Capitalizing on the Strengths of the U.S. Multigenerational Corporate Workforce
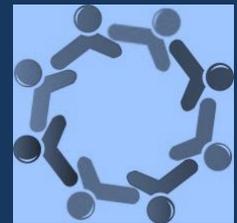
Advanced Project

Theresa J. Stueber

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Foreword

My experience working in a multigenerational workforce

My story is a bit backwards, however, an enriching experience. When I started at DePaul I had been working in the United States based healthcare industry for the past 13 years and my co-workers were similar in age, 46, and we shared the same line of work, as an Executive Assistant. The executives I worked with were also close in age to me.

While at DePaul I was introduced to global business and affairs when I opted to participate in the Germany study abroad program. I had never been to Europe nor had I studied global matters. I was first introduced to a culture outside of the U.S., an experience of a different lifestyle in comparison to that of the U.S. I had little time to study the German language and encountered a bit of a language barrier as street signs were all in German however English is a second language for Germans – whew, I was thankful. The trip brought so many experiences and attention to my personal being, to broadening my view outside of "home sweet home".

Other classes at DePaul that brought personal professional awareness included Kolb Learning Style and Meyers Briggs tools. Each of these helped me understand who I am or how I may more effectively learn based on my personality and thinking. While still at the healthcare company that I had worked for, I had the opportunity to participate in a Senn Delaney workshop that brought teams together to assist them in learning more about each of their co-workers and learn how they might best work in teams. The team that I participated with was not my team so additionally I experienced others perceptions of me and vice versa based on the few facts they and I had learned about each other during the workshop.

In the final phase at DePaul, ready to start my Advanced Project, I landed a new position with a global manufacturing company. Wow I thought, but what an experience to learn a new industry as well as global. The team I work with is primarily composed of a younger generation

between the ages of 25-32 which are Gen Ys – born between 1982-1999. My boss is a Baby Boomer born between 1946-1964 and I just hit the cusp being a Gen X born between 1965-1981.

Within the first few weeks of starting, I experienced generational differences in communication, learning styles and personality traits that I had learned about but had not really personally experienced in my previous job working with a like-age team. I decided to take this a step further. I learned that the labor force as of today and anticipated through 2022 and possibly 2050 will be that of primarily three generations. I took this as an opportunity of growth which would enable me to understand and collaborate more effectively as well as learn of opportunities to strengthen my relationships both at work and at home. So, I decided to research and write my Advanced Project on the issues companies face today in having a multigenerational workforce.

Part I: Research Structure

Introduction

This Advanced Project is an analysis of today's United States multigenerational corporate workforce. The goal of this paper is to define and understand the characteristics of life experiences, values, likes, dislikes, and expectations of today's multigenerational workforce. These insights will enable better communication to capitalize on each generation's strength as a strategic resource for the corporation's competitive edge. A third goal discusses and analyzes current and future US workforce trends. This paper concludes with proposed strategies for building cooperative and collaborative mutigenerational corporate workforce teams.

Toossi (2012), an economist in the Division of Industry Employment Projections, Office of Occupational Statistics and Employment Projections, Bureau of Labor Statistics, reiterated in the Bureau of Labor Statistics *Monthly Labor Review*, "Projections of the Labor Force to 2050*,"* that the last several years has been that of a proportionate labor force which includes people who are actively looking for employment or are employed, and is projected to continue through 2050. The Bureau and various researchers, while using the same names to identify each generation use slightly different age brackets. Researchers, Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, and Lance (2010) identify the four generations in their article "Generational Differences in Work Values: Leisure and Extrinsic Values Increasing, Social and Intrinsic Values Decreasing" in the *Journal of Management*. They are:

- Traditionalists born 1925-1945

- Baby Boomers born 1946-1964

- Generation X born 1965-1981

- Generation Y born 1982-1999

Advanced Project Competencies

- F-11: Can identify corporate trends and develop strategic solutions to capitalize on multigenerational workforce strengths.

- F-12: Can define generational characteristics of today's multigenerational workforce, and identify similar and different perspectives to enable improved communication and foster business management trends.

Problem Statement

Corporations today are seeking solutions to their loss of revenue due to the inability of their inter-generational workforce to collaborate in productive working teams. This Advanced Project addresses the corporate problem of how today's multigenerational workforce can work together to improve company success.

Advanced Project Goals

In this Advanced Project, I will:

- Conduct a literature review of scholarly sources analyzing today's U.S. multigenerational corporate workforce.

- Define terms: generation, generation gap, knowledge, skills, mentor.

- Include statistical data provided from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics which has determined the current multigenerational workforce mix and predictions for near future.

- Define and identify each generation's characteristics: Life experiences, values, communication preferences and work ethics.

- Analyze current corporate multigenerational workforce trends.

- Research generational differences which affect a corporation's bottom line:

- o Social trends: Age stereotypes in the workplace—effects on communication and computer-based technology

- o Demographic trends:

    - ▪ Knowledge Transfer

    - ▪ Technology

- Define generational similarities

- Develop strategies to creative solutions to bridge the multigenerational gap factors that affect a corporation's bottom line.

    - ▪ Participate in two corporate workshops:

        - • Senn Delaney, Heidrick & Struggles, "Unfreezing" Session

        - • The "How" in Leadership

Limitations of this Study

This Advanced Project focuses only on today's multigenerational United States workforce. My research does not include diversity of race or gender. Although my research shares significant life experiences of the era or eras each generation has live(d) to help explain how that might shape their values, motivation, similarities and differences, it does not explain in detail any economic (U.S. population, unemployment in relation to U.S. labor force) or physical impacts (financial hardship, illness, disability, etc...) that would affect human behavior with respect to the workplace.

Research Methodologies

My research includes a collection of materials from quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative statistics cover demographics as well as empirical studies conducted by behavioral scientists, sociologists and human resources (HR) experts in the field. Qualitative research

includes a review of scholarly literature on the United States multigenerational workforce values,

behaviors, attitudes, and challenges with a focus on the additional risks of knowledge lost when

the older generation leaves or retires. My resources came from DePaul University library, U.S.

Bureau of Labor, the Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM) and the American

Association of Retired Persons (AARP).

I also participated in two business workshops: Senn Delaney, "Unfreezing Session," and

the Rob Reindl Organization Consulting Services, "The 'How in Leadership," and share my

personal experiences and reflections. I took notes from both workshop presentations and made

personal notations of my own findings as well as my observations and notes on the group's

participation and responses during these workshops. I did not formally interview anyone but did

have valuable conversations and feedback during the many teambuilding exercises.

Glossary

American Retired Persons Association (AARP)
A nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, with a membership of nearly 38 million, that helps people turn their goals and dreams into real possibilities, strengthens communities and fights for the issues that matter most to families such as healthcare, employment and income security, retirement planning, affordable utilities and protection from financial abuse (Jenkins, 2014, p. 4) .

Rob Reindl Organization Consulting Services, Inc.
As Corporate Vice President, Human Resources at Edwards Lifesciences, Reindl played a key role in the development of the company's culture during its pivotal period of growth (Reindl, 2014).

Senn Delaney is now at Heidrick & Struggles
Senn Delaney was the first firm in the world to focus exclusively on transforming cultures. We were founded in 1978 with a singular mission: to create healthy, high-performance cultures. More Fortune 500 and Global 1000 CEOs have chosen us as their trusted partner to help shape cultures that deliver better business results than any other company in our field (Senn Delaney, Heidrick & Struggles, 2014).

Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM)
Founded in 1948, is the world's largest HR membership organization devoted to human resource management. Representing more than 275,000 members in over 160 countries, the Society is the leading provider of resources to serve the needs of HR professionals and advance the professional practice of human resource management, SHRM has more than 575 affiliated chapters within the United States and subsidiary offices in China, India and United Arab Emirates (Jackson, 2014, p. 1).

