

# BREAKOUT SESSION 1C

**BRIDGING GENERATIONS:  
LEADING AND GROWING TOMORROW'S HOSPITALITY WORKFORCE**

*Presented by*

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# Bridging Generations

*Leading and Growing Tomorrow's Hospitality Workforce*

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# On any given shift...

*Hospitality is one of the most generationally diverse industries in the world.*



**Gen Z**

*Host checking guests in*



**Millennial**

*Sous chef on the line*



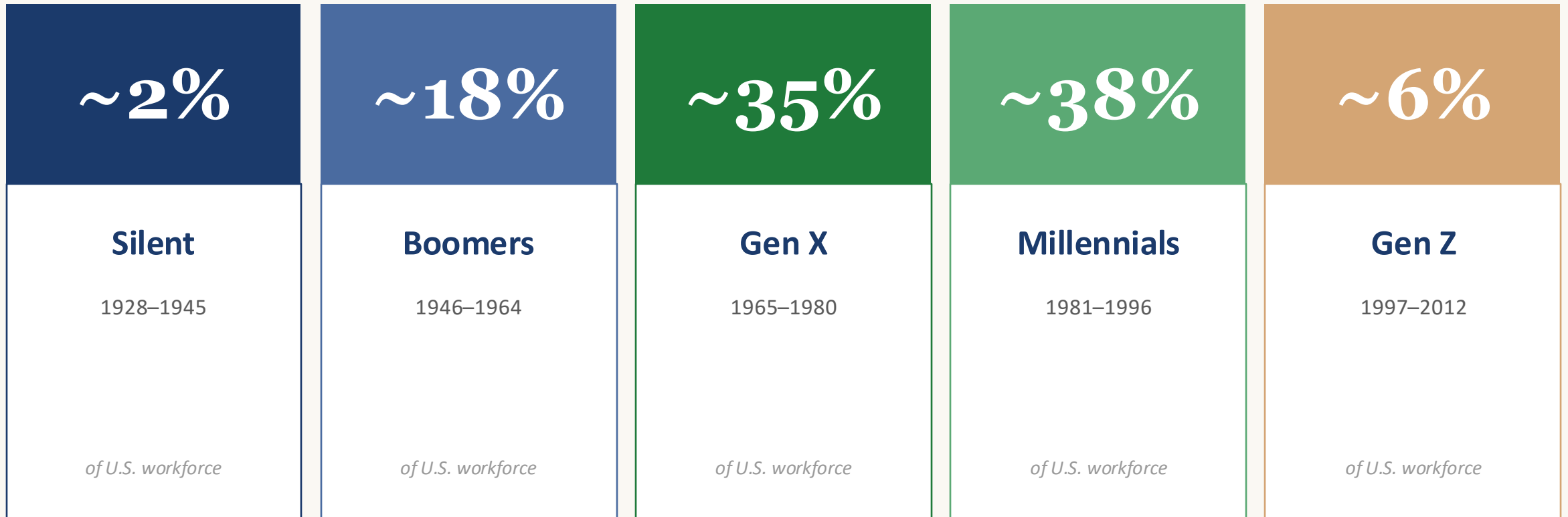
**Boomer**

*Concierge advising VIPs*

**All on the same shift. All on your team.**

# Five Generations at Work

*For the first time in modern history, five generations are working side by side.*



*Treat these as planning context — not a label maker.*

# What Do You See?

*Take a moment — share with the room.*

“ *What generational differences are you seeing on your team?* ”



## Communication

How they reach out, respond, and stay in the loop



## Work Style

Pace, structure, flexibility, and approach to tasks



## Motivation

What drives them, what recognition lands

*No wrong answers — just observations.*

# Kill the Stereotypes



*There is more variation within generations than between them.*

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The research is clear

## **Tendency, not rule.**

Use generational awareness as a hypothesis to check.

## **Confirm with conversation.**

Ask each individual what they actually value.

## **Standard is the standard.**

Hold the same expectations for everyone, regardless of age.

# What Every Generation Wants

*The needs are universal. The delivery is what differs.*



**Respect**



**Fair Pay &  
Predictable  
Schedules**



**A Manager Who  
Notices**



**Growth**



**Belonging**

**Get these right, and most "generational conflict" disappears.**

# Communication & Feedback

*Don't pick one channel. Ask each person how they prefer to be reached.*

## HOW THEY WANT TO BE REACHED

- ✓ Phone calls and in-person conversations
- ✓ Texts and direct messages
- ✓ Email for anything in writing
- ✓ App notifications for shift changes
- ✓ Multiple channels for anything important

## HOW THEY WANT FEEDBACK

- ✓ In the moment — "nice save on table 12"
- ✓ End of shift — quick check-in
- ✓ Formal sit-down — quarterly or monthly
- ✓ Written notes they can keep
- ✓ Just ask: "How do you like feedback?"

# Rethink Recognition

*A plaque means everything to some — and almost nothing to others.*



Public shoutout in pre-shift huddle



Sincere thank-you in private



An extra shift off, unannounced



First pick of the next schedule



Cross-training or learning opportunity



Asking their opinion on a real decision

**Build a toolkit. Learn what lands for each person.**

# Pair Up. Path Up.

*Two structural moves that pay off long after the workshop ends.*

## Reverse Mentoring

*Pair experienced staff with newer hires — both directions.*

- Veterans teach service standards and guest reading
- Newer staff teach tech fluency and current expectations
- Set a cadence: 30 minutes biweekly for 90 days
- Recognize both people publicly when the cycle ends

## Career Pathing for All Ages

*Don't assume older workers are done growing — or younger ones are passing through.*

- The 55-year-old line cook may want to move into training
- The 22-year-old server may stay 10 years with a path
- Annual development conversations with every team member
- Regardless of age, role, or how long they've been here

# Scenario Lab

*Apply the frameworks to a realistic, messy hospitality situation. (10 minutes)*

## The Phone Problem

A veteran server complains that two younger hosts are "always on their phones." The hosts say they're using the reservation app.

## The Schedule Pushback

A long-tenured cook resents that newer staff are getting more weekends off because they "asked for it."

## The Training Resistance

Your most experienced bartender is openly skeptical of the new POS rollout. Others are taking cues from her.

## The Ambitious New Hire

A 22-year-old front desk agent tells you in week three they want your job in 18 months.

## The Quiet Veteran

A 30-year housekeeper rarely speaks up but is the team's anchor. How do you recognize and retain her?

## The Recognition Misfire

You named your top performer Employee of the Month. She seemed embarrassed and now avoids you.

**Each table picks ONE scenario. Discuss for 6 minutes. Share out in 60 seconds.**

# Start With One Conversation

*This week, ask one team member:*

→ How do you prefer I reach you when something's urgent?

→ What does meaningful recognition look like to you?

→ Where do you want to be in this industry in two years?

*Generational fluency is a habit, not a destination.*

# Thank You

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