

Intergenerational Groups: How They Benefit the Workplace

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ABSTRACT

With intergenerational groups becoming more common in the workplace, research is still focusing on how to *manage* working in intergenerational groups rather than how to promote the benefits of using intergenerational groups. Generations have different work values and attitudes. However, it is unclear whether putting diverse generations together will lead to better outcomes in a team setting. Using surveys and interviews of a convenience sample of all age groups, the study examines how generational perception influences the behavior and desire to work with other generations. Although there are stereotypes linked to each generation, respondents still desire to work with multiple generations to get alternative perspectives. The three key findings are that everyone stereotypes based on generation, yet most people want to work with Generation X and Y. Limited respondents have received training on generational differences, but those who have perceive intergenerational groups to be more beneficial than those without training. Lastly, although society understands the need and perceived benefit of intergenerational groups, results show they would prefer to work with generations closest to them in age.

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INTRODUCTION

The focus for this capstone is on intergenerational groups and how the individuals of different generations interact in the workplace. An individual's generation is defined by the year an individual was born, and a generalized description of an individual's values based on experiences and socialization in the defined time period of young childhood (Sessa 2007). Intergenerational groups in the workplace are becoming more common because of the *aging workplace*. One reason for the aging workplace is employees are staying in the workplace longer because retirement savings are not enough to sustain their costs. Because of numerous challenges with intergenerational groups, workplaces tend to not look forward to working with other generations. At one time, the workplace only had two generations in it and followed the *Apprenticeship Model*. The older generation would teach the younger how to run the business, and the young generation taking over the business would not question the business structure or values (Cox, 2010). Today there are 4 generations in the workplace: Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y.

The research questions are as follows:

- Are there workplace perceptions that are attributed to each generation?
- Can intergenerational groups benefit the workplace? Are there specific scenarios to use intergenerational groups?

The objective of this capstone is to study if intergenerational groups can benefit a company, and in what scenarios these groups should be used. It is hypothesized in this thesis that these groups should be used in creative, innovative, problem solving groups, rather than task focused groups. There are some tasks that are better for individuals, tasks like writing. It is a common mistake to form a team for an individualistic task (Hackman, 1998). In task focused groups, there is limited need for constructive conflict because that will impede the efficiency of the group. Because different generations have different strengths, weaknesses and communication styles, it is difficult to have different generations work on a task that does not require creativity. However, when the objective of the group is open ended and project goals have room for innovation, this is where a team made up with people with different experiences, strengths and weaknesses will help because the structure provides diversity.

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The studies' hypotheses are as follows:

- Each generation stereotypes and perceives other generations based on experiences and interaction with that generation and the media. These stereotypes may or may not impede the work efficiency.
- Intergenerational groups can benefit the workplace. Intergenerational groups should be used when the group objective requires creativity, innovation and problem solving.

Most research that has been done to date is focused on how to deal with multiple generations, not how to use them to an organization's advantage. There are books and articles with similar titles to Espinoza's book "Managing the Millennials" (See Hart, 2006 and Williams, 2011). Most workplaces have accepted that intergenerational groups are a reality, and there is a lot of research on how to make those groups function when needed. Research tells managers how to manage different generations and work to the individual's strengths while understanding their weaknesses. While playing to strengths is important, there is the additional step of exploring how using differences in generations can create constructive conflict and possibly lead to better results. Groups only made of one generation can be closed-minded because they are going through similar life experiences, and have the same mindset. However, generations usually like to work with people their own age because they understand their values (Nicholas, 2008). These groups most likely would be affected by *groupthink* as well. Groupthink is when a group is seeking concurrence, in other words agreement of an idea. There is no conflict because members of groups either do not want to ruin their relationship with the group, or, due to the homogeneity of the group, think exactly the same way as other group members. Groupthink can limit the group's success (Janis, 1971). By creating groups including multiple individuals of all of different generations, therefore different values, members contribute ideas that other generations never considered therefore avoiding groupthink. It is a hypothesis that groups will debate ideas ultimately coming up with better, more innovative ideas than if they were to work in a group of the same generation.

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Part of the reason for this hypothesis, that intergenerational groups are better at problem solving than task oriented groups, is from the researcher's personal experience. In the workplace, school, and personal life when working with other generations, tasks are hard to accomplish because of different work ethics and communication styles. However, when it comes to brainstorming or process improvement, different generations bounce ideas off each other that other generations would never consider. The researcher has been placed on a few intergenerational teams and has been stereotyped because of age and felt that communication styles needed to be changed to communicate with other generations. The interest in this capstone is to see if others have had the experience of being stereotyped based on belonging to a specific generation. This study also wanted to research if intergenerational groups should be used to benefit the organization's goals and, if so, in what scenarios.

The interest is further heightened by the media hype about the Millennial generation. The Millennial generation is entering the workforce, and there are TED talks, articles, books and other sorts of media bashing the Millennial traits, teaching people how to deal with this group of people. There is limited research on how this generation can benefit an organization. The researcher believes the Millennial generation is proficient in attributes of the workplace that others are not. Together with other generations, teams have many opportunities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are three major themes that arise through the research of intergenerational groups. The first theme is the attributes of each generation and how those attributes developed. The second theme is different ways to manage teams with diversity. The third theme is how to manage conflict within intergenerational teams. Throughout the research, the gap continues to be how we can use intergenerational groups to our benefit. First, the literature review will explain the relevance of studying this topic, and then go into the three main themes that the literature agrees on. In this capstone, intergenerational groups are described as groups with three or more people, representing at least two different generations. The term intergenerational groups will be interchanged with multi-generational groups. The term 'groups' may also be interchanged with the word 'teams'. This research will focus on the United States and how their culture defines generations. This description loses cultural

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context and is thus invalidated when applied across different countries (Parry, 2014). There are some cultures that have gone through different experiences and social construct, making their generations different than western generations.

Relevance on the topic of intergenerational groups

Generation is a relatively new term, since before the 1900s, change was slow and technology was not developed to communicate social changes across the country. Because of this there were limited distinct groups formed, and age was used to describe individuals rather than their generation (Sessa, 2007). Interest in generational diversity has exploded since the start of the 21st century (Parry, 2014). Currently, there are four generations in the workplace working daily together, often on similar tasks and at similar levels of authority. As life expectancy increases, employees are retiring later than they did in the past. Also, older employees need to stay in the workforce to foster economic growth (Posthuma, 2009). With all four generations working together, there is often tension and miscommunication between the employees of different ages. However if groups are made up of a single generation with similar values, there is chance for groupthink (Cox, 2010).

Generations did work together in the past, however, in a different structure. In the past there were two generations in the workplace and they followed an *Apprenticeship Model*. The older generation would teach and guide the younger generation to eventually run the business. The younger generation was expected to accept the organizational culture and not question it. Now that technology has made changes in the workplace, and children are raised differently, organizational culture is being questioned, and younger generations feel the need to make contributions to improve the workplace (Cox, 2010). With more education, younger generations are being promoted to positions that are managing people older than them. Promotions in the workplace today are mainly based off of performance, not age. With this, companies cannot afford to wait and avoid different generations working together. The Millennial population is 80 million, and companies cannot wait to tap into this talent pool (Pallak, 2014). There is an increased need for organizational leaders to know how to handle and capitalize on the demographic changes of the workforce, including the diverse generational changes (Parry, 2014).

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Companies could stay reactive to change, wait for it to happen and respond. Research shows a more effective way is to forecast change, taking a proactive approach (Lepine, 2003). If companies can foresee that groups with multiple generations are inevitable and structure teams accordingly by making their workforce knowledgeable about the subject, then they are organized to have a better strategy than competitors including efficient teams. If a team is age aware, the work environment is more comfortable, there is higher productivity and morale, lower turnover rate and an overall more successful organization (Blauth, 2011). In order to be proactive to change, society needs to study the history of generations and follow historical trends. The pattern of generations, known as the generational diagonal, is strong enough to predict the future. In order to study what 40 year olds will be like in 20 years, we need to study the 20 year olds now and predict their future using historical trends (Howe, 2007). By doing this, companies can be proactive to change.

Howe (2007, p. 51) states, "If Boomers and Xers let businesses adjust to the Millennial work style, economic productivity could surge even as job turnover declines." Each generation fills a gap that was created by the generations prior. Gap in this context is used to describe the weaknesses that some generations have, and by filling the gap one generation has the strength that is another generation's weakness. Together generations, even though different, fill the needs of society. Howe agrees that generations are different, and the individuals of each generation working together will cause issues. However the people that understand how history creates generations and how generations create history will be the most successful.

Currently, the changing dynamic workforce is seen as "hype". Hype is used here in the sense that it is exciting and agitating people and is creating exaggerated publicity. Some of this is because Millennials are being negatively portrayed in the media and the problems that they bring as a generation pose challenges to managers (Espinoza, 2011). This can be seen with an easy search on Amazon for "millennials." The book titles that come up are "What's Wrong with Millennials? 50 Things you Need to know about the Entitled Generation" by Stan Brown and "Managing the Millennials" by Chip Espinoza. These books along with news articles and blogs are drawing attention to the generation like it is similar to a plague, causing the stereotypes against all generations in the work force. There is some pushback on the idea

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of generational diversity because some think it is another reason we blame conflict on (Parry, 2014).

Attributes of Generations

A generation is a group of people that were born in the same general time span, therefore have shared the same critical life experiences. With these experiences, it can be argued that certain values and assumptions can be made about a generation (Blauth, 2011). Generations are usually 17-22 year spans of time in which a person was born (Cox 2010). Generations are societal factors on a macro scale (Parry, 2014). The Generational Cohort Theory, described by Sessa (2007), explains how the phenomenon of generations contradicts the traditional belief that people change and mature as they age. Instead generation theory is based off the belief values are programmed while children are young, and those values hold true as they age. Generations are a social creation, but not a biological necessity. With this being true, studying generations is not necessary to survive. However, with this information we can make the workplace more efficient. Howe (2007) says a 40 year old has less in common with 40 year olds across time and more in common with people in their own generation. If attitudes remain the same over time as a person ages, the qualities are generational rather than age-based (Parry, 2014). It is important to study generations because generational qualities act as a prediction of the years to come.¹

Sessa lists five factors that determine a generation. These five factors can be seen in the Table 1:

¹In this capstone, the words values and attitudes are used interchangeably to describe what people feel is important or the way a person approaches a situation.

