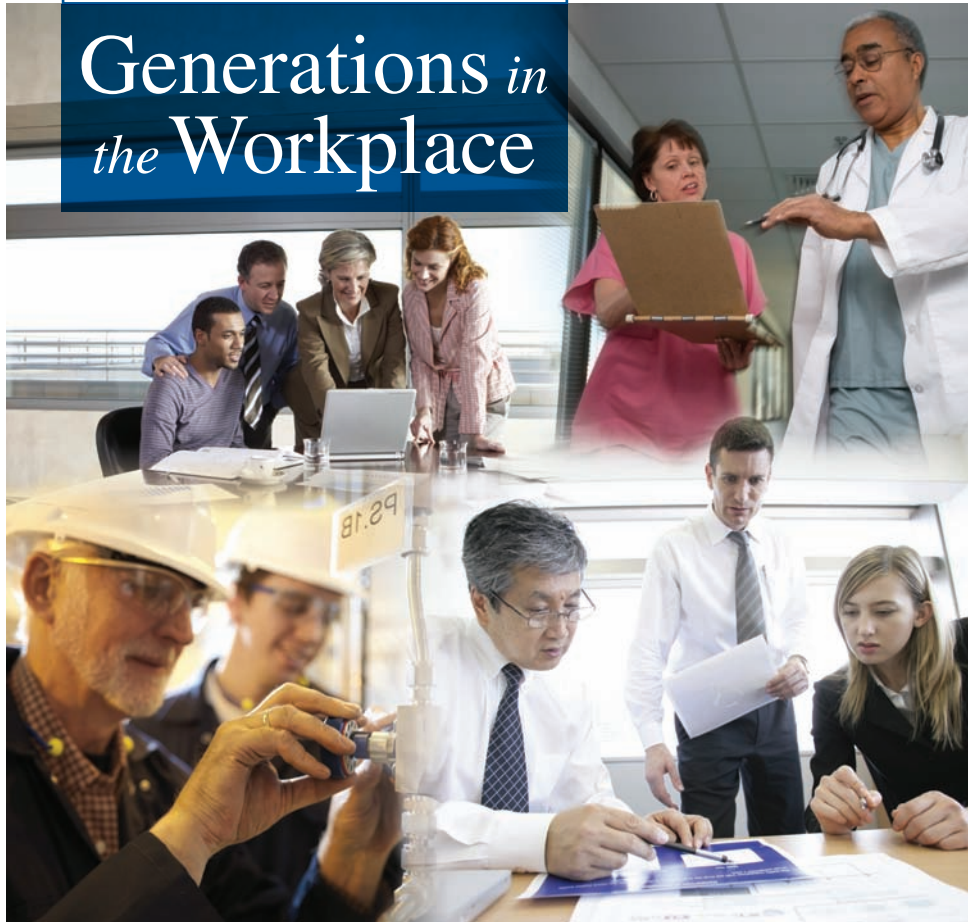# Generations *in* *the* Workplace

Engaging the Best Talent of All Ages

Transforming *Multi-Generational* Workplaces
into *Intergenerational* Workplaces

**generations
united**

MetLife®
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MetLife Mature Market Institute®

Established in 1997, the Mature Market Institute (MMI) is MetLife's research organization and a recognized thought leader on the multi-dimensional and multi-generational issues of aging and longevity. MMI's groundbreaking research, gerontology expertise, national partnerships, and educational materials work to expand the knowledge and choices for those in, approaching, or caring for those in the mature market.

MMI supports MetLife's long-standing commitment to identifying emerging issues and innovative solutions for the challenges of life. MetLife, a subsidiary of MetLife, Inc. (NYSE:MET), is a leading provider of insurance and financial services to individual and institutional customers.

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Generations United (GU)

Since 1986, GU has served as the country's leader in educating policymakers, business leaders, and the general public about the economic, social, and personal imperatives of Intergenerational cooperation. GU is focused solely on encouraging Intergenerational strategies, programs, and public policies through education, technical assistance, materials development, and the popular media.

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Why Intergenerational Matters

Introduction

Multi-Generational workforce? *Intergenerational* workforce? What's the difference between the two? How do you know which description represents your workforce? And why does it matter?

What do these questions mean for your company's retention and productivity? How does your company recognize the importance of people's knowledge, skills, and relationships as an asset and a major source of competitive advantage in today's information economy? Does it have strategies and benefits in place to recognize and support employees of all ages? Do employees of all ages have access to training and development and flexible work options?

Health, wellness, and stress management programs, and insurance of all kinds (health, life, long-term care, pet, dental, and vision) are attractive to all ages. What are the advantages of age-informed benefit plans and strategies?

Is optimal employee engagement possible without understanding the age demographics of your workforce? Can a Multi-Generational workforce approach achieve the engagement level necessary for giving your organization the competitive advantage it needs? Can an Intergenerational workforce deliver employee engagement in an enduring and sustaining way?

The *Generations in the Workplace* Workbook will help you answer these questions and develop strategies to ensure the benefits and competitive advantages that accrue from an Intergenerational workforce. The core tool, an *Assessment of Corporate Intergenerational Systems©,* and the Action Steps and Exercises that accompany it are user-friendly and applicable to large and small work groups, divisions, and teams. The Workbook is designed for use throughout the company.

