

Leadership Awareness for Today's Organizations

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 also cultures and many of the protected classes of individuals that make up the United States of America. This article focuses on describing 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 I work in, I will attempt to describe the changing challenges for leaders and present these challenges by generational cohort. Further, I will demonstrate leadership strategies that might help create multigenerational cooperation to foster engagement and stronger inclusivity. According to Grubb (2017), problems arise when there is not only diversity but also an age gap between employees and their supervisors. Further, it becomes even more of a challenge when supervisors are younger than the employees (Grubb, 2017).

That is very much the case in the organization. We face many challenges in organizations that comprise multigenerational human capital with a wide range of diversity. Some of our challenges include dealing with conflict. In hospital systems, we see doctors dismiss younger, less experienced nurses because of their poor bedside manner. This is not at all new. We also experience veteran employees, whether clinical or non-clinical, who fear becoming obsolete. They experience what Grubb (2017) says: that younger co-workers think that no one has taught them about their idea before. The cycle rages on and on, with the young

dismissing the old and the old believing the young are 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 it is something that was done in the past that may not have worked. Creating inclusivity means being patient and 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, company blogs, interactive webinars, podcasts, and other forms of media for engagement (Grubb, 2017).

Leaders should adopt strategies that encourage inclusivity and foster 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. As leaders work to develop an understanding of their employees, an attitude of mutual respect 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 media to be consistent with messaging. These media include

YouTube videos posted online, Snapchat, Slack, and other cloud-based messaging platforms.

Reverse mentoring is one of the most significant strategies 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).

As I conclude, I would be remiss 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 fully effective if leaders do not effectively share their expectations and vision for their multigenerational teams (Grubb, 2017).

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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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