Table 1: Sessa's Five Factors that Decide a Generation

- | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Traumatic event2. Dramatic shift in demography3. An interval that decides if a generation is a success or failure (ie. The Great Depression)4. Creation of a social space that maintains a memos (ie. Woodstock)5. Mentors or heroes |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

These factors decide when the prior generation stops, and a new one begins. This is important because the new generation now does not have the experience of the generation prior, but they will have an experience during childhood that the prior generation does not have. There is limited validation that there are clear differences in generations. However, stereotypes and experiences usually define a generation (Sessa, 2007). A stereotype is a simplified conception of what others think, while experiences are events over time that has left an impression on individuals in the generation. Generations experience similar events. Therefore, they are predisposed to a characteristic mode of thought (Parry, 2014). Each generation is given a term to describe that generation so that it is easy to remember and gives the group an identity (Pitt-Catsoupes, 2007).

Generations in detail

Currently there are four generations employed in the workforce. Numerous studies have defined the values, shared experiences, strengths and weaknesses of each generation. Compiling the results of these studies creates the following four descriptions which can be seen in Table 2: Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y².

² Generation Z is the generation currently under 18. They are excluded from this research since they are not in the workforce yet, and their generation is not clearly defined yet. See Future Research.

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Table 2: Generations in Detail

Generation	Birth Year*	Shared Experience	Core Values
Traditionalists	1922-1945	Great Depressions, WWII, GI Bill	Dedication Hard work Conformity Law and order Respect for authority Delayed reward Duty before pleasure Adherence to Rules
Baby Boomers	1946-1964	Economic prosperity, Vietnam War	Optimism Team oriented Personal gratification Health and wellness Youth Work involvement
Generation X	1965-1980	Divorce, lack of faith in social institutions	Diversity Global thinking Balance Fun Informality Self-reliance
Generation Y	1981-1997	Technology, 9/11, War on Terror, being "connected"	Optimism Civic duty Confidence Achievement Social ability Morality Street smarts diversity

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Generation	Expectations/beliefs	Strengths	Weaknesses	Alt. Names
Traditionalists	Security from institutions Promotions based on longevity Loyalty to organization Wait to be told what to do Respect based on position and title	Accountability Clear communication Managing resources Organization Service orientation Working collaboratively	Adaptability initiative Technology Valuing diversity Delay rewards Value training (help employees leave the company)	The silent generation Veterans Great Generation
Baby Boomers	Live to work Driven Relentless pursuit of goals Change is painful but inevitable Casual team oriented environment preferred	Accountability Adaptability Clear communication Initiative Organization/Project Management Problem Solving Service Orientation Working Collaboratively	Look for immediate gratification Technology Valuing diversity (everyone should fit in)	
Generation X	Work to live Promotions based on ability vs. seniority Computers are a part of everyday routine Attitude/fun is important in the workplace Expect a say and want to be heard	Adaptability Initiative Managing resources Problem solving Technology Valuing diversity Value training	Tend to speak technical jargon Organization/project management Service orientation Working collaboratively Loyalty to organization	
Generation Y	Team oriented Hard working Multi-taskers Prefer structured environments Acknowledge and respect position/title Want a relationship with their boss	Accountability Organization/project management Service orientation Technology Valuing diversity Working collaboratively	Communicate informally with text messages Problem solving Loyalty to organization Technology integral to lifestyle	Millennials GenMe

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Most of the research is taken from Patota because the study was the most in depth and the most credential being published by the Journal of American Academy of Business (2007). It is important to remember that generations are general and there are exceptions to the researched description. Generations are not mutually exclusive and there are individuals born on the border of generations and have qualities from both sides. There is also a crossover effect where an event can be so large it impacts multiple generations (Patota, 2007). No generation is more valuable than another; all values are developed from the environment individual were raised in, so no value is right, wrong, good or bad.

Traditionalists

Traditionalists are currently mostly retired, but there are still a few in the workforce. They are most well known for being part of the draft during World War II, and then coming back to economic prosperity. While in school, they were silent and conformists (Howe, 2007). Most of these individuals were part of traditional families. When this generation was growing up, social movements for women and African Americans were just starting.

In the workplace, they stay true to their military learned values, since this was a vast part of their education. The military teaches respect of authority, a specific work culture that is not to be questioned, and that hard work will make them successful. The Traditionalists carried this morale into the workplace knowing they would have to pay their dues in order to get where they wanted to go. The GI bill gave this generation tremendous opportunity, and Traditionalists wanted to pass this opportunity along to their kids, the Baby Boomers, when the time came.

Baby Boomers

Baby Boomers are a result of men coming back from WWII to a prosperous economy and starting their families. Baby Boomers are hardworking like their parents, and stay loyal to their companies (Shragay, 2011). Women worked in companies during the war, so Baby Boomers grew up with many independent mothers and mother figures. Baby Boomers accept change because in their young adult life, there were a lot of social changes like the women's movement, the start of the gay rights movement, and racial equality. This is the generation

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responsible for coining the terms “glass ceiling” and “equal opportunity workplace” (Value Options). Baby Boomers are reaching the traditional retirement age. Many Baby Boomers are choosing not to retire; some because of financial reasons and the promises of pensions, job security and Social Security are being broken. Many companies are revoking pension privileges and the retirement age for Social Security continues to rise. Another popular reason is retirement has a negative connotation of mindless consumption, and Baby Boomers want to stay sharp and self-sufficient (Howe, 2007). In 1978, when Baby Boomers were 15-32, they made up 45% of the workplace. These Baby Boomers will continue to stay into the workplace until they can afford to retire, bringing the average age of the workplace up to 40.7 years in 2008 (Dohm, 2000). Technology has been ever changing since Baby Boomers were children. As they are familiar with technology, they are not experts since they did not have computers or the internet growing up.

Generation X

Generation X was born into a fairly unstable economy, making them untrusting of their peers. They are confident and independent as their parents communicated to them growing up, so they do not respond positively to supervision. The rise of divorce rates during this time period has a lot to do with these traits. They are loyal to their jobs, however not a specific company; they are going to do what is best for them in their career. Technology started to become prevalent in their lifetime, making them familiar, but not necessarily experts or attached to being ‘connected’. Through their adult life, they have been through the 2008 recession, and have had trouble finding jobs out of college, making the generation suspicious and cynical (Shragay, 2011). Generation X is known to push efficiency and innovation, while making quick decisions and downsizing bureaucracy (Howe, 2007). This generation is not extremely large, but has kept the workplace turning. A lot of members in this generation have not stayed at one job their entire life. Rather, they started the trend of job hopping when their original job does not fit their personal goals anymore. The idea of personal growth and development was passed along to their children, Generation Y.

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Generation Y

Generation Y, also known as Millennials, grew up in an age of globalization and technology. This generation has seen their parents go through tough recessions and become workaholics, leading to Millennials' work-life balance motto. As children, they were the center of everything as parents placed them into numerous childhood activities to keep them entertained and talented. Generation Y prefers formal structured programs, like training programs, because they have always been involved in organized activities. These children have a close relationship with their parents and are often involved in family decisions, which leads to why this generation seeks a relationship with their manager (Shragay, 2011). Generation Y has always worked in teams whether it be in sports, dance or school. Therefore, they prefer teamwork in the workplace, specifically working with people in their own generation (Nicholas 2008). They are more teachable than other generations and have a high willingness to learn, but lack simple skills like professionalism (Howe, 2007). Seventy eight percent of Millennials feel they are leaders (Pollak, 2014). Because they grew up with technology, they are fluent in text messaging and quick Google searches (Nicholas, 2008). The individuals feel the need to be personally connected and use technology as their main mode of communication (Shragay, 2011).

The Millennials that are graduating college have high amounts of student loans, higher living costs and the same entry level pay as prior generations. Because of this, less people are starting careers in the public sector because they need a higher salary. Therefore, the public sector is lacking in young adults. Another reason for this could be because there is diminished trust in government as an institution. Most of these individuals are flooding into corporations instead, making the entry-level employees a key generation to focus efforts on. Millennials are also entering higher positions because they are more educated than graduates have been in the past. With this, they are working with other generations, sometimes managing people older than them.

Important functions of a team

In order to study how intergenerational teams can be successful, we need to study the basics of teams and why teams are successful. With this information, we can compare attributes of intergenerational team with attributes of successful teams. First, in order for

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companies to remain competitive they need to be flexible on how they complete work. Teams are important and inevitable in the workplace, and in the next few years, over half of the work done will be by teams. By knowing team members' abilities and adaptability, you can predict how a team will act (LePine, 2003). Cognitive ability is the capacity to process and learn new information. In an effective team, members have cognitive ability and are open to new experience. By being receptive to change, team members are already being proactive.

Competencies are skills that all employees and managers must have in order to manage their company successfully (Patota, 2007). Top management of a company usually identifies the competencies needed, and team members should have most or all of these competencies to be successful. Intergenerational teams can do this by identifying the competencies a team needs, and determining what generation best has those competencies and should be a part of the team. Challenges, especially with communication, bring less efficiency and more debate within a group. Myers (2010) states that communication functions as the interactions that maintain work relationships. Differences in values and communication styles can cause a disruption in the workplace.

Conflict within Intergenerational Groups

Some intergenerational groups have been studied. However, most academic research provides advice on how to work in intergenerational groups. Tips such as making personal connections, avoiding age-based stereotypes and taking a situational leadership approach to situations are all advised for managing intergenerational groups. One short blog post by Koort states, "I often read articles that set the tone as if things have gone sour. This could not be further from the truth" (2014, pg1). Koort goes on to say that the Millennial traits such as confidence to speak ideas spreads to other members of the group, creating more innovative ideas. Blauth (2011) identifies that stereotyping based on age or generation is harmful to interpersonal relationships, collaboration, and working with clients. Age-based stereotypes can diminish self-esteem, personal control, self-efficacy, relationships and cause more tension in the group (Blauth, 2011).