Managing Four Generations in the Workplace

There is broad recognition of the fact there are now four generations in the workplace. Much has been written about the differences between and among the Silent Generation, the Boomers, the Gen X'ers, and the Millennials/Gen Y'ers. Some of the differences are highlighted by perceptions between and among the generations. For example, Gen X'ers and Millennials consider Boomers and the Silent Generation as too rigid, with expectations that employees "pay their dues." Boomers and the Silent Generation consider Gen X'ers and Millennials as being self centered—"it is all about me"—and having expectations based on a sense of entitlement.

Millennials/ Gen Y	Gen X	Boomers	Silent Generation
Born after 1980	Born between 1965-1980	Born between 1946-1964	Born between 1925-1945

Generations also differ in what works best for them in the workplace; thus, it is important to match generational preferences with strategies to assist employees to reach their full potential and stay engaged as demonstrated in the case studies on Cisco Systems, Deloitte LLP, Pitt County Memorial Hospital, and Sodexo Health Care (*MetLife Mature Market Institute, 2009*).

For instance, research indicates that to engage the Silent Generation, more formal face-to-face or telephone conversation or written communication is effective, while communication to engage Millennials should be positive, outline steps needed to achieve a goal, and provide frequent feedback. With regard to training programs, for Boomers such programs should pre-evaluate technology skills, keep them competitive in a rapidly changing workplace, and provide realistic examples to use while learning. Engaging Gen X'ers in training programs often requires being flexible and offering numerous choices, addressing career goals, and promoting new ideas on methods of getting work accomplished (*Generational Insight, 2008*).

Generations have a different historical lens as well. The Silent Generation influences include the Eisenhower years and the Korean War; Boomers were influenced by the Civil Rights Movement, Vietnam War, and the sexual revolution; Gen X'ers recall the Challenger explosion, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and Desert Storm; and the Millennials were shaped by the Oklahoma City bombing, Columbine school shootings, and 9/11. A whole field of job and career coaches has sprung up to address these differences and differing perceptions between and among the generations.

Recognizing and addressing each generation in the workplace as a separate entity requiring different strategies and policies is treating the workforce as Multi-Generational. This approach identifies generational differences and adjusts supervisory, policy, and learning approaches according to the attributes of the generation—which can end up benefitting all generations. For example, when Deloitte adjusted its policies to attract Gen Y's, it found that these changes created an environment to engage employees of all ages. And when one hospital invested in activities to re-energize veteran nurses, many of them became more motivated mentors for younger nursing staff (*MetLife Mature Market Institute, 2009*).

Think of Multi-Generational as recognizing diversity in the workplace, and engendering respect for the differences. Intergenerational can be thought of as inclusionary—creating a stronger, more cohesive environment through shared values and understanding among the generations. Intergenerational practices are important because they lead to optimum performance by leveraging the skills of each generation for organizational success.

This Workbook takes an Intergenerational approach. The overarching intent is to identify the strengths and common attributes between and among the generations and to develop strategies to encourage interaction that uses those assets optimally. In a global economy,

employers need to leverage the skills of all generations to contribute to the productivity and profitability of the organization. Interaction and sharing among the generations is essential to the fiscal and future health of the organization.

The research discussed below documents the need for an Intergenerational workforce, as well as the positive results an Intergenerational approach returns.

Promoting Employee Engagement

Much has been written about employee engagement as the means to increased productivity and profitability. There is consensus on the benefits of engagement for employers: higher productivity, longer tenure, stronger customer relations, less health care usage among employees, and fewer sick days. Engaged employees reap benefits through less reported stress, higher job satisfaction, and more satisfaction with life overall (*MetLife Mature Market Institute and the Sloan Center on Aging & Work at Boston College, 2009*). Hallmarks of an engaged employee—hard work, commitment, enthusiasm, and emotional dedication—are not age-specific. It is clear that

> Being engaged means that the employee consistently seeks excellence and is energized by the work.
>
> — *MetLife Mature Market Institute and the Sloan Center on Aging & Work at Boston College, 2009*

all employees want to be engaged. One essential measurement of employee engagement is job satisfaction. Loving a job is also not age-related. Employees who share a common organizational mission and who understand how they

contribute to the mission are more likely to report positive job satisfaction.

Engagement pays off. According to Hay Group Insight's workforce opinion surveys, highly engaged employees can improve business performance by up to 30%. Fully engaged employees are 2.5 times more likely to exceed performance expectations than disengaged employees *(Hay Group Holdings, 2009)*.

It is clear, then, that talent management and retention are critical to the continued economic success of all organizations. Those functions will want to focus on what workers have and can create in common. Hewitt's *Next-Generation Talent Management Report* concludes that "Organizations will…promote collectivist values and reward collaborative contributions. They will highlight the goals, standards, and destinies that all workers share and emphasize the commonalities among workers such as the need to make a living and the desire to participate in fulfilling work" (*Tucker, et al, 2006*).

At the same time, the *Randstad USA World of Work* survey (*Randstad, 2008*) reported three findings that it calls "blunt"—findings that are cause for concern with regard to workplace productivity:

Why Intergenerational Matters

- Retiring workers are not likely to transfer knowledge to newer workers
- Co-worker perceptions are based on generational stereotypes, particularly about Gen Y
- Each generation thinks it brings self-contained strengths to the workplace that do not enhance the strengths of other generations

"Bottom line—the generations aren't talking," according to the report. As Eric Bunting, Randstad USA's Managing Director, Marketing and Operations, observes, "The key is that organizations find a way, structurally, for generations to interact, but it cannot be a rah-rah coffee or lunch. It has to be bringing them together in meaningful ways so they are engaged in projects together, and that has to be managed in the course of time" (*Randstad, 2008*). The good news is that the generations already have a lot in common.

