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Leadership Across Generations

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Organizations today are built on a complex group of human capital that is unlike any that we have known before. Today our workforce does not only consist of all the defined generational cohorts as we know them, but in addition we have a level of diversity that spans not only generations, but cultures and many of the protected classes of individuals that make up these United States of America. The focus of this research is to describe the changing challenges for leaders and the leadership strategies that will foster multigenerational cooperation in the workplace.

As I reflect on the multigenerational workforce and the specific professional field that I work in, I will attempt to describe the changing challenges for leaders and present these challenges by generational cohort. Further, I will present leadership strategies that might help to create multigenerational cooperation that would foster engagement and stronger inclusivity. According to Grubb, (2017) problems arise when there is not only diversity but when there is an age gap between employees and their supervisors. Further, it becomes even more of a challenge when supervisors are younger than the employee (Grubb, 2017).

In a Hospital system and on the administrative side of the house we often see hospital presidents and researchers, many of whom are much younger than some of the doctors that are treating patients. Of course, this may be unique to hospital systems, as doctors reporting structure in a hospital system is not a traditional reporting structure. They are not looking to the president of the hospital to mentor them or looking for recognition for a job well done. Still, there are many challenges that we face as a multigenerational organization with a wide range of

diversity. Some of our challenges include dealing with conflict. There are some doctors that dismiss younger less experienced nurses because they have a poor bedside manner. This is not at all new. We also experience veteran employees whether clinical or non-clinical that are in fear of becoming obsolete. They experience what Grubb, (2017) says is the fact that they think younger co-workers think that no one has taught of their idea before. The cycle rages on and on with the young dismissing the old and the old believing the young is inexperienced and untrained as managers (Grubb, 2017).

The changing nature of leadership begs for common ground. Leadership must embrace that the generational cohorts that are showing up in our offices, schools, hospitals, and other workplaces all have different life and work experiences and leaders are challenged to pay attention to what is being said by these individuals, how it is said, and how it is perceived if they want to create inclusion in their diverse workplaces (Grubb, 2017). According to Grubb, (2017) creating inclusivity means not dismissing an idea from one of the younger generations because it is not interesting or because this is something that was done in the past that may not have worked. Creating inclusivity means having patience to be open to ideas that encourage participation and foster more ideas. This includes the use of new and emerging technology, social media engagement, and the many avenues of communication that younger generations find more user friendly, like, text messaging, using company blogs, interactive webinars, podcasts, and other forms of media for engagement (Grubb, 2017).

Leaders should adopt strategies that not only encourage inclusivity, but also fosters effective and efficient communication. There are many strategies that leaders can implement to develop a high performance, engaging, efficient, and effective multigenerational and diverse workplace. According to Grubb, (2017) this starts with setting aside prejudices and valuing what

others contribute to the culture. An attitude of mutual respect, as leaders work to develop and understanding of their employees is essential to motivate and engage individuals on a higher level (Grubb, 2017). Providing ongoing positive feedback, and where necessary coaching through the negative is essential to mentoring your staff. Grubb, (2017) also advises that leaders adopt a variety of communication mediums to be consistent with messaging. These media include YouTube video's posted online, Snap Chat, Slack, and other cloud-based messaging platforms. Reverse mentoring is one of the most significant strategies that a leader can use to assist older workers with embracing the many different technologies that can develop strong communication, and engagement for the teams (Grubb, 2017).

In conclusion, it would not be prudent of me if I did not add that while all of the outlined strategies will effectively create the synergy that leaders so desperately want in their teams, none of these strategies will be effective if leaders do not share their expectations and vision for their multigenerational teams to foster further inclusivity (Grubb, 2017).

References

Grubb, V. M. (2017). *Clash of the generations: Managing the new workplace reality* [VitalSource Bookshelf version]. Retrieved from <https://online.vitalsource.com/#/books/9781119212478>

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