So how can a company tell if they are having a problem with age-based stereotypes? According to Blauth (2011) there are 12 ways you can tell if your company is having a problem:

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1. Employees routinely judge others based solely on age
2. Multi-generational teams struggle to complete their work
3. Older and younger employees compete for recognition or resources
4. Employees routinely complain about members of other generations
5. The organization usually hires only within certain generations
6. Employees routinely dismiss ideas offered by younger or older colleagues
7. Managers believe they need special training to lead other generations
8. People make comments or assumptions about individuals based on their age
9. Managers assume that younger or older employees are incapable of certain tasks
10. Members of certain generations are routinely passed over for promotion
11. Older workers often express desire to retire early
12. Younger workers appear disengaged or uninterested in their work

However, Blauth continues to state that employees across generations spark creativity and innovation by having different perspectives. Patota (2007) states that there are differences between generations and one generation is not better than another. With any diversity issue, with motivation and training, employees of different generations can work together successfully and avoid conflict. As management roles shift to Millennials, it is important to study how generations work together. There was a study by Ernst and Young (2013) with a survey showing seventy five percent of people are uncomfortable managing an intergenerational group and believe it is challenging. Younger generations also showed that they are uncomfortable managing older generations. This shows that it is an important topic to study and be aware of so we can maximize the potential of our groups (The Generational Management Shift, 2013).

Having the right type of conflict in a team is important to team success. There are two types of conflict: cognitive and affective. Cognitive conflict is related to the work at hand in a team. Affective conflict is interpersonal conflict related to the emotional aspects of a team. Cognitive conflict that fosters debate will increase team effectiveness. Affective conflict sometimes gets in the way of cognitive conflict; therefore the team loses sight its goals (Garvin, 2001). Intergenerational teams are likely to have conflict with different experiences and ideas, however conflict is not always bad. Team members need to be aware of the

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different types of conflict and focus on cognitive conflict while limiting affective conflict in order to achieve the best results.

Managing Intergenerational Groups

Blauth (2011) provides a few tips for groups and companies as a whole, to be “age-aware”. Many of these tips are similar to accepting diversity or other stereotypical issues. The first is to challenge stereotypes - do not take everything at face value, and understand the strengths and weaknesses of each generation. The second is to find common ground - find a way to communication and a work style that fits the needs and levels of all generations in the group. The third is to find talent in everyone - do not assume they are bad at something because of their age, rather take the time to understand what they can contribute. Showing interest in their abilities will help assess what work style will be the most productive. The fourth tip is to purposely mix it up. Partnering across generations can help collaboration and sharing of perspectives. If the group is respectful, ideas and help can be shared by all.

Patota (2007) advises there are two types of people that work best in multi-generational groups: Super Managers and Super Employees. A Super Manager has the ability to identify what makes a project successful. They can then identify what makes each generation tick. From this they can blend the tasks of the project and strengths of the generation to reach the end goal while staying consistent with the companies’ goals. A Super Manager can also provide rewards to each employee that is consistent with what motivates their generation.

A Super Employee would work best with a Super Manager as their authoritative figure. A Super Employee recognizes and respects generational differences. They do not stereotype or make age-based assumptions. This employee is valuable to work with other generations besides their own because they are able to adapt to the understood differences and not let the stereotypes get in the way of communication, productivity, and relationships (Patota, 2007).

Patota (2007) offers a way to help employees become Super Managers and Super Employees. He suggests a generations/competencies matrix. This is a key management tool for constructing, managing and working with teams of different generations. The tool can be used as a training document, especially to be referred back to when needed. The goal of the

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matrix is to optimize each generation's strengths and promote awareness of the interaction of generations to promote more creativity and productivity. When conflict occurs, the matrix can be reflected back to review each generation's strengths. It can assist in diffusing the conflict if we focus on the demands of each generation, and use communication styles that will meet the needs of each conflicting party. Patota states that by using this approach, teams will see slight productivity gains and will have increased self-satisfaction with the work experience.

What are the gaps in the research? How does my research fit in?

Although generations are different, working across generations and in groups with multiple generations collaborating may help realize the value of diverse perspectives which often spark creativity and innovation. Twenge discusses this topic with Posthuma (2009) and did a study in 2008 about generational differences. Twenge has proven only four scientifically validated generational differences versus age differences, which are as follows (Posthuma, 2009):

1. Work is less central for younger compared to older employees.
2. Older employees have a stronger work ethic compared to younger employees.
3. Younger employees more highly value leisure compared to older employees.
4. Younger employees self-report more workplace individuality compared to older employees

The first part of this study will confirm some of the researched stereotypes/perceptions in the workplace. Some studies contradict each other regarding what strengths and weaknesses each generation has. This study will look to see what each generation perceives about their own generation and other generations as well. Most studies look at strengths and weaknesses of each generation, however no studies have separated responses by the respondent's generation. This study will compare how each generation perceived their own generations and other generations.

The second research gap is determining in which the situations the formation of intergenerational groups benefit the organization? Are there scenarios where intergenerational groups will hurt productivity and efficiency? This study will further the research of identifying if intergenerational groups benefit the workplace, and if so, the scenarios where intergenerational groups can be used to benefit the workplace so managers can be aware of this diversity that can use for increased innovation and productivity.

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METHODOLOGY

Method

Surveys and interviews were conducted as the main research method for this capstone. A survey was developed to gauge how different generations perceive other generations, along with how they perceive their own generation. Questions asked participants to rate how much they consider each generation to have certain leadership skills, also known as soft skills. Soft skills here are referred to as emotional intelligence levels, communication skills and relationship skills defined by “The generational management shift”, conducted by Ernst & Young (2013) and “Generational differences in leader values and leadership behaviors” (Sessa, 2007). Between the two studies, there were some discrepancies about what characteristics each generation was known to have. Though the literature review, it is still unclear if there are confirmed generational differences or if they are perceptions. Two studies guided the creation of the survey. At the top of every page of the survey that asked questions about a specific generation, the definition of each generation was posted so participants were informed. Characteristics that were surveyed were not defined for respondents therefore respondent’s definitions may be inconsistent.

A copy of the survey with its logic can be seen in Appendix A. The survey begins with demographic questions: year of birth, gender, affiliation of Bryant, and industry (if applicable). Questions that rate how each generation perceives each generation were based on a numerical scale of 1-5 so that statistical analyses could be conducted. For perceptual questions, a rating of 5 was a favorable or positive rating. This method also allows each generation to be compared to one another. The survey ended with questions about intergenerational groups. If a participant had participated in a group with multiple generations present, they were asked a set of questions about their experience. They were asked if having multiple generations present proved beneficial, and they could add comments about the experience. In addition, participants were asked if they had been trained on working with different generations. Lastly, they were asked if they would purposely work in an intergenerational group. The survey concluded by thanking participants for their time, and provided a space to put their email if they were interested in providing more information in

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the form of an interview. That list was used to conduct interviews with follow up questions to provide more qualitative data.

The purpose of the organization of this survey was to confirm that generations had different strengths and weaknesses and to determine if there was a consensus across all participants. Also, by filtering the results by which generation was taking the survey, we can see if some generations agree or disagree with the stereotypes, and also how they view their own generation in comparison to everyone else. The second half of the survey was meant to start a discussion, to see if the topic is relevant in the everyday workplace, as well as to assess if people have had positive or negative experiences in intergenerational groups.

Survey Distribution

The survey was first sent out through the Innovation and Design Experience for All (IDEA) program at Bryant University, a three-day course that teaches the problem solving method of design thinking to first year students. The survey was sent to 115 alumni mentors and judges that came from outside of the Bryant community and 102 faculty, staff and upperclassman student mentors. The survey was then sent to 30 Senior Honors students. Out of the approximately 250 people that received the survey link, 160 people started the survey, and 125 people completely finished the survey which is a 50% response rate.

One limitation with the survey distribution process is the limited type of people to which the survey was sent. Since it was sent to mostly mentors in the IDEA program, it was sent to people volunteering their time to work with first year students. The type of person who volunteers for such an event may respond a different way than a random participant would. The limitation of the distribution process needs to be considered while evaluating the results.

Interviews

Interviews were conducted with participants of the surveyed that volunteered. Out of 125 people that completed the survey, 20 participants volunteered to be interviewed and seven were interviewed either in person or over the phone. Questions that guided the conversation can be seen in Appendix B. Interview questions were structured around what scenarios intergenerational groups were effective vs. ineffective in accomplishing group goals. These questions were not as easy to include in a survey. The interviews were an open forum

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discussion about how people formed their opinions on generations and how this diverse group context was used in their workplace. This qualitative approach put some context around survey analysis, and also provided content of discussion.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The survey responses are broken down by age of respondents in the following way:

Generations are abbreviated as:

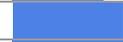
1 or TR: Traditionalists

2 or BB: Baby Boomers

3 or X: Generation X

4 or Y: Generation Y

Table 3: Breakdown of results by generation

Generation		Responses	%
1		4	3%
2		31	20%
3		38	25%
4		80	52%
	Total	153	100%

Out of the survey responses, it should be noted about half of respondents were from the Millennial generation. Also, since only four Traditionalists took the survey, their results were only partially considered. To supplement the lack of Traditionalist responses, an interview was conducted with a Traditionalist. These outcomes should be taken as limitations of the study. A means analysis was conducted on perceptual questions, and a chi-square analysis was conducted on the second half of the survey questions to find significance. Each statistical test is explained more fully below.

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Research Question 1: Are there workplace stereotypes and/or perceptions that are placed on each generation?

Hypothesis: Each generation stereotypes and perceives other generations based on experiences or interaction with that generation and the media. These stereotypes may or may not impede the work efficiency.

A means analysis was conducted on survey results to identify perceptions. A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used because there was one dependent variable (generation) in comparison to more than one independent variable (response to perceptual questions) (Tabachnick, B., & Fidell, L., 1996). The independent variables were the responses one generation had on perceptual questions of four generations. Survey responses were grouped by respondent's generation and how they responded to each perceptual question. The MANOVA was used to compare a person's response across multiple questions (Tabachnick, B., & Fidell, L., 1996).

In the first part of the survey, respondents were asked to what extent a generation had a specified characteristic. There are a few interesting findings that will be discussed, however all means analyses can be seen in Appendix C. Survey responses are compared to two similar studies, Sessa (2007) and Ernst and Young (EY, 2013) to corroborate key findings.

