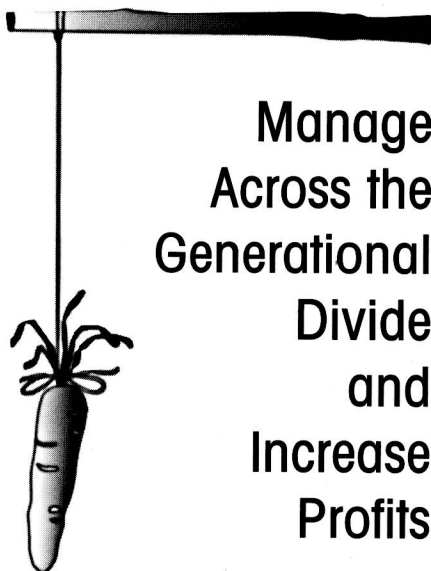


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MOTIVATING THE “What’s In It for Me?” WORKFORCE



Manage
Across the
Generational
Divide
and
Increase
Profits

CAM MARSTON



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Advance Praise for *Motivating the "What's in It for Me?" Workforce*

"The information on leading and managing generations found in this book is invaluable to all executives today. The 'war for talent' has become increasingly fierce. Attracting and retaining this talent is critical to a successful global company. This book is a masterful tool for developing the skills required for managing multigenerational teams. It is a must have for executives at all levels who are responsible for a company's greatest asset: its people."

—Phebe Port, Vice President, Global Management
Strategies, The Estée Lauder Companies

"*Motivating the 'What's in It for Me?' Workforce* has given our managers good ideas about leading the different generations in our workplace, particularly the New Millennials whom we at Enterprise are especially reliant upon to grow our business every single day and, ultimately, become our company's future leaders."

—Marie Artim, Assistant Vice President, Recruiting,
Enterprise Rent-A-Car

"After Cam presented to our management group, approximately 400 individuals, and after we responded to the clamor for his book, it became *commonplace* to hear people discussing solutions to problems based on generational considerations. There aren't many people discussions that occur today where we don't at least consider differences between Baby Boomers, Millennials, and so on. He really changed our way of thinking!"

—Anne Donovan, U.S. Human Resources Leader,
Systems and Process Assurance, PricewaterhouseCoopers

"If you ever had any doubt that generational differences have an impact on go-to-market strategies, Cam Marston's book, *Motivating the "What's in It for Me?" Workforce*, provides thought-provoking realities

you need to consider. This is a must-read. At our Sales Leadership Conference, Cam gave our top sales managers actionable ideas on how to gain better understanding for what drives today's workforce to take direct action and deliver exceptional results."

—Damian A. Thomas, General Manager, Corporate
Sales Leader, General Electric Company

"Rich in insights. Far and away the most persuasive account of how to cope with the huge generational divide."

—Amin Rajan, CEO, Centre for Research in
Employment and Technology in Europe
(CREATE), Pan-European Research Consultancy,
Kent, UK

"For anyone who is interested in a positive future for his or her company or organization, this book is a must-read. Marston has helped my staff and me understand our generational differences and how to make those differences work for us, not against us."

—Larry Naake, Executive Director,
National Association of Counties (NACo),
Washington, D.C.

"Understanding generational differences is changing the way we look at the world of work. Marston's insight puts him at the forefront of this thinking."

—David Skipsey, Managing Director, Change
Mentors, Ltd., Newcastle, UK

"This thought-provoking book is a must-read for today's manager concerned with understanding and motivating colleagues. Marston brings passion and relevance to the subject. The research is faultless, the analysis compelling, and the message clear."

—Stephen Cowell, CEO, The Longhirst Group,
Newcastle, UK

*To my wife, Lisa,
my daughter, Reiney,
and my son, Spencer*

In case you're worried about what's going to become of the younger generation, it's going to grow up and start worrying about the younger generation.