Part II: Literature Review

Researchers Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, and Lance (2010), in their *Journal of Management* article *"*Generational Differences in Work Values: Leisure and Extrinsic Values Increasing, Social and Intrinsic Values Decreasing," identified the time frame for each generation as: The Traditionalists born 1925-1945, the Baby Boomers born 1946-1964, Generation X born 1965-1981, and Generation Y born 1982-1999. These authors note that each distinct cohort brings its own life experiences as well as differing perspectives, expectations, work styles, and strengths to an organization (Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, & Lance, 2010).

Researchers Kupperschmidt (2000), Leiber (2010) as well as Smola and Sutton (2002), Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, and. Lance (2010), and Zemke, Raines, and Filipczak (1999), Burke (2004), Murphy (2007) along with other HR professionals on behalf of the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) (2010) and the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) (2007) have stated that one of a corporation's strategic competitive advantages is to understand each generational cohort in order to facilitate better communication to capitalize on each cohort's strengths. These strengths or differences are attributed to the values of each distinct generation.

Additionally, Hill and Stephens (2003) reported in their article "The Compassionate Organization in the 21st Century: Challenges for the New Millennium," that these cohorts expect respect from others based on their values, needs and wants, and when they do not see the results they anticipated, they are often offended. By recognizing these differences, conflict could be avoided (Hill & Stephens, 2003; Kupperschmidt, 2000; Leiber, 2010; Smola & Sutton, 2002; Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, & Lance, 2010; Zemke, Raines, & Filipczak, 1999).

Researchers DeLong (2004), Calo (2008) and Jackson (2010), CEO of the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), have reported for the past several years that one of the

largest risks corporations' face today is the threat of lost knowledge when older employees leave

or retire and the critical urgency to facilitate transferring that knowledge to the younger

generations sooner than later. As an update to his 2010 article in the *Special Supplement* of *HR*

Magazine, Jackson (2014) reported that the oldest Boomers have reached the traditional age of

retirement of 65 while the youngest Boomers are today turning 50 and strongly reemphasizes a

greater urgency to this matter as it will affect the United States' competitive position in the

global marketplace.

　　"The Clash of the Titans," as it is commonly referred to over the years, has been much

covered in trade journals such as *Forbes*, *Gallup Business Journal* and the *Journal of*

Organizational Behavior in attempts to define generational differences in the workplace today.

To date there has been limited empirical research on intergenerational differences. Murphy

(2007), Senior Consultant for Claire Raines Associates and primary contributor of the American

Association of Retired Persons (AARP) publication "Leading a Multigenerational Workforce*"*

reported that in today's workforce the hierarchy of command is much different. For example, a

20 year old is likely to be working alongside someone who is old enough to be their grandparent

or better yet, managing this person and implementing policies that will effect this older

generation (Murphy, 2007).

　　Managers and human resource (HR) specialists have the opportunity to utilize the

strengths of each distinct generation as a resource of competitive advantage as social trends and

demographics in the near future will severely impact the workforce. Understanding these

generations will enable better communication to capitalize on each generation's strengths as a

strategic resource for the corporation's competitive advantage (Kupperschmidt, 2000; Leiber,

2010; Smola & Sutton, 2002; Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, & Lance, 2010; Zemke, Raines, &

Filipczak, 1999).

Demographics

In December of 2013, Toossi (2013), an economist in the Division of Industry

Employment Projections, Office of Occupational Statistics and Employment Projections, Bureau

of Labor Statistics, defined in the Bureau of Labor Statistics *Monthly Labor* "Review,

Projections of the Labor Force to 2050," (p. 1) the civilian labor force as any U.S. citizen

employed (excludes government or military employment), or actively looking for employment.

The labor force is a percentage of the Census Bureau's U.S. population projections. For 2012,

the labor force population was 63.7% of the U.S. population and is predicted to fall to 61.6% in

2022 (Toossi, 2013).

The labor force growth rate today and projected for the next 10 years, 2012-2022 is 0.5%

compared to 0.7% for the past 10 years, 2002-2012 (p. 18); clearly a declining labor force.

Changes in the labor force composition occur due to economic and social factors (Toossi, 2013).

A primary economic and social factor (cause and effect) of recent changes was the

recession of 2007-2009. Reported by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2012), "according to

the National Bureau of Economic Research (the official arbiter of U.S. recessions), there were 10

recessions between 1948 and 2011" with the most recent recession that began in December 2007

and ended in June 2009. The unemployment rate at the start of the recession was at 5% as of

December 2007; a rate that had been maintained at 5% or below for the preceding 30 months.

By the end of the recession, the unemployment rate was at 9.5% and peaked in October 2009 at

10% (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statisitcs, 2012).

In Toossi's 2013 report, these generational age-based cohorts were defined as follows:

16-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, and 55 and older. Toossi (2013) also noted that the next 10 years

will present an aging workforce. Based on data collected from Toossi's February and October

2012 and 2013 reports, illustrated by author, myself, Table 1 is a snapshot of each 10 year span

projection, 2002-2022 and 2050 of the percentage of age-based groups in the U.S. civilian labor force.

Table 1: Multigenerational Groups as a Percent of U.S. Civilian Labor Force, Bureau of

Labor Statistics

Civilian Labor Force by Age							Shifts from 2002 through 2050			
Age	Year 2002	Year 2010	Year 2012	Year 2020	Year 2022	Year 2050	2002 to 2010	2010 to 2020	2012 to 2022	2022 to 2050
16-24	15.4	13.6	13.7	11.2	11.3	12	-1.8	-2.4	-2.4	0.7
25-34	22.2	21.8	21.6	22.2	22.5	22	-0.4	0.4	0.9	-0.5
35-44	25.5	21.7	21.1	21.4	21.3	22	-3.8	-0.3	0.2	0.7
45-54	22.5	23.4	22.6	20.1	19.3	20	0.9	-3.3	-3.3	0.7
55 and older	14.3	19.5	20.9	25.2	25.6	24	5.2	5.7	4.7	-1.6
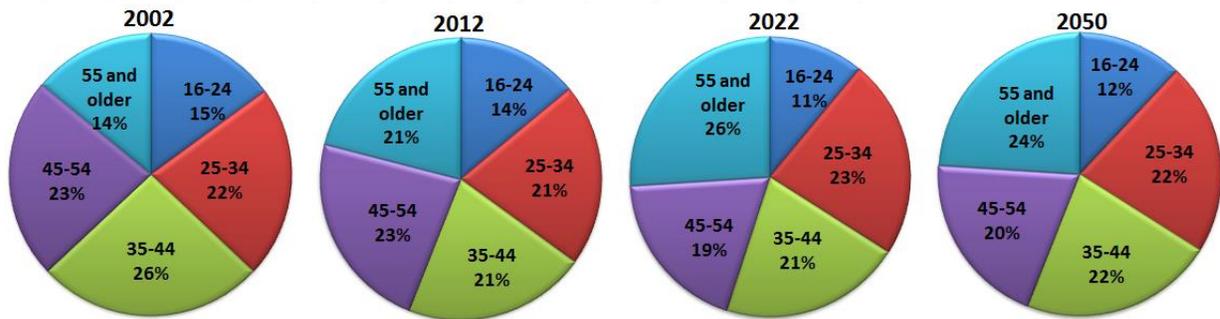
Author created and adapted from:
Source: [1]Data collected from the U.S. Bureau of Labor of Statistics, Toossi, Labor force projections to 2020: a more slowly growing workforce, 2012, February, Monthly Labor Review.
[2] Data collected from the BLS, Labor force projections to 2022: the labor force participation rate continues to fall, 2013, December, Monthly Labor Review.
[3] Data collected from the BLS, Visual Essay: Long-Term Labor Force, Projections of the labor force to 2050: a visual essay, 2012, October, Monthly Labor Review.

Toossi's (2013) civilian labor force predictions for older workers, age 55 and above, from

2012 to 2050 were 20.9% of 2012 (p. 15) to that of 2050 of 24% (2012, October, p. 11).

Additionally he noted, the only age group that has seen a strong growth in the labor force since

1996, are 55 years and older (Toossi, 2012, October).