The following perceptual charts are broken down by the independent variable of which generation is responding. The independent variable can be seen on the left hand side. Along the top of each chart is the dependent variable, how each generation rated its own generation and other generations. As stated before, a five is the most positive rating a generation could have. The mean, number of respondents and standard deviation for each quadrant is listed.

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Effective Manager vs. Effective Leader Results

Table 4: Identify to what extent you think each generation represents being an effective manager

What year were you born?		Identify to what extent you think each generation represents being / a effective manager. - Millennials/Generation Y	Identify to what extent you think each generation represents being / a effective manager. - Generation X	Identify to what extent you think each generation represents being / a effective manager. - Baby Boomers	Identify to what extent you think each generation represents being / a effective manager. - Traditionalists
1 (TR)	Mean	2.50	3.00	4.00	3.67
	N	2	3	3	3
	Std. Deviation	.707	1.000	1.000	1.155
2 (BB)	Mean	2.65	3.13	4.00	3.73
	N	20	16	24	22
	Std. Deviation	.813	.719	.417	.767
3 (X)	Mean	2.45	4.03	3.79	3.46
	N	22	29	28	24
	Std. Deviation	.858	.626	1.031	1.062
4 (Y)	Mean	3.52	3.74	3.44	2.92
	N	54	57	52	50
	Std. Deviation	1.005	1.061	.938	1.226
Total	Mean	3.08	3.70	3.67	3.25
	N	98	105	107	99
	Std. Deviation	1.042	.950	.898	1.137

Generation X and Baby Boomers are rated the most effective managers as seen by their mean rating of 3.7 and 3.67 respectively. Each generation rates themselves as more effective managers than the average. Millennials rate Baby Boomers much lower than everyone else rates them 3.44 compared to the average 3.67, and Traditionalists even worse, 2.92 compared to the average 3.25. Other, besides Millennials, seem to rate Millennials poorly.

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Table 5: Identify to what extent you think each generation is an effective leader

What year were you born?		Identify to what extent you think each generation is a effective leader. - Millennials/Generation Y	Identify to what extent you think each generation is a effective leader. - Generation X	Identify to what extent you think each generation is a effective leader. -Baby Boomers	Identify to what extent you think each generation is a effective leader. - Traditionalists
1 (TR)	Mean	2.00	3.00	3.50	3.67
	N	3	4	4	3
	Std. Deviation	.000	.816	.577	.577
2 (BB)	Mean	2.87	3.55	4.08	3.87
	N	23	20	24	23
	Std. Deviation	1.014	.826	.881	.815
3 (X)	Mean	2.44	3.90	3.85	3.92
	N	25	21	27	24
	Std. Deviation	1.003	.700	.949	.881
4 (Y)	Mean	3.71	3.94	3.66	3.33
	N	52	52	50	55
	Std. Deviation	.871	.916	.872	1.019
Total	Mean	3.17	3.81	3.80	3.59
	N	103	97	105	105

Every generation thinks of themselves as more effective leaders that their peers perceive.

Millennials in specific rate themselves an entire point higher (3.71) than their older counterparts, Generation X rating Generation Y a 2.44 and Baby Boomers rating them a 2.87. In conclusion, Generation X and Baby Boomers are the most effective leaders with scores of 3.81 and 3.8 respectively.

Effective Manger vs. Effective Leader Discussion

As seen in the results in Table 4 shown above, Generation X and Baby Boomers are rated the most effective managers. These generations were also rated the most effective

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leaders as seen in Table 5. Sessa (2007) discusses how managers older than oneself are often seen as more effective managers than how other older managers see them. This is seen how performance evaluations are more positive from younger employees assessing older managers, than older employees on a similar aged older manager (Sessa 2007). The survey results showed that older employees ranked older generations higher than younger generations ranked them as an efficient manager, which is different from Sessa's (2007) findings. No studies on generational differences in leadership have been conducted like they have for managerial skills (Sessa, 2007). EY's survey (2013) showed that people think Generation X and Baby Boomers are the best leaders and have more leadership capabilities than Generation Y.

Respondents consider Generation X and Baby Boomers as both effective leaders and managers, possibly because they make up the biggest current manager population. These results are inconclusive as it seems it may be age dependent, and not generational dependent. Throughout the survey, each generation seems to rate themselves more favorably than others rate them, with Generation Y rating themselves much higher as effective leaders than everyone else. This is similar to EY's survey responses where Generation Y was rated the lowest in leadership. These results seem to be because Generation X and Baby Boomers are the current managers in the workplace. It is difficult to visualize someone as a manager that does not have the experience of being in that role. Millennials rated low as managers and leaders because not many of them have been in managerial positions yet. This is a dangerous perception since the oldest Millennials are most likely in managerial positions in the workplace. However, their coworkers do not see them as managers. Millennials rate themselves favorably because as they grew up and went to college, they were managers and leaders on sports teams, team projects and in social groups. All of these groups are with their own generation, and they have rarely been on intergenerational team. This is why older generations have not seen the leadership skills of Millennials yet. These results seem to show that people think of managers and leaders as the same thing. As the definition of the characteristics were not defined in the survey, these are interesting results to conclude. It is curious if the characteristics were defined if the results would have been different.

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Team Player vs. Collaborative Results

Table 6: Identify to what extent you think each generation is a team player

What year were you born?		Identify to what extent you think each generation is a team player. - Millennials/Generation Y	Identify to what extent you think each generation is a team player. - Generation X	Identify to what extent you think each generation is a team player. - Baby Boomers	Identify to what extent you think each generation is a team player. - Traditionalists
1 (TR)	Mean	2.00	3.33	4.00	3.67
	N	4	3	3	3
	Std. Deviation	.816	.577	1.000	1.155
2 (BB)	Mean	3.23	3.33	3.68	3.73
	N	26	24	22	22
	Std. Deviation	1.275	.816	.839	1.120
3 (X)	Mean	3.41	3.81	3.33	3.56
	N	27	27	21	27
	Std. Deviation	1.185	.879	1.238	1.340
4 (Y)	Mean	3.92	3.60	3.08	2.81
	N	60	53	48	53
	Std. Deviation	1.094	.743	1.069	1.241
Total	Mean	3.58	3.59	3.31	3.22
	N	117	107	94	105
	Std. Deviation	1.212	.800	1.078	1.293

Millennials and Generation X are rated the best team players with ratings of 3.58 and 3.59 respectively. Baby Boomers rate both generations much lower than the average, rating Generation Y at 3.23 and Generation X at 3.33. Each generation rates themselves higher than the average of their peers, for example Generation X rates themselves at 3.92 compared to the average of 3.58.

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Table 7: Identify to what extent each generation is collaborative

What year were you born?		Identify to what extent each generation is collaborative. - Millennials/Generation Y	Identify to what extent each generation is collaborative. - Generation X	Identify to what extent each generation is collaborative. - Baby Boomers	Identify to what extent each generation is collaborative. - Traditionalists
1 (TR)	Mean	2.25	3.00	3.50	3.50
	N	4	4	4	4
	Std. Deviation	.500	.816	.577	.577
2 (BB)	Mean	3.84	3.76	3.63	3.29
	N	25	21	24	24
	Std. Deviation	.987	.700	.711	.999
3 (X)	Mean	3.90	3.57	2.83	2.42
	N	30	30	23	24
	Std. Deviation	1.213	.971	1.072	.974
4 (Y)	Mean	4.42	3.67	2.80	2.44
	N	57	55	41	48
	Std. Deviation	.823	.747	.843	1.090
Total	Mean	4.09	3.64	3.05	2.68
	N	116	110	92	100
	Std. Deviation	1.051	.810	.930	1.091

Results show that younger generations are more collaborative than older generations.

Generation Y and X were rated 4.09 and 3.64 respectively whereas Baby Boomers and Traditionalists were rated 3.05 and 2.68 respectively.

Team Player vs. Collaboration Discussion

Results from the survey showed that Generation Y and X are the best team players even with Baby Boomers rating these generations much lower than the average (Table 6). A team player is defined as someone who can be held mutually accountable. A collaborative

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person is someone who enjoys and also works well with others. These results differ from a survey that EY conducted which found Generation Y were the worst team players and Generation X the best (The generational management shift, 2013). When respondents were asked about collaboration, which many would think is synonymous to team player or, at a minimum a quality of a team player, results showed that Generation Y is the most collaborative, and get less collaborative as respondents age (Table 7). EY's (2013) study supported these results indicating that Generation X is the most collaborative followed by Generation Y. A reason for this could be the changing workplace, and starting with Generation X, the workplace was made up of more teams than before. Technology has also aided with the ability to collaborate. Generation Y grew up in a time period of organized sports and activities, therefore they have been on teams their entire lives. This could affect how this generation is perceived as high team players. EY's study was also conducted in the workplace, while this study was conducted in an academic setting. Since many respondents of this study were Millennials, and in a setting where there is a clear hierarchy of teachers of older generations having more power than students of the Millennial generation, could be the reason for the differences in findings. A future research opportunity is to duplicate this study in the workplace to see if conducting the study in an academic setting manipulated the results.

These results are interesting as they are inconsistent with other studies done such as Ernst and Young's research. This survey did not define what a team player was versus a collaborator. In one interview conducted with a Bryan University Lecturer, he stated that his company looks for collaborative people to put on teams, no matter their age, and that each generation could be equally collaborative. The inconsistencies in data between this current study and EY's study could show agreement with the interviewee that collaboration is not a generational characteristic therefore it is not rooted in a person's values they learned when young.

When asked on the survey to explain your intergenerational group experience, some stated that the older generation did not want to understand the younger generation. There was a common complaint of interviewees that younger generations were "shot down easily" by older generations. This could explain the low rating the Generation Y gave Traditionalists as bad team players and collaborators. It is still unclear from this data which generation is best at

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collaboration and being a team player, which may indicate it is a perception, and not a generational characteristic.