Recognizing What the Generations Have in Common

Marilyn Moats Kennedy *(Kennedy, 2009),* author and management consultant, points out that, "Expectations rather than age define workplace attitudes." In addition to her observation that employees of all generations seek more family time, other researchers highlight commonalities across the generations in terms of the desire for meaningful and challenging work. A "Generations in the Workplace" survey conducted by e-HResources (2004) asked, "What entices you to join an organization?" The most important features across all age groups were, in descending order:

- Mission, values, ethics
- Pay and benefit package

- Challenge and interesting work
- Opportunity for career development

The same survey asked, "What compels you to *stay* with an organization?" The most compelling factors across all age groups were:

- Challenge (the work itself: interest and variety)
- Being treated with respect by managers and co-workers
- An ethical organization

Clearly, there are universal and common features that resonate with employees of all generations. By identifying and building upon those common needs (such as mission, ethics, challenge, and respect), management will create a more cohesive workforce—one where each generation feels its talents are recognized and valued, and all generations are communicating with and learning from each other. Companies with an Intergenerational workforce benefit from a more collegial environment that is of mutual benefit to the individual and the company. Mutual success is achieved through continuous improvement; excellence is delivered through employee engagement.

"The only long-term competitive advantage a company has is its people. Advantages in capital markets or technological advances are short-lived and can be duplicated. To be successful, companies must create a culture that engages its employees and must invest in programs that attract, motivate, and retain talent."

**— Don Lindner,
    Certified Compensation Professional
    (CCP)**

"The bottom line is down where it belongs—at the bottom. Far above it in importance are the infinite number of events that produce the profit or loss."

— Paul Hawken, Entrepreneur, Author

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About the Workbook

What Is in This Workbook?

This workbook offers concrete, data-informed strategies for analyzing and addressing issues for the development of an Intergenerational workforce—issues that:

- Present challenges to optimal performance

- Can be sensitive and thus require thoughtful attention

- Must move from research or dialogue into concrete action for better results

The Workbook is built around an **Assessment of Corporate Intergenerational Systems**© (ACIS©), your workplace's Multi–Generational and Intergenerational features (pages 15–21). The scores you achieve on the Assessment will take you to specific **Action Steps**—tools and exercises that promote stronger Intergenerational performance (pages 24–37).

Here are the goals the Workbook can help you achieve and the Action Steps' tools that can be used to advance each goal:

To Achieve This Goal:	Use Action Step(s):
Always take generational perspectives into account when developing policies, employee benefits, and procedures.	❯ Generational Impact Analysis
Appreciate and honor the perspectives of all employees.	❯ 360-Degree Mentoring ❯ The Power of Perspective ❯ Intergenerational Team Quiz
Develop a system to effectively transfer skills and knowledge.	❯ 360-Degree Mentoring ❯ Intergenerational Team Quiz ❯ Intergenerational Workforce Teams
Turn Multi-Generational teams into Intergenerational collaboration to move your company forward.	❯ Intergenerational Workforce Teams ❯ 360-Degree Mentoring
Develop ways to maximize all employees' capabilities and strengths.	❯ The Power of Perspective ❯ Intergenerational Team Quiz ❯ 360-Degree Mentoring

About the Workbook

Who Should Use This Workbook?

This Workbook has been developed for Human Resource decision-makers, Supervisors, Directors, company leadership, or anyone who would like to engage an Intergenerational workforce.

How to Use This Workbook

1) Complete the Assessment of Corporate Intergenerational Systems©
on pages 16–19. You will obtain scores for Organizational Policy and
Organizational Operations.

2) Based on how you score, you will be guided to specific Action Steps
recommending the use of specific tools to increase the
Intergenerational productivity of your company.

3) Develop a strategy and timetable for implementing the selected
Action Steps.

4) Repeat these steps periodically for continuous workplace improvement
on Intergenerational performance.

5) At any time—try one of the exercises on pages 38–41 to foster
Intergenerational discussion.

The overarching intent [of an Intergenerational approach] is to identify the strengths and common attributes between and among the generations and to develop strategies to encourage interaction that uses those assets optimally.

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"In developing reward programs, employers should
   consider the demographics of their workforce.
   What motivates a Generation X employee may not
   have an impact on a Baby Boomer in the same company.
   Employers should assess both the lifestyle and
   life cycle of their employees."

—Anne C. Ruddy, President, WorldatWork

Assessment of Corporate Intergenerational Systems© (ACIS©)

Directions:

The Assessment of Corporate Intergenerational Systems© (ACIS®) was developed by Generations United and JustPartners, Inc. and is intended to be used by Human Resource decision-makers, supervisors, directors, and other company leaders who want to engage an Intergenerational workforce.

The following questions assess your organization's policies and operations in areas important to transitioning from a *Multi-Generational* to an *Intergenerational* workforce. This Assessment can focus on the whole company or one unit or one department, depending on how you feel the Assessment will best gauge your workplace and can be put to most productive use.

Answer each set of questions, add up your score, learn what your score means, and complete the Action Steps associated with your score.

ACIS© Part I: Policy Assessment

PART A

1a) This workplace offers a flexible range of benefits (defined contribution plans, self-managed investments, portable cash values, dependent care reimbursement, health care spending accounts, final average pay pension plans, etc.).

No	In Development	Yes
1	2	3

2a) This workplace offers health and wellness programs to all employees (health care coverage, gym memberships, mental health services, yoga, etc.).

