

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

While individual users' experience may differ, there are overarching similarities among generations that help us understand our audiences better. You don't need know every detail, but you must have an understanding of generational differences beyond the cursory understanding provided by the media. Choose your words based on your audience, and your connections will be more real.

TRADITIONALISTS

BORN 1900-1945



KNOWN AS
Veterans

Silent

Moral Authority

Radio Babies

The Forgotten Generation

Looking for... Recognition and respect for their experience. Value placed on history/traditions. Job security & stability. Reputation. Defined rules and policies with adherence to the same. Integrity and a willingness to act.

CHARACTERISTICS

Raised by parents that just survived the great depression. Experienced hard times while growing up which were followed by times of prosperity. **They're influenced by...** WWII, Korean War, Great Depression, New Deal, Rise on Corporations, and The Space Age.

VALUES

**HONOR • COMPLIANCE • SACRIFICE • DEDICATION
HARD WORK • GOOD ATTITUDE • ATTENDANCE
PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE • LOYALTY**

COMMUNICATION WITH THIS AUDIENCE

- Be discrete
- Show respect for their age/experience (address formally)
- Use good grammar and manners, absolutely no profanity, dramatically limit slang
- Deliver your message based on history and traditions whenever possible
- Present your story in a formal, logical manner
- Don't waste their time
- Use inclusive language (we, us)
- Focus-words not body language
- Be slow to "warm up"
- Whenever possible, use hand written notes, less email, and more personal interaction

BABY BOOMERS

BORN 1946-1964



KNOWN AS
"Me" Generation

Moral Authority

HIGHEST DIVORCE RATE AND 2ND MARRIAGES IN HISTORY.

Post War Babies who grew up to be radicals of the 70's and yuppies of the 80's, "The American Dream" was promised to them as children and they actively pursue it. As a result they are sometimes viewed as materialistic or ambitious.

CHARACTERISTICS

They question everything and are slow to trust. They handle crisis well. Ambitious, anti-establishment, competent, idealistic, and live to work. They dislike conflict. Often challenging the authority of Traditionalists, and are judgmental if others disagree. **They're influenced by...** Civil Rights, Vietnam War, Sexual Revolution, Cold War, Space Travel.

VALUES

**FAMILY LOYALTY • PERSONAL GRATIFICATION
PERSONAL GROWTH • INVOLVEMENT**

COMMUNICATION WITH THIS AUDIENCE

- Be diplomatic
- Communicate in person whenever possible
- Speak openly and directly
- Use body language to communicate
- Present options (this group responds to flexibility)
- Use electronic communications as well as face to face (direct)
- Learn what is important to them such as values, priorities, or opinions
- Answer questions thoroughly and expect to be pressed for details
- Avoid manipulative/controlling language
- This group will respond to your "personal touch"
- Get consensus. This group wants to be included, without you may cause offense
- Establish a friendly rapport
- OK to use first names

GENERATION X

BORN 1965-1980



KNOWN AS
Gen X

Xers

The Doer

Post Boomers

13th Generation

They are educated and have high job expectations. Independent, informal, and lack organizational loyalty. They are pragmatists that seek life balance and self-reliance.

THIS GROUP IS UNIMPRESSED WITH AUTHORITY AND SKEPTICAL OF "INSTITUTIONS."

CHARACTERISTICS

This is a group of dynamic young leaders with an appreciation for cutting edge systems/technology. They are forward thinking in company environments, and flexible in scheduling. They value input on merit, not age or seniority. **They're influenced by...** Watergate, Energy Crisis, Single Parents, First Generation of Latchkey Kids, Y2K, Activism, Corporate Downsizing, End of Cold War, and Increasing Divorce Rates.

VALUES

BALANCE • DIVERSITY • ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT • FUN

COMMUNICATION WITH THIS AUDIENCE

- Be direct
- Be immediate
- Use straight talk, and present facts
- Use email as the # 1 tool
- Learn their language and speak it
- Use informal communication style
- Speak in short sound-bytes
- Share information immediately and often
- This generation has the potential to bridge the generation gap between the youngest and oldest workers
- Don't micro manage them, but rather manage details on their behalf
- Avoid buzz words and jargon
- Tie your message to "results"

MILLENNIAL

BORN 1981-2000



KNOWN AS
Generation Y

Gen Y

Generation Next

Echo Boomers

Chief Friendship Officers

24/7s

THIS GROUP BELIEVES THAT BECAUSE OF TECHNOLOGY, THEY CAN WORK FLEXIBLY ANYTIME, ANYPLACE AND THAT THEY SHOULD BE EVALUATED ON WORK PRODUCT, NOT HOW, WHEN OR WHERE IT WAS DONE.

CHARACTERISTICS

They value achievement and civic duty, and are confident, avid consumers. They are extremely competitive, and are the most educated generation. They are optimistic and value instant gratification. Eager to spend, ambitious, but not focused. Have been indulged, "me first" attitude, but politically savvy. They have a strong sense of entitlement. **They're influenced by...** Their coming of age during a period of economic expansion, who were kept extremely busy as children.

IN THE WORKPLACE THEY ARE

- Goal Oriented.
- Prefer diversity, technology, informality and fun.
- Expect to influence the terms and conditions of their workplace.
- Have a work ethic that does not mandate 10 hour days.
- Have high expectations of bosses and managers to be mentors.
- Want long term work relationships, but on their own terms.

COMMUNICATION WITH THIS AUDIENCE

- Be polite
- Use positive, respectful, motivational, electronic communication style (cell phones, email, IM, text)
- Communicate in person if the message is very important
- Use email and voice mail as #1 tools
- Don't talk down-they will resent it, and you
- Show respect through language and they will respect you
- Use action verbs
- Use language to portray visual pictures
- Be humorous – show you are human
- Be careful about the words you use and the way you say it (they are not good at personal communication because of technical ways of communicating)
- Be positive
- This group prefers to learn in networks, teams using multimedia while being entertained and excited