Age group 16-24 (Toossi, 2013, p. 54), has seen a decline in the workforce population

and attributes this to either the age group's education attainment, which is on the rise, or that of

cyclical changes which have had the greatest impact on the labor force making this age group at

high risk since they are the first to lose their job and the last to be hired (Toossi, 2012, February,

p. 51). Toossi (2012, October) additionally stated that the prime-age workers — those 25 to 54 years are noted to have a strong presence in the labor force and it is predicted that the percentage of this age group will continue to decline in coming decades (p. 53).

Defining the Multigenerational Workforce

Kupperschmidt (2000), in her article "Multigeneration Employees: Strategies for Effective Management," defines a generation as a group that shares the same birth years and experiences similar significant life experiences. Gravett and Throckmorton (2007), Smola and Sutton (2002), Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, and Lance (2010), and Zemke, Raines, and Filipczak (2000) add that when individuals from the same generation share similar significant life events, such as the Great Depression, 9/11, or other historic, economic or social experiences, it is more likely that they would also share similar characteristics of work values, attitudes and behaviors.

Twenge, et al. (2010) cited Lubinski, Schmidt, and Benbow (1996), along with Meglino and Ravlin (1998), all of whom agreed that these significant life events experienced during childhood through adolescence serve as a foundation of values for each generation (Twenge, et al., 2010). Therefore, as Twenge et al. (2010) shared, "these are generally understood to describe gradual but study changes over time rather than sudden shifts at birth year cutoffs" (p. 1120).

As mentioned earlier, Twenge, et al. (2010), presented in their article, "Generational Differences in Work Values" for the *Journal of Management*, a definition of age-ranges of each of the four generational groups that slightly differs from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), and names each generation beginning with the youngest group, GenY, as those born between 1982 and 1999 and the Traditionalists as those born between 1925 and 1945, the oldest group.

The two other groups are in-between: GenX as those born between 1965 and 1981 and the Baby Boomers as those born between 1946-1964, share Schaeffer (2000) and Shepard's

(2004) theory that behavioral sociologists suggest that each generation is about two decades and either side of this age span can fade into the background of the previous or next generation. As stated in my Introduction, for the purposes of this paper, I am using the age spans as defined by Twenge, et al. (2010). See Table 2.

Table 2: Generation Titles, Defined Timelines

Generation	Years Born	Age in 2002	Age 2012	Age 2022	Age 2050
GenY	1982-1999	20-3	30-13	40-23	68-51
GenX	1965-1981	37-21	47-31	57-41	85-69
Baby Boomers	1946-1964	56-38	66-48	76-58	104-86
Traditionalists	1925-1945	77-57	87-67	97-77	125-105

Author created and adapted
Source: (Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, & Lance, 2010, p. 1118)

Lieber (2010), reported in her *Employment Relations Today* journal article that researchers agree on these four generation cohorts by name, however, each researcher uses timelines that divide each generation cohort by a few years; not a significant differences and possible for those born in cusp years of one generation to another, that it is likely to have a blend of values and experiences. These age-based cohorts are not to be portrayed as a stereotype but more so as a gauge of general characteristics of what each group's life experiences have been, their values, wants, needs, and behavior traits.

Twenge, et al. (2010), conducted a time-lag study in 1976 (Baby Boomers), 1991 (GenX), and 2006 (GenY), examining work values of U.S. high school seniors (nationally represented, N = 16,507). Twenge's team pointed out the time-lag method focused on each generation during a given time period of 1976, 1991, and 2006 and concluded that any differences among these cohorts was due to that of a generation than that of age (maturity or stage in career) differences. Twenge et al. (2010) research of values includes support from other researchers, defined work values "as outcomes employees desire and feel they should attain — Work values shape employee perceptions which in turn influence attitudes, work behaviors,

problem-solving, and job decision-making" (p. 1121). This data provides valuable feedback for

managers with respect to changes in management strategies as each generations values were

established in adolescence to early adulthood — what worked for past young employees might

not work for young employees of today (Twenge, et al., 2010).

The Four Generations in Today's U.S. Workforce

The Veterans (also known as the Traditionalists or the Silent Generation)

Twenge, et al. (2010), defines Veterans, also known as the Traditionalists or the Silent

Generation, as those born between 1925-1945. Murphy (2007), states that this group is also

known as Builders, GI Joe Generation, Industrialists, and Radio Babies. A few significant events

that this generation experienced includes Pearl Harbor, the Hindenburg tragedy, World War II,

and the Korean War started in 1950 shortly after the "close" of this generation and ended at the

beginning of the Baby Boomers era. Veterans' values include strong association to family with

strict rules and significant respect to soldiers. Leiber (2010) and Murphy (2007) add that this

group has great respect for authority and is inclined to follow the rules. Dress code was

conservative, prevalent technology was the radio and messages from this cohort included: "make

do or do without," "consider the common good," "sacrifice," and "stay in line." This cohort has

the longest history in the workforce. Leiber (2010) added that climbing the ladder in the

organization had a "paying your dues" (tenure) attitude. Business relationships were formal and

hierarchy orders were respected and followed. Burke (2004) reported that Veterans are loyal –

committed to their work and the organization.

Baby Boomers

Twenge, et al. (2010) defines Baby Boomers as those born between 1946-1964. A few

significant life events that this generation has experienced include: The assassinations of John F.

Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Civil Rights and Women's Movements and the Vietnam War

(Twenge, et al., 2010). This generation also experienced 10 recessions as reported by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2012), which occurred between 1948 and 2011 with the most recent recession 2007-2009. Leiber (2010) added that due to economic times Boomers developed an attitude of fighting their way to the top of the ladder.

Gravett and Throckmorton (2007), Hill and Stephens (2003), and Kupperschmidt (2000) agreed that this generation developed distant emotional relationship with their parents and were influenced by their intergenerational conflict over the Vietnam War with Kupperschmidt (2000) adding that that most Boomers protested or participated in the war. Leiber (2010) reported that unlike their Veteran parents, Boomers have challenged authority and prefer a democratic organization, seek personal satisfaction and value achievements and recognition however have difficulty sharing these very things with others. They have a live-to-work attitude and are more committed to their teams than they are to the organization (Kupperschmidt, 2000; Leiber, 2010; Gravett & Throckmorton, 2007).

Professional Human Resource specialist Mary Elizabeth Burke, survey analyst for the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), reported in 2004, and cited by Twenge, et al. (2010), that the top workplace traits of Baby Boomers were "results driven," "plan to stay for long term," and "give maximum effort." Interestingly, Burke (2004) also indicated that Boomers too along with their colleagues GenXers and GenYs, value flexible work schedules. Burke (2004) and Kupperschmidt (2000) note additional work traits that Boomers are often characterized as "workaholics," "strong-willed employees who are concerned about work content and material gain" (p. 6).

Leiber (2010) reported that Boomers prefer to work in structured team environments and are not afraid to challenge rules when needed. Boomers are participative managers — making decisions based on consensus, process-oriented, have a keen sense of office politics and inclined

to manage with the latest management trends, and lead collaborative efforts. Boomers are

motivated by career advancement and salary (Leiber, 2010). Burke (2004) adds that Boomers are

viewed as good source for consultant or project work after they have retired.

GenX

Twenge, et al. (2010) define GenXers as those born between 1965-1981. Burke (2004),

Glass (2007), Kupperschmidt (2000), Leiber (2010) and Twenge (2010), citing Beutell and

Wittig-Berman (2008), reported that GenXers experienced the fall of the Soviet Union, the

recession of 2007-2009 with substantial economic impacts which included company downsizing

and record high unemployment rates, compared to prior recessions. They experienced parents

that divorced or lost their jobs. They witnessed the AIDS epidemic, many lived in homes where

both parents worked; they were given a key to let themselves in the house and were known as

latchkey children; growing up quickly as Leiber (2010) shared as well as stating this group was

influenced with the introduction of personal computers, video games and music television

(MTV).