What Generation do you want to Work with Results

Table 8: Identify to what extent you would like to work with each generation

What year were you born?		Identify to what extent you would like to work with each generation. - Millennials/Generation Y	Identify to what extent you would like to work with each generation. - Generation X	Identify to what extent you would like to work with each generation. - Baby Boomers	Identify to what extent you would like to work with each generation. - Traditionalists
1	Mean	3.75	3.75	3.25	3.00
	N	4	4	4	3
	Std. Deviation	.957	.500	.957	1.000
2	Mean	3.76	3.91	4.17	3.67
	N	25	23	23	24
	Std. Deviation	1.200	.848	.778	1.049
3	Mean	3.59	4.28	3.67	3.36
	N	29	29	24	22
	Std. Deviation	1.150	.591	.917	1.049
4	Mean	3.78	3.94	3.24	2.73
	N	55	54	51	52
	Std. Deviation	1.117	.856	.992	1.206
Total	Mean	3.73	4.02	3.55	3.10
	N	113	110	102	101
	Std. Deviation	1.128	.790	.991	1.187

Generation X and Y are the most wanted generations to work with; rated 3.73 and 4.02 respectively. Traditionalists are the least desirable to work with as seen by an average rating of 3.1. Each generation wants to work with their peers, scoring their own generation the highest out of all of the generations. The only result where this is untrue is Traditionalists wanting to work with Millennials and Generation X more than people similar to them in age.

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What Generation do you want to Work with Discussion

This study concluded that Generation X and Baby Boomers had the most positive characteristics. This is similar to the EY study (2013) that concluded Generation X had the highest ratings on positive managerial skills. The second most wanted generation to work with based on the findings of this study is Generation Y, which EY's study showed was the most difficult to work with. The outcomes of this study showed similar results where respondents want to work mainly with Generation X. Generation Y was also rated low on many positive managerial skills. However, people still want to work with this generation. When broken down by generation, it was found that each generation wants to work with their own generation, and those generations closest to them in age.

The data from this survey supported the claim that we put perceptions on other generations and stereotype people based on when they grew up. It is unclear whether these perceptions are based on generation or age, and a longitudinal study which looks at generations at different points in their life is a way to determine that. The most significant conclusion is that, even though Generation Y is negatively stereotyped, people still want to work with this generation. An interview with a Traditionalist stated that because of the technology knowledge gap, younger generations were often brought on to a team to fill that gap. It is clear that the younger generation has more experience with certain technologies, therefore the older generation wants to work with Generation Y specifically because the older generation could learn from them. It is also interesting how generations want to work with people of a similar age, which may be because they grew up with this generation. Older generations are often seen as authority figures because they have been parents, teachers and bosses. Because of this, people may not want to work with older generations rather people of a similar age. If people choose teams that are only composed of their own generation, the team needs to be concerned about groupthink and how thinking similarly will impact team results and limit creative problem solving.

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Do we place perceptions/stereotypes on each generation?

The answer is yes, respondents attribute perceptions to each generation. Even though topic expert Twenge (2010) claims there are only four generational differences, as seen earlier in the literature review (Posthuma, 2009), when survey respondents are asked to rate to what extent a generation has certain characteristics, there are always judgments on each generation. The results of this current study show that perceptions of generations go much deeper than Twenge's four generational differences. However, from these results there is no way of knowing if these perceptions are actually true. An interview with a Bryant Alumnus stated that we create these perceptions based on the experiences we have had with certain generations. With these results, the workplace needs to further think how this will impact team dynamic knowing that people most likely act on their perceptions rather than reality. Going into the study's second research question, it is important to note that there are perceptions that impact society's opinion on one another based on when they were born.

Research Question 2: Are there specific scenarios to use intergenerational groups?

Hypothesis: Intergenerational groups should be used when the group objective requires creativity, innovation and problem solving. Any conflict and stereotypes within the group has to be constructive and cannot impede the efficiency in order to be successful.

A chi-square analysis was conducted to find significance between those respondents that thought multiple generations in a group benefited group goals and people wanting to purposely put multiple generations together in a group. The chi-square test of independence examines the relationships between two discrete variables (Tabachnick, B., & Fidell, L.,1996). This test was used to find association between responses of survey questions. Also, an analysis of means was also conducted on questions that asked about the benefits of intergenerational groups.

On the survey, there was a qualitative question about the experienced respondents had on intergenerational groups. Interviews were also conducted for more qualitative information. Qualitative survey responses can be seen in Appendix D and interview questions can be seen in Appendix B. These results were used to further analysis the second research question.

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Table 9: Chi-Square Analysis

		Did having Multiple generations in a group benefit group goals? (1=Benefitted Greatly, 4= Did Not Benefit)				Total
		1	2	3	4	
Would you purposely create an intergenerational group? (1=Never, 4=Very Likely)	Count	1	1	0	0	2
	1	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
		2.6%	2.1%	0.0%	0.0%	1.9%
	Count	0	4	0	1	5
	2	0.0%	80.0%	0.0%	20.0%	100.0%
		0.0%	8.5%	0.0%	12.5%	4.9%
	Count	13	38	9	7	67
	3	19.4%	56.7%	13.4%	10.4%	100.0%
		33.3%	80.9%	100.0%	87.5%	65.0%
	Count	25	4	0	0	29
	4	86.2%	13.8%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
		64.1%	8.5%	0.0%	0.0%	28.2%
Total	Count	39	47	9	8	103
	Total	37.9%	45.6%	8.7%	7.8%	100.0%
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	44.277 ^a	9	.000
Likelihood Ratio	49.725	9	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	17.012	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	103		

A chi-square analysis was conducted to find correlation between “Do you think having multiple generations in a group benefitted the groups goals” and “Would you purposely put generations together in a group”. The result of the chi-square analysis was significant at $p < .05$. Eighty percent of respondents that agreed intergenerational groups benefitted the group’s goals were also likely to intentionally put different generations together in a group. There is correlation between those that had a good experience in intergenerational groups and those that would use generation as a factor when deciding team members. Since every

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question on the survey was optional (except year of birth), there are only 103 cases valid cases in this particular question.

Results: Are there specific scenarios to use intergenerational groups?

Eighty Seven percent of respondents have experienced a team setting with multiple generations. Over 80% of those people agreed that having multiple generations benefitted the outcome of the group's goals. Those people said they were likely to put different generations in a group together. These results show that the use of intergenerational groups in the workplace is a relevant topic and the perceptions that we attribute to each generation can affect the group's effectiveness. The group surveyed is very optimistic about the topic of using intergenerational groups in the workplace, and few had negative experiences.

In interviews (Appendix B), respondents were asked what scenarios they would purposely create an intergenerational group. Many respondents said that when the audience of the project is broad and includes many generations, all generations should be included in the planning. One Bryant Graduate student identified the university's homecoming planning committee as an example when intergenerational groups are needed to plan an event that caters to all age groups in attendance. Another scenario mentioned was when new information needs to be brought to the group. One Traditionalist alumni stated that technology was the biggest generation gap, and having younger generations on a team to teach others new technology is important. A few interview respondents stated creative and problem-solving teams need intergenerational groups to act similarly to a brainstorming group. The reason for this is because of the different perspectives that each generation brings that fills the knowledge gap of a team. Even though there are perceptions on generations, both negative and positive, respondents saw the benefits of working with other generations.

The reason people speak highly of using intergenerational groups is because it sparks debate (See Appendix D). Even though participants say it takes longer to come to a conclusion, the outcome is better because the team structure more accurately represents the environment in which we all live. The older generation guides the younger generation similar to the Apprenticeship Model, However, the younger generation brings in their opinion as well as they are more educated as they have been in the past. The older generation offers their experience, and the younger generation is willing to take risks and suggest change. It is

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important that debate fosters cognitive conflict about the work at hand, rather than affective conflict which is interpersonal conflict (Garvin, 2001). If an intergenerational group has the right type of people, similar to Patota (2007) Super Managers and Super Employees model, then there is a greater chance intergenerational groups will benefit group goals. This is important to consider before purposely creating an intergenerational group.

There are a few comments respondents and interviewees had cautioning the use of intergenerational groups. Some were dissatisfied with the amount of time it took to find common ground on group goals because of the different opinions, sometimes too much time. It is possible that one bad experience created a perception that these respondents now have on intergenerational groups, similar to the perceptions on other generations in the first half of the study. Some also caution about the people that formulate these groups, and that the diverse groups will only be beneficial if participants are willing to learn. The leader of the group also must avoid one-sided arguments. Strong leaders that smother debate because they think it will turn into affective conflict or scared that their idea may not be the best are not the best leaders in this type of group. A Super Manager is needed instead because they can pick out what makes each generation tick and use it to the group's advantage (Patota, 2007). According to a Bryant Professor, any diverse group needs to be made up of people with high emotional intelligence. Many said that to form a group, they would consider a person's soft skills and expertise before they considered a person's generation. With this being said, intergenerational groups should only be used in the scenario that the right people are available to form the group, not just for the sake of having other generations.

LIMITATIONS

The biggest limitation of this study is the convenience sample that was surveyed. All survey participants volunteered to take the survey, and all interviewees volunteered their time as well. The convenience sample was half Millennials, most being juniors and seniors in an undergraduate program. These Millennials have had limited experience with intergenerational groups. The sample size was also a limitation. Though big enough to get valuable results, a larger sample size would have more validity. All questions besides year of birth were not mandatory, therefore some questions had more responses than others. The last limitation is

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that this study was a cross-sectional study, only studying generations at a specific point in time. Because of this type of study, it is unclear whether any of these results are generational based or age/experience based. A cross-sectional study only looks to one cohort of people at one specific time, and therefore it does not compare the group of people across time. It is quite possible that the characteristics we attribute to a specific generation simply reflect their age, not necessarily when they grew up. A better option would be a longitudinal study (see Future Research).

FUTURE RESEARCH

An idea for future research is to duplicate a study similar to this one in the workplace. This study was done in an academic setting, with many Millennial respondents still in college. Duplicating this study in a workplace environment where intergenerational groups are often used would be a great comparison point. Another future research study would be a longitudinal study, meaning the same cohort of people is surveyed as they age. This type of study would determine which characteristics are generational based. If values and characteristics change over time, they are age-based. However, if a cohort of people possess consistent values and characteristics over time, they are generational based, meaning those traits were programmed at a young age. Another research opportunity would be to study the blending of generations. Since family structures are changing, there may be a gap between the generations a parent is in versus their children. For example, there are some Millennials with Baby Boomer parents, whereas generational studies would say they should have Generation X parents. Generational blending has not been researched and was only considered as an after thought of this study. It would be interesting to study how generational blending, and what generation a person's parents are a part of affects a person's characteristics.

