



## Effective Leaders Need Differing Methods Of Communicating

By Tim Moore

Good leaders know we're all more comfortable working with people of our own age and background. Generational peers are likely to "speak the same language." Sending the wrong generational signals creates a generation gap. Today there are four major generations in the workplace: Matures (born before 1946), Baby Boomers (born between 1946 and 1964), Generation X (born between 1965 and 1979), and Millennials (born between 1980 and 1997).

### Connecting With Matures

Duty and sacrifice are at the heart of the Mature mindset. Matures usually do not have inflated egos or a sense of self-importance, and they don't expect special treatment, but they do believe they have earned a certain amount of deference and respect for all that they have accomplished.

- Clearly communicate to Matures what is needed from them and their teammates.
- Matures prefer to communicate face-to-face, by telephone, and by mail.
- Matures prefer to read documents on paper not on a screen.

### Connecting With Baby Boomers

Boomers have a work ethic measured in face time. Commitment to "team" is paramount, and face-to-face skills are critical to success. The Boomers tend to be optimists. Boomers have two opinions on technology; they recognize technology is now ubiquitous, but a good number aren't convinced it has made things better.

- Face to face or phone call are the preferred ways to communicate.
- Focus on team goals — work in individual recognition.
- Assume that even older Boomers think of themselves as young, fit, and active.

### Connecting With Generation X

Gen Xers have learned to be skeptical of just about everything. Address their innate cynicism with back-up plans for the inevitable time when a problem arises. Gen Xers dislike hierarchy, prefer transparent communication, and value efficiency. They embrace technology and use it in most aspects of their lives.

- Get straight to the point.
- They probably will prefer email updates.
- They are likely to let your calls go to voice mail.
- They dislike face-to-face communication. They will not want to make hard decisions face-to-face.

### Connecting With Millennials

Build rapport with Millennials by recognizing their individuality and accomplishments. They live in a digital world – texting, email, and social media are musts. This generation regards personal information much differently than older generations. They share info more freely and may know the details of friends' and business associates' lives.

- Be authentic – don't try to fake youth or be cool.
- Recognize individuality and uniqueness.
- Texting is OK. Preferred! Do it.



Tim Moore is an accomplished author and speaker. At Generational Insights, Moore is part of a team that has become the leading voice on the impact of generational differences in the workplace.

To comment on this article, send an email to [rob.wright@lifescienceconnect.com](mailto:rob.wright@lifescienceconnect.com).