Kupperschmidt (2000) reported that GenXers are "risk takers," "multitasking parallel

thinkers, able to do several tasks concurrently;" they are "entrepreneurial," and "resourceful."

This generation is said to be independent, has low company loyalty, untrusting of authority

figures and views job hopping as an opportunity to remain marketable. Leiber (2010) further

explained that many Xers believe an organization's loyalty is to their bottom line versus the

value of their tenured employees. Work-life balance is a high priority — Xers have a "work-to-

live" attitude Leiber (2010).

Leiber (2010) stated that this cohort is challenged by hierarchy organizational structures

and the majority of hard workers who deliver results; capable of exceeding expectations however

prefer informal relationships with authority figures, prefer to work independently with minimal

supervision and value competence over length of employment with an organization. GenXers are collaborative leaders managing on performance — get the job done, whatever it takes and values feedback. Their focus on career growth is self-directed as the organizational could be yanked at any time (Leiber, 2010).

GenY

Twenge, et al. (2010), refer to the generation born between 1982-1999 as the GenMe, GenY, or the Millennials. Leiber (2010), Murphy (2007), Hill and Stephens (2003), Leiber (2010), Twenge et al. (2010) and Zemke et al. (1999), explained that this cohort experienced corporate scandals displaying unethical leadership behavior with the fall of Arthur Andersen, Enron, and TYCO. 9/11 significantly impacted this generation's global diversity as terrorism occurred on American soil. Additionally, Leiber (2010) adds that much publicized school violence and internet social networks influences them.

Burke (2004), Zemke et al. (1999), Hill and Stephens (2003), note that GenYs are the most diverse and accepting of diversity, "sexual orientation," "family composition," and "ethnicity" of the generations. Computers that were introduced to them early on and information via the internet were literally at their fingertips; social networks and instant messaging with others around the globe was common with knowledge of time zones. This cohort is "somewhat defined by their (predominately) Boomer parents" who provided them with opportunities they (Boomers) struggled to obtain, i.e., competitive sports. Boomer parents had their children later in life which allowed them to provide opportunities ranging from participating in extracurricular school activities and have home computers, gaming systems, and mobile phones; they are said to like interactive activities that are entertaining and provide sensory stimulation (Burke, 2004; Zemke et al., 1999; Hill & Stephens, 2003).

Hill and Stephens (2003) noted that GenYs are team players as their parents provided them with an environment where "everyone wins" and Leiber (2010) reported that GenYs ladder is circular, a team effort, and value equality for all and "work-to-contribute" attitude and that their loyalty is more apt to be among their peers than to management or the organization.

Burke (2004) reported that GenYs workplace traits included being "tech savvy," "embracing diversity," "liking informality," and "needing supervision." Zemke, Raines, and Filipczak (1999) asserted in their book *Generations at Work: Managing the Clash of Veterans, Boomers, Xers, and Nexters in Your Workplace* that GenYers are "confident," "civic-minded," and "fast learners." Leiber (2010) pointed out that GenYs feel policies are guides and situations should be evaluated individually. Zemke et al. (1999) added that praise and recognition motivates them.

According to Leiber (2010), GenYs are ultra-collaborative managers, manage by free-reign, encouraging their team members to "do what you are best at" (p. 90). Interesting enough, Drucker (2005) wrote an article in the *Harvard Business Review*, "Managing Oneself" asserting that "an individual must be their own leader, directing their own careers, knowing their own values, work styles, not only your strengths and weaknesses, but how you learn and work with others to best contribute to the organization." Drucker (2005) also stated that "working relationships are as much based on the people as they are on the work" (p. 2).

Summary of Similarities & Differences

In summarizing the multigenerational workforce characteristics discussed above, the authors agree that understanding each generation's unique life events influence their values, strengths and differences; additionally, they all agreed that when HR professionals and managers alike utilize these unique characteristics to form cooperative and collaborative teams, the end results are most advantageous for capitalizing on strengths and meeting organizational bottom

line strategic initiatives. A compilation of these researchers' findings is illustrated in Appendix

A, "Workforce Traits Most Attributed to Each Generation."

Part III: Current Corporate Workforce Trends

The Aging Workforce and Knowledge Transfer

To name a few, researchers Calo (2008), DeLong (2004), Piktialis (2007), Tishman, Van Looy, and Bruyere (2012) and several Human Resource (HR) professionals Vilet (2012), Jackson (2014), and Jenkins (2014) have repeatedly reported that one of the largest risks corporations' face is the threat of lost knowledge when older employees leave or retire. This knowledge, skills, and experience that older workers possess are invaluable, much less the cost of turnover noted by Tishman et al. (2012), revealed that studies by the American Management Association, reported "turnover costs ranging between 25% and 250% of annual salary per exiting employee, depending on the skill level of the position." All of these researchers and HR professionals note that organizations are not only facing an aging workforce but the challenge of how lost knowledge will impact the organization.

Aging Workforce

Heidkamp, Mabe, and DeGraaf (2012), in support of Toossi (2013), reported that the future U.S. labor force will consist of a much greater percentage of older adults than it does today. A factor in this shift to older workers is due largely in part to economic and/or health issues, forcing this age group (born between 1946 – 1964) to continue working beyond the traditional retirement age of 65 (Heidkamp, Mabe, & DeGraaf, 2012).

Reported by Rix (2011), results of an October 2010 American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) Public Policy Institute online survey of more than 5,000 Americans over 50 years old in the labor force within the previous three years, revealed the following financial impacts as a result of the Great Recession: 52.6% were not confident they had enough money for a comfortable retirement, 67% filed for Social Security benefits earlier than expected, 24.7% reported they had exhausted their savings during the Great Recession, 31.6% saw their value of

their homes decline drastically, and if this was not enough, one in eight (12.4%) lost their health insurance forcing many to continue working beyond the traditional 65 now 67 age of retirement (pp. 2-6).

To touch on health related issues, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2012) and last updated in 2014, reported that of all Americans at least half have one or more chronic health related conditions and one in four Americans has at least two related chronic health conditions. Arthritis is the most common disability along with diabetes and obesity. Heart disease and cancer are among the top chronic illness leading to death (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012, last updated October 2014). Tishman, Looy, and Bruyere (2012) showed that the occurrences of disabilities has proven to rise in accordance to the aging workforce based on a 2001 University of Wisconsin's Trace Study that indicated a solid relationship between aging and disabilities among the U.S. workforce. Study findings revealed the following among working age groups: 9.5% were between the ages of 18 to 24, 20% were between 45 and, about 42% were 65 years and older.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (2014) analyzed in a news release in September 2014 that the average number of years an hourly or salaried employee stays at a company is just less than five years. The number of years varies based upon the industry, however, the report stated that while the older generation, ranging in ages 55 to 64 on average, stay with the same place of employment 10.4 years, the younger generation ranging in ages 25 to 34 on average, only stay three years (U.S. Department of Labor, 2014).

Jackson (2014), President and CEO of the Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM), explained in the *Special Supplement, HR Magazine, HR and the Aging Workforce Two CEO Points of View* article "The Role of HR in Addressing the Challenges of an Aging Workforce," that the oldest Boomers have reached the traditional age of retirement of 65 while

the youngest Boomers today are turning 50; additionally, he noted that of the 77 million

Boomers born between 1946 and 1964, on average 10,000 of them a day are reaching the age of

65 since 2011 according to the Pew Research Center. Furthermore, he stated that 10% of the

Boomers had retired in 2010 and that that number has nearly doubled as of this year 2014, per a

U.S. Census Bureau report (Jackson, 2014).

