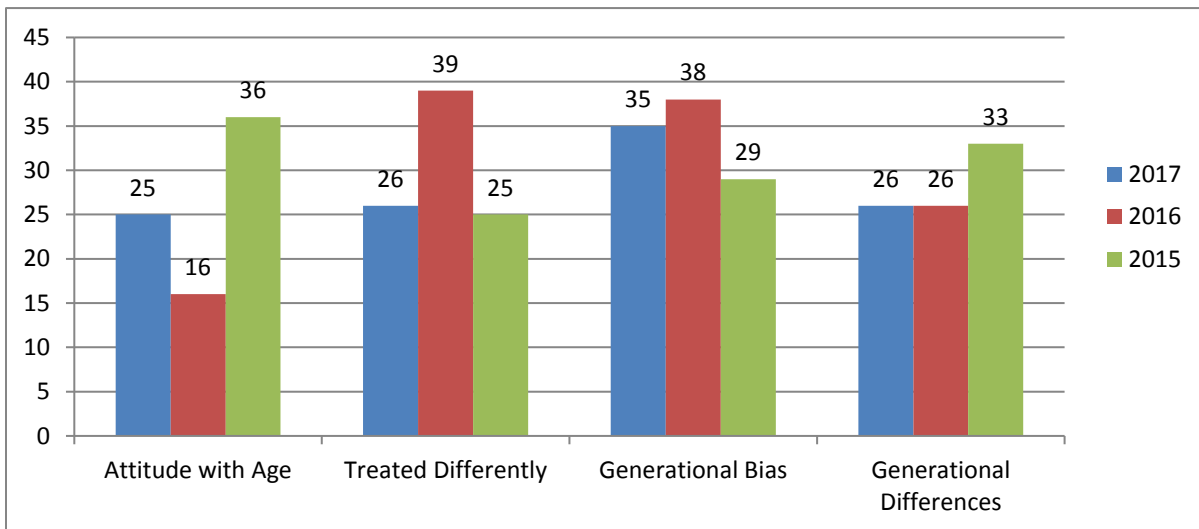
This chart illustrates how the generational differences yes responses have declined. Coupled with unconscious bias and sensitivity training generational attitudes have improved in the workplace. Employees are learning to work through differences; and teams are learning to be more innovative in how they collaborate.

Because of changing times, in how works get done and quick access to information, a different leadership style is required to ensure consistent messaging is communicated across generations in the workplace. Some things to consider is what are the differences between generations?, Are their differences in leadership style among the generations? And how do generational differences affect organizational success?

The insights shared in this summary will perhaps provide perspective when making decisions on integrating generations and developing values. (unedited responses from index).

IDENTIFYING GENERATIONAL BEHAVIORS

Below are charted behaviors companies have identified among generations in the workplace.

Traditionalists	Boomers	Gen Hers	Millennial
High loyalty and retention	More loyal yet unwilling	Loyal and open to change	Not loyal but more flexible
Valuable life experiences	High work ethic and strong sense of drive of task accomplishment	Want to achieve work/life balance	Adept to using communication tools & technology; enjoys social media
Sense of belonging	Accepts the status quo to work until the job is done	Cynical but flexible, adaptable and hardworking	Desire an enhanced work life balance
Holds institutional knowledge	Prefers benefits and recognition	Prefers benefits that are flexible	Prefer cash in lieu of benefits
Set in ways but respected for long term commitment	As a group goal oriented and results driven	Self sufficient and effective change managers	Willing to be flexible in work schedules
Prefers face to face and hands on connection	Significant expertise to share with colleagues and new generations	Strong interpersonal skills	Seek career advancement faster than other generations
Not sophisticated technology users	Rigid in protocol but offers a wealth of experience	Consistent users of current technology and willing to learn	Want to make a contribution both at work and in the community
Believes they pretty much are the authority	Sense of belonging with reluctant to change	Value learning to enhance existing skills	High expectations and innovative
Great story tellers	Exceptional interpersonal skills	Strong off the bench which means they adapt quickly	Eager to be coached and developed
Ownership of work so may not be easy to give away the secret sauce	Out of touch with technology, must understand the need to learn themselves	Takes a while to delegate but can learn to	Poor follow up and inconsistent team members

## Retooling Generations for Advancement

What companies are doing to develop each generation. Every generation has a different understanding of diversity and inclusion. The insights are from the DMBA Inclusive Leadership Index (ILI).

- Internal multigenerational Toolkit for managers to help them understand and appreciate how different generations create a more diverse workforce.
- Training for managers: Custom workshop (2hours) Managing the Cross Generational Workforce; which helps with communication and motivation of direct reports.
- Redesigned benefit plan to a cafeteria style model which included auto enrollment. This addressed the desire of millennial desire to have flexibility in managing plans.
- Administer a relevancy test of employment brand among millennial employees. Results revealed that all generations related to the attributes and with no generational differences.
- Encourage honest and authentic conversations in the workplace to bridge potential gaps in workplace dynamics. Leverage internal communications and messaging.
- Training to educate about stereotypes and unfavorable workplace behaviors. Focus on minimizing judgments and assumptions. Managers are required to be trained on perspectives that may influence their decision to promote Millennials.
- Additional specific training to increase awareness about generational differences and similarities.
- Intergenerational employee resource group assists in educating employees on generational differences and how to leverage differences to competitive advantages. They also support events and programming.
- Leadership training on the benefits of all generations in workforce, and how to create effective and inclusive multi generational teams.
- Companies need to be sensitive to employees in remote locations and virtual environments. Create different learning platforms for these groups and understand that one size does not fit all.
- Transformational leadership style focuses mainly on the ability of leaders to influence and inspire followers through their visions, creativity, goals, and actions.
- Leader behaviors as the "Four I"s": Idealized influence, Inspirational motivation, Intellectual stimulation, and Individualized consideration.