The last research opportunity is to research how Generation Z is growing up. Generation Z is debatably still being born and by researching the generation's values now, it will prepare educational systems and future corporations for how to work with the generation. Generation Z is growing up more connected to technology than Generation Y. This generation finds the internet more helpful than school, often referring to the internet as a tool of teaching. Generation Z learns fast, therefore they seem to be maturing faster. Taking these

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considerations into account, the workplace may be different in how it is structured and how elders teach their employees. This generation is already entering the workplace as unskilled laborers, therefore researching their characteristics and benefits of this generation cannot wait. The educational system may be able to benefit from this type of study as well.

CONCLUSION

This study showed that intergenerational groups cannot be avoided. With the growing working population, employees need to be aware of the strengths and weaknesses of each generation, not necessarily the stereotypes. However, over 80% of survey respondents have not had training on generational differences. Those who have had generational training, only 15% of survey respondents, rated each generation more beneficial to a group than those who have not had training. Although there is not enough data to support this conclusion, we can predict that those with generational training have a higher emotional intelligence for generations than those without training. It should be an action plan for anyone in the workplace to learn about generations, their strengths and weaknesses, what environment they grew up in, and what others perceive about them. They should caution their teams about stereotypes, and if possible set up a formal training program. Twenge (2010) stresses to focus on treating employees like individuals, not as members of their generation.

Overall, the three key findings on the study are first, that Generation Y is negatively perceived while Generation X is positively perceived. Even with these perceptions, all generations want to work with both Generation X and Y. Second, there is limited training on generational differences, however those that have had training think that intergenerational groups benefit group goals more than those that have not had training. Lastly, there are perceived benefits of intergenerational groups, however generations would prefer to work with people of a similar age before they work with other generations. Knowing this, managers and employees need to be aware of the perceptions on each generation in order to avoid bias in group. By being aware of the perceptions, action can take place when needed to limit the bias. Even with the perceptions that are place, intergenerational groups do have perceived benefits. Therefore, generational diversity should be supported, and not seen as a negative. The workplace needs to be aware of this type of diversity as much as the other types of

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diversity out there. Training is not the answer to the question, however if there is a workplace that is growing in the amount of age ranges that are in it faster than normal, training should be considered so employees are aware of generational differences. Generations are generalized, however knowing the basic values of a large group of people in the workplace can be beneficial when trying to be successful.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Survey Copy and Codes
Second Round Capstone Survey

Q9 The following survey is for a Bryant University Senior Honors Capstone. All records from this study will be kept confidential. Any identification given will not be published in any report. By proceeding with this survey, you understand that participation is voluntary, that you may discontinue participation in the survey at any time and refusal to participate will not result in any penalty. The survey will take 5-7 minutes. Thank you in advance for your time.

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Q10 Are you currently a student, faculty or staff member at Bryant?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Answer If Are you currently a student, faculty or staff member at Bryant? Yes Is Selected

Q11 What is your role at Bryant University?

- Student (1)
- Faculty (2)
- Full-Time Staff (3)
- Part-Time Staff (4)

Answer If Are you currently a student, faculty or staff member at Bryant? No Is Selected

Q12 What field of work are you employed in?

- Accounting (3)
- Actuarial Math (4)
- Banking (5)
- Communications (6)
- Entrepreneur (7)
- Finance (8)
- Human Resources (9)
- Information Technology (10)
- Legal (11)
- Marketing (1)
- Sales (12)
- Supply Chain Management (13)
- Other (14)

Q13 What is your gender?

- Female (1)
- Male (2)
- I prefer not to answer (3)

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Q14 What year were you born?

- 1900 (1)
- 1901 (1)
- 1902 (1)
- 1903 (1)
- 1904 (1)
- 1905 (1)
- 1906 (1)
- 1907 (1)
- 1908 (1)
- 1909 (1)
- 1910 (1)
- 1911 (1)
- 1912 (1)
- 1913 (1)
- 1914 (1)
- 1915 (1)
- 1916 (1)
- 1917 (1)
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- 1927 (1)
- 1928 (1)
- 1929 (1)
- 1930 (1)
- 1931 (1)
- 1932 (1)
- 1933 (1)
- 1934 (1)
- 1935 (1)
- 1936 (1)
- 1937 (1)
- 1938 (1)
- 1939 (1)
- 1940 (1)
- 1941 (1)
- 1942 (1)
- 1943 (1)

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- 1944 (1)
- 1945 (1)
- 1946 (1)
- 1947 (1)
- 1948 (1)
- 1949 (2)
- 1950 (2)
- 1951 (2)
- 1952 (2)
- 1953 (2)
- 1954 (2)
- 1955 (2)
- 1956 (2)
- 1957 (2)
- 1958 (2)
- 1959 (2)
- 1960 (2)
- 1961 (2)
- 1962 (2)
- 1963 (2)
- 1964 (2)
- 1965 (3)
- 1966 (3)
- 1967 (3)
- 1968 (3)
- 1969 (3)
- 1970 (3)
- 1971 (3)
- 1972 (3)
- 1973 (3)
- 1974 (3)
- 1975 (3)
- 1976 (3)
- 1977 (3)
- 1978 (3)
- 1979 (3)
- 1980 (3)
- 1981 (3)
- 1982 (4)
- 1983 (4)
- 1984 (4)
- 1985 (4)
- 1986 (4)
- 1987 (4)
- 1988 (4)

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- 1989 (4)
- 1990 (4)
- 1991 (4)
- 1992 (4)
- 1993 (4)
- 1994 (4)
- 1995 (4)
- 1996 (4)
- 1997 (4)

Q15 For the following questions, identify to which degree each generation you feel has the specified characteristic. Please slide the bar to the number you feel related to your honest assumptions. Millennials/Generation Y - Currently ages 18-32
Generation X - Currently ages 33-50
Baby Boomers - Currently ages 50-66
Traditionalists - Currently ages 67-85

Q40 Identify to what extent each generation is hardworking.

- _____ Millennials (1)
- _____ Generation X (2)
- _____ Baby Boomers (3)
- _____ Traditionalists (4)

Q17 Identify to what extent you think each generation represents being an effective manager.

- _____ Millennials/Generation Y (1)
- _____ Generation X (2)
- _____ Baby Boomers (3)
- _____ Traditionalists (4)

Q18 Identify to what extent you think each generation is a team player.

- _____ Millennials/Generation Y (1)
- _____ Generation X (2)
- _____ Baby Boomers (3)
- _____ Traditionalists (4)

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Q19 For the following questions, identify to which degree each generation you feel has the specified characteristic. Please slide the bar to the number you feel related to your honest assumptions. Millennials/Generation Y - Currently ages 18-32
Generation X - Currently ages 33-50
Baby Boomers - Currently ages 50-66
Traditionalists - Currently ages 67-85

Q20 Identify to what extent you think each generation respects authority.

- _____ Millennials/Generation Y (1)
- _____ Generation X (2)
- _____ Baby Boomers (3)
- _____ Traditionalists (4)

Q21 Identify to what extent you think each generation is honest

- _____ Millennials/Generation Y (1)
- _____ Generation X (2)
- _____ Baby Boomers (3)
- _____ Traditionalists (4)

Q22 Identify to what extent you think each generation is an effective leader.

- _____ Millennials/Generation Y (1)
- _____ Generation X (2)
- _____ Baby Boomers (3)
- _____ Traditionalists (4)

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Q23 For the following questions, identify to which degree each generation you feel has the specified characteristic. Please slide the bar to the number you feel related to your honest assumptions. Millennials/Generation Y - Currently ages 18-32
Generation X - Currently ages 33-50
Baby Boomers - Currently ages 50-66
Traditionalists - Currently ages 67-85

Q24 Identify to what extent you think each generation is opinionated.

- _____ Millennials/Generation Y (1)
- _____ Generation X (2)
- _____ Baby Boomers (3)
- _____ Traditionalists (4)

Q28 Identify to what extent each generation is more likely to make mistakes?

- _____ Millennials/Generation Y (1)
- _____ Generation X (2)
- _____ Baby Boomers (3)
- _____ Traditionalists (4)

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Q27 For the following questions, identify to which degree each generation you feel has the specified characteristic. Please slide the bar to the number you feel related to your honest assumptions. Millennials/Generation Y - Currently ages 18-32
Generation X - Currently ages 33-50
Baby Boomers - Currently ages 50-66
Traditionalists - Currently ages 67-85

Q30 Identify to what extent each generation is collaborative.

- _____ Millennials/Generation Y (1)
- _____ Generation X (2)
- _____ Baby Boomers (3)
- _____ Traditionalists (4)

Q25 Identify to what extent you would like to work with each generation.

- _____ Millennials/Generation Y (1)
- _____ Generation X (2)
- _____ Baby Boomers (3)
- _____ Traditionalists (4)

Q31 Please answer the following questions for any team you have been a part of in school, work, non-profits, etc.

Q32 Have you ever experienced a team setting with multiple generations represented? (ex. Millennial and a Baby Boomer as 2 members of the team)

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To Generations have different strengths ...

Q33 In the multi-generational team experience, would you say that having multiple generations benefited the outcome of the groups goals'?

- Benefited greatly (1)
- Benefited (2)
- Did not matter (3)
- Did not benefit (4)

Q34 Briefly describe how having multiple generations impacted the teams' goals?

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Q35 Generations have different strengths and weaknesses. Knowing this, would you purposely create a group with multiple generations?

- Very Unlikely (1)
- Unlikely (2)
- Likely (3)
- Very Likely (4)

Q36 On a scale of 0-5, how beneficial do you think the following generations are to a team?