In her article "Adaptations to an aging Workforce: Innovative Responses by the

Corporate Sector" Piktialis (2007) wrote that the majority of organizations were aware of this

"urgency," however, they had not made it part of their strategic workforce planning as other

initiatives have taken precedence. Those organizations that have addressed this urgency have

implemented new practices to accommodate older employees in an age-neutral organizational

culture (Piktialis, 2007). Ravasi and Schultz (2006) shared a compilation of scholars' definitions

of organizational culture sharing that is how an organization represents itself by its history,

leaders, policies, mission and values, that employees utilize as a guide for appropriate behavior

in a given situation (Ravasi & Schultz, 2006). Piktialis (2007), Murphy (2007) and Jackson

(2014) have recently stated that as a key strategic initiative of today's intergenerational

workforce, that organizations with an age-neutral culture provide not only a workplace with

opportunities of learning and understanding of intergenerational strengths and values, but as

Jackson (2014) emphasized, an organization known as an "employer of choice."

Piktialis (2007) stated that those companies who have made changes to adapt to older

workers reviewed current programs and policies to make certain they were written in a manner

that was not age specific and new methods of managing a multigenerational workforce were

included in diversity training. Well known organizations such as IBM, The MITRE Corporation,

and CVS have implemented programs ranging from part-time hours and "snow bird" flexibility

— enabling one to work at another branch of CVS in a warmer climate during the winter months

— part-time flexible schedules and consultant work, additional training courses, and career

opportunities to move within the organization (Piktialis, 2007).

In 2010, SHRM joined the Association of Retired Persons (AARP) in efforts to work

together raising awareness of the value of older workers while providing strategies and resources

to HR professionals in efforts to retain, engage and further develop their experienced workforce

(Jackson, 2014). The AARP website offers HR managers tools to assess their aging workforce in

terms of creating work environments conducive to the aging workforce as well as recruitment

and retention strategies. For complete information and link to AARP website see the Additional

Information section at the end of this paper.

Knowledge Transfer

Thomas J. Calo (2008), Tishman, et al. (2012); citing Pitt-Catsouphes & Matz-Costa

(2009), and Jackson (2010), explained that companies are losing decades of company

knowledge. Tishman et al. (2012) added that "this 'brain drain' could result in a loss of key

information about customers or practices that could be devastating." The impact is abrupt,

organizational productivity is compromised and in turn can significantly affect the corporation's

competitive edge in the industry (Calo, 2008; Jackson, 2010; Tishman, Van Looy, & Bruyere,

2012).

Jackson (2014) reported results of a survey conducted in the second quarter of this year,

of approximately 1900 randomly selected SHRM members (HR professionals), with results

revealing that 68% of the respondents agreed that over the next six to 10 years, there is a

potential of lost knowledge of the older workers. Survey results also revealed that "just over 35%

or one-third of the respondents stated that strategic workforce planning analysis had been

conducted to access the impact of their organization's older workers ages 55 and older in the

next two years" (Jackson, 2014, p. 3). Jackson (2014) strongly reemphasized a greater urgency to

organizations attention to their aging workforce stating that it will affect the United States competitive position in the global marketplace.

Calo (2008), breaks down knowledge stating that it is explicit knowledge (rule based knowledge for example: systems, processes, policies and procedures) and tacit knowledge (effective group collaboration which displays a high level of trust that develops over time) that older employees retain, that organizations regard as a top strategic resource.

In support of DeLong's (2004) definition of knowledge, Vilet (2012), citing DeLong (2004) explicitly pointed out that tacit knowledge is more difficult to transfer as it is knowledge that is built upon throughout the years and sometimes is hard to verbalize or a thought at a given time. Vilet (2012) also touched on the fact that Boomers are from a generation that their retention of knowledge was valuable with respect to job security and the Boomer generation's common thought has been that the younger generations need to "pay their dues" and learn by "trial and error as they did."

Vilet (2012) watched the "*60 Minutes*" program aired on April 12, 2012 that interviewed past employees of the NASA space program who now found themselves without a job. These men, mostly in their late 50s to early 60s, had worked for NASA for 25 to 35 years and grew with the space program. At the end of this program, comments were that we would have to start from scratch if we thought of sending a man to the moon today, we'd fail (60 Minutes, 2012).

Vilet (2012) provided two examples of company lost knowledge significantly impacting the company's bottom line. The first was at Texas Instruments when machinery failed. The company incurred repair costs of $200,000 because and employee, who always knew best how to handle the machinery, had retired. The second example resonates DeLong's (2004) comments on today's hiring approach. Recruiters are looking to replace an older retiree with a younger employee if not two, with results that are not always favorable as was the case of a chemical

plant explosion. The investigation results concluded that the engineer at the plant along with the operators in the control room all had under a year's worth of experience in the unit. An executive at the plant said that by hiring additional people he thought it would make up for lost knowledge, however, it cost the company dearly for that lost knowledge of a more experienced workforce (Vilet, 2012).

To name a few, DeLong (2004), Gravett and Throckmorton (2007), Murphy (2007), and Jackson (2010, 2014) have all stressed that if organizations do not address the pending issues of knowledge loss when older workers retire or leave the organization, it will have significant impact on recruitment and retention practices. Key knowledge retention initiatives the above researchers and HR professionals share collectively, naming a few initiatives: part-time hours, part-time contractor project work, additional training courses, opportunities to join the organization's professional network of retired experts as a resource, and coaching/mentoring of stored knowledge. Gravett and Throckmorton (2007) provide an example of this coaching/mentoring as a win-win situation stating that the younger generation thrives for additional knowledge and skills, and in turn they are eager to help the older generation with the rapid changes in technology.

Both Murphy (2007) and Jackson (2014) emphasized that by attracting and retaining older employees by offering flexible working hours, phased retirement and telecommuting to accommodate their schedules and busy lifestyles is two-fold as these are benefits the younger generations are seeking as well. By offering these benefits, employees remain with the organization, are said to be more engaged and in turn, the organization becomes known as "an employer of choice" (Murphy, 2007 & Jackson, 2014).

Innovation — A Barrier in Communication

Murphy (2007) and Goudreau (2013) reported that according to a Harrison survey, more than 60% of employers had experienced intergenerational conflict; nevertheless difficult, these differences can lead to increased creativity and productivity with business goals achieved as a result. Berstein, CEO and president of VisionPoint, states that it is the blend of these four generations' characteristics that creates the "ideal employee" (Salopek, 2006).

Over the years, there has been much coverage from trade journals such as *Forbes*, *Gallup Business Journal* and the *Journal of Organizational Behavior* attempting to define generational differences in the workplace today. Although these media bring the multigenerational differences to the forefront by way of non-empirical interviews, it is many times biased and what is perceived as a "conflict" is most often a misunderstanding in communication. For example, Goudreau (2013), staff editor for *Forbes* magazine, wrote in an on-line article that during a recent professional development retreat led by Dana Brownlee, a corporate trainer and president of corporate training firm Professionalism Matters, said a woman in her mid-50s voiced her dissatisfaction with communication issues on her diverse age-based team. She commented that it was disrespectful when she calls a younger individual on her team and that person either emails or texts her instead of calling her back. Brownlee commented that she sees a lot of generational conflict around communication style and approach to working (Goudreau, 2013).

Researchers Hill and Stephens (2003) argued that the "rapid growth of technology and its applications toward the end of the 20th century is nothing short of phenomenal and that the younger generations take for granted what technology was before their time" (p. 335). Gravett and Throckmorton (2007) reported in their generation descriptions that a few conveniences of today's communication technology — cellular phones, computer systems including email,

instant messaging and social media access that allows us to communicate much faster however is also said to de-personalize relationships.

Hill and Stephens (2003) noted that the impact of technology will significantly affect our personal lives as we are now able to conduct business outside of the office environment and they predicted that GenXers and GenYs will become blended selves, that one's personal and professional lives will overlap each other with the conveniences of communication and doing business from anywhere at any time (Hill & Stephens, 2003).

