

From Cam Martston's book: *Motivating the "What's in it for Me?" Workforce*

Meet the Matures

Born between:

1909 – 1945 (Age 67+)

When you think of this generation think:

Duty, Sacrifice

Formative events: The Great Depression, Pearl Harbor, WW II, Hiroshima

Think of: Jimmy Carter, Charlton Heston, John Glenn, George Bush, Billy Graham

Matures: An Overview

The Matures are actually a combination of two generations, the Veterans (1901 – 1924) and the Silent Generation (1925 – 1942), whose characteristics in the workplace are very similar. They either fought in World War II or were children during the war. The eldest members of the Matures remember the Great Depression and their memories of those times have made an indelible mark on them. Many of their behaviors today can be traced back to their experiences during the Depression.

Of the four generations, the Matures are the smallest in numbers (55 million). They're also the wealthiest. They either first entered the workforce after WWII or came home from the war and got a job with companies that took care of their employees. Both the company and the employee believed that loyalty to one another created even more loyalty. Most of the Matures worked for only one company in their lifetime and stayed with their employer until they retired and the company rewarded them with a gold watch. The post-war workplace they inhabited was primarily male dominated. The mothers stayed at home and kept up the house and raised the children.

Today the Matures are being acknowledged on every front for their efforts. They're being written about by Tom Brokaw ("The Greatest Generation"), featured in films ("Saving Private Ryan", "Band of Brothers") and are courted by politicians since they vote en masse. They have one of the nation's most powerful lobbies in the AARP.

Matures in the workplace

In the workplace, they:

- * Are loyal to their employer and expect the same in return.
- * Possess superb interpersonal skills.
- * Are enjoying flextime arrangements today so they can work on their own schedule.
- * Believe promotions, raises, and recognition should come from job tenure.
- * Measure a work ethic on timeliness, productivity, and not drawing attention.

Matures in the marketplace

In the marketplace, they:

- * Have great faith in the nation's institutions: people (i.e., Charlton Heston), companies, and the government.
- * Demand quality. It is more important than speed or efficiency.
- * Are loyal customers but aren't afraid to shop around.
- * Willingly follow the rules that have been established. They believe they are there for a reason.
- * Think the standard options are just fine. There is no need to get fancy or customize.

Meet The Boomers

Born between:

1946 – 1964 (Ages 49-67)

When you think of this generation think:

Individuality, "Me" Generation

Formative events: The Civil Rights Movement, John F. Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, Martin Luther King assassinations, Vietnam War, Woodstock, The Cold War, Roe vs. Wade

Think of: The Beatles, Bill Gates, Bill Clinton, Oprah Winfrey, Muhammad Ali

Boomers: An Overview

Today the Boomers are in control. They run our local, state, and national governments, they are the bosses, supervisors, managers, and CEOs of most companies, and they dominate the workforce because of their enormous numbers. They are an amazing workforce because of their dedication to a solid, strong work ethic that is uniquely defined by them as working long and hard and being seen doing it. The word “workaholic” was coined to describe the Boomers. They believe in “face time” with their bosses – they must be seen working hard or else that work ethic wasn’t benefiting them.

The Matures laid the groundwork for the United States to become an influential member of the world community. The Boomers came behind then and set the wheels in motion. Through their enormous numbers (77 million), their intense work ethic, and their competitive nature, the Boomers got productivity in US to the forefront of the world community. The Boomers also believe in the sanctity and the importance of the individual. Developing themselves into a more “whole” person is very important. Part of becoming a better person is learning to operate as a fluid member of a team, and the Boomers are champions of teamwork.

Boomers today are still working as hard as they’ve ever worked but some are asking themselves if their intense work ethic has paid off the way they had hoped. The Boomers entered the workplace with company loyalty was still standard. They’ve seen that change dramatically, though, as tough economic conditions have required layoffs and downsizings. Their work ethic may have gone unrewarded and they are wondering if they’ve missed critical parts of their lives while giving the company 110%. The Boomers are evolving today and in the second halves of their lives will live with a different focus.

Boomers in the workplace

In the workplace, Boomers:

- * Believe in, champion, and evaluate themselves and others based on their work ethic.
- * Work ethic for Boomers is measured in hours worked. Measuring productivity in those hours is less important.
- * Believe teamwork is critical to success.
- * Believe relationship building is very important.
- * Expect loyalty from those they work with.

Boomers in the marketplace

In the marketplace, Boomers:

- * Are interested in products and services that will allow them to regain control of their time.
- * Believe technology brings with it as many problems as it provides solutions.
- * Want products and services that have been customized for them, the individual.
- * Believe rules should be obeyed unless they are contrary to what they want; then they’re to be broken.
- * Want products and services that will indicate to their peers that they’re successful.

