

PRODUCTIVITY THROUGH GENERATIONAL DIVERSITY

PANEL DISCUSSION (WITH QUESTIONS & ANSWERS)

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2009 (3:00 – 3:50 P.M.)

(Room C124-125)

William A. Verkest, Past Region VII Director and National 2006-2207 President, Director of Transportation and Public Works for the City of Fort Worth, Texas, representing the Silent Generation (Ages 63-86)

Rosemary J. Baltcha, Central California Chapter President-elect, Retired Public Works Personnel Manger for Fresno County Public Works and Planning Department, representing the Baby Boomers (Ages 44-62) (Moderator)

Laura A. Kroeger. Colorado Chapter board member at large, Education Chair, Graduate of the Emerging Leaders Academy and Project Manager for the Urban Drainage and Flood Control District in Denver, representing Generation “X” (Ages 28-43)

Charles R. Jordan, Florida Chapter West Coast Branch, Executive Committee, Graduate of the Emerging Leaders Academy, and Sr. Management Analyst for the City of Largo, Florida, representing Generation “Y” or Millennials (Ages 9-27)* *Only 10% of this generation is old enough to work (18-27)

There is a new term out there it is commanding a lot of attention, these days. The term is Generation Diversity. This terms deals with all of the different age groups in America’s workplace and how to establish congruity. At no other time in our history has there been four distinct generations in the workplace.

Our purpose here today is to discuss some of the generalizations about each of our generations, what we believe to be the benefits and pitfalls, our personal opinions or experiences with other generations, and finally how to make it work so that we have productive workplaces. This is a participatory workshop so we want you interact with us, ask questions, and share your experiences with us too.

First we will each tell you some of the common characteristics about each of our particular generations – remember nothing is set in stone and these are generalizations. We all have unique, individual personalities that do not fit the mold.

The Silent Generation – Born 1922-1945 – comprises 10% of the workforce

- Respects authority
- Takes direction, without questions
- Communication at the height of their careers was by formal memo
- Not a lot of time spent talking in the workplace
- Place great value on being respected for their experience
- Willing to sacrifice
- Worked individually
- Typically did not mix work and family

The Baby Boomer – Born 1946-1964 – comprises 45% of the workforce

- Very committed to their jobs or professions (life long careers – workaholics)
- Consensual in nature – therefore needed meetings
- Believed hard work/loyalty resulted in greater earning power and more important titles
- Great need to feel valued and needed
- No balance – work to live mentality (forsake family)

Generation “X” – Born 1965-1980 – comprises 40% of the workforce

- The self-reliant generation
- Challenges themselves and others
- Communication style is direct and immediate (needs answers today)
- Motivated by being able to do it their way
- At the same time wants structure and direction
- Skeptical
- Seeks balance between work and family

Generation “Y” (Millennials) – Born 1981-2000 – comprises 10% of the workforce

- Have always multi-tasked
- Greatest tolerance level of any generation (about everything)
- Participative/collaborative work style (in your face)
- Have always had e-mail, voice mail, and the information super highway (internet) - at the touch of a button
- Not afraid to embrace the idea of being with and sharing with other bright, creative individuals like themselves
- Shares information easily – facebook, my space, twitter, and other social networks
- Goal oriented
- Demand personal time for family/leisure

What is fascinating is that all of these diverse and unique generations with their quirks and nuances add up to 100% of America's workforce. The question is how "do" we work together. It is possible and we can still learn a lot from each other.

We welcome questions/comments/concerns from the audience directed at any of our panel members.