Hill and Stephens (2003), spoke of "building self" — meaning that as we mature we build our identity in layers based on experiences (either personal or professional) with explicit (i.e., role as a daughter, mother, sister, those titles of oneself that are clearly defined) and implicit (i.e., behavior or those titles, roles that are not clearly expressed or blend between personal and professional) responsibilities. However, a factor in building this connectivity layer theory that is not often considered but does happen, are the demands on one's personal and professional roles over-lap. Hill and Stephens (2003) reported that as time passes, GenXers and GenYs development of selves will become virtually seamless, hence eliminating this approach of juggling between work and home as computer-based technology will produce further blurring of the lines between personal and professional lives and eventually create a blend of self in time and space.

Part IV: My Personal Experiences — Workshops and Analysis of Learning Styles

As research findings developed from my Literature Review, critical key themes were brought to mind. Most prevalent was human behavior: understanding and learning about each generation's unique experiences and how it has shaped their values, and how communication is so delicate and many times misinterpreted due to perception of individual values.

For the final portion of this research paper I would like to share three organizational workshops I have recently participated in. Following is a description of each workshop and my analysis of how each demonstrates the complexities that need to be understood in a multigenerational work environment.

WORKSHOP One: Senn Delaney, "Unfreezing Session:" Key Findings

Senn Delaney (also known as Heidrick and Struggles), founded over 35 years ago and was "the first firm in the world to focus exclusively on transforming cultures with a mission 'to create healthy, high-performance cultures' to assist in forming cultures that deliver better business results" (p. n.a.) Senn Delaney, Heidrick and Struggles' (2014) methodology consist of five elements: Diagnose, unfreeze, reinforce, apply and measure as illustrated in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Senn Delaney, Heidrick and Struggles Methodology

Five elements in our DURAM culture-shaping methodology	
1	**Diagnose:** Diagnostic tools to analyze the current culture and consulting work to define the cultural behaviors needed to better support organizational performance. (A gap analysis)
2	**Unfreeze:** An insight-based learning model that uses intact team sessions to unfreeze old habits and to connect individuals and teams to healthy, high-performance behaviors.
3	**Reinforce:** A comprehensive reinforcement system that provides the continual reminders needed to ensure that changes in behaviors become a conscious way of life.
4	**Apply:** Tools, processes and consulting that ensures the new behaviors are used day to day to impact business performance.
5	**Measure:** Measurement creates accountability. A measurement strategy that regularly monitors cultural dimensions to ensure that change is occurring and challenges are identified and addressed.

Source: (Senn Delaney, Hedrick and Struggles, 2014).

The DURAM process takes place in layers; Senn Delaney HR professionals hosting the organization's "unfreezing" sessions first meet the top leaders — upper management team and conducts a gap analysis; looks at current operations and structure of the organization in efforts to optimize operations and change behaviors towards the organization's overall objectives in line with its mission, vision, and strategic goals with anticipated outcomes of reforming their culture environment. After this has been established then a series of two-day workshop "unfreezing" sessions are held in layers within the organization. For the purposes of this paper, I will follow the DURAM methodology and share key findings from my experience on each element.

DURAM Methodology: Key Findings

As I shared earlier, these sessions are composed in layers of teams who currently work together. Due to the timing of the workshop and my research I had asked to participate with the Analytics team only knowing team members by name and casual work conversation. The majority of the team knew of me by association as I was the Executive Assistant of their upper management boss, the Senior Vice President of Operations. Because I did not work with this team, I felt a disadvantage during this workshop, however it did raise my close attention to what individuals were saying it efforts to learn more about each of their experiences, behaviors, values and how this two-day session had impacted the team's dynamics.

To highlight my key learnings from this workshop I will follow the DURAM culture-shaping methodology as illustrated in Figure 1. For a complete description of Senn Delaney, Heidrick and Struggles program, please visit their website provided in the Appendix/Resources.

The first element, **Diagnose** – Senn Delaney HR professionals, also known as moderators, met with the team's Vice President and Directors to discuss the Analytics team current functionality and how well individuals cooperate and collaborate amongst one another. The team was not privy to the initial meeting and neither was I however based on my

observation, I saw a working team that was somewhat dysfunctional socially and somewhat guarded.

The second element, **Unfreeze** — was exercised on the first day within the first few hours. Following is a breakdown of these components by the outcome or awareness they brought to self as well as others and the team as a whole.

- **Life experiences, values, likes** — exercises the moderator engaged individuals and the team, included: introducing yourself to the team, sharing a life experience that has had an impact both personally and professionally. In another exercise each participant was to share an admirable characteristic pointing out that co-worker (receiver) in the room. The receiver would in turn comment back "Thank you 'Sally'" and add additional comments reflective of the admirable characteristic.

- **Perceptions, behavioral styles** — the moderator presented abstract pictures and asked team members to quietly jot down what they saw. It was interesting to hear how many saw the same images and then others who saw something completely different. The moderator shared that we all have "blind spots," meaning that the way in which we see things or people is not necessarily how our team members see them. When information is received, we each might interpret the main point of the message the same, however, many times this can be misinterpreted by other factors that we do not necessarily pay attention to — "blind spots" — attitude, mood, and body language and even our past experiences and our own values. The moderator then facilitated the next exercise to demonstrate these blind spots — a behavioral styles matrix consisting of four quadrants; controlling, analyzing, promoting and supporting as illustrated in Table 4. A copy of this matrix was taped to each team members back. Team members then placed an "x" in the quadrant they felt each team member belonged in. Then team members placed themselves in the quadrant they felt suited described them best.

Figure 1: Behavioral Styles Matrix

Formal

Controlling	Analyzing
Characteristics Takes charge Decisive Results-focused **Potential liabilities** Impatient Insensitive Autocratic	**Characteristics** Thorough Organized Anchor of reality **Potential liabilities** Indecisive Too detailed Not a risk taker
Promoting	Supporting
Characteristics Stimulating Inspirational Idea generator **Potential liabilities** Impulsive Poor follow-through Too much at once	**Characteristics** Team player Consensus builder Relationship-oriented **Potential liabilities** Too agreeable Avoids conflict Not demanding enough

Dominant (left axis) — Easygoing (right axis)

Informal

Source: (Senn Delaney, Hedrick and Struggles, 2014).

Team members were surprised to hear and see that other team members had placed them in quadrants that they had either placed themselves in or had placed them in a quadrant that the member felt was so incorrect; a perfect exercise the team recognized as perception and recognition of how information is delivered and perceived. Understanding these blind spots enables individuals and teams to work more cooperatively and collaboratively by recognizing and working through these differences. Based upon workshop exercises learned, it is a changing of behaviors, the unfreezing of old behaviors — moods and attitudes — that effects one's quality of thinking to new thinking that is unbiased and facilitates new attitudes and behaviors that deliver high performance.

The third and fourth elements, **Reinforce** and **Apply**, are the continuation of recognizing and reinforcing new behaviors. During the last day of the workshop, the team was divided into sub-teams and were each given a department goal based on the organization's strategic

initiatives. Keeping in mind workshop learning, teams were asked to provide steps in how they would achieve this goal and timelines were applied — established along with a weekly meeting with their manager to share and consult on their progress and new behaviors applied to have enhanced their working relationships and steps towards acquiring the goals set forth.

The last element, **Measure** — would ultimately be the manager's task as consultant to monitor and provide feedback and reinforcement as needed towards the teams' cooperative and collaborative efforts of changed behaviors and progress toward goals.

WORKSHOP Two: Rob Reindl, Organization Consulting Services: The "How" in Leadership: Key Findings

The most recent workshop I attended was hosted by Rob Reindl, President of Rob Reindl Organization Consulting Services, Inc. Rob spent eight formative years at Arthur Anderson's Management Development Group, five years as the global head of Baxter Healthcare's Training and Development, and fifteen years as the global head of HR at Edwards Lifesciences.

Reindl's methodology

Reindl's years of experience and knowledge has provided him the opportunity to observe many leaders first hand; many of them put together a vision, mission, strategy and goal objectives, however, where they often times fell short was HOW they approached leading others during the implementation phase.

The workshop's key learnings resonated similar thoughts of Drucker's (2005) *Harvard Business Review* article, "Managing Self" as a leader that includes knowing your strengths, values, how you learn, and perform to best contribute and then learning the same of the people around you, utilizing a diverse team whose strengths are your weaknesses.