Meet The Xers

Born between:

1965 –1978 (Ages 34-48)

When you think of this generation think:

Skeptical, Reluctant, Self Sufficient, the most loyal consumer, the most loyal employees

Formative events: Watergate, Fall of the Berlin Wall, Challenger explosion, The Gulf War, The PC boom, The Reagan Presidency

Think of: Andre Agassi, David Beckham, Kurt Cobain, Michael Dell, the cast of "Friends," Monica Lewinsky, Julia Roberts, Chris Rock , Peter Theil (Paypal Inventor).

Xers: An Overview

They came onto the scene and were given an unflattering, vague name. They were defined as “slackers” and were characterized as unmotivated, lethargic, sarcastic, and irreverent. They were the first generation that parents could take pills not to have. And as youth they were told they’d be the first generation in the nation’s history that would not be as successful as their parents. Every institution in the United States that has said “you can trust us” (government, the church, military, marriage, major corporations) has fallen flat on its face. Whereas to the Boomers and Matures these institutions still mean a great deal and they just briefly faltered, to Xers they have never been deserving of anything but skepticism.

Though they could easily be considered pessimistic about their world and their future, you’ll find that their attitude has a “carpe diem” feel to it. “There is nothing we can count on in the future,” they say, “so we’ll focus short term and make sure each day has significance.” It is not an attitude of irresponsibility. It is the contrary. In fact, Xers have willingly shouldered the responsibility for their day-to-day well being. “We’ve seen that the company won’t provide it, nor will the government,” they think, “So it is up to me.” And this attitude permeates the workplace where Xers are steadily rejecting the Boomer work ethic attitude. Ironically, along the way, they’re gaining Boomer converts.

Today you’ll find the eldest Xers achieving management positions and the youngest have been in the workplace for at least three years or more. They’ll inherit the many management positions vacated by the Boomers upon their retirement, and they’ll run things a bit differently. Don’t fear. They’ll be effective, profitable, and responsible, but different.

Xers in the workplace

In the workplace, Xers:

- * Eschew the hard-core, super-motivated, do or die Boomer work ethic.
- * Want open communication regardless of position, title, or tenure.
- * Respect production over tenure.
- * Value control of their time.
- * Look for a person to whom they can invest loyalty, not a company.

Xers in the marketplace

In the marketplace, Xers:

- * Can spot a phony a mile away.
- * Rely on peer-to-peer referrals more than any other generation.
- * Want options; plans B, C, and D.
- * Embrace technology as a way to maintain control of their lives.
- * Want to be in control of the sale.

Meet The Millennials

Born between:

After 1980 (33 and under)

When you think of this generation think: Coddled, Idealistic

Formative events: Oklahoma City Bombing, 9/11 Terrorist Attack, The Internet boom,

Think of: Macaulay Culkin, Christina Aguilera, Elijah Wood, Justin Timberlake, Paris Hilton, Anna Kournikova, Natalie Portman, Britney Spears, Millennials:

An Overview

Born in a time where cell phones, laptops, remote controls, and travels to outer space are the norm, the Millennials are living in a world ubiquitous with technology. And the studies show they'll still see more change in their lifetime than any other generation. Along with ever-present technology, the Millennials have mostly known affluence in their lives. For the majority of their lives they've only seen a growing economy. The recent economic downturns are the first change in the nation's economic pace they've experienced.

Children of the Boomers and the oldest Xers, the Millennials have lived protected by their parents. Threats to them are of a different variety than any of the other generations have lived with as children – rogue individuals with nuclear weapons, unchecked violence from their peers, and terrorism in their home nation (and, in one case, by their own countrymen). The parent's response is to insulate and protect their children, to carefully guide them through life, and to constantly build their self-esteem. Their lives thus far are epitomized by the yellow placards ubiquitous a decade ago on every minivan and station wagon on the nation's roads – "Baby On Board." "Be mindful of my precious cargo," they essentially say.

Today the Millennials are entering the workforce in droves. A population whose size will rival the Boomers, the Millennials come into the workplace looking for the opportunity to learn and move about. They want to be close with their peers and search for leadership from their bosses and supervisors. They're an army waiting to be guides, but they play by different rules.

Millennials in the workplace

In the workplace, the Millennials:

- * Search for the individual who will help them achieve their goals.
- * Want open, constant communication and positive reinforcement from their boss.
- * Find working with someone of the Mature generation easy to do.
- * Search for a job that provides great, personal fulfillment.
- * Are searching for ways to shed the stress in their lives.

Millennials in the marketplace

In the marketplace, the Millennials:

- * Want to be like their peers but with a unique twist.
- * Don't want to be hurried.
- * Will consider a company's products if the company is known for their altruistic attitude.
- * Are loyal consumers.
- * Search for the unique and hard to find items.