



Multigenerational Diversity: the key to a successful company

In just a few years, five generations will coexist within companies: Baby-Boomers and the Silent Generation, as well as Gen X, Y, and Z. A major challenge looms for company leaders. They need to attract and retain all generations and ensure they all work together harmoniously.

Generational diversity: a strategic challenge

When several generations coexist, an accumulation of reciprocal negative perceptions can lead to tensions in the workplace. 43% of companies believe that there are many misunderstandings between generations, which result in tense hierarchical relations¹. The digital revolution contributes to highlighting these tensions, as it induces a major mindset change and exacerbates their differences. Seniors sometimes feel set aside even though they have valuable expertise. Millennials, now predominant within companies, have different aspirations. Finally, Gen X is too often overlooked, even though it has the ability of creating bonds between generations. Without being stereotypical, it is important to consider the needs and aspirations of each generation to allow them to reach their full potential, both individually and collectively.

Generational diversity is above all a great opportunity: when well-managed, it can create value for businesses. Effective cooperation among generations allows to increase everyone's satisfaction (49%), to modernize ways of working (65%), to develop the firm's activity with new ways (38%), and to run projects more quickly (34%)¹.

Overcoming the generational hurdle

Build a strong identity to forge solid employee bonds

To attract talents whatever their age, an identity should be first and foremost inclusive of every generation. The mismatch between a candidate and a company identity causes 36% of hiring failures². Secondly, the installment of a strong identity mobilizes employees and motivates them to commit to a common goal. Committed employees are more efficient and perform better. Thirdly, a concrete identity gives common codes for every generation to rely on.

Examples for inspiration:

<p>Bain & Company encourages its employees to dedicate 10% of their time to team building projects within the firm.</p>	<p>Citi worked on destroying generational stereotypes, by organizing group discussions to raise awareness of generation differences and biases.</p>	<p>Korn Ferry's employees committed to coach a thousand young people from underprivileged neighborhoods.</p>
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Reshape the way we work to increase collaboration

39% of millennials are asking for new ways of working³. The companies that come out on top will be the ones enabling them to fully play their role of agents of change. On the one hand, employees of all ages should be included in the decision making process: diverse teams take

¹ InterGen Lab, 2015, Observatoire du Management Intergénérationnel

² Study on the cultural fit between candidates and companies, 2013, Vadequa

³ "Les Jeunes de 18 à 30 ans face à un travail en mutation", 2017, Viavoice et Manpowergroup



80% better decisions and generate 60% better results⁴. On the other hand, companies should generate cross-generational knowledge transmission. Every employee, whatever their age, should be encouraged to share expertise with colleagues, leading to 360° feedback, and classic, reverse and peer-to-peer mentoring. Finally, more collaborative, agile, and horizontal ways of working value every generation and allow them to bring their best to the table.

Examples for inspiration:

<p>Pitney Bowes forms commercial teams with a senior, to share experience, a member of X Gen, as an advisor, and a millennial, learning how to own the client relationship.</p>	<p>Carlson Wagonlit developed an internal digital platform to gather its employees' views on business issues.</p>	<p>Cisco signed a telecommuting agreement and offers many tools facilitating collaboration between employees: Webex Teams, Jabber, DX.</p>
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Develop an attractive value proposition to attract and retain talents

Building multigenerational teams starts with recruiting; position and age should be decoupled in this process. For example, a digital expert does not have to be a millennial, since 56% of millennials as well as 54% of X Gen claim to have strong digital competences⁵. Career paths must also be adapted to all ages and life momentums, to benefit from a workforce until the last day in the company. Furthermore, employees of all generations should be properly valued, through a meritocracy that is transparent and free of stereotyping based on age.

Examples for inspiration:

<p>General Electric developed an innovative application allowing employees to manage their internal career, with personalized recommendations of trainings and job offerings.</p>	<p>At Otis, experimented technicians pair with new recruits, to transmit their knowledge and expertise, and are rewarded and valued for it.</p>	<p>All PepsiCo employees can participate in a challenge, by suggesting new products or new ways of working. Everyone's contribution is valued and the best ones are actually implemented.</p>
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Test-and-learn: the key to success

Generational diversity is a key performance factor that every leader should encourage. There is no off-the-shelf recipe: firms have to find inspiration in initiatives from their peers and adapt them to their own culture workplace culture.

⁴ "Inclusion and Diversity = Better Decision Making", 2017, CloverPop

⁵ Stephanie Neal et Richard Wellins, "Generation X — not millennials — is changing the nature of work", April 2018, CNBC