Reidl spoke of the HOWs of leadership stating that leadership is about everyone else, it is a leader who is connected to his/her team, knowing what and how they do things. Reidl provided

a list of 12 Leadership Principles (see Table 4) and shared that we build upon our relationship

strengths; understanding each other's life experiences, values and strengths with each person we

meet. Reidl also stressed as Drucker did, that we must first know ourselves; our strengths and the

ability to seek strong followers whose strengths are your weaknesses. A diverse team is one of

the best performing teams.

Table 4: Reindl's 12 Leadership Principles
1. Be Trustworthy – It's the foundation of leadership
2. Seek first to understand, then to be understood
3. Keep your ego in check
4. Don't take yes for an answer
5. Encourage learning
6. Allow yourself to be vulnerable
7. Focus on your circle of influence rather than your circle of concern
8. Seek maximum, appropriate participation
9. Choose to deal effectively with stress
10. Select a diverse team
11. Think positively
12. Take charge of your attitude

Source: (Reindl, 2014).

DEPAUL FOUNDATIONS COURSE: Kolb Learning Style

Psychologist David A. Kolb (1984), in his book *Experiential Learning: Experience as the*

Source of Learning and Development, claims that genetics along with life experiences and a

demanding environment, individual learning styles emerge. Learning is defined by Kolb (1984)

as "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (p. 38).

Kolb's methodology

Kolb's (1984) learning style theory primarily focuses on a learner's internal cognitive

processes and functions on two levels. The first is based upon methods of perceiving and

processing information which includes Concrete Experience (CE); the ability to do and

experience, Reflective Observation (RO); the ability to think, review, watch, and reflect on the

experience, Abstract Conceptualization (AC); the ability to methodically gather ideas and

concepts building theory from the experience and Active Experimentation (AE); the ability to

actively participate and summarize from the experience (Kolb, 1984).

In the second level Kolb (1984) described four learning styles which are a combination of

the above mentioned methods. They are:

- **Accommodators** are people who get things done, are leaders, take risks, initiate,

  are adaptable and are practical.

- **Divergers** are imaginative, they understand people, recognize problems, are good

  at brainstorming and are open-minded.

- **Convergers** are logical, they are good at defining problems, making decisions

  and solving problems.

- **Assimilators** are patient, good at defining problems, developing theories and

  creating models (Kolb, 1984). See Figure 2, Kolb's Learning

  Styles, which illustrates these two levels.

From this model, Kolb (1984) developed his learning style inventory LSI; a questionnaire

which provides information on one's learning style and then is mapped out on a grid illustrating

where one's learning styles and strengths fall.

Figure 2: Kolb's Four Learning Styles and Cycles of Learning
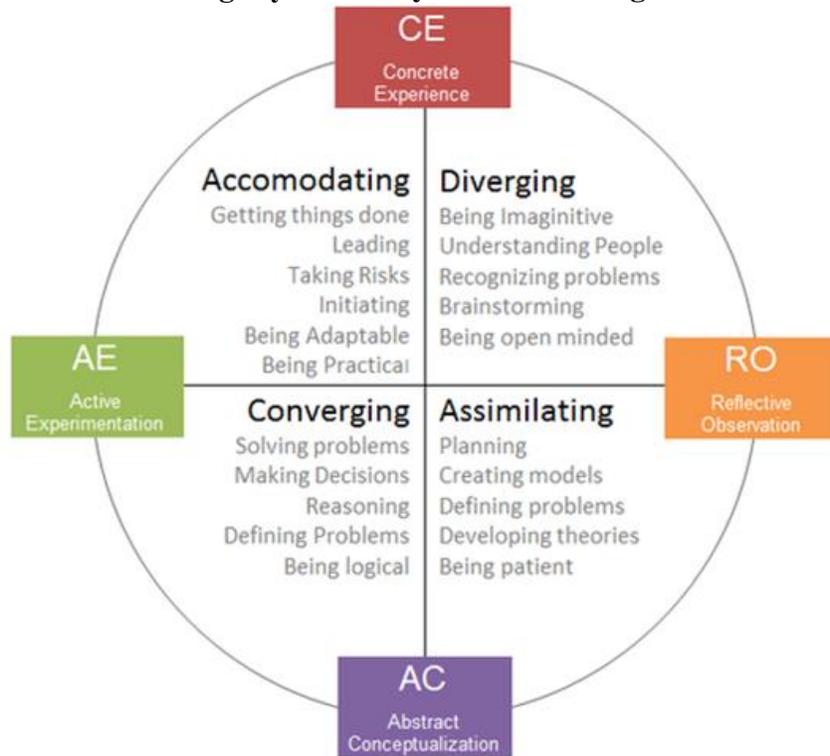
Source: (Kolb, 1984).

As coursework studied at DePaul University, the exercise the class participated in involved breaking into groups with the same learning styles. We were given a situation; your team is stranded on an island with a limited number of supplies. How do you plan to be rescued or seek help? I am a stronger Assimilator so my team was good at planning, defining what supplies were on hand and how we could effectively use the supplies to create a raft. The outcome was somewhat frustrating as we, as a team of Assimilators, had difficulty making a solid decision in the time given as we all had detailed plans and theories, carefully thought out for creating the ideal raft. The teams gathered back in the classroom for discussion of our teams' findings and soon found out that a team of all similar styles was not advantageous. We learned that we would have benefited with a mix of styles on our team — to help get things done (Accomodator), understanding people (Diverger) to solving the problem and making a decision (Converger).

I found Kolb's Learning Styles interesting as well as insightful as to how I learn, to that of how others learn, so that I can best adapt to other learning styles when working together as a team or communicating in regard to a project's status/progress.

Part V: Conclusions

The economy and demographics "set the stage" as to the structure of the workforce. Research to date predicts that we will have a semi-proportionate multigenerational workforce at least until 2020 and up to 2050. I did not realize that the proportion of the population of these age-based groups was so closely balanced and I was concerned about the possibilities of the Veterans, or more so, the Baby Boomers being forced out of the workforce due to the competitive marketplace. Aside from this research, I did further examination of higher education and concluded based on the findings that the demand in the marketplace for higher education will be on the rise as early as 2015 as the economy continues to recover from the recession of 2007-2009.

I was pleasantly reminded of the generational values and life experiences which have shaped each generation and how important that the workplace is not only about getting the job done, but it is about the people and relationships we make. A true appreciation — value of the knowledge the older generations possess a wealth of history and layers of economic and corporate knowledge that is many times overlooked until it is too late. They are respected as subject matter experts (aka SMEs) possessing a stronger base of both explicit and tacit knowledge.

By learning and understanding each generation's values, I was able to recognize how conflicts between the generations are many times "misfires" in communication; an opportunity of awareness when communicating with the ability to adapt based the audience. This also brought to mind that aside from generational characteristics, as humans we have different learning styles which I shared my experience as part of my research.

As an aging workforce with Baby Boomers nearing retirement, many are choosing to continue to work simply because they enjoy their work or as in many cases, are forced to

continue to work past the traditional age of retirement due to financial reasons. Several

organizations have made knowledge transfer/sharing a strategic initiative and have examined and

redesigned "age-neutral" programs and policies to adapt to older workers' needs. A few of these

programs include part-time and flexible hours, coaching and mentoring to facilitate the transfer

of knowledge and a few have even established committees of retired personnel as a resource of

knowledge or consultation. With respect to company roots and established history, an alarming

statistic just released in September of 2014, reveals that the average worker today only stays at

an organization an average 4.6 years. I ask myself, what this will mean for organizations in

general in regard to company stability and strategic growth. What will happen to a company's

reputation — perhaps a depersonalization, loss of the sense of loyalty and company name/brand

in general, and a possible blur of economical business? For the workforce, will the benefits,

flexible hours, mobile offices, telecommuting, etc…. outweigh GenX and GenYs tendency to

"job hop" and will an "age-neutral" work environment provide company branding as an

"employer of choice?"