No	In Development	Yes
1	2	3

3a) This workplace offers a flexible range of scheduling options (telecommuting, flexible work schedules, part-time work, etc.).

No	In Development	Yes
1	2	3

4a) This workplace has clear written policies about the use of technology for personal purposes during office hours (iPods, texting, personal calls, personal radios, personal networking sites, etc.).

No	In Development	Yes
1	2	3

5a) This workplace has clear written policies regarding appearance in the workplace (dyed hair, piercings, tattoos, formal/informal dress, etc.).

No	In Development	Yes
1	2	3

6a) This workplace has clear written policies to manage conflict among employees.

No	In Development	Yes
1	2	3

PART B

1b) If yes, are employees of all generations satisfied with these flexible benefits options?

No	Yes
1	2

2b) If yes, are employees of all generations satisfied with these health and wellness programs?

No	Yes
1	2

3b) If yes, are employees of all generations satisfied with these flexible scheduling options?

No	Yes
1	2

4b) If yes, do employees of all generations adhere to these policies?

No	Yes
1	2

5b) If yes, do employees of all generations adhere to these policies?

No	Yes
1	2

6b) If yes, are these policies always used to manage conflict?

No	Yes
1	2

Policy Assessment Scores: Indicate how many times you selected each number.

PART A (1) (2) (3)   PART B (1) (2)

_____   _____   _____   _____   _____

ACIS© Interpret Your Policy Assessment Scores

PART A

❯ If you had mostly: (3)

Congratulations! According to *Engaging the 21ˢᵗ Century Multi-Generational Workforce (MetLife Mature Market Institute and the Sloan Center on Aging & Work at Boston College, 2009)*, higher employee engagement benefits employees and companies alike. The benefits of engagement include increased employee productivity, longer tenure with the company, stronger customer relationships, higher job satisfaction, and greater satisfaction with personal lives.

We recommend that you use the **Generational Impact Analysis** tool to see if any policies could use fine-tuning.

❯ If you had mostly: (1) (2)

There are numerous resources available to help you develop policies that benefit individuals from all generations. See **Additional Resources** on page 46. We recommend that you also use the **Generational Impact Analysis** tool to develop new policies.

PART B

❯ If you had mostly: (2)

Congratulations! According to *Engaging the 21ˢᵗ Century Multi-Generational Workforce (MetLife Mature Market Institute and the Sloan Center on Aging & Work at Boston College, 2009)*, higher employee engagement benefits employees and companies alike. The benefits of engagement include increased employee productivity, longer tenure with the company, stronger customer relationships, higher job satisfaction, and greater satisfaction with personal lives.

We recommend that you use the **Generational Impact Analysis** tool to see if any policies could use fine-tuning.

❯ If you had mostly: (1)

There are numerous resources available to help you develop policies that benefit individuals from all generations. See **Additional Resources** on page 46. We recommend that you also use the **Generational Impact Analysis** tool to develop new policies.

ACIS© Part II: Operations Assessment

1) A knowledge transfer system is used to ensure that the skills and expertise of veteran employees remain organizational assets (mentoring, knowledge management systems, written documentation, etc.).

Rarely ⟷ Routinely
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

2) This workplace offers training opportunities to build employee capacity (workshops, continuing education, conferences, etc.).

Rarely ⟷ Routinely
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

3) Workers of different generations are intentionally teamed together on projects.

Rarely ⟷ Routinely
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

4) Employees of different generations interact informally inside and outside the workplace.

Rarely ⟷ Routinely
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

5) Managers receive training on how to increase communication among generations.

Rarely ⟷ Routinely
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

6) This workplace intentionally provides feedback to employees using a variety of communication formats (written memos, e-mails, face-to-face, etc.).

Rarely ⟷ Routinely
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

7) This workplace rewards employees for exceptional work using a variety of incentives (parking privileges, newsletter announcements, awards, bonuses, etc.).

Rarely ⟷ Routinely
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

8) Overall, this organization is a hospitable place for all generations to work together.

Strongly Disagree ⟷ Strongly Agree
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

Operations Assessment Scores:
Indicate how many times you selected each number.

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____

❯ **If you had mostly:** 4 5

Congratulations! According to *Engaging the 21st Century Multi-Generational Workforce (MetLife Mature Market Institute and the Sloan Center on Aging & Work at Boston College, 2009)*, higher employee engagement benefits employees and companies alike. The benefits of engagement include increased employee productivity, longer tenure with the company, stronger customer relationships, higher job satisfaction, and greater satisfaction with personal lives.

We recommend that you use the **Generational Impact Analysis** tool to see if any policies could use fine-tuning.

❯ **If you had mostly:** 1 2 3

Consult the **Summary of Recommended Tools** on page 21 to learn which tools to use. There are numerous resources available to help you develop policies that benefit individuals from all generations. See **Additional Resource**s on page 46. We recommend that you also use the **Generational Impact Analysis Tool** to develop new policies.

Intergenerational can be thought of as inclusionary—creating a stronger, more cohesive environment through shared values and understanding among the generations. Intergenerational practices are important because they lead to optimum performance by leveraging the skills of each generation for organizational success.

ACIS© Summary of Recommended Tools

Based on the results of your assessment, use the chart below to find the most beneficial action steps to move your workforce from Multi-Generational to Intergenerational. Multiple action steps may be recommended, depending on the composition of your workforce and the specific areas which would benefit most.

