

Generational Differences in the Fire Service: Bridging the Gap



Presenters

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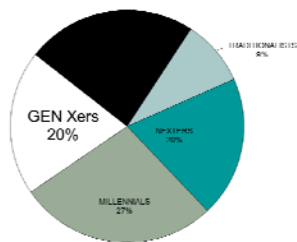
Objectives

- Identify characteristics of the three generations in the California Fire Service
- Recruitment strategies for Millennials
- Strategies for new firefighter development
- Suggestions for engaging and overcoming generational differences
- Promotions and the generations
- Senior staff and the generations

Generations in the California Fire Service (2016)

- Baby Boomers
 - 1946 – 1964 (52 – 70 years of age)
- Generation X
 - 1965 – 1981 (35 – 51 years of age)
- Millennials
 - 1982 – 2000 (16 – 34 years of age)

U.S. Population



322,761,807 in 2016

Generations

EACH GENERATION CONTRIBUTES

+ POSITIVE TRAITS CHALLENGES **-**

BABY BOOMERS
GEN Xers
MILLENNIALS

What makes one generation different from another?

Shared life experiences



Events and Experiences that Shaped Generations

- Baby Boomers
 - Civil rights
 - Feminism
 - Vietnam
 - Cold War
 - Space travel
 - Assassinations
 - Scientific advances
 - Credit cards
 - Television
- Generation X
 - Fall of the Berlin Wall
 - Challenger disaster
 - Desert Storm
 - Personal computers
 - Working mothers
 - MTV
 - Divorce
 - Energy crisis

Events and Experiences that Shaped Generations

- Millennials
 - Child-focused world
 - School shootings
 - 9/11
 - Boston Marathon
 - Internet
 - Social networking
 - Continual feedback
 - Great Recession
 - Iraq/Afghanistan

Baby Boomers

- Born 1946 to 1964
- 79 million
- Lived in generally prosperous times, but experienced layoffs
- Grew up with fewer rules and a more nurturing environment
- Women entered workforce in record numbers
- "Live to Work!"
- Spend "quality time" with children
- Excelling in their career is important
- Prefer telephone or face-to-face communication
- Desire challenge and opportunity



Common Values

- Baby Boomers
 - Optimism
 - Team orientation
 - Personal gratification
 - Involvement
 - Personal growth
 - Workaholics
 - Competitors



Boomers in the Workplace

- Uncomfortable with conflict
- Consensus building leadership style
- Formal
- Follow protocol
- Social
- Politically sensitive
- Idealistic



Generation X

- Born 1965 to 1981
- 49 million
- Grew up as latchkey or day care children
- Turbulent economic times – downturn in 80s, upswing in 90s
- “Work to Live!”
- Friends with their child, want to spend quantity time
- Expect their career to keep moving forward or they will leave
- Prefer electronic communications
- Change from job security to career security



Common Values

- Generation X
 - Diversity
 - Techno-literacy
 - Fun and informality
 - Self-reliance
 - Pragmatism – realists
 - Results oriented
 - Individualism
 - Challenge the system



Gen Xers in the Workplace

- Fast-paced
- Independent
- Confident
- Value personal time
- Challenge the status quo
- Loyal to staff leader



Millennials

- Born 1982 to 2000
- 75 million
- Attended day care, very involved "helicopter" parents
- Prosperity has increased over their lifetime
- "Live, then Work!"
- Achievement oriented
- Prefer instant or text messaging
- Want to build parallel careers – experts in multitasking



Common Values

- Millennials
 - Optimistic
 - Civic duty
 - Confident
 - Achievement oriented
 - Respect for diversity
 - Informal (Chain of Command?)
 - Tenacious
 - Social consciousness

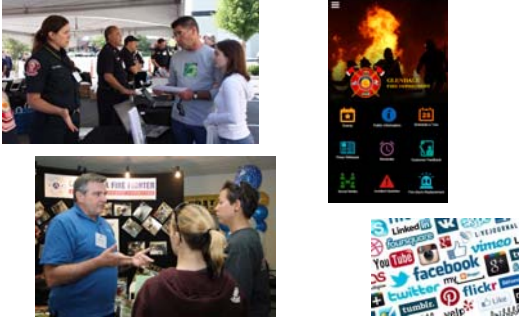


Millennials in the Workplace

- Task oriented
- Want options & choices
- Expect attention
- Expect feedback
- Multitask through multimedia
- Think "digital"
- Work toward weekend or closing time
- They are impatient
- Want to be led



Recruitment strategies for Millennials



Strategies for new firefighter development



Suggestions for engaging and overcoming generational differences



On-the-Job Strengths



	Boomers	Xers	Millennial
Job Strength	Service Oriented/Team Players	Adaptable and Techno-Literate	Multitaskers and Techno-Savvy
Outlook	Optimistic	Skeptical	Hopeful
View of Authority	Love/Hate	Unimpressed and Unintimidated	Polite
Leadership	By Consensus	By Competence	By Pulling Together
Relationships	Personal Gratification	Reluctant to Commit	Inclusive

On-the-Job Strengths



	Boomers	Xers	Millennial
Time on the job	Visibility is key "Face Time"	As long as I get the job done, who cares	It's quitting time – I have a real life to live
Diversity	Integration began	Integrated	No majority race
Feedback	Once a year with documentation	Interrupts and asks how they are doing	Wants feedback at the push of a button
Work/Life Balance	Balances everyone else and themselves	Wants balance now	Need flexibility to balance activities

Generational Challenges We Face in the Workplace

- Poor communication
- Decreased productivity, quality, & innovation
- Misunderstood attitudes, relationships & working environments
- Less engaged workers
- Lack of motivation, initiative, and team work

On-the-Job Challenges



Boomers generally do not question or challenge authority.



Xers and Millennials have been taught to speak up.

On-the-Job Challenges



■ **Xers and Millennials**

- Prefer electronic communication.
- Do not like meetings.
- Many have not developed listening skills.

■ **Boomers**

- Prefer face-to-face communication.
- Boomer bosses like to have at least one meeting each week with employees.

Bridging the Generation Gaps

■ **For all employees**

- Appreciate differences
- Acknowledge your interdependency
- Appreciate what you have in common



Bridging the Generation Gaps

- For all employees
 - Accept and appreciate another's perspective
 - Take responsibility for making your relationships better

Bridging the Generation Gaps

- For all employees
 - Discuss expectations
 - Inquire about immediate tasks
 - Look for ways to cut bureaucracy and red tape
 - Keep up with technology

Bridging the Generation Gaps

- For Managers
 - Focus on goals
 - Make everyone feel included
 - Break the bonds of tradition
 - Show employees the future
 - Encourage balance

Bridging the Generation Gaps

■ Getting along with *Boomers*

- Show respect
- Choose face-to-face conversations
- Give people your full attention
- Learn the corporate history

Bridging the Generation Gaps

■ Getting along with *Xers*

- Get to the point
- Use email
- Give them space
- Get over the notion of dues paying
- Lighten up

Bridging the Generation Gaps

■ Getting along with *Millennials*

- Challenge them
- Ask them their opinion/collaborate
- Encourage finding a mentor
- Provide timely feedback
- Lighten up

Bridging the Generation Gaps

- Remember that all generations want:
 - To be treated fairly
 - Work that provides personal satisfaction
 - Employers who understand personal lives are important
 - Work that is valued by employers and customers
 - A clear sense of purpose from employers

Promotions and the generations



Senior staff and the generations



Discussion | Questions

- What practices work for you?
 - Relationships
 - Work environment
 - Rules
- What changes will you make based upon what you have learned today?

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