—Roger Allen

Remember the generational battles 20 years ago? Remember all the screaming at the dinner table about haircuts, getting jobs, and the American dream? Well, our parents won. They're out living the American dream on some damned golf course in Vero Beach, and we're stuck with the jobs and haircuts.

—P.J. O'Rourke

The reason people blame things on previous generations is that there's only one other choice.

—Doug Larson

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My brothers, Loyd and Dale, who unwittingly were the perfect case studies and generous critics of their own managers' styles.

My father, a wise, generous, and good man. I truly hope the apple doesn't fall far from the tree.

My mother, who has been my role model and a constant source of encouragement in so many aspects of my life, especially for this book.

Larry Chilnick, who began this project with me.

Suzanne Oaks, who took a jumbled mess and created a book out of it.

And finally, Judy Knipe, who refined the manuscript and became the highlight of this entire book-writing experience.

Introduction

It's Not Your Father's Workplace Anymore

Everyone who has spent time in any workplace over the past 25 years knows that it's not like it used to be. Members of the Baby Boomer generation remember that in the post–World War II era, the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, there were business leaders who looked forward with burning vision. But they also knew how to look back, learn from their mistakes, and apply those lessons. Now it's the Baby Boomers who are the leaders. They, too, work hard, and many are rewarded with promotions and greater responsibilities.

But the workplace has changed, and fulfilling those responsibilities today is much tougher and more frustrating than it was for the immediate postwar generation. It's a given that no workplace is perfect and there are always job-related issues. But two new younger generations of employees, called Generation X (Gen X) and the New Millennials, have changed the workplace. These employees, many of them the same age as the Boomers' children, don't necessarily follow the traditional styles and patterns of workplace behavior. The common wisdom among Boomers is, "They aren't really interested in the future, and their vision is limited to the here and now. They don't have the seasoning or burning ambition to even want to look forward or back to learn."

On the one hand, many Boomer managers believe the concept of a work ethic will die with them; on the other, many young employees view the Boomers as dinosaurs, thanks to their limited technological ability and a shift in the demographics of the workplace itself.

Is the generational divide really that sharp and divisive? Not always—but in many companies generational issues are a common and continuing problem that can have an all-encompassing organizational impact and can lead to employee unhappiness and, ultimately, to profit loss.

There Are Solutions

For the past eight years, I've been a lecturer and consultant for a broad range of domestic and international companies. My clients have ranged from small family-owned businesses to Fortune 500 multinational corporations. They've been headquartered both in the United States and abroad. And the audiences range from a handful of senior, top executives who are strategizing about future employee trends to groups of midlevel managers who work on a day-to-day basis with employees of all ages. I spend days preparing my research and a day on-site helping clients develop and implement new strategies—the solutions they need to get their teams to function more fluidly. All struggle with the challenges of bridging the gap between generations. Most of the company managers are Baby Boomers, while a large percentage of the workforce is now, and will increasingly be, Gen Xers and Millennials.

In the course of my work I have interviewed countless employees of every generation, and I understand the problems, values, and belief systems of each distinct generation. I know what motivates them and how they view themselves, their community, their families—and their workplaces. Their experiences in the trenches led to the insights that helped me create the solutions presented in this book—solutions that can be implemented in workplaces of every type, shape, and size.

I wrote *Motivating the “What’s in It for Me?” Workforce* because I believe there is a critical need for a practical, solution-oriented reference that businesses can use to improve employee relations in the multigenerational workplace and at the same time increase profits. This book will help you discover:

- How the different viewpoints of the each generation affect the workplace.
- The basic survival skills the Boomer manager must have to cope with Gen Xers and Millennials.
- How a realistic plan with workplace-tested, concrete steps for solving the problems that may arise from generational differences can give you the freedom to explore and unlock the full potential of your organization.