POLICY ASSESSMENT SCORES:

Use the tools indicated if you scored:	Generational Impact Analysis	360-Degree Mentoring	Intergenerational Workforce Teams	Power of Perspective	Intergenerational Team Quiz
Part A					
Mostly 1s and 2s:	✓		✓	✓	
Mostly 3s:	✓				
Part B					
Mostly 1s:	✓		✓	✓	
Mostly 2s:	✓				

OPERATIONS ASSESSMENT SCORES:

Use the tools indicated if you scored mostly 1s, 2s, and 3s.	Generational Impact Analysis	360-Degree Mentoring	Intergenerational Workforce Teams	Power of Perspective	Intergenerational Team Quiz
1) Knowledge Transfer System	✓	✓			
2) Training Opportunities	✓	✓			
3) Intergenerational Teaming	✓		✓		
4) Informal Interaction Among Generations	✓			✓	✓
5) Manager Intergenerational Training	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6) Communication Formats	✓		✓		
7) Employee Rewards and Incentives	✓		✓		
8) Hospitable Workplace for Generations Together	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

"Leaders rally others to a better future."

— **Marcus Buckingham, Author, Researcher**

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☐ Action Steps

Action Steps

Once you've completed the Assessment tool, you can identify the steps to take to move your workforce from Multi-Generational to Intergenerational effectiveness. You will find the **Action Steps** you are looking for on the following pages:

Action Step: Generational Impact Analysis

The Goal: Encourage employers to look at all company policies through an age-inclusive lens so that policies and decisions can attract, engage, and retain employees of all ages.

The Data Behind It: The structure of the job/employment situation, access to resources, and workplace culture are positively linked to employee engagement (*MetLife Mature Market Institute and the Sloan Center on Aging & Work at Boston College, 2009*).

Using the Tool: Use the following four questions routinely when creating or modifying company policy and practice.

1) How will the proposed policy/decision <u>affect</u> each generation?

2) How will the proposed policy/decision be <u>perceived</u> by each generation?

3) Does the policy/decision ignore or exacerbate existing generational differences or tensions?

4) Based on the above responses, what revisions are needed in the policy/decision in order for it to be more age-inclusive?

Action Steps

Action Step: Generational Impact Analysis

EXAMPLE 1

Your company currently has a policy requiring employees in "essential" positions to work overtime if necessary to complete time-sensitive assignments given on a rush basis. Several employees have approached the Human Resources (HR) Director with concerns about their ability to meet this requirement because their children's child care centers close promptly at 6 p.m., with no exceptions. The HR Director has agreed to review the policy and convenes a small cross-section of "essential" employees to do so. The group's conversation is guided by the Generational Impact Analysis. Here's what they concluded:

1) How does/will the proposed policy/decision affect each generation?

> Workers of any generation who have significant caregiving responsibilities will be at a disadvantage. In addition to families concerned about child care arrangements, employees may have elder care or other dependent care responsibilities, and some may be grandparents raising grandchildren.

2) How does/will the proposed policy/decision be perceived by each generation?

> Gen X'ers and Millennials may be more likely to see this requirement as intrusive on their desire for work-life balance.

3) Does the policy/decision ignore or exacerbate existing generational differences or tensions?

> The Silent Generation and Baby Boomers may have their stereotypical belief reinforced that Gen X'ers and Millennials are not willing to "pay their dues" in the workplace if the latter happen to be the ones who—because of child care responsibilities—complain about the policy.

4) Based on the above responses, what revisions are needed in the policy/decision in order for it to be more age-inclusive?

> Give "essential" employees the option of designating capable stand-ins around rush assignments, with the expectation that this employee pair will trade off responsibilities in a way that neither is unfairly burdened. The "bonus" benefits from this option include the opportunity for mentoring and its resulting knowledge transfer.

> Allow employees to work on rush assignments virtually, if appropriate.

> If appropriate, allow employees a flexible work schedule, with the option of coming in early rather than staying late.

Encourage employers to look at all company policies through an age-inclusive lens so that policies and decisions can attract, engage, and retain employees of all ages.

Action Steps

Action Step: Generational Impact Analysis

EXAMPLE 2

Your company wants to be the first in its sector to become an environmentally friendly workplace. In order for this to be achieved, you will need to get buy-in from the workers whose decisions and practices will allow you to reach this goal. Before putting such a policy forward, you want to consider how it will be received.

1) How will the proposed policy/decision affect each generation?

› The managers who would have to promote and enforce the policy come disproportionately from the Silent Generation and Baby Boomers.

2) How will the proposed policy/decision be perceived by each generation?

› Research suggests that Gen X'ers and Millennials are more activist around environmental concerns than others, so they may be more likely to be on board.

3) Does the policy/decision ignore or exacerbate existing generational differences or tensions?

› Given the above, it may actually be a good way to bring generations together. The trick is to message it right so that it "speaks to" the legacy that everyone can build together.

4) Based on the above responses, what revisions are needed in the policy/decision in order for it to be more age-inclusive?

› So far it appears to be on the right track. But we'll ask for input from everyone to fine-tune how it should work.

› It will be important to outline what becoming environmentally friendly means in concrete terms and to put this information in a variety of formats (e.g., posters, e-mails, text messages, etc.).

› We might consider forming Intergenerational environmental teams to create the outline of what becoming environmentally friendly means in concrete terms. (For guidance, see the Action Step for Intergenerational Workforce Teams.)

Action Steps

Action Step: 360-Degree Mentoring

The Goal: Provide opportunities for all employees to be involved in mentor/mentee relationships to better engage them in the workplace.