- _____ Millennials/Generation Y (1)
- _____ Generation X (2)
- _____ Baby Boomers (3)
- _____ Traditionalists (4)

Q37 Have you ever received formal training on the strengths and weaknesses of each generation?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

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Q38 Thank you for completing this survey for a Bryant University Honors Capstone project. This capstone is looking at inter-generational groups as well as the perception of other generations within groups. If you wish to be further involved in the form of an interview, please enter your email in the box below. (Optional)

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Appendix B: Interview Questions

1. In your role, do you often work with other generations?
2. Do you find differences between other generations that can be attributed to generation, not necessarily age?
3. When you are creating teams to work on a project, do you consciously think of putting different generations together? If only occasionally, is it topic dependent?
4. How did you form your opinions about generational traits and attributes?
5. Do you have any other comments about how you perceive other generations, and how you view your own generation that are relevant to your interest in working with inter-generational groups.

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Appendix C: Survey Results Not Reviewed in Paper

Identify to what extent each generation is Hardworking

What year were you born?		Identify to what extent each generation is hardworking. -Millennials	Identify to what extent each generation is hardworking. -Generation X	Identify to what extent each generation is hardworking. -Baby Boomers	Identify to what extent each generation is hardworking. -Traditionalists
1 (TR)	Mean	2.25	2.25	4.00	3.67
	N	4	4	3	3
	Std. Deviation	.957	1.258	1.000	1.155
2 (BB)	Mean	3.04	3.54	4.35	4.54
	N	23	24	26	28
	Std. Deviation	1.107	.658	.629	.744
3 (X)	Mean	2.81	3.80	3.97	4.42
	N	32	30	30	31
	Std. Deviation	1.030	.847	.890	.923
4 (Y)	Mean	3.36	3.76	4.13	4.20
	N	61	59	63	60
	Std. Deviation	.984	.727	.889	1.070
Total	Mean	3.12	3.68	4.13	4.32
	N	120	117	122	122
	Std. Deviation	1.047	.808	.843	.973

The older you are, the harder a worker you are. Each generation scores their own generation as harder workers than the average amongst their peers. Sessa's study was similar in that the Traditionalists were seen as hardworking.

Identify to what extent you think each generation respects authority

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What year were you born?		Identify to what extent you think each generation respects authority. - Millennials/Generation Y	Identify to what extent you think each generation respects authority. - Generation X	Identify to what extent you think each generation respects authority. - Baby Boomers	Identify to what extent you think each generation respects authority. - Traditionalists
1	Mean	2.50	2.33	3.75	4.00
	N	4	3	4	4
	Std. Deviation	.577	.577	.957	.816
2	Mean	2.50	3.20	3.73	4.73
	N	24	20	22	26
	Std. Deviation	1.022	.834	.935	.452
3	Mean	2.22	2.96	3.87	4.67
	N	27	23	30	30
	Std. Deviation	.934	.878	.937	.547
4	Mean	2.26	3.30	4.08	4.57
	N	53	56	59	61
	Std. Deviation	.923	.989	.896	.826
Total	Mean	2.31	3.18	3.95	4.61
	N	108	102	115	121
	Std. Deviation	.934	.938	.916	.700

The older you are, the more you respect authority. Millennials respect authority much less than their peers, even millennials said so. Traditionalists are rated very highly that they respect authority. Sessa (2007) agrees that Traditionalists are known for respecting authority.

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Identify to what extent you think each generation is honest

What year were you born?		Identify to what extent you think each generation is honest- Millennials/Generation Y	Identify to what extent you think each generation is honest- Generation X	Identify to what extent you think each generation is honest- Baby Boomers	Identify to what extent you think each generation is honest- Traditionalists
1 (TR)	Mean	3.00	3.00	3.25	3.33
	N	4	3	4	3
	Std. Deviation	.000	.000	.957	.577
2 (BB)	Mean	3.29	3.47	3.81	4.09
	N	21	19	21	22
	Std. Deviation	.956	.841	.873	.811
3 (X)	Mean	3.25	3.38	3.40	4.13
	N	24	21	25	23
	Std. Deviation	1.032	.973	1.080	.968
4 (Y)	Mean	3.00	3.13	3.65	4.17
	N	55	52	57	58
	Std. Deviation	1.089	.950	1.044	.881
Total	Mean	3.12	3.25	3.61	4.12
	N	104	95	107	106
	Std. Deviation	1.027	.922	1.016	.881

Results show that you are more honest the older you get. Millennials think of themselves as less honest than the rest of survey participants. Other generations think of themselves as more honest than the rest of survey participants.

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Identify to what extent you think each generation is opinionated

What year were you born?		Identify to what extent you think each generation is opinionated. - Millennials/Generation Y	Identify to what extent you think each generation is opinionated. - Generation X	Identify to what extent you think each generation is opinionated. - Baby Boomers	Identify to what extent you think each generation is opinionated. - Traditionalists
1 (TR)	Mean N Std. Deviation	4.25 4 .500	4.25 4 .500	3.25 4 .500	3.25 4 .500
2 (BB)	Mean N Std. Deviation	4.16 25 .898	3.65 23 .647	4.00 24 .590	4.14 22 .834
3 (X)	Mean N Std. Deviation	4.26 27 1.130	3.79 28 .833	4.19 27 .736	4.31 29 .967
4 (Y)	Mean N Std. Deviation	4.37 60 .956	3.98 55 .757	3.96 54 .931	4.06 54 1.188
Total	Mean N Std. Deviation	4.29 116 .969	3.87 110 .756	4.00 109 .816	4.11 109 1.057

Millennials ranked the most opinionated, followed by Baby Boomers. All generation rated high on this scale.

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Report

What year were you born?		Identify to what extent each generation is more likely to make mistakes?- Millennials/Generation Y	Identify to what extent each generation is more likely to make mistakes?- Generation X	Identify to what extent each generation is more likely to make mistakes?- Baby Boomers	Identify to what extent each generation is more likely to make mistakes?- Traditionalists
1	Mean	2.67	3.25	3.33	3.67
	N	3	4	3	3
	Std. Deviation	.577	.500	.577	.577
2	Mean	2.75	3.00	3.28	3.22
	N	20	17	18	18
	Std. Deviation	.550	.612	.669	.548
3	Mean	2.58	2.89	3.00	2.89
	N	24	18	20	18
	Std. Deviation	.717	.471	.973	.832
4	Mean	2.50	2.89	3.14	3.13
	N	48	37	42	47
	Std. Deviation	1.052	.875	.872	.992
Total	Mean	2.58	2.93	3.14	3.12
	N	95	76	83	86
	Std. Deviation	.870	.718	.843	.873

On this scale, a 1 means that generation makes a lot of mistakes and a 5 means the generation never makes mistakes. The results show that the older you are, the less mistakes you make.

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			Have you ever experienced a team setting with multiple / generations represented? (ex. Millennial...		Total
			1	2	
What is your role at Bryant / University?	1	Count % within What is your role at Bryant / University?	28 77.8%	8 22.2%	36 100.0%
		% within Have you ever experienced a team setting with multiple / generations represented? (ex. Millennial...	37.3%	88.9%	42.9%
	2	Count % within What is your role at Bryant / University?	15 93.8%	1 6.3%	16 100.0%
		% within Have you ever experienced a team setting with multiple / generations represented? (ex. Millennial...	20.0%	11.1%	19.0%
	3	Count % within What is your role at Bryant / University?	31 100.0%	0 0.0%	31 100.0%
		% within Have you ever experienced a team setting with multiple / generations represented? (ex. Millennial...	41.3%	0.0%	36.9%
	4	Count % within What is your role at Bryant / University?	1 100.0%	0 0.0%	1 100.0%

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	% within Have you ever experienced a team setting with multiple / generations represented? (ex. Millennial...	1.3%	0.0%	1.2%
Total	Count	75	9	84
	% within What is your role at Bryant / University?	89.3%	10.7%	100.0%
	% within Have you ever experienced a team setting with multiple / generations represented? (ex. Millennial...	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.157 ^a	3	.027
Likelihood Ratio	11.584	3	.009
Linear-by-Linear Association	8.590	1	.003
N of Valid Cases	84		

Academia works in a lot of intergenerational groups. Over 60% of survey respondents were from academia.

Have you ever experienced a team setting with multiple / generations represented? (ex. Millennial...

What year were you born?	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
1	1.00	4	.000
2	1.11	28	.315
3	1.06	34	.239
4	1.19	62	.398
Total	1.13	128	.341

Millennials have encountered slightly less intergenerational groups. In the multi-generational team experience, would you say that / having multiple generations benefi...

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What year were you born?	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
1	2.00	4	1.414
2	1.62	24	.711
3	1.97	31	.912
4	1.82	50	.873
Total	1.83	109	.870

Younger generations are not as aware of the benefits of intergenerational groups. Generations have different strengths and weaknesses.

Knowing / this, would you purposely create a...

What year were you born?	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
1	3.00	3	1.000
2	3.27	22	.767
3	3.23	31	.560
4	3.02	62	.587
Total	3.12	118	.629

Most people are likely to put multiple generations together, however Baby Boomers are the most likely.

Generations have different strengths and weaknesses.

Knowing / this, would you purposely create a...

In the multi-generational team experience, would you say that / having multiple generations benefi...	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
1	3.59	39	.637
2	2.96	47	.509
3	3.00	9	.000
4	2.87	8	.354
Total	3.19	103	.611

People that think generations benefited their group's goals, also said they were likely to put different generations together.

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		Generations have different strengths and weaknesses. Knowing / this, would you purposely create a...	In the multi-generational team experience, would you say that / having multiple generations benefi...
/ / Have you ever received formal training on the strengths and / weaknesses of each generation?			
1	Mean	3.39	1.61
	N	18	18
	Std. Deviation	.502	.850
2	Mean	3.06	1.90
	N	95	83
	Std. Deviation	.598	.850
Total	Mean	3.12	1.85
	N	113	101

People that have received formal training are more likely to put different generations together and think having different generation impacted group goals.

On a scale of 0-5, how beneficial do you think the following / generations are to a team? -

Millennials/Generation Y On a scale of 0-5, how beneficial do you think the following / generations are to a team? -
Generation X On a scale of 0-5, how beneficial do you think the following / generations are to a team? -

Baby Boomers On a scale of 0-5, how beneficial do you think the following / generations are to a team? -

Traditionalists * What year were you born?