Cam Marston

Charlotte, North Carolina
May 2007

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1

Peter Pan in the Workforce

*Pixie Dust, Forever Young, and
“What Success Means to Me”*

“I won’t grow up / I don’t want to wear a tie / And a serious expression / In the middle of July.” So sang Peter Pan and the lost boys in Disney’s version of the classic story. Yet to many business leaders, this childhood fantasy is being played out daily among young employees nationwide. They are an entire generation (actually two) that doesn’t want to grow up. Or so it seems.

The year 2005 marked the hundredth anniversary of Sir James Barrie’s *Peter Pan*. It is a fitting time to look at the role of the younger generations—specifically Generation X and the New Millennials—who today combine to make up half of the workforce, and whose values and beliefs seem to mirror those of the boy who refused to grow up. Now more than ever, Americans born since roughly 1965 do not want to follow in the footsteps of their elders. And while their managers blame it on immaturity, the reality seems to lie more in perspective. These generations do want to grow up; they just don’t want to grow up to be like the generations before them.

Time-Honored Traditions

Our nation today lives in the world created by a generation known collectively as the Matures. Born prior to 1945, they total approximately 30 million people. Heavily influenced by the military, the Mature generation created a workplace reflecting that hierarchy with a clear chain of command. Promotions, bonuses, and raises were granted when an employee (almost always a male) proved himself ready for the next level. Employees worked hard to achieve higher ranks. All employees shared a similar definition of success: climbing the company ladder and earning the rewards that came with greater responsibility. The successive job titles and associated perks were admired and envied by employees on their way up and relished by those already at the top.

This model is still the basis for a large part of today’s workforce. The Baby Boomers, born between 1945 and 1964, now occupy the higher rungs of company ladders and make up 45 percent of today’s workers. They are in control, but they don’t always feel like it. Boomers’ language of “success” and their work ethic are very similar



Each generation assumes that the succeeding generation will experience the same desires, have the same values, and appreciate and cherish the same things, in an unchanging continuum.

This hope lives on in the face of reality. I’ve experienced it myself with my own father, who said to me recently, “One of these days you’ll realize that music gets no better than Hank Williams.” What was happening? He assumed (perhaps presumed) that one of these days I’d come around to his type of music, that my tastes would mirror his, that I’d finally “get it.”

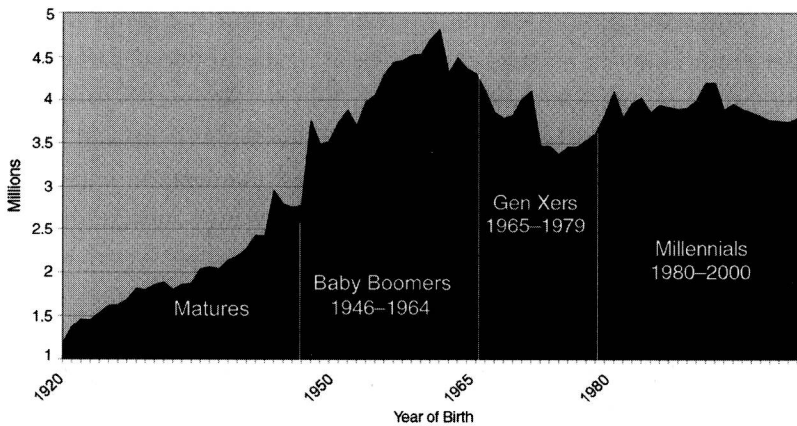


FIGURE 1.1 Today's Workplace Population by Birth Years

to those of the Matures. However, Matures now make up a mere 5 percent of the workforce. The other 50 percent—Gen Xers and the New Millennials—present a challenge to Boomer managers. (See Figure 1.1.) These younger workers are not interested in the time-honored traditions. They are unconcerned about the way things have always been done. They don't care how their managers got where they are. They are focused, often single-mindedly, on what it will take to get where they want to go.

Generational Repetition

Since World War II, each generation has assumed two things about the younger generations entering the workplace:

1. Senior generations assume that the younger generations will measure success the same way they themselves have.
2. Senior generations also believe that younger workers should pay their dues, following the same paths to achieve the same levels of success.