The Data Behind It: Knowledge transfer is critical to performance, sustainability, and innovation (*The Conference Board, 2008*). Mentoring is an example of an effective knowledge transfer method. According to Gibb and Lewis, mentoring benefits the company by reducing turnover, increasing organizational commitment, promoting knowledge transfer, and identifying key talent early. A 2006 study by Gartner found that both mentors and mentees have higher promotion and retention rates than those not involved in mentoring (*Insala, 2007*).

Using the Tool: To develop an effective Intergenerational mentoring program, pair employees based on skills and experience, not age. Capturing and transferring knowledge effectively requires understanding the generational learning preferences of both the receivers and the sources of knowledge (*The Conference Board, 2008*). Mentors and mentees can be from *any* generation. The type of mentoring that works best depends on your company's needs, resources, and workplace dynamics.

Types of Mentoring Programs Include:

› Long-term relationships focused on mutual development and growth

› Mentoring aimed at knowledge transfer

› Time-limited mentoring focused on specific goals

› Appointing a mentor for specific jobs

› Regular mentoring in time-limited meetings that focus on specific projects or networking

› Virtual mentoring through e-mail or instant messaging

Action Steps

Action Step: 360-Degree Mentoring

EXAMPLE 1

A second-career employee begins at the company and is not familiar with the sales-tracking computer program. You may choose to pair this employee with a younger employee who has worked at the company for at least one year and is comfortable with the computer tracking program.

You can set up parameters for the mentoring program. For example, there may be weekly in-person meetings for several months, supplemented by continuous virtual mentoring by e-mail until the skill set is achieved.

EXAMPLE 2

An older, veteran employee has worked at the company for 25 years and will retire in one year. You can pair this employee with a younger person in order to provide a long-term mentoring relationship that allows for knowledge transfer.

This mentoring relationship will continue as long as needed, with the number and frequency of meetings determined by the mentor.

Action Steps

Action Step: Intergenerational Workforce Teams

The Goal: People from different generations share ideas, skills, knowledge, and stories. All generations feel valued in the workplace when they know that their input is important. Intergenerational teams in the workplace produce well-rounded, diversified results when trying to solve a problem or reach a goal—which in turn reduces tensions and common stereotypes that one generation may have about another generation.

The Data Behind It: The ability of differing generations to work together requires a focus on the strengths of the various employees, rather than their differences. "By capitalizing on what each employee offers, a company can combine the business knowledge of the older and wiser with the new insight and tech savvy of the younger" (*Central Penn Business Journal, August 200*8). Intergenerational productivity is produced through teamwork within an atmosphere focused on company goals, where workers collaborate to achieve a common goal (*Randstad, 2008*).

Using the Tool: Create small groups of employees from different generations to work together on a team project. Ideally, each team would include an individual from each generation. The goal is to complete your task together. The requested task should be something that has some impact on the company, so that employees feel that working together, they can complete a project that has value.

It is important to set up regular debriefing sessions with your Intergenerational teams. This will allow you to gauge whether team members are working together effectively, and the project is moving forward successfully. Whether the project is expected to take one week or one year, you should schedule these debriefing sessions about one-third and two-thirds of the way through your expected timeline for completion, asking questions such as the following:

› Is the team on target to meet all deadlines as originally stated in the project timeline?

› What improvements can be made to achieve the project's goals?

› What additional supports or resources do you need to complete your project?

Action Steps

Action Step: Intergenerational Workforce Teams

EXAMPLE 1

Using a project that is already intended for employee workloads, place members of all the generations on the team. Ensure that all employees have a shared understanding of the project, and ask them to outline in writing and verbally their respective strengths around the tasks needed to complete the project.

Encourage the team to assign tasks according to employees' self-identified strengths. As the project unfolds, employees will have the opportunity to demonstrate their respective capabilities. The goal is increased understanding of and respect for one another's talents and expertise—an outcome that can be leveraged for future projects within the company.

EXAMPLE 2

Form a Multi-Generational team to work on a multi-year project plan. For instance, if you plan to develop a computer program that will be completely functional in three years, but will be incrementally operational each year, request that a Multi-Generational team develop this project. This will allow the members of all generations to work on the project, plan for the future, and develop working and personal relationships over time.

Employees will have the opportunity to demonstrate abilities and develop connections around the work and with each other. The long-term assignment will encourage Intergenerational communication and working relationships, as well as weaken generational stereotypes.

Action Steps

Action Step: The Power of Perspective

The Goal: Reduce Intergenerational conflict in the workplace by encouraging employees to recognize, value, and respect the perspectives and experiences of one another across generations.

The Data Behind It: According to a Randstad study, generational differences are often about perspectives on how things should be done. Intergenerational environments can break down barriers of age, perception, and experience, and subtly persuade the generations to understand what each has to offer. Intergenerational workforces have the potential to create a fusion of knowledge, perspective, and experience (*Randstad, 2008*).

If members of all generations understand where the company started and the path it has taken—and how different generations perceive the workforce—they will be better able to understand each other and work together.

Using the Tool: Create a timeline that begins with the company's first year of operation, and goes through the present. Request that all staff members mark on the timeline when they started work at the company.

Next, ask participants to consider the timeline in terms of a specified topic (the timeline topic can cover any number of issues that may be causing generational conflict, from technology to rewards/recognition to use of personal leave).

For the given topic, employees indicate on the timeline when a particular change occurred at the company, and also when they believe there were major improvements—or problems—associated with the change.