 Note, that continuous and customized training is very popular platform for creating awareness and educating the workforce on generational differences.

Illustration: Regional differences affect how employees want to be treated in the workplace:

Percent of companies with Yes Responses
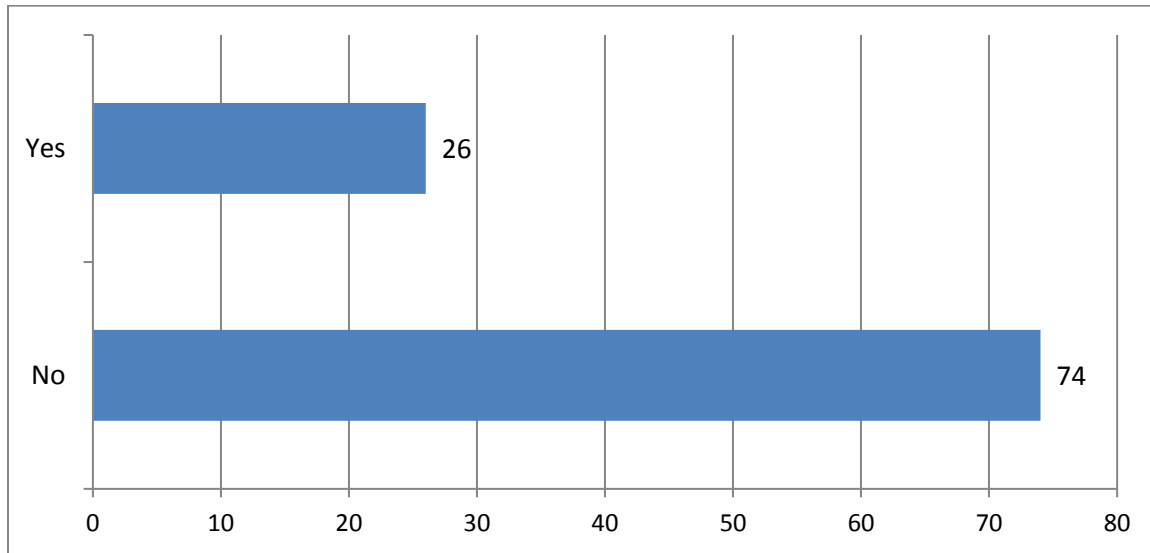
26 percent of companies responded yes to having regional differences impact how employees want to be treated. This particularly insight is important because it identifies the importance of why subcultures require intentional efforts.   Regions represent different geographic locations (both domestically and globally), so we must respect that different regions are in different places of their diversity journey.

25 percent of companies responded yes to employee's workplace behavior and attitude influenced by age of supervisor. Leadership styles influence culture heavily in remote locations. Encourage periodic check in to ensure leaders in remote locations are in alignment with corporate values.

Characteristics of Most Admired Leaders

Regardless of generation leaders with the below defined characteristics are able to engage followers, influence environments and create inclusive cultures.

Ambitious - showing a strong desire and determination to succeed;

Caring - display of kindness and concern for others;

Competent -possessing the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to lead;

Determined -making a firm decision and being resolved not to change it;

Forward-looking -favoring innovation and progressive development;

Honest - simply put not lying, being truthful and straight forward;

Imaginative -ability to come up with new and creative ideas;

Inspiring -ability to influence positive behavior on someone;

Loyal -showing firm and constant support to an individual or institution;

Self-controlled -ability to manage emotions in difficult and/or exciting circumstances.

About the Author

Pam McElvane, MBA, MA, CEO, P & L Group, Ltd./Founder DMBA Inclusive Leadership Index

Pam's business experience in the diversity space spans more than 20 years. As publisher of Diversity MBA Magazine, Diversity Business Review Journal (DBR), *Inclusive Leadership Index (ILI)* and the White Paper Series, she has become one of the leading experts and resources on how companies recruit, develop, retain, and advance women and diverse talent.

Pam has spent the past 20 years as an entrepreneur building a business that recognizes and develops women and diverse talent on a national scale. Diversity MBA is a national recognized brand that ranks Fortune 500 companies for the Best Places to Work; recognized Top 100 executive leaders through events and customized platforms. Diversity MBA provides services to more than 100 companies and Universities on a national scale. Pam has her MBA in Finance and International Marketing, and MA in Public Policy, from University of California, at Berkeley. She has several executive certifications and a host of awards recognizing her contributions to leadership. She serves on five national community boards and is a loving wife and supportive mother of three young men.