



Multigenerational Workforce Challenges

By Nancy Capistran, PCC, CPC

Generational differences at work are one of the top challenges that my clients struggle with. Having five generations in the labor force presents a new diversity challenge that most leaders are unprepared for. Workforce behaviors vary between the traditionalists, baby boomers, Generation X, Generation Y, and Generation Z. Many seasoned leaders miss out on new and exciting opportunities because they believe that the sole focus should be on providing mentoring opportunities for the younger generations to be partnered with those who are more experienced; they don't see that the younger generations have value to provide to the more seasoned professionals as well. When we are open to appreciating the value of a diverse labor force, we can best capitalize on the styles and approaches of each.

It is vitally important to never underestimate the power of employee engagement within your business. Everyone within the ecosystem of a business should be taken into consideration and treated with kindness and respect. Each of us has a unique set of strengths that provides value. Different doesn't mean better or worse: it is just different. The most successful organizations remain nimble and capitalize on the unique merits that each person brings.

The CEO of a human resources technology company was referred to me by one of my long-term clients. This technology company was having a revolving door issue with employee retention. Unfortunately, its leadership did not appreciate the importance of building into the fabric of the business the range of multiple generational needs which was paramount if it was to become a sustainable, competitive, agile, and linked organization. This intergenerational disconnect escalated into a crisis, which was when I was invited to come on the scene. There were clearly different values, different expectations, and different life experiences across all levels of the organization. This meant that there was a need for new skills to be developed and new employment practices to be implemented to bring a wider view of the company's diverse cultural dynamics and work behaviors. The ongoing demands on the entire staff required establishing highly interactive and agile teams that were made up of supercharged individuals with unique skills and abilities. We worked on reshaping teams, organizational units, and processes to create "dream teams." It was imperative that employees were able to connect and communicate across all levels of the company if they were to respond effectively to constantly changing needs. This strategy was also extended to how departments were reorganized, and to how employees were assessed and compensated.

Getting employees to initially interact, and ultimately to collaborate, increased employee engagement so that value-added knowledge flowed freely across multiple generations. This effort expanded employee relations and transitioned the learning environment at all levels. Organizational transformation does not happen overnight. In this situation, there were a number of "naysayers" who eventually became believers once the generational transition strategy became a model for success. This company is now more focused

on the variations that people bring to the table because leadership witnessed firsthand how differences can serve to be an advantage.



About the Author: Nancy Capistran is a best-selling author, an award-winning, internationally certified executive coach, motivational speaker, and trusted advisor. She is Principal of [Capistran Leadership, LLC](#), and [Crisis Interception, LLC](#). Nancy's best-selling international leadership book: [Open Your Eyes and LEAD](#) shows readers how to become a positive force in the world and how to balance and manage omnipresent tensions while striving for leadership excellence. Capistran shares inspirational stories and advice from her 30+ year career to help both seasoned and emerging leaders develop intentionality while maintaining their core values and beliefs even when life's pressures dictate otherwise.