Action Steps

Action Step: The Power of Perspective

EXAMPLE 1

Employee benefits are critical to the working environment. It is important to ensure that the company offers benefits that fit the needs of employees of all generations. You may choose to develop a timeline that indicates how the range of benefits has changed over time.

In this exercise, you will not only address the specific benefits available, but also any changes in the flexibility of benefits. For example, voluntary benefits offer more choices and therefore offer more control. A timeline will help employees see how company policies have changed, and will enable them to better understand how their colleagues' operating environment has changed over the years.

❯ **After developing the timeline, ask someone to summarize the results and allow employees to discuss the impact of the changes in the range of benefits for all employees.**

	Employees A, B, C, D	Employee E	Employees F, G	Employees H, I, J	Employees K, L		
1964	**1970s**	**1980s**	**1990s**	**2003**	**2005**	**2008**	**This Year**
❯ Full employer-paid health benefits for all full-time employees ❯ One insurance company available	❯ Unused sick leave can be used as comp time ❯ Dental, vision coverage added	❯ Unused sick leave can be donated to others	❯ Employer portion of health care reduced to 80% ❯ Multiple insurance companies available	❯ Partner benefits offered ❯ Health Savings Accounts offered	❯ Coverage parity offered for mental health services	❯ Group purchase benefit plans ❯ Cell phone allowances	

Reduce Intergenerational conflict in the workplace by encouraging employees to recognize, value, and respect the perspectives and experiences of one another across generations.

Action Steps

Action Step: The Power of Perspective

EXAMPLE 2

If you have discovered that technology is causing generational conflicts, you can develop a Power of Perspective timeline around the topic of technology. All staff members will be encouraged to mark in the decades when various technology was introduced (computers, fax machines, e-mail, etc.) and to note the date they joined the company.

This can begin discussion—allowing staff to recognize the changes in the technology each employee has adjusted to, and gaining a greater level of respect for the experiences of each individual.

❯ **After developing the timeline, ask someone to summarize the results and allow employees to discuss the impact of the changes in the range of benefits for all employees.**

	Employees A, B, C, D	Employee E	Employees F, G	Employees H, I, J	Employees K, L	
1964	**1970s**	**1980s**	**1990s**	**2005**	**2008**	**This Year**
❯ Typewriters ❯ Xerox copier ❯ Executive secretaries ❯ Secretarial pools ❯ In-house production (copies, binding) ❯ In-house courier service	❯ 1978: Word processing dept. established ❯ In-house couriers replaced with contract courier service	❯ 1980: IBM Selectrics with memory for admins ❯ 1986: Desktop computers for all admins ❯ 1986: Word processing dept. eliminated	❯ 1999: Corporate cell phones for senior executives	❯ PDAs for sales staff, executives	❯ Social networking sites ❯ Webinars	

Action Steps

Action Step: Intergenerational Team Quiz

The Goal: Create opportunities for all employees to understand the importance of working as a team to achieve a goal. Employees should recognize the strengths of all generations, and how each person's unique knowledge base and skills assist the team.

The Data Behind It: While employee engagement is most often considered an individual experience, it may be helpful to promote employee engagement by recognizing the importance of team inclusion (*MetLife Mature Market Institute and the Sloan Center on Aging & Work at Boston College, 2009*).

Using the Tool: The facilitator asks employees to divide themselves into teams, with no more than four persons per team. The facilitator does not reveal the rules of the quiz before the players divide themselves—so teams will not know that the groups with the most generational diversity will have a clear advantage.

After the teams are divided, the facilitator reveals that the quiz contains questions about the company and its focus, and these questions will require knowledge from different generations. Each team receives four "Intergenerational links" (paper clips could be used) and three "Intergenerational lifelines" (strings or straws could be used). The object of the quiz is to be the last team left with "Intergenerational links."

The Intergenerational Team Quiz should require unique generational knowledge, and should be adapted to reflect the organization's focus. If a team gives an incorrect answer, they lose an "Intergenerational link." A team may choose to use one of its "Intergenerational lifelines" at any stage, which means the team has permission to ask an employee on another team (presumably someone who does not represent a generation on their team) for the correct answer.

If the answer is correct, then both the team who used the Intergenerational lifeline and the team with the player who offered the answer receive an extra "Intergenerational link." The game continues until only one team has any "Intergenerational links."

Action Steps

Action Step: Intergenerational Team Quiz

EXAMPLE 1

The questions should relate directly to an area from the assessment tool that demonstrates a need within the company to become more Intergenerational. Using the example of knowledge transfer, questions could include:

> ❯ Prior to the Internet, what was the most common method at this company to research information?
>
> ❯ How would employees share that information with other employees?

EXAMPLE 2

If the ACIS© results show that employee benefits is an area where the company needs to become more Intergenerational, quiz questions could include:

> ❯ Which employee benefits are valued most by the Silent Generation, the Boomers, Gen X'ers, and Millennials?
>
> ❯ In which year (plus or minus two years) did the company start offering each of the following benefits: mental health coverage parity with medical coverage, subsidies for gym memberships, on-site daycare, tax preparation assistance, and Health Service Accounts (HSAs)?

Intergenerational Exercises

We have included a few entertaining exercises you can use to get generations talking and listening to one another, outside the pressures of specific work responsibilities:

Quick-Talk

Participants explore the different slang or short-cut expressions used by different generations.

1) With all participants sitting together, the facilitator starts by speaking briefly about how slang words can be shorthand communication, and then shares one or two favorite slang words.

2) The facilitator asks participants to give slang words for the word "wonderful" (ex. groovy, awesome). After the slang words have been shared, the facilitator should mention how slang is likely to vary across the generations represented in the room.