What year were you born?		On a scale of 0-5, how beneficial do you think the following / generations are to a team? - Millennials/Generation Y	On a scale of 0-5, how beneficial do you think the following / generations are to a team? - Generation X	On a scale of 0-5, how beneficial do you think the following / generations are to a team? - Baby Boomers	On a scale of 0-5, how beneficial do you think the following / generations are to a team? - Traditionalists
1	Mean	3.25	3.50	3.50	3.25
	N	4	4	4	4
	Std. Deviation	.500	.577	.577	.500
2	Mean	3.52	3.74	3.70	3.52
	N	27	27	27	27

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	Std. Deviation	1.122	.944	1.103	.975
3	Mean	3.79	3.79	3.34	3.03
	N	33	33	32	33
	Std. Deviation	.992	.820	1.035	1.380
4	Mean	3.90	3.69	3.29	2.93
	N	62	62	62	59
	Std. Deviation	.882	1.049	1.062	1.216
Total	Mean	3.77	3.72	3.40	3.10
	N	126	126	125	123
	Std. Deviation	.965	.952	1.055	1.211

Millennials are seen as the most beneficially to a team, and Generation X comes in a close second. People seem to rate their own generations a more beneficial to a team then they rate other generations. People also rate the generations closest to them highest than the ones farther away in age.

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Appendix D: Qualitative Survey Responses

Briefly describe how having multiple generations impacted the teams' goals?

81 Responses

- I can't think of one specific time. Every day, my work involves multiple generations of people working together. It's a benefit to have this diversity of ages working together.
- The older people basically took over and lead conversation. While consideration was given to comments from younger generation, it was generally shot down initially. Funny thing though, the idea was picked back up later by an older person who was leading the conversation. Took the credit and we ran with it. Whatever, it happens all the time.
- The goals were hard to set because of the different opinions on what should be a priority
- Diversity of thought and perspectives, ability for different teammates to "pivot" in and out of leadership roles
- Everyone was working towards a common goal but all of the gaps were filled. If one person did not know about something another person was able to use their strengths to help out.
- Good combination of thinkers, doers and tech savvy support.
- Each generation was at a different stage in their lives and careers. Generally the younger generations were willing to accept more risk than the older generations, I notice that in myself as I get older. In terms of how that impacts goals, I typically see that older generations are focused on creating something they know will work and can be maintained, whereas the younger generations typically are willing to find something that might work if there is a greater reward.
- Each generation brought their own experience, expertise, and working styles to the table in different and complementary ways.
- Provided a variety of views of the world. Key is to listen and consider each groups opinion equally.
- Each come a issue from a different perspective. The older generations are more practical while the younger generations have a more up do date view and more technical knowledge on a project.
- Various points of view and skill sets
- Different aged participants bring different perspectives to the project.
- We were able to obtain a wide range of perspectives on the challenge at hand. This helped identify that best overall solution.
- We had a range of experiences and perspectives.
- Everyone had different ideas and it was interesting to put them all together in the final outcome
- The "Big Picture" became broader and encompassed more elements that different generations would not think of because of being in different stages of life. Having older generations mixed with the younger we had high ambitions that were able to be guided to set feasible milestone goals.
- Multiple generations creates a 'thought provoking' and 360 perspective on various topics and is ideal for creativity and problem solving. This team structure more accurately represents the environment in which we all live, work and play.

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- It gave a number of perspectives and allowed us to review the different ideas that would best fit for the target audience.
- The older generation can bring a perspective and calmness, while the younger can bring an energy and excitement that can pair well together.
- multiple perspectives and priorities
- Each generation has different skills. E.g. the millennials are more skilled in technology, where baby boomers are more experienced and have a strong work ethic.
- Generally speaking, I think of older generations as more conservative and younger generations as more forward-thinking. In a business context, it is nice to have a blend of these perspectives/mindsets. That being said, this is a stereotype so it is more important to have a mix of perspectives/mindsets than a mix of biological ages.
- I'm not sure that having teams of multi-generations has any impact on the outcome. In my organization, it is an opportunity for the more junior members to learn and develop.
- It takes longer to reach consensus and develop a plan with multiple generations--important to take the time to make sure each person is heard and understood and that assumptions are challenged and discussed. I think having the input from several generations makes the outcome more effective in the long run.
- Different perspectives on issues. Allowed the team to innovate but adhere to deadlines.
- In any team experience, it is beneficial to have a diverse group in order to learn and grow. Although each generation has its own characteristics each plays an imperative role in realizing the goal. Each generation brings an important aspect to the table.
- Team goals are more achievable with the variety of experience and knowledge amongst the generations.
- Different experiences and perspective bring a new dynamic to the table especially when all participants are willing to learn from each other.
- Varying perspectives and experiences. While the younger members had a lot of energy and drive, they did not have the knowledge base from which to draw to clearly define goals and the path to get there. The more experienced members were able to help guide them or take their ideas and help to further refine them.
- Multiple generations allow for various few points to come through in the group dynamics. Avoiding a one-sided argument or way of doing things always creates a dynamic group environment and usually creates success.
- people bring different experiences to the table or a different way to solve the problem. People draw on their life experiences.
- Having an older generation member to provide examples from her experience in the workforce was extremely helpful.
- Having multiple generations was beneficial because it allowed the group to have different perspectives and bring in different experiences.
- Sometimes it is more difficult to work with people who do not understand or want to understand to ynger generation
- Each member comes from a different perspective and brings something unique to the table.
- We were all able to see the different ways to think about and approach a given task and helped to broaden all of our horizons
- Different perspectives and opinions contributed to more facets of the goal

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- While differing perspectives can bring a great deal to a team setting, my experience has been that boomers and traditionalists worldview is so far from those of millennials and Gen-X that too much time is spent trying to find some common ground and not enough time has been spent working towards the team's goal(s)
- The Gen Xer was able to guide the millennials in the right direction, it was a nice mix of characteristics that produced a great result. It was difficult working with them at times and not enjoyable, but the outcome was better because of their involvement.
- Different perspectives as well as drive and focus. the "older" generations seem to focus more on end goals while the younger seem to look at strategy
- A greater diversity of experiences helps. Also the more experienced members can provide pre-emptive warnings on potential pitfalls.
- Differing perspectives and experiences.
- Different perspectives usually leads to a better outcome as long as there is organized mediation.
- different generations will bring different perspective depending on their experiences with the world around them. The younger generations can give new, fresh and creative ideas while the older ones can give more constructive, outlined, a bit more conservation (reasonable) based on their experiences.
- Each group brings different concerns to the table.
- Different work ethics, ideas, experiences and character traits bring in a well rounded experience for the group, and whomever the group is working with.
- Multiple generations invite a variety of opinions, lived experience, knowledge, etc. The best new idea might come from anyone on the team. The danger is when there is a leader whose opinion carries more weight and others are afraid to participate.
- diverse backgrounds based off of social norms from their childhood and upbringing
- They may have different approaches when tackling a project. Younger generations may tend to start coming up with ideas right away and expressing them, while older generations may hear what other team members have to say first, and then express their ideas after listening to others.
- Different perspectives and brought awareness of things they were not exposed to previously.
- I would actually says it depends. In one aspect it would benefit because each generation has it's own strengths and weaknesses, but then at the same time, if those strengths and weaknesses include collaboration and being opinionated (just to name two aspects), that could hinder the overall goal.
- Conflicts arose over some points of view, but particularly over how we tackle problems.
- different minds, diversified thinking, in our case we were able to collaborate well with our different generational views
- Hearing different perspectives from different people from multiple generations aided in goal attainment.
- Generation X and Y were usually on the same page, while older generations were often more stubborn, stuck in their own ways, and generally slower.
- Through having a diversity of backgrounds, you have greater diversity of input towards ways of achieving team goals.
- Progressive and traditional ideas blended created a good mix.

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- Older generations expected the younger generations to defer to them and the younger generations felt like the older generations had nothing to offer. This was in a classroom setting so my theory is that the younger generation wondered why someone who was much older was just now in school....and the older generation felt like they had something to prove.
- Very different interpretations of situations, processes, outcomes.
- Being able to look at a problem and/or situation from various perspectives. To consider alternative solutions and approaches - promotes creativity - and provides greater likelihood that a potential solution/approach will appeal to the masses.
- The different perspective of each generation impacted the team's goals.
- Multiple perspectives allow for a greater generation of ideas and opportunities to improve the task at hand.
- Each generation has a different point of view and many times a different level of receptiveness to change.
- The power structure was difficult to overcome (some group members attempting to dominate in what should have been a collaborative environment). Also there was an issue with feedback - younger group members seemed more comfortable receiving criticism while older group members became disgruntled. The project was completed but in an almost disheartening manner due to the fact that everyone ended up complete "their portion" of the project.
- Differing perspectives and capabilities (technology, innovative thinking) have enhanced team effectiveness in successful achievement of goals.
- There are a lot of different strengths that the different generations bring to the table. Sometimes this can cause conflict, however in the end I think it is beneficial
- Took us out of the here and now and expressed what could be. Use of technology and social media streamlined and otherwise cumbersome process/communication.
- I don't know if you can underestimate the value of experience in setting and obtaining team goals.
- I would say that the willingness to try new things and take risk were definitely the biggest factor. Some of the older generations felt more uncomfortable with new and novel ideas.
- The older generation, was not engaged, did not add anything to the team, and threw off the positive impact of the millennial.
- Multiple generations in a team bring different perspectives to the table. Allows for new ideas as well as an experienced perspective to be present in the team.
- Having multiple generations created a hierarchy of tasks to achieve the goals at hand, with the older generations completing more of the complicated, decision-making tasks.
- Having different generations present brought out different viewpoints
- Benefited greatly as there were multiple perspectives brought to the table which helped enhance the overall drive and buy in.
- There are a variety of views, opinions and ideas that are presented when working with multi-generational teams.
- It was often difficult to work with both because they have very different views of the workplace and it got frustrating at times. They each have different individual goals of how they wanted to spend their work time so that would make things difficult. However overall everyone had the same goals to get the job done, make money, and go home.

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- Younger generations seem to have more detailed groups, while the older generations seem to have more broad goals.
- Different learning curves in different areas various levels of expertise
- Varying opinions and experience levels benefited overall results
- There were more thought and general experience that was brought to the table, More overall knowledge.
- I would say having multiple generations did not impact the goals of the team.