As technology continues to advance, the older generations will benefit from assistance of

learning new technology from the savvy GenX and GenYs. As Stephens and Hills (2003) had

revealed in their report that with technological advances that the younger generations will

experience a "blurring of selves" that personal and professional becoming one. The Baby

Boomers concern is depersonalization of communication — I believe we can all agree to this.

Researchers and HR professionals noted in my research continue to include culture as a

top priority in their strategic efforts of a multigenerational workforce. The company that I had

worked for at the time, Caremark had merged with CVS in the first quarter of 2007 and was then

known as CVS Caremark. As can be imagined, much reorganization took placed to merge

processes, policies and yes…. a new company culture; a new way of thinking and in 2013 I was provided the opportunity to participate in a culture reforming workshop.

 HR professionals and managers continue emphasis on learning and understanding the dynamics of each generation in order to effectively manage cooperative and collaborative teams. By doing so, organizations provide an age-neutral culture conducive to multigenerational workforce and a reputation of being an "employer of choice" in the marketplace.

 Multigenerational group dynamics will continue to change as the workforce ages. As the economy evolves and technology advances continue, it will require constant awareness and further scholarly attention.

Part VI: Personal Reflection

An unplanned positive outcome during my Advanced Project research was that I found myself looking for new employment in the later part of 2012. I interviewed with several employment agencies from October through December and heard the resounding echo that I already knew from my research that unemployment rates were still recovering from the last recession and hiring freezes during the fourth quarter of the year were common. I was reassured that employment opportunities should pick up in the spring.

One of the first interviews I went on was for a global manufacturing company Illinois Tool Works (ITW). ITW employs about 60,000 people across 58 countries, with an operating revenue of almost $18 million for 2012, and ranking 414 on *Forbes Global 2000*. Reported on their website, the average employee tenure was 20 years as of the first quarter of 2013. This was much different than the 15 plus years I had worked in corporate healthcare, CVS Caremark, which employs about 280,000 employees exclusive to the United States (as of today), with an operating revenue for 2012 reported at just over $28 billion, and ranking of 13 on *Fortune's 500* list as of 2013. I saw this position as an opportunity of growth and development as my responsibilities would be projected oriented and would expand my novice global business affairs knowledge. I was offered and accepted this new role at Illinois Tool Works (ITW) and started the end of April 2013.

Shortly after starting this new position and meeting others in my department, I quickly learned my team consisted of all four generations. I first thought of Drucker (1999), who wrote the article in the *Harvard Business Review*, "Managing Oneself" asserting that an individual must be their own leader, directing their own careers, knowing their own values, work styles, strengths and weaknesses, and how they work with others and can best contribute to the organization.

My research provided me with a better understanding of work more efficiently with my boss, 20 years older than me and my immediate team, 20 individuals, on average, 20 years younger than me. This team dynamic was different than I had had for the past 10 years. As a GenXer, my team also consisted primarily of GenXers.

Communication protocol was to pick up the phone or email even if the person was within 50 feet, out of respect of someone's time and schedule. As I started this new job reporting to a Baby Boomer in his mid-60s and with the company for 35 years, I was reminded of communication "conflicts" as my boss commented to me "I am just a "stone's throw away" from you, come see me. You don't need to call me." Yikes I thought, okay, I was trying to be respectful of his time by calling whereas I am sure he felt offended that I should have addressed him in person. I smiled to myself and said okay, I can do this and from that point forward I have been cognizant of his communication preferences.

The Kolb Learning Style focused on how I organize my thoughts and action. As a stronger Assimilator, I learned through a limited time team-building exercise on a team with only Assimilators like myself, that this would be easy — we all think alike which means we will all get along and our task will be completed quite quickly. Wrong. We did have the same ideas, however, it took much time to agree on the best strategy and there were conflicts. For the sake of time, we quickly held a process of elimination of our well thought out list and action plans and just made the time limit. After review of each team's strategy and then discussion of a mixed learning styles team, I am certain it would have been more effective had my team been composed of mixed learning styles; each adding their own strengths to bring the task at hand to fruition in a more efficient and timely manner.

Research observation: with predicted demographic, social and technology changes today and into the future, it is imperative that the area of intergenerational communication is continually researched.

Appendices

Appendix A: Workforce Traits Most Attributed to Generations

Workplace Traits	Veterans	Boomers	GenXers	Gen Ys
Loyalty to Organization	loyalty to the organization = tenure	loyalty to team	loyal to their supervisors, do not trust authority and elects to change the rules	loyalty first to their peers then to management -organization, equality for all - horizontal, likes to create own rules
Attitude Toward Authority/Rules	respects and follows hierarchy authority, follows rules, prefers formal relationships with superiors, respects titles "tell me what you want me to do"	challenges the rules, prefers democratic structure, form personal relationships with superiors and has "let me show you what I can do for you"	prefer informal relationships, value competence and skills over tenure, "tell me what you can do for me"	situations should be evaluated per individual rather than based on policies, high expectations of benefits, flexibility and pay.
Characteristic Attitudes	"brick builder of corporate culture, "pay your dues" - tenure =success moving up the ladder	personal satisfaction, career advancement, thrives external recognition, "go the extra mile," results-driven, mentoring and "live to work"	results - driven, focus on own career goals, view job-hopping is opportunity as sustaining marketability, "work-to-live"	overly confident, self-absorbed, ladder is circular, "work-to-contribute"
Management Style	prefers to take command and control, sometimes micromanage, "Do as I say, not as I do"	participative managers aware of office politics up on business trends and consensus rules in decision making.	collaborative managers - performance based management. personal approach - "do what we need to do to get the job done"	extremely collaborative, free-reign management - "do what you are best at"
Work Style	linear -follows rules and leader, thrives on processes	structured environment, challenge rules when needed, people-team focused	flexible, rules-changing and results-driven, prefers to work independently with little supervision, change = opportunity	flexible but somewhat viewed as challenging, would rather create rules than follow them, technically savvy, prefers to work independently with little or no supervision, change is positive and means development
Motivators to Capitalize on	respect for their historical experience and accomplishments, they value heirarchy structures and formality	money defines who they are. Motivated by material gains and career advancement. Driven by processes and values historical experiences.	thrive on independence, flexibility and feedback not orders motivated by career growth	seek to give back to their communities - making a difference, flexibility and opportunity for personal growth, thrives on equality for all and immediate feedback/recognition

A compilation of sources: (Burke, 2004; Gravett and Throckmorton, 2007; Hill and Stephens, 2003; Kupperschmidt, 2003; Leiber, 2003; Murphy, 2007; and Zemke et al., 2007).

Appendix B: Additional Information

Zemke, Raines, Filipczak (2000 p. 259-), Appendix B

- *The Fourth Turning* website *www.fourthturning.com* created by Neil Howe and Bill Strauss, distinguished generational scholars, center this website around the book they wrote, *The Fourth Turning*. The website focuses on discussions of all matters of generational issues, political issues to questions to the authors. Captivatingly insight, Howe and Strauss are utilizing these discussions to structure their next book on the Millennial generation.

- *Generations at Work* website at *www.generationsatwork.com,* Claire Raines' website which includes all the issues of *Generations™*, *A Newsletter for Managers*, *Generations Training: Speeches/Workshops*, and interactive activities like the *Generations Game* which engages employees learning of each generations life events/experiences and their values.

- *The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), www.aarp.org*. The website offers information on becoming a member, receiving discounts, computer tips and update information on current issues like *Social Security* and *Medicare*, *Health Care*, *Caregiving*, to *Job Resources*. A good resource particularly for older people who are getting on the internet.

- *SeniorNet, www.seniornet.org* website focus of offering formal computer education and technology for older adults. This organization offers senior members discounts on computers from IBM and software discounts from Microsoft, and online investment information from Charles Schwab and a Time Capsule (sponsored by ABC News) where stories are shared from this generation.

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