3) Begin creating a slang chart by making a chart (in PowerPoint or on a flip chart) that is similar to the example below. Make sure to leave extra blanks for participants to offer suggested words for the left column. Participants can share slang words and work together to place the word in the appropriate column, recognizing that more than one generation may use the same word.

4) Discuss how the generations may be saying the same things, just using different words.

SAMPLE SLANG CHART

	Silent Generation	Boomers	Gen X	Millennials/Gen Y
Good/Positive				
Bad/Negative				
Friend				
Boss				
Talk/Communicate				
Money				
Work				
Make a Copy				
(Add other examples)				

Intergenerational Exercises

Age Line

Participants share their feelings about their own age and other ages.

1) Ask participants to line up from youngest to oldest without communicating verbally or nonverbally, based on where they think they should be.

2) Ask participants to introduce themselves by name and age.

3) Then, have participants rearrange themselves so they are in the correct (age-ordered) place in line.

The facilitator should ask participants questions like the following:

> What are the perceived STRENGTHS of your GENERATION in the workplace?

> What are the perceived WEAKNESSES of your GENERATION in the workplace?

> What do you think makes employees in your GENERATION more ENGAGED in the workplace?

> What types of recognition or rewards do you think MOTIVATE most employees of your GENERATION?

> What do you envy about older/younger workers?

> What is most important at your age in the workforce/your job/your career?

4) Finally, ask participants to find a new place in line based on their desired age. Ask why each person chose that desired age. The facilitator should conclude by discussing the meaning of age, the similarities across age groups, and how each age has its advantages and disadvantages.

Create opportunities for all employees to understand the importance of working as a team to achieve a goal. Employees should recognize the strengths of all generations, and how each person's unique knowledge base and skills assist the team.

Intergenerational Exercises

You, Too?

Participants answer questions about themselves and search for others who share these experiences.

❯ In advance, the facilitator should print the questionnaire below and ask participants to fill out the YOU column on the form.

❯ During the activity, participants should move around the room and look for people with the same answers. They can place more than one co-worker's name in that column. Completion of the questionnaire is achieved by having all participants' names in a box on the questionnaire, either by answering one of the existing questions the same or coming up with a commonality that does not exist in the written questions and writing that on a blank line.

❯ Once everyone has completed the questionnaire, participants should each share something that surprised them regarding what they have in common with a fellow employee.

	You, Too?	
YOU	**15 Match Items**	**CO-WORKER(S)**
	1) Place of Birth	
	2) Favorite Form of Communication	
	3) Best Time of Day	
	4) Career Goal	
	5) Number of Children	
	6) Preferred Method of Transportation to Work	
	7) Most Challenging Piece of Technology/Computer Program	
	8) # of Years with Current Employer	
	9) New Skill You'd Like to Learn	
	10) (List others appropriate to your company/employees)	
	11)	
	12)	
	13)	
	14)	
	15)	

Congratulations!

☑   About the Workbook

☑   Assessment of Corporate
     Intergenerational Systems© (ACIS©)

☑   Action Steps

"The best way to get a great idea is to get lots of good ideas."

— **Linus Pauling, Scientist, Nobel Prize Winner**

Conclusion

Taking an *Intergenerational* approach to your *Multi-Generational* workforce will increase your competitive advantage in a workplace where generations are increasingly called on to collaborate. Abundant excellent advice already exists on how to accommodate employee differences, offer workplace choice, offer a range of employee benefits, nourish initiative, and increase retention. Such advice tackles the question of how to get the most from each individual worker. There is no denying that generational differences are apparent within the workforce.

The importance of this Workbook is its emphasis on the need to develop strategies for bringing the strengths and perspectives of the generations together. These competencies turn individual musicians into a symphony, individual players into a team. No corporate result can be produced without teamwork, and no company can be successful without engaged employees.

In order to stay competitive, a company needs to accommodate the needs of all generations and encourage the generations to work together to achieve company goals.

"A group of people get together and exist as an institution we call a company so they are able to accomplish something collectively that they could not accomplish separately—they make a contribution to society, a phrase which sounds trite but is fundamental."

— **David Packard,**
Co-founder, Hewlett-Packard Company

What you learn from using the ideas in this Workbook can advance the nascent field of Intergenerational workplace management.

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Additional Resources

AARP
http://www.aarp.org/money/work

American Management Association
http://www.amanet.org/

The Conference Board
http://www.conference-board.org

Generations United
http://www.gu.org

HR.COM
http://www.HR.com

International Association for Human Resources Information Management
http://www.ihrim.org

MetLife Mature Market Institute
http://www.MatureMarketInstitute.com

The Sloan Center on Aging & Work at Boston College
http://agingandwork.bc.edu

The Society for Human Resource Managers
http://www.shrm.org

WorldatWork
http://www.worldatwork.org/waw/home/html/home.jsp

This Workbook is one element of the MetLife Mature Market Institute's *Engaging the 21st Century Multi-Generational Workforce* Tool Kit designed to help employers enhance the engagement of today's Multi-Generational workforce.

The Tool Kit includes:

> The study, *Engaging the 21st Century Multi-Generational Workforce*, developed in cooperation with the Sloan Center on Aging & Work at Boston College

> This Workbook, *Generations in the Workplace*, developed jointly with Generations United

> Four Multi-Generational workforce case studies, developed with David DeLong & Associates

> An Employer Strategies summary, *Engaging the 21st Century Multi-Generational Workforce*

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