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**ECONOMIC
SUMMIT**



Adapting to Change, Building Resilience

Breakout Track: Workforce/Workforce Development

A BOOMER, A GEN XER, A MILLENNIAL, AND A GEN ZER WALK INTO AN OFFICE

Presented by

GRAND
HYATT
DEER VALLEY



DEBBIE STONE

Evolutionary HR

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May 11, 2026 | 7:30 AM - 5:00 PM

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Discussion facilitated by
Deborah H. Stone, SPHR
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HOW WELL DO WE WORK TOGETHER?

Generations tend to collide in how they view:

- Values
- Communication
- Respect
- Loyalty
- Decision making
- Meetings
- Feedback and performance management
- Ways of learning

WHO ARE YOUR EMPLOYEES AND CO-WORKERS?

Baby Boomers | Born 1946 – 1964
62 - 80 years old

Generation X | Born 1965 – 1980
46 - 61 years old

Gen Y/Millennials | Born 1981 – 1996
30 - 45 years old

Gen Z | Born 1997 – 2010
16 - 29 years old

WHO WILL BE YOUR EMPLOYEES AND CO-WORKERS IN THE NEAR FUTURE?

Gen Alpha - Born 2010 – 2024. Oldest are ~16 years old

Early personality (and likely workplace) traits:

- Connect virtually
- Want to co-create with others
- AI is integrated with learning, life
- Mental health is challenging and important

BABY BOOMERS' WORK TRAITS

- Hardworking: Motivated by position, perks, and prestige
- Achievement-oriented: Dedicated and career-focused
- Believe in hierarchy/rank and “face time” at the office
- Pay your dues to get ahead; sacrifice for success
- Motivated by company loyalty, teamwork, and duty

GEN X'S WORK TRAITS

- Dislike authority, structured work hours, and being micromanaged
- Expect work-life balance and flexibility
- Personal/professional growth are more important than their employer's interests
 - May be viewed as “not loyal”
- Entrepreneurial spirit – “go big or go home”

GEN Y/MILLENNIALS' WORK TRAITS

- Work is a key part of life; not a “work-life balance” issue
- Needs work to be personally fulfilling
- Will likely prioritize their long-term career interests over their current employer's needs
- Work collaboratively – culture of connectivity
- Expect diversity and equal treatment for all
- Want training and mentoring
- Want clear objectives/expectations

GEN Z'S WORK TRAITS

- Grew up with technology: “Digital natives”
- Value independence and individuality
- Drawn to meaningful, challenging work
- Expect mentoring to support learning and development
- Want leaders who are honest, exhibit a solid vision, communicate well, and listen to and value their opinions

REAL-LIFE GENERATIONAL CHALLENGES

Let's talk:
Addressing generational
differences to maximize results

1. FEEDBACK: ESSENTIAL OR EXCESSIVE?

- A Gen Z employee asks for weekly feedback and career check-ins
- Their Gen X manager, who has some Boomer traits, feels this is excessive and says, “You’ll know if there’s a problem. Otherwise, let’s talk quarterly.”
- The Millennial team member appreciates feedback but is used to more autonomy

FEEDBACK: ESSENTIAL OR EXCESSIVE?

- Is this about generational difference—or evolving workplace norms?
- What does “good feedback” look like today?
- How can leaders create consistency without overburdening managers?
- What systems could bridge expectations?

2. PROMOTIONS: TIME IN SEAT OR RESULTS?

- A high-performing Millennial employee wants a promotion within 18 months
- The Boomer leader believes advancement should be earned over time
- The Gen X employee is quietly doing the work but is feeling overlooked
- The Gen Z employee is already asking about “what’s next” after 6 months

PROMOTIONS: TIME IN SEAT OR RESULTS?

- How have expectations around career progression shifted?
- What does “earning it” mean today?
- How can organizations create clear pathways without inflating titles?
- Who is most at risk of disengaging in this scenario—and why?

3. RECRUITING: PURPOSE OR PAYCHECK?

- Your organization is recruiting for a key mid-level role. In interviewing four candidates, you learn:
- The Boomer candidate values benefits and stability
- The Gen X candidate prioritizes autonomy and work-life balance
- The Millennial candidate wants purpose, culture, and growth
- The Gen Z candidate asks about values, flexibility, and social impact

RECRUITING: PURPOSE OR PAYCHECK?

- What messaging resonates across all four groups?
- Where do employer value propositions need to evolve?
- Can one organization authentically meet all these needs?

4. WORK ETHIC: WORK HARD OR WORK SMART?

- A Gen Z employee logs off promptly at 5:00 PM every day.
- The Boomer leader questions their commitment
- The Gen X manager shrugs and says, “Well, the work gets done”
- The Millennial employee would like to end their day at 5:00 PM, but sometimes stays late to signal commitment

WORK ETHIC: WORK HARD OR WORK SMART?

- Are definitions of “work ethic” changing—or just becoming more visible?
- What metrics are more important? Hours or outcomes?
- If employees expect to be evaluated on outcomes vs. hours, how can employers objectively track outcomes?
- How can leaders evaluate results fairly across styles?
- How can teams align expectations without judgment?

5. MEETINGS: PRODUCTIVE OR POINTLESS?

- Employees are overwhelmed with meetings, and feel they can't get their "real" work done
- The Boomer leader sees in-person meetings as essential for alignment
- The Gen X manager wants fewer, more efficient meetings
- The Millennial employee wants collaboration but not overload
- The Gen Z employee asks why meetings exist at all

MEETINGS: PRODUCTIVE OR POINTLESS?

- What is the purpose of meetings in today's workplace?
- What should successful teams eliminate, redesign, or retain?
- How can generational preferences create better workflows?
- What does effective collaboration actually look like now?

HOW DOES WHAT WE ARE DISCUSSING TODAY AFFECT YOUR PLANNING FOR TOMORROW?

- Accelerating Boomer, and soon Gen X, retirements are creating leadership and expertise gaps in organizations
- Millennials and Gen Z are likely to change jobs every few years as they look for career growth and promotions
- What are the implications in your organization?



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POST-EVENT SURVEY

