

Distractions and Output

I read an article the other day about the evolution of the millennial generation and their ability as it relates to working for, working with, and having to work for Baby Boomers, and Post War leaders. It focused on workplace distractions, and it got me thinking about output and how output is what remains relevant in the workplace. Linda Ronstadt was quoted that no one has connected one generation to the next better than the Eagles, better than any Behavioral Scientist can. There is just something about music, and I concur, because all my kids love the Eagles, as do I. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R1zB4CcMoLA>

“Currently, five generations make up our society. Each of those five generations has an active role in the market place. Depending on the specific workplace, the workforce includes four to five generations. Here are the birth years for each generation:

iGen, Gen Z or Centennials: *Born 1996 and later*

Millennials or Gen Y: *Born 1977 to 1995*

Generation X: *Born 1965 to 1976*

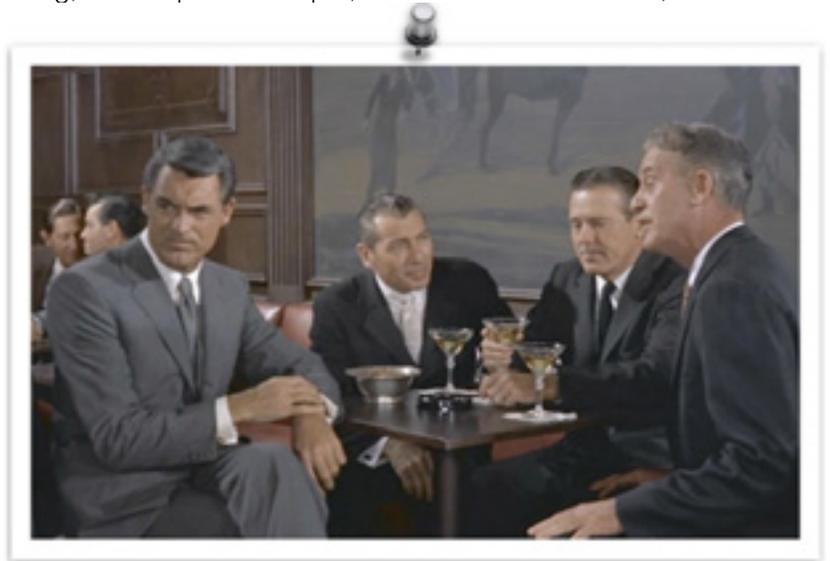
Baby Boomers: *Born 1946 to 1964*

Traditionalists or Silent Generation: *Born 1945 and before*

Post War Generational Behaviors

Let me begin by making some basic observations. I grew up watching my father, a real post war stereotype, providing for his family and making many friends over the years. He'll be 90 this year, and I find myself talking about my observations as a child and teenager. He made a good living, he was paid on output, he did what he had to do, and then he found time to enjoy life. Distractions are different from generation, and if a three martini lunch wasn't a distraction back then, I don't know what was.

As much as this new generation is welded to their tablets and smartphones, and employers at times ban them from certain workplace environment, every generation has been distracted at work, unless you consider the three-martini-lunch normal? And even though certain kids are medicated or high these days, very few are getting hammered at lunch like the good old days.



Baby Boom Behaviors

We are a pretty vain generation. Certain Boomers on unearned income borrow money on things they don't need to impress people they don't like, and then there are those waiting for the trust fund to kick in.

With regard to how we work, one of my favorite sayings my friend shared with me in a sales meeting when he turned in his weekly report was “Don't confuse activity with results.” As for me, at age 24, I chose the same profession as my dad and embarked on a sales career. I only had three jobs, and took pay cuts at every position move with incentives based on output. I had to turn in a report every week about sales calls, phone calls, prospects, revenue generation, client retention, and community service.

Back in my 20's and early 30's, I worked for a public company with many offices. Each office had a little dink word processor for correspondence and a fax machine, and that was it. I had the opportunity to visit many offices and teach my peers some sales techniques, including a stint in the UK. I turned down a promotion to move there, and, looking back, I'm glad I did.

We sat in a bullpen and that was tough for some. What were my distractions? A phone personal call or kicking back to read Sports Illustrated. We didn't have desktop computers so there were no ergonomics concerns and no carpal tunnel leaves-of-absence. The only thing you got was a stiff neck from being on the phone too long or a sore hand from too many handshakes. I showed a friend of mine his old business card. It didn't even have a fax number on it. I used to call his landline, write notes and delivered resumes via a cab driver.

We were taught to do one thing. Get results. And always with the understanding not to confuse business standards with ethics. We all know there are many paths to output, from thank you notes to lunches and dinners to gifts to bribes.

Generation X

Known for work-life balance, less loyal than the boomers, more tech savvy, craves attention and reassurance they are doing a good job, and a bit of a free agent mentality to job hop elsewhere if they're not feeling valued.

Millennial Expectations

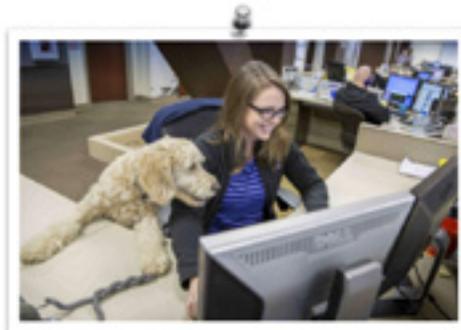
Personally I'm looking forward to the millennials repairing the damage the Boomers have done. How things have changed. We now put in cell phone lockers when we need all distractions eliminated. Bring your pet to work, work with your shoes off, sit on the floor, and work from home. But there is still only one thing that matters. Output.

Millennials have become the largest generation in the workforce. Millennials are also the fastest-growing generation of customers in the marketplace, bringing the greatest lifetime value. In addition, Millennials exhibit different attitudes toward employment, sales and marketing, which are challenging many conventional strategies and approaches." - <http://genhq.com/faq-info-about-generations/>

A 2014 Harris Interactive survey on behalf of CareerBuilder, a job recruitment website, found that 38 percent of U.S. workers had a younger boss, up from 34 percent in 2012.



If you dig into the numbers, this generation at work is more productive than any generation in the history of man. Now, technology certainly plays a big part in that progress, but let's give this generation some kudos for knowing how to get the most out of technology instead of romancing fax machines and the the old days when much fewer women worked



I keep hearing about Workplace 2.0, and that it's the new norm. I know what we focus on, and it's a combination of the new norm, and how to achieve output while allowing or disallowing what's this norm. I was trained in a bullpen environment, now known as open-plan environment. There are still those that need a private office, and I get it, some environments require concentration. Bring your own device (BYOD), connectivity, and 24/7/365 acceptable hours. Boomers working for millennial are different than millennial working for Boomers, and some of the post war folks, born before 1945, are still in charge, and quite often rule with an iron fist. Behavioral scientists are making a fortune training and establishing work environments where these three generations work in sync, and which work practices are the most effective.

In closing, there is the current dilemma of what to do with a privately held business and how to motivate the staff, regardless of which generation is steering the ship.

A friend of mine helped give some clarity to what's next:

1. First, you can continue to learn as we grow and teach/coerce as we go;
2. Second, the management team of a company can learn as they grow and be a valuable resource for the owners to depend on and enjoy building with;
3. Third, you can outsource the skill set necessary to take the company to the next level and beyond;
4. Fourth, cash out; and, finally,
5. Fifth, the owner can put the brakes on and let all of the employees enjoy their success for a while, and just sit back and listen to the Eagles.

What's your choice?